

THE CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY OF



THE FIRST
WORLD WAR

VOLUME III
CIVIL SOCIETY

EDITED BY
JAY WINTER

The Cambridge History of the First World War

Volume III of *The Cambridge History of the First World War* explores the social and cultural history of the war and considers the role of civil society throughout the conflict: that is to say those institutions and practices outside the state through which the war effort was waged. Drawing on twenty-five years of historical scholarship, it sheds new light on culturally significant issues such as how families and medical authorities adapted to the challenges of war and the shift that occurred in gender roles and behaviour that would subsequently reshape society.

Adopting a transnational approach, this volume surveys the war's treatment of populations at risk, including refugees, minorities and internees, to show the full extent of the disaster of war, and with it the stubborn survival of irrational kindness and the generosity of spirit that persisted amidst the bitterness at the heart of warfare, with all its contradictions and enduring legacies. This volume concludes with a reckoning of the costs and consequences of the Great War.

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The Historial Museum of the Great War Péronne, Somme

The Historial is an internationally acclaimed museum that presents the First World War in a unique way. Located on the battlefields of the Somme, the museum presents and compares the presence of the three main belligerent nations on the Western Front – Great Britain, France and Germany. It unfolds the story both of the front and of civilians under the pressure of war. The Battle of the Somme in 1916 caused over a million casualties in less than five months of fighting. The ground would be fought over again in 1918. By the end of the war, combatants from well over twenty-five nations had fought on the Somme, making it the place where the war truly became a World War.

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Volume III

Civil Society

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The Historial is funded by the Conseil Général de la Somme. It reflects local pride and a commitment to the preservation of the traces of the Great War embedded in the landscape and cultural life of the Department of the Somme and of the wider world that shared the catastrophe of the Great War. In the Conseil Général, we are indebted to Christian Manable, Président, and Marc Pellan, Directeur de la Culture. At the Historial itself, thanks are due to Pierre Linéatte, Président, Historial de la Grande Guerre; Marie-Pascale Prévost-Bault, Conservateur en chef; Hervé François, Directeur; and the following staff members: Christine Cazé (a very large vote of thanks); Frederick Hadley; Catherine Mouquet; Séverine Lavallard. In addition, Yazid Medmoun, was of essential help in providing us with photographs of the Historial's unique collection, visible in the illustrations selected for this three-volume history.

This transnational account of the history of the Great War was assembled through an editorial board composed of the members of the Comité directeur of the Research Centre of the Historial. As editor-in-chief of this project, I simply could not have even begun the task of creating this history without being part of a collective of historians with whom I have worked for more than two decades. Their shared vision is at the heart of these three volumes, and it is to these people and numerous other colleagues in the field of Great War studies working alongside us that the deepest vote of

thanks is due. May I add a special note of gratitude for Rebecca Wheatley for her help in preparing the maps we have used?

Our work took the following form. After the table of contents was set, and authors' assignments distributed, each section of the book was placed in the hands of section editors, who were responsible for the development and completion of individual chapters and bibliographical essays for each chapter in their sections. The chapters they approved were sent to the editorial board as a whole, and I, as editor-in-chief, ensured their completeness, and the compatibility of their style and approach with our global and transnational objective. Helen McPhail and Harvey Mendelsohn did yeoman's work and more in translating French and German draft chapters into English, respectively. An essential part of the coordination of this vast project rested on the shoulders of Caroline Fontaine, Director of the International Research Centre of the Historial de la Grande Guerre at Péronne. For any errors that still remain, I take full responsibility.

Introduction to Volume III

Jay Winter

The third volume of the Cambridge History of the First World War explores the role of civil society in the conflict. By ‘civil society’ we mean those institutions and practices outside the state through which the war effort was waged. We include the market and the family as fundamental elements within civil society, and emphasise the role of family and gender in the waging of war.

The damage the war inflicted on civil society was staggering. There were not only the toll of casualties and the complex efforts of medical authorities to save lives, limit suffering and serve the state, but other forms of damage as well – internment, incarceration, either as prisoners of war or as enemy aliens, the targeting of minorities and what Peter Gatrell terms ‘refugeedom’. All took their toll in war. And it was within families and on anonymous streets, with shades drawn down, that the crippled in mind and body were cared for during and after the war. In most respects, the state was not the source of recovery, when recovery was possible; individuals, families and associations of all kinds did that job, just as those family members of war-wounded men and women still do it today.

An essential part of this story is cultural. How contemporaries understood the violent world in which they lived framed what they did. Their understanding was mediated by many art forms – painting, sculpture, music, poetry, prose, film – and by many practices of faith, commemoration and mourning which continued long after the Armistice. All are traced in this volume.

We saw in Volumes I and II that the killing did not end in 1918; neither did the pain the disabled suffered or the widows and orphans had to live with. It is important to recognise the hidden injuries of war in all post-war societies, and to appreciate to what extent the shadow of war has extended for generations after the Armistice. While we attempt an accounting of the

costs of the war, human, material, political and cultural, we recognise that no one can fully establish the true losses of war – the truncated lives and hopes, the lost potential, the lives not lived and contributions to well-being foregone. Here too we encounter a global story, transcending national boundaries.

Perhaps one of the true mysteries of the war was the resilience of millions of men and women during and after a conflict of unprecedented violence and savagery; the stubborn survival of irrational kindness and of generosity of spirit amidst the bitterness of the First World War. Here too, the history of civil society is essential in helping to bring us into the heart of war, with all its contradictions and enduring legacies.

Part I Private Life

Introduction to Part I

Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Jay Winter This section of the book considers the multiple ways in which families adjusted to the challenges of war. The mobilisation of 70 million men separated married couples in an unprecedented way all over the world. How marriages survived, and how children and the elderly coped with the fragmentation of family life, are critical questions here, and ones which are now central to our understanding of the lingering effects of the Great War.

Focusing on family history shows the transnational character of the war in numerous ways. The pressures of mobilisation, of sustaining a family and a family farm or business, of looking after the wounded and the ill, transcended national boundaries. So did the epistolary outpourings among both soldiers and their loved ones. The significance of the letters shared between fathers and children may even have established a new medium for the expression of love within family life. Gendered distinctions as to the right degree of repression of sentiment survived the war, but they were also changed during it and by it. The history of emotion is embedded in these stories. They are essential to the history of war, and given the vast dispersal of soldiers during the conflict, that history straddled the globe.

These chapters show the development of the cultural history of war over the last twenty years, and present material of vital importance to students of the national history of each combatant country. More is to be learned about the adaptations of families in different theatres of military operations, particularly in the Ottoman Empire, and on the Eastern Front, but the framework of analysis provided here is ripe for exploitation in future work in this field.

1 The couple

Martha Hanna In August 1914 Maurice Masson had no choice but to abandon his academic post in Switzerland, return to France, and report for duty. As he made his way to the front he observed his compatriots, some young and enthusiastic, but many more sombre and heartsick. It seemed, he thought, as if ‘the better part of their hearts remain at home’.¹ Masson was an exceptional man in many regards, not least his ability to complete a two-volume dissertation in the trenches. But in one important respect he resembled the unsophisticated rural soldiers who went to war while their hearts remained at home. He too was married. Conscription in France and across Europe guaranteed that married men would be a significant presence in all continental armies. In France, upwards of 50 per cent of all men in uniform were married, as were at least one-third (and quite probably more) of all German and Italian soldiers: in Bavaria, where German archival records are the most complete, married men accounted for more than half of all conscripts. At least 40 per cent of all men who served in the army of the Habsburg Empire were married. The military service of married men in Austria was so commonplace that ‘of the 25,616 Viennese men who had died in service between 1914 and 1918, about 70 per cent were married’.² Even in Russia, where conscription reforms enacted in 1912 had exempted from military service ‘the only son or sole able-bodied male worker of a household’, married men still served in significant numbers: by 1916, 44 per cent of all peasant households in Moscow province had seen all their male workers – including, presumably, many married men – drafted into military service.³ Indeed, there were so many married men in the Russian army that their wives, dubbed *soldatki*, acquired a moral authority and political force of revolutionary consequence.⁴

In Britain and its Dominions there was no conscription to compel men, married or single, to serve from the very beginning of the war, and the proportion of married men in the armed forces dropped accordingly.

Although the state did not actively discourage married men from volunteering, the moral imperative to serve – so pressing and unambiguous

for single men – was much more muted. A married man, it was well understood, had obligations to his family as legitimate and immediate as those to King and Country. Nonetheless, married men were by no means absent from the rolls of the British, Canadian, or (to a lesser degree) Australian forces. In Britain, where military service became compulsory only in 1916, married men were evident in the ranks from 1914 onwards – when more than half a million wives were in receipt of state-paid separation allowances – and in ever more substantial numbers as the war progressed: more than a million by July 1916 and in excess of 1.5 million by 1918.⁵ Married men in the far-flung settler colonies of the British Empire also bade farewell to their wives, parents and families and travelled great distances to defend the Empire. A sense of loyalty to the mother country, an economic downturn in 1913–14 that left many men in Canada looking for steady employment, and a desire to prove deserving of their wives’ esteem: all motivated married men in the Empire to enlist. In Canada, where conscription went into effect only in 1917 and ultimately sent few conscripts overseas, almost one-fourth of all men who served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force were married. By contrast, married men represented only 16 per cent of the men serving in the Australian Imperial Force, which remained for the duration of the war untouched by conscription and was predominantly an army of young men.⁶

It is clear, therefore, that the Great War was fought not only by the callow lads newly out of school whose post-war memoirs of alienation and anger towards civilian society have so powerfully influenced popular memory.

Yet the married soldier of the Great War has all but disappeared from historical memory. His experiences, the connections he retained with home, and the unique anxieties he and his wife had to contend with as a married couple separated by combat remain under-examined facets of the war. By turning our attention to the experience of married couples in wartime, we can explore how husbands and wives worked to bridge the physical and existential gap that separated combatants from civilians; how the war prompted temporary (and sometimes permanent) changes in the character of married life; and how couples confronted, overcame and sometimes fell victim to the stresses associated with long-distance marriage and the anxieties of war.

To speak of 'the couple' is, of course, to oversimplify: every married soldier went to war with a kitbag of affections (and afflictions) unique to himself. Recently married couples, like Paul and Marie Pireaud, were in the first throes of infatuation.⁷ Other couples had been married for several years when war broke out. Masson had married in 1906 and he and his wife, the daughter of a prominent French scientist, remained united by their religious faith, their deep love, and an unwavering commitment to the life of the mind. Although many other marriages of long-standing had been tested by economic uncertainty and everyday disagreements, they too remained grounded in affection and empathy. Frank Maheux, who scraped together a living as a lumberjack in the backwoods of Quebec, enlisted in 1914 (without telling his wife), not to escape an unhappy family life but to provide a more regular income for his wife and five children. During eight years of married life George and Margaret Ormsby had also seen their share of economic insecurity and more than the occasional clash of two strong wills, but their marriage had been cemented by the births of two much-loved children. Herbert Oates, a skilled labourer from Leeds whose oldest child had been born ten years before the war, was not eager to enlist nor enamoured of military life when conscripted in 1916, but his misspelled letters reveal a great affection for his wife and four children. The more literate letters of Wilfrid Cove, a devoted family man who worked as a bank clerk in London, reveal a similarly happy home life.

These and many other couples whose wartime correspondence has survived were sustained by mutual affection; others, no doubt, welcomed wartime separation as a respite from a marriage marred by misery, mutual recrimination and physical abuse. It is not clear why the Viennese woman who murdered her husband, a military reservist, in 1915 did so, but the deed itself suggests something less than a happy marriage.⁸

If not all couples were happily married, some were not married at all. Few were of the distinguished social status of André Kahn, a French lawyer who scandalised his family by living with a divorcée, for common-law unions were more frequent in the urban working classes than in the ranks of the bourgeoisie. Nonetheless, the war brought to light many 'irregular' unions because military service forced the state to acknowledge, in ways that it had previously ignored, the legitimate needs and interests of common-law couples. It became customary for the state to provide

separation allowances to the wives and families of men who enlisted, regardless of the legal status of their union. This was true in France, Germany and Italy, where conscription compelled men to leave their families to fend for themselves; and in Britain and Canada, where men were reluctant to volunteer if their families would be left in penury. In France, the state encouraged couples who had lived together before the war in a *union libre* to regularise their situation, if need be through a ‘marriage by proxy’: as Clémentine Vidal-Naquet has shown, a law introduced in 1915 that allowed couples to marry while the fiancé served at the front made it possible for engaged couples, whose weddings had been postponed by the outbreak of war, and common-law couples to marry and thus secure the pension benefits that would accrue to widows and orphans in the event of the soldier’s death.⁹ In Germany, unmarried mothers of children whose father died in the war could petition the state to be officially recognised as ‘Frau’ rather than ‘Fräulein’, thus freeing themselves and their children of the stigma of illegitimacy. Catherine Dollard has demonstrated that petitions of this sort were more likely to find a sympathetic reception during the war than in previous years, when the state had been reluctant to ‘reward’ women for their irregular unions.¹⁰ Nonetheless, official recognition of common-law unions was by no means uncontroversial: in 1917, the virtuous matrons of the Montreal Patriotic Fund objected to the disbursement of separation allowances to the unmarried ‘wives’ of soldiers serving in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. They feared that such provisions ‘cast a slur on the high estate of matrimony and on all legal wives, which slur is not to be borne without protest’ .¹¹

Wives, legal and otherwise, looked on with trepidation as their menfolk departed for war. The challenges that confronted these young women were daunting; the questions that plagued them, dispiriting. How would the family support itself? Could the family business remain afloat? How would children be reared in a household lacking a father’s stern, but affectionate, presence? And when, if at all, would the couple be reunited? These questions – economic, familial and existential – dominated the daily thoughts of wartime couples and constituted the recurring themes of their correspondence. Letter-writing, the invisible thread that bound together the home front and the military front of every combatant nation, was an

enterprise essential to the well-being of all wartime families: parents and sons, sisters and brothers, husbands and wives all maintained contact with one another through regular (and, in the case of many married couples, daily) correspondence. In the letters exchanged between husbands and wives we see an intense desire on the part of many (but not all) married soldiers to share with their wives descriptions of life at the front that paid attention to both the tedium of military life and its intermittent terror.¹² Beyond their desire to convey to their wives something meaningful about their existence in uniform, married soldiers also hoped that correspondence would allow them to remain connected to the humdrum realities of home life. As Jessica Meyer has observed of British soldiers, ‘men found spaces in which they could present themselves to their families not only as soldiers, through their descriptions of war experiences, but also as domestic men through their continuing involvement with domestic concerns’.¹³ They worried about the financial well-being of their families and the health of their wives and children. They discussed educational plans for young children and medical prognoses for ailing infants. They fretted that their wives were being worn down by the exigencies of wartime life on the home front. And they thought about sex. Correspondence during the Great War thus constituted the means by which husbands and wives worked to maintain the essential elements of married life: economic support, emotional compassion and sexual intimacy.

The ideal was to write every day, and for British, French and German couples, who could usually count on a letter being delivered within three days, the regularity of correspondence and the (reasonable) reliability of delivery allowed them to establish in their daily exchanges a conversational tone that replicated, albeit imperfectly, the intimacy of pre-war married life. A shared commitment to write every day (or, in some instances, every other day) was not, however, always easy to honour. When soldiers found themselves in the heat of battle, when military postal stations were arbitrarily closed, when an imminent offensive cancelled all mail delivery, husbands were hard pressed to keep their promise of a letter every day. When infants were teething, when the often futile search for food occupied most of a woman’s waking hours (as became the reality in Germany and Austria in the last years of the war), when illness, fatigue and depression were ever present, wives, too, struggled to maintain the routine of daily

correspondence. Husbands, fearful that they had been forgotten, occasionally took umbrage when their wives failed to write every day.¹⁴

Couples from the colonies contended with these challenges and more. Mail was dispatched to Canada only twice a week and during the height of German submarine warfare ships sailing the Atlantic were always at risk.

Under ideal circumstances, a letter sent from (or to) Canada would be delivered in two weeks, but circumstances were rarely ideal and it was usual for a letter to take three weeks or more to reach its destination. Thus Canadian couples never enjoyed the luxury of quick and conversational exchange. A soldier's question posed in one letter – about the health of a sick child or the receipt of separation allowances – would not receive a reassuring answer for a month or more. And a wife's anxiety about her husband's very existence often persisted for weeks on end: during the last stages of the Battle of the Somme, when Sgt Frank Maheux's Canadian company suffered severe losses, his wife went for four weeks without word from him.¹⁵

That husbands and wives would write to each other regularly was a given. What they would write about, however, depended on their ability and willingness to ignore the strictures and intrusion of censorship; their capacity to describe honestly the circumstances, whether military or domestic, that confronted them; and the ease with which they could confide their most intimate desires. Married couples, like all wartime correspondents, had to come to terms with military censorship, and although its severity varied significantly by nation and within each army by rank, husbands and wives learned to adjust the content of their correspondence to suit or to evade the censors. For some married soldiers the presence of the censor offered a convenient excuse for not talking about the war. When Herbert Oates, a working man from Leeds whose phonetic spelling betrayed only a rudimentary education, arrived in France in November 1916, he warned his wife that his letters would always be read before being sent home: 'has we have to post them open and they read them before they leave here so we cant put mutch in'.¹⁶ Other soldiers, uncomfortable with or unaccustomed to emotional expression, also found refuge in appeals to the intrusive presence of the censors. George Ormsby, who was more flirtatious than ardent in his letters home, excused his emotional reticence on the grounds that his letters had to be read by his

commanding officer: 'No doubt all my letters must seem cold and formal but you will understand that every letter has to be censored by own officers [sic] and of course one cannot be too loving under the circumstances.'¹⁷

Censorship was an annoyance, sometimes a convenient excuse, but rarely an absolute impediment to marital communication. This was evident both in the descriptions of combat that married men, often at the urging of their wives, sent home, and in their erotic musings: the censors, it seems, were no match for either Eros or Thanatos. In the French army, where censors reviewed only a random sample of the letters generated in any given regiment, men of all ranks systematically ignored the censors and scorned their intrusive presence. The most literate among them hoped that their letters, often supplemented with trench diaries sent home for safe-keeping, would make it possible for their wives to absorb, however vicariously, the sights, smells and sounds of the front. Henri Barbusse used his trench diary as an aide-memoire when writing his letters home, and subsequently when composing *Le feu*. Benjamin Simonet also kept a trench diary, which he hoped his children would read in later years to understand the nature of the war, while simultaneously sending his wife letters that hid little, if anything, of his anguish and increasing misery. He confessed that much though he would have liked to hide the worst of the war from her, it seemed 'better that I can share with you as best I can my interior life. You are, thus, more unified with my existence and you understand better what we are suffering.'¹⁸ Months before his death at Verdun, Maurice Masson invited his wife to join him, if only in her imagination, as he made his way through his trenches: 'I would like during the peaceful hours of the night to take you with me on my rounds. I see you stopping with me near to the sentries. I think that you would be unable to speak to them but that you would have to hold yourself back from embracing them.'¹⁹

The urge to describe the Western Front and render its alien landscape intelligible to women at home was not unique, however, to literary, educated Frenchmen. Like Paul Pireaud, a French peasant with perhaps six years of schooling who told his beloved Marie of craters at Verdun deep enough to hold fifteen horses, Wilfrid Cove described a battlefield in terms that would, he hoped, make sense to his suburban English wife. He wrote of water-logged shell craters 'big enough to hold a couple of large motor omnibuses'.²⁰ A similar impulse prompted Lawrence Rogers, a struggling

farmer from the Eastern Townships of Quebec. Married with two children when he enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915, Rogers wanted to capture as best he could the visual reality of a front-line battlefield. In April 1917 he wrote: 'Dear May . . . I wish you could see a modern battle field that is from a safe distance it is just one mass of holes large and small like mine craters . . . the trenches are all flattened out and dug outs blown in and it is amazing how quickly everything is cleared up the wounded sent out and the dead buried.'²¹

Rendering in words the reality of the Western Front was, of course, an often grisly task, and many men were reluctant to burden their wives with its most unsettling scenes. Nonetheless, a kind of pained compassion often compelled them to write forthrightly about their life at the front. The omnipresence of death persuaded them of the need to prepare their wives for the possibility of their own death. As Simonet explained, he 'hid nothing from [his wife]' because he believed that 'certainty is preferable to doubt'.²² And honesty, many wives insisted, was better than dissimulation. Several soldiers wrote more frankly than they thought prudent because their wives insisted upon it; Masson's wife was by no means the only young woman who wanted to share a husband's experiences 'en toute vérité'. Masson complied (with some moments of hesitation), reminding his wife, 'You must see that I tell you everything very exactly.'²³ Léa Mauny, a rural French schoolteacher, also wished to know precisely what her husband's circumstances were: 'I much prefer to be informed about everything that is happening to you. Danger must always be looked straight in the face. What do you do in the trenches, night and day?'²⁴ And Marie Pireaud urged Paul to tell her the unvarnished truth. Thus when his battery was engaged in fierce battle at Verdun, she wrote: 'How your letters worry me how I weep each time that I read over these letters but listen I prefer to know the complete truth.' His reservations notwithstanding, Paul justified a stark description of shell-fire's gory effects by reminding Marie: 'I know that you have always told me to tell you the truth.'²⁵

Haunted by the multitudinous horrors of war many a soldier focused on one omnipresent image: the ubiquitous, unsettling presence of countless unburied bodies. In mid March 1915, while serving in the Champagne region, Simonet noted:

We are walking on top of dead bodies, parapets have been made out of cadavers on which we rest; and in front of the parapets, just as in the surrounding fields, there are piles of dead bodies. I wonder how, when the first sunny days arrive, we will be able to live and breathe. I'm sure that epidemics will force us and them to abandon these charnel houses.²⁶

Masson confided that the front-line trench that his company occupied in June 1915 was 'nothing but a charnel house, where the walls, the parapets, and the battlements are formed with human flesh. One can still see, here and there, a pitiful foot sticking out, a back smoothed out in a section of the wall.' Perhaps only a poetic French soldier would think, as Masson did, of the Western Front as a 'vineyard of death',²⁷ but British and Canadian soldiers were also awed by the macabre architecture of the front lines. Neither Rowland Feilding nor Agar Adamson, battalion commanders in British and Canadian regiments, respectively, had the literary skill that made Masson's letters so memorable, but they too shared with their wives unnerving accounts of the war's brutal effects. Like Masson, Feilding observed that 'the fire-trench itself is more or less a graveyard. In one part, particularly, it is lined with tin discs with numbers on them, indicating where soldiers have been buried in the parapet; and, wherever you dig, you are liable to come upon these poor remains. It is not even necessary to dig, for they outcrop in places.'²⁸ Adamson, who in 1917 commanded the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry regiment, was equally forthcoming in his letters to his wife. He wrote of the stinging, rasping effects of gas shells, of shell-shocked soldiers physically restrained by their comrades, of body parts extruding from the walls of trenches, and of men obliterated by shell-fire: 'One unlucky shell hit a dug out last night (5 p.m.) blowing to pieces four of our most valuable snipers. We could not find enough of those poor fellows to put in a handkerchief.'²⁹

As commanding officers, Feilding and Adamson were at greater liberty to write about the most awful aspects of the war. Censorship compelled enlisted men in the Canadian and British Expeditionary Forces to be more circumspect, or so they believed. There were, however, occasions that compelled honest communication, the censors' close scrutiny notwithstanding.

For the men of the CEF the Battle of Mount Sorrel was one such occasion. The battle opened on 2 June 1916 with an intensity that stunned even the most hardened front-line veterans. The usually taciturn George Ormsby wrote of its relentless barrage, and Lawrence Rogers, recuperating in London, confessed that he felt lucky to have emerged unscathed:

Thank God I came through with a whole skin, but there was a time when I did not think there would be one man left . . . The ground just shook like a jelly and the explosions were so heavy at times that I was lifted right off the ground . . . I went into the front line with 75 men and two officers and there was only one officer and twelve of us left to march out, of course they were not all killed some were wounded some shell shocked.³⁰

But Rogers's description of Mount Sorrel pales in comparison with that of Frank Maheux, whose written English was inflected with the syntax and phonetic accent of French Canada:

it is a fright, it is like a butchery, my dear wife, it is not war, their no name for it, the night before I was defending a Bridge with 5 mens, the Germans throw us 10 or 11 big trench mortars killed 3 of my camarades, and wounded another one on the leg . . . and the worse dear wife it was all them corpses around us, and we could'n beried them on a/c [sic] the Germans had killed every one of us . . . they was hands feets mens cut in pieces, by them big trench mortars . . . I see poor fellows legs cut off, trying to pull themselves to some place of shelter against the shells, but only to die I saw to much Angelique.³¹

How Angelique Maheux must have trembled as she read these words and reflected on the horrors her husband confronted 'somewhere in Belgium' .

Letters such as these drew soldiers' wives closer to the front by allowing them to imagine both the routines and real dangers of military life. But insofar as wartime correspondence also offered front-line soldiers the opportunity to occupy (at least imaginatively) their customary place at home, it also helped them preserve in many ways their civilian identities as

husbands, fathers, and lovers. Fathers could, and did, visualise their children at play or struggling with homework, their babies convulsed with colic or sweetly sleeping. Husbands could, and did, follow in their mind's eye their wives as they occupied themselves with the familiar tasks of domestic life. Often these thoughts were profoundly comforting: when Benjamin Simonet wrote home, he thought of himself as being physically removed from the hellish conditions that surrounded him at the front and 'in full communion' with his wife and four children in the south of France.³² Alois Deuringer, a German peasant, confided to his wife: 'My thoughts are always with you my dear ones. While being on guard during the night I think of you being safe at home, during the day I think of you working.'³³ Life on the home front was not always idyllic, however, and as the war dragged on and economic conditions deteriorated, noticeably for all combatant nations and disastrously in Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, anxieties about the well-being of families at home intensified.

Married couples struggled, with varying degrees of success, to address the economic challenges wrought by insufficient manpower, inflation and food shortages. Conditions were especially dire in Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Maureen Healy describes the desperate plight of an Austrian war widow who in 1917 threatened to kill herself and her two children because she could no longer put enough food on the table to support them.³⁴ And Tara Zahra writes of a young Czech girl who begged her father to desert: 'We are here alone without our father, and perhaps we will soon be without a mother as well, as our mother doesn't want to and cannot support us . . . Every day she goes without breakfast, and at lunch we have only black coffee. At night she comes home totally exhausted and cries from hunger, and we cry with her.'³⁵ A similarly afflicted peasant woman in a small German village complained to her husband: 'They take the breadwinner away from the children and let them starve to death, they are crying for bread the whole day long . . . I have to stand in the street all day long and wait for hours until I get a few things to eat.'³⁶ Even affluent war wives who sent servants to procure their meals at the communal kitchens that emerged in the last years of the war suffered economic strain.

Christl Wolf, a recent bride and new mother, was accustomed to a comfortable bourgeois life in Vienna. By January 1918, however, she too was feeling the bitter pinch of chronic food shortages. As she lamented in a

letter to her husband: ‘as far as the government is concerned we could all starve to death. I am really very angry at this whole soldiers’ economy . . .

You haven’t been able to get meat in Vienna for a fortnight, except surreptitiously, of course.’³⁷ Letters of this type were so common in Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire that the authorities disparaged them as *Jammerbriefe* (moaning letters).³⁸

The Western Allied nations were less oppressed by economic misery than Germany, Austria and Russia. Prices increased, but not prohibitively; food grew scarce, but starvation never threatened families in Britain, France or Canada as it did in Germany and Austria. Nonetheless, economic stress bore down on husbands and wives, punctuating their correspondence with oft-repeated laments. Whether affluent or impoverished, the front-line soldier feared that the war was forcing his wife and children to confront a future of penury. Separation allowances certainly helped to ease the financial hardship caused by a husband’s absence, but bureaucratic red tape often delayed payments, infuriating men like Frank Maheux who had enlisted in the hope of securing his family’s well-being. His one persistent hope was that Angeline would have a bountiful potato crop, adequate each year to see the family through the hard Canadian winter. He was not the only man of modest circumstances to fret about his family’s food supply.

From the time he arrived in France, Herbert Oates worried about how Beatie would cope: he heard that ‘flower as gone up again well I do not now what price it is going to get to before this war is over but I hope it will not be long’. By Christmas 1916 he confessed: ‘you ask me if I get enough to eat well sometimes we do and sometimes we don’t but we have to make the best of it. so long as you and Mammie and Lads get enough . . .’ He was so concerned about the family’s finances that he implored Beatie ‘to see about Willie leaving School then Arthur might get Willie job then you will be all right’.³⁹

The Cove family was more comfortably situated than Beatie Oates and her boys. But middle-class respectability required that Ethel keep an attentive eye on the bank balance. She reassured Wilfrid that she was doing her best to ‘keep the right side of the ledger’ but recognised that she could not afford to be extravagant. In a nation where in 1914 the average labourer had earned approximately £1 a week, the Coves were far from indigent, but their definition of affluence was modest indeed. Ethel reported that ‘There

seemed such a lot in the Bank blce. £18 odd (Feb 1)! It seemed such wealth. But it's dwindled now to £3 odd after paying rates *etc.* But it will soon pick up again.'⁴⁰ She was, however, a woman of generous instincts who insisted on sending Wilfrid packages filled with toothpaste, condensed milk and home-made sausage rolls, and helping her mother buy coal in the unusually cold winter of 1916–17: 'Had an unhappy letter from Mum yesterday . . . Mum can't keep warm (her hands are bad) and Poppy buys coal by the 1d or 2d worth. Would we girls give 6d weekly I've sent Mum 2/6 as it's dreadful to think of one of your own hungry and cold this weather.'⁴¹

What would Ethel Cove have made of Mary Corfield, who in 1917 contemplated taking a paying job because it seemed impossible to live on less than £400 a year? Such affluence was well beyond her ken. Yet Mary Corfield, like other women of the English upper-middle class also felt the pinch of wartime austerity, and money woes made for many a fraught exchange with her husband. In December 1915, Corfield offered advice on how Mary should make ends meet: 'I should pay your dress maker the nurse and the rent as soon as poss [sic]: and then pay Mrs. L at Xmas out of Mother's allowance. I enclose two small cheques which will pay the rent. Surely your list is practically all the bills we have . . . The coal and gas can wait till next month.'⁴² Whatever economies Mary was able to make were only temporary, for a year later she and her husband were once again at loggerheads over the family budget. Having contemplated the dreary prospect of making do on only £350 per year, and having urged Mary to see what she could do to 'save a bit', Corfield concluded: 'Well enough of this topic we discuss it so often it only makes us miserable and never has the slightest result.'⁴³

Money problems were not the only subject of anxiety. Married men knew that their wives were often overworked. Paul Pireaud feared that when Marie was in the last months of her pregnancy she ran the risk of a premature delivery because she, like many peasant women across Europe, had to work long hours in the fields. Frank Maheux was outraged that Angeline had no help from the men in their small town when it came time to chop the winter wood supply. And George Ormsby urged Maggie to give up the ranch they owned in the interior of British Columbia because it was too much for her to manage on her own.⁴⁴ To ease the burdens of overwork and oppressive anxiety that beset married women on the home front, their

husbands encouraged them to move in with parents, in-laws or other war wives. It is clear that these arrangements, although sometimes fraught with the usual tensions of a multi-generational household, offered a war wife real benefits. Childcare and domestic chores could be shared, finances pooled, and loneliness eased. Maggie Ormsby abandoned the ranch, moved to the nearest town of appreciable size and shared a house with another war wife. In the winter she relocated with her two children to Vancouver where she lived with her parents. May Rogers found herself in a similar situation in rural Quebec. She spent the winter of 1915–16 on the farm (with another woman sharing the house for company) and then moved in the fall of 1916 to Montreal, where she would be closer to but not under the same roof as her rather overbearing father. Lawrence Rogers, having just survived the final stages of the Battle of the Somme, was relieved to know that his wife and children would be well cared-for during the coming winter, but he feared for the safety of his small-town children: ‘Have the children any car tracks to cross on their way to school? I hope not as I am terribly afraid of street cars.’⁴⁵

War wives did not need to face the rigours of a Canadian winter to appreciate the advantages of a blended household. Many women in France also moved home or temporarily shared quarters with their in-laws or parents. As Peggy Bette has discovered, one-third of the war widows in Lyon whose cases she has examined had moved during the war to live with parents, siblings or in-laws. Some women went far afield, like the pregnant Mme Bonneaud who relocated from Lyon to the family home in Brest; others moved only a few streets away.⁴⁶ Beatie Oates decided, and her husband agreed, that however crowded the family home would be when occupied by four children and three adults it was to everyone’s advantage to have her parents live with them.⁴⁷ Many of these arrangements were satisfactory. Some were tense and difficult. By 1917, Mary Corfield and her two children were living with her mother and sisters, who seemed to treat her like a maid servant.⁴⁸

Although Frederick Corfield wished that Mary could be a better manager of the household budget, there was one economy he would not countenance. When he came home on leave, he expected Mary to meet him in London where they would spend a day or two at a suitably refined hotel. Leave was no time for penny-pinching. In fact, leave was an occasion so central to the

married soldier's wartime service that it figured in the correspondence of soldiers of all ranks and nations. In Germany, the Prussian War Ministry noted as early as October 1915 how eager married men were to return home for a leave that would give them physical rest and a much desired reunion with their loved ones.⁴⁹ French troops longed for leave with such a passion that the military censors could not help but take notice; and in 1917, when indiscipline swept the French ranks, the implementation of a more liberal (and more fairly administered) leave roster was central to the soldiers' demands. By contrast, married men in the Canadian Expeditionary Force found the promise of leave a source of constant frustration. Because few were eligible for home leave even on compassionate grounds,⁵⁰ Canadian soldiers took their leave in Britain or behind the lines in France. This had its attractions, of course, for the Canadian soldiers who had relations in Blighty, or for the hard-drinking and womanising men who enjoyed themselves so lustily in Paris that subsequent leaves there were temporarily suspended.⁵¹ But what married Canadian soldiers really wanted and almost never enjoyed was a leave that would allow them to go home. George Ormsby probably spoke for many of his companions when he said: 'With us Canadians England is not home, simply a makeshift and although people are very kind and nice yet it is different to home.'⁵²

Leave held out many promises. It offered rest to the overly tired and respite from the relentless noise of the guns. Mathieu Escande, a rural conscript from the south-west of France, noted in his journal that it could refresh the soul. In 1917 leave allowed him a brief escape from the 'métier militaire' and he returned to service rejuvenated by contact with his family: 'I leave happy to have seen my family and especially to have left them in good health.'⁵³ Others, however, were struck by the bittersweet quality of leave. Reunion filled them with joy; departure left them despondent. For Paul Pireaud it was always heart-breaking to bid farewell to his family and return to the horrors and hardships of life in uniform. While at home he had worked in the fields, taken his son on walks down country lanes, and made love to his wife. Sexual reunion was, not surprisingly, the most ardently anticipated aspect of home leave and, more surprisingly, a topic of frequent discussion in the wartime correspondence of husbands and wives. French soldiers and their wives resented the introduction of more rigorous censorship in late 1916 because it exposed their most intimate secrets to the

prurient gaze of strangers. But censorship did not stop the conversation: French soldiers and their wives ignored the censors and continued to write about the anticipated joys of leave.⁵⁴ British soldiers, whose letters were read by junior officers in their own company, were more reticent and did not write explicitly about what they really expected to do while home on leave. Not so for their commanding officers whose unpublished correspondence is noteworthy for its often intense, undisguised and erotic passion.

Hugh Rawson had wooed his beguiling Mary from afar, gradually overcoming her parents' objections to a wartime engagement and marriage. His letters from 1915 to their marriage in 1917 reveal an unapologetic longing to be with her. Mary, in turn, reciprocated his passion in letters that often left him emotionally fulfilled and erotically aroused. In October 1915 he confessed: 'You mustn't talk about kissing in your letters as I really can't sleep after it, think of you all the time.'⁵⁵ Six months later, he teasingly upbraided her again: 'I am afraid you are becoming a very naughty little girl, your last letter really made me want you very badly.'⁵⁶ And so it continued through the autumn of 1916, by which time he had resolved that they should 'get married on the quiet. I don't feel like having leave and then coming out again without you belonging to me entirely.'⁵⁷ Married in 1917, their honeymoon seemed entirely satisfactory, even though the morning sickness that quickly followed was more than a little irksome and the physical separation that war required even more so. Hugh hoped that fresh air and exercise would help his bride feel better; he could not recommend anything to take the edge off marital loneliness: 'You can't hate sleeping alone more than I do, but isn't awful [sic] having no one to cuddle . . . Well darling I do miss you terribly and get so fed up and short tempered over things, am afraid other people get it in the neck occasionally on your account.'⁵⁸

The sexual excitement evident in the correspondence of Mary and Hugh Rawson was not the exclusive privilege of newlyweds. Frederick and Mary Corfield had married in 1907 and both marked their thirtieth birthdays in the first year of the war. In their own minds they were well past the first flush of youth. And yet they were pleasantly surprised to discover that passion persisted. Indeed, sexual fantasy, combined with sexual frustration, punctuated their correspondence for the duration of the war. Always

calculating when his next leave would come due, he and Mary (like Paul and Marie Pireaud) devoted considerable time to determining when her period (referred to obliquely as ‘the Captain’ and sometimes as the ‘sergeant’) was likely to interfere with such plans.⁵⁹ In August 1917, Corfield observed:

So you have been thinking a good bit of your man again at nights Darling, I read your letter in bed last night and when I got to the last sentence it made something begin to move and want! What a pity we can't always be together, I love to think you do like loving, I often used to think you didn't and only tried to please me, but now I know differently and it will stop many little squabbles and disappointments which lead to unhappiness, I just want my woman always.⁶⁰

If enforced and prolonged absence provoked sexual frustration, did it also give rise to sexual infidelity? This, of course, emerged as a recurring theme in war literature, exemplified by the bitter tale of betrayal central to the closing chapters of Roland Dorgelès's *Les croix de bois*. Sulphart, having survived the war, received a letter from his concierge, alerting him to the fact that ‘his wife had gone off with a Belgian, taking all the furniture with her’.⁶¹ The unfaithful wife – a gendered symbol of civilian indifference to and betrayal of the front-line soldier – certainly did exist. Few saw their (alleged) infidelity become the stuff of headlines and national chatter, as was the case in September 1917 when Lt Douglas Malcolm stood trial at the Old Bailey for having killed the odious foreigner who had threatened the honour of his young, lovely (and, one suspects, desperately unhappy) English wife. In a much-talked-about trial Malcolm secured the sympathy of the British newspaper-reading public and acquittal at the hands of an equally sympathetic jury of his peers.⁶² Malcolm believed, against all odds, in the innocence of his wife; Hamilton Gault, by contrast, suspected the worst of his once beloved wife. Fearing that she was having an affair with a fellow officer, Gault sued for legal separation. Marguerite counter-sued, and left the Montreal courtroom with a support order that gave her \$1,400 a month and \$5,000 in court costs.⁶³ Without doubt, some couples suffered the strains of war in most unfortunate ways.

The infidelity of wives was deemed a grave moral offence against husbands risking life and limb on the front lines and, more generally, against the nation itself. Because women who betrayed their husbands were judged undeserving of the separation allowances provided to war wives, the state took pains to investigate charges of wifely infidelity. Susan Pedersen has demonstrated that this was a task the British government did not shirk: between 1916 (when the state took over responsibility for the payment of separation allowances) and 1920 it investigated 41,836 cases of alleged misconduct. Only 13,418 women (less than 1 per cent of all women in receipt of separation allowances) were struck from the rolls.⁶⁴ Some war wives did betray their husbands, as residents of small-town Ontario, rural France, and southern Germany could (and did) attest, but female infidelity was not as endemic as social commentators fearing the end of civilisation as they knew it contended.⁶⁵ And if husbands worried about what their wives were up to in their absence, wives had their own moments of apprehension too. When May Rogers feared that her husband might have sought ‘consolation while in Rest Billets’, he assured her ‘I am not affraid to tell you anything I have done so far.’⁶⁶ Paul Pireaud likewise denied any interest in comely Italian girls. These men, and others in uniform, could not say the same, however, for some of their colleagues.

Perhaps few soldiers were as devoted to the principle of marriage – if not the practice of monogamy – as Douglas Palmer, a corporal who bade farewell to his wife in Canada, wed another in Scotland and, rumour had it, a third in England. His wife, who knew nothing of these marital adventures until Palmer returned to Canada accompanied by his Scottish wife, considered herself ‘cruelly wronged’.⁶⁷ Other wives might have learned of their husbands’ indiscretions in a more direct manner: when a soldier in the British or Canadian Expeditionary Forces contracted a venereal disease and had to seek treatment in a military hospital he forfeited his family’s right to a separation allowance for the duration of his hospitalisation. Nonetheless it is as difficult to determine how many married men engaged in extra-marital sexual activity during the war as to know with any certainty how many of their wives did so. Gossip and inflammatory press reports about the prevalence of venereal disease in the ranks suggested national epidemics of infidelity. The dramatic and tragic denouements of some transgressions did so too: one British major, learning that his wife had been informed that he

had contracted a venereal disease, chose to commit suicide rather than return home.⁶⁸ Yet rates of venereal infection, a serious concern for military commanders determined to keep men healthy enough to serve (and die) in the front lines, suggest that the most apocalyptic estimates of imminent venereal disaster were vastly overblown. Jean-Yves LeNaour notes that approximately 8 per cent of all French soldiers serving between 1916 and 1919 were treated for a venereal infection.⁶⁹ Infection rates were considerably higher among Dominion troops, who spent the duration of the war far from home. The Australians and New Zealanders were the most seriously afflicted, with infection rates of 18 per cent; the Canadians were not much more restrained. Tim Cook notes that:

Canadians had one of the highest venereal disease rates in all the BEF. At the epidemic's most troubling point, 28.7 per cent of the men were reported to be infected; by the end of the war, some 15.8 per cent of overseas enlisted men had contracted some form of venereal disease, and this remained almost six times the figure of that experienced by British troops.⁷⁰

Statistics of this type offer only a rough indication of married soldiers' infidelity: not all sexual encounters would have resulted in venereal infections and not all of the afflicted were married. Single men, after all, were as susceptible to infection as married men. Indeed, some historians believe that sexually inexperienced single men were more likely than their married comrades to avail themselves of the services of prostitutes. This argument might explain the higher rates of infection in the Australian and New Zealand ranks, where young bachelors far outnumbered married men.

By contrast, Clare Makepeace argues that in the British Expeditionary Force 'brothel visits for married men were more acceptable' than for single men because married men were more accustomed to regular sexual activity.⁷¹ But in the absence of definitive evidence, it is impossible to know how many married men in uniform strayed from their marriage vows.

Wives certainly worried that they might be so tempted, just as some husbands harboured similar anxieties about their wives. Fears of infidelity could be allayed by reassuring words – Frank Maheux assured Angeline that 'I allways love you and I love you to the last'⁷² – but words and good

intentions were not enough to prevent him from subsequently contracting gonorrhoea .⁷³

Lawrence Rogers was surely correct when he observed: ‘a husband or a wife thousands of miles away is no fun’.⁷⁴ Wartime marriage was fraught with the frustration of physical separation, the intensification of economic hardship and fears of infidelity. These obstacles notwithstanding, husbands and wives laboured with varying degrees of success to sustain the affection of their marriages, the welfare of their families and the companionship that comforted them in their bleakest moments. However imperfect their letter-writing skills, they cultivated their marriages by correspondence. Letters conveyed to the home front more of the horrors of combat than we once believed: wives did not know in a visceral, immediate way what it was to serve on the Western Front, but most wives knew that it was pretty damned awful. Regular correspondence also allowed husbands to remain connected to their domestic lives: they fretted about the well-being of their children, the financial security of their households and the affection of their wives. Most endured the hardships of combat, enforced separation and relentless anxiety about the well-being of their loved ones in the hope of reunion .

For countless couples – including Lawrence and May Rogers – this hope was never realised . The Great War made widows of at least 2 million women: more than 600,000 in France and almost as many in Germany; 400,000 in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, 239,000 in Britain and approximately 200,000 in Italy. In Canada, a nation of fewer than 8 million citizens, more than 10,000 women lost their husbands in the war.⁷⁵ Widows had to confront the challenges of single-parenthood, the oppressive burden of grief and economic insecurity. Karin Hausen reveals the dire plight of many German war widows whose pensions, even before the inflationary crises of the post-war years, were rarely sufficient to replace the income of their lost husbands. Not every war widow suffered as grievously as the German woman whose monthly income plummeted from more than 300 marks before the war to a meager 47.33 marks after her husband’s death, but genteel (and not so genteel) impoverishment was the sorry lot of many war widows.⁷⁶ Peggy Bette’s study of war widows in Lyon reminds us that some war widows avoided economic disaster by successfully assuming

responsibility for their family business. Others – one-third or more in France and Germany – remarried.⁷⁷

Couples who reunited in 1919 sometimes found that the dreams of marital harmony that had sustained them through the war years dissipated in the stark light of everyday life. Divorce, legal separation or simple abandonment followed, at least for some. Marked increases in the incidence of divorce and separation caused much agonised social commentary and the French (who were particularly agitated by the elevated divorce rate in Paris) were not alone in believing that the war had created a ‘crise de mariage’.⁷⁸

In Canada, as in Britain, filing a divorce petition was expensive, yet the number of couples seeking to dissolve their marriages increased dramatically after the war: from an average of 40 per year in Canada to 500 per year between 1920 and 1924; in England and Wales the increase was more modest – from an annual average of 919 before the war to 3,150 in the immediate post-war period – but disconcerting nonetheless. Couples who could not afford the legal costs of a divorce petition could seek a separation order through a magistrate’s court, and here too the numbers increased, but not exponentially: from an average of 10,765 each year immediately before the war to 13,603 in the early 1920s.⁷⁹ In Germany, the divorce rate more than doubled, from 15,633 divorces per year immediately prior to the war to 39,216 in 1921. The German evidence suggests, moreover, that hastily concluded wartime marriages, where young couples only realised their radical incompatibility after the war, were the most fragile.⁸⁰ The moral panic that characterised discussions of divorce and marital disintegration in the post-war era nonetheless overstated the severity of the problem. Each of the major combatant nations had mobilised well over a million married men. Most returned home, were reunited with their wives and families, and remained married .

1 Pierre Maurice Masson, *Lettres de guerre, août 1914 – avril 1916*, preface by Victor Giraud (Paris: Hachette, 1917), p. 1. Letter to his wife, dated 4 August 1914.

2 Colin Dyer, *Population and Society in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1978), pp. 43–4. In France, 1.4 million soldiers died as a result of injuries sustained in the war; 630,000 women received widows' pensions. This suggests that at least 45 per cent of all French soldiers were married. Given that the mortality rate was highest among the youngest military classes, an extrapolation based on mortality rates alone probably underestimates the number of married soldiers in the French army. For Germany, see Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914–1923*, trans. Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p. 36; for Italy, Francesca Lagorio, 'Italian widows of the First World War', in Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee (eds.), *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War* (Oxford: Bergahn Books, 1995), p. 195, n. 16. On Austria, see Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 259 and 219, n. 24. Healy notes that the Dual Monarchy suffered 1,016,200 military deaths and cites estimates to the effect that probably 400,000 Austrian women were widowed during the war.

3 Aaron B. Retish, *Russia's Peasants in Revolution and Civil War: Citizenship, Identity and the Creation of the Soviet State, 1914–1922* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 27, 46, n. 95.

4 Barbara Alpern Engel, 'Not by bread alone: subsistence riots in Russia during World War I', *Journal of Modern History*, 69 (December 1997), pp. 696–721; Mark Baker, 'Rampaging *soldatki*, cowering police, bazaar riots and moral economy: the social impact of the Great War in Kharkiv Province', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 35 (2001), pp. 137–55.

5 Susan Pedersen, 'Gender, welfare and citizenship in Britain during the Great War', *American Historical Review*, 95:4 (1990), p. 985.

6 Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House, 1993), p. 279; L. L. Robson, 'The origin and character of the first AIF, 1914–1918: some statistical evidence', *Historical Studies*, 15:61 (1973), p. 739.

- 7** The wartime correspondence of Paul and Marie Pireaud is now deposited in French military archives at Vincennes, Service historique de la Défense, 1Kt T458, 'Correspondance entre le soldat Paul Pireaud et son épouse 10 jan. 1910–1927'. I have examined the Pireaud marriage in *Your Death Would Be Mine: Paul and Marie Pireaud in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
- 8** Maureen Healy, 'Becoming Austrian: women, the state, and citizenship in World War I', *Central European History*, 35:1 (2002), p. 27.
- 9** Clémentine Vidal-Naquet, 'S'épouser à distance: le mariage à l'épreuve de la Grande Guerre', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 35:3 (2006), pp. 148–9.
- 10** Catherine Dollard, 'Fräulein oder Frau? German women and the signification of title, 1850–1917', *Women's History Review*, 17:3 (2008), pp. 377–93.
- 11** Libraries and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), RG 13 A-2, vol. 208, file 92, 1917. Letter from Helen R. Y. Reid, Ladies Auxiliary, Montreal Patriotic Fund. Francesca Lagorio observes similar opposition in Italy when the state created the 'juridical figure of the assimilated widow . . . the unmarried companion of a fallen soldier'. Lagorio, 'Italian widows of the First World War', p. 183.
- 12** Important and illuminating though these often deeply unsettling descriptions of combat were, the confessional urge that informed them was not unique to married men in uniform. As Michael Roper and Helen McCartney have demonstrated, single men too shared such accounts with their families. Helen B. McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2005); Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester University Press, 2009).

- 13** Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 45.
- 14** Christa Hämmerle, “‘You let a weeping woman call you home?’ Private correspondences during the First World War in Austria and Germany’, in Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600–1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 161–2.
- 15** LAC, MG 30, E297, Frank Maheux correspondence. Frank Maheux to his wife Angeline, 24 October 1916.
- 16** Liddle Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Leeds (hereafter Liddle Collection), letters of Rifleman H. Oates, B Company, 3/8th Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment. Herbert Oates to Beatie Oates, 3 November 1916.
- 17** Canadian War Museum Research Center, Ottawa, Canada, 58 A 1 153, letters of George Ormsby. George Ormsby to Maggie Ormsby, 1 June 1916.
- 18** Benjamin Simonet, *Franchise militaire: de la bataille des frontières aux combats de Champagne, 1914–1915* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), p. 190. Letter dated 31 December 1914.
- 19** Masson, *Lettres de guerre, août 1914 – avril 1916*. Letter dated 20 January 1916.
- 20** Liddle Collection, letters of Gunner W. J. Cove, Royal Garrison Artillery. Letter from Wilfrid J. Cove to his wife Ethel, dated 14 November 1916.
- 21** Canadian War Museum Research Center, letters of Lt Lawrence Rogers. Lawrence Rogers to his wife May, 27 April 1917.
- 22** Simonet, *Franchise militaire*, p. 56. Letter dated 19 October 1914.

- 23** Masson, *Lettres de guerre*, pp. 81, 185. Letters dated 14 April 1915, 20 January 1916.
- 24** *Émile et Léa: Lettres d'un couple d'instituteurs bourguignons dans la tourmente de la Grande Guerre*, ed. Michel Mauny (Migennes: L'imprimerie Moutot, 2006), p. 69. Letter from Léa Mauny to Émile Mauny, dated 12 October 1915.
- 25** SHD, 1Kt T458, 'Correspondance entre le soldat Paul Pireaud et son épouse 10 jan. 1910–1927', Marie Pireaud to Paul Pireaud, 1 June 1916; Paul to Marie Pireaud, 27 May 1916.
- 26** Simonet, *Franchise militaire*, p. 315. Letter dated 15 March 1915.
- 27** Masson, *Lettres de guerre*, p. 109. Letter dated 19 June 1915.
- 28** Rowland Feilding, *War Letters to a Wife: France and Flanders, 1915–1919*, ed. Jonathan Walker (Staplehurst, Kent: Spellmount Ltd., 2001), p. 124. Letter dated 24 September 1917.
- 29** LAC MG 30 E149, letters of Agar Adamson. Lt Col. Agar Adamson to Mabel Adamson, 27 August 1917.
- 30** Canadian War Museum Research Center, letters of Lt Lawrence Rogers. Lawrence Rogers to May Rogers, London, 9 June 1916.
- 31** LAC, MG 30 E297, Frank Maheux correspondence. Frank Maheux to Angeline Maheux, 20 June 1916.
- 32** Simonet, *Franchise militaire*, p. 145. Letter dated 8 December 1914. Henri Barbusse also imagined that he could 'follow with his eyes' his wife's comings and goings: 'This past Tuesday, around five o'clock, I thought that you must have arrived in Paris and I followed you with my eyes. I forgot the rain, the cold, and the sadness of the evening in these half-

destroyed villages that are so pitiful to see.’ Henri Barbusse, *Lettres à sa femme, 1914–1917* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1937). Letters dated 24 May 1915 and 14 January 1915.

33 Letter from Alois Deuringer to his wife, 25 March 1917, as cited in Bernd Ulrich and Benjamin Ziemann (eds.), *German Soldiers in the Great War: Letters and Eyewitness Accounts*, trans. Christine Brocks, foreword Jay Winter (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2010), p. 166.

34 Healy, ‘Becoming Austrian’, p. 10.

35 Tara Zahra, “‘Each nation only cares for its own’”: empire, nation, and child welfare activism in the Bohemian lands, 1900–1918’, *American Historical Review*, 111:5 (2006), p. 1391.

36 Ulrich and Ziemann, *German Soldiers in the Great War: Letters and Eyewitness Accounts*, p. 100.

37 Hämmerle, ‘You let a weeping woman call you home?’, p. 171.

38 Ulrich and Ziemann, *German Soldiers in the Great War: Letters and Eyewitness Accounts*, p. 98.

39 Liddle Collection, letters of Rifleman H. Oates. Herbert Oates to Beatie Oates, 23 November 1916, 23 December 1916, 19 December 1916.

40 Liddle Collection, letters of Gunner W. J. Cove, Royal Garrison Artillery. Ethel Cove to Wilfrid Cove, 7 February 1917.

41 *Ibid.*, Ethel Cove to Wilfrid Cove, 31 January 1917.

42 Liddle Collection, letters of Capt. Frederick Alleyne Corfield to his wife, Mary Corfield. Frederick Corfield to Mary Corfield, 2 December 1915.

43 *Ibid.*, 1 October 1916.

44 Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine*, pp. 141–2; LAC MG 30 E297, Frank Maheux correspondence. Frank Maheux to Angeline Maheux, undated letter [September 1917]; Canadian War Museum Research Center, 58 A 1 153, letters of George Ormsby. George Ormsby to Maggie Ormsby, 13 May 1916.

45 Canadian War Museum Research Center, letters of Lt Lawrence Rogers. Lawrence Rogers to May Rogers, 5 October 1916.

46 Peggy Bette, ‘Veuves et veuvages de la première guerre mondiale Lyon (1914–1924)’, *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire*, 98 (April–June 2008), p. 198.

47 Liddle Collection, letters of Rifleman H. Oates. Letter no. 25 [winter 1916–17].

48 Liddle Collection, letters of Frederick Alleyn Corfield. Frederick Corfield to Mary Corfield, 26 January 1917, 15 February 1917.

49 Ulrich and Ziemann, *German Soldiers in the Great War*, p. 117.

50 Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay: Soldiers’ Families in the Great War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), pp. 133–4.

51 Agar Adamson noted in July 1917 that: ‘All leave to Paris has been called off I understand on account of some men of the Canadian Regiments behaving disgracefully and also contracting disease.’ LAC, MG 30 E149, letters of Agar Adamson. Agar Adamson to his wife, Mabel, 7 July 1917.

52 Canadian War Museum Research Center, 58 A 1 153, letters of George Ormsby. George Ormsby to Maggie Ormsby, 17 August 1916.

53 Archives Départementales de la Charente, Br8435, Jean Escande, *Le journal de Mathieu: la guerre de 14 vécue par un charpentier de Labruguière, sapeur au 2ème génie* (Castres: self-published, 1986).

54 I develop this argument in more detail in *Your Death Would be Mine*, pp. 190–2.

55 Liddle Collection, letters of Philip Hugh Rawson. Hugh Rawson to Mary Furnival, 30 October 1915.

56 *Ibid.*, 8 March 1916.

57 *Ibid.*, 6 October 1916.

58 *Ibid.*, 23 June 1917.

59 Liddle Collection, letters of Frederick Alleyn Corfield. Frederick Corfield to Mary Corfield, 11 July 1916.

60 *Ibid.*, 10 August 1917.

61 Roland Dorgelès, *Wooden Crosses* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), p. 387.

62 *The Times* covered the Malcolm case in a series of articles: on 27 August 1917 it noted that Malcolm had been arrested; between 6 September and 11 September it reported testimony presented at Malcolm's trial, and on 12 September 1917 it covered his acquittal, which it deemed a 'popular verdict'.

63 LAC, MG 30 E149: the letters of Agar Adamson includes a press clipping from the [Montreal] *Gazette*, dated 19 March 1917, concerning the Hamilton Gault divorce case. Gault was one of the wealthiest men in

Canada, with an estimated fortune of \$1,300,000 and an annual income of between \$60,000 and 70,000.

64 Pedersen, 'Gender, welfare, and citizenship in Britain during the Great War', p. 999.

65 Morton, *Fight or Pay*, p. 162; Hanna, *Your Death Would be Mine*, p. 267; Escande, *Le journal de Mathieu*, p. 49; Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany*, p. 123.

66 Canadian War Museum Research Center, letters of Lt Lawrence Rogers. Lawrence Rogers to May Rogers, 21 August 1917.

67 LAC, RG 13, vol. 260, file 1559/1921. Letter from Mary Ellen Palmer, 66 McGill Street, Toronto, Ontario, to the Minister of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, 23 July 1921.

68 K. Craig Gibson, 'Sex and soldiering in France and Flanders: the British Expeditionary Force along the Western Front, 1914–1919', *International History Review*, 23:3 (2001), p. 543; Clare Makepeace, 'Male heterosexuality and prostitution during the Great War: British soldiers' encounters with *maisons tolérées*', *Cultural and Social History*, 9:1 (2012), p. 70.

69 Jean-Yves LeNaour, 'Sur le front intérieur du péril vénérien (1914–1918)', *Annales de démographie historique*, 1 (2002), p. 109.

70 Antje Kampf, 'Controlling male sexuality: combating venereal disease in the New Zealand military during two World Wars', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 17:2 (2008), p. 239, n. 16. Although Kampf cites figures to the effect that 10 per cent of all Canadian troops contracted a venereal infection during the war, Desmond Morton and Tim Cook both believe that the infection rate was at least 16 per cent: Morton, *Fight or Pay*, p. 162; Tim Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War, 1917–1918*, vol. II (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2008), p. 176.

- 71 Makepeace, 'Male heterosexuality and prostitution during the Great War', p. 70.
- 72 LAC, MG 30 E297, Frank Maheux correspondence. Frank Maheux to Angeline Maheux, 11 January 1917.
- 73 Desmond Morton, 'A Canadian soldier in the Great War: the experiences of Frank Maheux', *Canadian Military History*, 1 (1992), p. 86.
- 74 Canadian War Museum Research Center, letters of Lt Lawrence Rogers. Lawrence Rogers to May Rogers, 21 August 1917.
- 75 For France, see Dyer, *Population and Society in Twentieth-Century France*, pp. 43–4; for Britain, Pedersen, 'Gender, welfare and citizenship in Britain during the Great War', p. 1005. In 1924 the Weimar Republic authorised the allocation of pensions to 371,795 German war widows. However, Karin Hausen estimates that 'the total number of women widowed by the war must have been about 600,000, but by 1924 approximately one-third of them had apparently remarried and had become ineligible for widows' pensions'. Karin Hausen, 'The German nation's obligations to the heroes' widows', in Margaret Randolph Higonnet *et al.*, *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 128. On Italy, see Lagorio, 'Italian war widows', p. 195, n. 16. On Canada, see Morton, *Fight or Pay*, p. 228.
- 76 Hausen, 'The German nation's obligations to the heroes' widows', pp. 139, 137.
- 77 Bette, 'Veuves et veuvages de la première guerre mondiale Lyon (1914–1924)', pp. 191–202; Stéphanie Petit, 'Les veuves de la grande guerre ou le mythe de la veuve éternelle', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 197 (March 2000). pp. 65–72; Janis Lomas, "'So I married again": letters from British widows of the First and Second World Wars', *History Workshop Journal*, 3:8 (1994), pp. 218–27; Richard Bessel, *Germany after the First World War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 226.

78 Jules Maurin, 'Effets de la mobilisation française sur la population (1914–1918)', *Revue internationale d'histoire militaire*, 63 (1985), p. 86; Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France* (University of Chicago Press, 1994); Bessel, *Germany after the First World War*, pp. 231–2.

79 Morton, *Fight or Pay*, p. 162; Griselda Rowntree and Norman H. Carrier, 'The resort to divorce in England and Wales, 1858–1957', *Population Studies*, 11:3 (1958), p. 190.

80 Bessel, *Germany after the First World War*, p. 232.

2 Children

Manon Pignot On the eve of the war, the world of children was still broadly shaped by the economic, social and cultural structure of each of the countries about to enter the conflict. The existence of educational policies, different laws on child labour and juvenile crime, the greater or lesser diffusion of literature, artefacts and other elements of what may be termed the culture of children at the turn of the century, the designation of childhood as a specific stage and therefore also as a potential market: these are some of the essential factors varying markedly from one country to another that helped define the new place of children in Western societies of the pre-war period. Yet whenever we read national studies devoted to children, we must also acknowledge that during the Great War numerous bridges existed across national frontiers that linked children's experiences of the conflict.

Definitions of the age cohort that constituted childhood, though they varied slightly from country to country, were fairly homogeneous: almost everywhere, childhood was understood to be the period between the beginning of collective schooling (around 6 years old) and the minimum legal working age (around 13–14 years old). Beyond this lay another category whose contours were hazier: adolescence. The state of war helped to distinguish adolescence more clearly from 'youth', a term much more widely used at the time, and during the conflict it became more easily identifiable: its upper limit was no longer only that of civil and criminal minority, it was also that of voluntary enlistment, in other words 17 or 18 years old.

In purely demographic terms, then, there was certainly a generation born between 1900 and 1910 that lived through the war: the big question is to discover whether that generation participated in it. To answer that, we need to go back to shared forms of experience. At the heart of all national studies lies the fundamental question of separation and bereavement, or in a more general sense the question of children's link to absent men: fathers certainly, but equally elder brothers and uncles. Their departure brought

about a modification of family relations, either temporary or lasting, and even a complete restructuring of roles within the family. Absence also stimulated the expression, often for the first time, of feelings of affection and love: from this perspective the war brought people closer as much as it separated them. The vast majority of children lived the conflict behind the lines, and so among the most frequently shared experiences were the upheavals of everyday life, of hunger and of cold. At the same time children were directly involved, as a result of cultural mobilisation, in particular in their schooling. If we look closely, there were scarcely any children who were totally sheltered from the conflict: even on the other side of the Atlantic, to escape from the war, from its images if not from its reality, was no easy matter. But these common forms evidently display significant variations, and the aspect upon which we must most closely reflect is that of the intensity of children's experience. Certain factors will help to intensify an experience by making it worse, and this was true in material life – that of the country as much as that of the individual family; in some places where war was waged, gender determined risk. This was true with respect to location: proximity to the front line, and a fortiori to occupied areas, placed young people who witnessed what went on in particular danger, radically distinguishing them from their contemporaries living a long way behind the lines.

In addition, the younger generation's relation to the conflict was not immutable between 1914 and 1918: it must be set in a precise chronology. The caesura of the winter of 1915–16, for example, emerges from both national and transnational studies. After an intense period of mobilisation that had gone on more or less spontaneously, the first signs of lassitude appeared at the end of 1915; at the same time, the harshness of a persistently virulent war discourse began to alienate some younger listeners. Similarly, mounting hardship and physical difficulties, especially in Germany, added to the effects of a father's absence and provoked a diversification of coping strategies after 1915; we see this notably in the growth of delinquency. The 'Great War generation' therefore needs to be examined from a double perspective: chronologically, through the unfolding of the war over time; and thematically – the distinction between common experiences and national specificities.

The significant revival of the historiography of childhood in wartime relies, without question, on an archival renewal. Recent writing suggests a joint usage of institutional and private sources: in the first case we think of documents originating in schools, bureaucracies, juvenile courts, even medical literature; in the second we are dealing with all the family archives letters, photographs and objects, already very familiar to historians of the Great War but also with all the documents produced *by* children, particularly their diaries and drawings, which constitute two alternative modes of children's personal expression. To complement these, historians of childhood in wartime will also use numerous secondary sources: narratives, memories of childhood, memoirs and even oral accounts collected by researchers.

To fight? From the battlefield to the domestic front

Children occupied a special place in the cultural mobilisation of both civilian and combatant populations in the majority of belligerent nations. As figures of innocence, symbols of home and future, they embodied for adults the category to be most protected, and as a result constituted a significant stock of negative motivation – a way of encouraging adults to act by potentially making them feel a sense of guilt. Images of children were massively present on conscription posters and posters advertising successive war bond campaigns. In the press and literature there also reappeared a classic figure of wartime, that of the child hero. A distant descendant of the French republican child soldier Joseph Bara, murdered in 1793, or of the young Prussian ammunition-carrier Johanna Stegen of 1813, the child hero celebrated in the media was largely fictitious; his or her interest lay not in authenticity but in plausibility. He or she was a metonym, the small being standing for the whole, of the Nation fighting for survival.

Even so, the part played by children cannot be reduced to this single rhetorical figure. Alongside such imaginary heroes the archives also preserve the memory of genuine young combatants, volunteers who enlisted freely, sometimes under their own names:

Dear Sir,

When you read these lines you will think I am silly or something after that, but I am quite earnest. My greatest friend has been killed by the treachery at the front, my brother has been discharged medically unfit from the West Kents and my father is making shells in the Arsenal. For the first thing I want and I feel, I *must* avenge my friend, secondly I feel I *must* keep up my brother's honour by taking his place, and thirdly I feel that I *must* carry on the work my father has begun. I am twelve and a quarter years of age and exactly 5 ft 3' high and 33 inches chest measurement. Will you please do your best to procure me a position as a drummer or a bugler in any regiment where one is needed for I can assure you that I will do my best for my God, my King and my Country.

I remain your faithful servant, H. J. Palmer¹

More often than not, such adolescents presented themselves under false names, making their identification more difficult. Although minors in the legal sense, these very young combatants managed to confound recruiting officers because they no longer looked like children. Between 14 and 16 years old, sometimes younger, the majority were spotted as soon as they tried to sign their enlistment papers. Many were already being sought as runaways by their families. Some, however, succeeded in overcoming the obstacles that separated them from the front and combat. An estimate of the numbers is obviously very difficult: Tim Cook mentions 20,000 underage soldiers in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, Richard Van Emden talks of 'several thousand' in the British army, and Catriona Kelly points out that massed crowds of young boys constituted a 'serious social problem' for the Russian authorities. Despite obviously being in a minority, such adolescent combatants nonetheless constituted a numerical, and above all symbolic, reality.

Adolescent infatuation with war has several possible explanations: on the one hand it demonstrates a feature of that phase of development, the 'taste for adventure' that causes the adolescent to swing from violence to control, transgression to filiation. Numerous accounts emphasise the sense of 'excitement' felt by youth, at least in 1914–15, although it was an ardour that declined as the war went on. On the other hand, such precocious involvement also demonstrates the influence of patriotic indoctrination past

and present. The legacy of a pre-war educational curriculum that had been patriotic to the point of militarism, as in France and Prussia, was wedded to the immediate cultural context of the war and the emergence of national 'war cultures', within which the press and literature lost no opportunity to support juvenile elan .

In every nation at war children became, in fact, the target of a war discourse that had been elaborated especially for them. Intended to explain and justify the war in the eyes of the younger generation, this initiative of both cultural and economic mobilisation appears as a transnational constant, a visible sign of the process of totalisation that affected all belligerent nations. To reinforce children's patriotism, idealised masculine and feminine stereotypes were exalted. In Great Britain, for instance, the usual model followed was that of a former public-school boy, the son of middle-class parents, a young officer; such young men were presented as 'modern-day knights fighting the Huns, in the tradition of Roland, Richard I and the Black Prince'.² Profoundly Manichaean, this discourse relied on the idea of a just war, a war of Right, even a holy war, against Evil. In 1915 the Russian pedagogue Sergei Levitin wrote from teachers' answers to his questionnaire: 'Even a 3-year-old lad can argue that "you can kill Germans, not people".'³ Ruthlessly stigmatised in his military attitude, his behaviour and customs, even in his physique, the enemy was an absolute Other, a Barbarian: the German to the French, the Slav to the Germans, and so on. The institutions and cultural supports that before the war had helped define a specific place for children within pre-war societies were to be substantially recycled by the discourse of war. Children's literature, picture-books and periodicals, games and toys became so many vectors of distribution for patriotic and xenophobic sentiment. The degree of development of such cultural supports varying from country to country proportionally affected the degree of mobilisation of the juvenile population: thus in France there was a children's culture that was relatively democratised by educational legislation and the low cost of publication, and at the other end of the spectrum, in tsarist Russia, a children's culture existed but was reserved to a social elite. Yet the tonality of the discourse remained very similar in different nations. Juvenile war culture, as found in the press and in literature and toys, had two important features: its wide distribution allowed it, on the one hand, to address itself to a wide public,

from very young children up to adolescents close to the age of enlistment; and, on the other hand, its content rarely avoided representing the violence of war. Quite the contrary: certain periodicals did not hesitate to use the crudest language and the most lurid images to impress their young readers.

School, for many children a 'second family', became a distribution point par excellence for this discourse. Lessons and exercises were largely devoted to the new military context, putting in place a genuine 'pedagogy of war'⁴ in which the conflict became the 'substrate of education'.⁵ This educational mobilisation also went further, emphasising at every turn the combatants' sacrifice: by defending country and home, the soldiers were sacrificing their lives for the generation that followed: 'My daddy he has gone to war, Has your dear dad gone too / My daddy, he has gone to fight, Fighting for me and you', ran one Canadian nursery rhyme.⁶ From this point on, children were invited to show themselves worthy of this willing and supreme sacrifice on their behalf and to demonstrate in turn a dedication appropriate to their ability. In a vision of the war in which everyone must remain at their post, the child's place was at their desk, as the woman's was in the factory and the man's at the front; school was the terrain where the 'battles' of childhood were to be won: diplomas and laurels, information and knowledge. Canadian schoolchildren who looked after school gardens were called 'soldiers of the soil' or even 'the second line of defence'. Young heroes behind the lines, children were symbolically drawn into the war effort by participating in the nation's moral elevation. But this participation was equally pragmatic. Schools organised collections for charitable works: by the end of January 1917, for example, the Patriotic Fund of the Schools of the State of Saskatchewan had collected \$24,888.69.⁷ Similarly, it was very often at school that parcels were made up to send to soldiers symbolically adopted by the pupils: from October 1914 to April 1915 the Lycée Cours Spinoza in Paris sent '70 sweaters, 33 flannel vests, 306 long johns, 40 flannel corsets, 190 shirts, 143 pairs of socks, 103 balaclavas, 88 comforters, 90 bibs, 89 pairs of gloves, 229 handkerchiefs, 104 towels, 24 pairs of slippers, 41 bars of soap, and 100 phials of iodine'.⁸ In general terms, the majority of children's 'voluntary service' took place within the school framework: in Germany 6–7 million schoolchildren did some form of charitable activity during the war .

Girls and boys, however, were not equal in this exhortation to sacrifice. Far from abolishing social norms, the context of war contributed greatly to a reinforcement of them, particularly gender barriers. Boys were encouraged to think of themselves as combatants-to-be, soldiers of the conscription class of 1920 or 1925. Girls had no such warrior future to project. On the contrary, they were reminded of their domestic and maternal roles and as a result were much more deliberately put to work in the children's war effort, being urged to collect for charity, to help with the soup kitchens, and especially to knit. In Germany they made *Liebesgaben* ('love packages') and knitted 'to express their love for the nation, the soldiers and the Kaiser'.⁹ In France, from nursery school to university, girls were set to work using their sewing skills: in the youngest classes they made lint for the hospitals, and in the older classes they knitted and sewed clothes for the men at the front .

In its exhortations to patriotic sacrifice, the war discourse targeted at children produced tangible and often notable collective results; the sums of money raised and the number of garments made prove it. But to what degree was such a discourse effective on the everyday and individual level? Even making allowances in the scholastic sources for the desire to conform to the teacher's expectations, the patriotic exaltation of children's language is undeniable. One Austrian schoolgirl wrote:

Dear Tsar! You are my biggest Enemy! You know you are less than me because I am from Austria and from Tirol! If I was older, I would come with our brave soldiers in a balloon to drop a bomb on your head . . . you dared to attack our good Emperor. But you will have no power against our Emperor he is a great Christian and an aid of God in everything and everywhere . . . Also my Father is in the Army . . . and if I was big, I would go with him to help him.¹⁰

The guilt-inducing dimension to war discourse seems, to a certain extent, to have borne fruit: one notes the interiorising that it helped produce: 'I get cold going to school but I think: how must it be for our dear brother soldiers, I'd rather they were warm and me cold', one child in Kiev wrote in January 1915.¹¹ Such examples of personal mobilisation could take the form of mortifying practices: Simone de Beauvoir, born in 1908, wrote that

as a young girl: ‘I invented a task, to put all the sweet things people offered me into a box: when the box was full of stale cakes, bloomed chocolate and wizened prunes Maman helped me wrap it up and I carried it to the ladies [at school]’.¹²

In this respect the first two years of the war seem to have been a time of effective mobilisation of juvenile goodwill. Children’s participation in the war effort in part constrained by the school and family framework, in part interiorised and autonomous, helped to make of them fully fledged actors on the domestic front.

In the long term, however, sources also show the progressive emergence of signs of lassitude, indifference and even rejection of the conflict. The banalisation of violence and the repetitive and simplified black-and-white nature of the propaganda targeted at children carried within them the seeds of their own failure, as they fed feelings of boredom, hypocrisy and even indiscipline. In addition, the length of the war, its violence and its effects on men helped to blunt children’s approval. Scholastic sources prove it, almost despite themselves: in a composition devoted to the description of a train of wounded soldiers, a French schoolgirl wrote in February 1916, ‘I feel pity for this poor disabled soldier’; ‘pity’ has been crossed out in red by the teacher and replaced by ‘admiration’.¹³ It was assuredly the discovery of the nature of the ‘true’ war that led children to alter their view of the conflict. Thus in 1914–15 the young Bertolt Brecht, born in 1898, wrote several patriotic poems and essays and even sent one of them to the Kaiser: but around mid 1915 his poetry began to express scepticism towards the war, in particular criticising German propaganda in general and the notion of a heroic death in particular.¹⁴

Daily life tested by the war

The younger generation’s progressive shift in attitude towards the war is partly explained by its growing experience of the upheavals of daily life. Entry into the war, provoking as it did the immediate mass departure of millions of men, brought about brutal and profound changes within the family. The first upheaval was obviously that of the absence of fathers: a lasting separation that had implications that were as much affective and personal as they were social, to the extent that they led to a more or less

provisional reconfiguring of the family and the roles of each member within it. For the youngest, the war often became truly tangible not at the moment when it was declared, but when the father went away: in drawings made during the war and in memoirs that were often written many years afterwards, scenes of farewell recur again and again, as do the tears shed as much by men as women. The irruption of tears into the social space seems to mark these accounts strongly: to see women, and even men, weep in public was something that constituted a first crack in the traditional social and emotional affective code of restraint.

The departure of the men, some of whom had never left home before, caused a sort of chasm, emotional and social, in the fabric of families. It was only partially filled by letters, news and, later, home leave. War caused an explosion of writing in families, which children fully took part in. As well as the parcels, several million letters were exchanged every day, written as often by the illiterate as by the highly educated, and devoted first and foremost to private and family life, as the postal control quickly became aware. Throughout the Great War letter-writing truly became the ‘life blood of the family’, to borrow Michelle Perrot’s felicitous phrase.¹⁵ Letters were an essential support for the coping strategies developed by both children and soldiers to withstand separation; waiting for them, reading them, composing them gave rhythm to family life. Their prime social function was to preserve for the father his status as head of the family, the *paterfamilias*. The paternal letter was thus also an instrument of control, notably of school work. Where necessary, it could also be an instrument of punishment; in which case fathers would not hesitate to write to the head teacher or teacher about their children: ‘I have learned from a card from my boy that he was still going to school. I send you this short card to tell you myself that if Henri don’t do what he is told to learn, don’t be afraid to chastise him, because you know very well when he has no father at home that he needs it.’¹⁶

The paternal letter also had a further function of extending the father’s authority beyond his death. Testamentary letters addressed to children, more numerous than we might expect, tended to be very specific: sometimes written to share out an inheritance fairly, they might simultaneously contain a final declaration of love, educationally wise words to be followed post-mortem, a wish to justify the writer’s death at the front and the resulting

abandonment of his family and a desire to organise his family's memory of him: 'you will keep this scrap of paper as a precious relic', wrote a French combatant in August 1914. For some children, the loss of their father was their first experience of the war. In general terms, the experience of bereavement constituted an impassable fracture within the juvenile group, an essential marker for that generation. It is estimated that at the end of the war there were some 6 million orphans, of which a million were French and another million German; in Great Britain there were 350,000. Bereavement understood simultaneously as both fact and emotion was intrinsically linked to children's experience of war, whether as personal bereavement, observed bereavement or the bereavement of the entire community. Juvenile sources show its grip on children's social life: their drawings are punctuated by figures veiled and dressed in black, which henceforth became part and parcel of their surroundings, of public space. For bereaved children, the news of a father's death was mostly described as a shock of concentric impacts: the mother's shock at first, often with intense and painful outward expression; and then a personal shock, whose intensity could be measured by the clarity of its memory several decades afterwards.

But if the majority of accounts describe news of the combatant's death as a tragic event, we must make space for other bereavements too: 'diminished bereavements', when the lost father was not missed; or 'glorious bereavements', when the greatness of the sacrifice exceeded the sorrow at the loss. It seems, therefore, important to speak of children's bereavements in the plural if we are to talk about a protean phenomenon whose range of experience is, as we see, not inevitably or at least not systematically tragic.

In a similar way, the wartime context also upset relationships within the family and forced readjustments that were sometimes painful. Home leaves were more often than not moments of happy reunion; but they were sometimes disappointing and inconclusive too, because the father was altered, different from the family's memory of him and from his letters. It would be illusory to paint family relations solely in the colours of affection and regret, even if those are the emotions most frequently expressed in the sources .

The upheavals of everyday life were equally material. For many families the departure of the men meant the disappearance of their chief source of income. Allowances given to combatants' wives were generally inadequate

for a family to live on. A rapid reorganisation of roles took place: among the working class, women who were already working switched to war work that was better paid, and others left the domestic sphere to work outside the home. A direct consequence of this was an increased autonomy among children. Some were set to work at a younger age than usual, particularly on farms, often to the detriment of their schooling. In towns and cities they were put in charge of shopping and queuing at the market or the coal merchant. In the countries most directly affected by rationing, in France and even more so in Germany, shortages and the search for provisions accentuated the porosity of domestic roles. In addition, the departure of the men and the temporary absence of the women shed new light on the role played by grandparents in both town and country.

The sources tell us how much children and adolescents were affected by the privations linked to the war. The lack of food and coal was felt severely by all civilians, but particularly by the young generation: the shortages of Germany's 'turnip winter' of 1916–17, whose effects were also felt in the different occupied zones, directly affected children, with serious impacts on their growth and health, causing anaemia, nervous complaints and fatigue.

Ill-health kept them away from school, when schools were not already closed because of a lack of coal to heat them. In 1917, a study carried out in Munich showed the loss of average height and weight in comparison with the pre-war period. It was for this reason that nearly a million young German city-dwellers were sent to the country (*Kinderlandverschickung*) to work on farms for periods of up to six months.

In France these problems were mostly borne by the working class, among whom the responsibility for shopping often fell to the children; in a 1917 drawing one schoolboy wrote: 'the coal-merchant gets coal, you have to run to get some' – this at a time when the temperature in Paris was close to minus 20 degrees Celsius. In Germany, where the situation was even more severe, shortages led to widespread truancy, especially among girls who 'danced the polonaise', in other words they were standing and queuing outside shops for several hours. To their physiological deficiencies young Germans thus added long periods of missed schooling that were difficult to catch up after the war.

It was similar in the occupied zones. In northern France, children's sources show, scarcity of food was exacerbated by the requisition policy of

the German forces. 'We ate black bread and drank water. It was a hard diet and gave me colic and diarrhoea . . . I did everything to find some food wherever I could', a young boy from the Ardennes remembered in 1920.¹⁷

Another consequence of deteriorating living conditions was a growth in juvenile delinquency. Between 1910 and 1916 the number of crimes committed by minors in the Russian Empire rose by 284 per cent, particularly in the two capitals of Moscow and St Petersburg. Such figures went hand in hand with a rise in the numbers of orphan and runaway children. In Germany, as in Russia, the growth in delinquency was not strictly linked to the country's entry into the war; it was after 1915 that the curves turned upwards. For the police and contemporary educationalists the responsibility was primarily the mothers', the combatant fathers being no longer present to control their children. In reality, as the timeline illustrates, it was more educational disorganisation, the harshness of socio-economic conditions and, where applicable, the appearance of youth violence that explained the growth of this delinquency. In spring 1915 a gang of fifty to sixty boys sacked restaurants, hotels and holiday homes at Zoppot in western Prussia, breaking windows, mirrors and crockery and slashing furniture; when questioned, they said they had been influenced by the account of the invasion of eastern Prussia by refugees. 'They called their game "Russian".'¹⁸ Juvenile delinquency was thus directly attributable to the war context; in both its extent and its characteristics the notable growth of juvenile prostitution in the occupied zones is a good example. Belgium is one of the best-known cases, thanks to the work of Aurore François: in 1914 six cases of solely juvenile prostitution (with no other offence) were examined by the juvenile court in Brussels; in 1915 the number rose to twenty cases.¹⁹

Children, a selected target of the violence?

Unavoidably caught up in the mobilisation of the civilian populations on the domestic front, children were nevertheless not systematic targets of the war's violence. But living behind the lines did not mean that they were completely sheltered from violence even if they were not facing it daily. In the big cities, for example, children were particularly aware of artillery bombardments. Often overshadowed by the high levels of aerial

bombardment during the Second World War, the bombardments of the Great War played a central part in both children's accounts and later juvenile memoirs. For French children, Zeppelins, Taubes and cannons extended the war's reach right into the domestic front. Diaries and drawings describe in detail and with anxiety the fear of a random night attack:

'Yesterday evening there was a weird star in the sky. I'm afraid of Zeppelins . . . [they] can't aim. They drop their bombs anywhere. It's all a matter of chance', a girl from Lyon noted in her diary in February 1916.²⁰ Numerous accounts describe the fear of being killed while asleep, or being trapped in a cellar, buried under rubble. Children in the cities witnessed the agitation of adults when the alarms sounded and the general panic that drove people to public shelters, cellars and metro stations. The grown-ups' behaviour, their untidy dress and uncontrolled actions were noted by the young observers: they saw how fear distorts people's judgement, habits and most elementary social codes. Evacuation exercises were organised in schools too, but these did not prevent a rise in truancy after the renewal of aerial bombardment, as in London in 1917–18.²¹ Children picked up this fear of bombing, composing nursery rhymes, making protective charms out of scraps of wool and cotton, like the two dolls Nénette and Rintintin in France,²² and inventing games like the alarm game. In their diaries and drawings the Zeppelin appears as the great incarnation of the danger from the skies, although it caused less damage than planes or artillery. But the confusion caused by the alarms could simultaneously be a source of play: some children who lived in cities under bombing or shelling developed forms of diversion and even appropriation of these difficult hours, converting them into positive, sometimes even joyous experiences. War, overturning habits and particularly the school routines, unleashed a temporal freedom that children were able to benefit from.

Yet the violence of war still reached children who were far from the front line, becoming part of their daily life. The commemoration of those who were killed in action, long before the Armistice, helped preserve the bubble of brutality in which children floated: 'violent death became a part of everyday life in all three capitals'.²³ Even in rural villages it was not uncommon for the roll-call of the district's dead to be read out at school, sometimes every morning before the start of classes. School exercises, decoded, reveal a habituation to the codes of violence: 'If I had Wilhelm I'd

do him with a knife', wrote a Russian schoolboy in autumn 1915.²⁴ This attention to knives and to hand-to-hand fighting is visible in French children's drawings: far from being visions of an anonymous war, most fights drawn by children were in fact duels. Of course schoolchildren reproduced the antagonism between Good and Evil that they had learnt in class: conscientiously they drew 'good Frenchmen' killing 'bad Germans'. But their recourse to this kind of representation of fighting cannot but strike the historian with its illustration of the interpersonal dimension of the violence of war.

Children's exposure to violence was greatly increased in the occupied zones. After the loss of a father, this was doubtless the most determining and differentiating experience of the juvenile generation. Even if children were not the object of specific violence at the invasion itself, they were victims of the same atrocities as other civilians: beatings, burnings, shootings, sometimes rapes, being used as human shields. We remember that children were frequently selected to witness abuses committed against adults. This was particularly dramatic in the case of rape, when the presence of child spectators redoubled the transgressive dimension and the brutality of the invader's act by striking at 'the capacity to reproduce and to transmit the bond of filiation'.²⁵ In the longer term, children also logically found themselves in the front row: with the domestic space occupied, the house became one of the loci of confrontation par excellence between civilians and soldiers. Children's diaries are punctuated by requisitions and prohibitions of every kind, endured in notes of indignation and humiliation. More specifically, two questions in particular gnaw at the young generation: rationing and school and the tasks imposed on them, via school, by the occupier. Such forced labour (gleaning, gathering, clearing, maintenance of paths and fields, goods-handling at railway stations) provided an opportunity for small symbolic acts of resistance (singing patriotic songs, destroying crops). In a general sense children were witnesses to an arbitrary regime established in the occupied zone, within which disobedience became a positive value, sometimes encouraged by adults. In contrast to those behind the lines, children and adolescents in an occupied zone experienced the war in the same harsh way as other civilians. When deportations began (to camps in Germany for the French, to Siberia for the Germans of eastern Prussia), they were not spared.

In certain specific situations and certain locations, children did constitute a selected target of the violence. The Armenian genocide of 1915 was one such case: in villages before the removals, and later at the time of the deportations, the youngest were frequently massacred or left behind with their mother's bodies; many died of exhaustion. Older children and young adolescents (including the youngest women) were subject to forcible removal, referred to by the Ottoman authorities as the 'remains of the sword'. Here a specific policy was in place with regards to children, especially girls, described in identical terms in different witness accounts by survivors or their descendants. Children were first brutally separated from their families during deportation:

Several men suddenly tore Heranus and Horen from Isquhi's [their mother's] hands. She rushed to take them back, but the policeman had already sat Heranus on his horse. Isquhi leapt forward and grabbed the man's leg with one hand, catching hold of Heranus with the other and pulling her towards her. The policeman, realising that he wouldn't easily get rid of this woman, started whipping her. Despite the intolerable pain, Isquhi refused to let go of her daughter. She pulled with all her strength, begging and insulting the man at the same time . . . The paths of Isquhi and Heranus never crossed again.²⁶

Such children were subsequently placed with Muslim Turkish families and given new identities; the oldest adolescents were married, the younger ones adopted by Muslims. They lost their names as well as their language, religion and culture:

There were already eight girls like me there, from the same village . . . I was abducted by the police chief of Cermik, a corporal Hussein. His wife was called Esma . . . They gave me the name of Seher. I quickly learnt Turkish. I did what they wanted me to do. But Esma Hanim's star and mine were not in harmony . . . I understood that I was only a servant [for her].²⁷

The memory of the Armenian genocide has long been preserved by the children who survived: those who lived to swell the ranks of the diaspora as

well as those who, many decades after their forced conversion, revealed their Armenian roots to the generation of their grandchildren .

The children of 1914 became the adults of 1940. From this self-evident demographic fact a fundamental question nevertheless follows: what was the impact of the Great War upon their generation? The effect of the intensive mobilisation to which they were subjected cannot be measured in a categorical way, which tends to force the historian to choose between two schematic positions: between the idea of 'brutalisation' or the 'reinforcement of civic sentiment'. In the countries in which there already existed a strong tradition of schooling, patriotic mobilisation was able to function as reinforcing the feeling of belonging and of unity among citizens. However, in all the warring countries the sources also attest to the porosity of the violence of war; the notable increase in, and nature of, juvenile delinquency is a good example. The discourses of war seem above all to have had a hold on children at the beginning of the war, at least until 1915, before we see emerging patterns of lassitude, rejection and even resistance. The context of war did not therefore systematically create rupture between the young generation and the established order, but it supplied conditions to make it possible, where it was not thwarted by the solidity of institutional structures. It was thus not so much the war itself that had an impact, as a certain sort of experience of the war that crystallised children's reality and left long-lasting traces on the adults to come: in other words, an experience of fracture and separation from the rest of the national community, of bereavement and occupation.

The bereavement of war, massive and immediate, was a spectacle witnessed by the whole of the children's generation. Its extension into the 1920s perpetuated the idea of a 'society in black' that affected the spirits of all the young, even those who had been spared the death of a family member. Yet the experience of bereavement profoundly divided their generation: on one side were those who had experienced it and would carry its memory afterwards for the rest of their lives, and on the other were those for whom the phenomenon was inseparable from the war itself and so disappeared progressively with the return to peacetime. This is why one finds personal accounts of the Armistice by orphans of the war that resemble one another in their experience of an event that was painful and

ambiguous, at odds with the collective relief and joy: children punished for refusing to stand for the national anthem, children beaten for crying about their father's death in the midst of the celebration. The fate of the orphaned cannot in any way be considered the touchstone of children's relations to the war; it would be a form of shorthand verging on sophism to characterise *all* the children of 1914 as traumatised on the pretext that the orphan occupies a central place in the collective memory of the conflict. Likewise, the spatial barriers that during the fighting had separated children in the occupied zones from those behind the lines endured after the end of the war. The imprint left by the experience of occupation is visible in the way in which the end of the war was perceived as a return to normality followed by memories of the conflict. A feeling of displacement, to the point of exclusion, prolonged the sense of dichotomy that was experienced while the war was still going on.

The examination of the effects of the Great War must, from this point on, be twofold. First of all comes the collective impact: the majority of studies underline the educational, literary and, more generally, cultural impact of the conflict. The war helped to stimulate a wide post-war discussion of the child's place in society, his place in school and in the class system, his place in the penal system, and so on. But there is also the individual impact. To read the numerous memoirs and personal accounts is to come to a clear conclusion. The Great War was, it appears, not *necessarily* a determining life event.

It is important therefore to distinguish clearly between what, in the memory of the conflict, arises from the imprint of the war itself from what arises, in reality, from the lasting effect of bereavement. Beyond its impact on the personal life of orphaned children, bereavement in war may have played a founding role in their later conceptions of life and relationships – even, once they became adults, in their political affiliations and their ideological convictions. In the French case, several well-known anonymous accounts identify wartime bereavement as the starting point for socialist and pacifist commitments. By contrast, in the case of Germany it was the experience of defeat that was foundational for some boys: studies here show that enlistment in the irregular forces, and a fortiori in the Nazi Party, was common among a certain category of German youth – the middle class and urban lower-middle class who were over-represented both in paramilitary

training organisations during the conflict and in secondary schools where the pedagogy of war was on the curriculum. Often orphans themselves, they had watched helplessly the Reich's collapse, too young to enlist themselves; their later enlistment was still, even at that stage, a sign of rupture with the rest of their national community, bereaved and defeated .

One sees, then, that the young generation displays, during and after the conflict, profoundly heterogeneous characteristics, according to whether war was experienced in town or country, in middle-class or working-class milieux, in unoccupied or occupied zones, in a victorious or defeated country. Yet all children shared one form of essential experience: that of the impregnation of daily life by cultural mobilisation, especially at school, and by the violence of war. Despite the disparities, there was indeed a 'Great War generation', which emerged with the feeling of not only having experienced the war but also having participated in it .

Helen McPhail translated this chapter from French into English.

- 1 To a recruiting officer, 26 June 1915. Imperial War Museum, class. mark 91/5/1.
- 2 Michael Paris, *Over the Top: The Great War and Juvenile Literature in Britain* (London: Praeger, 2004), p. 40.
- 3 Noted by the pedagogue Sergei Levitin, quoted by Aaron J. Cohen, 'Flowers of evil: mass media, child psychology and the struggle for Russia's future during the First World War', in James Marten (ed.), *Children and War: A Historical Anthology* (New York University Press, 2002), pp. 38–49, quote at p. 43.
- 4 Andrew Donson, *Youth in the Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism and Authority in Germany 1914–1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 59.

5 Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *La guerre des enfants 1914–1918: essai d’histoire culturelle* (Paris: A. Colin, 1993; new edn 2004), p. 25.

6 Susan Fisher, *Boys and Girls in No Man’s Land: English-Canadian Children and the First World War* (University of Toronto Press, 2011), p. 10.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

8 Manon Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie: génération Grande Guerre* (Paris: Seuil, 2012), p. 75.

9 Donson, *Youth in the Fatherless Land*, p. 86.

10 Letter translated and quoted by Gabriela Dudekova (international colloquium, ‘Gender and War’, Vienna, October 2011).

11 Catriona Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing up in Russia, 1890–1991* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 52.

12 Simone de Beauvoir, *Mémoires d’une jeune fille rangée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), p. 32.

13 Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie*, p. 334.

14 Donson, *Youth in the Fatherless Land*, p. 88.

15 Michelle Perrot, *Le journal intime de Caroline B.* (Paris: Éditions Montalba, 1985), p. 140.

16 Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie*, p. 284.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 221.

- 18** Donson, *Youth in the Fatherless Land*, p. 174.
- 19** Aurore François, 'From streetwalking to the convent: child prostitution cases judged by the Juvenile Court of Brussels during World War One', in Heather Jones, Jennifer O'Brien and Christoph Schmidt-Supprian (eds.), *Untold War: New Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 153.
- 20** Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie*, p. 151.
- 21** Stefan Goebel, 'Schools', in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, vol. II (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 222.
- 22** Nénette and Rintintin were a famous pair of wooden dolls invented by Parisians to protect themselves during the shelling of Paris, especially in January 1916 and then during spring 1918. Children kept the dolls in the shelters (see [Figure 25.9](#)).
- 23** Goebel, 'Schools', p. 228.
- 24** Collected in *Russkaia skola*, quoted by Cohen, 'Flowers of evil', p. 45.
- 25** Véronique Nahoum-Grappe, 'Le viol comme instrument de guerre et d'extermination', *CNRS Théma*, 2:2 (2004), available at: www2.cnrs.fr/presse/thema/225.htm.
- 26** Fethiyé Cetin, *Le livre de ma grand-mère* (Paris: Éditions de l'Aube, 2006; first edn 2004), pp. 72–3.
- 27** *Ibid.*, pp. 84–9.

3 Families

Jay Winter

The story of family life in wartime is the most powerful vector of transnational history. War tore families apart and reconfigured them in myriad ways. In all societies at war, the pressures on families to adjust to new circumstances differed not in kind, only in degree. And as in every other facet of the war, the longer the war went on, the more it became clear that differences in degree were transformed into differences in kind; the war of 1914 turned into total war; this was the moment when family history and the history of violence became braided together in new and terrifying ways.

The sheer scale of the story defies precise description. The movement of populations was so vast as to propel staggering numbers of people around the globe in the effort to create, arm and service the nearly 70 million men in uniform during the 1914–18 conflict. The sheer scale of this story requires a framework of analysis that enables us to see the broad outlines of wartime family history.

There are three central elements treated sequentially here. The first approaches the centrifugal forces of war, the forces tearing families apart. The starting point here is mobilisation, and thereafter the toll of life and limb in the conflict. But there were other forces in motion, producing huge population movements to staff war factories, to till the fields, and to transport the polyform materials of war around the globe. State policies were important in stimulating and controlling this tide of movement and activity, but the sheer scale of combat inevitably produced material pressures making family life difficult, and in some cases impossible, to sustain. How families faced this tide of war is the subject of the first part of the chapter.

The second part deals with the return home, the centripetal forces bringing families back together, separating others, and creating new forms of kinship among victims of war. Here there is evidence of a return to the

family as an escape from appalling wartime experiences, one which restored much of the patriarchal structure of pre-war family life.

The third part of the chapter considers the enduring aftermath of the war, in the sense of its lingering legacy on family life. The piecing together of families, and family stories, is one that went on throughout the twentieth century. It continues now, and provides evidence of the profound importance of the Great War in braiding together family history and world history. The family history of the Great War spans the globe; it is at the core of a memory boom, a return to origins which – like this very multi-volume history – returns to the Great War, the ur-catastrophe of the twentieth century.

The demography of war

The shape of family history may be glimpsed in a very general way through standard demographic indicators, but we need to go beyond the quantitative to appreciate the astonishing range of adaptations families made to deal with the extraordinary circumstances of the war and its aftermath. Demographic change is glacial in character: it reflects earlier patterns and moves very slowly over time. Hence it is hardly a surprise that there were major continuities in demographic history over the period of the war. Continuities are evident, but in a number of ways family history after 1918 was very different from that before 1914.

Population profiles

Economic development before 1914 created conditions enabling the combatant powers to have at their disposal the largest population of able-bodied males and the greatest store of weapons with which to arm them in history. Birth rates in Europe had remained high while death rates began their decline from the middle of the nineteenth century, except in France where the birth rate declined earlier. This general tendency ensured sustained population growth yielding a steady flow of men and women to settle the imperial holdings of the European powers. Life expectancy at birth in 1900 varied between 45 and 50 years for Western Europeans; that is about the level registered in Iraq in 1970 and in Afghanistan in 2000. At the high end, life expectancy reached 55–60 in Australia in the early twentieth

century; at the low end, parts of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires registered life expectancy figures below 40. Today's figures vary between 75 and 80, reflecting later medical, hygienic and nutritional developments. In 1914 the Great Powers were then more populous and their people lived longer than at any time in previous history.

None of these populations was homogeneous. There was a class structure to life expectancy, just as there was a class structure to all other life chances. In Britain, children born to well-to-do families had twice the chances of surviving to the age of one year than children of labourers' families. Paradoxically, the material hardships of working-class life, perhaps more in the cities than in the countryside, saved the lives of millions of labouring men, whose stunted bodies or exposure to endemic diseases such as tuberculosis precluded their passing even the rudimentary standards of medical fitness of the day. If one estimate of a million working-class men in Britain so excluded from either the army or the front line is accurate, then it is evident that perhaps 10 million such men escaped the risks of military mortality due to the marks of pre-war deprivation on their bodies.

Mortality

In Antoine Prost's chapter on 'The dead' (see [Chapter 22](#)), there is a full discussion of the toll of war-related mortality in all combatant countries. It is evident that there were radical changes in the age structure of countries like Germany and France who lost approximately one in six of the men who served. In addition, there were geographical and social distinctions in the distribution of war deaths within populations. In most countries – Britain is an exception here – the social group hit hardest by war losses were farm labourers. Further east and south in Europe, and in Africa and Asia, the same was true. The bloodbath hit agrarian society with particular force.

The social structure of pre-war societies was reflected in the social selection of the officer corps in many armies. Once again, this is hardly surprising, but produced unanticipated consequences. Since army officer casualties in combat were up to twice as high as those of men in the ranks, the social elites and well-to-do families who provided these officers suffered significantly higher losses than those less materially fortunate.

There was a social structure to war losses, such that the higher up a man was in the social order, the greater were his chances of being killed or wounded in combat. This was so for nascent air forces, though not for naval forces, since when a ship went down everyone went down with it.

Just to provide a rough estimate, since approximately one in eight men who wore a uniform during the Great War died on active service, and another three in eight were wounded or made prisoners of war, we can infer that half the families from whom soldiers were drawn suffered the death, incarceration as a prisoner of war or the war-related injury of someone in the family circle. Thousands of families suffered multiple losses and social elites were certainly not spared: virtually every noble family in Europe, whose sons naturally chose military careers, suffered similar losses. The French General Castelnau lost three sons; Prince Friedrich Karl of Prussia, an Olympic horseman turned pilot, was killed in 1917; the German social democratic leader Friedrich Ebert lost two sons in the war; and the British Prime Minister H. H. Asquith lost his son Raymond – some said he never recovered from the loss. It is important to note, though, that officer casualties were approximately 5 per cent of all casualties. Commoners formed the overwhelming majority of the lost generation.

Many families survived the war unscathed; they were the lucky ones. The combination of war losses and the influenza pandemic ensured that in four or five years millions of families were destroyed or changed radically. The best estimates we have indicate that the 10 million men who died left 3 million widows and 10 million orphans. Shattered families had to start again, if they could. Some never did. The sociologist Émile Durkheim never recovered from the shock of his son's death, alongside those of virtually all his students. He died in 1917, at the age of 59. Who is to say he was not a casualty of war?

Civilian death rates rose everywhere in 1918–19, when the influenza pandemic killed an estimated 50 million people worldwide. This mutant virus was not caused by the war, but it was spread by it, especially since it was particularly virulent among the age group 15–35: that is, among those eligible for military service. There were no effective preventive measures to limit the spread of the disease, though in some areas – South Australia for instance – quarantine was tried. Populations far from combat regions –

India and the United States – suffered high death rates from this disease, which added further to the devastation families faced in the war decade.

There is some evidence that the elderly suffered increased mortality during the war. This was in part because the mobilisation of farm labourers meant that elderly men had to pick up the plough again, and to manage farms at times without farm animals, which were also requisitioned for military uses. Those aged people who lived off the generosity of charitable institutions received less in wartime, when inflation radically reduced the funds available for such assistance, and when the price of food skyrocketed.

There is evidence of war-related mortality among civilians at earlier ages. Workers in munitions factories drawn from the countryside, where tuberculosis rates were lower than in the cities, were more likely to contract the illness than urban workers, who had the antibodies from earlier brushes with the disease. Much worse was the fate of civilians in the path of retreating armies, as in Galicia in 1915, or the Armenians in Anatolia who were forced to leave their homes and to march to their deaths in the Mesopotamian desert in the same year. On balance, while the Allied powers were better able to prevent worsening mortality among their civilians than were the Central Powers, and while some advances were made in protecting infant and child health, the war was a disaster in public health in general, notably in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa .

Nuptiality and fertility

Substantially different marriage patterns separated family life in Western Europe from that in Eastern Europe, Asia or Africa. In Belgium or Sweden, for instance, roughly one in five women never married; celibacy was a normal social position. This was not the case in Eastern Europe, east of a line running roughly from Trieste in the Adriatic to Stettin on the Baltic Sea. There celibacy was much rarer among women, and the same was true in most parts of Asia and Africa.

In Western Europe, the outbreak of war led to a short-lived marriage boom. It is evident that young people realised the risks they faced of missing the pleasures of married life, and rushed to the altar before enlistment took the new husbands away. At times, these marriages were intended materially to protect women, who would then be in a position to

claim widows' pensions should their new husbands be killed in the war. The outbreak of the war was a time of mixed emotions, very far from the myth of war enthusiasm some writers imagined at the time and later. Anguish and stoicism were the order of the day; is it surprising that many young people came to the conclusion that the basic unit of survival was two and married in the first months of the war?

Thereafter the marriage market plummeted, only to recover sharply after the Armistice. While nuptiality rates remained roughly constant, there was one change which we can attribute to the war. Divorce rates in many countries rose sharply in the immediate post-war period. There were many sources of this change. The first was the way long separation put many marriages at risk; some of those who had married hurriedly in 1914 realised the mistakes they had made and ended their marriages. There were minor changes in the law which accelerated this shift, which the law followed, but did not cause. We should be cautious about placing too much emphasis on this change, since divorce was a middle-class option which most working-class and agrarian women could not afford. The safest conclusion to reach is that for some social groups, in the war decade, young people got into and out of marriages more frequently than before.

Consequently, celibacy rates for women were not significantly higher after the war than before. The reason was that women changed their strategies of family formation, such that they married men the same age as they were, since the older men they would have married on pre-war patterns were dead. In urban areas, some women chose marriage partners from social groups they would never have met without the war. Demographic turbulence opened up opportunities for some women to marry outside the cohort of potential marriage partners assigned to them by tradition and family pressure. Whatever the source, it is clear that remaining unmarried was an unattractive option for most women during and after the war. Celibacy meant dependence on the men in the nuclear family, particularly fathers, and in the inclement economic conditions of the post-war years, being inside a marriage was materially safer for most women than being outside one.

It is important to pay particular attention to the stability of marriage patterns in the period of the Great War, because here is a subject in which popular perceptions were completely misleading. There is a myth of the

Great War, still alive today, which has it that millions of women never had the chance to enjoy marriage and family life because there were no men left after the war for them to marry. In individual cases the losses of male friends and workers were indeed catastrophic, but there is no doubt that when women decided to marry they were able to find a husband with whom to share their lives to the same degree as had been the case before the conflict. Spinsterhood existed as a recognised social position for women in Western Europe before the war, and neither there nor elsewhere is there any convincing evidence that the war barred a substantial number of women from married life. Women's choices were more varied and subtle than that

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Despite the profound shock caused by war losses, the institution of marriage weathered the storm of war. So did pre-war fertility patterns. The downward trend in fertility throughout Europe continued unabated, despite a brief upward inflection caused by births postponed during the war years.

Migration

The most radical effect of the war on population movements was the extent to which it closed a period of massive out-migration from Europe westwards over the Atlantic to the Americas and south-eastwards to the Antipodes. Here political change was the key: the Russian Revolution and other upheavals had led the United States to erect immigration barriers, effectively ending a thirty-year wave of immigration totalling as many as 30 million people who left Europe for new worlds and new lives. The economic instability in potential host countries like Canada and Australia meant that other destinations were unable to accommodate anything like the pre-war flow of migrants. Thus Europeans who would have migrated on pre-war patterns were stuck where they had been born.

Migration within Europe remained very substantial, especially in that area to the east of Germany and Italy where armed conflict carried on long after 11 November 1918. One estimate has it that one-fifth of the population of Russia was on the move in 1918; similar movements followed combat and famine conditions which persisted into the 1920s. Only with the end of the civil war in Russia and the restriction of communism within the

boundaries of the new Soviet Union, did some degree of population stability return to Europe .

Families under the pressure of war

Letters home

One of the most powerful vectors for the maintenance of family ties was letter-writing. One estimate has it that in the order of two billion letters were exchanged between families at home and men in uniform during the conflict. That figure is probably an underestimate. The epistolary history of the war has yet to be written, but it includes parcels, objects, letters and postcards of all shapes and kinds. Parents provided soldiers with items to make their lives more bearable, and sometimes soldiers would send parcels home if they felt their loved ones were in danger of going without. Many but by no means all letters were censored. A comparative study of the lexicon of British and German soldiers' letters shows remarkable similarities, indicating a transnational code of stoicism and reassurance in both directions.²

To be sure, there were linguistic and social class conventions which preclude any generalisation from even a large sample of such letters to family correspondence as a whole. Suffice it to say that the art of letter-writing kept families in touch if not together. Most soldiers had neither the time nor the temperament for extended epistolary conversations, but there were those who wrote repeatedly from the front and waited expectantly for return mail.

There is some evidence that letter-writing enabled fathers to discover and to express the love they felt for their children in ways beyond social conventions before the war. Long-term separation was certainly not unknown in poor families before 1914, and migratory patterns were marked by a father's foray, followed (with luck) by the arrival of the rest of the family when circumstances and savings permitted. But the staggering tide of casualties put familial ties, including those between fathers and children, into stark relief. When fathers came home they tended to appear as apparitions to children, shadowy and sometimes frightening figures, who came one day and left another. How did fathers themselves respond to these

separations? Once again, we need to be sensitive to what is unsaid in the documents, but there are traces of a change in the norms governing the expression of male affection for their children, an open tenderness rarely fostered before the war, but which the conflict helped frame and which may very well have endured.³

Some family correspondence is full of affection between parents and children. One extreme case of a family determined to carry on an intense family life despite the war is that of the Bickersteths. Samuel Bickersteth was an evangelical Anglican priest, the vicar of Leeds and a preacher at St James's Palace in London. He and his wife Ella had six sons, three of whom served in the war. All eight of them wrote constantly, and did so regardless of military vicissitudes.

Morris Bickersteth was an infantry officer who had two brothers also on active service: Julian, a chaplain, and Burgon, a cavalry officer. On 29 June, just before Morris's death, the three managed to find each other on the Western Front to share their news and write a collective letter to their parents. Morris Bickersteth was killed in the first minutes of the attack on the Somme on 1 July, but it was only four days later that the family received the news that he was missing in action. By that time, Julian Bickersteth had found men in his brother's unit who said that he had been killed, but that his grave was lost. 'His grave is all the world', he wrote to his parents, but that was not the end of their search for their son's remains. The parents met a soldier in Morris's unit, who described the circumstances of his death. Unfortunately, his body was lost in the chaos of the battle. 'I can't bear to think of our darling's body lying in the open, and we should love the things he carried in his pockets', Ella Bickersteth noted in her journal. The search for the body lasted until they were able, as a family, to visit Morris's grave site on the Somme in 1919.

There are other discussions in this volume of war memorials and mourning practices. What is striking about this story is the way one exceptional family used letters to fortify their ties in wartime on a daily basis, and how the parents collected these letters and their wartime journals as a kind of war memorial to their son and to their grief over his death in combat.⁴

Another kind of family correspondence linked a father and son during the war. This too was an unusual case, arising out of the letters exchanged between Alan Lascelles, a young cavalry officer, and his father during the war. Lascelles would later be private secretary to George VI and Elizabeth II, but thirty years before he was simply a young cavalry officer on the Western Front, cooling his heels, as it were, and waiting for the breakthrough that never occurred. The cavalry were to consolidate the advance once a hole had been punched in German lines in 1916: that never happened.

Young 'Tommy' Lascelles – aged 27 in 1914 – and his father, a retired naval commander, both loved horses. Their correspondence frequently had an equine element in it, and evidently talking about horses enabled them to express their affection towards each other and to share practical knowledge of use to a cavalryman in the field. In April 1916 Tommy told his father all about a 'Marathon' horse race, drawing in all kinds of cavalry units for an eight-mile run. On 16 July he wrote that he was at Divisional Headquarters awaiting the call: 'the situation is not ripe for us as yet', is how he summarised the situation. It never would be. On 9 August, Tommy thanked his father for having sent him some grouse, and then remarked that 'it is no joke watering thirsty horses in the dark'. He wrote to his sister about horses too, complaining lightly that they debarred him from living anywhere near civilisation, and kept him standing about after a long ride because they had to be fed and watered. He engaged in a bit of self-mockery, saying that he hoped some day that the horse would be declared obsolete for war purposes: in that case, he would be made obsolete too, but he did not say that.

He welcomed the arrival of the tank – he called them 'caterpillars' – which had knocked 'another nail in the coffin of the war-horse'. He thought tanks looked 'like elongated snails'. A few weeks later, he asked his father if he could send him some 'small wheel horse clippers' to groom his mount. He noted that 'horses do much better when clipped', reducing the risks of 'ringworm and mange'. On 5 November 1916, he wrote to his father that 'the horses are well, but with coats like bears; the only way to get them tolerably clean is to beat them like carpets'. His own mount was lame, but (he told his father) it healed relatively quickly.

He wanted to hide his head, Tommy told his sister, when the rains came and made both him and his horse filthy. In April 1917, he wrote to his sister that their 'horses suffered cruelly' from the cold; some had to be hoisted out of the mud, in which they were trapped 'belly-deep'. On 17 April he rode on horseback to Vimy to see the site of a major victory, when German units were pushed off an escarpment by the Canadians.

Tommy's mobility was severely reduced when a remount crossed its legs and landed on his ankle. Still he reassured his father that 'I have got what looks to be a quite reasonable sort of horse in place of my chestnut', though he could not ride her yet. He gave his father the name of the man in charge of cavalry horse remounts in case he decided to send some of his own horses to the front. On 31 July he asked his father if he could think of good names to give to new-born colts. 'Marengo' was the best name Tommy could come up with. In December 1917 his cavalry days were interrupted when he was shot in the arm and invalided to England. Returning to service, he saw action during the March 1918 German offensive at Villers-Bretonneux, on the Somme, where the German advance was ultimately stopped.⁵

A cavalryman's war naturally turned around horses, but the content of this family correspondence shows how talking about them to each other domesticated the war. These were courtiers, men and women used to the great estates of England, and perfectly at home with horse-racing, horse-riding, horse-breeding and horse talk. The Bickersteths had their faith; the Lascelles had their horses. Their correspondence tells us much about how families tried to keep together through the written word. Those much less privileged than these two prominent families did the same, in any way they could.

Many farmers wrote home to their wives about what needed to be done at various seasons. These rural families had much more to worry about than the Bickersteths and the Lascelles of this world. Their futures were precarious, depending not only upon weather but upon family members, under 16 and over 60, to help to bring the harvest in, to sow the fields for the next year, and to care for the animals. Prisoners of war were drafted into this work in Germany and elsewhere. But even their presence did not make up the labour shortage on the land. Women had to do the backbreaking

work alongside the men and boys left on the farm. And afterwards there was the effort of keeping children in line without a father around. In Bavaria miscarriages and other ailments in the latter years of the war testified to women's overexertion in rural society. Here too letters from the front could cheer an overworked wife or mother.⁶

The letters or cables all families dreaded were those announcing loss. Villagers in rural areas watched the postman moving through their houses, hoping that his destination was elsewhere. Notifications frequently stopped short of stating that a soldier had been killed; the chaos of war ensured that most messages simply stated that a person was missing in action. Elisabeth Macke, the wife of the German painter Auguste Macke, heard only in mid October 1914 that her husband had been killed three weeks before. Before then she suffered the anguish of receiving back letters she had sent to her husband, stamped 'wounded: field hospital unknown'. She thought he might have been captured by the French, then read a newspaper report that he was in British hands. We can only imagine the state of mind of thousands of wives in her position, blown in different directions by rumours before being flattened by the truth: they were no longer wives, but widows.⁷

Casualties on such a scale certainly brought the state right into the heart of family life. It is difficult to argue that the private and public realms were divided in any significant way in wartime, and yet how radical a change in the intersection of the two occurred during the war? Elizabeth Domansky has argued that during the Great War 'the family ceased to exist . . . as a unit of economic and social power and, beyond the war's end, as the site of society's social and biological reproduction'. Later, we will take issue with the claim with respect to the post-1918 period. What is the evidence to support her claim about the wartime family? Her view is that the 'traditional family unit', dominated by the male patriarch, was not at the core of German society's mobilisation for war. By 'removing men from their families, by moving women into the position of the principal family breadwinner', and by making reproduction a matter of the state and not the family, 'militarisation dissolved both the family as an institution that guaranteed the reproduction of bourgeois society and the power basis for the role of the family patriarch'.⁸ Ironically, then, the militarisation of German society undermined one of its traditional props.

While making intriguing links between the militarisation of daily life in wartime and later under the Nazis, Domansky's interpretation on balance is not borne out by family correspondence or by studies of domestic life in wartime.⁹ Indeed one of the extraordinary features of family life is the ingenuity with which women in particular and family members in general addressed issues of shortages of food, fuel, clothing and other essentials. This was as true of Germany and Austria-Hungary as it was of Britain and France, though the material pressure on daily life in the Central Powers was much more severe than it was for the Allies, with the exception of Russia. True enough, the state stepped into the patriarch's shoes by providing separation allowances directly to wives, and controlled rents in order to mobilise munitions workers in urban areas. But when she claims that 'Men's dominance over women derived no longer from their role as *fathers* but from their role as *soldiers*', she has underestimated the staying power of traditional gender roles, which were put under stress, but did not change radically in any combatant country.

And yet we must exercise a considerable degree of caution here. The only history we can write is that of families, not of 'the family'. In many cases there were unavoidable shifts within families faced by the ravages of war. Women received separation allowances directly and handled the family budget directly; who did so after the war is an open question, but it would be absurd to doubt that some women retained a degree of financial freedom after the war which they had not had before it. Some women – for instance, schoolteachers – received pay much closer to the level male schoolteachers received after the war; in other occupations gender differences in pay persisted.

There is a separate history to write of the way in which war wounds affected the balance of power between husbands and wives during and after the war. Who can say that an amputee who could no longer shift a plough had the same authority after the war that he had exercised in his able-bodied days before it? The need for disabled men to learn new trades and new skills destabilised families, and probably moved many households to towns so that the 'breadwinner' could indeed earn the family's bread. Under conditions of instability and unemployment, the fate of such households was uncertain, and so was the status of the head of the house.

Many letters home from peasant soldiers reinforced the authority of the man of the house, who took pains to instruct his wife and other family members about what needed to be done, when and how. The need for such assertions of control hints at levels of anxiety perhaps difficult to express directly about the role of the husband in the life of the family. Given wartime and post-war inflation, there was a substantial improvement in the material position of smallholders and tenant farmers. Pierre Barral sees the war as a watershed in rural social relations in France, ending the quasi-feudal hold of large landowners over smallholders, whose greater degree of independence and lesser need to show deference to the great proprietors may have reinforced both their economic position in the countryside and their authority at home.¹⁰ Nothing of the kind happened in war-ravaged Eastern Europe, where fighting continued for years after the Armistice. Here again, we must insist that the war reconfigured not the family but families, by the millions .

Demobilising the family

Indeed, in the post-war period, there is abundant evidence of a widespread desire to return to pre-war patterns of family life. That could not be done in a very large number of families, or among war widows who lived a shadow existence both before and after the Armistice, but by and large even those who divorced at the time overwhelmingly sought second marriages for both emotional and material protection in the harsh years following 1918.

The state's presence in domestic life, was greater after 1918 than it had been before the war. This was as true of liberal Britain as it was of revolutionary Russia. Partly this was the outcome of the extension of social insurance in wartime to include all munitions workers, and thereafter the majority of the manual labour force. But it was also a result of the presence in all combatant countries of substantial numbers of the war disabled, widows and orphans.

In France, the case for decent treatment of these victims of war was made by the disabled themselves. Only there did a disabled man establish the validity of his claim to a pension solely by making it: a right was that which could be confirmed by a tribunal. Elsewhere, men who sought a pension

had to prove their condition was war-related; in France, the state had to prove that the claim was unfounded. Putting the burden on the state to contest a claim saved thousands of Frenchmen from the fate of their colleagues elsewhere who faced a hostile bureaucracy from the start. In addition, pensions were matters for discussion by administrative bodies on which the disabled in France – again as opposed to elsewhere – had a determining voice. Everywhere bureaucrats claimed that veterans had a right to pensions as a matter of natural justice, but only in France did they gain their rights by separating pensions from charity .¹¹

The French Jacobin tradition – linking citizenship to military service – also lay behind a system of making war orphans into wards of the nation, and helping them buy a smallholding or obtain job training which enabled them to earn a living, and thus to marry. Domansky is right that procreation was a political crusade in post-war Europe, but with the exception of war pensions, nothing any state did in the immediate aftermath of the war halted either the pre-war trend of declining fertility or the restoration of patriarchal family structures .

The shadow of the war on post-war family life lay elsewhere. It was in the presence of damaged men by the hundreds of thousands throughout the world and in the unrecognised and gruelling effort family members, mostly women, made to care for these men and to prevent their suffering from destroying their children or themselves. The Great War placed the disabled at the centre of civil society, but it was in homes and out of sight that their miseries were expressed, attended to and relieved, if relief was possible at all.

Doris Lessing

The first children's home in what is now Zimbabwe was set up after the Great War for twelve war orphans.¹² In what was then Southern Rhodesia, the novelist Doris Lessing grew up no less in the shadow of the war than did these twelve. Here is her snapshot summary of living with her father, a damaged veteran of the Great War, who left Britain after 1918, first for Persia, and then for Africa:

Alfred Tayler, a vigorous and healthy man, was wounded badly in the First World War, tried to live as if he were not incapacitated, illnesses defeated him, and at the end of a shortened life he was begging, 'You put a sick old dog out of its misery, why not me?' Nursed back to life after the amputation of his leg in an army hospital by his wife-to-be, he never left behind the images of bodies mangled, beyond repair. 'I couldn't stop thinking of them. My heart felt like a big cold stone.' He was plagued by dreams of the men who died alongside him. His daughter heard him speak of them at the breakfast table. 'Dead soldiers', she wrote laconically, 'simply should not be angry ghosts displaying their wretched wounds.'¹³

As we note in [Chapter 13](#) of this volume on shell shock, medical statistics are woefully incomplete. Alfred was one of those whose physical disability was recognised, but whose psychological disabilities were just as devastating for him, his wife and his two children.

Alfred Tayler talked incessantly about how terrifying his war service was. 'So', Lessing writes in a fond memoir of her father and mother, 'I had the full force of the Trenches, tanks, star-shells, shrapnel, howitzers – the lot – through my childhood and felt as if the black cloud he talked about was there, pressing down on me.' Her mother's anguish at the suffering she saw as a nurse never left her, or her daughter. Her mother, she realised, 'was as much a victim of war as my poor Father' .¹⁴

Pat Barker

Many veterans never spoke of the horrors. That does not mean that their wounds, physical and psychological, were hidden from their families. The novelist Pat Barker was an illegitimate child of the Second World War. After her birth, her mother married a man who had been in the Great War, and who had fits and such a violent temper that the child was brought up by her mother's mother. Her grandmother's second husband was also a wounded veteran of the Great War. He 'had served in the battlefields of northern France and had been bayoneted in the side by a German soldier'. As a child she 'would stare at the scar as the man, stripped to the waist, stood washing himself at the kitchen sink: sometimes, like St Thomas, she

put her fingers in it. But how he came by the wound, like every other aspect of that horrific wartime experience, was never mentioned.’ Her grandfather’s horror of noise was one of her lasting memories. She grew up learning about the ways women had to cope with the mess that war made of family lives. In the 1980s she began to write novels and became the celebrated author of a trilogy of books on shell shock and damaged soldiers of the Great War. ‘In all my books’, she said in 2008, ‘there is a great emphasis on the long-term damage to the individual and the family. There are male careers for veterans, but the overwhelming burden of caring for someone who will never be the same again falls on women. I’ve always been aware of the psychological damage inflicted on families, sometimes not clearing for generations .’¹⁵

This is not to say that the families of all veterans were damaged. Some were fortunate enough to bear no trace of its horrors. They were the lucky ones. In many cases, the impact of the war was indirect or subtle. The great actor and mime Jean-Louis Barrault lost his father in the Great War. Who is to say that his choice of silence as his medium was not a reflection of a missing voice in his childhood? Albert Camus wrote of ‘The first man’, in talking about his father, who also died in the Great War. Did he learn to be a stranger when visiting the grave of his father in Normandy, and realising that at the time of his visit he was already older than his father was at his death in 1914?

Public recognition of the scale of the effect of war on children was global in scale. The American mining engineer Herbert Hoover, living in London in 1914, launched an effective campaign to feed Belgian children in the first year of the war. After the Armistice he widened these efforts to feed children in Central and Eastern Europe, and then went further into communist Russia to provide supplies to starving populations in the nascent USSR. Children in what are now Belarus and Ukraine embroidered their thanks on the sacks in which grain and other supplies arrived, and sent them back to Hoover with messages of gratitude. Hoover’s were probably the first foreign-aid programmes in history. An orphan since the age of 10, he threw himself into this work, which had a political as well as a humanitarian aim, especially in his intervention in Russia at the end of the civil war of 1918–21.

American aid for French children took other forms as well. In the castle that was the Marquis de Lafayette's birthplace in Chavaniac, an American foundation created an orphanage for the care of war orphans. The same group opened a 'Preventorium' there to help sick or weak children.

Serbian children were cared for by men and women working for the Scottish Women's Hospitals and the Serbian Relief Fund, based in London. After the Armistice, Evelina Haverfeld, who organised the Serbian Red Cross Society in London, set up an orphanage in the remote village of Bajina Bashta on the river Drina in Serbia. She died of pneumonia there in 1920.

There was a major international effort, organised by the League of Nations, to rescue children who had been forcibly placed in Muslim families in the aftermath of the Armenian genocide of 1915. As Keith Watenpaugh has shown, for the first time children counted as a class of victims of war during and after the genocide, thereby focusing attention on what we now term the human rights of those in ethnic minorities damaged by international conflict .¹⁶

In 1914 a Joint Distribution Committee was established by American Jewish philanthropists to help provide for Jewish communities in Palestine, and later throughout Europe, who were suffering hardships due to war conditions. In 1919 the 'Joint', as it was and is known, set up the Palestine Orphans Committee to help more than 4,000 war orphans. A more ecumenical effort was begun in 1919 under the aegis of the Save the Children Fund. Eglantyne Jebb and her sister Dorothy Buxton started the organisation to help feed hungry children in Germany and Austria-Hungary during the period between the Armistice and the signing of the Peace Treaty on 28 June 1919. The Allies used hunger as a means to ensure that the defeated powers would sign the peace treaties, rather than risk a renewal of hostilities. Jebb and Buxton were not the only ones who thought this policy was waging war on children and other vulnerable people, and set out to do something about it. In December 1919, Pope Benedict XV placed his prestige behind the effort, and many Catholic organisations followed suit. The plight of children was sufficiently well publicised in the immediate aftermath of the war to ensure that there would be help for the millions of people whose families and homes had been destroyed by the war. The sheer

scale of humanitarian assistance spoke to the dimensions of the disaster the Great War represented in the history of family life .

Remembrance

Fictive kinship and the shadow of war

The bonds some men formed in wartime lasted long after the Armistice. Some of these ties of shared experience were as strong as blood ties. When men remembered the war in which they fought, they thought not only of blood relatives who had gone through the war, but of friends and comrades who had shared the same risks and knew the same hardships. I term these bonds those of 'fictive kinship', as distinguished from ties of blood or marriage.

Patterns of remembrance have made room for these fictive brethren, alongside those who measured war experience in terms of the price blood relatives paid in wartime. War museums record the legacy of both, and the pattern of visitorship has reflected both. There are museums all over the world now, a century after the outbreak of the war, where the old tell the young about the Great War, and do so in ways which highlight how personal war stories really are. For 1914 was the moment when Great Power history and family history became braided together in an inextricable embrace.

Some of those families were born of experience and formed by men during war service. These ties of 'fictive kinship' were at times no less powerful than blood ties. Many unrelated men who served in the war formed bonds strong enough to last long after the Armistice.

Among them were three New Zealanders who met in London while two of them were convalescing from wounds suffered in different theatres of military operations. All three were architects. Of the three, Malcolm Keith Draffin was the only one to serve both at Gallipoli and in France and Belgium, where he was wounded at Passchendaele, and won the Military Cross. In a London hospital he met Hugh Cresswell Grierson, who had served in France as a sergeant in the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps and stayed on in London to continue his studies. Joining them was

Kenneth Walter Aimer, who had embarked for Europe in February 1917, and who had been injured at Passchendaele on the very same day Draffin had also been wounded there. He was transferred to the same hospital in England.

The two men wounded in the same engagement and a third who was a fellow Anzac all studied at the Architectural Association in London at the expense of the New Zealand government. It is hardly surprising that their friendship carried on well after the Armistice.

Back in New Zealand, Grierson and Aymer formed their own firm, and in May 1921 they enlisted Draffin to join them in their submission of a design for the Auckland Memorial Museum, to be built as an extension to the city museum on Observatory Hill overlooking the city. In October they learned that their submission had been chosen.

It was no accident that three veterans, two of whom had been wounded, were chosen to do this job. Their military record gave them the moral authority to speak in stone, as it were, of the war as a tragedy, and to find an appropriate form to express the meaning of the war. They chose a neoclassical design to do so, and designed a cenotaph to stand separately in front of the building. Over the colonnade they placed the words of Pericles: 'The whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men – they are commemorated not only by columns and inscriptions in their own country but in foreign lands also and by memorials graven not on stone but on the hearts of men.' Here was a design halfway between a war memorial and a museum, where sacred themes would be displayed and later generations would learn of the things these men had done. Whose hearts but those of veterans could express the feelings of the people at such a moment? Who better could chart the future of the nation in stone?

The point about the brotherhood of veterans and their authority was reinforced by the explicit statement in public notices issued during the course of the building's construction that tenders from ex-servicemen would be given preference in selecting firms contributing to the project. These men formed something of a world apart. They had gone off to defend the British Empire, but they had come back changed, and were determined to help forge a new identity for New Zealanders. The form of a Greek temple

sacralised the dead and enjoined the living to create for their nation an identity worthy of the Anzac legacy.¹⁷

The case of the Auckland War Memorial Museum is but one of many . The role of veterans in the interwar world was by no means limited to politics, and certainly not to the politics of the extreme left or right. These men left their mark on their societies, perhaps rarely as prominently as the trio of Draffin, Grierson and Aylmer, but their partnership suggests a world of sociability worthy of the term ‘fictive kinship’ . The bonds of war helped many veterans to withstand some of the difficulties veterans faced on their return home.

Here too we must register a note of caution. In the immediate aftermath of the war, and when both remembrance and bereavement were matters of universal concern, this kind of kinship flourished. The question remains as to whether it faded by the end of the first post-war decade. In many cases the answer must be yes. Life went on, and there were multiple conflicts which cut across the brotherhood of the war generation, both domestically and internationally, and yet some of this spirit of solidarity lasted for generations. In the 1960s the French veterans’ leader and distinguished jurist René Cassin would visit the rural hinterland beyond Grenoble, the Grande Chartreuse. There he would stop by in small towns and wander into the town hall. He found it relatively easy to strike up a conversation with a town clerk or other official, and to discover that both were veterans of the Great War. Cassin, then head of the highest administrative court in the land, would ask if there were any local problems on which he could be of assistance – a permit for a road that needed to be granted or a project to refurbish a school that had to be approved. Yes, his interlocutors said, there were such problems, and handed over some details; Cassin said he would see what he could do. A short time later, miraculously these plans or permits were approved, following a phone call from the highest administrative court in France to a surprised administrator, who suddenly discovered the urgency of action in this particular case.¹⁸ Patronage was a form of brotherhood, as any student of the Mafia can attest. The favours granted by veterans to veterans were of the same order, only without the slightest hint of illegality attached. Military service constituted a kind of blood bond, one which mattered more in some contexts than in others .

Families reunited

A second Antipodean story will highlight another enduring facet of the legacy of the Great War. It concerns efforts which spanned the century to find the missing and to give them a formal burial. The reason why this mattered so much was that so many families were left uncertain about the fate of their loved ones, whose bodies had simply vanished in battle. This is hardly surprising given the nature of the artillery war, but it still left millions of families with a void, or rather without a place where they could express their grief at the loss of loved ones in war.

Once lost now found

The story of the construction of the last Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Fromelles in northern France can serve as an indication of the extent to which family ties with the dead of the Great War have spanned the century since the Armistice. In July 1916 a diversionary attack north of the primary point of British operations against the German lines on the Somme produced 7,000 British and Australian casualties, while having no effect whatsoever on the disposition of German forces, under considerable British and French pressure to the south. All the Allied casualties of this futile attack were accounted for with the exception of some 250 Australian soldiers who vanished during the battle. It was only in 2008 that an amateur historian had the good sense to consult German sources and to suggest that there was a high likelihood that they were buried in a wood near Fromelles, which had been adjacent to a casualty clearing centre behind German lines. Aerial photography confirmed this inspired guess, and the remains of several score bodies were matched to their families' DNA. Not all those lost were identified, but a sufficiently large number of them were to justify the construction of a new cemetery and the official burial of Great War dead in 2010 and 2011. Their descendants came from Australia to put their lost family members to rest.

The inscriptions they chose showed the way in which so many millions of families touched by the Great War were defined by those who were not there. Truncated lives meant truncated family trees, and the poignancy of the occasion of the reburials at Fromelles was mirrored in the epitaphs

chosen by families and carved in the Portland stone headstones erected for each man whose remains were identified. A few will stand for the many.

The words of the Baptist hymn 'Amazing Grace' provided a grammar for this extraordinary story of bodies being found so long after the war. This hymn, which has become a universal anthem in the late twentieth century, probably did not have the same resonance for those who died in the war. Here is one more reflection of the fact that mourning is always about the living. 'Once missing now found and at rest, Remembered by his family' is the inscription chosen by the descendants of Lt A. Mitchell, 30th Battalion Australian Infantry, who died at Fromelles on 20 July 1916, aged 22. The family of Private R. H. Pflaum, 32nd Battalion Australian Infantry, who died on 19 July 1916, aged 19, repeated the words of 'Amazing Grace' to honour their long-lost relative, whose own voice was framed in these words in stone: 'I once was lost but now am found.' The family of Corporal J. H. Ross, 29th Battalion Australian Infantry, who died on 19 July 1916, aged 23, did the same: 'Beloved son of Alice and James Ross. Once was lost but now is found, Not forgotten.' A variation is that chosen by the family of Private D. M. Lawlor, who died on 20 July 1916, aged 29: 'Now I am at peace free to roam wherever my family speak my name forever. Donated by his family.'

The family of Corporal R. C. Green, who died on 20 July 1916 at the age of 30 chose a line from Siegfried Sassoon's poem 'Before the Battle', written just weeks before the Battle of Fromelles. The line suggests that Green's voice was 'Hushed by a broad-winged breeze'. Many other inscriptions suggest the register of emotions shared by the families who came across the globe to honour their ancestors and to give them a formal burial. That privilege was denied to millions of other families around the world, families whose fathers, brothers, sons, lovers or friends perished without a trace during the war and whose remains are undiscovered .

The solace family members find in solemn rites on consecrated ground, at whatever distance in time from death, is palpable. The line 'I once was lost and now am found' applies just as powerfully to families with absences at their core; to be sure, the dead do not return, but perhaps through these acts the family returns to a time when it was normal for men and women to die one at a time. These rites return family time, if only for a moment, to the

rhythms of another age – that before the enduring catastrophe of the Great War .

Perhaps it is in this set of practices, rooted in family time, that we can see one of the enduring attractions of the Great War to later generations. Since the 1970s there has been a wave of interest in family history and genealogy, now multiplied exponentially by the internet. But even before the internet took over as a site of storage and retrieval, thousands of families found traces of the past in their attics, where trunks and boxes and folders disclosed their treasures to younger family members. Those who inherited parental or grandparental property found photographs, letters and objects no one had ever mentioned before. Archives around the world have benefited from the gift of such holdings, but so have family members several generations removed from the war itself. The bond between grandparents and grandchildren, over the heads of the difficult generation of parents between them, informed the wave of battlefield tourism which has become a worldwide industry, fuelled in part by family interest and in part by the decline in the price of air travel. More Australian families celebrate the dawn service on 25 April – Anzac Day – in Gallipoli than ever before. The same is true in Canberra, in Melbourne and in other Australian cities. Remembrance is family history performed in public. That is part of its power, and part of the reason why the Great War still retains its luminous presence in our public and private lives today.

1 For a good statement of the myth, in which she still believes, see Virginia Nicholson, *Singled Out: How Two Million British Women Survived without Men after the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

2 Aribert Reimann, *Der grosse Krieg der Sprachen: Untersuchungen zur historischen Semantik in Deutschland und England zur Zeit des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Essen: Klartext, 2000).

3 See Manon Pignot's [Chapter 2](#) above, and her book *Allons enfants de la patrie: génération Grande Guerre* (Paris: Seuil, 2012), pp. 314ff.

4 See Churchill College Archives, Bickersteth war diaries; and Pat Jalland, *Death in War and Peace: Loss and Grief in England, 1914–1970* (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 63–76.

5 All correspondence cited is from letters in the Lascelles papers in Churchill College, Cambridge.

6 Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany 1914–1923*, trans. Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2005).

7 Erica A. Kuhlman, *Of Little Comfort: War Widows, Fallen Soldiers, and the Remaking of the Nation after the Great War* (New York University Press, 2012), pp. 31–4.

8 Elizabeth Domansky, ‘ Militarization and reproduction in World War I Germany’, in Geoff Eley (ed.), *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 427–63, citation at p. 436.

9 See Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1997–2007).

10 Pierre Barral, *Les agrariens français de Méline à Pisani* (Paris: A. Colin, 1968), ch. 5.

11 Antoine Prost and Jay Winter, *René Cassin et les droits de l’homme: le projet d’une génération* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), ch. 2.

12 See Jay Winter, ‘Writing war: beyond glory’, Humanitas Lectures, University of Cambridge, Lent term, 2012.

13 Doris Lessing, *Alfred and Emily* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008), pp. 152–4.

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 170, 172.

15 Kennedy Fraser, 'Ghost writer', *New Yorker*, 17 March 2008, pp. 41–5.

16 Keith David Watenpaugh, 'The League of Nations' rescue of Armenian genocide survivors and the making of modern humanitarianism, 1920–1927', *American Historical Review*, 115:5 (2010), pp. 1315–39.

17 For these documents, see the archives of the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

18 Thanks are due to Cassin's stepdaughter, Chantal Connachie, for her recollections of these events, in interviews in August 2011.

Part II Gender

Introduction to Part II

John Horne and Jay Winter

Societies at war had to change the sexual division of labour to ensure that the men at the front would have the weapons of war they needed. But while gender divisions narrowed under the pressure of economic mobilisation, the dichotomy between masculinity and femininity changed in ways which sometimes starkly opposed them to each other and at other times required men to adopt more feminine roles and attitudes while women put on the trousers in several senses of the term.

One way in which the sexual division of labour changed was in the definition of what constituted 'work' itself. The armies in the field were defending their families at home, but their womenfolk had to engage in both domestic and extra-domestic work to see the job through to victory. The domestic was valorised more and more the longer the war went on, and so was the work women did in it. Here too we can see the destabilising effects of war.

In all countries women had worked outside of the home before the war to earn a paid wage, but the range of jobs they were entitled to do and the pay they would receive for those jobs were distinctly curtailed by gender distinctions of great importance in the working-class world. The imperatives of wartime eroded these distinctions, but after the Armistice much of the old gendered disadvantage women faced at work and in civil society returned, at times in an even more pronounced way than before.

Women writers captured this economic, social and cultural instability in gender roles, and made it clear that the home front was a front, a battlefield to determine the future not only of the nation but of the family itself. By and large men won that second war, and the patriarchal family, bolstered by state aid, returned to institutionalise and perpetuate notions of gender as

natural and immutable. War challenged masculinity and heightened its prestige, leaving women at a disadvantage in power and wealth just as marked after the war as before 1914. Yet for all this, constructions of masculinity and femininity were both more troubled and more politically charged as a result of the war than they had been before.

4 War work

Laura Lee Downs What is work? Is feeding and washing a child work? Is standing in line for severely rationed food work? Is soldiering or nursing at the front lines work? Is running a charity or medical dispensary work? Is scrounging for food, or raising rabbits for home consumption work? Since Adam Smith, economists (Marx included) have defined work in terms of the production of material goods. It is a kind of labour that produces things that can be exchanged or transferred to another person via the market, whereas the labour involved in producing services, though clearly important, is not understood to be a part of the economy of production. Indeed, such labour is most often understood as a non-productive form of work, linked to the realm of consumption.¹ But with the massive social and economic mobilisation during the First World War, the gendered frontiers between work and not-work shifted dramatically inside each combatant nation, as states reorganised their economies around the support of their armies. Women workers thus moved, rapidly and en masse, out of those sectors of the economy traditionally reserved to them – textiles, garment-making, domestic service – and into shops and factories working on defence contracts, into hospitals and support services for the armies, into transport services and expanded government bureaucracies: in short, into every facet of the economy where the sudden withdrawal of male labour had left a breach to be filled. Additional female hands were recruited directly from the ranks of those working and middle-class women whose pre-war labours had been consecrated exclusively to ensuring the maintenance and well-being of their families.²

Such tectonic shifts in the economic order produced an abrupt diminution in the level of those traditional services, provided quietly and invisibly by wives and daughters within the private realm of the home: an absence that would become visible quite abruptly as men moved out of productive labour in factories and on farms and into the business of making war, while wives and daughters, whether previously employed or not, moved into full-time employment in war-related industries and services. In a time of war,

this meant exhausting stretches of shift work, often ten to twelve hours or more, with precious little time off to see to various dependents, both young and old, back at home, let alone stand in line with ration tickets in the hopes of acquiring increasingly scarce food.

At a moment when European states had begun to take a deeper interest in the general fitness and well-being of their individual populations, the sudden deficit in women's unpaid domestic labour, crucial to the maintenance of the social fabric, not to mention the welfare of the rising generation, would be acutely felt across the combatant nations. As a result, these states were obliged to rethink the boundaries of public and private, work and not-work, a process which first took visible form in the separation allowances that virtually all belligerent nations, tsarist Russia included, paid to the wives of mobilised men. Such allowances, though woefully inadequate, indicate that wartime governments not only recognised the cost to families of removing the male wage-earner, but found it just (or at least expedient) to make up that loss, however partially, with a 'wage' paid to wives and mothers. For the duration of the war at least, these women were assumed to be 'working' at raising a family.

Total social mobilisation thus ripped a hole in the curtain that separated public from private, making the material needs of a broad swathe of the population a matter of public concern. For as one contemporary astutely observed, in an age of total war 'the entire sphere of women's private life became a matter of concern for war politics . . . Military policy and social policy entered the battlefield hand in hand.'³

What, then, is *war work*? How are we to understand the reach of this term, so widely employed at the time, and so often used as shorthand for *women's work* in wartime? Clearly it is a term that embraces women's work in both its paid and its unpaid (i.e., patriotic voluntary service) variants. But there is another dimension to the term, born during the war and picked up subsequently in much of the literature on women's war work, that encourages us to see women's war work as a key element in women's long, and unfinished march towards equality with men. And that is the idea that such work – and perhaps most especially those clearly patriotic and voluntary services such as nursing or ambulance-driving – offered clear proof of women's capacities as citizens and as workers. Patriotic sacrifice on behalf of the nation at war thus testified to women's aptitude for

citizenship, while their capacity to produce, and even out-produce men, on the factory floor, in government offices, wherever the duties of war called them, constituted clear evidence that women deserved equal opportunities and equal pay. 'Women's arrival in the life of the nation . . . [it is] the dawn of a new civilisation', proclaimed French journalist Gaston Rageot in 1918, as he recorded the details of the war's (temporary) subversion of the gendered order of things: women conductors driving trams and buses, women munitions workers turning shells at the lathe, women nurses working under fire in hastily erected military hospitals just behind the front lines.⁴ But the central paradox – that a war of unprecedented brutality, one that spelled death and terror for the millions of men on the front lines, might at the same time be opening out new fields of opportunity to European women – was best captured by a Scottish lady welfare supervisor who, in the summer of 1917, acidly remarked that with this war, 'the Kaiser handed British women an opportunity which their own fathers and brothers and mothers and husbands had ever denied them'.⁵

Long before the guns on the Western Front were finally silenced, our Scottish observer's shrewd observation that the total social mobilisation of the Great War had allowed women to finally prove their valour, would become the dominant interpretation of women's experience of the Great War. For in government administration, in war factories and wherever they took over from the millions of men who were fighting (and dying) on the field of battle, women amply demonstrated their capacity to keep the country running, and to keep up the steady flow of munitions to the front. In so doing, they put paid to any lingering doubts about their readiness to take up the full rights and duties of active citizenship, including the vote. Or so the story went. The case of Great Britain fits this interpretive frame best, for the partial female suffrage, granted in 1918 to women over 30 who met minimum property qualifications, was framed explicitly in recognition of women's heroic labours on the home front. But even in France, where women would not receive the vote until 1944, the women's suffrage bill that flew through the Chamber after the Armistice (only to be blocked three years later by the far more conservative Senate) was cast in terms of women's wartime service and sacrifice.⁶

If this interpretation of war work prospered most especially in wartime Britain, it clearly also had some play in France, as well as in Germany,

Austria-Hungary, Italy and Russia, especially during the initial months of war. Half a century later, the old idea that war work may have opened new routes to women's emancipation would be picked up by a new generation of (largely feminist) historians who began searching the recent past for the roots of the post-1945 expansion in women's employment and citizenship rights.

The difficulty, of course, is that the story of emancipation by war work is one that fits but loosely the highly varied experiences of women in Great Britain and France, for whom any wartime gains at work too often came wrapped in the sorrows of loss, bereavement and destruction. Whereas, so far as German, Austrian, Italian or Russian women are concerned, the concept of emancipation via work in the context of a war that brought in its wake massive hunger, penury and a gradual disintegration of social life seems hardly thinkable. Indeed, the more one looks at how conditions on the home front evolved over the course of four increasingly punishing years, the more it becomes clear that to ask whether or not the war contributed in some way to women's emancipation is to pose the question in terms that risk limiting and distorting our understanding of women's experiences and of the longer-term impact that those experiences had in shaping the post-1918 world. For as Ute Daniel cogently observed, when the term 'emancipation' – which was a powerful tool of progressive political argument in the nineteenth century – quits the realm of political discourse and enters that of historical analysis, it arrives bearing that same progressivist significance that made it such an effective means of political agitation. When transmuted from politics to history, emancipation's efficacy as a critical political perspective becomes merely teleological, 'an affirmative, backward-looking meaning-endowment of the respective present'.⁷

By the early 1980s historians of women and gender would start to complicate the narrative of war work as 'emancipation' via a series of national and industry-specific case studies that offer a far more nuanced balance-sheet of what did and did not change during the war, and how durable such changes would prove to be. 'What the First World War provided were opportunities for working-class women to shift the nature of their employment, for greater employment of married women with children, and for short-lived changes in the kinds of industrial work that women were

permitted to perform', concludes Susan Grayzel in a judicious overview of developments across the combatant societies. 'The strength of predominantly male unions, however, helped ensure that women's work did not threaten male wages or, ultimately, their access to jobs.'⁸

Yet the literature on war work as emancipation was not wrong to see that the First World War marked some important long-term shifts in the organisation of economic and social life. But those shifts seem to mark less a clear route towards female emancipation than a profound change in the ways that the realms of production and reproduction would be organised and thought about in relation to one another. For if the last years of the war made painfully clear just how vital women's unpaid domestic services were to national well-being, few post-war policymakers would follow Alexandra Kollontai in her conclusion that the socially necessary labour of housework and childcare be socialised, let alone that the sexual division of labour in such tasks be eliminated altogether.⁹ Rather, post-war reconstruction (outside the young Soviet Union) would focus on efforts to restore the pre-war order at home and at work, with one significant difference: the idea that families other than the most desperate and destitute could benefit from widened access to various forms of social service and support would receive a far wider hearing on both the right and the left in post-1918 Europe than it had before the war. This would have consequences for how women's place in the larger rethinking and reorganisation of relations between production and reproduction would be understood and interpreted by various actors in the post-war era. For the wartime legitimisation of a larger role for a 'third' sector of social services (in which many middle-class women would find employment), intervening between state and economy, would, in the long run, have a significant impact on the lives of women across the social classes, at home and at work, though not always in an 'emancipatory' direction.

It is therefore crucial to find a new way to discuss what did and did not change during the First World War, a way that takes into account the scale of such change and its long-term impact without necessarily interpreting that change within the ultimately misleading framework of emancipation for women. Tracing the upheaval in the productive work/unproductive service distinction (which maps largely, if imperfectly, onto the distinction between women's waged and unwaged work) and thinking about the

various ways that post-war societies sought to restore and uphold that distinction at home and at work, in part through the deployment of an enlarged and newly legitimised social services sector, may help us to do just that .

Among the first women workers to feel the impact of the war were peasant wives and daughters, and women agricultural workers more broadly, across continental Europe and Great Britain. For the war had broken out just when it was time to bring the harvest in. Within a week of the general mobilisation, the French Prime Minister René Viviani issued a stirring appeal to the women and children of rural France:

sons and daughters of the fatherland, arise [and] replace on the field of labour those who are on the field of battle. Prepare to show them, tomorrow, the soil cultivated, the crops harvested, the fields sown! In these grave times no labour is small; everything that serves the country is great. Rise up! To action! To work! Tomorrow there will be glory enough for everyone. Long live the Republic! Long live France!¹⁰

Some 30 per cent of the active male labour force had been mobilised in August 1914. By dint of sheer hard work, women, children and the men who remained managed to bring in that year's particularly abundant harvest and so avert (in the short term) urban panic over food supply. But as the war ground on, the army's appetite for men grew unabated until, by 1918, 63 per cent of the active male labour force was serving in the armed forces. As peasants enjoyed no exemptions from military service (unlike men employed in those sectors of the economy – transport, mining and metallurgy – deemed critical to winning the war), the percentage of male agricultural workers mobilised was even higher.¹¹ If several tens of thousands of unemployed men were quickly placed as farm labourers, as were a comparable number of prisoners of war, it was but a drop in the bucket when weighed against the absence of those 3.7 million men whom the war had snatched from the land.

From the winter of 1915 on, the physically exhausting toil of labouring the earth, then sowing, harrowing and reaping, as well as bringing in the hay, fell increasingly on the shoulders of women – alone, or assisted by a younger brother or aging grandparent. It was heavy labour, particularly with

the progressive disappearance of horses and oxen, which were requisitioned from farms for service at the front. ‘Before he left, Joseph taught me to plough’, recalls Émilie Carles of her wartime adolescence on the family farm in the Haute-Savoie in the wake of her older brother Joseph’s mobilisation.

The hardest part wasn’t dealing with a mule or a yoke of cattle, it was holding onto the plough-handle itself. I was not very tall . . . We had an ordinary swing plough with a handle that was designed for a man. It was far too high for me. When I dug furrows with that contraption I got the handle in the face or the chest each time I hit a stone. For me, ploughing was really a terrible ordeal.¹²

Women agricultural workers, as well as peasant wives, mothers and daughters, added these heavy labours to their own traditional tasks: seeing to the market garden and to the various barnyard animals (hens, rabbits, pigs, cattle, goats), as well as to the dairying and cheese-making. The outlines of this traditional rural sexual division of labour are etched deeply upon one woman’s letter to her husband (found on his body after his death at the front), which distinguishes between news of ‘herself’, that is, of the tasks that fell within her traditional domain, and news of the fields to be sown and harrowed – which she terms ‘the work’ (*l’ouvrage*) – that wartime conditions had added to her regular daily labours. Her words remind us just how deeply the traditional sexual division of labour might be internalised and assimilated to one’s own identity:

My dear Jean, I am sending you some woollies, some chocolate and a pencil. The cold weather has arrived, and one hears the lapwings singing in the new meadow and in the alder groves. You would be delighted . . . Marie-Joseph has grown as tall as the table now, and never fails to do the dishes. I breeched Louis this week; you can imagine how pleased he was. *Now let me tell you a bit about me.* The potatoes have all been sold, and I have a lovely hen-house: 22 pullets and a handsome rooster – a real fortune. *As far as the work is concerned*, your mother and I have just about finished the planting. They’ve taken away all the mares, ours and Uncle Pierre’s as well. But we manage all the same. I bring the cow into the stable each night and

put her back in the meadow by day. One day soon I will harrow the grain.¹³

Despite the endless toil of the 3.2 million women left more or less on their own to work the land as best as they could, the productivity of French agriculture necessarily diminished during the war. The harvests of 1915 and 1916 were less abundant than that of 1914, in part because the labour shortage had imposed a steady reduction in the number of hectares cultivated. By 1917, food shortages and rising prices, though by no means so desperate as the increasingly dire situation that Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Russia had known since 1915–16, would add to France's hardships in a war that seemed destined to grind on without end.

The story of women's agricultural labour during the war featured no great technical innovations, though there was some limited effort to encourage the mechanisation of ploughing and reaping. Nor do the extra burdens of fieldwork taken on by women during the war seem to have translated into any notable shift in the rural sexual division of labour once the war had ended. On the contrary: whether in France, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary or Russia, women's unfamiliar labours of ploughing and sowing (they had always helped with the harvest) seem to have taken place under careful patriarchal scrutiny, whether by older male relatives, village elders or at a distance, via careful instructions sent home from the front. 'There is no evidence that taking on men's work helped [peasant women] attain the prestige traditionally associated with it', concludes Benjamin Ziemann in his careful study of Bavarian agriculture during the war. It is a judgement that would seem to fit a broad range of cases across agricultural Europe, given the war's scant impact on the organisation of agricultural work, and on rural sexual divisions of labour over the longer term.¹⁴

Women's work in transport and other war-related industries, and especially in metals and engineering, presents a rather different picture, in part because the massive wartime recruitment of women workers represented a sharp departure from a pre-war status quo in which these trades were overwhelmingly (95 per cent) staffed by men. Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere, women's arrival in these industries coincided with a significant transformation in the organisation of labour away from artisanal modes of production, based on the skilled male worker, to a mass-

production organisation that would carry the day in the most modern sectors after the war had ended. In mass production, skilled tasks were broken down into their component parts and distributed to a range of unskilled and semi-skilled production workers of both sexes. These wartime recruits toiled on the more or less standardised production of shells, guns and other weapons of war under the supervision of the very skilled men who, before the war, had produced parts and machinery on a custom-made craft basis. While this meant that much of the work that women did during the war was unskilled and repetitive, wartime conditions and the haste with which some shops were set up for arms production occasionally opened up opportunities for women to gain skills and perform more varied and interesting work as well. In the case of France and Britain at least, the wartime association of women with rapid mass-production techniques would ensure their future in the industry well beyond the Armistice.¹⁵ And this was no small matter because, as a general rule, the wages women earned in war factories, though almost never as high as those of their male colleagues, were at least two, and often three times higher than those paid out in traditionally female sectors of the economy.

Consider, for example, the case of Isabella McGee, a young Irish woman who entered the war factories at a time and place when it was possible for a determined young woman to rise a fair distance through the skill hierarchy, a feat that would earn her good wages and the respect of her male workmates.¹⁶ Just weeks before her sixteenth birthday, Isabella had left her home in Belfast and crossed the Irish Sea to Morecambe, hoping to find work in munitions. She began her career as a press operator, filling shells with TNT at the White Lund factory. This was destined to be a temporary job, as employers, knowing TNT to be poisonous (it could lead eventually to death by toxic jaundice), routinely shifted women off such work after four to six months. Women who worked with the deadly powder soon showed early symptoms of toxic jaundice; their skin turned yellow from head to toe, while their hair, if blond, turned bright orange, or, if dark, took on a distinctly greenish cast. 'It was all bright ginger, all our front hair, you know, and all our faces were bright yellow. They used to call us canaries, of course', recalled Caroline Rennles who filled shells for nearly a year at the Slades Green works just outside London:

Some of the girls used to have stomach pains, the poison used to go in . . . of course, we never had gas masks or nothing like that. Mind you, the manager used to say to us ‘Keep your mouth shut’, but of course we used to sing and all that kind of thing and as I say you never used to bother, like.¹⁷

So after six months filling shells at White Lund, Isabella McGee packed her bags once again and migrated south-east to the Coventry Ordnance, which had just begun hiring women. For the rest of the war she would work here in the gun shop, making 8-inch howitzers on a machine that was far more sophisticated in its operations than the press she had operated at White Lund.

After cleaning down her machine, ‘which I always did do first to make the machinery free to handle’, Isabella would set it up for a complex run in which the machine first hollowed out the inside of the howitzer barrel before placing the slinger nut precisely in the gun cradle. The set-up demanded that she make extremely fine measurements with her gauges and micrometer in order to determine within a fraction of a millimetre the shape and dimension of the cuts that her machine would make in the metal. She then had to adjust the machine itself to the job, which called for a good deal of strength: ‘The men were more than good to me . . . because it was them that used to make me these bars of steel to put on the spanners to help me.’ (The bars gave her more leverage to tighten the bolts and helped her to steady the machine at the table.)¹⁸

But however helpful they may have been to her on the shift, the men were also vexed, ‘kicking up in the section because of me doing the job and I wasn’t getting the rate’.¹⁹ So she applied for the rate but was told she was ineligible because she was underage. When she protested ‘but I’m doing the same job as them’, her manager pointed out that she could not grind her own tools. So Isabella turned once again to her mates, who showed her how to grind her own tools ‘and put the lip on it and all the rest’.²⁰ Management recognised her accomplishment with a small raise, but Isabella was still not earning the full rate for a semi-skilled gun-worker. Nor would she do so until she joined the Transport and General Workers Union, which then interceded on her behalf and pressed her employers to recognise the justice of her claim:

I still didn't know nothing at all about unions, and there was a Miss Arnold [the local union organiser] . . . and she asked me why I didn't form a union among the other girls . . . it was Miss Arnold that come and advised us and told us what we were entitled to and enlightened us as to what to fight for . . . [the union] was where they put me right about the rates . . . and when I got the rate, then of course the men made a bit of noise with their spanners and that.²¹

By her seventeenth birthday, then, Isabella not only performed the work of a semi-skilled man, she had won the pay and status of one as well. Fifty years later, she still spoke with genuine pleasure when she recalled her job at the Ordnance ' [I earned] about six times as much as I would have got in Belfast and I didn't work a quarter as hard', she laughed. 'I used to send my mother a pound a week and my grandmother five shillings a week because she was an old-age pensioner, and the first time I went home she wanted to know how it was I had such nice clothes and such a lot of money .'²²

But of course working-class women were not the only ones to enter war factories; there were middle-class women as well who responded to the call to make weapons. A few would rise to the position of forewoman, or of fully skilled tool room worker. (Being less dependent on their wages, such women could afford to invest their time and money in the six-month training courses offered by the Ministry of Munitions or the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. This allowed them to enter munitions work at a higher skill level and then refine their skills on the job.)²³ Others applied as office workers in the growing industrial bureaucracies that mushroomed alongside the new, highly rationalised mass-production process, while others still entered industry as pioneers in the fledgling profession of factory welfare supervision. The idea that employed and productive members of society might also need social services, and that such things were not reserved to the most vulnerable categories of the population, was a relatively new one in France and Britain, which both trailed behind Bismarck's Germany in this respect. As we will see, the principal appeal of factory social services lay in their promise to render work less exhausting and workers more productive. Meeting workers' 'legitimate' need for better sanitary conditions at work was also seen as a way to calm labour militancy and thus ensure a steady flow of munitions to

the front. But as the case of France's welfare supervisors illustrates particularly clearly, such supervision also had the potential to link home and workplace in new ways, particularly, though not exclusively, in the case of women workers.

Women welfare supervisors first appeared in Great Britain in the winter of 1915–16, in response to the Ministry of Munitions' call to improve conditions in the war factories, especially for women workers. To that end, the Ministry appointed a special 'Health of Munitions Workers Committee' in September of 1915, to study the impact of the long hours and highly variable working conditions on workers' 'personal health and physical efficiency'.²⁴ The Committee soon began issuing its recommendations, one of the first of which was that employers appoint 'lady' welfare supervisors, to oversee the health, discipline and productivity of the new female workforce. While more than one armaments employer had already had the bright idea to deploy his own wife to look after the burgeoning female workforce – 'when I go home at night to dinner, I learn more about what is going on in the factory than I should ever know with any paid worker', bragged one Birmingham employer – the Ministry's welfare department, smelling an industrial relations catastrophe in the making, soon put an end to such practices.²⁵ When the Home Office decided to make the appointment of such supervisors obligatory in all government defence plants, the Ministry took it upon itself to select and hire some 1,000-plus welfare supervisors, then impose its chosen recruits on their more or less willing defence contractors.

The first such supervisors to appear were drawn from the ranks of those middle-and upper-class volunteers who, during the second year of the war, came into British war factories as supplementary workers at the weekend or in times of heavy demand. Their main qualification for welfare work lay less in any technical knowledge of the work being performed, let alone in the socio-medical expertise of social work, than in the simple possession of that social authority that came with their class background: 'the decided difference in education, force of character and social position between them and their workers', as one Ministry official put it.²⁶ Throughout the war, the British lady welfare supervisor, unlike her French counterpart, would qualify for her job primarily by virtue of who she was – a woman who was

‘accustomed . . . by habit and by social position . . . to supervising [her] inferiors’ – rather than through any formal programme of training.

Though her brief included oversight of basic sanitary and welfare provisions – lavatories, changing rooms, canteens or on-site infirmaries – the hiring, control and discipline of the new, and sometimes unruly female labour force lay at the heart of her task: ‘The Supervisors are women experienced in the handling of women and possessed of tact and a manner able to win the confidence of the naughtiest girl’, explained officials at the vast government arsenal at Woolwich.²⁷ But intervening in disputes with male workers and foremen, particularly over the vexed issue of wages, was at least as important as calming any hot-heads among the working ‘girls’. Indeed, middle-class authority was probably indispensable to a job that often involved standing up for women workers against their foremen in disputes over wages or discipline. ‘That Lilian Barker, she was abrupt – oh, ever so abrupt’, recalls Caroline Rennles of her welfare supervisor. ‘But . . . she was a marvellous person as I say and she wouldn’t have anything wrong in our factory. She was a real old battle axe, you know, she’d fight for you.’²⁸

Of course, the welfare supervisor’s interventions were less about sisterhood than about maintaining an uninterrupted flow of weapons to the front. To that end the Health of Munitions Workers Committee did some pioneering work on efficiency, industrial fatigue and what would come to be called human factor management, contributing significantly to the establishment of welfare management as a new, more efficient and allegedly more humane approach to extracting a steady and intensive effort from the individual worker: ‘A worker’s body may in one limited sense be likened to a machine, and if a machine is not kept well oiled it cannot be expected to run swiftly and smoothly or turn out perfect goods’, observed officials in the Ministry’s welfare department. ‘But workers’ bodies being human flesh and blood need more than iron and steel, and cannot work efficiently without the oil of human kindness and consideration.’²⁹ Welfare management thus pointed the way to the future, a future in which trained professionals would help to ‘oil’ the human machinery on the factory floor and so avoid costly labour disputes. Interestingly enough, these considerations would be taken on board far more seriously by French employers than by British ones who, at the war’s end, would happily divest

their factories of the lady supervisors, preferring to return to the male-dominated structures of 'industrial governance' of pre-war days, in which male trade union representatives and male employers bargained collectively over wages and conditions, with no 'useless interference' from the troublesome middle-class ladies .

On the other side of the Channel, British initiatives in welfare supervision were being watched with considerable interest by state officials, employers and a small band of republican feminists concerned with the often deplorable conditions in which women worked in French war factories. In the spring of 1917, these women, led by Cécile Brunschvig, president of the National French Women's Council, would found the Association de surintendantes de France, an organisation whose avowed purpose was to 'train women capable of creating, overseeing, or directing the social organisation of women factory workers, from the point of view of their material and moral well-being'.³⁰ The Association promptly opened a school to train the daughters of the bourgeoisie in factory-based social work via a series of classes on political economy, medicine, welfare and social assistance. Candidates had to be at least 24 years old and in possession of a nursing diploma, which qualified them to organise and operate the factory's infirmary, crèche and nursing room. Before taking up her post, each had to complete a series of obligatory internships in factories and in various municipal social services (hospitals, crèches or dispensaries). By August 1917, the school had placed twelve rapidly trained supervisors in the state arsenals alone. A year later, some fifty had found posts, largely in the metalworking trades, and the school was poised for expansion.³¹

While the French Ministry of Armaments welcomed Brunschvig's initiative, it played no role in underwriting the school, structuring its curriculum or placing its graduates; the enterprise remained a private one to the end, and welfare supervisors were directly responsible to the industrialists who hired and paid them . General Appert, the director of the giant Alsthom electrical works in Saint-Ouen, was among the first to take advantage of this new managerial resource. In the spring of 1917, just weeks before the outbreak of a massive wave of strikes among women munitions workers, he engaged the services of five women supervisors to oversee the health, productivity and discipline of the factory's 6,000-plus women workers. After the war had ended, the General recalled with smug

satisfaction how, despite widespread agitation in the streets, ‘order and discipline had reigned’ in his factory: ‘During those troubled days, the factory’s women . . . made it very clear that they would not walk out, despite the excitement and the threats’ from the thousands of women who thronged outside the factory gates, seeking to draw ‘his’ workers into the movement.³² The General attributed the industrial peace at Alsthom to the beneficent influence of his newly hired supervisors, who circulated watchfully among the workers, carefully monitoring discontent and ‘gently rebuking’ the more rebellious souls among them.³³

If enforcing labour discipline was an important dimension of the supervisor’s multi-valent task, seeing to the health and productivity of the female workforce loomed at least as large on her daily agenda. Given the widespread concern with depopulation in early twentieth-century France, ‘health’ invariably translated as ‘maternal condition’ where women workers were concerned. Welfare management in France was thus organised around raising productivity while easing the physical toll such work took on workers’ bodies, and it was aimed specifically at women as workers and as mothers. To that end, women welfare supervisors took over responsibility for selecting and hiring the female workforce, and worked with the foremen in assigning them appropriate jobs, reserving lighter tasks and jobs that could be performed sitting down to pregnant women and young mothers. They also managed the factory’s health and welfare facilities – crèches, nurseries and nursing rooms, canteens, infirmaries and holiday camps for the children of loyal and reliable workers – while offering advice and assistance of various kinds to workers of both sexes.

The factory’s childcare facilities were a key element in the welfare supervisor’s larger pedagogical strategy vis-à-vis her women. For if these were maintained in a state of ‘perfect order and cleanliness’ and run with ‘unwavering discipline’, they could serve as a platform for dispensing ‘highly effective lessons’ in housekeeping and childcare to young worker–mothers whose sense of maternal duty would surely be ‘awakened’ by seeing the quality of care that their babies received in the crèche.³⁴ The ‘scientific’ management of women’s labour in war factories thus went hand in hand with the welfarist management of their maternity, actual or potential. Both spheres of management fell within the expert domain of the factory supervisor. Indeed, by connecting maternal health to productivity,

welfare management created a new set of connections between the realms of production and reproduction, particularly, but not exclusively, where women workers were concerned. Throughout the interwar period (and beyond), the ties binding working-class households to the factories in which the parents toiled would thicken around such institutions as family allowances (which began during the war) and the host of factory-based social services organised and maintained by the welfare supervisors.

The particular way that French employers and factory supervisors implemented welfare management strategies thus had the effect of upholding the distinction between work and not-work, between women's paid labour in factories and their unpaid labour in the home. In this effort, factory-based social services had a key role to play, assisting working women to deliver those unpaid, but socially (and nationally) necessary services of care that would ensure the reproduction of the current and future workforce .³⁵

If the demands of total war brought home to British, and especially French, defence industrialists the connections between home and work, reproduction and production, women's unwaged (yet socially necessary) labour and their waged labour, total war underscored those same connections in Germany, Russia, Italy and Austria-Hungary as well, though in a somewhat different register and under rather different circumstances. Most strikingly, war factories, though important, would not be the primary stage on which these connections would be worked out. Rather, the gradual collapse of the German, Italian, Austro-Hungarian and Russian consumer economies in the face of ever more dire food supply problems would ensure that these questions affected civilian society as a whole: in the context of widespread hunger, revolution, defeat and civil war in Russia; in the context of a wholesale collapse of the consumer goods market (and the partial collapse of the money economy more generally) in Germany and Austria-Hungary; and in the context of widespread hunger, massive social protest and deepening social polarisation in the case of Italy.

In the cases of Germany and Austria-Hungary, the growing inability of families to thrive (let alone reproduce themselves) led these wartime states to assume greater responsibility for feeding civilian populations via ever more comprehensive systems of rationing and collective feeding schemes. As Belinda Davis has argued, this would redefine relations between state

and society, obliging the former to assume some level of responsibility for feeding its people in return for their patriotic support. But it was in the end a responsibility that neither Germany nor Austria-Hungary would be able to credibly sustain in the face of ever more drastic food shortages. By 1916, both were engaged in what the Viennese called a 'starvation war', and this would have dramatic political consequences. For as Belinda Davis, Reinhard Sieder and Maureen Healy have argued for the cases of Berlin and Vienna, the state's inability to fulfil its end of the new contract between state and society forged under conditions of total war (whereby the state owes its people maintenance in return for their patriotic support) would contribute mightily to undermining its legitimacy in the final months of the conflict.³⁶ Nonetheless, the increased attention that wartime states paid to the material conditions of their people would also lead officials in government, industry and the military to reflect more closely on the links between production and reproduction, and the question of women's unpaid, but economically vital services in the home .

Ute Daniel has argued convincingly that, in contrast with France and Great Britain, efforts to mobilise previously unemployed women for munitions work in Germany ran up against several stumbling blocks that would in the end prove insurmountable. First, German metals and engineering employers were not terribly enthusiastic about replacing male workers with women. Rather, they preferred to use men wherever possible, seeking military deferments for their own skilled workers, or hiring foreign men or POWs who, as Daniel points out, 'could be paid less and treated worse than German women'.³⁷ Secondly, the pressure of male unions, concerned to protect the gendered structures of craft privilege, operated to keep women's wages exceptionally low, even in the booming armaments sector. It was therefore extremely difficult to draw women who had other sources of income (notably the famous 'warrior' allowances paid by the state to some 4 million families whose male breadwinners had been conscripted) into factories where they could expect to toil long hours for scant reward. As Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, a leading organiser of women's wartime labour service in Germany, observed in 1917, many women

were kept from working by the practice . . . of counting earnings towards family allowances. Understandably, the women felt that . . . they were being penalised for wanting to work; in many cases it led

directly to women giving up work they had already started, because after deductions, their income was hardly an appropriate reward for the work they did or for their readiness to sacrifice running their homes in an orderly manner.³⁸

So if German war factories expanded their contingents of women workers some four or five times over, they did so by recruiting primarily from among the ranks of women who were already employed elsewhere: from traditional female industries, which contracted sharply in the fall of 1914, as well as from shop work and domestic service. Moreover, as shortages of food and fuel became more pronounced, women who had dependents to care for could no longer combine paid labour with the increasingly extensive and exhausting domestic labour entailed in looking after a family that such shortages imposed: 'Keeping a watchful eye on supplies, fighting for goods, queuing up for hours on end, are all things which appeared for the first time with the war', wrote Goetz Briefs in 1917. 'The same tribulations, and others besides, are to be endured when one tries to get hold of one's allocation of rationed goods. Visits to local authorities, the difficulties of managing and using ration cards . . . keeping track of coupons, standing patiently in queues.'³⁹ As the dearth of food grew more severe, the ambit of domestic labour widened to include a host of activities that rapidly returned urban working-class families to their peasant roots: scavenging the nearby countryside for turnips, a bit of lard, wood for fuel, a few extra ears of corn gleaned from already harvested fields; raising goats, ducks or rabbits while cultivating a small garden plot near one's city apartment. Many previously unemployed women began taking in home work as well, in order to combine wage-earning with the redoubled load of domestic labour.

But as the war went on, the amount of labour that it took to look after a family continued to expand, while the consumer goods market collapsed altogether. As a result, a higher income could not bring about a significant reduction in the amount of domestic labour required for survival. Within the increasingly distorted German war economy, low-wage workers in general, and women employees in particular, were, in Ute Daniel's stark formulation, 'the first to reach the point where wages stopped being a meaningful way in which to secure one's livelihood'.⁴⁰

From 1916 on, then, seeking paid employment often made less sense than investing time and labour in more direct ways of laying one's hands on increasingly scarce food. As a result, Germany stands out among combatant nations for the low numbers of women mobilised on war work. For if the war saw a significant, if temporary, transfer of women away from 'women's' industries and into war factories, the overall number of women employed did not increase noticeably in Germany after 1914.⁴¹

Military and civil authorities were well aware that German war factories, unlike those of their British and French foes, had failed to dig deep into the population of previously unemployed women. At the same time, government officials, who had taken note of the catastrophic (if not entirely surprising) fall in the birth rate since August 1914, began sounding the pronatalist alarm (albeit to little effect), signalling that the domestic services deficit was making itself felt in the highest government circles. By November 1916, the state would begin to set in place a number of social welfare schemes intended to reconcile paid labour in war factories with women's obligations to their families. In particular, they expanded the existing system of factory 'nurses' – an industrial social worker who looked after women's welfare inside the factory (safety and hygiene) and at home (living conditions, use of leisure). 'They paid house calls, visited the sick and had to take care of the problems women workers encountered in arranging for their children to be looked after and, increasingly, with food and transport.'⁴² These 'nurses' were clearly the ideal instrument for enabling women workers to allocate their time most efficiently between paid employment and unpaid (but vital) services to their families, and their numbers rose rapidly in the first years of the war: from 20 to 482 between August 1914 and November 1917. In the summer of 1917, the state made their appointment obligatory in all state factories, and urged private firms to hire factory nurses as well. Over the last year of the war, the number of factory nurses would rise even more sharply, from 482 to (a still inadequate) 752.⁴³

But it was outside the factories, in their guise as mothers and caretakers on the home front, that German, Austrian, Italian and Russian women all ran into increasing difficulties in delivering those unpaid services on which the reproduction of national life depended, thanks to ever more drastic shortages of basic consumer necessities: food, of course, but also fuel,

clothing and textiles, soap, *etc.* Wartime states were acutely aware of these difficulties and sought, with ever diminishing efficacy to ensure an equitable (or at least minimal) distribution of food via ever more inclusive systems of rationing. In some factories employers even began feeding their workers on site as a means of retaining their labour. But as Belinda Davis and Maureen Healy have demonstrated, these efforts were doomed from the outset, as the impact of the ever tightening Allied blockade made itself felt as early as the winter of 1914–15. Rationing systems were set in place by the spring of 1915 in both Germany and Austria-Hungary, which had the effect of making the state a focus of protests for a more just distribution of food; ‘in wartime, food *was* the political arena’, concludes Maureen Healy.⁴⁴

It was precisely the wartime politicisation of everyday life’s most essential element – food – that neither the Russian nor the Italian wartime state would ever come to grips with in any materially or politically meaningful way. In these two states efforts to equalise the burdens of suffering and sacrifice via rationing, price controls, allocations to soldiers’ families or systems of collective feeding were so piecemeal and ineffective as to be utterly unconvincing. Indeed, their inability to ensure the basic survival of their populations contributed to a profound crisis of state legitimacy, which would end in the downfall of the tsarist regime in Russia, and in social protest so widespread and so violent that by the war’s end Italy seemed on the brink of civil war.

In both countries, the crowds that rose in ever more massive protest from that third grim winter of war onwards embraced a very broad swathe of the popular classes, bringing together urban and rural, peasant and factory worker, strikers and food rioters, women and men under the sign of movements which blended social protest (against low wages, rising prices, harsh working conditions), subsistence riots, rejection of the war, and increasingly rejection of the state that was waging it. At the head of these crowds were women: workers, wives of workers or soldiers, peasants and agricultural labourers: ‘They are slaughtering our husbands and our sons at the front, while at home they want to do us in with hunger’, cried Russia’s *soldatke* (soldiers’ wives) as they protested at the absence of bread in the market.⁴⁵ ‘The war will not end and we’ll die of hunger and the others will die in the trenches’, exclaimed the women munitions workers of Fiat

Lingotto as they exhorted their male comrades to down tools and join them in the streets. ‘The men looked at us and came out with us. The Fiat guards looked at us but did not say anything.’⁴⁶

If those same links between production and reproduction, women’s waged and unwaged work, were equally visible in Italy and Russia, they manifested themselves most clearly in the forms of protest that flowed from marketplace to factory floor and back again, with demands over wages, working conditions and food prices melding into a single howl of pain that often arose from those women workers whose paid and unpaid responsibilities led them to understand all too keenly just how connected the two realms really were: ‘They represented the principal link between factory and society’, notes Giovanna Procacci, ‘given that it was women who had to put up with the inefficiency of food distribution (queues, lack of basic foodstuffs), and it was women who, for obvious reasons, were the most aware of rising prices’.⁴⁷ Unlike Germany and Austria-Hungary, where rationing served to equalise (somewhat) the burden of sacrifice and convince the population, at least temporarily, of the state’s concern with their well-being, Italy and Russia both saw increasing social polarisation in the face of a growing burden of deprivation that was clearly being borne by the popular classes alone. As the cost of living spiralled ever upwards and shortages of food grew ever more unbearable, popular disaffection from a war that was seen to be in the sole interests of state officials and profiteering industrialists spread rapidly in Italy as in tsarist Russia, creating a profound crisis in the authority and legitimacy of both states. Among the most vigorous and pugnacious contesters of that legitimacy were the women of the popular classes: housewives and workers, both agricultural and industrial, whose responsibilities as mothers and workers made them the first to experience the contradictions of a total war economy in which sacrifice and suffering were meant to be the hallmarks of patriotism .

In all belligerent nations the state’s efforts to address the multiple social problems raised by the war entailed leaning more or less heavily on private charitable organisations, many of which were heavily staffed by bourgeois women. These organisations, which had focused on various vulnerable populations before the war, notably widows and children, were called upon to assist (if not take over entirely) the task of feeding the hungry, seeing to the housing and welfare needs of migrant labourers such as Isabella McGee,

sheltering massive displaced and refugee populations, and nursing soldiers at the front.⁴⁸ This latter need was met in part through existing corps of professional nurses, in part through volunteers who often conceptualised their service as a citizen service/duty analogous to that of front-line soldiers. Volunteer nurses thus envisioned their work as women's wartime service, as feminine 'devotion' nationalised, militarised, even combat-ready: 'I always wanted to go to the front', wrote French actress-turned-military-nurse Lola Noyr in 1915. 'I considered myself a soldier and I believed I shouldn't stay behind; I would have thought myself a shirker.'⁴⁹

There is not sufficient space in this chapter to address in detail the wartime expansion and transformation of charities called into service by hard-pressed states desperately in need of social service expertise, nor the diverse processes whereby such private associations acquired semi-public or official status as a result of their wartime activities (France's Secours national, an official structure created at the outbreak of war to organise and streamline aid to refugees and other civilian populations being a particularly clear example of this process). Suffice it to say that the expanding role of social services in the various national economies would ensure a place for various middle-class women professionals – factory welfare supervisors and social workers, kindergarten teachers and nurses – in the growing social services sector that arose during and after the war: in factories to be sure, but also in municipalities, around neighbourhood dispensaries, and in pre-schools and primary schools .

For if the centrality of women's unpaid domestic labours to the continuity of society suddenly became staggeringly visible during the war, with the return to peace, all combatant nations (Russia excepted) would seek to restore the pre-war division between production and reproduction; between the paid production of goods and women's unpaid production of services. Social services would have a key role to play in the effort to restore those boundaries, assisting mothers, especially working-class ones, to accomplish those tasks of care that the First World War had revealed to be anything but automatic. The war, after all, had reminded everyone of what Adam Smith's famous work/services distinction had obscured, namely that the home is not only a site of consumption but a site of production as well: the production of human capabilities. In other words, 'domestic labor, though not recognized as work because not paid for, is as necessary to the economy as

the waged sort. For the workforce needs to be fed, clothed, cleaned for, comforted, as does its progeny, the workforce of the future.’⁵⁰ The partial monetarisation of such services during the war, via allowances paid to soldiers’ wives, food rationing, collective feeding and the expanding network of social services at work and in municipalities, would leave its imprint in a range of ways – not all of them progressive and emancipatory – on the workplace, and on post-war welfare and social protection across all combatant nations .

- 1 Carolyn Steedman, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), esp. pp. 16–17.
- 2 See Susan Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (London: Longman, 2002) for a very helpful overview of these changes.
- 3 Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, *Das unbekannte Heer: Frauen kämpfen für Deutschland, 1914–1918* (Berlin, 1937), pp. 180, 183, cited in Young Sun Hong, ‘Gender and Welfare Reform in Germany’, *Social History*, 17:2 (1992), p. 255.
- 4 Gaston Rageot, *La française dans la guerre* (Paris: Attinger, 1918), cited in Françoise Thébaud, *La femme au temps de la guerre de 14* (Paris: Stock, 1986), p. 16.
- 5 Imperial War Museum (hereafter IWM), Press Cuttings/Trade Unions/1917, ‘Fair Play for Women’, *People’s Journal*, 27 January 1917.
- 6 A gesture of justice and recognition of women’s services and sacrifice, as Jules Siegfried put it during the parliamentary debates of 8 May 1919 on women’s suffrage. Cited in Suzanne Grinberg, *Histoire du mouvement suffragiste depuis 1848* (Paris: Henry Gouet, 1926), p. 129. See also Karen Offen, ‘Feminisms under fire: World War I, the Russian Revolution and the

great backlash, 1914–1930s’, in Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700–1950: A Political History* (Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 257–76.

7 Ute Daniel, *The War from Within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), p. 273.

8 Susan Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, p. 29.

9 Alexandra Kollontai, *Marxisme et révolution sexuelle: textes choisis et présentés par Judith Stora-Sandor* (Paris: Maspéro, 1977), esp. ‘La société de demain’, ‘Révolution dans la vie quotidienne’ and ‘Révolution des mœurs’. See also ‘Place à Eros ailé! (Lettre à la jeunesse travailleuse)’.

10 Archives départementales de l’Indre, R 963, René Viviani, ‘Aux femmes françaises’, poster published 7 August 1914. The Prime Minister’s appeal was posted in town halls throughout the French countryside.

11 Michel Augé-Laribé, *L’agriculture pendant la guerre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1925), pp. 65–6. Figures for wartime Bavaria are similar, where, by 1916, an estimated 44 per cent of all farms were headed by women. Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914–1923* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p. 156.

12 Émilie Carles, *Une soupe aux herbes sauvages* (Paris: Hachette, 1977), p. 82.

13 Cited in Thébaud, *La femme*, pp. 153–4, my emphasis.

14 Ziemann, *War Experiences*, p. 166. See also Thébaud, *La femme*, esp. p. 152; and Luigi Tomassini, ‘The home front in Italy’, in Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), pp. 59–87. While the British Board of Agriculture successfully mobilised single young women of the educated middle classes in a ‘Women’s Land Army’ that gave precious assistance in

bringing in the last two harvests of the war, the long-term impact of these temporary agricultural workers on the organisation of rural labour was nil.

Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

15 Laura Lee Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality: Gender Division in the French and British Metalworking Industries, 1914–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

16 Her case is by no means typical, as women munitions workers often encountered angry opposition from male workers who saw in women's arrival the threat of de-skilling and debased wages. Nevertheless hers is not an isolated example. See Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality*.

17 IWM, Sound Records Department, Caroline Rennles (née Webb), 'War work, 1914–1918', accession no. 000566/07, typescript, p. 60.

18 IWM, Sound Records Department, Isabella Clarke (née McGee), 'War work, 1914–1918', accession no. 000774/04, typescript, p. 4.

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Ibid.*, p. 5. Male workers were not always so happy to help the female newcomers: 'My drawer was nailed up by the men, and oil was poured over everything in it through a crack another night', recalls skilled tool-fitter Dorothy Poole of her experiences in a large firm just outside London. IWM, Women's Work Collection, Mun., 17/7, Dorothy Poole, typescript (1919), pp. 5–6.

21 McGee, 'War work', pp. 6–7.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 7

- 23** See Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality*, esp. pp. 94–106.
- 24** Health of Munitions Workers' Committee, *Final Report*, Parliamentary Papers, 1918, Cd. 9065, Ministry of Munitions, p. 5.
- 25** IWM, War Cabinet Committee Minutes, Testimony of Melville Smith, p. D84.
- 26** Ministry of Munitions, *Official History of the Scottish Filling Factory at Georgetown* (London, n.d.), p. 147.
- 27** IWM, Mun 29/15, Woolwich Arsenal 'Mode of selection', pp. 1–2.
- 28** Rennles, 'War work', p. 65. Things did not always work out so well between working women and their welfare supervisors. In one 'rough' factory, the women quickly tired of the welfare lady's constant harping on their 'irregular' domestic arrangements and vulgar taste in clothing: 'You want a club, you come from such overcrowded, dirty homes', she announced one fine day. The 'girls', to her astonishment, stood up and threw their lunch at her. 'Women after the war', *National News*, 8 March 1917.
- 29** IWM, Mun 18/9/4, 'Intramural welfare work', p. 1.
- 30** Pierre Mangnier de Maisonneuve, *Les institutions sociales en faveur des ouvrières d'usine* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1923), p. 268.
- 31** The number of supervisors employed in French industry rose rapidly after the war, from about 50 in 1919 to 101 in 1928 to nearly 300 by 1939. Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality*, esp. pp. 233–75.
- 32** This was no small achievement, for in the last days of May nearly 43,000 women munitions workers would abandon their machines and pour

into the streets to join the huge demonstrations of women workers demanding better conditions and wages for themselves, and the return of their husbands and brothers from the butchery at the front (the strikes followed hard on the heels of the mutinies of French soldiers at the front). See Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality*, pp. 119–46; and Downs, ‘Women’s strikes and the politics of popular egalitarianism in France, 1916–1918’, in Lenard Berlanstein (ed.), *Rethinking Labor History: Essays in Discourse and Class Analysis* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 114–48.

33 ‘Allocution de Général Appert’, *Bulletin de l’Association des Surintendantes de France*, 1925.

34 ‘Rapport de Mlle Geoffroy sur ce que font et peuvent faire les surintendantes pour “l’Éducation Familiale” et “l’Enseignement Ménager”’, *Bulletin de l’Association des Surintendantes de France*, February 1928, p. 30.

35 Though the example given is French, a number of belligerent nations made significant investments in welfare arrangements for women factory workers during the war, some of which would endure into the interwar period. On Germany, for example, see Young-Sun Hong, *Welfare, Modernity and the Weimar State, 1919–1933* (Princeton University Press, 1998); and Carola Sachse, *Industrial Housewives: Women’s Social Work in the Factories in Nazi Germany* (New York: Haworth Press, 1987).

36 Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.

34. See also Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Reinhard Sieder, ‘Working-class family life in wartime Vienna’, in Jay Winter and Richard Wall (eds.), *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

37 Daniel, *The War from Within*, p. 277.

38 Ute Daniel, 'Women's work in industry and family: Germany, 1914–1918', in Winter and Wall, *The Upheaval of War*, pp. 285–6.

39 Goetz Briefs, quoted *ibid.*, p. 275.

40 Daniel, *The War from Within*, p. 281.

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 276. See also Daniel, 'Women's work in industry and family', p. 267. If the mobilisation of women workers in France and Britain also involved massive transfers of women from 'female' sectors of the economy, it also entailed mobilising women who had not been previously employed outside the home, or who had retired from work upon marriage, particularly in the case of Britain.

42 Daniel, 'Women's work in industry and family', p. 279.

43 *Ibid.*

44 Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 33.

45 The Governor of Moscow, representing the voices of *soldatke* in a report on popular discontent due to the severe bread shortage, November 1916. Quoted in Barbara Alpern Engel, 'Not by bread alone; subsistence rioting in Russia during World War I,' *Journal of Modern History*, 69:4 (1997), p. 717.

46 Young woman worker at Fiat Lingotto (Turin), cited in Simonetta Ortaggi, 'Italian women during the Great War', in Gail Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914–1918* (New York, Berghahn, 2003), p. 232.

47 Giovanna Procacci, 'Popular protest and labour conflict in Italy, 1915–1918', *Social History*, 14:1 (1989), p. 46.

48 By 1916, some 1.5 million refugees had ended up in Paris alone, while in Russia, six million streamed east to the interior, fleeing the battle zones of Russia's Western Front. See Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War One* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

49 'Souvenirs de Mme Lola Noyr', in Camille Clermont (ed.), *Souvenirs de parisiennes en temps de guerre* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1918), p. 203. For a subtle reflection on the instability of the work/services distinction for soldiers as well as for women volunteers, see Janet Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). After the war, social workers in the extreme right-wing Croix de Feu movement in France would conceptualise both their wartime service as nurses and their interwar social mission to the 'dangerous classes' of the famous 'red belt' around Paris as a battlefield service analogous to the sacrifice of soldiers in the trenches: 'Even in this time of peace, the movement's social workers are our front-line soldiers . . . carrying out the mission to fly the tricolour flag over the citadels of Communism . . . We give ourselves over to this peaceful battle with serene tenacity [for we] carry the orders of the 1.5 million war dead of 1914–1918', wrote Mme de Gêrus, director of the Croix de Feu's women's social action groups in the summer of 1935. Cited in Laura Lee Downs, "'Nous plantions les trois couleurs": action sociale féminine et recomposition des politiques de la droite française. Le mouvement Croix-de-feu et le Parti social français, 1934–1947', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 58:3 (2011), pp. 139–40.

50 Jenny Turner, 'As many pairs of shoes as she likes', *London Review of Books*, 15 December 2011, p. 13.

5 Men and women at home

Susan R. Grayzel

I. The invention of the home front

Let no tears add to their hardships As the soldiers pass along
And although your heart is breaking Make it sing this cheery song:
Keep the home fires burning
While your hearts are yearning Though your lads are far away They
dream of home . . .¹

In one of the best-known songs of the First World War, Lena Guilbert Ford's lyrics evoke the powerful sense of separation between the fronts. That such a separation was deeply gendered is hardly noteworthy. While the song exhorts stoicism for both sexes, it assumes that women are the ones in need of a reminder to hold back the tears, to restrain their emotions. Yet the verse and chorus also assure women that they are never absent from their men; despite their being far away, men dream of the home life that they embody. Nowhere does the song acknowledge that the home fires that women were meant to keep burning for their men far off fighting battles might not be tended by women alone. Nor does it recognise that the battle zones were not devoid of women and children.

If, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* reminds us, the term 'home front' was an invention of this war, it suggests two important things to keep in mind for understanding the respective, and complex, roles of men and women during the Great War. One was that the 'home front' might now be vital to the war effort and that what happened at home could help determine the course and outcome of modern and total war. It elevated the work that had long been performed away from active battle to the stature of a war zone. The other was that realms beyond active military engagement remained domesticated spaces, allegedly psychologically and physically

divorced from the dangers, privations and sufferings produced by more authentic battles.²

Wars such as the First World War complicate distinctions between combatants and non-combatants. They incorporate entire nations into war efforts. In this sense, during the First World War what men and women experienced at home – i.e., in the areas not technically defined as active military zones – was not new. Yet several things are noteworthy and crucial to understand about gender at home in order to appreciate both the continuity and change that the First World War offered to women and men.³ One was that mobilisation on the scale of this war placed often unprecedented demands on families and the domestic sphere. Displaced male labourers meant that women assumed numerous occupations that had previously been restricted to men. The combination of shifts in the labour force and restrictions on resources meant that the nature of consumer society and women's roles as household managers likewise had to change.

Another change for many participants was that the home front literally came under attack, most obviously in the places that bore the brunt of invasion and occupation. Yet spaces never overrun by troops also experienced direct and indirect warfare. The naval blockade of the Central Powers caused civilians of all ages and both sexes to die of starvation, which was its intended goal. The airplanes and Zeppelins that attacked capital cities such as London and Paris killed women and children asleep in their homes – and that too was the purpose of such raids. Imperial powers coerced labour and military service from their colonial subjects: in Africa these states imposed on men by threatening their villages and their women and children. The mobilisation of men into the armies of the Tsar, the Emperor, or the *République* depleted vital agricultural labour; the resulting shortages of food and fuel disproportionately affected those at home. With notable exceptions like Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States, which remained relatively immune from such privations, the war changed daily life in the participant countries. Moreover, even these states urged non-combatants and especially women to make sacrifices to provide for men in arms.

Women and men also found themselves subject to new or renewed government efforts to manage and control their behaviour. Censorship and propaganda aimed to shape how those at home understood the war,

bolstering certain core identities (mothering and soldiering) and attributes (stoicism and thrift) while seeking to downplay others (dissent and selfishness). Messages about the war seeped into songs and posters, and into regulations about reproduction and death.

It is difficult to summarise the varying experiences of men and women at home during the Great War given its geographic and demographic scale. This chapter explores several key aspects of the 'home front' during this conflict in order to understand in more detail what the war meant to those away from the primary battle zones. It starts with an examination of the incorporation of the domestic sphere into the battlefield, either directly via invasion or aerial onslaught or more subtly through economic and cultural mobilisation. It then traces the efforts to link the home and battle zones and some of the critical forces that destabilised both. As the war began with unprecedented mobilisation, so it ended with a more gradual and, in many cases, fraught demobilisation for both civilians and combatants. While the war in and of itself did not overthrow traditional gender roles or fundamentally transform relations between the sexes, it created a climate that both emphasised the importance of, and exposed some of the fault lines in, a gender system that equated domesticity with femininity and militarism with masculinity.

The domestic sphere as battleground

While war had been anticipated before its outbreak in 1914, the precise circumstances of the crisis of summer 1914 left much undetermined. Would significant segments of the populations of wartime states refuse the call to arms? After all, women were seen by many observers as naturally opposed to war, internationalism was widely considered a tenet of feminism, and the international women's suffrage movement had made their reliance on 'moral' rather than 'physical' force a virtue as suffragists had argued for the vote in numerous states. In addition, the Second International had affirmed as a cornerstone of socialism that the working class who supplied soldiers and weapons alike was also a 'natural opponent of war'. Pre-war socialist internationalism thus told working-class men that they should have no vested interest in fighting for the benefit of the bourgeois state. Yet, despite fears that such political beliefs, which appealed to gender and class

solidarity, would trump exhortations to rally to the side of the nation, in 1914 such ideas did not keep working-class men from heeding the call to arms and women from all segments of society from supporting these endeavours. In the summer of 1914, millions of men strode off to war across Europe, and millions of those left behind faced new challenges.

Geography played a major role in how civilians faced the initial phase of mobilisation. For many women in most of the participant states, sending men off to war was a relatively new experience. Even in key opposing powers like France and Germany – where military service was de rigueur for young men, and vivid memories and physical reminders of the wars of German unification, especially the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, still lingered – war had not been seen on such a large scale in nearly a hundred years. In Britain, with its volunteer army fighting imperial wars overseas, the mass mobilisation of men called forth a set of instructions for women as to how to behave. That the media had to exhort women across Europe to send their men bravely off to war raises the question of why such instructions were necessary. In 1915, Annie Swan, a popular Scottish author of light romances, published a series of *Letters to a War Bride* in book form that reminded the recipient of what remained her primary goals: to wave off her new soldier husband with a smile and to make her house a home to which he would want to return. Like their men in uniform, what women must do was, ‘Stick it! The words are slangy but the spirit is embodied in them. And it is what we women have to do at home, too, so as to be on their level.’⁴ One can locate similar appeals to women to be steadfast and stoic across participant states. One can also find the voices of women themselves offering their services individually and collectively across a range of countries, such as this speech given by Hindu Princess Tradevi in Calcutta on 25 December 1914: ‘I jump on my feet [sic] at the aspiration of going to war to fight Britain’s battle . . . there are thousands and thousands of Indian ladies who are more anxious than myself.’⁵ The ability to live up to such ideals either of stoicism or more active militarist desires depended a great deal on individuals, and also upon the particular circumstances of wartime communities. Certainly those whose homes literally became battle zones might find calm cheerfulness more difficult to practise.

As was the case with previous conflicts, civilians who found themselves in the path of invading armies faced a range of traumas. They could find

their homes destroyed, their way of life disrupted (at best), their freedoms drastically curtailed, and their bodies injured, violated and laid waste. Propaganda may have focused to a great extent on the gendered nature of violence in order to portray enemies as alien barbarians, but real non-combatants – women, children and men – experienced real violence as a result of this war. In some cases, violence or the potential for violence became the cornerstone of their wartime experience .⁶

Across a geographical swathe that ranged from Serbia to Belgium, invading troops became occupying ones. Invasion deeply disrupted the lives of those who found themselves in the way of armies. Among other things, it caused an enormous displacement of a feminised civilian-turned-refugee population. Perhaps nowhere was internal displacement and the resulting refugee crisis more profound than in the Russian Empire. By the end of 1915, 3.3 million inhabitants had moved from borders and battle zones to the interior. In another year, another half-million augmented this initial group of refugees, and the numbers continued to climb through 1917. Among the many other challenges that war brought to Russia, the enormous number of refugees ranks high among them.⁷ The displaced population consisted of Russians together with members of other ethnic groups living in the vast stretches of the Empire (such as Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Ukrainians, Germans and Jews). The influx of these latter populations proved particularly challenging for some of the cities and regions where they sought refuge, exacerbating concerns among urban families about shortages of housing, food and fuel. This was also the case for uprooted populations, such as those from Galicia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, who sought refuge in the capital city of Vienna, and for those displaced internally within Romania. In most of these instances, as the ones deemed responsible for the maintenance of home life in both its material and moral senses, women bore the brunt of the hardships that displacement imposed. They helped to create and sustain some of the voluntary organisations that worked to alleviate the plight of refugees in ways that the state was unable (or unwilling) to do. However, women also expressed their resentment towards refugees, who might provide yet more competition for limited resources.⁸

The invasion of Belgium and northern France also produced a wave of refugees, many of them women and children. The plight of these victims of

war produced an outpouring of sympathy and material aid, and displaced families from invaded areas found shelter not only in the rest of France but also in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Belgian refugees – stereotypically represented as feminine and helpless – became some of the more visible emblems of the suffering inflicted by this war, especially when such figures later featured in atrocity propaganda highlighting the ferocious and often sexual assaults inflicted by the German army.⁹

The vulnerability of women to sexual abuse and exploitation by invading and occupying troops has a long history pre-dating the First World War. Yet the widespread use of propaganda, both informal and state-sanctioned, to manipulate stories of this abuse for political ends employed new methods (including film) and was done on a larger scale.¹⁰ The tone of official reports on the violation of the rights of civilian inhabitants, such as those issued by the French and British governments in 1915 following the initial German invasion of Belgium and France, stressed the graphic nature of sexual violence. Yet the testimony of victims reproduced in the lengthy appendices to these tomes was often matter-of-fact: a soldier came into a home, asked for wine and a bed, and then proceeded to rape the women of the family. Atrocity propaganda turned the invasion of territory into the ‘rape of Belgium’; it transformed accounts of the regular mistreatment of the civilian population accompanying invasions into lurid stories of the abuse of innocents, such as the English novel *Behold and See*, which featured the horrific rapes of a group of nuns living in Belgium when the Germans attacked.¹¹ Visually, Allied posters turned the notion of invasion as sexual violation into disturbing images of brutal simians carrying off helpless women or stamping upon their prostrate bodies.¹² *The Little American*, a 1917 film by Cecil B. DeMille, brought home the brutality of the German army to a far removed audience by depicting America’s sweetheart, Mary Pickford, under threat of sexual assault.

Invasion thus brought violence home to women in symbolic and communal as well as intimate ways. While propaganda made extensive use of rape both metaphorically and in terms of representation in ways that subsequently discredited many accusations, sexual violence did accompany armies. The scale and public nature of sexual assaults might have been exaggerated in atrocity propaganda, but sexual abuse was something that an unknown number of women had to face. Part of the difficulty in

determining such statistics comes from the reluctance of survivors of such attacks to report them, something that was no different when such violations were part of the 'spoils of war'. Sexual abuse also accompanied the lethal attacks on Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915.¹³

When sexual assaults resulted in pregnancies, the evidence was harder to conceal. Yet states as well as individuals had complex reactions to the 'children of the enemy': offspring and potential offspring resulting from wartime rape. In France, for instance, an initiative by Senator Louis Martin in February 1915 proposed provisionally suspending all criminal penalties for abortion for women in German-occupied French territories, assuming that those who sought to terminate their pregnancies were victims of rape. The resulting public furore exposed some voices arguing in favour of such measures as well as others advocating that French maternal blood could remove from these infants the taint both of their German ancestry and of the violent nature of their conception. A concrete example of leniency given to those claiming to be victims of wartime rape in order to justify ridding themselves of the pregnancy or even child that resulted can be seen in the well-publicised infanticide case of Joséphine Barthélemy, who defended her action by stating 'I did not want a child born of Boche', and was acquitted.¹⁴

Thus life under occupation unsurprisingly merged home and war fronts. By the middle of 1915, Germany's imperial army occupied areas of Central Europe that encompassed Poland, Lithuania and a substantial percentage of Belorussia. In this area, which became known as Ober Ost, the Germany military found itself governing a largely unfamiliar civilian population. As a result, authorities imposed order by regulating the behaviour and bodies of those they deemed to be backward populations now subject to their authority. For example, they insisted on 'cleanliness' as part of their establishment of control through such enforced hygiene measures as the compulsory quarantine and treatment of infectious diseases and herding inhabitants to military-governed baths and disinfection stations. While subjecting both men and women to such regulation, in some cases women recounted bribing guards to avoid such compulsory public bathing for fear that such a policy would lead to their sexual abuse.¹⁵ Women living in occupied southern Romania, and especially in rural areas, faced the critical disruption of agriculture and loss of supplies. On account of refugees who

headed for the region of Moldavia, German-occupied Romania contained a highly feminised population and saw desperate women forced to negotiate with the German authorities in order to secure necessities.¹⁶

First-hand accounts of life under occupation highlight the sense of sexual menace as much as actual assaults that characterised life for women in many such zones of occupation. In Marguerite Yerta's *Six Women and the Invasion* [*Les six femmes et l'invasion*], she compares the experience of her female household in occupied France to living under 'the reign of terror . . . And you do not understand the meaning of this, you who have not rushed to your light to blow it out for fear its pale glimmer would betray your presence . . . you who have not realised that you are women and weak, and that a dozen brutes will seek more than your life if they succeed in their design.'¹⁷

Such implicit sexual threats also elicited anguished responses from the inhabitants of occupied zones to the requisitioning of young women's labour. In April 1916, the Germans compounded these fears by forcibly requiring not only basic goods but also labour, most shockingly from young women. As schoolteacher Maria Degrutère living in occupied northern France wrote in her diary of these events:

Life becomes more and more painful on all sides. This carrying off of people lasted all week in Lille. Each day German soldiers (20 per house) with bayonets arrive in a neighborhood around 3 a.m., waking everyone and carrying off some men but above all women and young girls . . . There are indescribable scenes, hours of anguish and agony for mothers who have their children wrested from them.¹⁸

The removal of these unwilling, single and often sheltered women provoked additional outrage two years after the invasion, exposing anew the vulnerability of women under occupation.

The physical and 'moral' danger to women also emerged in accounts from across various zones of occupation that suggest that some women in occupied territories resorted to some version of trading sex for material aid in order to survive. For example, during the Habsburg occupation of Serbia, women made a variety of strategic arrangements with occupying troops to

secure their immediate needs. Some women went to work for the occupiers, others struck up personal relationships with officials in the occupying government, and still others resorted to prostitution. Whether such women worked in brothels or even accepted money for a variety of services rendered, many Serbs denounced the behaviour of women who were seen as fraternising with the enemy as being akin to prostitution and not only 'immoral' but also a betrayal of the nation.¹⁹

Depending on women's willingness to endure deprivation without either complaint or resorting to immoral behaviour, public opinion could laud them as heroines. Female victims forced to flee their homes, work for the enemy or endure sexual violence could become martyrs. However, evidence from multiple states suggests that fear that women removed from the protection (control) of men would engage in a range of illicit behaviours was widespread. If the perhaps understandable actions of women trading access to their bodies for material support in the face of wartime privation could be condemned, women could be seen as disloyal to the war effort by indulging in anything that smacked of a continuance of pre-war patterns of consumption. Some voices in wartime society campaigned against the immorality that the war allegedly induced in women, painting them as a kind of enemy within; this did not mean that anyone lost sight of external threats to the home.²⁰

For the denizens of some states, new forms of technology helped turn the domestic sphere literally into a battle zone. Inhabitants of Paris as well as other areas found themselves under fire both from aircraft and from long-range artillery over the course of the conflict. The first aerial attack on Paris took place on 30 August 1914, killing one man and injuring three women and one other man. Perhaps the most famous victim of these early air raids was 13-year-old Denise Cartier, whose leg had to be amputated as a result of the injuries that she received in a bombing attack in September 1914, and who was lauded for her courage and stoicism in the mainstream media. By the war's end, air raids against Paris alone had claimed the lives of 275 and injured 636. Beyond these numbers, which are obviously dwarfed by the casualties among French combatants, the effect of using air power against civilian targets and populations profoundly troubled contemporary commentators. Public accounts of such attacks consistently and throughout the duration of the war condemned such raids as criminal acts committed by

a barbaric enemy, and they did so by emphasising the unacceptable damage done to young female victims such as Cartier. As late as March 1918, a French newspaper emphasised that during a recent air raid the victims ‘of German barbarity were almost entirely women and children’.²¹ Despite the fact that air raids injured French men as well as women and children, public responses feminised the victims in an effort to suggest the illegitimacy of such assaults and also to call into question the masculinity and bravery of those who waged war on helpless civilians from the seeming safety of the skies.

This was also the case in Britain, where naval attacks on the coast in 1914, Zeppelin raids that intensified in 1915, and even more deadly airplane raids by the summer of 1917 all brought damage and death to young and old, men and women, on British soil. The naval raids on Scarborough in 1914 quickly found their way into recruiting posters that depicted wrecked homes and asked the ‘men of Britain’ if they would stand for this, while attacks on London evoked an even stronger response. On 13 June 1917, Londoners experienced the most deadly raid of the war, shocking both because it occurred during daylight and because it included a direct hit on a school. As *The Times* recounted:

The raid on London yesterday morning . . . killed and maimed . . . with wanton, indiscriminating ferocity. It slew women and children as well as men. It wrecked buildings of no greater military value than a warehouse here, a tobacconist’s shop there, and a school not far away. It made London quiver, not with fear, but with sorrow and anger.²²

Like the stoicism urged upon women when sending men off to fight, the reactions of those at home regardless of age, class or gender were meant to reflect the calm acceptance of trained combatants. Air power might bring war home to men and women alike, but at least in public, any sign of feminised distress was meant to be invisible.

In private, Zeppelin and airplane raids reminded wartime women of the altered nature of this war. Writing in her diary in September 1916, Londoner Georgina Lee juxtaposed the description of the hasty wartime wedding of a friend with the effect of the raids upon the bride:

she has had her nerves upset since the last big air raid. She was working in the City in her office (as most women are doing nowadays), when the raid began and bombs began falling all around. She and the others were hustled to the basement and later a large piece of shrapnel was found under the desk at which she had been sitting.²³

Small wonder that she and others who experienced aerial attacks could cry, tremble and otherwise express shock and fear at being under fire.²⁴

Whether due to invading armies, occupying regimes or air power, civilian populations, including many women and children, suffered directly. While their governments tried to shape appropriate responses to the incursion of war into domestic life, this was not always possible. Propaganda sought to transform attacks on non-combatants into fodder to strengthen the resolve of a community to hold out against the enemy and to rally behind the war effort. Yet the genuine suffering of individuals behind the lines was often masked, and the expectation that all members of the civil population would exhibit the fortitude of trained combatants worked to inhibit the expression of their wants and needs .

The state and the home: the militarisation of the domestic sphere

Waging war on the scale and scope of the Great War increasingly demanded new types of state action. The involvement of the state in the mobilisation of the workforce, including the types of employment and wages available to women for the first time, is one facet of this expansion, as is the shift for women from domestic to industrial labour in a range of nations.²⁵ The centralised regulation of the food and fuel supply also directly affected women across class lines as household managers. Although few women possessed an official political voice in the form of a vote at the war's outset, their interactions with the state brought them directly into the realm of politics.

In addition to having territory come under enemy control and other more distant areas under enemy attack – thus blurring the borders between the front lines and the home – the sheer scale of mobilisation also pushed states

into taking new measures to ensure the well-being of the civilian population. These included not only official and unofficial sources of material aid but also greater surveillance of the words and actions of non-combatants. By 1917, even a democratic republic like France could target civilians for the crime of defeatism, in other words advocating anything short of all-out victory. The morale and morality of non-combatants, particularly women, thus came to matter in new ways.

Unsurprisingly, states targeted measures for the dependents of those serving in the military as part of larger efforts to shore up morale. Wide-scale military mobilisation disrupted regular sources of income, necessitating direct financial support to soldiers' families in a variety of forms. France's system of allowances to soldiers relied on means-testing to ensure that only those deemed fully dependent on an absent male breadwinner's wages could receive state support. When Italy entered the war in 1915, it too revamped a system of largely private aid so as to meet the needs of soldiers' dependents who lacked other means of support. In Germany by the end of 1915, more than 4 million families received support, presumably based on need; this was determined and supplied at the local level but reimbursed by the national government. Austria-Hungary offered conscripts' wives – and thus presumably the mothers of their children – direct financial aid. However, in the case of both of these Central Powers, wartime conditions could shift both the availability and amount of material aid offered to the women and children dependent on men in uniform. When the Austrian government determined that it needed women who did not have responsibility for young children to fill gaps in the labour force, it cut off state support despite their claim to be the wives of soldiers.²⁶

In contrast, states that began the war with volunteer armies, especially Britain and its Dominions such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, actively used some form of 'separation allowances' as deliberate recruiting tools. By promising to supply soldiers' dependents – mothers, wives and children – with direct financial aid, these states sought to assure the men they wished to recruit that their family members would suffer no adverse effects from their military service. Even during the United States' relatively short-lived engagement in this war, the government launched a system designed to deduct money directly from soldiers' pay to send to the family member(s) who relied on it.²⁷

In addition to offering financial aid to allow military families – both legitimate and, in a number of cases, illegitimate members – to survive despite the absence of a male breadwinner, states also promulgated measures to support motherhood as a form of national service. This could take both rhetorical and concrete forms. Not only did existing pronatalist organisations such as the French Ligue contre la mortalité infantile (League against Infant Mortality) and the German Bund für Mutterschutz (League for Protection of Mothers) expand their scope during the war, but new groups focused on issues ranging from maternal and child welfare to early childhood education also emerged. As public voices called upon women to have babies in order to make up for wartime population losses, it is clear that the absence of mobilised men was not the only reason that many women (and men) made choices not to bring children into such an insecure world.²⁸

Other stresses on wartime women included uncertain access to food, fuel, adequate housing and the means by which to sustain daily life. Anxiety about all of these came to preoccupy often female-headed households in all participant states. As the anticipated ‘short war’ turned into a multi-year and multi-front global conflict, lack of resources for non-combatants emerged as a growing problem. It was not simply that severe limits on basic supplies meant that war workers could not sustain their part of the war effort, namely the production of goods vital for military support. The effects of the Allied blockade on Germany not only caused food shortages leading to hunger and malnutrition but, additionally, the absence of food associated with the very essence of good housekeeping could prove deeply demoralising, as Belinda Davis has shown for wartime Berliners.²⁹

The double burden placed upon women in nations like Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia of working for the war effort and trying to obtain the basic necessities of life for their families, which often meant standing in line for hours, helped to politicise large groups of women. Especially in the urban centres of these states – Berlin, Vienna and Petrograd – criticism of food shortages could turn into criticism of food policy, and thus of the government, the war and the country itself.

In Berlin, rationing began relatively early in the conflict and substantially reduced key resources to below pre-war levels. Berliners quickly came to

rely on food that could be mailed from the countryside (even after 1915 when this became illegal) or carried in; family networks became especially important in helping urban residents cope with shortages. Community networks of support, such as those that existed among housewives in the city, also enabled many to negotiate access to food supplies. Yet being unable to feed children and later to keep homes warm in the dead of winter also cut to the heart of women's sense of themselves as mothers and household managers. As the war continued into its third and most brutal winter, the toll was evident everywhere. As an Englishwoman living in Berlin commented in January 1917: 'We are all gaunt and bony now, and have dark shadows around our eyes, and our thoughts are chiefly taken up with wondering what our next meal will be, and dreaming of the good things that once existed.' It was under such conditions that women's frustration with the war effort intensified.³⁰

Wartime Vienna faced a dire shortage of food. The Habsburg government called upon all its subjects, including its women and children, to endure and to sacrifice for the war effort. From the outset the state tried to shift blame for the lack of food and subsequent hardships that civilians endured on the enemy for imposing the blockade, reminding the residents of its urban capital that a war of starvation was being waged against them. In the face of this, women in Vienna received a consistent message from multiple sources about the important role they played in this realm of the conflict: 'we must no longer live in the way that is pleasant for us, but rather in the way that is useful to the state'. By 1917 such beliefs were almost unsustainable, and women's evident dismay and then active participation in protests over shortages contributed to a sense of the Empire's looming crisis.³¹

The disruption of agriculture and the patterns of rural life affected women disproportionately in places like Russia, both in the countryside and its expanding urban centres like Petrograd. If by early 1917 nearly half the able-bodied men in rural areas had been incorporated into the armed forces, this meant that the population left behind was both feminised and related to men in uniform (wives, sisters, daughters and mothers). While the soldier's wife or *soldatka* came to occupy a prominent place in Russia's schemes to aid families deprived of male breadwinners – in the form of obligatory state aid – the Russian government never figured out how to distribute such aid. Promised support that never appeared, *soldatki* mobilised to demand what

they felt entitled to, including rioting as well as petitioning. One new feature of the riots and unrest that spread across Russia in 1916 was the role played by soldiers' relations, especially *soldatki*, in demanding goods and compensation for their wartime deprivations. All this, plus the failure of effective rationing (which meant the continued unequal distribution of food and resources), contributed greatly to the volatility of the domestic front in the Russian Empire.³² Government officials themselves were aware of the potentially explosive nature of such women, and a police report from Russia in January 1917 warned that 'the mothers of families, who are exhausted by the endless standing in line at the stores, who are worn out by the suffering of seeing their children half-starved and sick, may now be much closer to revolution'.³³

Although other states in Europe did not experience the same level of shortages of food and fuel, the governments of nations like France and Britain also implemented systems of rationing before the war was over. Even before such formal control of the food supply began, campaigns aimed at women as the guardians of home and hearth tried to encourage shifts in diet and consumption. 'The Kitchen is the Key to Victory' proclaimed one British poster, as a smiling matron orders the civil population to 'eat less bread'. By insisting that those living at home restrict their intake of sugar, wheat, meat, eggs and butter, governments sought to continue these supplies for troops as well as maintain equity in access to goods at home. Trying to increase the food supply offset by the lack of agricultural labour (including animal labour, as horses disappeared into the military as well), the British government launched a back-to-the-land movement for women, creating the Women's Land Army to encourage urban middle-class women to supply ongoing labour as well as the influx of able bodies that were needed particularly at harvest time.³⁴

Food shortages among civilians were not restricted to Europe. Campaigns aimed to convince civilian women to adjust their families' diet and to consume less in order to provide everything that troops demanded occurred across Britain's extended Empire in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as in the United States. In Africa, hardship was more directly felt: women in Nyasaland (present-day Malawi) worried about the potential food shortages faced by their husbands and sons fighting the war, and they also had to contend with shortages of food at home. In addition, as was the case

elsewhere, wartime malnutrition and hunger contributed to the death tolls associated with the influenza pandemic that also affected Africa.³⁵ As every participant state implicitly or explicitly called upon civilians to sacrifice, and for women to suffer silently and heroically on a par with male combatants, they also acknowledged the changing nature of modern war for women as well as men .

Destabilising the war at home

When war broke out in 1914, the international feminist movement, which had been focused on winning the vote for women, and to a great extent advocating that such political enfranchisement could lead to a better and more peaceful world, did not respond with one voice. A manifesto issued by International Women's Suffrage Alliance (the umbrella organisation for women's suffrage movements in individual nations) proclaimed that:

In this terrible hour, when the fate of Europe depends on decisions which women have no power to shape, we, realising our responsibilities as the mothers of the race, cannot stand passive by . . . [W]e call upon the Governments and Powers of our several countries to avert the threatened unparalleled disaster.³⁶

As prescient as these words may sound given the disastrous loss of life that unfolded, their effect at the time was minimal. Although the war did divide feminists, only a minority continued to adhere in public to the internationalist ideals expressed above and to advocate for peace in the face of the virulent nationalism that emerged as the war got underway.

Nonetheless, a significant and often vocal group of women at home continued throughout the conflict to demand everything from an immediate end to fighting to a negotiated settlement arranged by neutral powers. In April 1915, a gathering of such women at The Hague, with representatives from most but not all the major participant states, rearticulated a feminist vision of a world that sought peace rather than war. Again, speaking particularly as mothers, these women asked for an immediate end to the conflict rather than a costly fight until victory. While giving rise to an organisation – the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom –

that continues to the present day, and despite the best efforts of leading figures like the American Jane Addams, little resulted from feminist anti-war efforts.

Several prominent women active in socialist and feminist circles attempted separately both to strengthen international pressure against the war and to try to defeat militarism in their own countries. Some of these women, including Germany's Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg and France's Louise Saumoneau and Hélène Brion, found themselves imprisoned or put on trial for crimes ranging from hindering the war effort to defeatism or advocating a negotiated end to the conflict rather than a fight to the finish. After its entry into the war, the United States treated anti-war activists harshly, including putting Kate Richards O'Hare on trial for sedition and deporting Emma Goldman for speaking out against the war. In most cases, these activists directly appealed to women as women to help stop the war.

Yet the continuation of this strand or outgrowth of pre-war feminism, while it may have appeared threatening to national war efforts, did little to challenge normative ideas about gender. Such ideas stressed that women were peaceful and emotional; it would thus not be shocking if they thought of battlefields not only as sites of glory and heroism but as places strewn with the blood and bodies of their sons and lovers. To some extent wartime societies might understand and perhaps even excuse versions of feminist pacifism, especially when they relied on rhetoric rooted in women's difference from men, and in their seemingly natural instincts of maternal devotion and empathy . By contrast, male war resistance was more intolerable because it called into question the very essence of masculinity.³⁷

Nowhere perhaps was male pacifist activity more visible in participant states than in Britain, where military service was not compulsory until 1916, and provision was made for conscientious objection to military service once conscription was introduced. In her 1918 novel, *Despised and Rejected*, Rose Allatini depicted the fate of those 'peculiar' types who refused to hear the call of King and Country. Banned in 1918, presumably as much for its sympathetic portrayal of gays and lesbians as for its overt pacifism, the novel offers us insights into this often overlooked part of the war's male population – those who not only did not participate militarily in the conflict, but also questioned its very idea. Allatini frankly summarised

the pressures put upon such men from the outset of the war by explaining the reaction of the local middle-class community to her protagonist's decision not to go to war:

Eastwold, with a tolerance and forbearance which later it was to lose, assumed that Dennis, being an artist, and hence possessing a certain right to be 'peculiar', would take longer than the others to realise his duty towards his King, country and family. But inspired by the example of his brother Clive and the rest of Eastwold, he would no doubt soon long to feel his hand upon the hilt of a sword, as did every true-born Briton in times like these.³⁸

Instead, *Despised and Rejected's* protagonist Denis Blackwood falls in love with a committed pacifist denied conscientious objector status who goes to jail rather than do anything to support the war effort. Those who became conscientious objectors serve as stark reminders that there were multiple ways to display courage by the many men who spent this war at home. Conscientious objectors often experienced vitriolic disapproval from the wider public, and those who chose prison (like the character in this novel) faced physical abuse as well.³⁹

Furthermore, while some form of military service remained deeply entrenched as the masculine ideal during the First World War, such service was not of course the domain of either the young or the old. Despite tales of teenage boys lying their way into front-line combat, relatively healthy men in the prime of life formed the majority of combatants. Furthermore, given the materiel required to wage this war, most governments also excluded certain categories of male workers from military service. Members of so-called reserved occupations – such as skilled machinists who were needed to produce munitions, or coal miners – contributed to the war effort in crucial ways, though not in uniform. Resentment festered against such groups of men – including accusations that they were shirkers or cowards – as the war continued and the casualties mounted. Yet the cultural ideal of a feminised home front and masculine battleground remained stable despite concrete exceptions and continued links (and breakages) between the war zones.

Connecting the fronts

While both privately organised and officially sanctioned groups existed to ensure that soldiers received comforts and were reminded of home, those serving in the war zones relied on a stream of letters and parcels from families and friends. As Henri Barbusse describes it in his 1916 novel *Le feu* ['Under Fire'], receiving letters from home was a crucial and vital part of front-line life, while for soldiers: 'letter-writing time is the moment when we are most and best what we were'.⁴⁰

Every nation with mobilised troops tried to ensure a steady flow of communications between the fronts. Michael Roper convincingly argues in his study of correspondence between soldiers and their sources of support at home, particularly mothers, that letters contributed to the emotional survival of those serving in war zones. Beyond the material support provided by parcels containing everything from food to tobacco to 'comforts', letters offered a vivid reminder of moral support and of the value of life in the midst of death.⁴¹

Letters could both maintain and fray the borders between the fronts. Despite censorship, letters home could and did express an emotional range of responses to war experiences, including anger at the conduct of the war and an awareness of the hardships suffered at home. As the surviving correspondence between the young French couple Marie and Paul Pireaud reveals, a soldier husband could be just as concerned with his wife's pregnancy as with the conditions of his daily survival. Nor would such a soldier completely spare his wife a sense of the horrors of a battle like Verdun.⁴²

In addition to both intimate sources of support and official efforts to promote soldiers' morale through reminders of home, a variety of voluntary organisations emerged in participant nations to satisfy the real and imagined needs of soldiers. Many of them relied extensively on the labour and leadership of women. Some of these charities mobilised women's domestic skills by collecting hand-knitted items like socks and scarves. From Ireland to New Zealand to North America, women packed up comfort bags filled with homemade garments, tobacco, sweets and inspiring notes to send to mobilised troops. In contrast to other states, in Germany, where food

shortages plagued the civilian population, soldiers might come home on leave bringing vital supplies like butter.⁴³

Other women either created or staffed organisations like the Foyers du soldat (Soldiers' 'homes from home'), the Young Women's Christian Association or various war relief societies that also aimed to provide alternative sources of 'wholesome' entertainment for soldiers on rest or leave. Fearful that men in uniform would succumb to the temptations of alcohol and illicit sex, alternative spaces such as canteens or entertainment huts offered doughnuts and cakes, cocoa and tea served by respectable women. Providing cups of hot beverages to those embarking or disembarking at train stations was not glamorous war work, but it offered women at home an opportunity to do something for the war effort that was completely acceptable to all concerned.⁴⁴

Women's wartime charitable work that verged – at times – on the unacceptable can be seen in the creation of the *marraines de guerre* (godmothers of war) in France. Since a 'marraine' was supposed to adopt a godson individually, there was little supervision of what sort of messages or gifts might be carried in the parcels and letters sent to the front. Like all such efforts to offer material reminders of the home to those in the military, the sustaining of morale was the main goal. Yet in popular culture the relationship between 'godmother' and 'godson' quickly became sexualised.⁴⁵

When examined more closely, many of the ways in which women at home were meant to encourage and sustain their nation's troops engaged in an often uneasy relationship with female sexuality. The encouragement of procreative heterosexual encounters could coexist easily with the pronatalism that was a recurring theme in many wartime states. Such a desire for women to embrace motherhood as the key to population growth was not caused by the war, but the war's enormous toll certainly exacerbated governmental anxiety about falling birth rates (no surprise during wartime) and the fraught issue of how states could ever recover if their population did not. Impregnating women was something that soldiers were supposed to do on leave, preferably within the bounds of matrimony and legitimacy, but social and cultural barriers to birth out of wedlock seemingly fell during the war.⁴⁶

There are a number of striking examples of this process. First, and perhaps most vividly, it can be seen in the notion of what became known in Britain as ‘war babies’ – the alleged flock of children created by women eager to reward a man going off to war by having sex. Far from decrying the taint that might be imposed upon women who gave birth to illegitimate children, many voices in the popular media of wartime states seemed to extol such actions. In the United Kingdom the phenomenon of alleged war babies led to public cries of both condemnation and acceptance. Meantime, in France it became possible to legitimise a child even after a soldier father had been killed in battle, as wartime legislation allowed marriage (and thus the conferring of legitimacy) both by proxy and posthumously .⁴⁷

Sexual encounters between men and women in wartime states raised a number of concerns for their governments. In addition to worries about the potentially demoralising effects of coercive, commercial, abusive or illicit sex, states worried about the spread of venereal diseases . While different states might employ varying methods for satisfying the presumed needs for sexual gratification of those serving in the military, ranging from regulated brothels to the distribution of prophylactics to warnings to keep ‘pure’, the toll taken by sexually transmitted diseases remained a motivating factor in the increased regulation of sexuality. In Britain, for example, under the Defence of the Realm Act and later Regulations, it again became a crime for a woman suffering from venereal disease to have sexual relations with a member of the military.⁴⁸ Of more particular concern were the potential (and real) relationships forged between non-white colonial troops and white European women. Postal censors in France, as elsewhere, took careful note of how often troops from places like Indochina wrote of ‘their adventures in the company of white women’.⁴⁹ For many, almost worse perhaps than the spread of disease from such ‘adventures’ was the spread of notions of equality forged by relationships across racial and colonial divides and their ultimate ability to undermine imperial authority .⁵⁰

Women’s political mobilisation at home for greater equality and political rights also reshaped the post-war landscape. While some women and men active in the vibrant pre-war feminist movement turned to the anti-war activities already discussed, others saw in the war opportunities to promote by demonstration the fact that women could both sacrifice for and serve

their nations. In nearly every participant state, then, members of women's suffrage organisations mobilised to support national war efforts.

As the war drew to an end and in its immediate aftermath, a number of such states finally granted women a political franchise, including among others Austria, Belgium, Britain (although not on equal terms as men since only women over 30 gained the franchise in 1918), Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland and the United States. Comparative study of the granting of women's suffrage reveals that the participation of women in specific war efforts helped shape the legislative debates over female enfranchisement in a range of states.⁵¹ France remained the most notable exception to the expansion of suffrage to women, although here the sticking point was due less to women's service and sacrifices for the state than to republican and radical fears about women's alleged propensity to vote according to the dictates of the church, given their religiosity. There were French legislators during the debates over women's suffrage who proposed giving women a 'familial' vote or a form of 'suffrage for the dead' – a voting right transferred from a dead male head of household to the woman who now headed it. In the end, all these measures failed, and Frenchwomen remained without full political enfranchisement.⁵² However, even for the large numbers of women across Europe and in North America who now possessed a vote, this did not mean an end to deeply gendered expectations about men's and women's roles in national and indeed domestic life.⁵³

Demobilisation and a return to domestic life

Wars have official endings, but precisely when the First World War ended for those at home varied tremendously. One could easily argue that for some individuals the war never really ended. They lived with the consequences of war-induced loss or trauma for the rest of their lives. In some geographic locales the war was far from over on 11 November 1918. Demobilisation and rebuilding took years to accomplish. In one of the major powers – Russia – civil war raged between the victors of the 1917 Revolution and those opposed to the Bolshevik regime so that all the hardships of war at home – starvation, lack of fuel and an enormous refugee crisis – continued unabated. For the men and women who survived

malnutrition and disease in the defeated states of Central Europe, recovery was slow indeed.

Inhabitants of post-war states faced a number of challenges. One factor often overlooked in accounts of the war was the rebuilding of domestic life itself. Mobilised men in relationships with those at home had to re-establish the patterns of daily life in all its aspects. How did couples resume intimacy? How did fathers acquaint themselves with children who had rarely seen them over the course of the conflict? How did displaced female war workers respond to new curtailments on their opportunities and even mobility? How did the many who mourned loved ones adjust to altered circumstances? Such questions are difficult to answer definitively, in part because frank accounts of post-war family and domestic life remain in short supply.⁵⁴

Certainly the years of total war helped to structure a post-war world where gender relations remained a fraught and contested aspect of political, social and cultural life for men and women.⁵⁵ What Western society and culture stressed to post-war families was the need to establish 'normality': for women to remove themselves from the waged workforce and resume their domestic duties, even if it was no longer possible or even desirable to do so. Across many states, pronatalism and literally the rebuilding of the nation through repopulation became a dominant theme of post-war public voices. Some of the policy measures designed to aid families while men were mobilised were adapted, slowly in some cases and more quickly in others, in the post-war world into pronatalist measures designed to promote motherhood and the associated maintaining of home life as the essential services that women above all could provide in their post-war states.⁵⁶ That this was both resisted by women (and men) and incorporated into new political regimes that sanctified certain versions of motherhood, most notably perhaps in Germany, is testament to the centrality of both cultural assumptions about, and the lived experiences of, women and men in shaping the aftermath of this war.

1 'Keep the Home Fires Burning', by Lena Guilbert Ford (lyrics) and Ivor Novello (music) (London, 1914).

2 For a discussion of the invention of the home front, see Susan R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 7 and n. 1, p. 249.

3 An influential analysis of continuity and change in gender relations due to wartime that stresses the notion of a sustained gender hierarchy despite wartime transformations can be found in Margaret R. Higonnet and Patrice L.-R. Higonnet, 'The double helix', in Margaret R. Higonnet *et al.* (eds.), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

4 Annie S. Swan, *Letters to a War Bride* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), p. 52. See the synopsis of the start of the war for women in Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (Harlow: Longman, 2002).

5 Quoted in Santanu Das, 'India, Women and the First World War', in Alison S. Fell and Ingrid Sharp (eds.), *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914–19* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 21.

6 Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World At War, 1914–1919* (New York University Press, 2010), ch. 2, provides a useful description of civilians in such circumstances.

7 Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during the First World War* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999; paperback edn 2005), p. 3.

8 *Ibid.*; Maria Bucur, 'Between the mother of the wounded and the Virgin of Jiu: Romanian women and the gender of heroism during the Great War', *Journal of Women's History*, 12:2 (2000), pp. 30–56, for refugees see pp. 36–7; Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

9 For more on the treatment of civilians during these invasions, see John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

10 For a useful synthetic discussion of First World War propaganda, see Nicoletta F. Gullace, 'Allied propaganda and World War I: interwar legacies, media studies and the politics of war guilt', *History Compass*, 9:9 (2011), pp. 686–700, and the summary of scholarship on gender and wartime sexual violence in Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), pp. 21–35.

11 Lillith Hope, *Behold and See* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1917); see also the discussion in Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*, ch. 2.

12 See posters in collections such as Peter Paret *et al.* (eds.), *Persuasive Images: Posters of War and Revolution from the Hoover Institution Archives* (Princeton University Press, 1992), and Walton Rawls, *Wake Up, America! World War I and the American Poster* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988).

13 See Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*, ch. 2, and Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, pp. 57–8.

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15 Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 105–7.

16 Bucur, 'Between the mother of the wounded', p. 36.

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18 Maria Degrutère, 'Tableau des événements particuliers et journaliers', in Annette Becker (ed.), *Journaux des combattants et civils dans la France du nord dans la Grande Guerre* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1998), p. 197.

19 Jovana Knezevic, 'Prostitutes as a threat to national honor in Habsburg-occupied Serbia during the Great War', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 20:2 (2011), pp. 312–35.

20 Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, ch. 5; Allison Scardino Belzer, *Women and the Great War: Femininity under Fire in Italy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 134–41.

21 'Les nuits de guerre de Paris', *Le Matin*, 9 March 1918, quoted in Susan R. Grayzel, "'The souls of soldiers": civilians under fire in First World War France', *Journal of Modern History*, 78:3 (2006), p. 609. The rest of this paragraph is drawn from this article.

22 'Story of the raid', *The Times*, 14 June 1917.

23 Gavin Roynon (ed.), *Home Fires Burning: The Great War Diaries of Georgina Lee* (Stroud: History Press, 2006), p. 228.

24 For more reactions to air power in Britain, see Susan R. Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 20–92.

25 As seen in [Chapter 4](#) of this volume.

26 See summation in Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, pp. 22–6. See also Ute Daniel, *The War From Within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War*, trans. Margaret Ries (Oxford: Berg, 1997); Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*.

27 Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, p. 22.

28 Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890–1970* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 111–35. See also Elizabeth Domansky, ‘Militarization and reproduction in World War I Germany’, in Geoff Eley (ed.), *Society, Culture and the State in Germany, 1870–1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

29 Davis, *Home Fires Burning*.

30 Thierry Bonzon and Belinda Davis, ‘Feeding the cities’, in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: London, Paris, Berlin, 1914–1919* (Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Davis, *Home Fires Burning*. Quote from Evelyn Blücher, *An English Wife in Berlin* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1920), p. 158.

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45 Grayzel, *Women's Identities At War*, ch. 4.

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6 At the front

Margaret R. Higonnet A wide range of women found themselves in a war zone during the Great War, and there is much documentary evidence showing that many women who wished to serve their nation had a fixation on 'the front'.¹ As Cynthia Enloe has argued, in wartime women have always followed armies in a range of capacities, such as laundresses, cooks, prostitutes, nurses, messengers or porters, spies and sometimes even as armed combatants.² Inevitably such women encountered violence in their experiences of war. This chapter briefly mentions some of the occupations that blur lines between 'front' and 'rear', but focuses on three groups of women who wrote about their experience of the front lines: medical staff, auxiliaries and soldiers. The ways their service intersected with gender definitions differed according to geographic location and national traditions, and shifted in response to urgent demands of the moment. A few figures may serve to interpret how they represented their own wartime situations, formed an identity in relation to combat, and used the experience of war to shape their narratives. The reception of the texts published during or following the war exposes the fascination aroused by women's accounts as well as doubts concerning their authenticity. Accordingly, one feature of women's autobiographies about this period is the use of photography to authenticate or to provide a corollary narrative that speaks beyond words.

While the popular pair of terms 'battlefront' and 'home front' were highly gendered, appearing to distinguish male combatants from female civilians, in fact (as in any war) the battle front might be defined as wherever the armies were active – and on a mobile front civilians often found themselves painfully located next to military forces. The relative threat of violence might be another factor in the definition; thus auxiliary functions that liaise with the front might entail high risk. We may also question the distinction between victims of war and actors. The relative stability of the Western Front was bracketed by a war of movement in 1914 and in 1918, in which women who suffered from military aggression also took on impromptu roles of leadership and resistance. On the Eastern Front

rapid realignments of troops created an unstable military and social order that broke down traditional roles for women and made it possible for them to volunteer as soldiers, or to be integrated into the military when caught up in a mass migration. Women serving with the Scottish Women's Hospitals in Serbia, who stayed with patients who could not be moved when the Austrians and Bulgarians advanced, became de facto prisoners of war, while they continued to serve as doctors and nurses. Similarly, Red Cross representatives inspecting prisoner-of-war camps, such as Countess Kinsky, became what Alon Rachamimov calls 'female generals' who negotiated with camp commandants.³ Even in the entrenched West, although women who were engaged in relief and rescue work stood at the margins of the groups on which this chapter focuses, they exemplify the blurred lines between civilian and militarised citizens in wartime. Smith College women working from a base at Grécourt in March 1918, when the German 'Michael' offensive began, scrambled to evacuate the villagers they had been caring for and fled in their cars and lorries on roads crowded with retreating soldiers. Moreover, women travelled between national organisations and fronts, passing in some cases from Belgium to France then to Serbia and on to Russia or back to France. In 1914 a young British nurse, Emily Simmonds, joined a group of American Red Cross relief workers in Serbia, then accompanied refugees and soldiers on their journey to Corfu, where she organised medical care and further transport. Her mobility and the merging of groups with which she worked signal the instability of women's war work, especially on the Eastern Front.

Certain wartime roles were symbolically gendered as feminine, as in the conflation of spying and prostitution in public discourse. Since military intelligence constitutes a kind of virtual front, those who served as spies might be farmers billeting soldiers, or might secure information from diplomats in distant locations, albeit at the risk of their own lives. Mata Hari faced execution; so did nurse Edith Cavell in Brussels and the Belgian aristocrat Louise de Bettignies, who passed soldiers along an underground network in occupied territory. Cavell was executed in 1915, and Bettignies, although her sentence of death was commuted, died in German imprisonment in a hospital in Cologne in 1918. These cases suggest that the information stream may itself be a kind of 'front' .

A more conventional example of an engaged civilian profession is that of journalists, who could become targets when reporting from front lines. Although for the most part newspaperwomen were sent to write about what editors considered to be women's issues, a number of American women (until 1917 representing papers published in a neutral country) reported from combat zones. These included Mary Roberts Rinehart, Madeleine Doty, Bessie Beatty and Rheta Childe Dorr. With Belgian accreditation Rinehart was able to spend three weeks making 'excursions into the trenches, into shelled towns, once even into No Man's Land' past bodies afloat in the floodwaters.⁴ Some women wrote for national magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *Il Giornale*. Women's papers such as *Jus Suffragii*, *Englishwoman*, *Zhenskii vestnik*, *Zhenskoe Delo*, *La Française*, *La voix des femmes* and radical papers such as *La difesa delle lavoratrici*, *La bataille syndicaliste* or *Die Gleichheit* sought reportage about women's new industrial and economic contributions. Reporters were particularly eager to secure stories about Russian women in combat. They sought out women under the leadership of Maria Botchkareva, who had created a Woman's Battalion of Death (*Zhenskii batal'on smerti*). Radical journalist Louise Bryant, in her *Six Red Months in Russia* (1918), discussed the symbolic importance of these soldiers: when talking to one of them, she realised the woman was barefoot, personifying 'Russia hungry and cold and barefoot . . . planning new battles, new roads to freedom'.⁵ Rheta Childe Dorr, who met female regiments in Moscow and Petrograd, recounts that she slipped onto Botchkareva's train to the south without papers, then shared meals and a plank bed with Botchkareva before the battle of Smorgon.⁶ French journalist Colette Yver visited a mobile hospital on the Somme where she played a maternal role, comforting the injured waiting for an emergency intervention, a scene she reported to *Lectures pour tous* in 1916.⁷ On the Western Front even the novelist Colette sought to reach a sector near Verdun from where she could report to *Le Matin* on the experience of bombardment. Helen Johns Kirtland and Florence Harper worked as photographers for *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*; Kirtland visited military installations in France and Italy, where she photographed men in trenches, and the magazine claimed she was 'the first and only woman correspondent allowed at the front after Caporetto'.⁸ One English journalist, Dorothy

Lawrence, cross-dressed as a soldier on the Western Front, but was sent back home.⁹ As these various examples suggest, women drawn by idealism, a sense of adventure, politics or professional ambition courted danger in all its different facets. The threat of death associated with combat could thus leak across rigid conceptual boundaries into non-combatant occupations .

To a surprising extent, young women, even girls, desired to go to the front, responding in part to nationalist legends and militarist propaganda addressed to the young. The history of heroic women fighters or ‘amazons’ inspired some young women to imitate them in 1914.¹⁰ Female volunteers in Russia referred to Joan of Arc and Nadezhda Durova (a cross-dressed officer who had served in the Napoleonic era with the blessing of the Tsar), as well as to more recent terrorists such as Sophia Perovskaia and Vera Zasulich, and some related to the warrior maidens of Russian folklore.¹¹ Children’s books of the nineteenth century had celebrated figures such as Joan of Arc, Florence Nightingale or Durova as national heroines, undoubtedly fostering adolescents’ ambitions to serve the motherland.

Nineteenth-century civil wars and nationalist conflicts had thrown up female combatants such as Elizabeth Dmitrieff in the Paris Commune and Rosa Donato in Sicily, and their legacy lingered in women’s minds. Early in the First World War, stories about girls’ contributions to the war began to proliferate. Twelve Russian schoolgirls aged between 14 and 17 ran away to join a unit on the Austrian front with which they fought for over a year.

Their adoption as mascots, their acquisition of uniforms, and their subsequent injuries or deaths were described by the *New York Times* in its 1916 ‘Current History’ series, quoting from a London *Times* reporter.¹²

Mädchenpost , an Austrian weekly for girls, published articles about Ukrainian women in uniform, one a graduate in philosophy, another a teacher. In Germany, young women wrote petitions to be allowed to join the army, as Bianca Schönberger notes: 18-year-old Anna Sauter explained to King Ludwig of Bavaria, ‘I have German blood running through my veins and I want to have a closer relation to the war.’¹³ In France, according to revolutionary catechisms printed for children, tradition reached back not only to Joan of Arc, but to *cantinières* and women who fought beside their husbands or brothers; at the end of the nineteenth century their stories were illustrated by JOB (the pseudonym of Jacques Onfroy de Breville) in beautiful albums. Historian Margaret Darrow has gathered a cluster of

stories about brave French girls and women that alluded to Joan of Arc, Jeanne Hachette and Antoinette Lix (who fought both in Poland in 1863 and in Paris in 1870).¹⁴ Such narratives, which spread especially during the first weeks of the German invasion of the northern departments, excited ambitions to serve the nation among the young, including women. In the next few years, as Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau has shown, stories about child heroism continued to be published in collections aimed at children ('livres roses pour la jeunesse') as well as in newspapers.¹⁵ One finely illustrated volume tells us that Émilienne Moreau, aged 16, rescued her father from execution, then defended herself with grenades and a pistol, winning a French decoration 'as a soldier'.¹⁶ Among Charles Guyon's paperback tales about heroic children, we find *Les exploits d'une petite Roumaine (récit de la Guerre des Carpathes)*, which recounted the courage of little Mariola, who warned Romanians of advancing enemy troops and who burned a bridge to slow them down. When she was imprisoned, she found an exit through which she led to freedom the men of her village who had been rounded up.¹⁷ The children's culture of war fed into the phenomenon of women actually volunteering to work in a medical, auxiliary or military capacity at the front.

As we shall see, this 'front-line fever' drove many volunteers to serve as doctors and nurses or as drivers picking up the wounded and doing non-combatant work that they felt made them into metaphorical 'soldiers' whose task of saving lives constituted a second battlefield.¹⁸ In spite of military regulations barring females from the war zone, and social disapproval of women in uniforms, female volunteers managed to establish women's medical and auxiliary groups, and then to secure passes from the Belgian or Serbian embassies. The majority of these women hoped to perform medical services, in positions where they could retain their femininity yet serve the military. Florence Farmborough (1887–1978), an English governess in Moscow, at the age of 27 became a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) and then trained as a Russian Red Cross nurse. She describes her longing, in the face of authoritative refusals, 'to be accepted as a nurse in a Red Cross Front Line unit'.¹⁹ In January 1915 she was finally accepted as a surgical nurse in the 10th Field Surgical Otryad of the Zemstvo of all the Russias, joining a 'flying column' staffed by two male doctors, four surgical sisters, male nurses and orderlies. Blessed by her

Russian ‘mother’, Farmborough felt, ‘I, too, was a soldier, going to war.’²⁰

Margaret Darrow quotes the actress Lola Noyr who enrolled as a nurse, preferably in the war zone: ‘I always wanted to be at the front. I considered myself like a soldier, and so I believed that I could not stay on the home front.’ Another French volunteer, Léonie Godfroy, felt that volunteering would endow her with an identity: ‘A young girl in ordinary life is nothing or next to nothing. For the first time I was going to be someone, I would have a personal role to play, I would count in the world.’²¹ French girls were taught that ‘military service is obligatory for all’.²² Mary Dexter, an

American trained as an ambulance driver who served with the admired British Hackett–Lowther Unit, boasted that this was the only unit officially attached to the French army, with French soldiers’ pay: ‘there are none who are actually driving ambulances attached to an army, going up to the *postes de secours*, and under fire, as we shall be’.²³ She too considered herself to be a ‘soldier’. In Romania, nurse Jeanna Col. Fodoreanu published her war journal under the title *The Woman Soldier (Femeia-Soldat, 1928)*, representing her own sense of mission in a volunteer corps in Moldavia.²⁴

It was not just girls but older women that caught the fever and sought to register for medical service. Thus 50-year old Dr Elsie Maud Inglis, when she founded the Scottish Women’s Hospitals was notoriously told by the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) to ‘go home and sit still’, but instead took her units to France and Serbia.²⁵ By 1918 over a thousand of her women had served in six countries. Novelist May Sinclair wrote in her memoir that everyone seemed ‘desperately anxious to “get to the Front,” and desperately afraid of somebody else . . . getting there first’.²⁶ The Munro unit with which she volunteered was dismissed and snubbed by the Admiralty, the British Red Cross, the Americans and the French before being accepted by the Belgian Red Cross. Sinclair was 51, but dreamt of carrying injured men from the battlefield, a task that her co-workers Elsie Knocker and Mairi Chisholm did in fact undertake. Margaret Holliday and Margaret Hall from Boston, both in their forties, hoped that their Red Cross work would take them to the war zone. Hall lamented to her family from Paris as she waited for her assignment: ‘I have no hopes of getting anywhere near the front. The Red Cross does not send women near.’²⁷ A few days later she happily secured the prized position of canteen worker in

Châlons-sur-Marne, on the critical railway line that carried troops and munitions to Verdun .

The most dramatic shift in popular attitudes was marked by the widespread eagerness of women to volunteer for military service, leading to surprising numbers serving in the armies of imperial Russia. In November 1914, Sofia Pavlovna Iur'eva of the Petrograd School for Higher Education for Women wrote a letter to the women's journal *Zhenskii vestnik* to secure funding for a 'detachment of Amazons, of women soldiers' so that she could be useful to her homeland. An anonymous contributor to the journal, 'Ivanova', observed: 'Despite the reigning view that women's wartime role should be confined to helping the sick and wounded, Russian women are taking up arms to defend their fatherland . . . In some cases women are already taking part in battles, weapons in hand. Many girls from different social classes are running away from home, dressing up as men, and trying to get into the army.'²⁸ *Le Miroir* published a photograph of Fathima la Marocaine who followed the Spahis and 'fought courageously like a man', commenting that this was not a new phenomenon: several women, the paper noted, were taking an active part in the war, just as Mlle Svovovitch had in Belgrade in 1912. The German *Illustrierte Geschichte des Weltkrieges 1914–1916* noted that victory in the war depended on women's contributions of every kind. One article included photographs of Fräulein Marie von Fery-Bognar, a corporal in the Austro-Hungarian army who had won a golden medal from the Emperor Franz Joseph; similar volunteers, we are told, were more common among the Russians, Poles, and Ukrainians.²⁹ The intense journalistic attention to the phenomenon of the soldier-woman undoubtedly responded to but also fed the 'front-fever' .

Doctors and nurses

The medical professions offered women the most traditionally acceptable paths to national service, although even here they encountered obstacles to engaging in work in military units. Only a small number of women doctors reached the Western Front; more served in the East, and most remained in the rear. When women doctors were rejected by the British military, they volunteered to serve under Belgian, French and Serbian flags. The most famous British women doctors in war zones belonged to Dr Inglis's Scottish

Women's Hospitals: the first unit entered service under the French Red Cross Service de Santé. They left for France in December 1914, and by January 1915 were receiving patients at the grand but utterly filthy and decrepit Royaumont Abbey (the outer limit of the German advance in September 1914); a second hospital was established at Villers-Cotteret (closer to Soissons) in 1917. Inglis had secured funding from the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and the American Red Cross to establish this organisation, which was joined by eminent doctors, writers and suffragists. Over a dozen other Scottish Women's Hospitals were sent to Corsica, Malta, Romania, Russia, Salonica and Serbia, equipped with doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers, cooks and orderlies.³⁰ In May 1915, the British War Office, after rejecting female physicians, permitted Dr Louisa Anderson and Dr Flora Murray, who had founded the Women's Hospital Corps and set up hospitals for the French army in Paris and Wimereux on the Channel coast near Boulogne, to establish the all-female Endell Street Hospital in London. Such service by women on the home front 'freed' medical men to serve with the military. Under the British Red Cross there were ten 'voluntary hospitals' in France and under the St John's Ambulance another three. The Duchess of Sutherland's hospital that was set up in Belgium moved to Dunkirk in November 1914 and to Calais a year later. Most hospitals were set up along the Channel at Wimereux, Abbeville, Paris-Plage, Boulogne and Le Tréport, facilitating transport of the wounded back to England.

A number of the women who established hospitals were certified as nurses but were not themselves doctors. In 1914 the dramatic and energetic Mabel St Clair Stobart, founder of the Women's Sick and Wounded Convoy Corps (1912), which had organised relief during the Balkan wars, created the Women's National Service League. She was quick to respond when war broke out in August, setting up a hospital for the St John's Ambulance Association in Antwerp; the city was evacuated as the Germans advanced, so she organised the removal of her patients, and escaped with her staff by riding on top of ammunition transported by London omnibuses. She next travelled from England to the Balkan Front, where she led the Serbian Relief Fund's Front Line Field Hospital as commander with the rank of major. Mrs Stobart's field hospital and dispensary included fourteen women doctors, thirty-three nursing sisters, twenty-three orderlies and three drivers. They also served in locations with quite different needs and impacts. Thus

Mrs Stobart first confronted a typhus epidemic among Serbian peasants, then moved up to the front lines. She and her medical staff accompanied the Serbian army's three-month retreat through the Albanian mountains in September 1915.³¹ She was 53 at the time, spending eighteen hours a day on horseback in the mountains in winter.

Several such women were celebrated by Barbara McLaren in a set of short pen-portraits, *Women of the War* (1918), which highlighted the contributions and sacrifices of women who ventured to the Eastern Front, including not only Elsie Inglis but Lady Paget, Edith Stoney (an x-ray technician in Salonica) and nurse Violetta Thurstan, who wrote a brisk account of her work in Belgium and Russia. Lady Paget, who had come to know Serbia when her husband Sir Ralph Paget was Minister to the Kingdom of Serbia in 1910–13, established a unit at Üsküb, which withstood the Austrian invasion of November 1914 and continued until the October 1915 joint invasion by the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. She stayed with her patients and distributed her supplies to refugees, feeding 70,000 people. In contrast to such widely scattered British women, by 1916 in France only one Frenchwoman seems to have served as a doctor in a front-line hospital, and one in the rear: Mme Girard-Mangin, a tuberculosis specialist, directed a typhoid ward at a Verdun military hospital, and Dr Tissot-Monod directed military hospital no. 3 at Lyon.³²

In Russia women volunteered enthusiastically as nurses, orderlies or paramedic *feldsher* but the numbers of doctors are not readily available.³³ In Russia, the socialist Dr Tatiana Alexinsky was an exception who wrote a memoir based on diary-letters about her work while on a hospital train shuttling between the front lines and the rear. Her book gives details of the (dis)organisation of medical care and the perplexities of reaching the wounded in the face of shifting battle lines and geographical distances from base hospitals. Having emigrated to France with her husband in 1908, she returned to Russia with her little son, whom she left in Moscow with her family. She described her hospital train of three dozen cars as 'a town on wheels', which aside from pacifist Mennonite orderlies and stretcher-bearers was staffed exclusively by women. 'Ours is a feminist train', she wrote. Her staff included trained doctors, intellectuals 'seeking an outlet for their moral energy and their social aspirations', and even a young teacher

eager to volunteer as a soldier. The diary entries follow the chronological thread of the war, zigzagging back and forth with the movement of the armies, and punctuated by portraits of individual members of the staff, military officers and the wounded. Her sense of irony gives her narrative an edge that is missing from many more fervently patriotic accounts. Thus at one point, when she was trying to assess how to load more casualties onto her train than space allowed, she encountered a ‘gentleman’ who told her to place them on the next train, only to discover that he was indeed the commander of the train, and a ‘fierce reactionary and instigator of pogroms’. ‘Only the war could produce such results’, she commented. ‘The German social democrats are my “enemies”, and I, a Russian Socialist, have become a “sister” to P—tsh!’³⁴ The narrative voice of this account is one of its distinctive features, since it combines the intimacy of a letter home with a lively sense of humour, as well as the easy tone of command of a doctor .

Texts written by nurses often convey a more devotional aura than those by doctors. Emblems of purity and patriotism, nurses were ‘white angels’, while at the same time conceiving of themselves as ‘soldiers’. Contemporaries tended to hold binary views of nurses – comparing those who were professionally trained with women who were more sentimental volunteers, or dedicated workers with ‘mondaines’ – ladies of fashion whose interests were either sexual or marital or both. A great many rumours recycled in both men’s and women’s accounts suggest that prostitutes were to be found among the young women whose medical care required them to lay hands upon men’s bodies, uncovering holes in stomachs and thighs or mangled genitalia.³⁵ Katherine Hodges North, for example, reported in her engaging diary that both in Russia and Romania, where she was working with the Scottish Women’s Hospitals, ‘a great percentage of the nursing staffs were recruited from the demi-monde classes’. She had been warned that nurses should remove their Red Cross insignia in order not to be mistaken for ‘ladies of the streets’. Yet she exclaimed ironically, ‘All honour to them for the fine work they did.’³⁶ The *Berliner Zeitung* talked about nurse-prostitutes.³⁷ Susan Zeiger attributes rumours about pregnant nurses and sexually active women volunteers to apprehensions about working women in general.³⁸

While tens of thousands of nurses joined the medical profession between 1914 and 1918, most of them did not serve close to the front. Male nurses, orderlies and stretcher-bearers were deployed in the war zone between trenches and first-aid stations or dugouts. 'Mobile' field hospitals in tents and wooden barracks were located several kilometres back where they would be less vulnerable to shelling. Of roughly 70,000 British nurses (as against 1,253 female doctors and surgeons), most remained in England. Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service had close to 8,000 nurses by November 1918, together with roughly 80,000 female VADs. According to Arthur Marwick 4,500 nursing sisters worked for the RAMC of the British Expeditionary Force in France in 1918.³⁹ But Haig remained adamantly opposed to the service of women in France, writing in 1917 that medical women would be unable to support 'the enormous and incessant strain' of service during a battle like the Somme.⁴⁰ However, staff shortages displaced gender prejudices, and female physicians ultimately worked with British units in Salonica, Egypt and Palestine.⁴¹

Statistics for French employment and deployment of nurses close to the war zone are not entirely consistent: Margaret Darrow indicates that 60,000 Red Cross nurses and half as many temporary military nurses served in 1914–18; Alison Fell and Christine Hallett find as many as 100,000 nurses under the umbrella of the French Red Cross, while Chantal Antier found the French Red Cross placed 3,000 women in military hospitals (out of 112,000 members) and other Red Cross associations certified 70,000 volunteer nurses in addition to 20,000 salaried nurses. Françoise Thébaud found that by 1918 the Service de santé aux armées had 30,000 salaried nurses out of over 100,000, in addition to 10,000 nuns.⁴² As German troops advanced into France, French auxiliary hospitals well back from the frontier became de facto front-line stations. By spring 1917 Red Cross women were admitted to the war zone, and by February 1918 to front-line dressing stations.⁴³ Some American doctors and nurses served in France, as did Japanese and Norwegian nurses. Dr Marie Curie introduced groups of 'autos-chirs' or mobile surgical vans with x-ray machines deploying fifty personnel to perform urgent operations before the wounded were sent to the rear. Seventy-four of the 850 nurses in these units died.⁴⁴ The chain of transmission of the wounded went from a first-aid station in a dugout (exclusively male staff) to evacuation hospitals in barracks or tents, where

the wounded were sorted out, then via hospital trains, canal boats or lorries to the main hospitals or specialised services in the rear.

Equivalent numbers of nurses served in Germany, with about 92,000 employed by the Military Inspector for Voluntary Nursing, but Bianca Schönberger explains that the *Etappenhelferinnen* were located in the 'rear echelons' about 10–15 km from the front, and that only about 28,000 nursing personnel worked beyond the home front.⁴⁵ Germans designated three different zones, and in principle nurses were in military hospitals in the *Etappe*, behind the combat zone, but as shortages of male personnel rose they may have moved forward. The Eastern Front had higher mortality rates because of malaria and typhus.

As a neutral organisation until 1917, the American Red Cross sent 'mercy ships' with medical units to both the Central Powers and the Allies. In the United States the War Department opposed the service of women physicians in the Army Medical Corps. In response, women physicians created their own all-female mobile hospitals – the Women's Overseas Hospital of the USA and the American Women's Hospitals. One unit treated French wounded at Château-Thierry, but others were set up not at the front but in zones where they could help with refugees and epidemics among civilians.⁴⁶ More nurses than doctors went from the United States to Europe. Julia Stimson, who was head nurse for base hospital no. 21 near Rouen, went over in the first group of six hospital units; in April 1918, she was appointed chief nurse of the American Red Cross in France and became superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps. The Corps counted 21,480 women, but according to Susan Zeiger, only 10,000 were serving in the American Expeditionary Force abroad. Most of these were located in large base hospitals set back from the actual combat zone, staffed by 100 or more nurses. Some centres with clusters of hospitals had a capacity of 25,000 patients a day, with a staff of several thousand.⁴⁷ Roughly 100 of the 296 women died overseas in war service or as a result of injuries.⁴⁸ Their primary causes of death were not the bombing raids or strafing but contagious diseases. Three US hospitals were sent to Serbia.

Perhaps 18,000 Sisters of Mercy served the Russian military during the war, according to Laurie Stoff.⁴⁹ Other countries had far fewer trained nurses, and countries like Serbia were grateful to receive units formed by

private donors and organised by British doctors or the American Red Cross. Nurses helped clear the dead from no-man's-land and treated the wounded at improvised first-aid stations in barns or on dining-room tables.⁵⁰

According to Allison Belzer, the Italian Red Cross counted 8,000 trained nurses.⁵¹ About 1,300 female medical volunteers saw action on the Italian Front against the Austrians, of whom 40 died in service, primarily from exhaustion and illness.⁵² Women were sent to the front as nurses, drivers and radiographers starting three days after Italy declared war in May 1915.

Nearly 300 British women also served there with the Red Cross. For example, after training as radiographers in Paris, the wealthy Lady Helena Gleichen and her partner Nina Hollings were rejected by the British and French Red Cross, but their unit was accepted by the Duca d'Aosta, becoming the first mobile x-ray unit in Italy in December 1915. From December 1915 Gleichen and Hollings travelled along the Italian Front, attached to the third and second Italian armies; they witnessed the battle at Gorizia in August 1916, where they worked amid the 'rattle of rifles and machine guns'.⁵³ Gleichen's comment on the contradictions of military medicine is acute: 'In war we do all we can to help the wounded on both sides and yet do our best to kill. It is all so illogical.'⁵⁴

Maria Perduca, a young teacher from Pavia whose poetic autobiography appeared during the war, served at the front from 1915 to 1918. Just 19 years old in 1915, she reflected 'The war has changed us, matured us before our time.'⁵⁵ In her writing she caught vivid images of the sensations to which nurses were exposed, such as the burning smell of cauterisations 'sizzling on the flesh'. Like many other texts, her individual sketches provide us with portraits of soldiers that convey their heroism and pathos, with an awareness of her own helplessness to save them from suffering. Her descriptions of surgical operations are intimate, suffused with her sympathetic identification with the wounded soldiers: "His knee had been shattered by a grenade; was it a knee or was it a shapeless mass of bleeding ground flesh from which greenish pus ran?"⁵⁶ She stands vigil by Davide, a dying soldier filled with 'savagely grief', who asks unending questions that have no answer. Repeatedly the way she bears witness is to make her presence a gesture of support, reassuring an amputee as he goes under anaesthetic that 'Yes, dear, yes, I'm here.'⁵⁷ To bear witness is to understand that the innocence of the soldier puts the machinery of war to

shame, as he is chloroformed to a state close to death, in order to save his life. 'I curse war', she wrote.⁵⁸

An endemic cost of front-line service by medical women was the experience of what today we might call post-traumatic stress disorder, which at the time might have been labelled 'exhaustion' or 'neuritis'.⁵⁹ The stressful conditions of assembly-line work, with hundreds of men arriving during a 'push' and little time to sleep for days, together with many nurses' ethical conflicts produced by the system of triage and by the dismay at sending patched men back into the trenches, combined to erode their morale. Thus British and Dominion nurses who served on ships anchored off Gallipoli worked under oppressively cramped conditions with overwhelming heat and casualties. Anna M. Cameron sailed to 'the firing line' from Lemnos, anchoring amid 69 warships in a narrow strip of water amid 'the screaming of the shells and the noise of artillery from the land'; shells not only hit RAMC men picking up the wounded on Cape Helles but those in small boats coming to her *Delta* hospital ship, where 'The gangway ran with blood.' Writing a letter later, she reflected that: 'The lives of living men must not be risked for lives going out, but the memory of some things which have had to be left undone in the stress of war nursing stabs and stabs in the quiet days.' In August 1915, in intense heat, she wrote that the 'nervous strain' and 'the hopelessness of struggling against heavy odds' to relieve suffering tried her dreadfully.⁶⁰

Texts about nursing shared narrative patterns as well as tropes of war. Both the healing vocation and severely traumatic trials shaped the way nurses recorded their experiences at the front. Most commonly they used an autobiographical sequence to frame a set of individual soldiers' portraits, usually presented as tributes to the stoicism of simple men in anguish because of their infected wounds – men who smiled and thanked the nurse while apologising for any screams or twinges. Anna Cameron reported on the gratitude of men who had been left in their filthy clothes to rest before treatment: 'Faces shot away, arms, legs, lungs, shots everywhere. One man had a shattered hand, a broken arm, a smashed wrist, shrapnel through the top of his head, his lips shot, and his right knee, and all he said was "Thank God we have the Sisters."' ⁶¹

A gallery of portraits is presented by Mary Bucknall Britnieva, a 20-year-old Anglo-Russian, who completed her nursing training in September 1914 and was assigned to a mobile hospital staffed by three doctors, seven sisters and about twenty orderlies, under the patronage of the Council of State. *One Woman's Story* (1934) plunges in with the nurses' dedication service in St Petersburg, imperial receptions, and a description of the polyglot medical team, which included a Bulgarian, an Englishman and an Italian girl, as well as the brilliant older surgeon whom she would marry in January 1918. Britnieva's memoir elegantly combines the first-person voice of a naïve witness ('Mouse') to the impact of war with interpolated anecdotes about the medical staff and soldiers she encountered. While caring for a German POW with peritonitis, to whom she spoke German, she was suddenly threatened by a Russian amputee who was frightened by hearing German and had to be 'pacified'. Two other patients typified the self-sacrifice of dying soldiers, who sought the nurse's embrace in order to face death, just as the nurse's pain at their suffering symbolised her role of compassion. The most moving of her chapters embeds a story told by her friend Sister Vera about a German concentration camp in Galicia. Petruha, a peasant prisoner, shyly told Sister Vera how his hand had become terribly mutilated: once he realised that his work as a stoker in a German factory made him into a tool of the enemy, he refused to work, and was repeatedly punished by being suspended by his wrists. Having prayed for help, he suddenly noticed, brightly shining on a stump in the factory yard, 'a beautiful new axe', which he seized and used to chop off his fingers 'For Faith, Tsar and Country'.⁶² Britnieva modestly frames this searing story by attributing it to Vera, who in turn provided the soldier's own words .

The soldiers' bravery contrasts with nurses' observations about the mismanagement of the war. Hanna Hacker quotes from German nurse Henriette Riemann's *Schwester der Vierten Armee* ('Nurse of the Fourth Army'), in which a laconic style foregrounds the men's self-sacrifice: 'A man . . . unflinchingly allows his intestines to be perforated – others have their eyes removed . . . A young student . . . let his ribs be broken while under local anaesthesia.' The pathos of the men's shattered bodies emerges from the incapacity of the medical system to save them: 'So many shots to the head. Their skulls are shattered. They lie several days, weeks. Their

brains ooze out. They die slowly, abandoned. Once in a while someone is “healed”⁶³.

Responding to the centrality of the ‘front’ in representations of wartime service, one scene that recurs in nursing accounts is the eyewitness picture of the battlefield. The frame-narrative, in itself relatively linear, reaching from medical training to the end of service, can also foreground moments of shocking encounter with the physical traces of the trauma of war. Halted on the battlefield near Monasterzhiska on 31 July 1916, Florence Farmborough wrote:

Not far from our tent, there was a slight incline with a couple of dugouts; a dead man was lying near them, half-buried in the piled earth thrown up by a shell . . . a litter of bombs, hand-grenades, cartridges, rifles, spades, pickaxes, gas-masks, shells exploded and unexploded. From where we stood, we could clearly espy the crumpled forms of dead soldiers. I took one or two photographs, but a feeling of shame assailed me – as though I were intruding on the tragic privacy of Death . . . It was a terrible battlefield; a sight which one could never erase from one’s memory.⁶⁴

When nurses were sent into no-man’s-land to pick up the wounded or dead they directly confronted the detritus of combat. Lidiia Zakharova, a well-to-do mother of two, for example, was sent in the dead of winter to the German trenches, which she found impressively comfortable and labyrinthine, with underground corridors, nooks, dugouts and blind alleys. She described the luxuries that had been moved from burnt-out estates (which she had seen on her journey) into the dugouts of the victorious Germans. Even more striking is her attention to the symbolic details of this disturbed, topsy-turvy world. In one trench, she found a ‘toppled child’s high chair’, a ‘mute witness’ to the horrifying and monstrous ‘sight of trenches overflowing with masses of dead bodies’. Death had become a ‘spectacle’: ‘A city of the dead, its inhabitants frozen in the most unlikely positions . . . They were all intertwined, so you could not tell whose arms and legs were whose.’ By transposing the wasteland into the context of a ‘city’, she enables us to see the grotesque inversions that make such deaths uncanny. Seemingly alive, ‘most terrible were those who had not fallen, but

stood shoulder to shoulder, still holding their rifles, eyes open and glazed with the tranquillity of non-existence, as if they were listening to the ominous cries of the crows flying overhead.’⁶⁵ The cliché of peace in death has been overshadowed by the noise of crows.

With a more abrupt ironic contrast, Mary Britnieva describes a ‘gay’ outing to the battlefield, when a group of sisters were invited to accompany some doctors during a lull in the fighting in December 1914. Instead of cleared trenches, they discover soiled litter amid haphazard ditches and remnants of bodies: ‘there were several “somethings” and we guessed too well what they were’. Five frozen bodies in crouching positions, as if they had crawled together, ‘were terrible to behold. Field-mice had made a nest in the head of one and they scuttled away under our feet.’⁶⁶ Tacitly she invites us to bear witness to the consequences of war, here and in later chapters. After identifying the fallen men, the group return with pickaxes to bury them in the frozen earth.

The act of testimony bears not only on what is seen, but on the impotence to respond, as Mary Britnieva explains following a gas attack not far from her unit’s base hospital in Teresino Palace. Although her unit had been moved back during an advance, a group of them returned to the fields where the gas attack has just taken place; there they found the victims laid out in orderly rows:

They lay on their backs mostly, their upturned faces terribly swollen and livid – some almost blue – choking and coughing, their bloodshot eyes protruding, unable to utter a word, yet fully conscious, only their eyes and their occasional spasmodic feeble movements proclaiming the supreme agony that they were enduring. Some were even coughing up pieces of their lungs that the cruel gas had disintegrated in their living bodies.⁶⁷

She comments on the ‘utter futility’ of their efforts to render first aid to soldiers she knew, in response to ‘this monstrous weapon of warfare’. ‘The realisation of our helplessness was almost unbearable; a wound can be dressed and the flow of blood from a haemorrhage can be staunched, but this fiendish weapon had got science and surgery beaten.’⁶⁸ For the soldiers

unable to speak, her description becomes testimony to their martyrdom ('supreme agony') and to the nurse's own despair .

Much more rare is the account by a nurse of directly witnessing a battle, and its shocking impact. When with the British Red Cross in Italy, VAD Sybil Reeves, who watched the attack on Cormons heard incessant guns that 'hardly ever cease firing'. 'At night one can see the shells and star rockets bursting in the distance.' She was 'invalided out' in August 1920 with 'acute neuritis'.⁶⁹ The encounter with trauma did not only occur on the battlefield, but also within the field hospital. Thus American nurse Ethel Pierce, whose memoir Susan Zeiger discusses, tells us about undoing a bandage and discovering a 'wound writhing with maggots'.⁷⁰ Pierce's discovery speaks to the length of time that elapsed between injury and treatment; the image she gives us may also be a metaphor for the de-idealisation of military sacrifice and the trauma that these sights inflicted on the nurses themselves.

Some nurses were driven to drugs by stress and exhaustion, but they rarely record their weakness. One exception is the Swiss nurse Maria Naepflin, who in her autobiography *Fortgerungen, durchgedrungen bis zum Kleinod hin* describes herself as 'ill, crushed, and broken' upon her return from work at the front in Serbia. On ill-equipped hospital trains she had cared for soldiers 'racked with fever' with nothing to relieve the pain, and she was 'cut to the quick' by their cries. In spite of a month's leave, she was unable to escape depression until she began to help herself to the morphine in the hospital pharmacy.⁷¹

Auxiliaries

The lines between medical and auxiliary work frequently became blurred. When all-female volunteer units went to the Eastern Front, those in auxiliary positions as drivers or cooks were caught up in work of many kinds. Auxiliaries' patriotic motives were similar to those of nurses: all were eager to reach the front and serve the nation.⁷² In 1914 female nurses and male orderlies were already going with troops to the front, where they also served as litter-bearers , as in the case of Zakharova. Another example of different occupations was the Russian aviator E. P. Samsonova, who had learned to fly in 1911, but was refused permission to join the air force.

Having attended school for army nurses, she first worked in a field hospital, then joined a motor detachment as an army chauffeur.⁷³

Similarly, the teenager Marina Yurlova, who had been swept up into a Cossack regiment in 1914, and adopted as a mascot, strings together stories about a succession of military occupations, punctuated by wounds and hospital stays: at different times she was a groom, then wore uniform in combat, served as an orderly, and drove an ambulance. Some of her shifts in service were triggered by wounds, others by a military emergency. Thus she became a driver after she had suffered a concussion at the front in August 1917. A dawn gas attack took out so many *sanitars* that she carried the wounded to her truck; faces seemed like ghosts and her mask screened out the world.

Nobody looked human; even when men fell dead, they fell like animals, with their masked faces turned upwards, and their bodies twisted sideways. Even when they were blown to pieces – and God knows I must have seen it happen a hundred times, those arms and legs and heads scattering up through the murky air – I found nothing wrong in that. Deafened and speechless, I went about my work automatically, staggering back and forth to the stretchers, not even aware of aching arms and shoulders.⁷⁴

Although her autobiography appears to be sensational, these details are compelling. The hallucinatory setting and confrontation with body parts were perhaps even more traumatic for her than her experiences as a soldier.

Nurses became drivers in order to reach the front, and once there they became nurses again. In Belgium, where their heroic work evacuating and nursing men became legendary, nurse Elsie Knocker (later Baroness T'Serclaes) and 18-year-old Mairi Chisholm, both expert drivers, had joined Dr Hector Munro's ambulance corps, which served with the Belgian Red Cross during the German advance. The group retreated to France with wounded during the German drive forward, then returned to Furnes near Dixmuidе 'going into the thick of it'. Within weeks, Knocker and Chisholm 'were used to being under fire', and had become impatient with inadequate hospital arrangements at Furnes, wasteful trips in the ambulance for trivial purposes, and the heavy casualty rates. Admiral Ronarc'h reminded

Knocker that ‘women were not allowed in the trenches’. Despite disapproval from Dr Munro and the medical chief of the BEF, with the help of Chisholm she set up an advanced dressing station in the ruined village of Pervyse to prevent shock by providing immediate treatment. British officers disapproved of their work, which ‘did not fit in with their conventions’, but the women carried on, eventually securing approval from the Allied Council and the British Red Cross. In January 1915 King Albert of Belgium himself awarded ‘the heroines of Pervyse’ with the star of the Order of Leopold II.⁷⁵

Readers today may compare the two women’s accounts. The Baroness’s memoir *Flanders and Other Fields* (1964) not only incorporates quotations from her diary but bears the hallmarks of episodic composition, interspersed with statistics inserted at a much later date, or zigzagging from social encounters to anecdotes about official stupidity and an occasional grotesque detail. Mairi Chisholm’s memoir about her work in Belgium places more emphasis on how ambulances and nurses working in field hospitals came under fire: ‘When we first went to Pervyse, the village was still largely intact – gradually the houses were pulverised. By 1918, little was left but rubble and gable ends. Taking wounded to hospital fifteen miles back at night was a very real strain – no lights, shell-pocked *pavie* roads mud-covered, often under fire.’⁷⁶ Making several runs a night, the ambulance would slide off the road to let soldiers pass, and the tilting made the men on stretchers in the back scream. In close proximity to the battle lines, both women were themselves badly gassed by exploding mustard and arsenic gas shells.

When manpower shortages became evident, women’s auxiliary units were officially organised by some Western states (Germany, the United Kingdom, the USA, France and Poland), but these remained subject to controls that aimed to keep women at a distance from the front. Thus the German *Etappe* demarcated spatial divisions that maintained women’s removal from combat. In 1917 the British established the WAACs (the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps, later named QMAAC after Queen Mary) and in 1918 the Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS) and the Women’s Royal Air Force (WRAF). The varied occupations in new auxiliary units included mechanics, drivers, signallers, typists and telephonists. As long-range shelling and bombardment increased, auxiliary workers who had

taken over tasks previously performed by men likewise became vulnerable to new modes of combat; some died in raids on the French coast.⁷⁷

At first the French military and doctors resisted women's ambulance units, but by 1915 they accepted female ambulance drivers in the rear.⁷⁸

Jeanne Pallier organised a 'Club Féminin Automobile' whose drivers provided the transport of wounded from trains to hospitals within the Paris region, with 120 licensed drivers and seventy nurses, twenty of whom contributed their own cars. From January 1916 General Gallieni strove to replace men with women. Yet despite the efforts of several commanders, only 300 Frenchwomen out of 120,000 employed as civilians drove for the Direction de Service Automobile.⁷⁹ The other female employees worked in offices as telephonists, or performed kitchen and laundry tasks. Neither at the front nor in military uniform, they did not acquire any political rights.

A wide range of auxiliary activities were performed by Aleksandra Szczerbińska, the mistress and future wife of Marshal Piłsudski. She was brought up as a Polish patriot and became a member of the Polish Socialist Party, then joined its military branch, the Organizacja Bojowa, organising the group's arms depot in 1905. She was imprisoned for passing on intelligence and supplies as part of the underground resistance. Carrying messages and munitions was dangerous. In her autobiography she recounts a dramatic accident in a street, after she and a seamstress comrade had sewn bandoliers of bullets into their full skirts. Suddenly the weight of the metal made the seams break, and the bullets spilled out, bouncing on the cobblestones and exploding. The two women broke into a run and escaped. Later, in November 1915, when detained as a prisoner of war, she found herself lodged in a German camp where impoverished women prisoners, including a young schoolteacher, had been condemned to serve as prostitutes in a separate hut. One evening, they swallowed needles, but she was able to rescue them from their suicide by forcing buckwheat down their throats. The many roles Piłsudska assumed in the course of the Polish struggle for reunification suggest how mobile and adaptive an activist had to become in wartime. The engaging way she constructed her narrative underscored the human costs of Poland's political oppression, as well as the spectacle of female performance of covert political and military roles.⁸⁰

The Imperial War Museum holds a typescript by Katherine Hodges North, an ambulance driver who turned to nursing when demand for extra hands became acute. She juxtaposes letters from Romania, Russia and France in 1916–17, with a framing memoir that fills in the missing details.

The intensity of work, compounded by the sudden interruptions in her letters as a result of a retreat or a call to work, leads to incomplete sentences and gaps of a week at a time in the record. The memoir not only weaves the pieces together, but expands in searing detail where the pressure of the moment as well as a concern for censorship led to omissions. Thus her original letter describes the pandemonium along the roads during a retreat in October 1916, when a man halted her ambulance by standing in front of it with a child in his arms, in order to force her to put him into the van, and at another steep incline, a soldier driving a gun carriage lost control of his panicking horses, which pulled their cannon from behind the ambulance right over its roof. Into this account she retrospectively inserts the detail that among the people she passed was a woman giving birth in the ditch by the road. Similarly, in a later passage, her letter refers briefly to the ‘strain at night’ driving up and down a hill with the loaded ambulance. Only in the memoir does she elaborate, explaining that her Ford had no brakes, so that in turning the car for the descent she started to roll helplessly over the edge.

‘It was a very nasty moment.’⁸¹

What Hodges’ manuscript demonstrates repeatedly is that an immediate letter or diary record is often an aide-memoire, subject to the constraints of time and politics. In such cases, it is the later memoir that provides the tellingly memorable detail, which was too violent to be recorded in the first instance, but was inscribed without being recounted before. Thus the example of Hodges makes clear that a vivid and less fragmentary record of the crises lived at the front may require distance in time, not immediacy .

Female soldiers

The vast majority of women who served in combat were from the Russian Empire. In the first two years of the war, volunteers from across all classes submitted individual petitions, or passed covertly into service under the protection of a mentor or a male member of their family; statutes prohibited women, but individual commanders could allow them to join a unit. Even

when dressed in male clothes, ‘many did not disguise their sex’.⁸² The Tsar personally approved requests from hundreds of women, and the prevalence of cross-dressing meant that an unknown number, perhaps over a thousand, served by 1917, and after the February Revolution of 1917 up to 5,000 served in female battalions.⁸³ Most were young, unmarried and childless.

Laurie Stoff tells the stories of a number of these individual women in addition to the most famous, Maria Leont’evna Botchkareva, a Siberian peasant who first secured approval from the Tsar and then in 1917 proposed to Kerensky the formation of the first Russian Women’s Battalion of Death.

An interesting example was Princess Kati Dadeshkeliani whose memoir detailed her experiences disguised as Prince Djamal, protected by a family friend whom she served as a cavalry courier. Dadeshkeliani preferred service as a medic assigned to an ambulance, where she found ‘scope for my womanly faculties’, rather than in a trench, where she experienced terror.⁸⁴ Stoff recounts how the individual volunteers of the first years of the war were replaced in 1917 by all-female military formations. The

breakdown of discipline and military hierarchy under the Provisional Government eroded the troops’ will to fight, and General Brusilov sought the formation of revolutionary ‘shock’ detachments to revive the war effort by symbolically shaming male deserters. In 1917 the recruitment of women expanded, with proposals from soldiers such as Valentina Petrova for their own units. The first unit approved by Kerensky was that of Maria Botchkareva, which at first drew 2,000 volunteers almost overnight. Also known as Yashka, Botchkareva had served since 1914, when she was 25, with a company of the 25th Tomsk Reserve Battalion, suffering repeated wounds and earning several medals including the St George’s Cross in 1916.⁸⁵ Split by political disagreements and by Yashka’s harsh discipline, the unit that went into battle at Smorgon numbered only about 300.

Melissa Stockdale and Laurie Stoff set Yashka’s project in the context of other woman soldiers who likewise sought authorisation to set up their own units. Thus another recipient of the St George’s Cross, Antonina Tupitso, asked the Supreme Command to outfit a women’s combat legion in Mogilev province: ‘I wanted at first to sign up for Bochkareva’s battalion until letters reached me at the front from women volunteers in cities in the rear who asked me to organise them into a legion. I already have nearly 300 desirous people.’ Similarly, Valentina Petrova, an experienced soldier of the

21st Siberian Rifle Regiment and also winner of a St George's Cross, requested that Kerensky approve a group called the 'Black Hussars of Death'. Perhaps fifteen female combat units were created, but none won the fame of Botchkareva's.⁸⁶

Overall, female soldiers were nonetheless a rare phenomenon (thousands, not a million), although on the Eastern Front several women recorded their service as soldiers. On that more mobile front, laxer military bureaucracy and the possibility for autocratic decisions at lower levels of command contributed to the scattered entry of women into the military system. Other women on the Eastern Front also joined the military. One national heroine was the Romanian Ecaterina Teodoroiu (1894–1917), aged 20 in 1914, who had studied to become a teacher. When Romania was invaded she became a scout and carried medicines to hospitals, serving as a volunteer nurse in Târgu Jiu. A member of the local militia (largely composed of women) she defended the town in 1916. After two of her brothers died, she volunteered to join their battalion. Twice wounded, she was promoted to second lieutenant and later won the Military Virtue Medal. Taken prisoner in 1916, she escaped but was wounded. On recovery she fought in the Battle of Mărășești, where she died in September 1917.

In Poland, significant numbers of women served in the Polish Legions. The Polish girl Sophie Nowosielski (aged 14 in 1914) ran away to join Piłsudski's Legions in 1914, but was retrieved and forced by her family to wait several years before she was able to join the volunteers defending Lvov. There she was asked embarrassing questions, which forced her to pull her cap over her ears to avoid 'unpleasantness', but after serving an extended period in the Polish Women's Voluntary Legion, she became a lieutenant; she was covered with medals when she visited the United States in 1929.⁸⁷ What impressed journalist Coningsby Dawson about the female soldiers he met was that they were mere girls from 15 to 20, who were celebrating the New Year just like any 'kiddies'.⁸⁸

Laurie Stoff's indispensable study of Russian fighters, in which she argues that the feminist movement and socialist thought were also critical factors, devotes a chapter to the images that were propagated around women soldiers.⁸⁹ My focus is rather on the self-representation of a few figures and on the forms their narratives take. Story-telling itself figures in

these autobiographies, destabilising their factual claims. Broadly speaking, female soldiers confronted two kinds of tests: tests as soldiers, and tests as women.

The primary test of a soldier is success in combat and stoic survival after being wounded. These ritual rites of passage mark the typical soldier's story, albeit with some variations that correspond to the status of the female soldier. Because the process of crossing symbolic gender lines plays such a large role in these accounts, they all include rites of hair-cutting, acquiring uniforms, and learning how to handle a gun and salute. Men and women alike cropped their hair to reduce infestation by lice. But the real step was to demonstrate their capacity as a soldier. Botchkareva's autobiography, *Yashka: My Life as a Peasant, Officer and Exile* (1918), dictated in America to Isaac Don Levine, describes the confusion of her first battle, facing gas and machine guns that cut her unit in half, leaving the wounded plaintively crying in no-man's-land. She crawled out to save as many of the wounded as possible, winning her first order of merit. If the nature of her bravery here suggested a maternal quality, in her next battle her attack on enemy trenches with a fixed bayonet demonstrated her desire to perform like a soldier, until she was struck in the right leg and forced to go on sick leave. Her powerful account pauses to reflect on bayoneting a German, and on the harshness of winter and a protracted hospital stay that made death a welcome guest. In addition to frostbite she suffered further wounds to her leg and an explosion that lodged a fragment in her spinal column, causing paralysis for several months. Each time she returned, her unit welcomed her with 'spontaneous joy'.⁹⁰ Like Yashka, when wounded in the door-to-door fighting at Lvov, the teenager Sophie Nowosielska wrote: 'I forgot then that I was a woman. I knew only that I had to fight . . . I did not feel the pain.'⁹¹

The wound transforms her from a woman into a soldier.

The female soldier is an anomaly, a puzzle. Her double identity seems to many to be a contradiction in terms, and it invites physical exploration of the body. In the case of Botchkareva's memoir, the body was a site of violence even before the war, since she had been beaten by her father, her husband Botchkarev and later her partner Yakov Buk. When she joined her regiment, word went out that there was a woman, which aroused curiosity. 'Knots of soldiers gathered about my *teplushka*, peeped through the door and cracks in the sides to verify with their own eyes the incredible news' of

a *baba* going to the trenches. Green recruits stared at her, but ‘they wanted to make sure that their eyes were not deceived, so they proceeded to pinch me, jostle me and brush against me’, offering insults to the ‘*baba*’.⁹² ‘Yashka’ became the pet of the regiment, ‘but not before I had been tested by many additional trials and found to be a comrade, and not a woman, by the men’.⁹³ On a period of relief, she finally decided to go to the bath-house with the men, in order to rid herself of lice. Although she was embarrassed when the men laughed, she ‘made it a habit’, and her comrades learned to silence any new soldier’s mockery.⁹⁴ When she recovered from her paralysis, she was submitted to a medical examination by a general on the medical commission before she could be discharged from hospital. Ordered to undress, she threw off her clothes with a wry sense of drama typical of her account.

‘A woman!’ went up from a hundred throats, followed by an outburst of laughter that shook the building . . .

‘What the Devil!’ cried the general. ‘Why did you undress?’

‘I am a soldier, Excellency, and I obey orders without question’, I replied.

‘Well, well. Hurry up and dress.’⁹⁵

In short, she was both a woman and a soldier volunteering for the front. Later, her sex became a tool of liberation when she was captured by the Germans. She declared ‘I am a woman and not a soldier’, claiming to be a Red Cross nurse on a visit to her husband. A few hours later, the Russian prisoners threw themselves on their captors, wresting their rifles from them, just as their comrades broke through the barbed wire. For many of her soldiers, there was no conflict between the two roles. Anna Shub told Louise Bryant what to report in her column for *Metropolitan* : ‘Tell them I am a woman soldier, and I fight only imperialistic invaders.’⁹⁶

Flora Sandes, an English nurse who served with the Serbian Red Cross and carried a revolver, crossed over to become a soldier in the Fourth Company during the retreat of 1915–16. On top of Mount Chukus, she first watched the exchange of fire with Bulgarians, then borrowed a rifle to shoot coolly ‘as if we were stalking rabbits’. Sandes alternated between firing and shooting ‘a lot of photographs’, which were lost when the films got wet and

spoiled. That night she was enrolled on the books of the Serbian company. 'I had luckily always been used to a rifle, so could do it with the others all right.'⁹⁷ She passed the test as a rifleman, and also demonstrated her seriousness as a soldier when she was wounded, winning the Order of Karađorđe and becoming a sergeant-major in the Serbian army. While she may have been the only woman in her regiment, she met other female soldiers and commented on the bravery of Milunka, a 17-year-old girl in a diary entry of 28 November 1915.⁹⁸

Her ambiguous situation as a soldier in the Serbian army and an Englishwoman drew the attention of the local inhabitants. As she puts it in her first memoir: 'I was an object of curiosity to the inhabitants, especially the women, and they always asked Lieutenant Jovitch whether I was a woman or a soldier, and seemed very much puzzled when he said I was an English woman but a Serbian soldier.' Native women 'came up and inspected me and all my belongings very closely, and seemed deeply impressed with the extraordinary luxury in which an Englishwoman lived, with a room to herself, a bed, and a rubber bath'. For the Serbs her material presence as a soldier symbolised the promised British support. 'I represented, so to speak, the whole of England.'⁹⁹ The introduction to her book by Slavko Grouitch, Secretary General of the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, affirms her signal importance. Among the British women whose charity work had helped save Serbia, 'she was the only foreign woman allowed to serve in a fighting capacity . . . she only took to a rifle when there was no more nursing to be done'.¹⁰⁰ She buoyed Serb spirits, since she served as a promise that England would never forsake them. As a woman she symbolically guaranteed British efforts to protect the Serbs from 'rape' by the Austrians and Bulgarians .

Younger girls who volunteered could more readily pass for boys, but their chests were often stroked to expose their female identity. Thus the Cossack volunteer Marina Yurlova, only 14 in 1914, and serving as a groom, was inspected physically by a Kurdish captor. 'He wants to know if she's really a girl . . . He says she's to take her jacket off.' Yurlova identified herself as a Cossack – a group known to be fighters – but in fact she tricked the Kurds by telling them the story of her leg wound, described in a chapter entitled 'Scheherazade'. The story of her wound when bombing a bridge (the token of her becoming a soldier) resulted in her second war exploit, the capture of

40 Kurds. As they listened to her story she led them back to her camp – a female act of narrative brio rather than combat. Repeatedly Yurlova responded to the probing of her identity by hands under her shirt with the claim that ‘I was a soldier, not a girl.’ Yet war makes a new world and creates new women. When Yurlova later became an ambulance driver, she attracted attention because ‘they had never met a female of my kind before’. For her fellow soldiers, it was ‘a great joke that I was a girl of sixteen, though they never carried things too far’.¹⁰¹

The ambiguity of the female soldier is conveyed by the pairing of two themes: her chastity and her association with prostitutes. Here the theme of the national body at risk comes to the fore. This paradox is especially striking, since the prostitute was a figure associated in the popular imagination with the ‘internal enemy’, whose ability to pass on syphilis and secrets provoked widespread condemnation and calls for military control. Like the nurse, the soldier had to ward off association with the prostitute, because of her close contact with male bodies. The female soldier threatened and was threatened by her comrades.

This odd pairing of the soldier with the prostitute figures in more than one of the autobiographies. When she was first admitted to the army, Maria Botchkareva’s parents assumed that as a lone woman she was vulnerable: ‘Think what the men will do to a lone woman in their midst. Why they’ll make a prostitute of you.’ The parents were right: ‘The men were, naturally, unaccustomed to such a phenomenon as myself and took me for a loose-moralled woman who had made her way into the ranks for the sake of carrying on her illicit trade. I was compelled therefore constantly to fight off intrusions from all sides.’ As part of her initiation into a soldier’s life (‘Be a soldier, Yashka’, the men say), Yashka visited a brothel – and was caught by the military police. The result was ‘a universal riot of laughter’. Indifferent to punishment, Yashka performed her role as a female soldier with an amused self-consciousness of the contradictions she embodied.¹⁰²

Marina Yurlova dropped a number of references to rape and prostitution into her narrative. As she was leaving Russia in 1919, she joined a group of three prostitutes (*kurvy*) she met on a train crossing Siberia, who carried the ironic title of ‘Smolny Institute Girls’. The juxtaposition and contrast served to reinforce the virtue of Marina, who fled from the flophouse at the end of the evening, apparently as chaste in 1919 as in 1914 .

At key points each of these soldiers underscored the importance of crossing and re-crossing gender lines, using dress according to the particular situation. They also highlighted the performative nature of their soldiering, by pointing to and manipulating viewers' reactions to their female bodies. Slippages between roles proliferated as well, such as when Sandes passed from nurse to soldier, or Yashka from protective mother of the wounded to aggressive soldier. The linkage of the female soldier to the prostitute was one way of symbolising other transgressions. And the transgressiveness of the female soldier may ultimately have been a way of encoding the transgressiveness of the male soldier as well.

Many of these soldiers' accounts were challenged by reviewers and now face sceptical readers. Marina Yurlova's bravado alongside her claims to have danced across Europe and travelled the world sow doubts about the veracity of her self-representation. A positive review in the *Boston Globe* recapitulates 'her story' of soldiering with Cossack troops as 'told with frankness and simplicity', noting that 'truth is far stranger than fiction'.¹⁰³ The *New York Times*, however, doubts the publisher's assurances 'that this is a true story, an assurance that is much needed as its narrative advances from one incredible incident to another'. Stacking up the battles, wounds, sieges and decorations with service not only as a volunteer but as a chauffeur to a grand duke, an ambulance driver, and a prisoner of war, the reviewer notes that they 'challenge acceptance'.¹⁰⁴

Despite the documentation about Maria Botchkareva and her Women's Battalion of Death, supported by official ceremonies, public drills, photographs, Western journalists' interviews and meetings with Allied generals and even Woodrow Wilson, her book *Yashka* was also assessed with some sobriety. Like modern oral testimonies whose transcription and translation have provoked questions about their authenticity, Botchkareva's historical facts have been contested. In his 1923 introduction, her French translator Michel Prévost cites confirmation of her details in the *New York Times*, the *Illustrated London News*, and *L'Illustration*, where photographs supplement the news accounts. Yet, he finds, 'The account of her adventures as exile, soldier and commander would seem implausible to more than one reader, if we did not know that in Russia anything is possible.'¹⁰⁵ The chaotic situation in Russia makes it impossible to locate supporting documents, explains this librarian of the Bibliothèque nationale,

but her language differs significantly from the refined tone and educated vocabulary of Don Levine, who transcribed her oral account and translated it. Not only could he not invent the stories about her travels, but he would not have made the obvious factual errors that she makes when she confuses Austrians with Germans, or the provisional government of February 1917 with the Soviet one. Her artless, simple and even 'shameless' story carries the hallmarks of orality, with its 'particularly precise and faithful memory', in which she remembers landscapes through which she passed but not towns, and details of engagements but not grand military strategy.

Some readers consider Flora Sandes's two accounts to be embellished for fundraising purposes. Yet details of her story were confirmed by Dr Isabel Emslie Hutton and her family reported that her back was covered with scars. Moreover, her service with the Serbian Red Cross and the Serbian army led to her promotion to corporal and then sergeant major; she was honoured by the Serbian military with the Order of the Karađorđe's Star.¹⁰⁶

Textually, this anomalous status of the female soldier requires documentation in the autobiography of her actual service – the equivalent of our pinching her to see if she is real. Her autobiography is accompanied by authenticating prefaces and by photographs of her in uniform, and by photographs of her military and medical records that authenticate her service. Maria Botchkareva, for example, puts a photograph of herself in uniform, her chest covered with medals, on the cover of her autobiography, as well as in a full-length frontispiece portrait. Zofja Nowosielska includes a studio portrait of herself as a chubby-cheeked girl in uniform between swing doors that may signify the opening of a new world or the threshold between the reality of war and the artificial construction of the female soldier's identity. Ten years later her photos in the *Baltimore Sun* show her decked with medals and wreathed in smiles. Yurlova's *Cossack Girl* reproduces the document of her sick leave and closes with a photograph of Yurlova in uniform, her wounded arm in a sling, boarding a boat on her way to Japan. The British nurse and Serb soldier Flora Sandes included a photo of herself with her rifle and uniform to make a statement about her spirited support of a nation under attack. She took a small camera with her and printed several tiny snapshots in the autobiography she published, showing the harsh conditions of the Serbian army's retreat, as part of an effort to raise funds in England for relief work in Serbia .

All these visual documents offer evidence confirming the transgressive position of the woman at the front, in the territory that belonged to the male soldier. The camera as an instrument enabled the woman to claim the authority to speak as a witness of the taboo realm of men's combat. The wartime snapshot of the woman at the front stands at the intersection of the personal and the historical. Up front in many books it serves as a kind of visual signature, identifying the author as well as the kind of war work she may have done – proof of her patriotism and participation. It was also proof that she had crossed gender lines at the cutting edge of the war and had lived to tell the tale.

- 1 Several other chapters of this book address women in related circumstances: Joanna Bourke (shifting gender identities, [Chapter 7](#)), Annette Becker (civilian camps, [Chapter 11](#)), Sophie de Schaepdrijver (occupied regions, [Chapter 10](#)), and Peter Gatrell and Philippe Nivet (refugees, [Chapter 8](#)).
- 2 Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarisation of Women's Lives* (London: Pluto, 1983).
- 3 Alon Rachamimov, ““Female generals” and “Siberian Angels”; aristocratic nurses and the Austro-Hungarian POW relief’, in Nancy Wingfield and Maria Bucur (eds.), *Gender and War in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 23–46.
- 4 Mary Roberts Rinehart, *My Story: A New Edition and Seventeen New Years* (New York: Rinehart, 1948), pp. 158, 163.
- 5 Louise S. Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (New York: Doran, 1918), p. 219, cited by Dorothy and Carl J. Schneider, *Into the Breach: American Women Overseas in World War I* (New York: Viking, 1991), p. 225.

- 6** Rheta Childe Dorr, *Inside the Russian Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1917). Cf. Schneider and Schneider, *Into the Breach*, p. 226.
- 7** Cited by Chantal Antier, *Les femmes dans la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Belin/Soteca, 2011).
- 8** *Leslie's Photographic Review of the Great War* (New York: Leslie-Judge, 1919), p. 107.
- 9** Dorothy Lawrence, *Sapper Dorothy Lawrence: The Only English Woman Soldier, Late Royal Engineers 51st Division 179th Tunnelling Company BEF* (London: Lane 1919).
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- 15** Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *La guerre des enfants, 1914–1918: essai d'histoire culturelle* (Paris: A. Colin, 1993).

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18 Schneider and Schneider, *Into the Breach*, p. 83.

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20 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

21 Cited by Darrow, 'Land of Joan of Arc', p. 263. Léonie Godfroy, *Souvenirs d'ambulance et de captivité* (Paris, L'Éclair, 1917), p. 6.

22 Darrow, 'Land of Joan of Arc', p. 267.

23 Mary Dexter, *In the Soldier's Service: War Experiences of Mary Dexter, England, Belgium, France, 1914–1918* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), p. 153.

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26 May Sinclair, *A Journal of Impressions in Belgium* (London: Hutchinson, 1915), p. 1.

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- 30** See Eva Shaw McLaren (ed.), *A History of the Scottish Women's Hospitals* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919); Eileen Crofton, *The Women of Royaumont: A Scottish Women's Hospital on the Western Front* (East Linton, East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 1997); Cahill, *Between the Lines*.
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American Historical Review, 109:1 (2004), p. 93.

- 87** Sophie Nowosielski [Zofja Nowosielska], *In the Hurricane of War* (n.p.: 'Published by Sophie Nowosielski', 1929).
- 88** Stoff, *They Fought for the Motherland*, pp. 89–90; Coningsby Dawson, *It Might Have Happened to You: A Contemporary Portrait of Central and Eastern Europe* (London: The Bodley Head, 1921), p. 90.
- 89** Stoff, *They Fought for the Motherland*.
- 90** Maria Botchkareva, *Yashka: My Life as Peasant, Officer and Exile*, as set down by Isaac Don Levine (New York: Stokes, 1918–19), pp. 92–3, 99, 95.
- 91** Nowosielski, *In the Hurricane of War*, p. 53.
- 92** Botchkareva, *Yashka*, pp. 87, 76–7.
- 93** *Ibid.*, p. 80.
- 94** *Ibid.*, p. 102.
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- 96** Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia*, p. 216.
- 97** Flora Sandes, *An English Woman-Sergeant in the Serbian Army*, intro. Slavko Y. Grouitch (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916), pp. 139, 140, 144.
- 98** Julie Wheelwright, 'Captain Flora Sandes: a case study in the social construction of gender in a Serbian context', in John B. Allcock and

Antonia Young (eds.), *Black Lamb and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans* (New York: Berghahn, 2000), p. 93.

99 Sandes, *An English Woman-Sergeant*, pp. 154, 62, 91.

100 *Ibid.*, p. vi.

101 Yurlova, *Cossack Girl*, pp. 113, 140, 170.

102 Botchkareva, *Yashka*, pp. 77, 78, 83.

103 ‘Russian girl soldier tells a dramatic story’, *Daily Boston Globe*, 7 April 1934, p. 15.

104 ‘A Cossack Amazon’, *New York Times Book Review*, 4 March 1934, p. 18.

105 Maria Botchkareva, *Yashka. Ma vie de soldat: Souvenirs de la Guerre, de la Révolution, de la Terreur en Russie*, trans. Michel Prévost, from English transcription by Isaac Don Levine (Paris: Plon, 1923), p. 10. ‘Le récit de ses aventures d’exilée et de soldat, de chef, paraîtrait à plus d’un lecteur invraisemblable si l’on ne savait qu’en Russie tout est possible’ (my translation from the French).

106 Sandes, *An English Woman-Sergeant*.

7 Gender roles in killing zones

Joanna Bourke

Die Waffen Hoch!
Das Schwert ist Mannes eigen.
Wo Männer fechten,
Hat das weib zu schweigen.
(Hold your weapons high!
The sword belongs to the man.
Where men are duelling Women have to keep silent.)

Marching songs possess a rhythm that is both mesmerising and deeply unsettling. They claim to convey knowledge not only about underlying values, but also about the bodily comportment required of men preparing to kill. They lay claim to military conflict as fundamental to what it means to be a man. The lyrics conflate war and combat. Misleadingly, the donning of a military uniform is assumed to initiate men into a gnostic society, from which women and children are resolutely excised, and confers upon these chosen ones the greatest power of all: that is, power over life and death.

Except that is not what happens. Living and dying are more random; the performance of gender roles in war is confused and confusing. Men are disarmed; women, indispensable. In wartime, commonplace assumptions about the dichotomous concepts of masculinity and femininity are conspicuously fractured, inciting desperate attempts to reaffirm their salience in the face of palpable discord.

In wars such as the one that raged between 1914 and 1918, the crumbling of any significant distinction between the 'front lines' and the 'home front' further complicated any easy distinction between persons who could routinely be harmed, even killed, and those allegedly safeguarded by military regulation and international law. Perhaps this was what Robert Graves was alluding to in a scene in *Goodbye to All That* (1929) in which

his character and a fellow officer called Jenkins found themselves three-quarters of a mile away from the killing zones. Mildly bored, they played a game of cricket and then idly practised revolver-shooting. Their ‘beautiful target’ had been looted from the only undestroyed living-room at the front. It was an opulent glass case full of artificial fruit and flowers, an impeccable symbol of frivolous, domesticated femininity. Jenkins excitedly told the others that ‘I’ve always wanted to smash one of these damn objects. My aunt has one. It’s the sort of thing that *would* survive an intense bombardment.’ The idea of attacking this symbol of home life slightly disturbed Graves. A ‘tender impulse’ to ‘rescue’ this feminine object from the destructive urges of martial masculinity welled up in him. However, he ‘smothered’ his delicate instincts and joined his fellow officers in shooting at the flowers and fruit. Shamefully, their martial prowess proved to be unequal to the challenge, as ‘everyone missed’. Determined to carry out their mission, though, the men moved closer to their target and continued to fire volleys of bullets, but they only managed to knock the case to the ground. Repenting of his attack on the feminine sphere, Jenkins swore: ‘Damn the thing, it must be bewitched.’ But when Jenkins suggested that they return the unbroken case to its proper, domestic milieu he was met with an important objection. ‘No’, insisted another officer, the cabinet was ‘in pain’ so ‘We must put it out of its suffering’. Standing immediately above the cabinet, this officer gave it the *coup de grâce*. This violent act proved both the false-chivalric persona of British officers (‘chivalric’ because it was considered honourable to put a suffering ‘creature’ out of its misery; ‘false’ because the symbol of domesticity never had the chance to fight back) and the fact that neither symbols of masculinity nor femininity were to escape destruction (most of the officers had been killed by the end of Graves’s memoir).¹ In battle, gender literally liquefies into mud.

Death is the ultimate gender equaliser (although not, as we shall see, in the memory of survivors). For living persons, proximity to death and dying impressed gender identities ever more strongly on participants and observers alike. In part, this was a reaction to the dramatic disruption of those roles, especially for men, for whom killing – an axiomatic breach in idealised masculinity in modernity – was disconcertingly transformed into an archetype towards which ‘true men’ ought to strive. Proximity to the killing fields may have led to shifts in the theatre of gender, but the fundamental chasm between masculinity and femininity was dogmatically

maintained. Gender is performative; it is a learned hermeneutics, which takes knowledges from the corporeal body, language and cultural as well as environmental interactions. Faced with two of the most extreme experiences of human existence – that is, witnessing or being directly at risk of killing and being killed – men and women sought refuge in their most basic ways of being in the world.

The first major test of gender identities occurred well before either men or women approached the killing zones. In this sense, the gendered glamorisation of battle pre-dated the declaration of hostilities. In stark contrast to the indirect, subtle training for aggression in literature addressed to girls and women, literary models for boys and men were graphic and spanned a range of diverse styles, from chapbooks and imperial adventure tales to classics such as *The Iliad* (eighth century BC), Carl von Clausewitz's *Von Kriege* (1832), and innumerable nineteenth-century military romances. In the period immediately prior to the First World War, near universal literacy throughout Europe, combined with a proliferation of lending libraries and increased youth leisure time, meant that war-obsessed literature addressed to boys and young men was widely available. It was also extremely popular. As Henry Jourdain (who was later to become a lieutenant colonel in the Connaught Rangers) recalled, as a youth he was addicted to war tales. In his memoirs (published in 1934), he could still conjure up the thrill he felt while reading the martial stories of Scottish writer Sir Walter Scott and Irish novelist Charles Lever. These tales prompted him to join the army, in order to 'take part in such stirring times as were depicted'. He singled out Lever, in particular, for preparing him for combat which involved charges, wild cheers that 'rent the skies', and wholesale bayoneting until the enemy scattered and the Rangers 'halted to recover breath and stayed the slaughter'.²

Romanticised tales of violence contained important national inflections. In Britain and France, for example, male youth literature was more likely to emphasise combat as a defensive response to aggression and atrocity. German literature, in contrast, was uniquely graphic in its violent depictions. Prior to the war, German authors and publishers of youth literature were intensely imperialistic and militaristic. In the words of historian Andrew Donson, they eagerly 'adopted the lurid adventure story as their model' and 'projected a masculinity' that focused upon 'the

courageous and merciless young soldier'. From the 1890s, these war stories became increasingly ferocious. By the time war was declared, it was not unusual to read accounts describing German soldiers as 'wild devils' who 'cut and jabbed' with glee. In the words of one story, as their 'deafening cry filled the air', 'we hit with rifle butts so madly that the Serbians' skulls shattered, and though some good comrades bit the dust, the enemy could not withstand the vehement attack'.³

While such stories did not directly stimulate enaction, the excitement they generated created an imaginary arena crowded with murderous potential and provided a narrative structure within which young men might legitimately fantasise about aggressive behaviour. In this way, young men primed themselves for the coming fray.

In the literature addressed to boys and young men, gendered identities were defined against the opposite sex. This was also the case for mature men. Indeed, the very possibility of war depended upon the distinction between men and women, at least according to Russian journalist Valentina Kostyleva. 'It is possible to say with certainty', she contended in 1914, that 'not one warrior would go to the field of battle if he knew that on that very field would be his wife, his sister.' Neither, she went on, would a man be so keen to fight if he thought that 'when he returned, his family would be broken up, his children would be dead of hunger, and no one would be there to heal his wounds, received in glorious battle with the enemy'.⁴ The man in the front lines required women behind the lines to succour his wounds, bear and nurture his children, and bestow upon him the honour due to a 'warrior'.

It is easy to exaggerate Kostyleva's point. Arguing that manliness was defined in opposition to women did not mean denying the full *range* of manly traits, values and habits. After all, being a man – at least, in its adult as opposed to adolescent incarnation – did not solely mean possessing those traits of hardness, courage and aggression that typified the 'warrior'. It also meant being a heterosexual and ruling over a domestic sphere. Indeed, front-line war service may have actually enhanced the importance of both of these masculine attributes. The performance of heterosexuality, for instance, was strengthened in wartime (witness the occasional panics about homosexuality in the forces) and its enactment became much more public. Popular song and comedy routinely depicted consensual sexual encounters

in explicit detail, as in the popular American hit of 1917, 'Oo-La-La! Wee-Wee'. In that routine, Harry Ruby and George Jessel told of the courtship between a young American soldier called Willie Earl and a 'sweet young [French] girl'. Earl's 'trench French' amounted to 'oo-la-la!' and 'wee-wee'. The lyrics went:

Her naughty little glance Put Willie in a trance . . .
She'd pinch his cheek and say you keekagay, He'd say not now, dear,
but later I may; Then she'd say, compronay voo, papa?
And he'd say 'oo-la-la! wee-wee!'⁵

Sexually explicit letters also became routine, as men were increasingly forced to commit to paper what might otherwise have been simply whispered discreetly between lovers on park benches. Thus, one Canadian soldier wooed his English girlfriend with the words, 'Dear Maizy, If I last another week, my leave comes up, and I will be on my way to London to see you. If you enjoy the birds, the bees, and the flowers, take a good look at them before I get there. After that, you will not see anything but the ceiling for the next six days.'⁶

Patriarchal domesticity was another aspect of the masculine identity that existed alongside other more conventionally martial traits. Finding themselves at a distance from mothers, sisters and wives, men performed their domestic roles within the circumstances in which they found themselves. On 26 July 1917, *Lillerkriegszeitung* related stories of men extending a 'loving hand' like a 'mother' to ease the pain of dying comrades.⁷ Men nurtured each other. A quartermaster-sergeant in France was affectionately regarded as a 'harassed but efficient mother of a reckless family'.⁸ Soldiers wrapped blankets around ill or exhausted comrades 'as a mother would a child'.⁹ Another soldier described meeting an old school-friend immediately before going 'over the top' at the Battle of the Somme. 'I looked at Herbert', he recalled, stating that: 'I could see his lips move – I shouted but I couldn't hear myself at all. I wanted to tell him that we would keep together so I grabbed his hand and we went over together as we had gone to Sunday school, hand in hand.'¹⁰ It would have been impossible to survive the horrors of combat without such emotional props. In other words,

there is no contradiction between the soldier as martial and as maternal: indeed, the two could be mutually dependent.

Of course, this masculine domesticity was only possible in the context of men at war. It required men to be actively engaged in the militarist enterprise. Abstainers had no place in this more nuanced version of masculinity at war. They were denigrated as womanly. There were two main types of war-abstainers. The first type consisted of those who deliberately chose to object to war. As in a depiction of a man who had been 'exempt from military duty' in an April 1915 edition of *Lillerkriegszeitung*, he was a feminine character in fine clothes being stared at as he strode around town.¹¹ Conscientious objectors were routinely portrayed as parasitic un-men. In the words of the *Daily Mail* on 26 April 1917, they were 'frauds, the crawling worms who stole the cloak of conscience to cover cowardice' or (according to *The Times* on 5 April 1916), they were 'faint and feeble souls'.¹² In every combatant nation, non-combatant men were portrayed as feminine and (in the case of the UK and the USA) taunted with white feathers. The equivalent in Canada was a card that read 'Wanted: Petticoats for all able-bodied men who prefer staying at home when their country needs them.'¹³

The second type of abstainer consisted of men who had suffered psychiatric collapse as a result of their military experiences. Psychiatrists and senior military officers never tired of implying that such men were 'feminine'. For instance, in his classic textbook, *War Neuroses* (1918), John T. MacCurdy described the suffering of one 20-year-old private, noting that although this soldier had not exhibited 'neurotic symptoms' before the war, he still 'showed a tendency to abnormality in his make-up'. The proof of this lay in the fact that he was 'rather tender-hearted and never liked to see animals killed. Socially, he was rather self-conscious, inclined to keep to himself, and he had not been a perfectly normal, mischievous boy, but was rather more virtuous than his companions. He had always been shy with girls and had never thought of getting married.'¹⁴ In other words, 'normal' men were psychologically capable of killing because they were tough, did not mind seeing animals killed, were gregarious and mischievous as youths, and were actively heterosexual.

There was an even more vicious side to this disparaging of the feminine: violent misogyny. This aspect of bellicose masculinity was particularly prominent in training and behind the lines (it tended to be easier to idealise women when they were entirely absent). Once again, marching songs provide clear examples of hatred of women. In France, for instance, soldiers marched to the tune of

Catherine has pig's feet Ugly ankles

Knees that knock

A mouldy crotch
And rotting breasts.¹⁵

Sexual violence was widespread. As one First World War ‘footslogger’ admitted, ‘The men I was with were rough with women, boasted of their conquests, many of whom were actually raped, but there were no prosecutions to my knowledge.’¹⁶ In many cases, senior officers did not merely turn a blind eye to sexual violence carried out by men in the other ranks, but sanctioned the violence and actively participated in its perpetration. John Horne and Alan Kramer meticulously document atrocities, including rape, carried out by German soldiers in Belgium during the First World War. They forcefully argue that rape ‘demonstrated in the starkest possible way that the relationship between invader and invaded was also one of gender. If male civilians were more likely to be shot, only girls and women (as far as we know) were raped, so that the invader’s absolute power to violate the body was expressed in different, gendered ways.’¹⁷

Furthermore, sexual cruelty was not only directed against enemy women. Once sexual abuse had been normalised for the enemy, it did not take long to spread to one’s own side.¹⁸ Misogyny nurtured within the hyper-masculine environments of certain military units contributed to the widespread abuse of women as prostitutes. According to one set of statistics, published in 1923, along one street in Le Havre over a fifty-seven-week period, 171,000 soldiers were seen entering brothels.¹⁹ For many young servicemen, straight from their family home, the ‘availability’ of ‘loose women’ was a revelation as dramatic as combat itself. As Robert Swan explained in an interview:

Here you had a very large number of young men at the very height of their physical condition and under rigid training. So they all honed down and tuned down, as fit as they ever would be, and with all the natural instincts of a young man. Yet we were facing the fact that ‘Well, we’re here today, but we might be gone tomorrow. So if we’re going to have any life at all, we’ll take it when we can get it.’ And if they were inclined in that way, and there were very large numbers what were, without any doubt, they went to the women . . . These boys

just didn't know whether they were going to have any of that, or whether they weren't, or how long they were going to have it.²⁰

Such attitudes justified worlds of violence.

The loosening of the veil of sexual propriety required a different comportment of femininity for women near or in the front lines. Where possible, nurses donned starched white uniforms, mimicking those of nuns and, as one British nurse noted, the red or grey capes that the nurses were required to wear were designed to 'hide the top part of their anatomy from the men they had to nurse'.²¹ They transformed themselves into the sisters and mothers of the wounded men who, in turn, became their 'poor boys'. As one young soldier whimpered, 'I know now why you nurses are called "sisters". You *are* sisters to us boys.'²² In the words of German nurse Helene Mierisch, 'A large hall is the "infants' ward", so called because it is populated solely by eighteen-year-olds . . . I must comfort my children well. When they are better and have recovered from the shock they will make just as good soldiers as anybody else. In the evenings . . . I sing to them "Sleep, my little prince, sleep".²³

This form of femininity was a world away from that adopted by combatant women. As one female soldier curtly informed one correspondent on 10 November 1916, if people thought she ought to be a nurse instead of a soldier, they should be told that 'we have Red Cross men for first aid'. She insisted on acting as a soldier, and being treated as such; like male combatants, she cared for the wounded, but only 'between shots'.²⁴ Implicit in such comments is the bond between combatant and caring roles.

Women who engaged in fighting were required to define themselves in relationship to a combatant masculinity. This was the case both in the context of those exceptional women who served as isolated individuals alongside men in armed forces, and during those rare occasions where women were mobilised en masse by the state. For example, nurse Ecaterina Teodoroiu had volunteered for the Romanian army after her two brothers were killed in battle. She fought and was wounded on a number of occasions, being killed during the famous Battle of Mărășești. Her image as a woman and a soldier was contested in her time, and remains so. Most

commonly, however, she was portrayed as a defeminised, Romanian Joan of Arc figure – skinny, flat-chested and with her hair cut short. Unlike the tombs erected for other soldiers, her tombstone described her as *fecioara Eroină*, or the virgin heroine.²⁵ In other words, rather than threatening gender dichotomies between men and women, Teodoroiu's combatant status reaffirmed them. She was portrayed as hardly a woman at all.

While evidence for Teodoroiu's gender identity has largely been imposed upon her by other people, Flora Sandes left behind her own accounts of her gendered identity in war. Although Sandes was born in the English village of Thornton Heath, she served in the Serbian army and, like Teodoroiu, came to combat from her previous role as a nurse. In her own construction of her life, becoming a soldier was the culmination of her desire to be a man – an urge she dated back to her earliest childhood when she would kneel by her bed, praying that the morning would see her transformed into a boy. Although she eventually accepted her femininity (albeit only on the grounds that 'it is better to make the best of a bad job, and not try to be a bad imitation of a man'), she found living 'a man's life' intensely satisfying. Despite the damp, dirt and danger, she admitted that throughout her seven years' service 'romance, adventure and comradeship' compensated abundantly for 'incessant fighting, weariness indescribable'. Most importantly, she felt accepted by her comrades. In one breath, Sandes was 'Nashi Engleskinja' (or 'Our Englishwoman'); in the next, she was 'Brother'.²⁶

Teodoroiu and Sandes were loners. Not so the thousands of women who served in Russian forces from the start of the conflict and were formally mobilised in sexually segregated military units from 1917. Initially, Russian women entered regular military units in similar ways to Teodoroiu and Sandes: they simply attached themselves to the troops en route or disguised themselves as men. In the words of Vasia Fedorenko in a 1915 letter to the Ekaterinoslav military commander begging to be allowed to enlist, 'women also can fight, and just as well as men'. 'Why', she continued,

are men given all the important responsibilities while women are assigned to kitchen work? Why does society so mistrust the intentions of women? Thousands of women could be fighting in the ranks of the

Russian army. Why don't they trust that we, like men, can also take up arms and go to the defence of our motherland with honour and pride?²⁷

Fedorenko's passionate plea was ignored. Within two years, however, women like her were being systematically encouraged to fight in gender-specific military formations. Very quickly over 5,000 women volunteered.²⁸ This systematic utilisation of women was a direct outcome of the disorder engendered by the February Revolution and the need to 'revitalise a war-weary army'. It divided Russian feminists. Was female mobilisation in combatant units a significant step towards female equality more generally? Were these female soldiers following in the footsteps of Joan of Arc, or were they traitors to an authentic maternal femininity? Either way, their role was to boost the morale of battle-weary male soldiers. Less generously, they were sent into battle to shame male soldiers' sense of masculinity. As historian Laurie Stoff has argued, all-female units were 'essentially . . . being used by the male military establishment to reassert traditional gender roles, that is, to get men to return to their roles as defenders'. They were only established because traditional gendered behaviour was believed to have failed.²⁹ Women soldiers were expected to reinforce, not endanger, wartime rituals of manliness. Once the hatreds engendered by international and then civil war ceased, female units were ingloriously disbanded.

Gender identities did not solely involve pitting 'men' against 'women', with combatant women reaffirming the fundamental masculinity of combat. Conceptions of 'race' infused all these debates about wartime gender identities. Mobilising minority groups within one's own society or from colonial outposts was profoundly indicative of underlying gendered beliefs. In the USA this took the form of debates about the role that African American men were expected to perform in the war. Indeed, in the southern states the antithesis of white manliness was not white femininity, but African American masculinity. Historian Gerald Shenk pointed out that white women 'positioned themselves in the vanguard of local mobilizations for the war. They acted as essential elements in a racial patriarchy rooted in whiteness, heterosexuality, and private property.' Middle-class white women were the property of white, propertied men: they were 'essential to and extensions of [white] manhood'. To be masculine, in other words, was not simply to be prepared to fight, but to fight in defence of white women.

In contrast, African Americans ‘represented all that was unmanly to the southern white man’. They were portrayed as ‘subservient, not able to control their passions, and lacking in courage and a sense of duty’.³⁰

Such attitudes were not the prerogative of a minority of white supremacists in the southern states. John Richards commanded a black unit during the First World War. He regarded the black soldier as a ‘splendid physical specimen’, ideal during the theatrics of parade-ground drill and possessing great powers of endurance and loyalty. African American soldiers would ‘follow like a dog through artillery barrage and the wind of machine gun bullets’, he wrote. On balance, however, Richards believed that black soldiers were of very limited usefulness since they were afraid of the dark, lacked initiative, and were liable to panic during attacks. They lacked the pugnacity of Anglo-Americans and were susceptible to mass suggestion which resulted in wholesale desertion. Richards continued: ‘They do what they are told, but move as if bewildered. I think they lack the free, independent spirit that stirs in the breast of the white; that rises within him when the shells are falling thick and says, “I am a better man than any – Boche, and I am coming through.”’ Such spirit was exceptionally rare among black soldiers and officers, he believed. Richards wrote: ‘They are boys. They do not grow up, even under shell-fire.’ In 1926, a professor of sociology at the University of Oklahoma agreed with Richards, arguing that the innate childishness of black troops and their simple faith in their leaders made ‘superior leadership’ the most important prerequisite in exacting military effectiveness from these men. The best black units were those commanded by white officers ‘of very superior intelligence and moral fiber’, he insisted.³¹

Even sympathetic portrayals of African American soldiers often betrayed the assumption that they were only useful in combat if they were led by white officers. For instance, Major Arthur West Little’s *From Harlem to the Rhine* (1936) was intended to be a tribute to the black troops who served under him. At the end of his account, Little described having to say farewell to Sergeant Henry Johnson, formerly the ‘colored porter of the Albany railway station’ and transformed by war into a ‘little homicidal king’, as Little patronisingly dubbed him. Sad that he would ‘see my beloved soldier boys no more’, Little described saying ‘Goodbye, Henry, don’t forget me’. Henry Johnson, ‘his eyes opening wider and wider’ replied, ‘Furgit yer!

Suh Major, Sur . . . Why, Suh Major Sur, yer made a man of me!³² It required a white officer to ‘make a man’ of a ‘colored porter’.

The presence of colonial or ‘foreign’ troops within units that were portrayed as otherwise ‘racially homogeneous’ often served to deconstruct notions of what was masculine and what was feminine. Entire peoples could be relegated to the status of children, rather than fully male adults. This was the way the 140,000 Chinese contract labourers, recruited between 1916 and 1918 by British and French governments to work in the docks and other areas experiencing labour shortages, were characterised. On 8 June 1918, the *North China Herald* reported that none of the Chinese labourers would return to China

the same or as he came out . . . After all, they are only great big boys, and whatever their age may be, they are none of them older than ten years in character – very amenable, easily managed with kindness and firmness, and loyal to the core if treated with consideration . . . They bear nothing but dislike for anyone who is afraid of them. A dog is the same.

Similar to attitudes towards African Americans, this disdain was tempered with fear. After all, the authorities were careful not to allow these Chinese labourers to work in direct competition with (less productive) white workers.³³ When minority groups within the military services actually did prove themselves capable of great valour, their sacrifice was further diminished by an erasure of their unique identities. This was the fate of Mick King, an indigenous Australian who was killed on the Western Front. An epitaph for King effectively stripped him of his history. It read, ‘although [King] was black, he was a White man, and a dinkum Aussie’.³⁴

Such racialist discourses inverted traditionally positive characterisations of masculinity. Courage, fortitude and aggression, for example, could become evidence not of valorised masculinity, but of artless inferiority. In *La force noir* (1910), for instance, General Charles Mangin claimed that West African troops ‘have precisely those qualities that are demanded in the long struggles in modern war: rusticity, endurance, tenacity, the instinct for combat, the absence of nervousness, and an incomparable power of shock’. Combined with a reduced sensitivity to painful stimuli, these traits were

evidence of West African inferiority and the need for strong European leadership.³⁵ The lack of a connection between martial vigour and a positive masculinity was widely observed among those groups dubbed 'martial races', such as Punjabi Sikhs, Nepalese Gurkhas and Highland Scots. Leaving aside the observation that the appellation 'martial race' was an invention (Sikhs are a religious group, not a 'race'; the concept of 'Gurkhas' was a British invention that included recruits from a vast array of regions and traditions in Nepal; and Highland Scots included lowland Scotsmen and men from Ireland and England),³⁶ it was a way to strip various groups of 'true' masculinity. Non-European peoples and those from the 'periphery' could be denigrated as possessing lesser bodies. They did not truly *feel*. Their position at the lower echelons of the great Chain of Feeling was due to their insensibility. In this great Chain of Feeling the ability of one's own group to bear pain stoically was proffered as evidence of a high status in that great Chain while, on the other hand, the ability of 'outsiders' to bear pain stoically was evidence of their low position in that Chain. Minority men were not so much stoic as obtuse.

Nonetheless, all armies found that even their 'core troops' failed to live up to gendered ideals. In late 1917 (to take an extreme example) hundreds of thousands (perhaps even millions) of Russian soldiers deserted.³⁷ In all forces martial masculinity had to be defended by the full force of the law. In British forces, over 3,000 death sentences were passed during the First World War. Although men were executed for murder, quitting their posts, violence, disobedience, mutiny, sleeping on post and casting away arms, the most common crime was desertion. And certain deserters were treated more harshly than others. Thus West Indian and Indian soldiers who deserted while serving in British units were more likely to be executed than white soldiers who deserted. Three out of every four Indian deserters were executed compared with 11 per cent of white British deserters.³⁸

Such harshness met inevitably with resistance. In July 1916, one Indian soldier serving with the British forces faced the firing squad with the defiant cry (in Hindustani) that he had acted as he did because of abuse and there was no justice in the British *Sirkar*. He called upon the Indian members of the firing squad to do as he had done, only to kill themselves afterwards rather than be killed. The firing squad failed to kill him outright, leaving Captain T. H. Westmacott (the assistant provost marshal of 1 Indian

Cavalry Division) to carry out the *coup de grâce* at close quarters.³⁹ Like Robert Graves and his colleagues firing at the symbol of domesticity (the cabinet filled with flowers and fruit) on the front lines in Flanders, it was to prove difficult to kill those who stood outside of martial masculinity, at least as defined by the victors.

The existence of the death penalty had other more subtle effects. For one, it made many soldiers reluctant to inform on their less courageous comrades. As one soldier recalled, ‘it was not for us to take sides with the authorities against mere privates; the scales of military justice were too heavily weighed on the one side to begin with. So we gave [the deserters] our rations and wished them luck.’ More crafty resisters simply sought safer ways to avoid carrying out the duty that their sex, age and physical fitness had forced upon them: they malingered. After serving in both France and Salonica, for example, Private Edward Casey decided that if he was going to survive, he had to take drastic action. In his words: ‘I started to scheme, how the hell can I work my ticket and get out of this bloody war . . . I admit I am a coward – a bloody, bleeding Coward – and I want to be a live coward not a dead blasted Hero.’ He faked madness, and when he realised that the doctors suspected his fraud he mutilated himself by stepping in front of a truck. He survived the carnage.

As such drastic measures suggest, combat represented men’s greatest test of manliness. Although they might be at less risk of death, even men in non-combatant units recognised that true manly status in war involved engaging in battle. Men serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps, for instance, lamented their non-combatant status. A piece of doggerel in their journal, *The Rifle Splint*, for 1915 began:

Not for us the attacking Mid the bursting shell, Smashing, slashing,
hacking, Giving Germans hell.

It is rather sad we
Never can be fighters, And however bad we
Want to pot the blighters.
We must never change a Stretcher for a gun;
We get all the danger Don't have half the fun.⁴⁰

For men in the front lines, not fighting was hardly an option. Survivors recognised that they had undergone an unparalleled experience for which they should feel pride. In the words of German pilot Ernst Udet , after his first 'victory', he could have 'shouted out with pride and joy'.⁴¹

The urge to kill and tell was fuelled in part by the desire to insist upon their new status as men, even if there was often a disjuncture between the appearance of masculinity and the reality. This was the function of Lieutenant Colonel Harold Hartney's introductory comments in his combat memoir *Up and At 'Em* (1940) about his service as the commander of the First Pursuit Group, US Air Service. Hartney warned readers not to be misled by his non-martial appearance. He described himself as 'under average height, with a face anything but ferocious and warlike, and now equipped with a permanent limp'. This was, he conceded, not 'the image of a warrior' but, despite appearances, he was capable of 'butchering'.⁴² Soldier William Willis was equally keen to project his martial prowess. In his letter to a Miss Luttrell on 4 May 1917, he spun his story out of a concoction of bravado and matter-of-fact brutality. 'The Huns attacked us with 15,000 men, in mass formation', Willis's combat narrative began. Despite the fact that his unit 'numbered [only] a few hundreds',

we . . . repulsed them and inflicted extremely heavy losses. We killed till we grew sick of the sight of blood and dead men. Personally I accounted for that many that I eventually lost count. Our platoon received the order to charge and we met the enemy half-way. He acted up to tradition and surrendered or ran away. It was impossible to take prisoners so they were all shot. One had the opportunity to utilise his knowledge of bayonet work. Just imagine 32 of us opposed to over 300 of them and beating them the way we did. Don't you think we have grounds for being a little bit proud?

Willis's story contained many elements of the combat masculinity valorised by many armies: aggression, determination, relentlessness and proud virility. Despite admitting to committing atrocities (he took part in slaughtering all the prisoners), when describing bayoneting men Willis delicately reverted to the third person. 'One', as opposed to 'I' or 'we', killed with the bayonet.⁴³

Combat was the ultimate rite of passage, a *baptême de feu* that permanently altered men's identity. This was graphically described by Guinean veteran Kande Kamara , who compared soldiering to being circumcised. It was equivalent to going into the 'secret bushes' where 'there were many things you never knew about before that they would tell you; and after you left the circumcision bush you'd be aware of a lot of things [that you never understood before]. And that's the same parallel as warfare, as being a soldier.' When his father attempted to persuade him to return to their family's village, Kamara's response was simple: he begged his father's forgiveness for being a disobedient son, but insisted that 'If I die, I die as a man – don't be angry, I'll simply be buried as a man.'⁴⁴

Martial masculinity also required shrouding oneself in a particular emotional style in battle and, if wounded, in pain. Men like Kamara were forced to learn to act in particular gendered ways. Maintaining the correct conduct was crucial. For example, prior to battle, French combatant Guy Hallé admitted to being tormented by thoughts about the possibility of his own physical disintegration. 'There will be a great flame, a cry', he speculated, and then 'I will be lying there, legs shattered, stomach torn up, all bloody, eyes wide open, and the [sic] face completely white.' As he neared the moment of attack, though, his thoughts turned to the more urgent issue of maintaining a proper bearing. He accepted that he was required 'to hang on. I even have a smile on the [sic] lips. Oh this smile, how many times have I seen it. This pale smile that trembles just a bit, pulled at the corner of the mouth. You must comport yourself correctly in the face of death.'⁴⁵

Even when wounded, there was no respite from the tyranny of comportment. Suffering demanded carefully calibrated responses. As Oliver Dent observed: 'They will silently endure agonies from wounds and dressings, and yet groan and even howl when one removes a little adhesive

plaster. They will tolerate stoically a shrapnel-ridden left leg, and yell from the further end of the ward to have a pillow or piece of cotton wool moved under the heel of the right.’⁴⁶

The correct response to pain was a learned hermeneutics. The lesson was repeated time and again by propagandists, medical personal and fellow servicemen. Experienced war surgeon James Robb Church served with the French army. He contributed to the rules of pain expressiveness in his memoir of 1918. In Church’s words:

Robert Deviennes, of the 417th Infantry, grips the sides of his white iron bed and the dark eyes close and the dropping corners of his mouth come up to a straight, set line and the olive color of his face goes a little gray while drops of sweat stand out like tears from a tortured system. But Robert Deviennes, of the 417th Infantry, does not whimper, for he is not a child, but a soldier of France, and he knows with the knowledge of his nineteen years how to bear his cross like a soldier.⁴⁷

Church’s description was purposefully propagandist: by repeating the French soldier’s full name and unit, he was reminding American readers of the sacrifices being made by their allies; the Christian imagery of crucifixion was heralded as something that ennobled Deviennes’s sacrifice; and Robert Deviennes became representative of manly soldiers generally. This was ‘pain patiently borne . . . suffering endured without a cry’, or, at its most extreme, a forbearance broken only by the exclamations of another wounded soldier who swore ‘queer good-natured soldier swear-words’. What was important, Church informed his readers, was not simply one individual’s ‘tortured system’ or ‘quivering flesh’. There was a higher cause.⁴⁸

Nurses were also active in propagating the necessity of stoicism. Nurse de Trafford , for example, described having to perform a fluid tap on a soldier from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. She admitted that it was a ‘brutal performance’ which ‘hurts dreadfully’ but, she recalled, the ‘poor old boy’ simply ‘doubled himself up and clenched his fists. . . . “I was afraid I’d shout”, he told us – but only a muffled groan escaped from him.’⁴⁹

Another war nurse confessed that she had inadvertently touched ‘a bare nerve-end’ with her forceps, thus ‘torturing’ a patient ‘unbearably’. At the time, her patient’s ‘eyes were full of tears and the pupils enormously dilated with pain. But not a word out of him. No groaning. No “Please wait a minute, sister”. Just patient silence.’⁵⁰ Or, as another nurse put it when describing a marine who had been wounded at Chateau-Thierry in June 1918, although ‘he had a most painful wound’, he would ‘never complain of it or grumble when it was dressed. If it hurt a lot, which it usually did, he would flash his black eyes and say nothing.’⁵¹

Fellow soldiers reinforced such accounts about the correct way to bear the pain of wounds. Henry Gervis’s memoir of 1920 went so far as to claim that the expression of pain was in itself an unpatriotic act, bordering on treachery. When a young lieutenant broke down while having a severe wound dressed, Gervis claimed that the other patients’ embarrassment was palpable. When ‘the pain was so great that [the lieutenant] began to cry like a child. A friend of his in the next bed, himself little more than a boy, leant over towards him and in an agonised whisper of entreaty said, “Don’t do that, old man; Pull yourself together, think of the Regiment.”’ The correct response, at least according to Gervis was to bear ‘the ills of life with cheerful philosophy’, not allowing ‘any suffering . . . [to] make them break down’.⁵²

Even those wounded men who *failed* to display manly detachment from bodily pain eagerly strove towards it as an ideal. In other words, servicemen felt the need to mask the excessive exhibition of pain, even if they were unsuccessful. Ruth Durst’s diaries, for instance, contained many examples of men who expressed their profound shame of expressing pain. As one dying Gordon Highlander stammered shortly before dying, ‘I have an awful confession to make. I think I am going to scream.’ A soldier might even apologise for being such a ‘damned baby’ while his wound was being dressed.⁵³ In the words of another nurse working in the field hospital close to the front lines, on the rare occasion when men did ‘cry out’ while having their wounds dressed, they ‘usually apologised for the annoyance of their agony’.⁵⁴

Such responses to wounded men in pain shows that medical personnel were not simply reporting men’s suffering, but were complicit in enforcing

a certain kind of response to pain. After all, Durst criticised the one soldier who was ‘not at all brave’ (he was ‘hysterical’ and capable of making ‘a great fuss’ after having had one leg amputated and the other one put in plaster) for being a ‘very sad’ case.⁵⁵ When a seriously wounded soldier whimpered ‘it’s very painful, sir, very painful. I’ll try ’ard, I’ll do me best – but it is painful, sir’, physicians might simply snap impatiently: ‘Pull yourself together now. Be a man! For God’s sake be quiet.’⁵⁶ In order to make their work more palatable, nurses frequently traded on their role as substitute sisters and mothers to young soldiers. In her war diary for 12 September 1918, for example, Helen Boylston noted that ‘one of my boys’ (a 16-year-old) ‘made a frightful fuss’ while she was dressing his leg. ‘I don’t think I hurt him much’, she claimed, insisting that she knew ‘when things really hurt’. However, she continued,

I hadn’t the heart to scold him, he was such a child. When I was through, he looked up at me with an ashamed grin and said, ‘I’m sorry, sister. I’m awful, aren’t I?’

‘Why, no, Morris’, I replied. ‘I think you did very well, everything considered.’ Which was the truth. He was so pleased it was pathetic. ‘I’ll be good tomorrow, sister. See if I’m not’, he said earnestly.⁵⁷

It was not only masculinity that was defined according to the ability to insist upon the redemptive power of personal suffering quietly endured. Wartime femininity also laboured under the demands of comportment under extreme conditions. This is hardly surprising, given that in many countries aerial bombardment meant that women, children, elderly men and those considered to be ‘unfit’ found themselves at the epicentre of killing zones. The German invasion of 1914, for instance, put French civilians in Paris as well as in northern and eastern France at risk. Their responses were as scripted as those of the *poilus*: indeed, as a Senator Louis Barthou put it in *Le Matin* on 2 February 1916, women and children proved they possessed ‘the souls of soldiers’. Or, in the words of Alfred Capus in *Le Figaro* a few days earlier, ‘virility [was] always present’.⁵⁸ This led to what Susan Grayzel identified as a ‘new kind of non-gender specific civic virtue’, that is, ‘stoic heroism under fire’.⁵⁹

A shared stoicism was an even more prominent theme among nurses serving near the front lines. Just as French civilians who were subjected to aerial bombardment were no longer *embusqués* (shirkers) but heroes, so too nurses near the front lines were accorded respect as female heroes. They had been ‘tested’ in the crucible of war and judged to be courageous. Nurses such as E. P. Korkina, who tended to the Russian wounded in the midst of battle, were honoured in *lubki*, praising their ‘exploits’.⁶⁰ In numerous nursing memoirs women told the story of the trial of war: in the depths of hell these women conjured up super-human energy, surmounted difficulties and, as a consequence, forged a new refined identity. The Baroness de T’Serclaes was attempting to convey this process to readers of her memoir *Flanders and Other Fields* when she bragged about how her underclothes ‘stuck’ to her body and she had to ‘scrape the lice off with the blunt edge of a knife’. The village where she was based had a graveyard that was ‘choked with corpses . . . exposed by the heavy rains’, and their drinking water tasted vile ‘even when it had been boiled’. Nevertheless, she observed that she ‘liked the smell of danger and the tension of battle’. She boasted that she ‘throve and blossomed on it. My self-consciousness disappeared, and I found a new self when I was serving others.’⁶¹ Nurse Mary Borden reported similar emotions, claiming that she was fighting on ‘the second battlefield’. It is, she insisted, ‘we who are doing the fighting now, with their real enemies’. It was a battle she found exciting and empowering.⁶² Even when they returned home, the status they had forged as persons who had served near the front lines was honoured, sometimes by being asked to wear their uniforms even at the dinner table on the grounds that they too were heroes.⁶³

The return of peace presented particular challenges. ‘Boys’ had been sent into battle. Some of them had killed other ‘boys’. When the survivors returned, they were ‘men’ faced with the task of re-establishing relationships with friends and family, sweethearts and spouses. No one expected this to be easy. Gendered identities had been carefully policed in wartimes, so much so that those who had broken conventional moulds were firmly set aside as deviations. As a consequence, female combatants such as Flora Sandes found reverting to civilian life particularly frustrating. As she explained, ‘Turning from a woman to a private soldier proved nothing compared with turning back from soldier to ordinary woman.’ It was, she

continued, 'like losing everything at one fell swoop, and trying to find bearings again in another life and an entirely different world'.⁶⁴

In all countries, the family was prioritised as the central institution that would enable the successful reintegration of fractured selves. It was not simply the fact that peacetime forms of masculinity had to be reasserted – although this was certainly the point of view of many authorities – but, more subtly, combatants had to be urged into forsaking the martial manliness that had been forged in conflict. From the point of view of established churches, martial manliness was a threat that had to be forcibly combated. Pastoral letters read aloud in churches throughout Europe emphasised the patriarchal family as the ideal. In the words of one such pastoral letter, read across German Austria in 1919:

You, dear homecomers, are to begin again the sacred, serious duties within the family, of which you are the head. The children, who for too long have been deprived of the strong hand of the father in their upbringing, must again be strictly disciplined. We ask you to head a true, Christian family life and your home will become paradise.⁶⁵

This was more difficult to achieve in defeated countries. In Italy, the humiliating rout at Caporetto hung over returning soldiers. Only the *Arditi*, or shock troops, were able to return with their martial reputations intact.⁶⁶ The Habsburg armed forces had collapsed in total disorder in 1918, meaning that many 'homecomers' returned to Austria still heavily armed. As a result, violent incidents involving rifles, hand grenades and shells soared. Well into the 1920s, masculinity was linked to domestic violence. Many people accepted that men's war experiences might (partly) justify continued brutality. As one beaten wife observed in a letter to an advice column in *Die Unzufriedene* on 7 June 1924:

There is only one thing I have to say and that speaks for my husband, he is a war victim. He spent years at the front and all that brutality of the war, noticeably in him immediately, still sticks to him today, as if he had just come back from the front yesterday. That is perhaps the only excuse for him.⁶⁷

Even in victorious nations, gender tensions could be marked. Henry William Hull, the protagonist in Richard Aldington's 'The case of Lieutenant Hall (extracts from a diary)' bitterly commented in his diary for the 18 January 1919, 'I don't want ever to touch a bloody woman. Didn't they urge us into that hell, and do their best to keep us there? Look at Stanton, with his genital mangled, becoming a bloody parson – poor devil. Women? Pah!'⁶⁸ Women were characterised as castrators – destroyers of mankind in both the universal and the gendered sense.

Furthermore, the more cosmopolitan masculinity of war created concerns about reintegration, especially for men who had worked in agricultural industries or hailed from rural areas. This was expressed humorously in a 1919 American song written by Sam M. Lewis and Joe Young, with music by Walter Donaldson. Entitled 'How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm?', the song featured a rural mother expecting 'the boys' to return to the farm 'now that all is peaceful and calm'. Her wiser husband, points out:

How 'ya gonna keep 'em, down on the farm, After they've seen Paree?
How 'ya gonna keep 'em away from Broad-way; Jazzin' a-round,
And paintin' the town? . . .
They'll never want to see a rake or plow, And who the deuce can
parleyvous a cow? . . .
Wine and women play the mischief, With a boy who's loose with
change.
How 'ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm, After they've seen Paree?
⁶⁹

Finally, the gender roles forged in and near the killing zones did not easily translate into peacetime rituals of remembrance. In most countries the violence that had been at the heart of the lives of combatant men had to be overlooked, even denied. It was rare for memorials to show soldiers in aggressive poses. According to one estimate, for every figure showing anything that could be regarded as warlike action, about ten showed states of repose.⁷⁰ Some artists did include aggressive, and often bayonet-charging, posturing, but these were hurriedly excluded in the final execution.⁷¹ On those few occasions when warlike actions *were* depicted, they were cast as examples of defensive violence, as in the memorial at

Grand-Leez in Belgium.⁷² Aggressive representations could be met with a roar of reproach from local people. Take the angry response to the Bradford war memorial after it was unveiled in 1921, and people were faced with angry bayonet-wielding soldier figures. The statues were ‘apparently too ready for restarting business immediately’, grumbled the lord mayor. A local Baptist minister objected more vehemently: ‘the idea of the fixed bayonet was not the motive which led some of our best to lay down their lives’, he held. He wished that the city ‘had handed down to posterity not an affirmation of might but of ideas not of physical but spiritual power’.⁷³

There were some notable exceptions to the erasure of violence in the immediate postwar period, including the glorification of martial masculinity in postwar Germany amongst the rightist *Freikorps*.⁷⁴ Blaming Germany’s defeat on traitors within, including corrupting women, they lauded an image of German masculinity as controlled, hardened and machine-like: a veritable militarist cyborg.

For women who had served in or near the front lines, their experiences were largely set aside. While war memorials showed men as active participants of war – ‘a *poilu* with a virile and energetic expression’, as the chair of the monument committee at Saint-Mihiel (France) described their design – women were little more than passive, grieving and maternal figures.⁷⁵ Even counter-narratives – such as that of Romanian Jeana Col. Fodoreanu, who argued that women deserved to be commemorated on a par with male soldiers – still tended to focus on the gendered nature of women’s suffering. As Fodoreanu admitted, after the war she decided not to attend a victory parade. ‘I am no longer anything more than a poor woman who lost her father, mother, brother, relatives, friends’, she stated, adding ‘I will remain between these walls where I was born to cry out my pain.’⁷⁶

The struggle to maintain gender identities was not always successful. The voices of those men and women who failed to reconcile their lived experience of war with their sense of self-identity are muted. Frequently they can only be heard within the fiction of men who had seen front-line service. Aldington’s ‘The case of Lieutenant Hall (extracts from a diary)’ was one such account. In it Hall was haunted by his cold-blooded murder of four young German soldiers in the trenches of the Somme. Like Robert Graves’s fellow officer with whom I began this chapter, who coolly

executed the symbol of domesticity, Hall had shot three Germans and bayoneted the fourth in the back: all had shouted 'Kamerad!' and had put down their weapons. Hall's comrades believed that he killed them in a fair fight, and Hall maintained this fiction, being rewarded for his valour. At night, however, the face of the man he had bayoneted repeatedly returned. The moon shining through his window

looked like a face, a yellow dead man's face swollen with corruption . . . It seemed to me that this moon-face was the face of one of the men – I can't write the old insult 'Boche' any longer – I killed on the Somme. The most awful feeling of sick terror and apprehension went through me – infinitely worse than waiting to go over the top. I felt all the hairs creep in my skull and I almost screamed aloud.⁷⁷

There was nothing to do but admit that he had failed as a man. It was a failure that hung over postwar Europe. Manly ideals valued self-control and rationality. Active combat brutalised such values, fracturing men's concept of themselves as men. The myth that fighting had been defensive had limited purchase. Women had become an integral part of the bellicose enterprise, and were rewarded by the deaths of their fathers, husbands and sons. Many women were also tortured or killed. In the aftermath of the war both men and women feverishly worked for the reinstatement of older forms of masculinity and femininity, but the experience of combat had issued the *coup de grâce* at close quarters to the ideals of millions of participants.

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65 *An die Heimkehrer und Soldaten* (Vienna: Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1919), p. 2, cited in Healy, ‘Civilizing the soldier in postwar Austria’, p. 49.

66 Perry Wilson, *Women in Twentieth Century Italy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 45.

67 *Die Unzufriedene*, 7 June 1924, p. 3, cited in Healy, ‘Civilizing the soldier in postwar Austria’, p. 63.

68 Richard Aldington, ‘The case of Lieutenant Hall (extracts from a diary)’, in Aldington, *Roads to Glory* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), p. 242.

69 For the full lyrics and Nora Bayes’s rendition, see www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgqVCJpRqWQ.

70 This is an estimate based on Australian war memorials: Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 1999), p. 169.

71 See Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), p. 160, and Alan Borg, *War Memorials from Antiquity to the Present* (London: Leo Cooper, 1991), pp. 112–13.

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74 Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, trans. Stephen Conway, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987–9).

75 Daniel J. Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 204–5.

76 Jeana Col. Fodoreanu, *Femeia-Soldat* (Bucharest, 1928), p. 74, cited in Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth Century Romania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), p. 13.

77 Aldington, 'The case of Lieutenant Hall', p. 236.

Part III Populations at Risk

Introduction to Part III

Heather Jones and Laurence van Ypersele

The First World War unleashed unprecedented violence against civilian populations. From the very opening days of the conflict, hundreds of thousands of civilians fled the fighting or were themselves the direct victims of combat, massacres, bombardments and deportations; by its end, millions of civilian lives had been lost and entire communities displaced. Yet remarkably these traumatic aspects of the wartime civilian experience were often overlooked, long overshadowed by the grim horrors of trench warfare. In many ways, this was a logical outcome of the original militarist culture of wartime contemporaries, who in many states in 1914–18 were still in thrall to the late nineteenth-century idolisation of the military, and privileged the soldiers' suffering above all else. As a result, civilian suffering in the Great War was until recently predominantly historicised in Western historiography as a secondary phenomenon, and largely a purely emotional one, defined in terms of grief for the military dead and wounded casualties. As recently as 1999, John Keegan stated that the First World War 'imposed on the civilian populations involved almost none of the deliberate disruption and atrocity that was to be a feature of the Second'.¹ In sum, the First World War was the 'soldiers' war', often depicted in the West in terms of a home front/front line dichotomy where war was limited to the battlefield and civilians were spared its many horrors, secure on the home front. This is a long-cherished image which many soldiers on the Western Front themselves believed during the conflict. It is also, as this section will show, misleading, incomplete or wrong.

What emerges in this section is the extent to which civilians were at risk of violence and displacement during the First World War. Indeed, by restoring a global perspective to the war, and in particular by including Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and the Middle East, this section reveals

the full extent to which civilians were not merely collateral damage but deliberately targeted. It remains a widespread belief to this day in most of Western Europe and elsewhere that state-sanctioned deportations, forced labour, ruthlessly exploitative and bureaucratically modern occupation regimes, internment camps and genocide were innovations of the Second World War. The reality is that these were key structural innovations that dominated the civilian experience of the First, as this section will show. This, in turn, reveals the full scale of the totalisation processes at work during the conflict. The home front/front line distinction collapses if we analyse areas where the unexpected duration of the war resulted in long-term occupations by the Central Powers, such as occupied northern France and Belgium, the Baltic states, Serbia, Poland, Romania or northern Italy where the enemy took control of civilian lives; at the mercy of the occupier, civilian populations often experienced violence, massacre, deportations, forced labour, restrictions, pillage and hunger. Of course occupation regimes varied considerably, as did occupied populations and their resources. The occupied population's perception of the occupier was key here, as was the extent to which local authorities remained in place; in well-established nation-states such as Serbia, France and Belgium the occupier remained the enemy throughout the war; in the Baltic states or Poland the situation was less clearly defined. Yet all these occupations attempted to fulfil the contradictory aims of securing the occupied territory using the minimum possible number of troops while also exploiting its economic and human resources for the war effort to the maximum extent possible.

Combat, like occupation, also brought the enemy right into the heart of the civilian home front. Indeed, in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the home front often *was* the war front: major cities such as Warsaw and Belgrade were at the heart of the fighting. Moreover, home-front civilians were often targeted not only by the enemy but deliberately by their own governments: the tsarist Russian Empire targeted its Jewish and Chechen populations for forcible deportation; the Ottoman Empire targeted its Armenian minority for eradication. In such cases, the 'home front' in the Great War was the site where the pre-war idea of home, in every sense – cultural, domestic and physical – was lost. It was the site of greatest danger.

Yet particular civilian populations proved to be more at risk than others. This section will highlight the different, sometimes overlapping, reasons

why certain civilian populations proved particularly vulnerable to deliberate wartime targeting for displacement or massacre because of their geographical location near to fighting zones, their ethnic difference to majority populations, their status as immigrants or the fact that their home area was occupied by the enemy. Civilian populations often found themselves evacuated, voluntarily or by force, during army retreats or advances; ethnic minorities who lived in close proximity to the fighting were often particularly suspect and forcibly deported or interned, out of fear that they might aid the enemy; refugees often fled on their own initiative, and found themselves dependent on state or private charitable aid. Indeed, the duration of the conflict meant that support for refugees, often initially enthusiastically provided, dwindled as the war went on, rendering them vulnerable to discrimination and hardship – for example, Belgian and French refugees who had fled to Britain ultimately came to be seen as a burden by local communities which became increasingly hostile to them. The different categories of vulnerable civilian populations also overlapped considerably: refugees or deportees became de facto minorities who faced a range of receptions, varying from welcome to outright hatred; occupied populations too were often also deportees or internees.

This section also highlights how one key trend above all else rendered specific civilian populations more at risk than others of physical violence, pillage and exile – the rise of the ‘nation-state ideal’. Many of the ‘populations at risk’ discussed in this section were rendered particularly vulnerable by their geographical location in multi-ethnic ‘shatter zones’ which were in the midst of historical realignment into more ethnically homogeneous nation-states following the rise of modernist forms of nationalism in the late nineteenth century. The nationalist fervour unleashed by the war narrowed understandings of who could be a ‘loyal’ citizen. Often simply living as a minority population in a state where their ethnicity or nationality differed from the majority was enough to render a particular population’s wartime loyalties suspect in the eyes of their government and fellow citizens, who, as the conflict continued, required a quasi-ontological loyalty to the state; those with ethnic affiliations to the enemy were in even greater danger. The long duration of the war and the sacrifices it entailed reinforced a fear of the ‘enemy within’ among populations. This particularly affected those minorities who were seen as a threat to national security and outside the national community; they blurred the Manichaean

lines within wartime cultures between friend and foe, good and evil, civilisation and barbarism. Thus, paradoxically, the sacralisation of the nation at war led in many cases to extreme violence by the nation against its own minority citizens. Immigrant populations with ethnic origins in enemy countries were also particularly vulnerable to accusations of treachery or spying and were frequently put under surveillance or interned, regardless of whether they had been naturalised for several generations or had recently arrived.

Overall, this section highlights, in light of recent new historical research, how the violent experiences of civilians in the Great War were fundamental to the process of totalisation of warfare that marked the twentieth century. It also invites the question as to why the wartime sufferings of these civilian 'populations at risk' were largely forgotten. With the exception of the Belgians, the millions of civilians who fled the fighting or were forcibly deported from their homes, exiled, starved or slaughtered were largely written out of the overall Western historical narrative of the war. Indeed the prominence of Belgian civilian suffering, both in wartime propaganda and in the war's historiography, underlines the fact that the Western European middle-and upper-class intelligentsia were most affected by this case because it was so close to home: geographically part of Western Europe, white and overwhelmingly Christian, Belgian refugees, who encompassed the full spectrum of social class groups, epitomised the type of civilian victimhood most likely to trigger both identification and anxiety amongst the Western Allies who, in the Belgians, saw themselves.

Other civilian populations provoked far less durable Allied sympathy, and their war experiences of displacement, cultural destruction or massacre were rapidly forgotten after 1918, despite often having been used in wartime propaganda as a means of highlighting the 'barbarism' of the enemy and his abandonment of legal and civilised norms. Post-war, their traumatic wartime fate only engendered indifference. Many fell foul of that longstanding historical handicap of being far away peoples 'of whom we know nothing', making it less likely that their wartime experiences would become historically prominent. The Serbian civilians who fled with their army into the Albanian mountains, the Armenians driven into the Syrian desert or the Jews forcibly deported by the tsarist army of their own state and made refugees in their own country, were all Eastern and South-Eastern

European populations, geographically distant from the key Western belligerent states, in particular from Britain and France who so dominated the propaganda war and who later, as the conflict's victors, privileged the Western Front in the historiography. Moreover, the states to which the majority of the war's civilian victims belonged were themselves destroyed by the conflict – after 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire were no more. The fact that they no longer existed to produce their own histories of the conflict is surely a factor in why, in the public mind, the war is rarely associated with civilian death and displacement, most of which occurred within these states. Ethnicity and class also played a considerable role. Most of the war's civilian victims of violence in these regions were peasants or workers; many were also illiterate, contributing to the absence of their suffering from the overall historical perception of the war as they left few written eyewitness accounts. Many of these civilian populations, including Greeks, Slavs, Armenians, Turks and Jews, were also ranked as primitive peoples in the eyes of contemporary elites, not considered the equal of Western Europeans. These civilian victims thus counted for less in the war's commemorative hierarchy than the soldiery of Western Europe.

Other civilian experiences were forgotten because their history was problematic for the patriotic narrative of the post-war period, for example the wartime hardships of those who lived under the ruthless German occupation of northern France. It was a reminder of the suspect compromises and *modus vivendi* with the enemy that long-term occupation inevitably rendered necessary for occupied civilians during the conflict and the fact that, as in most occupied areas in the Great War, resistance was relatively rare, as well as a reminder of the failure of the French state to bring about a more rapid liberation. Of course the Second World War, which brought still worse degrees of horror for civilians, also meant that the experiences of the earlier conflict were overshadowed as the historical focus shifted to 1939–45. Finally, the Cold War, with its sealing-off of much of Eastern Europe where many of the worst sufferings of civilians took place in the Great War further exacerbated the historiographical marginalisation of civilian victims of the conflict. It is to be hoped that the new material presented in this section will serve to redress this marginalisation of those innocent civilians whose traumatic victimhood often served no military purpose, and who were excluded from the national

commemoration accorded to combatants whose deaths could clearly be heroised as 'morts pour la patrie', yet whose fate illustrates so well the terrible trajectory of the totalisation of the twentieth century's wars.

1 John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), p. 8.

8 Refugees and exiles

Peter Gatrell and Philippe Nivet

Introduction

Our knowledge of the Great War tends to be informed by images of stalemate on the Western Front and the mixture of fear, terror and boredom that trench warfare induced. In Russia and Eastern Europe the experience was quite different. Here armies and civilians were regularly on the move. This was also true of the civilian population of Belgium and northern France. At the end of the war, the director of the Civil Affairs Office of the Red Cross wrote that 'there were refugees everywhere. It was as if the entire world had to move or was waiting to move'.¹ Part of the explanation was that the eruption of fighting on the European mainland caused non-combatants to flee. Thus Germany's occupation of Belgium, Poland and Lithuania prompted the mass flight of civilians. So too did Russia's invasion of East Prussia and Turkey in 1914. The invasion of Serbia by Austria and Bulgaria led to a humanitarian catastrophe as civilians and the remnants of the Serbian army sought safety elsewhere. But mass population displacement also had its origins in the process of mobilisation in continental Europe's multi-national empires, where minority populations were linked by ethnicity. Armenians lived under Ottoman jurisdiction, but other Armenians were subjects of the Tsar; Poles and Jews were scattered between the empires of Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany; Ukrainians were not confined to the Russian Empire but lived under Austro-Hungarian rule as well. Might these minorities seize the moment to link up with co-ethnics to undermine the war effort, wrecking central authority in the pursuit of greater autonomy or even independence? Nervous imperial administrators and military leaders called the affiliation of these groups into question.

The war posed equally challenging questions about the forms and extent of assistance. Questions arose such as who counted as ‘refugees’ and who determined their eligibility for relief? How far should central government be responsible for managing emergency relief or should responsibility be devolved to local and voluntary agencies, and if so what were the political implications of such a decision? What impact would the presence of large numbers of refugees have on host communities? To what extent would diasporas become involved in assisting distant kin affected by displacement? How might the crisis be resolved – would refugees wish to return to their homes and how would that process be managed? These inter-related questions continued to dominate discussions of refugee crises throughout the twentieth century.

Refugees on the Western Front

In the nations of Western Europe, the phenomenon of exodus affected three communities: French communities displaced within their own country and in Belgium; Belgians dispersed among France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands; and Italians straddling the Italian/Austro-Hungarian border. Let us consider them in turn.

In France, the presence of refugees in the seventy-nine French departments that were not invaded was not the result of a single massive exodus but a succession of displacements between 1914 and 1919. Properly speaking, the refugees were either civilians who left of their own volition, to escape the invasion or the shelling, or the inhabitants of places inside the zone of operations who were directed towards the zone of the interior by decisions of the military or administrative authorities. Thus from the first days of the war residents of key defensive points (such as Toul, Longwy, Verdun, Epinal or Belfort) were evacuated as ‘useless mouths to feed’. They were followed by inhabitants of the departments of the north and the east who fled before the advance of the German armies. The first months of the Great War were in effect marked by what may be termed a ‘Great Terror’ sustained by accounts from the first refugees which stirred up panic in areas that they reached. These accounts provoked panic in the areas where refugees arrived, leading to others deciding to flee, despite the efforts of the authorities to stop them. The first great movements of exodus in France in

the Great War therefore date from the summer and autumn of 1914. At the end of that year, the end of the war of movement gave way to the war of position.

In 1915, 1916 and 1917, however, fresh evacuations and fresh voluntary departures were observed, most frequently because of bombardments. In Verdun the offensive at the beginning of 1916 forced residents out of the town and its adjoining communes. In the first weeks of February 45,000 people were evacuated. The city of Reims, under constant shelling, saw its population gradually disappearing: by June 1916 it had no more than 20,000 residents (17 per cent of the population in 1914); by April 1917 the number had dwindled to fewer than 5,000. The German offensive of spring 1918 in Picardy, at the junction of the French and British sectors, set off the second great exodus of the First World War. Precipitate voluntary departures and evacuations were mixed together. From March to August 1918 more than 200,000 people would be evacuated from regions threatened by the enemy.

The second category generically described as 'refugees' consisted of people who had been liberated. Following the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line in the spring of 1917, the inhabitants of the 'recovered' regions in the Oise, the Somme and the Pas-de-Calais were sent to the interior. The pattern was repeated in the autumn of 1917, when the British victories in the Cambrai area enabled the liberation of a number of communes, and above all during the summer and autumn 1918, during the advance of the Allied troops.

The third category covered people who were repatriated: that is, those people who, after suffering the German occupation in the ten partially or wholly invaded departments, were authorised to return to France via Switzerland and Haute-Savoie (Annemasse, then Evian). The first convoy of repatriations, consisting of 500 French people interned in concentration camps in Germany, reached Annemasse, in the Haute-Savoie, on 23 October 1914, the day after they reached Switzerland. The civilian interneees were followed by French evacuees from the departments occupied by the German authorities. Initially forced, the repatriations became increasingly voluntary, the mark of the growing harshness of the occupation. Repatriation was halted temporarily in May 1915, but began again at the end of the year. During the first months of 1916 the arrivals were more

spaced out, but at the end of November 1916 the German government announced to the Swiss government that fresh repatriations of 20,000 people originally from the invaded regions would take place between 4 and 25 December 1916, arriving in two trains with 500 passengers each day. Early in December 1916 the overall figure for repatriation reached 100,000. From then on the arrivals were almost daily events, with the repatriation service functioning in Evian from 15 January 1917. In all, 500,000 people were repatriated through Switzerland to France between October 1914 and 1919.

According to a declaration by the Minister of the Interior to the Chamber of Deputies on 12 January 1917, the total number of refugees in France reached 150,000 by the end of August 1914. By 1 January 1915 the number exceeded 500,000. After a large increase in 1915, when the total rose from 560,000 to 910,000, the growth was less in the two following years: the millionth refugee was noted in December 1916, and in December 1917 the total number of refugees was estimated at 1.25 million. The fluctuation in monthly numbers followed the main events of the war – the slight drop in numbers of French refugees between May and June 1917 reflected the returns made possible in Picardy by the German withdrawal, while in 1918, the growth was much more rapid, following the German advance towards Amiens, followed by Champagne. The number of refugees rose rapidly from 1.32 million in February to 1.82 million in July, an increase of 500,000 in five months. The highest number was reached in September 1918, with 1.85 million refugees.

In the circular of 20 October 1922 that brought the service for refugees in the Ministry of the Interior to an end, the figure of 2 million refugees during the Great War was given. Other French refugees were found in Belgium, following the displacements imposed by the Germans during the war on those who remained near the zones of military operations, for example the inhabitants of Saint-Quentin at the beginning of 1917 or, in 1918, during the German retreat: thus the population of Douai was evacuated to Mons and its surrounding area in the first days of September 1918. In the summer of 1917 the figure has been advanced of 152,000 French refugees in Belgium, a figure which would reach 250,000 in the first half of 1918.

Belgian refugees were dispersed among France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. In August 1914, Belgium witnessed the exodus of

populations trying to escape the direct attacks of the war or the atrocities committed by the invading troops. Around 20 August 1914, nearly 6,000 Belgian refugees, the majority from the province of Liège, gathered in the Dutch province of Limburg. The Belgian exodus expanded in the last ten days of August 1914 in the regions between the Sambre-et-Meuse and Hainaut, essentially towards France. The spectacle of the retreating Allied armies fed the panic which, in the final week of August 1914, flooded through the regions near the front. This resulted in the massive departures observed on 24 August in eastern Flanders, accompanied by the rumour that the Germans would seize all men between the ages of 18 and 50 to force them into their armies.

In August and September, the official Belgian Committee for the Help of Refugees organised the departure of around 50,000 refugees who were encumbering Antwerp and its suburbs: 10,000 were sent to Britain, 20,000 to French and Belgian Flanders and 20,000 to the Campine and the Netherlands. At the beginning of October, in the days preceding the fall of Antwerp, thousands of residents sought the means to flee to the Netherlands. In the single day of 7 October 1914, 30,000 Belgians arrived in the Dutch town of Roosendaal. For several days the Antwerp region poured nearly a million refugees into the province of Holland. All the frontier communities of the Netherlands were invaded by a continual flood of refugees. The fall of Ghent, on 12 October, Bruges on the 14th and Ostend on the 15th set off new population departures, and the Battle of the Yser, beginning on 15 October, ended an exodus that had lasted for two months. The inhabitants of towns and villages near military operations then fled towards France. In total, nearly 1.5 million Belgians had left their country in the space of a few weeks. Some returned during the first weeks of 1915 when a 'tax on the absent' was instituted, initiated by a vote of the municipal council in Ghent on 7 December 1914 and imposed by the Germans on the country as a whole in a decree of 16 January 1915. This additional tax applied to Belgians subject to the highest rates of personal contributions who 'since the outbreak of the war had voluntarily left their home and stayed more than two months outside Belgium, unless they had returned before 1 March 1915'; Article 4 floated the possibility of confiscations.

To those Belgians who left during the exodus of 1914 was added the civilian population from the front-line zone, evacuated on a voluntary basis or at the demand of the Belgian, French or German authorities in the spring of 1915, during the summer of 1917 and the spring of 1918; between 11 and 25 April 1918, more than 6,000 inhabitants of the Ypres district were thus evacuated to the French frontier, in particular children.

The Belgian population in Great Britain (200,000 men at the end of 1915) and the Netherlands (320,000 on 1 November 1914) dropped during the war years and became stabilised at 170,000 in Britain at the beginning of 1917. In the Netherlands, where at the end of 1914 refugees came under pressure to return home, the number of refugees was only 85,000 by the early summer of 1915. In the early part of 1918 the figure rose again to 100,000, by reason notably of the evacuation of several thousand children. In France, on the other hand, the number of Belgian refugees grew throughout the war, although at a less steady pace than that of the French refugees. Thus the Belgian presence, assessed at nearly a quarter of the total of refugees in France in the summer of 1915, stood at only 15 per cent at the end of the war. At the end of 1918, some 325,000 Belgians were refugees in France.

In respect of the populations of Italian origin, we should distinguish between those defined as living in Austria-Hungary in 1914 and those defined as residing in Italy. After Italy joined the war on 24 May 1915, the Austrian authorities proceeded to evacuate the zone designed to become a theatre of battle and transferred those of Italian origin, from the Trentino or the Julian Veneto, to full-scale encampments of timber housing (*Barackenlager*), for example in Wagna in Styria, Pottendorf, Mitterndorf and Braunau, which Alcide de Gasperi, Deputy for the Trentino and delegate of the 'Aid Committee for Southern Exiles' referred to as 'concentration camps' in the Vienna Parliament on 12 July 1917. The populations who had left voluntarily, notably to escape the battles of the Isonzo, were mixed with evacuated people. In November 1915, with the addition of Slovene refugees from the Carniola region, more than 20,000 people were living in the 120 wooden barrack huts scattered over the 125 hectares of the Wagna camp.

On 1 January 1918 more than 114,000 refugees of Italian origin were being supported by the state. Many Trentinos were also forced to seek exile

in Italy: around 40,000, including those from Ampezzano . They were mostly women, old people and children who lived in the villages occupied from May to June by the Italian army and who were evacuated because they were dangerously close to the front. The evacuation of several villages in Vallagarina, Vallarsa and Valsugana was ordered in May 1916, following the Austrian offensive. In Italy itself, after an initial wave following the Austrian offensive of 1916, it was the defeat of Caporetto (November 1917) which provoked the greatest movements: 250,000 civilians from Friuli and the occupied Venetian provinces and at least the same number from towns such as Padua, Treviso, Venice or Vicenza took refuge in other Italian regions. The movement thus concerned around 600,000 people, essentially women and children .

In general terms, the refugees did not want to go too far from their homes. Staying reasonably near, they hoped to retain a certain margin of freedom to return to their own commune earlier or more easily, definitively or to pick up abandoned possessions, for example during a calm period in military operations. Perhaps they also thought that by remaining close to the front they would have more reliable news about what was happening militarily: going far away from the front was to be deprived of the oral sources of information essential for a rural and still partially illiterate population. The French authorities, however, did not share this wish. They tried to limit demographic pressures in the departments nearest to the front and to send refugees to the interior. The repatriated who arrived in large groups were also dispersed throughout the country. As a result, all the departments took in refugees and settled them throughout their communes. In most cases, however, the refugees were unwilling to live in the countryside, where they felt isolated and group solidarities were loosened. They wanted to settle in the largest cities.

From 1915, therefore, Belgian refugees began a vast movement of migration towards the north of France. The departments of the Seine and the Seine-Inférieure had concentrations of thousands of Belgians whom the French had methodically attempted to spread out across the country. The demographic saturation that arose from these internal displacements explains the difficulties that the refugees encountered in their search for accommodation. For the same reasons, refugees became heavily concentrated along the frontier with the Netherlands, while in Britain, the

refugees gathered in Kent. In 1917 more than one Belgian refugee in three was living in London. The industrial cities of Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, Sheffield, Blackpool, Leeds and Liverpool also took in large Belgian communities.

Looking after the refugees

The figure of the refugee encapsulates the suffering endured by civilians during the war. As a result, at the start of the war, there could be no question of not coming to their aid. Public authorities and charitable organisations thus contributed to the organisation of aid. For populations far from the experience of the front, helping the refugees was an opportunity to contribute fully in the great common effort and the mobilisation of societies.

In France, in 1914, nothing had been planned for the refugees. That there could be refugees had in effect been inconceivable – the French armies, committed to the offensive spirit, were duty-bound to advance and spread desolation in enemy territory. To anticipate refugees implied envisaging that operations would not unfold according to the plan of the general staff, and doubting the success of the troops. The situation that confronted the public authorities during the summer and autumn of 1914 was therefore unexpected. The law of 5 August 1914 gave the military authority

the right to supply, by means of requisitions, accommodation, food, heating and, in case of sickness, treatment for individuals and the subsistence of individuals who, having been evacuated as useless mouths by the governor of a key defensive point, would have declared themselves deprived of the means of existence.

The military authority could delegate this right to the civil authority. Monetary support, of variable amounts, was distributed in the departments of the interior. A circular from the Ministry for the Interior on 1 December 1914 specified that ‘the essential principle of assistance to refugees without resources was that the French state must supply, with the patriotic help of the people, their accommodation, their subsistence and their upkeep’. As a result, a grant was made available to refugees, with the rate fixed at the

same level as that allocated to the wives of mobilised men: 1.25 francs per day for adults, 50 centimes for children. The authorities made no distinction between Belgian and French refugees, and Belgian refugees without resources, like their French equivalents, even benefited from free medical assistance and payment of their pharmaceutical and hospitalisation costs. This was a challenge to the principle which intended that only French citizens were entitled to obtain state aid; aid to Belgian refugees was viewed as a sort of compensation for the inability of Allied troops to prevent the hardship inflicted on Belgium by the Germans.

During the entire war, under pressure from the elected representatives of the invaded departments, the French government had to establish a whole battery of legislative and administrative authorities to deal with refugees. A specific administrative body was created for this purpose, under the responsibility of the Minister for the Interior, and thus in the domain of the prefects. One of its essential features was the director of refugees, who attended to their fate in each department, notably in matters of accommodation. Constantly extended by new articles, the texts became so complex that Jules Pams, Minister for Interior in the second Clemenceau government, decided to assemble them into a veritable 'refugees' charter', published in the *Journal officiel* of 17 February 1918.

In addition to state help, the refugees were also supported by a multitude of independent organisations, responding to appeals launched by the public authorities from 1914 onwards. To those who could not fight because of their age, gender or state of health, refugee relief work became a matter of patriotic duty. The philanthropic associations directed by important individuals in the departments of the interior included, for example, the Franco-Belgian Group, where the writer André Gide played a major role until March 1916. The Catholic hierarchy contributed fully to the movement to help refugees, as a means of regaining a recognised place in the nation after the separation of church and state a few years earlier.

Refugees also organised themselves. Ten national committees were established for the French refugees, representing the ten departments of their origins, for example the Committee for Refugees of the Department of the Nord, with local committees, while the Belgian communities in exile set up a large number of committees in the provinces. The latter benefited from the active support of the official Belgian Committee for Help for Refugees,

created in Antwerp in August 1914 and reconstituted in France shortly after the installation of the Belgian government at Sainte-Adresse. These committees distributed aid in kind, and when necessary in money; they operated as employment bureaux, they ensured the maintenance of solidarity among refugees, they formed 'communities in mourning' and they tried to reassemble families separated by the war.

Similarly, nothing had been planned for the reception of Belgian civilians evacuated to Britain. In 1914 the management of the problem was handed to the Local Government Board (LGB), which held civic powers. But while in France the state became the central actor providing aid for the refugees, in Britain, which had a well-established, dense and active philanthropic network, refugee aid was largely delegated to private initiatives. The War Refugees Committee (WRC), formed in August 1914, was the most powerful aid committee for refugees, employing up to 400 people at the beginning of 1916 and receiving support from some two thousand local committees in existence at the start of the war. From the clergy, Catholic and Protestant, to the suffragettes, large numbers of people volunteered their help; some committees were set up with the intention of helping only those Belgians from the bourgeoisie or the aristocracy, like the Duchess of Somerset's Homes for Better-Class Belgian Refugees. Meanwhile, the committees for the aid of refugees created by members of the diaspora remained few in number; but the prolongation of the war and the exhaustion of private generosity increasingly forced the authorities to intervene. From the first months of 1915 substantial transfers of public money benefited the WRC; de facto it came under the aegis of the government and was reduced to the role of a government agency charged with sharing out the funds allotted by the LGB, notably for housing. By the end of 1915 the 'money grant system' was in place, replacing the direct provision of hostel accommodation. Unlike the situation in France, however, in Britain the payment of these grants remained part of private charitable provision, responsible for the management of public funds.

In the Netherlands, private operations and public authorities worked together during the first weeks of the war with the aim of helping the first Belgian refugees to reach them. In this neutral country this appeared to be a way of defusing growing tension with the Allies. But the military authorities swiftly evoked the threat that the large-scale arrival of refugees

posed to the nation's neutrality, particularly given that their tales could exacerbate anti-German feeling in the population. The first internment measures were taken, later to become generalised, while the public authorities encouraged the Belgians to return home. Nunspeet, the permanent camp for Belgian refugees which was opened in November 1914, took in refugees without resources and minor delinquents. It was severely criticised for its inadequate heating and medical services and prison-like regime which was imposed by the government. Living conditions were, however, more acceptable in the other camps of Ede, Uden and Gouda . By 1915, to avoid prosperous Belgians having to share the promiscuity of camp life, the Netherlands government issued special grants for their benefit alone. From 1915 to 1918 the state thus assumed the bulk of the financial burden for the care of refugees, to the extent of some 35 million Dutch florins. The sums gathered by private charities remained far less than the investment by public authorities.

For Italian-speaking refugees, the Hilfskomitee für die Flüchtlinge aus dem Süden was established in Vienna on 12 July 1915, presided over by the former Prime Minister Max von Beck, with political, cultural and ecclesiastical representation from the provinces affected by the exodus. Some fifteen delegates from this committee periodically visited the regions where the diaspora was located and the *Barackenlager*. Other aid organisations joined in. In 1917 assistance for refugees from the Italian Front in the Austrian part of the Empire was ensured by the ninety-six committees associated with the Hilfskomitee and sixty-nine of other origins, some dealing with refugees from the war zone on the Italian Front and others dealing with all the refugees in the Austrian part of the Dual Monarchy. In Italy, where the refugees were initially the concern of the Ministry of the Interior, the Orlando government, formed after the defeat of Caporetto, constituted a High Commissariat for war refugees, under the presidency of the former Prime Minister Luigi Luzzatti .

Integration of refugees and their relationship with local populations

The investment in aid for refugees at the beginning of the war shows evident and widespread compassion for their plight. Gradually, however,

they came up against a certain hostility from the local populations. In France, after the initial favourable response in 1914 to calls from the public authorities in favour of the refugees, the end of 1915 and the beginning of 1916 appeared to mark a turning point. The great movements of exodus in 1918 poisoned the situation. Relations with administrative staff deteriorated steadily, and refugees were faced with discrimination over matters of accommodation and employment; some of those who had been repatriated had no hesitation in comparing the attitude of the French with that of the German occupying forces. In the United Kingdom several weeks of cohabitation were often enough to overcome the generosity of thousands of English people, and from the middle of 1916 the rejection of Belgian refugees was progressively apparent. In the Netherlands solidarity with Belgian refugees was increasingly running out of steam, and many aid committees vanished in 1916. In any case, in this neutral country the burst of generosity lacked the symbolic impact that it had in France and the United Kingdom; reduced to the level of simple foreigners, the Belgians became the scapegoats for the host country's deteriorating economic situation. French refugees in occupied Belgium held different views regarding the welcome that they received. Although the *Journal des réfugiés du Nord* of 28 January 1918 estimated that the 19,000 repatriated people from the department of the Nord who were sent to the province of Brabant at the end of 1917 'found among the Belgian people a generally welcoming reception, which with some hosts even took on a truly familial nature', the interviews carried out when they returned to free France generally showed hostility among repatriated people towards their treatment by the Belgians. They criticised in particular the attitude of Belgian farmers who refused to sell them food and accused them of preferring to trade with the Germans.

How can we explain this growing hostility towards the refugees? The distribution of grants during the Great War was viewed by some as a novelty open to question, whoever the beneficiaries might be. Already criticised when they were paid to the wives of mobilised men, the grants were viewed even more harshly when they were distributed to refugees, who were often accused of putting the money to bad use. In June 1915 and March 1916 the newspapers of the two main unions of Dutch postmen openly denounced the 'excessive' outgoings demanded for the upkeep of the Belgians. *De Posthoorn* disliked the calculations applied to the grants,

according to which a family of exiles receiving less than 13 florins per week could claim subsidies, while the Netherlands postmen rarely earned more than 10 florins per week. Depending on the circumstances, refugees were either accused of being content with grants and refusing any work or, on the contrary, of adding them to a wage and earning more than the locals.

It is true that, during the first months of their exile, the refugees did not work; they were exhausted after their hardships and there was the sense that this was to be a short war and that it was pointless to embark on tasks which there would be insufficient time to complete. In addition, the work offered to refugees was not related to their skills or former professions: some clerks were offered jobs in manual labour for which they were not suited, and certain peasants wanted to offer refugees abnormally low rates of pay for agricultural work, arguing that refugees could live on public assistance. In any case, in Britain there was no question of making the Belgian refugees work in 1914; here too the war was expected to be short and wage conflicts with English workers were feared.

In the end, however, most refugees did work. According to an enquiry by the French Ministry of Labour in 1917, 81 per cent of male refugees were employed, while 13.9 per cent invoked a physical incapacity to justify their non-employment. The French and Belgian refugees then shared in the French war effort, the employment of the latter being preferred by the Belgian Labour Exchange and the French National Labour Office (ONT). Some were engaged in agriculture, in particular in the areas of major cultivation to the south of Paris or in Normandy. Others were employed in urban industrial establishments, while the presence of refugees helped the economic revival in some localities, for example in the towns of Seine-Inférieure which specialised in textiles. In 1917, without counting the 13,500 workers occupied in the Belgian war factories at Le Havre, who were essentially soldiers, as well as the 1,680 employees on the Belgian railways, the ONT counted 22,000 Belgians employed in industry, spread across more than 1,600 businesses, in particular the steel industry and mining. Among them, 3,800 were women, munitions workers for the most part. Other Belgian refugees worked in France as shop staff or in the public sector. Certain industrialists, such as Alexandre Galopin, set up companies there, with the support of the workers who had accompanied their employers into exile. In England, at the turn of the year 1914–15, paid

labour by Belgian refugees became a prerequisite for continuing to host them in the country. In the space of a few months the Belgians became the most numerous foreign labourers in the country, particularly in the arms industry, at the point when Britain was undergoing industrial mobilisation. As in France, Belgian women worked in British munitions factories.

The British government did not hesitate to mobilise considerable means to organise the emigration of Belgians who were refugees to the Netherlands. In April 1916 more than 30,000 Belgians crossed the Channel as a result of the work of the Commission for Transportation. Belgians also worked in the 500 Belgian firms listed in Great Britain in 1917, such as the Pelabon Works in Twickenham. In the Netherlands, from the spring of 1915 refugees interned in the camps took part in a vast programme of construction of portable houses or were employed in knitting and dress-making workshops. Among those refugees living outside the camps, some took an active part in farm work, while others were taken on by firms in the industrial basins of Rotterdam, in Eindhoven or Limburg or in the mines of Limburg .

But refugees who worked were seen as competitors in the labour market. In an editorial published on 15 November 1916 in the *Journal des réfugiés du Nord* , the publicist André Fage suggested that, in the French Midi, refugees who took on farm work were forced to accept lower wages than the traditional payments to local labourers. The newcomers were preferred, and native-born farm workers lost their place: the result was tension between refugees and local communities. By the end of 1914 the Belgian workers were considered by the British proletariat as rivals not to be trusted; in Birmingham, in the autumn of 1914, metalworkers went on strike to protest against refugees being taken on in their place of work. The Belgians were suspected of challenging the very hard-won gains obtained by the English unions. Seen by the British proletariat as symbols of social regression and union-wreckers, the Belgian factories were discredited, including their workers, even if the action of the Centrale des Métallurgistes Belges union did gain concessions from the Belgian owners and over time managed to improve relations between workers from the two countries. Similarly, in December 1914, a union of construction workers in Maastricht protested against reduced wages which they attributed to the presence of refugees who were accused of accepting abnormally low pay.

In Austria the gradual worsening of living conditions for the whole population during the war meant that refugees were also viewed at times as competitors in the distribution of increasingly limited resources. In the zones close to the *Barackenlager* the continued search for food in a context of scarcity led to great tension between locals and refugees, who were blamed for the hoarding of food, rising costs, contraband, black marketeering and rural theft.

Cultural differences made things worse. In Britain the language barrier was the principal obstacle between Belgians and British. Only the most educated upper classes in Britain had mastered the rudiments of French, while Flemish was practically unheard of. In France linguistic differences proved to be one of the essential causes of failure of comprehension between refugees and their hosts. Relations between the two communities were very difficult, particularly when one or other, or both, of the groups concerned still spoke in patois. The refugees also had their own ways and habits of work and life that were difficult to grasp for the populations who took them in. Customs surrounding food were irreconcilable between Belgian and British practices, while English households which took in refugee families were offended at the lack of Belgian interest in bathing on a daily basis, their ignorance of the rules of polite table manners, or their supposedly impulsive behaviour.

Cultural differences were particularly marked when the refugees were transplanted into the French Midi. The Belgians found it hard to swallow the dishes of ratatouille and the vegetable oils consumed in vast quantities in the region. For peasants from a country with agricultural yields among the highest in Europe, the discovery of the dry lands of the south of France was often a violent shock, and some were quick to show their scorn for archaic local methods. Belgian recriminations fed tensions and incomprehension between locals and newcomers, to the point of compromising the integration of refugees, who equally sought to maintain their own characteristics and assert their national identity. As Michael Amara noted:

Eat Belgian, drink Belgian, send your children to Belgian schools, meet, talk, shop among Belgians and in the Belgian shops, speak French or Flemish, take care to send part of your wages to those who

remained at home, attend Catholic church services . . . all concrete demonstrations of an attachment to their nation which few exiles were ready to renounce.²

Although local people criticised refugees for upsetting the balance of the micro-societies represented by town and country communities, and feared their presence as a destabilising force, there were other complaints, such as rough behaviour, even criminality. The British newspapers echoed such feelings, reporting the slightest infraction of the law committed by refugees. In the Netherlands the Belgians were criticised for frivolity and lack of seriousness, and were reproached at times for their tendency to live well and enjoy life, while the rumour spread that thousands of convicted criminals had profited from the exodus to escape and take refuge in the Netherlands. Thieves and people of low life were indeed present everywhere among honest refugees, particularly since ‘undesirables’ had largely been evacuated from zones that were occupied or close to the front line.

The delinquency of some refugees can also be explained by the psychologically destructive experiences of exile and, for those repatriated, of occupation. The treatment meted out by the authorities probably reassured the local population who were inclined to see the refugees as a ‘dangerous class’. In France, prefectoral decrees of 1914 on the orders of the Minister for the Interior had forbidden them from moving more than ten kilometres from their official base without authorisation. In March 1917 the newspaper *L’Ardennais de Paris et de la banlieue* suggested that the refugees had generally been seen as ‘germs of espionage’ by the military authorities, as ‘suspects’ by the civil authorities and as ‘vermin’ by municipal authorities. This fear of the infiltration of refugees by German spies was particularly strong in England, where it was used to justify some discriminatory measures against them .

Sometimes refugees were seen as cowards who had fled, refusing to fight or play their part in the occupied or threatened towns. The reluctance of many Belgians to join the army, despite the solemn appeal from their government on 26 October 1914, opened the first breaches in the warmth which had marked their initial reception. Proportional to the number of men called up, Belgians who resisted the call to arms were far more numerous

than French or British 'shirkers'. The young Belgians would be seen as *planqués* (layabouts), while the British joined up and the French were being mobilised in large numbers: this attitude lay behind the brawls between some Belgians and British men in the spring of 1916, which on 21 July 1916 encouraged the Belgian government to publish its mass call-up appeal to refugees.

Finally, one of the keys to the difficulties refugees faced is revealed by a term used in France for refugees, 'the *Boches* [Germans] of the north'. In the context of the war, this designation was particularly shocking, and refugees thus charged felt excluded from the national community. Some of those who used the expression were charged and convicted in the courts. Rumours about the associations, sexual or otherwise, which developed between the local populations and the Germans in occupied France threw doubt on the thousands of evacuees who poured into free France and were suspected in some way of being 'Germanised'. In Italy, at the end of 1917 and in 1918, local agents in Messina responsible for public security were charged with investigating groups of refugees to see if they were harbouring Austrian fighters.

Already traumatised by what they had suffered before their arrival, in exile the refugees were often faced with fresh disturbances: the loss of their possessions and separation from their families, frequently wretched accommodation, cold, constant suspicion and even hostility from those among whom they had found refuge.

They longed to return home, but at the end of the war they were faced with transport difficulties, the insistence on control imposed by the authorities and the difficulties of rebuilding a pattern of life in regions very heavily scarred by the war. French refugees began to return in the last days of July 1918, after the first successes of the Allied offensives, and the returns increased after the Armistice and throughout 1919. The population in the departments directly affected by the war grew from 1.94 million on 1 November 1918 to 3.5 million on 1 November 1919. In Britain the repatriation of Belgian refugees began at the end of November 1918. The majority of those in exile in the Netherlands had already returned to Belgium at their own expense by February 1919 and the arrangements for aid to refugees were brought to an end in April 1919. The tensions which characterised Belgian-Dutch relations in the immediate post-war period

were no doubt related, at least in part, to this rapid return. In the spring of 1919 hundreds of thousands of Belgians exiled in France returned to their own country in the space of a few months .

In France as in Belgium, tensions were observed between those who had left and those who had remained, expressing two very different experiences of the war. Those who had remained under German occupation were reproached for their compromises by the former exiles, while the former exiles in turn were criticised for having escaped the privations of occupation and of failing to understand the hardships it had imposed. Different war experiences exposed divisions among communities in peacetime .

Refugees on the Eastern Front

As on the Western Front, the refugee crisis in the East was the result of invasion and the flight of civilians who sought to evade conscription and other forms of compulsion likely to be imposed by enemy occupation forces. Following the Russian army's invasion of East Prussia in 1914, around 870,000 civilians fled westwards, confirming German fears of Cossack brutality and placing a huge burden on the German economy. In Austria the number of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Galicia, Bukovina, the Trentino and the South Tyrol reached 500,000 by the middle of 1915, most of them from Russian-occupied Galicia and Bukovina; by 1918 the figure had risen at least threefold.

In southern Europe the entry of Italy into the war in May 1915 caused around 87,000 ethnic Italian inhabitants of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, primarily workers from Trieste, Trento and Dalmatia, to flee to Italy and support the Italian war effort. The Habsburg authorities also sent 42,000 Italians, mostly women, children and the elderly, to internment camps where an emerging patriotic leadership took every opportunity to foster Italian nationalist sentiment. Italy's advance into Austrian territory was accompanied by measures to relocate ethnic Italians from the front, affecting around 52,000 people. Several thousand others were deported to Sicily and other distant locations on the grounds of 'national security'. As we have noted, by far the greatest impulse to population displacement came in October 1917, when the defeat of Italian forces at Caporetto brought

about the flight of half a million civilians and a million bedraggled soldiers to cities such as Milan and Florence. Others were urged to stay behind in the northern rural borderlands, partly to alleviate the urban crisis and partly to make life difficult for the occupying Habsburg army; the government also hoped that their presence would strengthen Italy's territorial claims to Friuli and the Veneto .

Serbia constituted another crucible of displacement. Although the Austrian invasion of Serbia was initially repelled, Serbian forces were defeated in November 1914 and thousands of civilian refugees fled to the interior. The Habsburg army targeted Serbian guerrillas, in order to forestall what they most feared, a *levée en masse* or uprising of the entire population. As a result of Habsburg aggression against civilians, small towns in the Serbian rear hitherto comprising a few thousand inhabitants increased in size by a factor of ten. Worse was to come a year later, when a combined Austrian and Bulgarian intervention, backed by Germany, led to the capture of much of the country and forced the remnants of Serbian forces to retreat across mountainous terrain in Kosovo towards the Adriatic coast; en route they were attacked by Albanian guerrillas. Up to half a million civilians followed suit to avoid the anticipated consequences of Bulgarian and Habsburg occupation. They found scant sympathy from Serbian officers, who blamed them for obstructing the passage of military convoys and for disrupting agricultural production. The population of the provincial town of Prizren swelled from 20,000 to 150,000 in a matter of days. This catastrophic displacement of soldiers and civilians directly affected one-third of Serbia's pre-war population.

By far the harshest impact of the war was to be found in the Ottoman Empire, where Armenian subjects of the Porte were targeted by the Committee of Union and Progress and 'Young Turk' officers, who maintained that Armenians constituted a fifth column that would stop at nothing to hamper the war effort.

To escape persecution, around 100,000 Armenian refugees fled to Russia in the autumn of 1914. Turkish radicals blamed Armenians for the defeats already suffered by the Ottoman army and charged them with instigating an uprising against Ottoman rule. The crisis intensified following the Russian army's occupation of eastern Anatolian territory in May 1915. Up to 250,000 Armenians managed to evade deportations by crossing the Russian

border in August 1915; but one-fifth of them may have died en route. More than 105,000 ex-Ottoman Armenians sought refuge in Erevan, a town whose population in 1914 barely reached 30,000.

These were the relatively fortunate ones. Armenians who remained on Turkish soil were deported; few survived the forced trek in the searing heat to distant parts of Anatolia. The beneficiaries were Muslim refugees who had arrived in Turkey before and during the Balkan wars, and who wanted to ensure that any surviving Armenians would not be able to return to their homes.

In the Russian Empire the number of displaced civilians reached 3 million by summer 1915 and climbed to 7 million by the time Russia left the war in November 1917. Most of them did not cross an internationally recognised border: they were and remained subjects of the Tsar. Seeking to account for the large numbers who fled from Russia's western borderlands, a leading tsarist official stated laconically that, 'as soon as our troops withdraw, the entire population becomes confused and runs away'. Civilians left their homes out of fear of being terrorised by enemy troops. Nor were these fears misplaced: 'rumours are rife that the Germans have behaved abominably towards the local population'.³ These verdicts generally supported the view that population displacement was the product of mass panic by civilians.

Yet displacement was by no means solely dictated by a fearful civilian response to punitive action by the enemy. The Russian general staff disposed of sweeping powers to enforce the resettlement of civilians, where this strategy was deemed appropriate. Army regulations permitted the military authorities to assume absolute control over all affairs in the theatre of operations. Civilians were sometimes removed indiscriminately from districts close to the front. 'We didn't want to move, we were chased away . . . we were forced to burn our homes and crops, we weren't allowed to take our cattle with us', in the words of one group of refugees. In public, the Minister of the Interior maintained that military behaviour had no bearing on refugeedom (*bezhenstvo*), which in his opinion was 'caused by a desire for self-preservation'. So widespread were the army's tactics that a leading tsarist dignitary observed that 'refugees' constituted a minority of the displaced population, compared to the hundreds of thousands of those who had been forcibly displaced.⁴

Ethnic minorities in the multi-national Russian Empire were especially vulnerable to accusations about their trustworthiness, and the same applied to minorities in Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. It did not help that minority groups had in the past challenged central state authority. Tsarist Russia suppressed revolts from Polish rebels on several occasions, most recently during the 1905 Revolution. Within the Dual Monarchy, nationalist politicians supported greater freedom for Czechs, Poles, Ukrainians, Italians and Croats. Keeping tabs on dissidents and curbing outbreaks of protest absorbed the resources of these imperial polities. The strength of nationalist sentiment should not be exaggerated, and the outbreak of war in 1914 duly produced declarations supporting the state. Nevertheless, the conduct of the war was complicated by the fact that each minority population had a counterpart among the inhabitants of the rival belligerent empire: Armenians lived under Ottoman jurisdiction but were also found among the subjects of the Tsar. Poles were scattered between the empires of Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany. Ukrainians (or 'Ruthenes') were not confined to the Russian Empire but lived under Austro-Hungarian rule as well. The scale and intensity of mobilisation during the war posed questions about the loyalty of these minorities. Jews were in a particularly precarious position, although their numbers were reduced in size by widespread emigration in the years before 1914 in response to persecution and impoverishment. In Austria-Hungary the term 'evacuees' was reserved for those who were ordered to leave their homes and 'refugees' who had left 'voluntarily' and included those who were thought to have done so for unpatriotic reasons or to feather their own nest. In Prague a citizens' committee contributed funds in the conviction that charitable activities should reflect refugees' patriotic commitment to the Austrian cause: 'these refugees are Austrian citizens, victims of Austria's war with Russia'.⁵ Jewish refugees from Galicia and Bukovina who fled to the interior in order to escape Russian rule confirmed their patriotic commitment to Habsburg rule. 'Better and truer Austrians simply do not exist', wrote one journalist in July 1917; another commentator lauded the refugees as 'Austrians who have sacrificed everything for this state and can therefore claim their rights'.⁶ A link was forged elsewhere between war, patriotic necessity and population displacement. The presence of Jewish refugees from the *shtetl* nevertheless inflamed existing anti-Semitic

sentiment among the non-Jewish residents of Vienna, who fell into the habit of berating the refugees for their bad manners and ‘profiteering’.

The First World War was thus a moment of truth for empires that could in peacetime proclaim their cosmopolitanism but which now asked questions about the loyalty of imperial subjects. In these circumstances it mattered little if Germans in the Russian Empire, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire or Jews in Austria-Hungary professed their support for the state or tried to keep a low profile; adults and children alike could quite easily be tarred with the same brush of disloyalty. In vain did Latvian political leaders and relief workers protest that it made no sense to deport civilians of all ages from the province of Kurland: ‘old men, youths under the age of 15, women with young children – none of these groups serve any military purpose and cannot render any assistance to the enemy’.⁷

In addition to the practical questions discussed below, profound issues were at stake in the debate about the origins of population displacement. To explain mass flight by recourse to ‘spontaneity’ (in Russian, *stikhiinost’*) was to draw attention to a disturbing lack of self-control on the part of refugees, evident for example in the damage they inflicted on crops and other property as they fled east to the Russian interior. As a consequence, it became necessary to fashion a relief effort that not only attended to their basic material needs, but that also sought to instil discipline in refugees. This task was undertaken by civil society as well as by tsarist officialdom. Where displacement was ascribed to ‘preventive’ action by the armies of the Tsar targeting ethnic minorities, a different kind of mobilisation took place, namely the articulation of a strong sense of humiliation and oppression. The result was to strengthen national identities in the multi-national Empire.

Reckoning with refugees

Refugees who had survived the journey from the vicinity of the front faced all manner of immediate difficulties, particularly if they had travelled with only a handful of belongings. Food, accommodation, sanitary needs and fresh clothing had to be found. In Russia, zemstvos (provincial local authorities), diocesan committees and the semi-official Tatiana Committee, named after the Tsar’s second daughter, provided underwear, shoes, linen,

soap and other items for refugees. Emergency accommodation was found in railway stations, schools, empty factories, breweries, hotels, bathhouses, army barracks, monasteries, synagogues, theatres, cinemas, cafés and even prisons. Those suffering from infectious diseases required immediate attention (initiatives to care for mentally disturbed refugees followed soon afterwards). Once basic needs had been assessed, answers had to be found to the questions that refugees posed. Children urgently sought to establish whether their parents were alive or dead, and adults wished to be reunited with children with whom they had lost contact. The disruption of family ties gave rise to poignant and dramatic testimony. Refugees badly needed legal advice about their status and entitlements to relief. They wanted jobs to do and financial compensation for the losses they had suffered. Children needed to be found somewhere to continue their education. This litany of dispossession, despair and dependency was recited many times.

What of the responses of established urban communities to the appearance of refugees? Unlike prisoners of war, who were often confined to camps in remote parts of the Empire, refugees were concentrated disproportionately in urban settlements. Towns and cities were transformed as a result. By the middle of 1916 more than one in ten inhabitants in some of Russia's largest towns were refugees; in Samara they made up almost 30 per cent, whilst in Ekaterinoslav and Pskov refugees reached around one-quarter of the total and in Nizhny Novgorod 15 per cent. Initial expressions of sympathy and hospitality rapidly evaporated as their neighbours realised that refugees had no money to pay for accommodation or food. Plenty of opportunities presented themselves to people who sought to exploit the vulnerability of refugees, particularly women and children.

Many Russian refugees chose or were forced to settle in the countryside. The tsarist state lacked a systematic plan of settlement, which was left instead to the discretion of provincial governors and local authorities. What did peasants think of refugees? An anonymous peasant diarist told his readers how sensitive an issue it was to find refugees somewhere to live. The peasant assembly debated arrangements for accommodating refugees. Several families maintained that they had already made a disproportionate contribution to the war effort by sending their menfolk to the army: should they also have to bear the burden of supporting refugees? There was talk of a rota, whereby refugees would stay for a month with one household and

then be taken in by another. Someone proposed that those who refused outright to take in refugees should pay compensation to their neighbours 'for the overcrowding and inconvenience'. One educated outside observer of the rural scene urged peasants to adopt a long-term view and take advantage of the skills of the newcomers. Amidst complaints throughout the later years of the war about the unwillingness of refugees to work, it is worth recording the following sentiment:

As I left the village of Gulushevo and reflected on the conversations I had had there, I took away the conviction that the Russian *narod* is beginning to wake up to the fact that its own welfare and material prosperity cannot be created if people do not shift themselves. Not for nothing is there a popular saying: 'water doesn't flow under a settled stone'.⁸

Thus the negative and demeaning image of refugeedom did not always prevail. The dispossessed supplicant was also imbued with the capacity to impart a civilising influence on the backward village.

Generally speaking the language used to characterise the refugee movement in Russia and Eastern Europe reinforced the widely shared sense of calamity. In one formulation, the refugee 'problem' was characterised as a 'state tragedy'; in another, a 'social catastrophe'. Some witnesses believed that the 'boundless ocean' of refugees could never properly be navigated. More typically, contemporary observers in the Russian interior used language that was directly reminiscent of disaster, of river banks being broken – thus 'flood', 'wave' and 'deluge', 'avalanche' and volcanic 'lava' – and of fertile land being laid waste by 'hordes of locusts'. These metaphors were all the more powerful, given the familiar, widespread and paralysing impact of recurrent natural disasters on the Russian landscape and the national economy. They suggested that refugees belonged to a realm of disorder – they had lost control of their lives. Furthermore, as Liisa Malkki reminds us, 'these liquid names for the uprooted reflect the sedentarist bias in dominant modes of imagining homes and homelands, identities and nationalities'.⁹ This discourse was readily embraced by the patriotic intelligentsia who reaffirmed the need for each member of the nation to be 'rooted'. Other kinds of representation also found favour, for

example among foreign relief workers who sought to dramatise displacement for audiences in distant locations. The British-based Serbian Relief Fund deployed biblical imagery: ‘all the time you are reminded of Bible pictures’.¹⁰ (This happened in Russia too.) M. Tatham, who served on behalf of the Scottish Women’s Hospital, described the arduous trek through the mud south towards Monastir as ‘Armageddon’, or ‘the Great Retreat, only the first stage of a Calvary which was to endure for several weeks’.

Public opinion in Britain, France and the United States was fed a diet of stories about oppression and atrocity as a device to create outrage and stimulate civic generosity. Such tactics were already familiar from campaigns in Bulgaria, Armenia and South Africa, but they became more widespread during and immediately following the First World War. Women in particular served as the embodiment of national suffering. The representation of refugee experience in film may be illustrated by the case of Aurora Mardiganian (1901–94) who survived the deportation of Armenians and made her way to the USA in 1917, where she came to the attention of a screenwriter who encouraged her to write a memoir and then to star in a film of her own life. The film, *Ravished Armenia*, depicted graphic scenes of rape and crucifixion; Aurora’s nakedness and powerlessness were clearly of great significance to the film-makers, and her ordeal, her youth and her gender turned her into the archetypal Armenian refugee. These representations helped galvanise diaspora groups. Serbian, Romanian, Armenian, Polish and Baltic communities, especially in North America, provided financial assistance and portrayed the suffering of refugees as a threat to the survival of the ‘nation’. In the case of persecuted Jews in Eastern Europe whose cause had been kept in the public eye by prominent Anglo-American Jews and diaspora organisations, the British government made a momentous promise to find a ‘national home’ for Jews in Palestine. This gesture emerged at a time when Britain was interested in countering opposition to America’s entry into the war alongside tsarist Russia.

What of the refugee voice? Refugees lamented that ‘we long to become people once again . . . we are living people . . . [with] the misfortune to have been displaced, but we are human beings all the same’.¹¹ Towards the end of 1916 the Tatiana Committee planned a special exhibition to inform the

Russian public about the living conditions and activities of refugees. Four main themes were to be highlighted: conditions in Russia's borderlands before and during the war (including 'the destruction of settlements, property and artistic monuments'); their 'sorrowful journey', including the background to their displacement, the course of the refugee movement and the assistance given by government and public organisations; the living conditions in their new homes (including 'the work undertaken by refugees and their impact on the local population');¹² and lastly the restoration of normal life in the regions cleared of enemy occupation. These elaborate plans were scuppered by the outbreak of Revolution in February 1917. Generally speaking the words of refugees were drowned out amidst the widespread confusion of official policy and the haste with which charitable and other bodies rushed to provide assistance .

Nationalising refugees

Eyewitness accounts of the enforced resettlement of population in Russia during the First World War from areas threatened by the enemy termed it 'a national migration' in which Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Armenians and others were caught up. The astute author of an article in an obscure diocesan journal had a keen sense of the key questions that arose:

What form has the contact between nationalities taken? What relations have been established between the representatives of different nationalities and the settled population (*korennoe naselenie*)? What innovations have foreigners (*inorodskie gruppy*) introduced into Russian life, and what will they absorb from the Russian people? What impressions will they take from this enforced journey into a strange land, if they are obliged to return home? How many of these refugees will put down roots in new places?¹³

Displacement thus contained the possibilities of a dynamic and fruitful encounter between different nationalities. More important to members of the patriotic intelligentsia of the displaced ethnicities, however, was the fact that invading troops had lately violated their homeland, and that they had

also been targeted by tsarist troops. As if occupation, despoliation and persecution were not bad enough, these calamities did not exhaust the fears expressed by national leaders. Latvians and Poles bemoaned the prospect of 'national dispersion'; unless they exercised vigilance and took decisive action they would suffer the fate of the Jews and Armenians, doomed for centuries to exist as diaspora communities .

Yet we must also acknowledge that enforced population displacement created an entirely new framework for belief and behaviour. When they took to the road, refugees were by definition deprived of membership in a close-knit local community. But refugeedom offered them an opportunity to gain access to a new, much broader national community, built on the foundations of a common sense of loss and the need for collective effort to regain what had been forfeited in wartime. The struggle to overcome individual hurt was more likely to succeed if it could be harnessed to a collective struggle that legitimised itself in national terms.

The activities of the patriotic intelligentsia were concentrated in a series of national organisations whose rapid emergence caught the tsarist government by surprise. Hastily improvised schools, orphanages, clubs, workshops, canteens and barracks were organised and subsidised by national committees. As a spokesman for the Polish national committee put it, the patriotic intelligentsia were determined to play a full part in all aspects of refugee life even if this exposed them to the charge of national particularism:

Only continuous and close contact with the national group, whether in the distribution of allowances, the allocation of accommodation, the supply of clothing, the search for work, the offer of medical treatment, the satisfaction of all material and spiritual needs – only this can guarantee and secure refugees on behalf of the motherland.¹⁴

The tsarist state tolerated these efforts, partly as a means of lightening the burden on hard-pressed government officials and on the public purse. By the autumn of 1915, contrasts were being drawn between the speed and efficiency of the national committees and the hesitant manner in which local authorities handled refugee relief. But the national committees served another purpose so far as the government was concerned: they represented

an acceptable alternative to the public organisations, whose leaders asserted a claim to organise refugee relief and resettlement.

Members of the patriotic intelligentsia were joined by a professional intelligentsia – doctors, psychiatrists, lawyers, social workers, teachers and statisticians (including also international relief teams, such as the Quakers and the American Red Cross) – who applied disciplinary techniques to the refugee population, by observing, counting, photographing, examining, treating and managing these subjects. The war enabled these caseworkers to secure their status and to gain credibility. Zionist activist Anita Müller created the Verein soziale Hilfsgemeinschaft, which assisted pregnant refugees and young mothers and created daycare centres in Vienna. It employed hundreds of middle-class women and Jewish refugees, becoming ‘instrumental in the professionalisation of Jewish social work in Austria’.¹⁵ But it was not just the scale of the crisis that generated this activism; as Marsha Rozenblit explains, the involvement of professional experts also owed something to the depiction of refugees as bewildered and helpless. Relief workers described their wartime work in terms of ‘romance’, ‘adventure’ and the exercise of calm judgement, in sharp contrast to their perception of refugees as inert, traumatised and lacking in self-control.¹⁶

Refugees at war’s end

As the First World War came to an end, so the question of repatriation became urgent. The first priority was to repatriate soldiers, including prisoners of war, but attention then turned to refugees. In practice, most refugees made their way back home independently, reviving official unease about the ‘spontaneous’ movement of people. When they returned to western Galicia, Jewish refugees endured frequent harassment. Others were prevented from returning by the vicious conflict in the new Polish–Ukrainian borderland; they struggled to survive in Vienna. Some succeeded in enrolling in university and even obtained citizenship in the new Austrian state, but this option was mostly confined to non-Jewish refugees. Serbian refugees returned home, partly with the assistance of the Serbian Relief Fund and Quaker relief workers. Social and economic reconstruction took many years to complete. One curious echo of wartime emerged in relation to Flora Sandes (1876–1955), a British woman who

travelled to Serbia as a Red Cross volunteer before enlisting in the Serbian army and then devoting herself to post-war relief efforts. Later on she married a Russian émigré and achieved a kind of fame as the driver of Belgrade's first taxi.

In the rapidly unravelling Russian Empire, fresh population displacement resulted from the dislocation caused by the revolutionary upheavals in 1917, by the Russian civil war, by the Soviet–Polish war and from continued political turmoil in the Caucasus. Mass emigration took place from Bolshevik-held territory, contributing in turn to the creation of an international regime of relief to deal with ‘the refugee problem’. Refugees who had settled in the Russian interior during 1915–17 faced the dilemma of deciding if, when and how to return ‘home’. New rulers had to decide if, when and how these citizens would be ‘repatriated’. The successor states of Eastern Europe embarked on programmes to consolidate a sense of affiliation to the new national ‘homeland’, identifying those who ‘belonged’ by virtue of ethnicity or who might conceivably be ‘nationalised’ into membership of the new nation-state. At times this intervention was directly linked to the 1914–18 war: for instance, Polish soldiers who survived the bitter conflict with Soviet Russia expected to be rewarded with land that refugees were deemed to have abandoned. This created the potential for new social friction.

The Russian civil war obstructed the return of World War refugees to their former homes and brought about fresh population displacement. In terms of civilian population displacement, between May and November 1918, around 400,000 refugees left Russia for territory that was under German occupation. For many of these individuals, the desperate economic situation on Bolshevik-held territory was sufficient to cause them to flee. When Kiev came under the control of the fiercely anti-Bolshevik Hetman Skoropadsky in 1918, Russian refugees from Soviet-controlled territory quickly entered the city in order to seek shelter from Bolshevik terror. This scenario was repeated elsewhere, as cities such as Riga and Vilnius constantly changed hands during the civil war. Further north, the Baltic region turned into a battleground in which new national armies contended with anti-Bolshevik ‘White’ forces, with the Red Army, and with the infamous troops under the command of General von der Goltz. Meanwhile, Poland's occupation of Belorussia and parts of Volhynia led contemporaries

to observe that the roads in and out of towns such as Minsk were crowded with refugees and 'speculators'. Conversely, the Soviet invasion prompted an exodus of propertied Poles from towns such as Bialystok in the eastern territories. Some 1.27 million Poles were repatriated from Soviet Russia after the war between Poland and Russia .

As with stories of flight, the voice of the individual repatriant emerges only rarely. One instance is the diary of Alfreds Goba, a young Latvian refugee who moved back to 'new Latvia' from his temporary domicile in Baku. In an entry from August 1918 he wrote: 'Now I am working. I am working towards building a new Latvia.' Three months later Goba welcomed Germany's readiness to engage in peace negotiations, but hoped that the future would bring freedom from German and Russian tutelage alike:

I don't know if something bad happened in Latvian affairs or if for some other reason Latvia, like me, has to be between Scylla and Charybdis. One master isn't yet away and already another is near to rule and suckle . . . Latvia, Latvia you have lived a hard and slavish orphan life, and still you are like a child. Will you survive? Will you be able to stand on your own two feet?

Goba saw a close fit between the need to establish his family on more secure material foundations and Latvia's search for national liberation.¹⁷

Goba's struggle to work out what would become of his 'homeland' reinforces the comment made earlier about the relationship between population displacement and national identity. Newly independent states emerged from the wreckage of multi-national continental empires. The experience of population displacement fostered among their political leaders a commitment to ethnic exclusivism as the basis for national 'salvation'. European diplomats maintained a paradoxical position. On the one hand, they sought to protect minorities in the successor states on the grounds that people should be made to live alongside one another irrespective of ethnic difference. On the other, they subscribed to the 'unmixing' of peoples by endorsing a compulsory exchange of population between Greece and Turkey at Lausanne in 1923.

Conclusions

The category of the refugee became part of the common currency of politics and public opinion during the First World War. In the process, social and cultural differences were usually effaced. The picture of a throng gathered outside a sanctuary for refugees in Petrograd was captioned: ‘people of the most diverse condition and status (*sostoianie*), now united by the single general term, refugee’.¹⁸ To be labelled a refugee had demeaning consequences, stripping away attributes of social distinction and class to leave oneself exposed to a sense of pure deprivation. A Belgian refugee spoke from the heart when he summed up his feelings: ‘One was always a refugee – that’s the name one was given, a sort of nickname (*sobriquet*). One was left with nothing, ruined, and that’s how people carried on talking about the “refugee”. We weren’t real people any more.’¹⁹

Yet if prevailing images tended to homogenise the refugee, creating a single category of difference, nationality offered a means of drawing distinctions between refugees. Refugeedom contributed to the intensification of a sense of national identity, not because one ethnic group had been singled out – after all, displacement affected more than one nationality – but because it created the prospect that the ‘nation’ might be permanently displaced, uprooted and scattered. In the Russian Empire, newly minted national organisations claimed the refugee for themselves. Refugees had been forced to abandon their homeland, but this did not deprive their lives of purpose. They had a responsibility to the nation, which in turn would not shirk its responsibilities to the refugee. Refugees belonged somewhere after all.

A similar process occurred in other theatres of war. Tormented yet valiant Belgian refugees came to stand for the country as a whole and could trade, at least for a while, on the resulting cultural capital. Italian subjects of the Habsburg Empire were deported by the Austro-Hungarian army and placed in internment camps, but they became a ready-made audience for patriotic Italians to disseminate nationalist propaganda. Serbian refugees symbolised the travails of an entire nation waiting for deliverance from enemy occupation. Population displacement was heavily invested with political significance.

This is not to say that new states necessarily appreciated the actual experiences of refugees, which rarely found their way into the officially sanctioned narrative. In vain did the Belorussian public activist E. S. Kancher suggest in 1919 that refugees should be the ‘object of study by the sociologist and the political analyst and regarded as an identifiable historical category’.²⁰ Post-war governments mostly drew a veil over the circumstances of mass displacement, particularly if they portrayed the state in an unfavourable light. Mussolini had no interest in talking about the mass exodus of Italians following the debacle at Caporetto, preferring instead to associate his regime with the glories of ancient Rome. In Russia the Bolsheviks derived their legitimacy from the Russian Revolution and relegated the ‘imperialist war’ and its refugees to the margins. Successor states such as Latvia and Lithuania devoted little attention to the history of refugee politics during the war; only to the extent that the relief effort helped the careers of aspiring politicians did the history of wartime displacement get much of a mention. Although the experiences of refugees might be slotted into a narrative of national salvation and deliverance, politicians trod quite carefully lest they encouraged refugees to claim compensation or reminded their audience of wartime failings, as in Belgium and France where leaders had little to say about refugees. Popular memories of the wartime crisis were revived in 1940, when the German invasion affected the same regions and often the same people. On the other hand, in Hungary, Armenia and Serbia mass displacement – and in Armenia’s case genocide – contributed to the cultivation both in the new state and among the diaspora of memories of national catastrophe. A Serbian teacher who taught refugee children in France during the war asked his pupils to write an assignment entitled ‘My departure from the fatherland and arrival in France’. He published the results in 1923, in a book entitled *The Hopes of the Serbian Golgotha*. It comes as no surprise to learn that it was reissued in Serbia eight decades later or to learn that other stories of suffering were revived in Belgrade in the late 1980s and 1990s, helping to legitimise independent Serbia as communist rule collapsed.

The displacement of population during the Great War anticipated subsequent refugee crises in some but not all respects. Refugees’ experience of displacement during the twentieth century was often bound up with the refugee camp. In 1914–18, however, most countries, with the exception of

the Netherlands, decided not to establish refugee camps and instead dispersed refugees to towns and villages where they sheltered in schools, warehouses, barns, monasteries, theatres and other buildings: in other words, in temporary accommodation. Purpose-built camps were used to detain prisoners of war and civilians who were thought to constitute a political threat, as in the case of Habsburg subjects from the Italian borderlands who were deported to the interior of Austria where they could be kept under close surveillance. By contrast, relatively few refugees were incarcerated in camps.

In other respects the war did establish something of a pattern. The speed and size of displacement encouraged emergency improvisation that gave way to more formal institutional provision of various kinds. The growth of bureaucratic administration during the war did not lessen but rather enhanced the importance of efforts by semi-official, voluntary and charitable organisations to address the consequences of population displacement. Faith-based groups such as the Quakers devoted themselves to the relief of civilians, and their work did not come to an end in 1918. The Save the Children Fund emerged from a group of philanthropists who cut their teeth on Serbian relief work. Relief efforts had an ephemeral purpose, but their legacy mattered in ways that were not always evident at the time. Many people drew upon their experience of wartime displacement to commit themselves to a career in assisting refugees .

Historians have lately begun to pay closer attention to the experiences of refugees and relief workers, and to set those experiences in the context of domestic politics and transnational networks. Hitherto social historians have tended to focus on organised social forces, whose actions impinged directly on the forms of state power. In the historiography of Russia, for example, the dominant narratives of revolution found little room for social activity that could not easily be incorporated within the framework of conventional political organisations or linked to the revolutionary teleology that legitimised the Bolshevik seizure of power. Here, and elsewhere, refugees were overlooked; they could not readily be accommodated in narratives of political change. This chapter has shown that a broad conceptualisation of population displacement extends our understanding of the First World War without losing sight of broader issues of social and political transformation .

- 1 Homer Folks, *Human Costs of the War* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), p. 250.
- 2 Michael Amara, *Des Belges à l'épreuve de l'exil: les réfugiés de la Première Guerre mondiale, France, Grande-Bretagne, Pays-Bas* (Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2008), p. 386.
- 3 Quoted in Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 15–16.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 16–22.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 59.
- 6 Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 74.
- 7 Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*, p. 21.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 67–8, 140.
- 9 Liisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago University Press, 1995).
- 10 Flora Scott collection, Imperial War Museum archives, 77/15/1.
- 11 Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*, p. 73.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 94–5.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 141.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

15 Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

17 My thanks to Aldis Purs for sharing extracts from his translation of Goba's unpublished diary.

18 Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*, pp. 96–7.

19 Sophie de Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre mondiale* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 104–5.

20 Quoted in Valentina S. Utgof, 'Re-evakuatsiia belorusskikh bezhentsev pervoi mirovoi voyny', in M. M. Krom (ed.), *Istochnik, istorik, istoriia* (St Petersburg: Evropeiskii universitet v Sankt Peterburge, 2002), p. 408.

9 Minorities

Panikos Panayi

Introduction

The First World War marked a major turning point in the position of minorities in Europe and elsewhere. It led to tensions between longstanding ethnic minorities and the dominant population within many contemporary European and non-European states, particularly where there was an ethnic affiliation or affinity between a minority population and a wartime enemy. Even those ethnic groups which did not necessarily have a connection with the enemy faced increased hostility. The war also ‘created’ new ‘minorities’ as a result of population displacement caused by the conflict. Moreover, it also led members of minority groups to re-examine their identity, to redefine themselves as a minority or to reject being labelled a ‘minority’ and to throw themselves into supporting the national war effort in an attempt to prove that they did not merit being seen as a distinct ‘minority’ grouping. All of these evolutions in how minorities were defined and the extent to which minorities were generally accepted were a consequence of the advent of total war – which often promoted a ‘totalised’ vision of the ‘citizen’ within a homogeneous national paradigm. This resulted in some states deepening the persecution of minorities; in others, it led to increased integration.

While persecution did not characterise the lives of all minorities on the European continent or elsewhere during the war, invisibility became increasingly difficult. A series of factors combined to make persecution and marginalisation increasingly normal. The most important of these consisted of the victory of nationalism, which made questions of loyalty and disloyalty increasingly important and made those minorities regarded by state and public opinion as outsiders highly vulnerable. In addition, the First World War also legalised mass killing. While this may primarily appear to be a battlefield phenomenon, scholars such as Alan Kramer have pointed to

the actions of a whole series of nation-states which pursued policies which have retrospectively attracted descriptions such as ethnic cleansing and genocide.¹ The step between mass killing on the battlefield and violence against minorities remained small. The German, Russian and Ottoman autocracies may have pursued the most extreme measures, but liberal nation-states including Britain, France and the USA also carried out acts of persecution and there were anti-German riots throughout the world.

However, while much official and public opinion constructed Manichaeic dichotomies which divided all of those within individual nation-states into insiders and outsiders or friends and enemies, ethnic identity remained a much more complex concept. The clearest example of this lies in the numbers of people with ethnic minority backgrounds who fought on the side of their birth often against the land of origin of their parents and grandparents. What ultimately mattered was nationality. Those with the correct nationality found themselves fighting for the armies of the countries of their birth, while those who held the wrong nationality, usually associated with the enemy, faced persecution .

Typologies of minorities

Before progressing further, we need to recognise that a variety of minorities existed in Europe and elsewhere at the outbreak of the First World War. Although no categorisation proves entirely satisfactory, it is useful to divide these ethnic groups into three. These consist of dispersed peoples, localised minorities and recently arrived immigrants. These categorisations remain unsatisfactory for a variety of reasons, including the fact that some overlap exists between the three categories, in particular between dispersed and immigrant groups. However, they allow us to construct a narrative. Ethnic here is used to encompass difference based upon religion, language and appearance.

Dispersed European minorities fall into six groups. First Jews, resident in Europe and Asia since antiquity and almost ubiquitous as a result of both recent and centuries-old patterns of persecution and migration. This group had always remained visible and the emancipation of the nineteenth century did not solve this issue, leading to the rise of a modern type of hatred towards Jews we term anti-Semitism . Secondly, we can identify Romanies,

arriving in Eastern Europe from India in the twelfth century and then gradually moving westwards. Again this group had always been visible but nineteenth-century liberalism did not extend to incorporate them, while state control and standardisation increasingly marginalised them. The third key dispersed grouping was made up of German-speaking populations who lived largely in Central and Eastern Europe. The Germans had moved eastwards from a variety of areas of core German settlement from as early as the tenth century, continuing throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. While German sabre-rattling and the approach of the First World War had made this group increasingly visible, the actual outbreak of the conflict meant that they had nowhere to hide in the states which found themselves at war with Germany. We can also identify three other dispersed minorities who lived largely in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe: Muslims, Greeks and Armenians. The first essentially consisted of the residue populations of expanding and contracting empires, above all the Ottoman. The rise of nation-states out of this autocracy during the nineteenth and early twentieth century made Muslim populations vulnerable, as they symbolised the former imperial master. A large number of Muslims had been displaced during the 1912 and 1912–13 Balkan wars and they fled into the Ottoman Empire, forming a new minority. Greek populations were dispersed across Greece, the Ottoman Empire and the coastal trading cities of the Levant, including a large population in Alexandria in British-controlled Egypt. Finally, we can also see the Armenian population as a dispersed minority; mainly found in the Ottoman Empire in Anatolia as well as in its major cities including Constantinople, they also counted minority populations in the Russian Empire and in the major trading cities around the Levant. Some of these minority groups such as Muslims and Germans had also made an appearance in Western Europe and beyond by the end of the nineteenth century as a result of migration.

The second group of minorities consists of localised groups, specific to one particular region or nation-state. These people with their own economic, social and cultural values became ethnic minorities because of state creation in the areas where they lived, particularly during the course of the nineteenth century. They resided in these areas before individual nation-states emerged, but this process made them visible. Some of these might have become minorities because of long-term processes of ‘internal colonialism’,² such as happened to the Sami of Scandinavia, American

Indians, Australian aborigines, and the peripheral peoples of Russia. State creation as a result of unification, as in the case of Italy and Germany during the course of the nineteenth century, also made groups conscious of their difference, as the example of Poles and Serbs in Germany would indicate. Other minorities lived in the heart of particular nation-states or in areas which would become the centre of nation-states as a result of the war .

Finally, we also need to consider immigrants. While the nineteenth century may have represented a period of European mass emigration to the Americas, significant immigration took place as a result of persecution, and more especially economic factors. In the case of states such as Britain, movement essentially occurred because of the fact that the country had open borders and a growing economy, which allowed the entry of newcomers from all over Europe. France had immigration policies resembling those of Britain, allowing significant levels of newcomers to enter the country from its near neighbours including Germany, Spain and Italy, while Germany adopted a policy of labour importation towards the end of the nineteenth century. Until the 1880s it had remained a country of emigration, but as industrialisation led to labour shortages, both agriculture and industry imported foreign workers, especially from further east, in particular Poles and Russians, but also from parts of Southern and Western Europe. Meanwhile, the United States possessed the largest minority immigrant groupings: according to the 1910 census one of every three Americans in that year had either been born abroad or had at least one parent born abroad. More than 10 million people had family links to the Central Powers, fuelling questions about their loyalty to America.³

The persecuted, the integrated and the exploited

The different minorities outlined above had varying experiences during the First World War, depending upon a range of factors. Those which faced the most difficult times usually had some association with the enemy in the minds of the government and public opinion in the states in which they lived. Thus, the German communities scattered throughout Europe and beyond found themselves interned or deported and they would also become victims of rioting. They consisted of a combination of newly arrived people in countries such as Britain, together with longstanding communities whose

history stretched back over centuries in the case of Russia. The level of persecution which minorities experienced in individual nation-states partly depended on the extent of integration which had occurred, although it also hinged on the extent of exclusion and persecution evident before 1914. In the case of the Ottoman Empire, the autocratic nature of the state constructed by the Young Turks helped prepare the war for genocide. This contrasts with, for example, liberal Great Britain, although even here the state would deport most of its German population at the end of the Great War .

The persecution which occurred during the Great War involved both state and society. In a situation in which the former increased its power in the interests of the military, ethnic minorities faced increasing levels of control. This could encompass restrictions upon movement, mass incarceration and property confiscation. In the most extreme case of the Ottoman Empire, the state became involved in acts of genocide against those it regarded as disloyal.

In liberal states public opinion played a significant role in excluding ethnic groups with the wrong credentials. Propaganda helped to whip up patriotic fervour against the external enemy, but the step from vilifying those who threatened the nation from beyond its borders to victimising the enemy within remained small. Vilification in newspapers helped to spark off mass rioting throughout Europe, especially against Germans .

Before we become fixated on the plight of the enemy within, it seems likely that the majority of those who fit into the typology of minorities outlined above actually remained fairly invisible, and often fought in the armies of the states in which they lived, as the example of the Irish in Britain would suggest. In cases such as this one, the ethnic group concerned passed the test of loyalty, even after the Easter Rising of 1916 .

However, some groups found themselves in an ambivalent position. For example, while fully integrated Jews fought for a variety of European armies during the Great War, the conflict also witnessed an increase in anti-Semitism, which in some cases resulted in rioting. Even more contradictory, sons of enemy alien origin with the nationality of the country of their birth found themselves fighting for that country while their fathers could face incarceration, as illustrated by the contradictory plight of first-and second-

generation immigrants in Britain. This kind of family fragmentation was also the case in the United States: for example, the literary figure Hermann Hagedorn chose to support America in the war while his father returned home to his native Germany and renounced his American citizenship.

We also need to recognise here that immigrants became important as a labour supply during the First World War as conscription resulted in manpower shortages. Although women filled many of the gaps created, the only other obvious supply consisted of immigrants. Some of these already lived in the countries in which they would find themselves working, especially if they were friendly aliens, but several states, including France, Britain and Germany, imported people from the territories which they controlled either within Europe or further afield.

In essence, we could argue that the First World War assigned three roles to minorities, over which they had little choice. The first of these consisted of 'the persecuted', and this persecution occurred when public and official opinion associated a particular group with the enemy. Their position had a direct link with the outbreak and development of the war. Secondly, we can also identify 'the integrated', who attempted to remain invisible and often succeeded in maintaining their invisibility. Jewish populations generally asserted an integrated position, particularly in Western Europe and Austria-Hungary; however, despite this they often faced persecution. Yet for some minorities, support for the war, especially through military service, did allow them to become invisible. In some cases, however, this was only temporary: for example, as the war reached its conclusion, some integrated 'minority' groups that had fought in the Habsburg armies found themselves living as majority populations in new nation-states as the changed European political order emerged in the aftermath of catastrophe, a process in which nationalist leaders had played a leading role. Thirdly, some ethnic minorities played the role of 'the exploited', helping the national war economies in terms of an economically exploitative relationship. These consisted particularly of immigrant groups, in some cases already present in individual nation-states before the war broke out, although France, Britain and Germany imported new labour supplies from beyond their shores.

This chapter cannot examine all minorities in Europe or elsewhere. Instead, using a series of examples, it will try to bring out the main themes, policies and experiences of ethnic outsiders during the Great War, while

making comparisons between minority groups. The narrative will also illustrate the complexity of experiences. The conclusion will stress these complexities; but the core focus remains Europe.

The persecuted

When writing about minorities who faced persecution during the Great War, the most important fact in determining their persecution consisted of their perceived connection with the enemy. The most obvious example consisted of enemy aliens. While this concept may have first emerged during the 1790s, the First World War universalised the notion, especially within the British Empire, where decisions in London influenced policy throughout British possessions. Although all nation-states and empires may have stigmatised enemy populations in this way, Germans, because of their diasporic nature and because of the number of states which found themselves at war with their place of birth or origin, proved some of the most universal victims. Of course minority populations could not determine whether or not they faced persecution. Consequently, while some long-established Jewish communities may have become fully integrated in many European states, and while governments may have accepted them as full citizens, public opinion often created an association with the enemy, as the examples of Britain, Russia and Germany would indicate. It is therefore important to accept that both state and public opinion played a role in marginalising minorities. While the two often agreed, public opinion sometimes became more intolerant.

State marginalisation had a variety of aspects, varying from legal exclusion by the creation of the category of enemy alien to internment, ethnic cleansing and even genocide. If we begin with the case of the Germans in Britain, Parliament introduced the Aliens Restriction Act, rushed through Parliament on 5 August 1914, the day after Britain declared war on Germany. It allowed the government to pass subsequent Orders in Council which controlled the activities of aliens with regard to entry into Britain, residence, registration and any other aspect of their lives. Enemy aliens could not enter or leave the country without a permit. Those who remained would have to register at the nearest police station and could not travel more than five miles without a permit. In addition, they could not

own arms, ammunition or any means of communication; nor could they reside in areas regarded as having military importance, which included the entire east coast of Britain, which meant that those who lived there essentially faced a process of 'relocation'. The Aliens Restriction Act played an important role in destroying the thriving German minority community which had existed in pre-war Britain because an Order in Council from the autumn of 1914 closed down German clubs and newspapers. At the same time, pressure from the press, which became concerned with the numbers of Germans changing their names so that they could hide their ancestry, resulted in a further Order in Council which prevented this practice. The Aliens Restriction Act only applied to those who had not become naturalised before the outbreak of war, which meant that generally wealthier Germans who tried to become completely assimilated escaped the restrictions. Nevertheless, naturalisation ceased during the course of the war, while the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1918 allowed the Home Secretary to revoke naturalisation certificates of enemy aliens, and also prevented the naturalisation of enemy aliens for ten years after the conclusion of peace. Even if other measures had not followed this legislation, members of the German community of Britain had their lives completely changed as a result of it. In Italy personal liberty was curtailed thanks to a series of measures which limited the right of foreigners to reside in specific areas, established a central register of foreigners and those suspected of espionage, and also subjected all these individuals to police surveillance and censorship, preventing enemy aliens from sending and receiving letters freely. In Russia, a decree from 18 August 1914 prohibited the use of the German language in public. Meanwhile, the imperial authorities in Germany introduced a series of guidelines at the beginning of the war forbidding citizens of enemy states from leaving a police district without permission, while a curfew also came into operation, although the extent of implementation of such measures varied from one region to another.

Such measures, taken especially against enemy aliens, simply represented the first step in what often developed into a campaign against them which eventually led to their internment and expulsion. Another important step in this process consisted of the confiscation of enemy alien property, which we can again illustrate by referring to Great Britain, Italy and Russia. In all three cases, nationalist voices saw the opportunity to eradicate German

competition. In Britain we can see this through the implementation of a series of Trading with the Enemy Acts, which led to the confiscation of all German property from small retail outlets owned by individual immigrants to the branches of the Deutsche and Dresdner banks. The assets seized, from throughout the British Empire, would help to fund Germany's reparation payments at the end of the war. In Italy two decrees in August 1916 placed firms, industries, shops and companies with an enemy alien interest under a syndicate or sequestration and forbade trading with the enemy. Owners tried to save their properties by placing them in the hands of friends, relatives or neutral subjects. They organised fictitious sales, wrote letters stating their loyalty to Italy and expressed their willingness to become Italian by taking out naturalisation. In Russia the government launched an economic war against enemy aliens. Laws were also aimed at Russian citizens who came from Germany or Austria-Hungary. They also restricted or liquidated the property of previously settled German colonists and landowners, who had become Russian citizens since 1890. On 6 February 1917 the Council of Ministers confirmed a decree to liquidate German land ownership in twenty-eight provinces including Saratov and Samara, the provinces with the main German settlements .

The most extreme measures taken against minorities regarded as having associations with the enemy during the Great War included internment – part of a process of forced migration and ethnic cleansing which would become mainstream policy during the course of the conflict. Britain played a leading role in legitimising internment as London became the centre of a global system of mass incarceration. Decisions made in the imperial capital had implications throughout the British Empire, whether, for example, in Australia, New Zealand or India. Matthew Stibbe has even suggested that the German government partly reached its decision to intern Britons as retaliation for the British government's incarceration of Germans, pointing out that Berlin did not intern Italians or US citizens.⁴

We can briefly pause to examine internment policy and its reality in Britain. Before the First World War broke out the British government did not actually have a concrete policy for mass incarceration. Internment, however, suddenly became an option during the course of August 1914, when the first arrests occurred, and over the next nine months the numbers of Germans who found themselves behind barbed wire rose and fell. The

panic caused by events on the battlefield and its consequent influence on press and parliamentary opinion helped to force Home Secretary Reginald McKenna to intensify internment, but the government remained undecided as to the right course. The turning point was the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915 and the consequent mass rioting against German shops fuelled by a Germanophobic press. Prime Minister Asquith's announcement in the House of Commons introducing wholesale internment of German males of military age (17–55) partially arose from the desire to protect Germans from rioters. This finds further support from the fact that many internees simply surrendered themselves to the police at this time. As a result of the new policy, the number of internees (overwhelmingly Germans, but also including Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman citizens) had reached 32,440 by November 1915. Most of these came from within the German community in Britain, but others originated on ships on the high seas and from British and conquered German colonies as Britain flexed its military and naval muscles. Some of the men who experienced life behind barbed wire in Britain may have spent up to five years away from their families. During the early stages of the war, the camps established for civilians remained fairly chaotic as the British government tried to decide on the extent of internment, leading to complaints about bad treatment in temporary camps with basic facilities. Nevertheless, as the conflict progressed and internment developed into a permanent wartime solution, several camps would become long-term places of incarceration. The most important of these were on the Isle of Man, at Douglas, which held an average of 2,500 prisoners during the course of the war and, more significantly, Knockaloe, which held between 15,000 and 25,000 men for most of the conflict. Those enemy aliens who found themselves interned in Great Britain during the Great War did not face deliberate mistreatment. Nevertheless, some of them would develop 'barbed wire disease', a form of mental illness, caused by years of incarceration away from families and often with little to do. We have to question the necessity of interning tens of thousands of male enemy aliens, when only a handful of German spies actually operated in Britain during the Great War.

A discussion of internment leads to issues of ethnic cleansing and even genocide. The ultimate plight of the German community in Britain during the Great War consisted of deportation at its conclusion so that the number of Germans in the country fell from 57,500 in 1914 to 22,254 in 1919. Such

policies fitted into wider population displacement during the Great War, affecting a variety of ethnic groups as forced migration became increasingly normal .

The state that practised such policies at their most extreme was the Ottoman Empire, in particular against its Armenian population, as well as against its Assyrian minority. The persecution and virtual elimination of the Armenian minority from the Anatolian heartland built upon a century of inter-ethnic conflict, during which time rising Armenian nationalism and the transformation of the Ottoman idea of empire into Turkish nationalism had clashed. As the minority population, the Armenians had suffered a series of massacres in the decades leading up to the First World War. The issues of loyalty which the conflict created intensified the tensions that had emerged between Turks and Armenians. Resentment focused especially upon the fact that a few thousand Armenians fought for the Russian Caucasian Army against the Ottoman Third Army. Most of these consisted of Russian subjects, but the presence of a few hundred former Ottoman subjects caused uproar in the Ottoman Empire especially following defeat at the Battle of Sarikamiş in January 1915, which was blamed on Armenian volunteers, despite the fact that far more Armenians fought in the Ottoman army. This fear of a hostile minority within acted as a spark for the Ottoman genocide of the Armenian population, when between 1.5 million and 2 million people were forced from their homes in south-eastern Anatolia and driven towards the Syrian desert, of whom about half died. These events forced Armenians to flee to any safe haven, many to France or the USA. The actions of the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians may have represented the most extreme taken by any state during the course of the Great War, but they mirror countless similar developments, usually not as violent, implemented by governments throughout Europe against their minority populations, especially those perceived as having a link to the enemy: the actions of the dying Ottoman Empire reflect 'milder' forms of state marginalisation throughout Europe. However, there were other reasons for the extremity of the actions taken by the Ottoman state, including the long-term history of persecution, which was intensified further by the war, and the situation of Armenia as a 'rimland' .

The complex tapestry of minority populations in the region was also a factor which continued to affect minorities after the Great War ended. The

Greek–Turkish war that followed the Great War led to further disruption for minority populations. First, both sides committed massacres against those they perceived as ‘enemy’ civilians, and minority populations became a prime target, particularly during the military advances and retreats of the war. Infamously, Greek and Armenian refugees died when the city of Smyrna was burned in 1922. Secondly, the end of the conflict saw the destruction of ancient minorities, as Greece and the new Ottoman successor state, Turkey, ‘exchanged’ their minority populations by the Lausanne Convention of January 1923, which emerged from the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923. Exact figures are difficult to ascertain: however, an estimated 1.2 million ethnic Greeks fled the area of the former Ottoman state or were ‘exchanged’ with Greece in 1922–3, increasing Greece’s population by 25 per cent, while, following the Lausanne Convention, 350,000 Muslims were expelled from the Greek state to Turkey, including ancient populations such as the Muslims of Crete.⁵ These displaced minorities found integration in their reception state very difficult, retaining a distinct cultural identity for decades.

Public opinion usually backed the actions taken by governments in persecuting minority populations deemed to have an association with the enemy during the Great War. As well as a rise in Germanophobia in the Allied states, the war also witnessed a rise in popular anti-Semitism in a whole variety of participants, which had a range of manifestations, particularly in Russia, despite the fact that Jews usually fought in the armies of the countries where they lived, and where they often found themselves over-represented.

Popular Germanophobia, focusing upon both the internal and the external enemy, developed in all the states at war with the Central Powers, as the example of Britain illustrates. In the first place, spy fever emerged, which labelled all Germans as agents of the fatherland, and helped to drive the British government’s decision to introduce internment. The popular press, saturated with Germanophobia, made sure that hatred of the internal enemy remained strong. As the conflict progressed and no British victory occurred, spy fever developed into a conspiracy theory, which asserted that Britain could not win the war because Germans controlled the country. Apart from influencing government policy on internment, this popular Germanophobia also led to social boycotts and the sacking of German employees. The peak

of hatred in Britain arrived following the sinking of the passenger liner *Lusitania* in May 1915 which resulted in press headlines such as ‘No Compromise with a Race of Savages’. While violence against Germans had occurred in the autumn of 1914, the week following the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915 resulted in some of the worst riots in modern British history, when virtually every German-owned shop in the country came under attack in actions involving thousands of people in many cases. This suspicion of Germans affected all classes; in 1917 even the British royal family changed both the name of its dynasty and its family surname from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to the suitably British-sounding Windsor out of fear that their German origins meant that the public viewed them as not fully British.

Similar developments also occurred against Germans in Russia, New Zealand, Australia, Italy, Brazil and the USA. In Russia attention focused especially upon businesses owned by enemy aliens. An anti-German pogrom occurred between 27 and 29 May 1915 in Moscow and its surrounding area, when a crowd devastated, burned and plundered more than 200 homes, together with 475 businesses (mostly shops), wounding at least forty and killing three Germans. The background to the events in Moscow lay in the development of the type of Germanophobic images which had characterised other belligerent states during the early stages of the Great War. By the end of 1914 the popular press began to carry out a witch-hunt against those Russians of German origin, questioning their nationality and loyalty to Russia. In addition, hostility towards German businesses persuaded Moscow residents to participate in the anti-German pogrom at the end of May 1915. If we were to take a global perspective, riots occurred against property wherever Germans had settled, especially during May 1915, which marked the peak month for pogroms against Germans, although some of the worst disturbances actually occurred in Brazil during the course of 1917, where about 400,000 people of German origin lived, as Germanophobia gripped a country moving towards participation in the war.

In the United States, German-Americans faced severe discrimination. In late 1915 and 1916, President Woodrow Wilson verbally criticised so-called ‘hyphenated’ Americans; when he addressed Congress on 2 April 1917, he referred to ‘millions of men and women of German birth who live among

us' and warned 'if there should be disloyalty, it will be dealt with with a firm hand of repression'.⁶ His words reflected the broader growth of anti-German feeling in the United States, which became rampant after America entered the war. Numerous American school districts banned the teaching of German; daily words such as 'hamburger' or 'sauerkraut' were re-named 'liberty sandwich' or 'liberty cabbage'. City streets with German names were changed. In some places, those suspected of being German were attacked. Near St Louis in April 1918, a young man named Robert Prager, who had been born in Germany, was lynched. Those who led the mob that attacked him were later found not guilty in court. Yet despite the rise in anti-German sentiment, most German Americans were loyal to the United States. They were extremely diverse in origin and religion, originating from within the Reich and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, and encompassing Catholics, Lutherans, Moravians, Jews and free-thinkers. Only a minority, often intellectuals, sought to propagandise for Germany before 1917.

Anti-Semitism also reached a peak during the Great War, despite the fact that Jews invariably fought on the side of the country in which they were born. In view of the violent nature of anti-Semitism which existed in Russia before 1914, some of the most extreme hostility took place here. This included the expulsion of Jews from the Pale of Settlement, especially in April and May 1915, which also triggered pogroms there. Between April and October 1915 nineteen anti-Semitic riots occurred in Vilna, thirteen in Kovno, seven in Volhynia and fifteen in Minsk. The army instigated or participated in all of these events, with local residents often joining in against the background of 'rumours of Jewish coin hoarding'.⁷ Both the military hierarchy and front-line soldiers suspected Jews of acting as spies for Austria or Germany; the fact that many spoke Yiddish, a language with close links to medieval German, exacerbated these suspicions. At the same time, anti-Semitic officers regarded Jews as not up to scratch in military terms. Issues of loyalty became central to the hostility which Jews faced. In Britain, wealthier Jews of German origin became associated with the 'fatherland', especially in the pages of the *National Review*, edited by the radical right-wing nationalist journalist Leo Maxse. Such views intensified during the course of the war. J. H. Clarke, a doctor at the London Homeopathic Hospital, published *England under the Heel of the Jew*, in which he stated that Germans and Jews were synonyms and that 'Prussia

and Germany are not Christian but Judaic nations: Lucre is their deity and Shylock their high priest'. The 'Hun and Jew' had imported into England the 'Cult of the Coin' and, in order to achieve victory, England must defeat not only 'Hindenburg and Tirpitz on land and sea', but also 'Shylock in his own country, in his own commerce, and his own heart'.⁸ Such anti-Semitic views affected poorer Jews in Britain who originated from Eastern Europe, reaching a peak in 1917. The Gentile neighbours of these working-class immigrants came to believe that they remained at home while their own relatives fought on the Western Front. Such perceptions led to anti-Jewish riots in Leeds in June 1917 and then in the East End of London in September of the same year.

Anti-Semitism also reached a peak in Germany during the First World War, again feeding off the questions of loyalty and disloyalty which the conflict threw up, but also having deep roots in the late nineteenth-century Judeophobia which had emerged following German unification and Jewish emancipation. Although Jews had hoped that the feeling of national euphoria following the outbreak of the Great War might further integration, this belief was soon shown to be unrealistic. As early as 3 September 1914, following the death of the Jewish Deputy Ludwig Frank, the anti-Semitic Franz Oppenheimer described Jews as pariahs in Germany. The hostility intensified as the conflict continued and images circulated about Jews as shirkers and profiteers. This animosity reached its high point at the end of 1916 when the Prussian War Ministry ordered an investigation into the number of Jews serving in the army. The 'Jew census' was never completed, probably because the early investigations pointed to a high level of Jewish participation at the front. Hostility intensified further as the Allied blockade resulted in the 'turnip winter' of 1916–17; in 1917, groups such as the Fatherland Party and the Pan-German League drew upon this to increase their anti-Semitic activity. Thus ethnic minorities, especially those regarded as having a connection with the enemy, became the main whipping boys for popular xenophobia during the Great War .

The integrated

Yet beyond first-generation immigrants of enemy alien nationality, who often became an easy target, both for nationalistic writers who demanded

total loyalty, and the state, which could marginalise them because of their often obvious connection to the enemy as a result of their nationality, lay a whole range of other more integrated ethnic minorities, who frequently had a complex relationship with the state in which they lived. Many such ethnic minorities became largely invisible because they fought in the armies of their state of residence, usually because they possessed the correct nationality. Nevertheless, the changing wartime situation could suddenly render such groups more visible: for example, those minority groups who served in the imperial armies of Austria-Hungary, who found themselves in newly created nation-states at the end of the war, pointing to the fact that, like the persecuted, these individuals had relatively little control over their own destiny.

Despite the extreme Germanophobia which gripped Allied states during the Great War, many people of German origin made a contribution to the Allied military effort. In Britain, the principle of *jus solis* ensured that all those born in the country assumed British nationality at birth; this contrasted with the 1913 German Nationality Law which operated on the principle of *jus sanguinis*. The novelist Robert Graves, whose maternal grandfather had moved to Britain following the failure of the 1848 Revolutions, wrote that: 'My history from the age of fourteen, when I went to Charterhouse, until just before the end of the war, when I began to think for myself, is a forced rejection of the German in me.'⁹ Graves was not unusual: many others of German origin found themselves fighting in the British army, especially after the introduction of conscription at the beginning of 1916. These included men whose fathers found themselves interned. Thus W. Roderwald was incarcerated in Knockaloe while his son served in the British army.¹⁰ On the other hand, Frederick Lewis Dunbar-Kalckreuth, of Scottish origins but holding a German passport, was studying English in St Leonard's-on-Sea at the outbreak of war but found himself classified as an enemy alien and therefore faced internment from 1915.¹¹ Meanwhile, some individuals of enemy alien nationality fought in the British armed forces when they could prove they were from friendly minority backgrounds such as Czechs, Poles and Ruthenes of Austrian nationality, although, equally, they could find themselves behind barbed wire. Matthew Stibbe has tackled the complexities of British nationality for those who found themselves interned in Germany during the Great War.

These included the sons of German women who had lost their nationality because they had married a Briton and Russian-born Jews who acquired British nationality while resident in Germany.¹²

Despite the existence of anti-Semitism in Britain, Germany and other parts of Europe, Jews often found themselves over-represented in the armies of the countries in which they lived. In Russia they became swept up in the patriotic climate following the outbreak of war. Jewish deputies in the Duma made nationalistic speeches stressing the unity of Jews and Gentiles. Following a pattern throughout Europe, Jews volunteered for the Russian army and continued to fight and die until the end of Russian participation in the war. Jews actually found themselves over-represented in the award of medals during the conflict. The persecution which they had faced in the army before and during the war, however, meant that they subsequently made up a significant percentage of the officer class of the Red Army, where they did not face the marginalisation that they had experienced under the Tsars. In Germany, Jews, like the rest of the German population, had 'responded to the outbreak of war in August 1914 with electrified enthusiasm'. The leading Jewish community organisations called upon all Jews 'to sacrifice their property and lives'.¹³ Although much of this commitment remained genuine and even encompassed Zionists, it also reflected part of a Jewish self-defence strategy which had characterised German Jewry's reaction to the rise of anti-Semitism from the end of the nineteenth century. At the end of the war, the National League of Jewish Frontline Soldiers came into existence under the Weimar Republic in order to defend the record of Jewish servicemen during the Great War against the slurs of anti-Semites. By 1932 it had become the second-largest Jewish grouping in Germany, counting 32,000 members.¹⁴ In Great Britain, as in Germany, a disproportionate number of Jews served in the armed forces, at 60,000 men and women. This represented 15 per cent of Anglo-Jewry compared with 10 per cent of the population as a whole.¹⁵ In France, anti-Semitism had declined but not disappeared since the Dreyfus Affair, and the First World War allowed Jews to play a full role in the military effort, while the Jewish leadership emphasised that French goals remained the same as those of the Jewish community. In Austria, meanwhile, the established Jewish community of the pre-war years, which included the elites of Viennese society who had become fully integrated, as well as Jews living in

towns, cities and rural locations throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire, together with more recently arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe, found themselves joined by Jewish refugees fleeing Russia during the course of the war. As many as 2 million Jews already lived in Austria-Hungary when the war broke out. As elsewhere, Austrian Jews greeted the outbreak of the conflict with nationalistic determination, displaying both their national and religious identities. As many as 300,000 fought in the Austro-Hungarian armies. Many obtained medals, ranging from members of highly assimilated Viennese Jewry to those from the ultra-Orthodox Galician and Hungarian groupings. But the new influx into Vienna of over 150,000 wartime Jewish refugees gave Viennese anti-Semitism a new lease of life, manifested for instance in press hostility towards them, but also reflected in parliamentary opinion, university and public meetings, as well as city council discussions, peaking in the summer of 1918. This led to public protests by the Jewish leadership in Vienna. Their defiance was fired by the fact that Jews had faced the draft to the same extent as other groups in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In fact, the anti-Semitism led to an increasing politicisation of the Jewish communities of Vienna, reflecting developments among other minorities within the Empire, many of whom sought to achieve nationhood.

Similarly, other more localised groups also played a full role in the armed forces of the states in which they lived. In Great Britain, the Irish had a long history of military service, so that in 1871 a total of 4.38 per cent of Irishmen of 14–54 years of age had joined the British army, whereas the figure for Englishmen stood at 2.09 per cent. Irish regiments came into existence in London and Liverpool from 1859, while the Tyneside Irish raised their own battalion during the First World War.¹⁶ While the Irish in Britain volunteered en masse to fight in the First World War, the Irish rebellion of 1916 also found some support among the Irish minority in Britain.

The complex reaction to the Great War among the Irish in Britain was also reflected in their motherland. In particular, the war brought great changes for a key minority population within Ireland: the Ulster Unionists. The outbreak of war in Europe caused rising internal political tensions in Ireland to temporarily dissipate: in particular, the two Unionist and Nationalist volunteer militias which had been founded just prior to the

outbreak of the Great War now focused on the European conflict instead of each other. Both Sir Edward Carson, the leader of the Unionists, and John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, pledged these militias to the Allied cause, with both hoping to gain rewards for this support. The implementation of Home Rule, which was already on the statute book and which was vehemently opposed by Carson, was suspended for the duration of the war: both Carson and Redmond hoped that their efforts to support Britain in the war would legitimate their respective anti-Home Rule and pro-Home Rule political positions. Recruiting took place in Ireland in the same way as it did in mainland Britain, with Protestants and Catholics initially having relatively similar rates of volunteering. Nevertheless, while fighting continued on the Western Front, on Easter Monday 1916 a radical nationalist uprising occurred in Dublin, which was ruthlessly suppressed. The competing British, Irish and regional Ulster identities continued to evolve during the Great War, leading ultimately to the partition of Ireland following the Government of Ireland Act (1920), which led to Northern Ireland remaining within the United Kingdom, and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 that led to the establishment of the Irish Free State in the south of Ireland influenced by the rhetoric of self-determination .

Other cases proved equally complicated, as the example of the Armenians who served in both the Ottoman Turkish and Russian armies indicated. A similar situation existed in the case of Alsatians and Lorrainers. Although many of them fought in the German army, about 14,700 may also have enlisted for France, as a result of what Paul Smith described as ‘the kiss of France’.¹⁷ Equally complicated and perhaps rather like the case of the diasporic Jews, those of Polish ethnicity, who would soon have their own nation-state, found themselves fighting for either the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary or for the Tsar.

Perhaps the most complicated situation of all consisted of Austria-Hungary, which, as a multi-ethnic empire with numerous minorities, demonstrated most clearly the problems of minority mobilisation in wartime. A whole series of ‘national minorities’ fought in the imperial army and most minorities supported the Empire’s war effort until late in the war; however, managing the numerous different languages and cultures within the army proved very difficult. At the end of the conflict, many of these ‘subject’ peoples would live in new nation-states as the defeated Habsburg

Empire found itself dismembered in the treaties which followed the war. Nationalist movements here, as in the rest of Europe, did not emerge for the first time during the First World War: they had grown during the course of the nineteenth century, particularly in the parts of the Empire that would become Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Military defeat, the increasing strength and organisation of nationalist movements during the war, and the principles of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points led to the emergence of the new nation-states. Minority alienation from the wartime Austro-Hungarian state also played a significant role.

During the course of the Great War minorities in Austria-Hungary, as in the rest of Europe, found themselves fighting for their place of birth regardless of their ethnicity. Thus, when between 350,000 and 400,000 Austro-Hungarian troops surrendered to Italy on 3 and 4 November 1918, only about a third consisted of ethnic Germans. 'The rest included 83,000 Czechs and Slovaks, 61,000 South Slavs, 70,000 Poles, 32,000 Ruthenians, 25,000 Romanians and even 7,000 Italians.'¹⁸ This, of course, needs consideration against the background of conscription irrespective of ethnicity, but it still demonstrates that minority populations fought until the end.

Yet we cannot ignore a glaring contradiction in any analysis of nationality in the Habsburg Empire during the First World War. Just as hundreds of thousands of young men of all ethnic groups fought in the Habsburg armies, nationality movements, which desired independence, crystallised. These were partly influenced by external events such as the Russian Revolution, war-weariness and economic misery throughout the Empire. At the same time, a policy of liberalisation by the new Emperor Karl I from 1917 also encouraged minorities. By the middle of 1917 the Czechs and South Slavs looked towards establishing their own nation-states. In the summer of 1918 a National Council of Czechs and Slovaks had emerged, but did not yet declare independence. Similar agitation also developed amongst South Slavs. Nevertheless, the final defeat of the Central Powers in the autumn of 1918 saw the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire and the emergence of Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

Any consideration of integration raises complex questions. Ultimately the majority of people who served in the First World War did so for the states in which they were born, whether they consisted of the sons of German

immigrants in Britain or those deemed to have distinct ethnicities in the Habsburg Empire. Yet at the same time the war offered the ultimate opportunity for nationalists to mobilise minorities, crystallising the movements which had emerged during the nineteenth century, who used the war to achieve increased support for their goals.

The exploited

An exploitative relationship between the state and certain minorities in wartime is also visible. Ethnic minorities, like the rest of the populations of the states in which they lived, faced service in the armed forces, partly as a result of the state's desire to recruit as many people as possible. This recruitment also extended, in the case of the imperial powers of Britain and France in particular, to indigenous subjects from the Empire. Christian Koller claims that the Entente powers deployed about 650,000 soldiers from the colonies on European battlefields. The British army used about 150,000 Indian soldiers. It did not deploy Africans as combat troops, but it did utilise West Indians as auxiliaries. France, on the other hand, used over 400,000 Africans, many of them as front-line troops.¹⁹

In addition, immigrants and refugees, both long-established communities and those who arrived or were imported during the course of the Great War, also played a role in helping to maintain labour supplies during the conflict, and although not always 'exploited', this term is the most apt to refer to the normative pattern of economic use of these groups, as the examples of Britain, Germany and France indicate. In all these states the conscription of males resulted in labour shortages, partly filled by the utilisation of women but also by the use of established migrant communities and the importation or arrival of new ones. The three states took different paths, however, in their approaches to labour recruitment.

In the British case, the long-established immigrant communities which had emerged during the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth century included the Irish, East European Jewish and smaller European groups, such as Italians, together with a limited number of settlers from beyond Europe including Africans, Indians, Chinese and West Indians, all of whom would have played a full role in the war effort on the domestic front. Unlike in the German case, where many immigrants had arrived as a result of

relatively recent labour importation, these particular groups had evolved through organic and voluntary migration to Britain over many decades. This mirrored the situation in France, where migration had predominantly occurred from other European states, especially Italy, Belgium and, to a lesser extent, Spain, although France had also witnessed a recent influx of East European Jews and also counted a small number of North Africans among its population.

Nevertheless, new groups also emerged in Britain during the Great War. These included refugees, above all the 240,000 Belgians who fled the German armies invading their country at the start of the war. Although they faced some hostility, most of the reaction towards them remained positive. The attitudes towards Belgians contrasted dramatically with the treatment of the German minority in Britain during the Great War because, while the latter symbolised the enemy, the former reflected the cause for which Britain was fighting. However, as Peter Cahalan has also pointed out: 'But for self-interest the British record on Belgian refugees might have been less generous. The shipment of Belgian refugees from the Netherlands to the UK was essentially part of British economic policy rather than an exercise in philanthropy.'²⁰ The same need for labour also resulted in the recruitment of imperial peoples. Koller claims that: 'About 215,000 civilian war workers from South Africa (31,200), the West Indies (8,000), Mauritius (1,000) and the Fiji Islands (100) as well as from China (92,000) and Egypt (82,000) came to work behind the British front.'²¹ The majority would have carried out non-combatant duties in France, but some made their way to Britain. The number of black people in Britain had increased to about 20,000 by the end of the war. These included labourers 'made welcome in the munitions and chemical factories', as well as merchant sailors who replaced white Britons.²² Similarly, the number of 'Lascar' sailors increased in Britain during the First World War, while growing numbers of Indians found themselves working in factories in Glasgow, London and Liverpool.

While immigrant communities in Britain had largely emerged as a result of voluntary immigration before 1914, supplemented by official recruitment during the Great War, the state had always played a more direct role in Germany. As it changed from a country of emigration to one of immigration during the course of the nineteenth century, both agriculture and industry

developed a need for workers, which meant that employers in both of these sectors cooperated with the government to ensure a supply of labour originating mostly from Eastern Europe, especially Russian and Austrian Poland, but also from Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy. By 1907 a total of 882,315 foreigners worked in Germany. The outbreak of the First World War, which forced over 3 million Germans into military service in August 1914, meant that all sectors of the economy became even more dependent upon imported labour. Consequently, directives from the Prussian Ministry of War in the summer and autumn of 1914 compelled over 300,000 Russian and Polish workers of hostile origin to remain in the country. The German economy also became reliant on a prisoner workforce drawn from the 2.5 million prisoners of war that the country captured over the course of the war. In those areas of Belgium and Russia that the German army had occupied following its invasion, high unemployment and food shortages resulting in malnutrition led to some of the local population volunteering to work in Germany when German labour recruitment began in 1915. Initially this recruitment of labour was on a voluntary basis; however, by the end of 1916 the Germans implemented forced labour conscription, which was in essence a policy of forced deportation, upon the local populations of their occupied zones of Russian Poland and Belgium. Overall, the use of non-German labour proved of fundamental importance for the German war economy, although the coercive policies adopted in the deportation of foreign civilian labour to Germany resulted in very tough conditions for those workers involved.

France also adopted policies aimed at importing labour, moving away from the informal and uncontrolled migration which had occurred before 1914 in order to replace the male population in the armed forces and increase industrial production. This process took off in particular from 1915. As many as 662,000 foreigners moved to France during the Great War. The largest number, 230,000, came from Spain but over 100,000 arrived from North Africa, while over 85,000 originated in the Far East, including China. Over a quarter of a million non-Europeans entered France during the course of the war. These newcomers, especially those from beyond Europe, were frequently employed in agriculture and armaments production. While the movement of Spaniards remained unregulated, at least as far as the French border, France signed contracts with Italy and Portugal, while the arrival of workers from beyond Europe took place in a

far more controlled, virtually military fashion, involving labour brigades and barracks established near places of work. Although the newcomers often earned more than they had in their land of origin, many expressed discontent with the conditions they had to endure, especially those from Spain. Meanwhile, some of the colonial workers endured virtual military control and received less pay than their French and European counterparts. Apart from experiencing control and exploitation, the newly arrived immigrants, especially those from beyond Europe, faced a variety of reactions from the French. While this included a positive reception, the non-European immigrants also experienced racial attacks during the course of 1917.

The role and position of ethnic minorities during the First World War

Summarising the position and role of ethnic minorities during the Great War proves problematic in view of the vast numbers of people involved and the range of communities concerned, ranging from localised groups such as Sorbs and Slovaks to diasporic communities such as Germans and Jews, including immigrants and refugees, both long-established communities and those that arrived during the course of the conflict. Nevertheless, minorities played three roles in particular during the Great War, which the state and the majority population ultimately assigned to them.

The most obvious of these consists of the persecuted. Those regarded in this way either had some connection with the enemy or were perceived by the state and public opinion as having such a position. The assignation of the label 'enemy alien', which Britain and its Empire pioneered during the war, doomed those populations which faced this description. Most obviously, this affected Germans, not simply in Britain and its Empire, but in all Allied states. On the one hand, the state, whether British, Italian or Russian, introduced a whole series of measures to deal with the perceived threat of Germans, ranging from controls upon movement and property confiscation to deportation. Against this background of official persecution, Allied public opinion played a role in marginalising German communities throughout the world, creating negative images of the enemy within the press and boycotting Germans. Most seriously, the First World War

witnessed a global pogrom against German communities and their property, peaking especially in May 1915, but surfacing again in 1917 in Brazil, in particular. Similarly ugly events also occurred in the United States.

While Germans in Allied states became one obvious example of a persecuted minority, confirmed by their legal status as enemy aliens, other groups perceived as having some connection with external foes also faced hostility. These included the Armenians, a minority whose members lived not just in the Ottoman Empire but also in Russia. Jews, meanwhile, despite their service in armies throughout Europe during the Great War, still faced persecution. This hostility drew upon thousands of years of Judeophobia, and their diasporic heritage made them equally vulnerable. Just as public opinion in Allied states could claim that the loyalties of Germans lay elsewhere, so in the same way anti-Semites in Britain, Germany and Russia could suggest that Jewish populations owed allegiance to enemy powers.

The second role of minorities during the Great War consisted of the integrated, although many communities did not become aware of their level of acceptance until the outbreak of war. The key indicator of acceptance and integration consisted of service in the army of the state of birth. Some members of minorities volunteered, like the Irish Roman Catholics living in Britain. Examples also exist of ethnic groups fighting until the bitter end for the state of their birth rather than the state of their ethnicity. Yet, as in the case of those who found themselves designated enemy aliens, many people with distinct ethnicities simply faced conscription by the state, with no control over their status, thereby simply resembling majority populations who faced the same fate.

The position of the integrated remained complex. Some groups who saw themselves as holding this status, above all Jews, actually discovered that many sections of the national population did not regard them as such. In view of the anti-Semitism that had increased in Europe from the end of the nineteenth century, Jewish leaders tried to stress their loyalty to the homeland, and this was reflected in the high service rates of Jewish males. In some states this worked, above all in France, perhaps because the country had already publicly addressed anti-Semitism in the army and population during the Dreyfus Affair . In most other cases, however, protestations of loyalty did not convince ardent anti-Semites, above all in

Russia, where anti-Semitism resulted in the type of extreme violence against Jews that had characterised the pre-war years.

The outcome of the war was even more complicated for those minority populations in Austro-Hungary who found themselves fighting for the Empire, yet who, by the end of the war, found themselves living in new nation-states. We can understand this dichotomy in a variety of ways. In the first place, as already mentioned, most of those fighting in any army consisted of conscripts. Secondly, while rank-and-file soldiers followed orders, those who claimed to represent them, in the form of nationalist leaders, seized their moment as the Austro-Hungarian Empire entered its final phase of collapse and as the principles of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points legitimised self-determination.

Yet at this stage we need to remember the meaning of integration at the time, which allowed for an overarching national identity in the age of the nation-state, yet also recognised sub-identities within it. Acknowledging this duality inherent in the contemporary idea of integration helps to explain the contradictions, at least in the case of the Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians and other residents of the Habsburg Empire during the Great War. Integration is not the same as assimilation, as the ethnic identity remains present, coexisting and interacting with the overarching national identity. Yet the case of Jewish minorities remained more fraught: even those Jews who regarded themselves as fully assimilated in Germany and Britain, for instance, would find their loyalty questioned. Ultimately the outcome of the war was to challenge older ideas of what constituted integration: the legacy of the war was to create a host of new minorities in the nation-states that emerged from the conflict. In Central and Eastern Europe in the interwar years 25 million people belonged to a minority grouping. Minority populations, and their treatment, thus emerged from the war as a major issue, and one which was to play a key role in perpetuating international instability.

Finally, minorities had a third role to play during the Great War in the form of the exploited. In the case of those long-term minorities who resided in France and Britain before 1914, many simply continued their previous employment or moved jobs into the war economy. Labourers imported to Germany before 1914 found themselves stranded after the outbreak of war and would continue working for the German economy, now in wartime

mode. At the same time, against the background of full mobilisation and the need to fill labour shortages and produce armaments, Britain, France and Germany imported immigrants from wherever they could find them. These newcomers simply represented a commodity for the war economies of these countries, often facing hostility from the majority population. While their experiences were not unremittingly bleak, European states certainly exploited their labour power.

Ethnic minorities therefore faced a series of complex experiences during the Great War. The above discussion has tried to summarise these into the three categories of persecuted, integrated and exploited, although some crossover clearly exists. Ultimately, however, the individual members of the vast range of minority communities scattered throughout Europe and elsewhere, whether Germans in Britain, Jews in Russia, Slovaks in Austria-Hungary or the Chinese in France, had relatively little agency regarding their role, as the vast forces of state and society either persecuted them, welcomed them into the armed forces or exploited their labour power.

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10 Populations under occupation

Sophie de Schaepdrijver

Introduction

The European military occupations of the First World War were, so to speak, a by-product of war. In 1939–40, imperial designs on the European continent would provide the very impetus for war. By contrast, in 1914–18, the European belligerents – specifically, the Central Powers¹ – found themselves in possession of vast swathes of continental territory, whether or not their leaders had gone to war with territorial aggrandisement foremost in mind.

But vast swathes of territory they were. Successive waves of attack (1914 in Belgium and northern France; 1915–16 in the Baltic, Poland, and the Balkans; 1917–18 in north-eastern Italy, the Baltic, Ukraine and the Transcaucasus) yielded territories ranging, at the height of occupation, from Lille to Rostov – and even, briefly, Tbilisi – and from Estonia to Albania. The spoils encompassed four major capital cities (Brussels, Warsaw, Belgrade and Bucharest) and a host of other thriving centres – Roubaix, Antwerp, Vilna, Udine – not to mention areas of crucial economic importance from the Borinage coalfields to the Ploieşti oilfields.

Conquest bred its own logic. Whether or not conquering these vast territories and administering these extensive populations had been part of any preordained plan, now that the conquests were a fact, they became part and parcel of the conquering states' war efforts. They were mobilised in three ways to help the conquering states wage war: they served as a hinterland for the fighting armies; their resources, including manpower, were siphoned off; and, on the symbolic level, the prestige of their conquest and of the conqueror's 'civilising' mission was harnessed vis-à-vis the victorious (but never wholly unscathed) home fronts. Longer-term perspectives emerged: the conquered territories became the subject of war

aims, to be retained in the orbit of conquering states even after the cessation of hostilities, whether in the form of outright annexation or of vassalage of some kind. Meanwhile, liberating the occupied territories became an Entente war aim. In short, possession through military conquest became a given of war, which found its way into the belligerent societies' mobilisation for war on all levels (military, economic, social, political and cultural).

As to the conquered societies, they found themselves at the mercy of armed violence (which brought concrete violence, and, through a plethora of vexatious or at least condescending measures, symbolic violence as well) and subjected to regimes bent on using them for the war effort and harbouring longer-term designs of domination. Invasions – as well as, in some cases, retreats – placed civilian populations at considerable risk: 'mobile' warfare wreaked havoc on civilian life as massacres, forced expulsions, plunder and destruction, with attendant mass flight and epidemics, took their toll. 'Established' occupation regimes further endangered civilian life through harsh restrictions, the repression of non-compliant behaviour, the imposition of a massive military presence (more so in areas closest to the fronts), material exploitation, and the dismantling of 'native' institutions.

At the same time it is important to point out that civilian life was not constantly and uniformly endangered – neither in the West nor in the East. While invasions occasioned explosions of violence, and occupations were brutal affairs, it is possible to observe certain interstices to the violence, boundaries to exploitation, and limits to encroachment. These ever shifting checks and bounds could emanate from occupation regimes themselves (or particular forces within them) and from occupying powers' national governments or, occasionally, parliaments; they could emerge from the contradictory priorities of warfare; they could be imposed by international bodies carrying the weight of neutral states; and they could be wrested from occupying powers by the occupied themselves.

For occupied societies were not passive recipients of violence, exploitation and domination. Occupied institutions, groups and individuals brought considerable agency to bear on 'their' occupation. Occupying regimes' decrees were counteracted or inflected in many ways, ranging from covert administrative measures over clandestine support for opposing

armies (secret intelligence, sabotage) to – much more rarely – armed protest. But occupying regimes could also count on some measure of support. This could come from specific segments of ‘native’ administrations: for instance, local police forces worked with occupying regimes up to a point, because keeping crime in check benefited not only the regime, but also civilian society. Support could also come from individuals bent on self-advancement, such as middlemen who facilitated armies’ purchases of agricultural products. Or it could come from certain factions, such as client ethnic groups. Some endeavours were collective in scope, encompassing, at least in principle, the entire occupied community; others emanated from, and sought to benefit, specific interests only. This distinction need not be coterminous with that between defiance and compliance; some compliant efforts were meant to serve collective interests, such as the collection of war taxes. Conversely, some actions of protest, such as farmers’ armed resistance to crop requisitions, were not necessarily meant to address the collective interest. In all cases, the actions of the occupied, no less than those of the occupiers, gave specific form to the war experience that was occupation.

The moving map of military conquest, 1914–18

When the offensive operations on the Western Front ground to a halt in November 1914, Germany found itself occupying almost all of Belgium and all or part of nine north-eastern French departments. In all, Germany ruled over some 10 million people in one of the world’s most industrialised and urbanised areas. A year later, when the front line in the East extended from the northern tip of Kurland in Lithuania to East Galicia, the Central Powers were in control of large swathes of Eastern Europe, including Russian Poland, most of the Baltic territories, which were now renamed Ober Ost (Supreme Headquarters East), Serbia and Vardar-Macedonia. Montenegro and most of Albania were occupied shortly afterwards. A year and a half after the outbreak of the war, then, Germany controlled the equivalent of 28 per cent of its home population and just under half the inhabitants of the French Empire; Austria-Hungary had enlarged its population by nearly a tenth, and Bulgaria by as much as 50 per cent. During subsequent stages of the war the Central Powers’ control expanded further. In December 1916, the three Central Powers, with Ottoman aid,

jointly occupied more than two-thirds of Romania. After the Italian debacle at Caporetto in October–November 1917, German and Austrian troops penetrated 100 kilometres into the northern Italian region of Friuli and the occupied Venetian provinces. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 enormously expanded the Central Powers' sphere: the Russian Empire lost a third of its territory and an estimated 50–55 million people. German control over the Baltic expanded by over 300 kilometres; in the south, Austro-German control expanded 1,250 kilometres to the River Don, including the Crimea. Until November 1918, the East seemed wide open.

In considering the military occupations of 1914–18, it is important to check the impulse to generalise. First of all, occupying powers differed – Bulgaria's *modus occupandi* stood at a considerable remove from that of Wilhelmine Germany; Hungarian occupying forces differed in their aims and methods from Austrian ones; and, within occupying regimes, military and civilian priorities seldom harmonised. Secondly, occupying regimes' goals changed as the war moved into different stages, with the second half of the war characterised by even more intensive exploitation of resources, including manpower. And, thirdly, the occupied areas spanned widely different societies. They ranged from Belgium, the most densely populated state in the world at the time, to the Baltic, a vast and sparsely inhabited region; from the highly literate population of northern France (the first completely literate generation in French history) and the urban sophistication of Warsaw to the still largely illiterate inhabitants of the southern Balkan uplands. Occupied populations entertained vastly different perspectives on the nation-state at war. If Serbians and Belgians might be expected to harbour strong feelings regarding their respective 'national Golgothas' – and many did, though by no means all – then the sense of the 'enemy' was considerably more blurred in regions disputed between competing empires, such as Poland, Galicia or the Baltic. Ethnic diversity further complicated the picture. All of these permutations of citizenship were part of the equipment with which military and civilians alike entered the experience of occupation .

Invasion

The differing circumstances of invasion would also make for different perspectives on occupiers and occupied. The German invasion of Belgium and northern France had been marked by the so-called ‘German atrocities’, a brief but furious outburst of violence against civilians accused of conducting a sniper war. The invading armies’ victimisation of civilians would circumscribe relations between occupiers and occupied for the next four years. In Poland and the Baltic the violence of the invasion established no such clear dividing-line: not the invading German but the retreating Russian army had harmed civilians most. Many hundreds of thousands of people had been forcibly, often murderously, herded away (see [Chapter 8](#)). Jewish communities fell victim to a malevolent merger of wartime ‘fifth column’ suspicion and traditional anti-Semitism (see [Chapter 9](#)). Serbia again offered a clear dividing-line of violence and victimisation. The first invasion in 1914 had occasioned cruel ‘retaliations’ against alleged civilian snipers. The Austrian Commander-in-Chief, Conrad von Hötzendorf, was as obsessed with the memory of guerrilla units – the *comitadji* – during the Balkan wars as the commanders in the west were with the memory of French *francs-tireurs* in 1870–1. The brief invasion of 1914 had been followed by the months-long shelling of Belgrade; the second invasion conquered a heavily damaged country.

There were differences in the degree of exhaustion of civilian society at the time the occupations started. In northern France and Belgium the atrocities of the invasion had caused great dislocation: in Belgium, an estimated 1.5 million out of 7.6 fled their homes (see [Chapter 8](#)). Still, the violence had remained geographically contained: it could erupt in one locality and bypass surrounding ones, which created pockets of relative refuge. Moreover, in spite of the exodus, local government continued and civil society functioned. Relief initiatives proliferated, with international assistance, though material misery remained severe. In France civilian society’s vulnerability was exacerbated by the departure of most men of military age. Because Belgium’s mobilisation had been interrupted by the invasion, a large number of military-age men were still around (to the bafflement, and on occasion rage, of the invading troops).

The ‘great advance’ of the Central Powers in the East found societies on which lengthy mobile warfare had taken a toll. The Government General of Warsaw had lost 1.5 million people (out of 7.5) to mobilisation, expulsions,

flight, epidemics and violence. All but the most subaltern civil servants had joined the Russian retreat. As in the West, a modicum of central administrative continuity was ensured by an ad hoc relief organisation: the Central Civilian Committee (Centralny Komitet Obywatelski), staffed by Russian-leaning Polish elites, addressed the population's abysmal misery. In February 1915 it encompassed 6 'national', 46 district-wide, 160 rural and 65 urban relief committees. Ober Ost, which had lost one-third of its population (well over half in some regions), was a picture of helplessness, without much in the way of civilian continuity. Likewise, Serbia's civilian society was battered out of recognition by two punitive invasions, the bombardment of undefended cities, the devastating retreat of the Serbian army, and the raging typhus epidemic. Belgrade had shrunk from 90,000 to an estimated 10,000 citizens.

In 1917 the flight of the civilian authorities and the landowning elites from the soon-to-be-occupied Friuli region and the Veneto plain caused so much dislocation that it would later be called, devastatingly, an 'internal Caporetto' – that is, a rout not just of military powers, but of those powers responsible for the security of civilians. The 1918 German advance into the disintegrating Russian Empire occurred, of course, in the context of civil war.

Establishing occupation regimes

Invasions were followed by the establishment of structures of control. In the areas closest to the fronts (the so-called *Etappen*), the improvised, immediate assertion of military authority prevailed over the establishment of organised occupation administrations. In the West, the French departments completely or partly under German control (Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Somme, Aisne, Ardennes, Marne, Meuse, Meurthe-et-Moselle and Vosges) fell under an *Etappe* regime; their largest cities (Lille and Roubaix-Tourcoing) were situated a mere 20 kilometres from the front. The Belgian *Etappe* (all of West and most of East Flanders, much of Hainaut and parts of Luxembourg) comprised one-third of the occupied territory and about 22 per cent of the occupied population. A military frontier was established between this part and the rest of occupied Belgium, which came under the control of the Government General with its seat in Brussels.² The

Governments General in Belgium, in German-occupied as well as in Habsburg-occupied Poland, and in Serbia were separate from the front, and from the front's hinterland. They were areas of more vigorous administrative efforts towards the long-term in-depth utilisation of the conquered territories' resources. They were governed by specially appointed Governors General answerable directly to the Kaiser in the German case (in 1915, the German Governors General were Moritz von Bissing in Belgium and Hans von Beseler in the German-controlled part of Poland), and to the army High Command in the Habsburg case (Baron Diller in the Habsburg-controlled part of Poland; Freiherr Salis-Seewis in Serbia). In German-occupied Poland, as in Belgium, the fact that the Governor General had no superior but the Kaiser, while the civilian administration (*Zivilverwaltung*) under his control also answered to the civilian authorities in Berlin, made for an unclear chain of command. Ober Ost was ruled by an exclusively military regime that tolerated little input from German civilian authorities, while enacting a far-reaching reconfiguring effort – a 'military utopia', in the words of the historian Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius . From the summer of 1916, the occupied two-thirds of Romania was administered by a military government of the Central Powers jointly – although in practice German officials made the key decisions, to the chagrin of their Austrian confrères. This power dynamic endured after the spring of 1918, when all of Romania came under central (de facto German) domination. Occupied Italy was an *Etappe* under exclusively military control by Austrian and German forces. Occupied Ukraine was divided between Germany and Austria-Hungary: as in Romania, this occasioned considerable tension over the division of the spoils.

In re-establishing order, no national or provincial authorities were invited to be 'partners', but the occupying powers enlisted local institutions in varying ways. In France, the *Etappe* inspection and district commanders took over much of the departmental and regional administration, while native municipalities continued to function: they were both the intermediaries between occupiers and occupied and the locus of direct, often harsh, confrontation . The situation was roughly similar – if less severe – in the Belgian *Etappe*. In the Belgian Government General, the *Zivilverwaltung* took over the upper echelons of the Brussels ministries that were still permitted to function (Justice, Interior, Culture, Public Works, Agriculture and Finance). However, native civil servants were increasingly

elbowed out of their responsibilities as German offices proliferated. Belgian jurisdiction was curtailed. Apart from the ad hoc National Committee for Relief, which was tolerated – if grudgingly – by the occupation authorities, native administrative continuity and autonomy shrank to the municipal level .

For all this, in the West, occupying authorities could work with an existing, if not always compliant, infrastructure of clerks, policemen, postmen, schoolteachers and the like. In the East, the dislocation wrought by the Russian retreat meant building up an administrative machinery from scratch. In addition, local initiatives were actively suppressed. In Ober Ost, the administration was exclusively, even emphatically, German; locals were denied access and employed only as forced and unpaid helpers. In the Government General of Warsaw, Von Beseler soon after assuming office dismantled the Central Civilian Committee, which by then had taken on a wide array of administrative and policing functions and had set up a Polish judiciary. Von Beseler's *Zivilverwaltung* chief, Von Kries, advocated maintaining the committee – a sizeable organisation by regional standards – while limiting its action to relief and school organisation, but the Governor General's claim to 'clear demarcations of authority' brooked no local initiative: he appointed his own relief organisation instead. In Habsburg-occupied Poland, the Government General's relative openness to Polish initiatives may have been offset by military rules and the concomitant limitations on public life. In Serbia the occupation government, pursuing a 'denationalising' policy, took over all governance except at the local level, and exercised far-reaching control even there: the territory's 852 municipalities were headed by "reliable" local inhabitants', and the presidents of local courts had to be approved by the occupying district commander. The newly appointed Belgrade city council was a strictly apolitical body, put in place to assist the Government General in material matters . The Austrian–German military command of occupied north-eastern Italy attempted to work as much as possible with such local administrations as remained, so as not to create an occupying civilian administration that would take up too much of the region's resources intended for the military. This arrangement, of course, was predicated upon local administrations' compliance with the occupiers' material requirements. When local powers proved unwilling, they could be replaced: when the Ukrainian Central Council (*Rada*), which at least in theory

constituted occupied Ukraine's 'government', proved unable to comply with the occupiers' demands, it was disbanded by German troops in favour of more compliant leadership (the hetmanate of the former tsarist General Skoropadsky'i, endorsed by the landowning interests). Elsewhere too, the intensification of warfare begat vassal states and statelets. The Central Powers created a kingdom of Poland in November 1916 in the hopes of raising an army against Russia. The German occupation regime declared Flanders 'independent' in December 1917. Baltic states such as the 'Duchy of Kurland and Semigallia' were created in 1918.

War aims

Short-term aims

The more immediate goals of the occupying regimes – what these states wanted from their conquests to support the war they were waging – were threefold. The first and most immediate was the establishment of order, as occupied territory was being transformed into a hinterland for a fighting army. This goal translated into different needs, depending on the shape and mobility of the fighting front, as well as on the terrain. Occupying powers preferred to commit as few troops as possible to policing occupied lands. In practice, this design prescribed two courses of action, which were not mutually exclusive: immediate terrorisation of the populace and enlisting local forces of order. The German troops that invaded Belgium in 1914 killed over five thousand civilians and burned tens of thousands of houses in a savage reaction to alleged civilian sniping. The violence subsequently gave way to a wary *modus vivendi* between occupiers and occupied. This arrangement included some common policing. As elsewhere, the occupied had a stake in maintaining order, for they themselves were made to bear the brunt of disturbances. The need to ensure domination while fighting a war led occupying powers to seek stability beyond coercion. Achieving some kind of self-replenishing authority over conquered lands promised maximum return for a minimal expenditure of troops. At a basic level, occupying powers did enjoy at least some temporary legality, given the existing 'laws' of belligerent occupation. In addition, occupying powers could highlight the end of the violence and the upheaval of invasion to foster an atmosphere of 'normality' and acceptance. Fostering acceptance,

of course, was easier where the violence of the invasion had spared civilians or the deposed regime had been discredited.

Since the conquered territories had to serve the invaders' war effort first and foremost, material exploitation was a priority. But it was exploitation in an orderly manner: disorganised greed might benefit individuals, but not the imperial fatherlands. Order as a priority also meant that the occupied lands had to be left with means of subsistence: this put limits to rapacity. Beyond these pragmatic considerations lay questions of self-definition: the German and Habsburg armies, in particular, saw themselves as bringers of order – dispensers but also containers of violence, stern but just. After initial periods of outright plunder – especially pronounced, for instance, in north-eastern Italy, which was overrun by half-starved Habsburg troops – more orderly requisitioning, then levies for 'occupation costs', were imposed on invaded lands. Revenue was siphoned off through the establishment of monopolies on crucial resources. Markets were rigged, as occupying regimes and ordinary soldiers bought goods at forced exchange rates, if they did not engage in outright looting. Other depredations included the 'sequestration' and takeover of non-cooperative manufacturing firms and utilities, as well as the hauling off to the homeland of industrial facilities (such as machinery and driving-belts), transportation infrastructure (railway lines and rolling stock), and agricultural resources (such as wood and livestock).

The fond notion of 'stern but just' rule foundered on the exploitation of one major resource, which occupying powers exploited with increasing ferocity as their military fortunes declined: to wit, labour. Labour was extracted from occupied territories in different forms, from the more or less voluntary variety (when people were in fact forced by material misery) to coerced, deported labour, work gangs and labour camps. (On the latter, see [Chapter 11](#).) In August 1914 the German authorities forced half a million seasonal agricultural workers from Russian Poland to remain in Germany. Forced labour was introduced in the General Governments of Belgium and Poland in the fall of 1916. This was a major shock to fragile survival systems, and introduced new levels of repression, with raids on workers, massive collective fines on towns and villages unwilling or unable to deliver the required contingent of workers, and the introduction of work gangs and labour camps. The measure was rescinded a year later, but the

rounding up of workers for forced labour continued in areas under direct German military rule in northern France, western Belgium and the Baltic. Forced labour was also imposed on civilians under Bulgarian and Habsburg rule. Coerced-labour drives, in their inefficiency and gratuitous cruelty, often resembled punitive measures more than they did measures of 'rational' exploitation.

They did not stop publicists at home from extolling the armies' capacity for bringing order and purpose to war-torn enemy lands.³ Nations' competence for occupation (so to speak) became an element in war culture. This cultural practice related to the third goal of occupiers vis-à-vis their conquered territories. The prestige of conquest was to be harnessed for domestic use, in order to promote the ongoing mobilisation of the home population, itself a crucial resource in an industrial war. Much enthusiastic rhetoric surrounded Germany's 'regenerating' mission not just in the East but also in Belgium.

For all that, as the war intensified, the occupied territories failed to yield sufficient resources to address the war needs of the occupying states: the resulting increase in coercion further eroded cooperation and the legitimacy of the occupying powers. In Habsburg-occupied Serbia and in jointly occupied Ukraine, for instance, increased repression and exploitation bred collective armed civilian resistance, which was otherwise rare among occupied civilians in the First World War. Compared to colonial or commercial empires, the wartime empires were unwieldy weapons. Not only were they unable to make up for a conqueror's military-industrial deficiencies, but the maintenance of empire actually weakened military fortunes. Germany's enormous land gains after Brest-Litovsk, to name just the most egregious example, rendered impossible a negotiated peace that would have left the country with at least some of its spoils. In addition, occupations were disorderly affairs, which further compromised the bureaucratic efficiency of belligerent states. Wilhelm II's 'personal regime' was replicated by the Prussian career officers who ruled the occupied territories. They felt little accountability to the government in Berlin and administered their lands like fiefdoms, imposing opaque and capricious structures of command.

Long-term aims

In 1914, as mentioned earlier, the Central Powers did not enter the war in order to create European empires. Their goal was continental or regional dominance, not a redrawing of the map. But conquest bred its own logic and permanent control over conquered territories *became* a war aim. In Germany lobbies formulated far-reaching demands as early as September 1914, and protest against the possibility of a peace without annexations gave rise to a mass movement, the Deutsche Vaterlandspartei, in 1917–18. An ever wider coalition of pro-expansionist forces pushed the agenda onwards and left no imperialist claim unheeded. The changes wrought by industrialisation (which had generated anxieties about overpopulation, ‘degeneration’, agricultural self-sufficiency and dependence on imported raw materials) and a diminished sense of limitations among the political and bureaucratic elites created the basis for a broad coalition in favour of expansion. Plans for long-term gain included agricultural colonisation, the creation of subordinate economies, and the suppression of uncongenial ideologies – even of ideologies altogether. In 1915–18 the Habsburg state aimed to return conquered Serbia to an apoliticised state of vassalage. By contrast, the creation of ethnically homogeneous territories was not a central aim: plans for what a contemporary – the pan-German leader Heinrich Class – called ‘a kind of “ethnic territorial cleansing”’, never left the blueprint stage. One exception was Bulgaria’s policy of forced transfers and even the mass murder of Serbs, Greeks, Vlachs and other minorities in occupied Serbia and Macedonia. The ethnic violence of Bulgaria’s occupation continued a tradition from the Balkan wars, and of course foreshadowed later developments. Elsewhere, the ethnic restructuring of conquered lands remained at an inchoate stage. But their very conquest and, importantly, their subsequent loss would contribute to the reimagining of these lands (specifically in the East) as putatively unstructured ‘spaces’, inhabited by congeries of disparate, subaltern peoples – not as nation-states

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The occupied

The many private diaries kept by men and women under occupation all paint a picture of civilian life grimly, almost despairingly, restricted by military occupation. (The very act of keeping a diary was a means of

combating despair.) The range of ‘normal’ activities available to civilians differed over time and by location, as well as by class and gender (with women often facing fewer restrictions than men, especially military-age men), but it was limited everywhere. Mobility was much restricted. Ordinary economic activities endured longer in some countries and in some sectors than in others, but as a rule the impeded flow of people and goods, monetary difficulties, requisitioning of goods, tools and labour, war levies, expropriations, expulsions, destructions and other calamities wrought by occupation increasingly constrained economic life. Illegal gains, obtained on black markets of many varieties, became correspondingly important. While it did not grind to a halt (contrary to pious post-war myths), public life shrank. Private lives were affected, as marriage and birth rates dropped even in privileged areas. Deepening scarcities – of food, fuel, clothing, soap and medicine – wreaked havoc on populations’ health: a large percentage of children grew up stunted for life.

At the same time, occupations offered allurements to the occupied, sometimes precisely in the context of diminished expectations. To the extent that the establishment of an occupation regime signalled an end to open violence, it could spell relief. Moreover, occupation regimes could offer opportunities for advancement. Supplying the occupying troops yielded profits. As misery widened, so did the pool of informers for the occupation police. The arrival of a new population of occupation personnel (sometimes with their families) offered opportunities as well: even much depressed Belgrade saw a surge in café life under occupation. Against the backdrop of a silenced press, authors of varying renown contributed copy to newspapers launched by occupation press bureaux in Serbia, Romania, northern France and Belgium.

Occupation regimes nevertheless faced a fundamental deficit of legitimacy. It was difficult to ground a regime imposed by violence in continuity and consent. It was therefore crucial to enlist either local elites – for whom occupation regimes could hold out the promise of maintaining existing social hierarchies, as they did for Ukrainian landowners – or client ethnic groups (or, as the case might be, self-appointed spokesmen of client ethnic groups). Such recruits, however, could prove to be wavering in their support, inefficient in such ruling tasks as were entrusted to them, or ostracised by the wider population to such an extent as to deepen the

occupied regime's legitimacy deficit. Even the apparently risk-free notion of generating a grateful apolitical elite through the creation of 'national' universities in Warsaw and Ghent (which would no longer offer instruction in Russian or in French) turned out to be inseparable from the polarising realities of occupation.

'Ordinary' civilian activities – policing, the collecting of taxes, justice – could shade into de facto complicity with the occupier. But they could also shade into forms of resistance. Across occupations, an array of forms of non-compliance, unarmed defiance or (rarely) armed opposition arose. Unarmed activities included administrative and industrial obstruction, the publication of underground protest literature, sabotage, establishing escape networks for 'enemy' troops, sheltering people who had been targeted for arrest or deportation, and military intelligence – the latter an especially important endeavour in the occupied West, a densely populated and largely hostile area behind the German front criss-crossed with crucial railway lines. The varieties of resistance depended on many factors, such as geography – the nature of the terrain or access to a neutral frontier – the depth and rigour of the occupation regime, and indigenous traditions of defiance of central authority.

Some forms of non-compliance, such as escaping forced labour camps or hiding requisitioned goods, became daily strategies for survival. When 'native' authorities engaged in non-compliant actions, they took overtones of a formal challenge to occupation regimes' authority. For instance, in occupied Belgium in 1917, the city of Tournai refused to submit lists of the unemployed whom the Germans had targeted for forced labour, declaring its unwillingness to 'provide arms against its own children'. Another form of civilian defiance was discursive. Clandestine newspapers and pamphlets were disseminated in great variety; they ranged from the high-brow to the broadly, even coarsely, popular. Several practical varieties of unarmed resistance existed. Escape networks helped trapped soldiers or even workers in key industries to leave the occupied areas and join the opposing forces. The British nurse Edith Cavell had been part of an organisation helping stranded Entente soldiers leave occupied Belgium; she was, for this reason, condemned to death on charges of war treason and executed in Brussels in October 1915. Such networks were ad hoc creations but deeply embedded in civilian society. A core of activists was assisted by large numbers of

occasional helpers – neighbours, couriers, people willing to lend out space or ‘mailboxes’ or to provide food and other supplies. The occasional participants thus effectively entered the world of illegality – with its attendant risks.

Another form of practical resistance was the gathering of military intelligence: in other words, spying. The territories behind the Western Front became choice areas for the gathering of information on the German armies by French, Belgian and (most intensely and efficiently) British intelligence.⁴ Many intelligence networks relied on pre-existing professional, political or confessional contacts. In Belgium the dense railroad network that ferried German troops between the Western and Eastern Fronts was the focus of spying activities by Belgian railway professionals, who were, as a result, disproportionately likely to become ‘martyrs’ of the resistance.

Armed resistance against occupation regimes was rare (as was armed support). The *francs-tireurs*, whose spectre prompted the massacres that took place in the summer of 1914 in Belgium and northern France, were a figment of the invading armies’ imagination. The assassination of collaborators was rare, of occupation personnel, rarer still. The killing of General von Eichhorn in the Ukraine in July 1918 occurred as occupation shaded into civil war, as the rudimentary Ukrainian state could claim no monopoly of armed violence. The range of civilian reactions to occupation during the First World War remained by and large more strictly *civilian*, i.e., unarmed, particularly in Western Europe, where the continued fighting of occupied populations’ ‘own’ national armies encouraged a clearer division of labour between armed forces and civilian populations under occupation. (Contacts between the occupied and ‘their’ army on the other side of the line were prohibited; the smuggling of messages between the French and Belgian armies, at one end, and occupied populations, at the other, was another form of resistance. This absence of contact helped create an exalted, almost mythical, view of the fighting army among the occupied.) Because of this division of labour, indigenous authority under occupation was less suspect by definition than it would be in 1939–45. To be sure, some local office-holders faced charges after the Armistice. Yet by and large local government was a bulwark against the exploitation of civilians by the enemy military. Maintaining domestic order was considered to be a part of

this task, and armed resistance seemed like the reckless, unpatriotic endangerment of fellow citizens.

In the formerly conquered territories the ‘exit from occupation’ was a long-drawn-out matter.⁵ Those who had worked with the occupying power (or were accused of having done so), those who had profiteered from the war, and those who had shown themselves to be on too intimate a footing with the occupiers (women were especially targeted), suffered ‘popular violence’, official reprisals or both. This fierce rancour coincided with equally fierce commemorations of civilian heroism in wartime. For all this intensity, the question of the possible wider relevance of occupations remains under-examined at the international level.⁶ Military occupation remained a marginal experience, neither front nor home front. In addition, the ‘pacifist turn’ of the 1920s fostered scepticism about civilian suffering, which was retrospectively defined as a figment of war propaganda. Memories of the occupations were even less distinct on the side of the erstwhile occupiers: in the Weimar Republic, what possible reflections might have emerged were eclipsed by the German innocence campaign and by the Rhine and Ruhr occupations. The resulting interwar amnesia across Europe with regard to the occupations of 1914–18, it seems fair to suggest, did not contribute to a sense of urgency over the need to reinforce the laws of war bearing on the treatment of civilians under military occupation. The outbreak of the Second World War would bring a renewed sense of urgency

I sincerely thank the editors for their comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

1 The Entente’s European holdings will not be considered in this chapter. They were, in the main, more purely strategic, such as the ‘occupation’ of Salonica behind the Macedonian front from 1916 to 1918. Russia’s incursion into East Prussia in 1914 and its intermittent control over Galicia from 1914 to 1916 reflected the mobility of warfare on the Eastern Front. See Mark von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914–1918* (Seattle: University

of Washington Press, 2007); Peter Holquist, ‘The role of personality in the first (1914–1915) Russian occupation of Galicia and Bukovina’, in Jonathan Dekel-Chen *et al.* (eds.), *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 52–73; and, for Lemberg (Lvov), Christoph Mick, *Kriegserfahrungen in einer multiethnischen Stadt: Lemberg 1914–1947* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010). A similar pattern obtains for Italy’s intermittent occupations in the Soča/Isonzo region. See Petra Svoljšak, ‘The social history of the Soča region in the First World War’, *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für soziale Bewegungen*, 41 (2009), pp. 89–109. Outside Europe, Entente states established longer-term forms of domination over areas eventually named ‘mandates’ in the former Ottoman Empire and in Africa.

2 Strictly speaking, the area in immediate proximity to the front – the *Operationsgebiet* – was distinct from the *Etappe*. In addition, the entire occupied coast, the *Marinegebiet*, stood under the jurisdiction of the German navy, specifically the Marine Corps Flanders, created by Von Tirpitz in August 1914 to defend the French and Belgian coasts, and given control over the civilian administration in its station area in February 1915.

3 An example pertaining to Germany is *Ein Volk in Waffen* by the Swedish reporter Sven Hedin (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1915), a paean to German mobilisation and conquests, featuring lyrical descriptions of German troops operating the captured Belgian railways. One Ober Ost testimony mentions that the book was a great success among occupation officers. See Laura de Turczynowicz, *When the Prussians Came to Poland: The Experiences of an American Woman during the German Invasion* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1916), p. 187. De Turczynowicz, née Blackwell, was the wife of an aristocrat from Suwalki.

4 There is as yet little scholarship on secret intelligence (or, for that matter, on unarmed resistance generally) in Eastern Europe. One massive post-war tome contains dozens of grisly photographs documenting the hanging of ‘spies’ by Austro-Hungarian and German armed forces in Eastern Europe, which suggests that spying was either widespread or perceived to be

ubiquitous. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck (ed.), *Die Weltkriegsspionage* (Munich: Moser, 1931).

5 It is still imperfectly mapped out as far as Eastern Europe is concerned, where in any event the fighting did not finish with the Armistice, and where the pre-war imperial context rather muddled categories of ‘occupation’ and ‘liberation’, with the exception of Serbia and Romania.

6 A partial exception: the 130-volume Carnegie Endowment for International Peace series *The Economic and Social History of the World War*, ed. James T. Shotwell, 152 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1923–38), gave ample – if inconclusive – scholarly attention to occupied populations. One of the volumes in this series, Henri Pirenne’s 1928 *La Belgique et la Guerre mondiale*, offered far-reaching reflections on wartime imperial conquest.

11 Captive civilians

Annette Becker Intentionally or incidentally, the Great War was a laboratory for the twentieth century: an experimental site to probe the practice of violence and to optimise its effects on men and materials. More specifically, the zones of invasion and military occupations provided a full-scale testing ground for population displacement and repression; in relation to the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, this even included policies of extermination. To some extent these zones became the laboratories of an atypical front whose ‘artillery’ and ‘gas’ took the form of exodus, deportation, forced labour or the concentration camp.

Etymologically, the word *exterminate* means to expel or to exile beyond the borders. For the civilians who were invaded and occupied between 1914 and 1918, being ‘exterminated’ meant being literally put ‘out of action’ or *hors de combat* on the military front, and they found themselves engulfed, without uniforms or weapons, in contrast to the enemies who confronted them. Flight or taking refuge were positive actions forced by invasion; being expelled, being deported and then interned in a camp as an ‘enemy alien’, a hostage or for labour, were passive states imposed upon them. For all of them it meant being torn from home and sent to a place of exile, believed or known to be temporary, for the duration of the war. But ‘temporary’ often lasted for four years or more for those who were among the first to be forced to live in the age of the concentration camp.

The procedure of ‘concentrating’ large numbers of civilians in order to enclose them was first encountered at the end of the nineteenth century.

When their routine lives and livelihoods were on a route contested by combat, these civilians were treated as enemies out of uniform; at worst, they were seen as guerrillas, or as supporters of enemy armies. These forced removals were called deportations, and the places of enclosure to which they were sent were known during the First World War as concentration camps. As Hannah Arendt wrote:

The institution of concentration camps . . . could well become this unexpected phenomenon, the stumbling block on the road to an adequate understanding of contemporary politics and society . . . Concentration camps existed long before totalitarianism made them the central institution of government. They were distinguished by the fact of not being penal institutions. They were filled with ‘undesirable elements’, that is to say those who, for one reason or another, had lost the legal identity of their country of residence.¹

Deport, concentrate: the two were now synonymous. Relocate in order to put to work, put under surveillance, even to punish. Detention was administrative and/or military, and certainly not legal, since the prisoners had not been put on trial and convicted. Giorgio Agamben put it well: ‘The camp was the space which opened up when the state of exception began to become the norm.’² Taken from the classical Latin *deportatio*, meaning cart or transport, the word now took on the meaning of deportation and exile in low Latin. The modern meaning combines the two accepted uses: removal from the place of residence and ‘transportation’ to another place. Even before 1914 the concepts of concentration and deportation were firmly associated with the means chosen to implement them – railways and wagons – as well as with a defined objective: the separation of civilians – women, children, old people – and soldiers, so that the former would not ‘get in the way’ of the latter through continuing links with their families. All this was planned and executed in a context of widely disseminated notions of social Darwinism.

During the Great War, deportees suffered an extended state of exception and/or martial law arising from the totalisation of war. They were forced to suffer forms of violence which included the loss of freedom, forced labour and separation from their families and way of life. For most, their living conditions were burdensome: lack of hygiene and food, cramped conditions, disease. Even if they were not faced with a genuine danger of suffering or death (although the deportations of some Armenians to the ‘camps’ from 1915 were a prelude to their extermination), large civilian populations encountered a series of compulsory orders to leave their homes and to enter another world – the world of the concentration camp.

The origins of camps: from Cuba to South Africa

When in 1896 the Spanish General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau created settlements to be known as ‘concentration camps’ for Cuban civilians, he gave the concept to history: ‘All the inhabitants of rural zones or living outside fortified towns will be *concentrated* within eight days in the towns occupied by troops. Any individual who disobeys this order or is found outside the zones imposed will be considered as a rebel and will be tried as such.’³ General Weyler’s intention was to separate peasants from insurgents, in the war which set Spain against its colony, under the pretence of protecting them while the army pursued its scorched earth policy. Until the rebellion was eradicated, they were kept isolated in ‘protective detention’.⁴

Weyler took advantage of two nineteenth-century technological innovations: barbed wire and railway transport. Barbed wire had enabled the extensive enclosure of cattle on the great American prairies: it was logical to use it when humans were being treated like animals. The wagons used to transport these civilians were not passenger carriages, but were designed for the transport of goods, sometimes livestock, and known in English as ‘cattle trucks’, such as the ones that would be used in the second operation of modern mass deportation in South Africa in 1900–1. This was when the expression ‘deported to a concentration camp’ became a widely recognised phrase.

Between 1904 and 1908 German troops under General von Trotha interned the Herero and Nama men of Namibia in military prison camps, and the women and children in concentration camps, using the new name which was the terminology of the time. Mortality of 50 per cent arose from the very bad conditions of detention, particularly on Shark Island, and this reflects the extent to which deliberate neglect was meant to kill. This neglect would now be incorporated in what we understand as a policy of extermination.

In South Africa the first camps, *laagers* in Dutch, were established in September 1900. Although men were the initial targets, women and children were soon included. Guerrilla warfare created a military situation that was highly unfavourable to the British army: the internment of families was used as an extension of their scorched earth policy. The destruction of

farms and harvests did not mean the extermination of ‘innocent’ non-combatant populations, but their sequestration to prevent them from feeding and supporting the Boer troops.

Kitchener intended to suppress this oxymoron – innocent Boers – when he took over command at the end of 1900: for him there was no such thing as an ‘innocent’ Boer civilian population. He then took all the populations hostage – whites and natives (that is, Africans) – and treated them as prisoners of war on whom reprisals were inflicted. Moreover, the camps were administered by soldiers and clearly formed part of a strategic plan, in the same way as the fortified blockhouses and armoured trains on which civilians were sometimes forced to act as human shields. While anti-British feeling led French, Dutch or Belgian observers to comment enthusiastically upon the Protestant asceticism and determination of the Boers, the British described them as primitive beings; in the context of the social Darwinism of the early twentieth century, they were sub-humans or even animals who could be shut up in a particular type of zoo, the camps: were they not ‘reptilian in appearance and quite hideous to look on’?⁵

Locking up civilians in a world war

‘Words are inadequate . . . or are too numerous, to define the civilian populations then imprisoned.’ Thus wrote the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and in 1917:

The *civilian internees* are an innovation of this war; the international treaties had not made provision for them. At the beginning of the war it could have been logical to *immobilise* them, to hold on to *suspects*; several months would have been enough, it seems, *to separate the chaff from the good grain*.

It is necessary, for a variety of reasons, to liken the fate of civilian internees to that of civilians *deported* into enemy countries, as well as to that of the *inhabitants of territories occupied* by the enemy. These civilians are deprived of liberty and their situation differs very little from that of *prisoners*.

After three full years of war, we ask that these *different categories of civilians* in the war be the object of special attention and that their fate,

in certain respects more cruel than that of *military prisoners*, be viewed seriously before the fourth winter of the war.⁶

How indeed was it possible to give a name to those who were overtaken by the war for geographical reasons, who had been unable to escape in time and had become identifiable refugees under these circumstances? As for those who had been captured and then incarcerated – were they ‘internees’, ‘deportees’ or ‘prisoners’? What was to be done with them? They were not soldiers, so there was no international convention to protect them: hence the particularly insistent demands of the ICRC. Its business was with military prisoners and the wounded; soldiers rendered *hors de combat* were the business of this neutral organisation which informed their families, visited camps and made various efforts to feed and sustain them, thereby maintaining them within the legal boundaries of the war. Although civilian deportations, concentration camps, barbed wire (sometimes electrified) and watch-towers were part of the landscape of the Great War, in a world preoccupied by the fallen heroes lost on the battlefields, these other victims of war were ignored. The combatant paradigm marginalised them within the memory of the First World War and, for a very long time, within its historiography.

Civilians had a different status. Soldiers consented to the war, and their courage and ‘heroism’ in defence of their country, and the admiration of their compatriots, were a kind of compensation for their suffering. Nothing of the kind applied to civilians: no heroism, no consent, but suffering, intensified because it was impossible to identify the victims individually or even to list the different forms of exactions they endured.

Administrative or military texts defined the ‘captured civilian’ through their use of the masculine form of reference and address. The neutral case, without gender, objectified the various populations affected. It was not even possible to name the multiplicity of fates these people knew, the specificity of different situations due to gender or to age. The paradox of the civilian prisoners lies here: while the Great War homogenised and privileged the combatants, at the same time it marginalised civilian victims, who were scarcely identifiable by category. And yet from 1914 they were shut up everywhere, because war was framed by notions of single and indestructible national loyalties. Each individual could only fight for his own nation, his

own camp. If he found himself a foreigner, an *alien*, among his ‘enemies’, he must be kept apart – preferably in a camp; otherwise it was certain that he would act to do harm to those among whom he happened to live and from whom he was separated by the barrier of his national identity, which was increasingly perceived as a form of racial difference. In occupation situations, many civilians would come to experience camps, where they were made to work or to ‘pay’ the price for having been located in the path of their occupiers’ advance. These hidden victims of war knew, perhaps better than others, what total war meant.

1914: the increasingly universal use of concentration camps for foreign civilians, enemy aliens or enemy subjects

In 1914 concentration camps were opened throughout the world, because the European war fought by imperial powers immediately became global. Civilian citizens of nations now at war were interned as ‘enemy aliens’, not only inside the territories of the warring nations themselves but also in all their colonies: Germans in Australia; Belgians in Germany’s African colonies; Germans, Austrians and Turks in Russia; Ukrainians in Canada, *etc.* Their only crime was to hold the passport of a nation now at war with the country where they lived, permanently or temporarily. They had become suspects, different and therefore dangerous. The men were the first to be targeted, because those of military age were viewed everywhere as potential spies – active eyes for their own nations at war. The best way to avoid this danger was to intern them.

On 25 July 1914 in Russia, a pioneer in this domain, General Beliaev, ordered the deportation and internment in camps of ‘all the male enemy subjects of an age for military service’ living in zones placed under military control.⁷ Of the estimated number of 600,000 enemy subjects in the Empire, 50,000 were interned immediately; by 1917, this figure would rise to at least 250,000. In Germany, those incarcerated were American, British, Belgian, Brazilian, French, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Montenegrin, Panamanian, Portuguese, Romanian, Serb and Siamese – probably over 100,000 in all.⁸

On 2 August 1914, France gave notice to foreign subjects to leave the country within twenty-four hours, to avoid being documented and put under police surveillance. In the United Kingdom, the Aliens Restriction Act was passed on 3 August, imposing registration with the police and a ban on living in zones judged militarily at risk. Internments followed, particularly from 1915 onwards.

Paradoxically, male internees of mobilisation age were saved from death at the front by this enforced segregation, however arbitrary it may have appeared. An 'enemy alien' interned in the Vendée, Saxony or Vologda ran no risk of dying at Verdun, Ypres or Tannenberg.

This applied to the 4,000 British men of military age who were interned from November 1914 until 1918 in the Ruhleben camp near Berlin, the majority of them merchant seamen brought in from Hamburg. In a mirror image of this procedure, German merchant seamen who were in Australian ports in the summer of 1914 were immediately interned.

This meant that civilians of military age who were interned could be likened to military prisoners – paradoxically 'protected' from the horrors of the front by capture. In a further paradox, these men, who had often lived for very many years in foreign countries, sometimes with dual-nationality families, rediscovered their original nationality during internment and expressed strong patriotism in all the camp activities. Australia offers a very revealing example in the case of an internee of Dalmatian origin, and therefore Austro-Hungarian. At the age of 13, Anthony Splivalo, born in 1898, joined a brother who had already settled in Western Australia. After an initial period of internment as an enemy alien in relatively mild conditions on Rottneest Island, where the 'camp' was limited only by the coastline of the island itself, Splivalo was sent to Holsworthy concentration camp near Sydney. Like him, his companions were Austro-Hungarians of all origins – Slav, Hungarian, Austrian. To them were added Bulgarians and Germans – all foreigners put away as potential traitors to the cause of the British Empire and its Australian spearhead.

Splivalo worked as an interpreter and a censor, wrote letters, and acted as a shuttle and an intermediary for everything between the camp commandant and the other prisoners. He effectively became what, in a military prisoner-of-war camp, was termed an *homme de confiance* – a trusted figure who

took on roles that carried great responsibility – and he appreciated both this function and the Australians with whom he worked. Later he wrote a very clear account of the ambiguity of his position and of these civilian camps in general:

I was ever conscious of my status as a ‘prisoner of war’ with my home behind barbed wire . . . In a way I was two persons in one. My peculiar position called for friendliness with the men on both sides of the fence. But it was not difficult since I harboured no ill feelings towards either the Germans or the Australians.⁹

He spoke of himself as a ‘prisoner of war’, which was more or less true, since in the general confusion ‘real’ prisoners of war were to be found mixed up among the civilian prisoners. In addition, the delegates of the Red Cross carried out inspections of civilian prisoners as if they were military captives who fell under the protection of the international conventions. Moreover, when Splivalo took the train to return ‘home’ after liberation in 1919, his group were identified as foreigners at Kalgoorlie by some of the passengers: ‘Did you know that there are Huns on the trains?’ – ‘Come on, let’s throw the bastards out of the train.’ Terrorised throughout their travels, they finally arrived safely, and Splivalo concluded that: ‘It appeared we travelled with a group of returning soldiers, men of limited education who were unable even to distinguish between Germans and other foreigners.’¹⁰

The Dalmatian Australian himself had wholly absorbed the fact that a ‘German’ was undoubtedly an enemy.

Popular animosity against the Germans went deep in Australia; in the camp Splivalo had been with Australian men of German origin, sometimes born in Australia to German parents, and who were always known as ‘Germans’. In the war-psychosis days of 1914 they had been separated from their families and their ordinary life as immigrants in Australia. Residence mattered less than blood lines.

Immediately following the declaration of war, Germans and Austro-Hungarians in Australia were placed under supervised and controlled conditions of residence. Foreign scientists and academics who had come for very short periods of research were caught up in this. One was the German geographer Albrecht Penck. Although he was able to avoid arrest because

of his age, unlike his colleagues Graebner and Pringsheim, who were of military age and therefore interned immediately, he had great difficulty in leaving the country. Since his ship was travelling via London, he was also detained there for a long time. The reason was that many German academics had signed the 'Manifesto of 93', a virulently patriotic tract, and were therefore considered as belligerents like any others. Penck would not be able to return to Berlin until January 1915, having experienced a somewhat unusual geographical excursion. Reading his defence as recorded by the Secretary of the Academy of Sciences in Berlin, the extent to which, from this point on, no one was excluded from what was already being seen as total war becomes clear and understandable:

the liberation of M. Penck is not only of great importance because he is one of Germany's most eminent university professors and scientists, but also because his opinion on the occasion of the modification of the country's frontiers could be of great value for our country: he is in effect a connoisseur without equal of the geographical nature of the territories of Central and Western Europe.¹¹

Concentration camps for civilians were part of the regular arsenal of the world war. In Australia, as everywhere, the first task was the preparation of lists in order to sift through all enemy subjects. Under the War Precaution Act, they were required to turn themselves in to the local police and swear that they would not take up arms against the Empire. Technically they became prisoners of war who continued to live normally, but upon the slightest suspicion they were interned. In March 1915, 1,930 'Germans' were interned. But the designation of 'enemy subject' was far from clear: in a country of immigrants, how should those in the course of naturalisation be considered, or even those already fully naturalised? In 1916, the 'precaution' was redoubled: it was decided that anyone whose father or grandfather was foreign was himself a foreigner, in an automatic line of descent of non-allegiance. The Australians allowed themselves to be persuaded that if Germany won the war, Australia would be demanded in compensation, and that the Germans of the interior were preparing for this annexation through espionage.¹² German Australians were thus banished, 'banned' objects of suspicion leading to internment, which removed them entirely from the Australian community. The most extraordinary incidents

were recorded: John Wenke, for example, was interned one week after his son, a volunteer with the Australian Imperial Force in France, had been seriously wounded; or there was the case of the many Germans who had worked in Australian industry for decades, for it was also necessary to 'intern' the German economic influence. German pianos imported before August 1914 could no longer be put on sale. German influence of this kind had to be interned too, though we should note that British imports were also confiscated in Germany. Carl Zoeller, in despair at being separated from his family, committed suicide after being interned, documented, registered by number and photographed.¹³

Other detainees retained an ironic or somewhat sardonic view of their situation. There were humorous entries published in the camp newspapers that detainees put together; in fact, in general it was possible to publish very freely in these newspapers. One instance is that of Kurt Wiese, whose cartoon in the Holsworthy camp journal showed barbed wire with a visitor on one side and an emu on the other. 'In Europe' it is 'normal' for visitors to a zoo to look at wild creatures. 'In Australia' the emu wanders by to observe the inhabitants of a human zoo.

In Canada, Ukrainians – Austro-Hungarian subjects – were the first to be incarcerated, and in the largest numbers. The camps were located in the Rocky Mountains, chosen for their isolation, and material conditions were difficult. The internees worked as lumberjacks or built the mountain roads. The Canadian winter was sometimes harder for the guards than for their prisoners, who, the more their repeated protestations of loyalty to Canada were ignored, the more they insisted on their innocence and on the injustice of their situation:

The Ukrainians of Western Canada have found themselves heavily handicapped since the outbreak of the war by the fact of their Austrian birth . . . Many have been interned, though they are no more in sympathy with the enemy than are the Poles . . . [Ukrainians] are a distinct nationality which hopes to emerge from the war enjoying a wide measure of national autonomy, yet Ukrainians in Canada are treated as enemy Austrians. They are persecuted, by the thousands they are interned.¹⁴

As immigrant countries, it is not surprising that Canada and Australia were among the first to take such measures despite their remoteness from the European scene of operations. For them interning enemy aliens was a way of showing their loyalty and solidarity with the British mother country. That the Austro-Hungarians paid the highest price was also logical: their allegiances were barely understood. The Poles, contrary to the assertions of the Ukrainians, were not favoured; were they Russians, Germans, Austro-Hungarians? Allies or enemies? On both sides of the front line confused national affiliations were always a problem, and these unfortunate people were more likely to be sent to an internment camp than to be accorded the status of a loyal subject or a friendly newcomer.

From men of military age to all ‘suspects’; from men to women and children

Deportation was the fate of many different people: men of foreign origin, whether of military age or not, suspects of all kinds, above all politicians, women – whether or not they were considered to be ‘morally’ suspect. From 1914, such forced removals were accepted as entirely normal. Guillaume Apollinaire wrote of his ex-lover, Marie Laurencin, who was now German by marriage: ‘They managed to escape, I don’t know how, and having escaped the concentration camps, are now at Malaga.’¹⁵ The ‘concentration camp’ formula seemed so obvious that the poet did not need to explain it; it was public knowledge that foreigners belonging to enemy belligerent nations were being interned. Proust made the same point, or rather Madame Verdurin did for him: ‘You know that she is a terrible spy, cried Mme Verdurin . . . I know it, and very precisely, she lived for that. If we had a more energetic government, all that should be in a concentration camp. This is a sorry state of affairs!’¹⁶

Karen Blixen, then in Kenya, described this predicament in a nonchalant manner. To her a camp was a method of protection for European women left to themselves by the mobilisation of their men:

It was a matter of organising a concentration camp for white women, so as to protect them against the natives. Then I was very afraid, for I

said to myself that if I went into a women's concentration camp for several months, you can't tell how long a war might last, I might die of it.¹⁷

East Prussian civilians, interned in Russia from 1914 and deprived of legal rights, became non-persons whose situation was described by an American observer *en mission* in the Volga region in 1916: 'Their precise status perplexed the local authorities themselves: these Prussian civilians were called, depending on the case, "prisoners", "hostages" or "refugees". They were generally considered as a special category of prisoners.'¹⁸

In France, the number of internees was estimated at 60,000. Without counting the thorny question of the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine who had German nationality, they were above all Austro-Hungarians, Ottomans and Bulgarians. Albert Schweitzer was the most famous of these, arrested with his wife in 1917, deported and incarcerated as a civilian prisoner at Notre-Dame-de-Garaison in the Hautes-Pyrénées and then at Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, until 1918. These camps were also sometimes used to 'segregate' women of 'low life' or vagabonds that no one knew what to do with in the army zones. Some revolutionary militants were included in the camps for good measure. Suspects from the interior joined foreigners whose numbers probably reached 40,000.

The internment of Alsace-Lorraine Gypsies showed the twofold intentions of the decision-makers: it was intended that nomadic people, suspected of treason because of their mobility, should be settled in one place, particularly if they came from regions that had been German since 1870: in view of these two 'defects', the camp was seen as the only solution, and one which continued to operate with impunity until 1920, long after the Armistice.

In Britain, 320,000 foreigners or persons suspected of espionage (to whom should be added around 3,000 Irishmen and women after the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin) were shut up in makeshift camps such as Newbury race-track, and thereafter more securely on the Isle of Man, in a prison in no way adapted to these 'non-criminal' internees. In 1915 it was realised that the thousands of Jewish tailors settled in London since the 1890s came from Galicia, and were therefore Austro-Hungarian. Although some of them

were occupied in stitching British uniforms, many of these aliens were put in camps for the duration of the war.

The example of Leon Trotsky reveals the blend of military and political fear underlying these policies. Seen as a dangerous enemy alien, he was interned in March 1917 in a Canadian concentration camp in Amherst, Nova Scotia. Following the February Revolution of 1917, he wanted to return to his country via New York, where he would act as a political agitator. Canada, a Dominion of the British Empire, was allied to Russia, so

Trotsky was not an enemy alien, but Canadian officials distrusted a professional revolutionary on principle. He was incarcerated in Halifax, together with his wife and two children aged 9 and 11 for good measure. Only at the beginning of May 1917 was the family allowed to return to Russia.

Deportations and the internal restructuring of the Russian and Ottoman empires

With the internal rearrangements of empires in the course of the war, certain population movements took the tragic form of forced homogenisation, which amounted to major social or ethnic reconstruction. This applied to populations considered ‘suspect’ in Russia, starting with Jews and Russian subjects of German origin, displaced permanently to the interior of the country from zones at the front. Above all it applied to the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, the victims of expulsions, deportations and extermination. The territorial realignments of 1918–23 were to refine these resettlements. In Russia alone, a minimum of 5.5 million civilians were displaced far from their homes between 1914 and 1917, often with internment that might be temporary or prolonged. These were events on an unprecedented scale.

In Russia, the army removed ‘suspect populations’ on a grand scale, interning their own subjects who lived along the front line. Here was a true ethnic cleansing by means of deportations and camps, particularly for Russian subjects of German origin and Jews. At least 600,000 Jews were deported, victims of violence and pogroms, put in temporary camps or forced to settle elsewhere without possessions a little further to the east. Probably 100,000 of them died during this operation.¹⁹ In this way Russian

action demonstrates the wartime shift from giving the status of refugees to those sent to the interior to giving them the status of deportees. For the graphic artist Abel Pann,²⁰ the evacuees packed into covered wagons, hardly distinguishable one from another, were civilians, women, children. They left, puzzled, anonymous: where were they going? Nowhere and everywhere. Soldiers – very large numbers of them, clearly defined – guarded the wagons. Which were soldiers? Which were civilians? Pann gives no identification; his implacable drawing says all there is to be said on the dereliction of this world on the move. Everywhere there was war, war against civilians. In Russia, indeed, it was very difficult to draw a clear line between the ‘true’ refugees fleeing before the enemy and those being expelled and deported within their own nation.

The writer Shimon Ansky recounts these odysseys and the vicissitudes of life in the camps where a thousand Galician Jews were exposed to and dying of hunger, cholera and typhus. He reports his arguments with certain representatives of Russian community humanitarian aid, the Unions of Zemstvos.²¹ The zemstvos acted independently, attempting to reduce the degree of disorganisation and the destabilisation of an entire society set in motion by the war. Yet they were overwhelmed by the task of providing aid to Russians, and had no interest at all in Germans, and above all in Jews. For many Russians, the war at least made it possible to expel beyond the borders the ‘traitors in power’, populations long under severe suspicion – Jews and Russians of German origin. In August 1915 a president of a committee of zemstvos stated that ‘This horde of demoralised, undisciplined nomads is advancing in Russia. It threatens her with a terrible plague. It is driving her to ruin, pillage and the entire disorganisation of the country.’²² There was a single solution: internment.

Concentration/extermination camps: the Armenians in the concentration camps of Syria and Mesopotamia, 1915–16

Ottoman concentration camps were set up at the time of the Armenian genocide in 1915–16, the peak period of the drive to ethnic homogenisation which led to extermination. From that time on, when we compare

deportations, occupations and atrocities in Europe with what was happening in the Ottoman Empire, it is clear that in the latter case a step further had been taken, 'the extermination of the Armenians': 'The unfortunate Armenians who live under the Turkish yoke are *perhaps* of all the populations oppressed by this war, the people who are most cruelly tested. It seems that their total annihilation is being pursued by the Ottomans. This is systematic destruction by sword and fire.'²³ An answer to this highly rhetorical 'perhaps' came in the form of caricatures denouncing the deportations of women from Lille at Easter 1916. On one drawing, a soldier in a pointed helmet remarks: 'They are complaining. But what would they say if they were in Armenia?'²⁴

Two factors were at play in the genocide of the Armenians. The first was the push towards the Islamisation of the country since the middle of the nineteenth century, as Muslim refugees moved from the Balkans and the Caucasus towards Anatolia. The second was the wartime radicalisation of anti-Christian measures, which had provoked massacres of Armenians since 1895. In 1914, the Germans went along with the Ottoman call to jihad to help in the invasion of the Caucasus and Persian Azerbaijan and to attract Muslims of the British and Russian empires to the cause of the Central Powers. These two elements, national security and ethnic cleansing, led to catastrophe.

To what extent did the concentration camps contribute to genocide? When in April 1915 the deportations of Armenians to the east and to Syria began, nothing was planned for the arrival of the exiles. Ottoman authorities probably thought they would not survive the uprooting, the looting, the rapes, the hunger, the thirst, the massacres. Later, from July 1915, camps were organised by the Subdirectorates for Aleppo Deportees in conjunction with the arrival of trains.

The way these camps were organised revealed that the Ottoman argument that the deportations were preventative measures 'for security' was clearly nonsense. Survivors were placed in tented camps without any form of sanitation or food supplies, generally more than 25 kilometres from the railway and reached on foot in cold or heat. Famine and typhus were the greatest killers in these camps, before they were emptied one after the other as survivors were either killed or sent further east by train. Armin Wegner, a

nursing orderly in the German army in Turkey, described Ras ul Ain, one of the largest camps. He called them:

The death laagers where the Armenians, unprotected outcasts in the desert, slowly awaited their end. The Turks avoided these camps and denied their very existence. The Germans did not go to see them and acted as if they did not exist at all. I was the only one who did, even though it was a health risk, for the refugees were suffering from many diseases. This was one of the reasons that the Germans were reluctant to go. But the main reason was that they were allies of the Turks, and the fear of contracting contagious diseases came second.²⁵

Here we see the worries all powers shared about the dangers of the spread of disease in camps, which had their origins in the first camps of the late nineteenth century. These fears of disease were interlinked with social Darwinism and the belief that certain illnesses were hereditary and showed the degeneration of particular populations.

Men were also taken from the ranks of the deportees for forced labour in the towns and train stations and for the construction of the Euphrates railway to Baghdad, in this case under direct German control. Arnold Toynbee, historian of the Armenian catastrophe, observed at the time:

This terrible and shameful scene of modern history which is happening in distant Armenia is no more than a repetition, another page of the principal history, this great narrative which must include the invasion of Belgium by Germany fourteen months ago. That was the guiding line, that was the signal understood by the Turk and the Kurd . . . What Germany has done has been to plunge us back again, we who live in the twentieth century, into the condition of the darkest ages of history.²⁶

During the war, the crimes against the Armenians were widely used by the Allies to vilify their enemies. At the end of the war they were quickly forgotten. For the survivors of the genocide, the concentration camps designated for the Armenians, as for others, marked the passage from 'the banality of evil' to the banality of 'indifference' .²⁷

Deportations and camps for occupied populations: hostages and forced labour

The inhabitants of regions that were invaded and then occupied by enemy armies formed a category of civilian prisoners who suffered different forms of alienation and internment. These ran from isolation from their compatriots to deportations to concentration camps where, depending on their circumstances, they might be under guard without being required to work (like hostages under detention), or made to undertake forced labour. Thousands, indeed hundreds of thousands, of Belgians, French, Russians, Serbs, Albanians, Slovenes, Romanians, Italians and Germans suffered this fate, including those resident in the colonies. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimated that 60,000 Belgians and French were deported to Germany and a similar number of Germans were deported to Russia.

Italians were also deported close to their home villages or to camps established by the Austrians, who mixed civilian and military prisoners, men, women and children, for example at Brunau and Mittendorf. The Serbs deported to Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria were slightly more numerous, but these camps were not well known – except by the francophone Serb press published in Geneva, which vehemently denounced the deportations. It is estimated that these men, women and children represented slightly more than 10 per cent of the Serb population. Thousands died in the camps of Boldogasogny, Nagymegyér and Nèzider in Hungary. ²⁸

The forced labour camps in the occupied territories are a good example of the complications, even chaos, created by occupation. All those who were of working age were requisitioned for maintenance work on railways, roads, etc., as authorised by Article 52 of the Hague Convention. Work in support of the needs of the army of occupation was allowed, even entirely legal, on condition that it was paid in some way: the occupation must not establish a form of serfdom. Despite very strong pressure, patriotism led to widespread refusals to work voluntarily. How could anyone agree to work for the ‘barbarians’ in their own street, their own district? The armed forces therefore very quickly used coercion to put the resisters to work, locally at first and then in forced labour camps. Both occupiers and occupied were thus confirmed in their view of the period: on one side the inhabitants’

resistance led to repression, on the other violence against civilians was synonymous with occupation. Detainees were indeed living in ‘serfdom’ and were used as human material (in German, *Menschenmaterial*) to aid the war effort:

Great events! The traffic in young girls is extended to boys . . . these youths, mercenaries at 2–3 francs per day, travel everywhere in torrid heat to work for the enemy, scarcely fed and working 14 hours a day . . . Stupid and brutalising tasks which German hygiene prepares for our young men.²⁹

The young Yves Congar’s use of the words ‘traffic’ and ‘hygiene’ show how far the ideology of biological warfare had entered colloquial language: it was the nation’s future that was endangered by the occupiers.

The same phenomena emerged in all the occupied regions. The inhabitants refused to work for the enemy war effort, which came down to refusing to work at all. In Albania the families of labourers requisitioned in squads who abandoned their work camps were deprived of food: the consequences are not difficult to imagine.³⁰ The result was a proliferation of orders on obligatory labour and the organisation of labour camps.

In northern France and Belgium, for example, three worker categories were established:

1. Volunteer workers (*freie Arbeiter*), very few in number.
2. Workers who were forced to sign a commitment, the most numerous category, wore a grey and red armband. They went home in the evening or, if they were working too far away, had periods of leave. The work was carried out in gangs of agricultural or industrial workers. The men were ‘levied’ for a specific gang and sent where needed at the time; often their work assignments meant that these units criss-crossed the region, backwards and forwards, in a complicated trajectory that was sometimes difficult to follow, between villages and regions.
3. All the refractory workers were sent to battalions of civilian labourers, or ZAB (*Zivil-Arbeiterbataillone*). In occupied France and in Belgium around 60,000 were housed in barracks and registered.

In the zone of General Government, the greater part of the German administration in Belgium, but not in the military staging areas, the *Etappen*, in occupied France, the despair after the great deportations to work in Germany was such that the number of volunteers increased: they agreed to forced work, for which they would at least be paid.

The forced labourers wore a red armband, unlike other workers requisitioned for a particular task who could return home depending on their place of work. The phraseology chosen demonstrates clearly the paradoxes of the time: they formed a battalion, a military identity for civilians brought together in the service of the occupying force. The forced workers rapidly became known as 'red armbands': the band was like a sign of mourning, red like the blood which flowed everywhere in time of war. If their 'uniform' was reduced to the simplest form, it was still a uniform, identifying the enrolment of these civilians in the battalions of an army of workers. These were disciplinary battalions for civilians, and their living conditions were similar to those of the forced labourers in the labour battalions of concentration camps. They were, properly speaking, soldiers in the German army, but of a special type, prisoners in their own bodies: hence the notion that they were prisoners of war, this time civilian forced labourers in camps. But in order to avoid the expression 'concentration camps', which was associated with undesirable foreign civilians, euphemisms were employed. They included: *Verteilungsstellen* (distribution centre) and *Unterkunftsstätten für Industriearbeiter* (accommodation for industrial workers). They were camps, but the expression *Konzentrationlager* was avoided.

The system established in Ober Ost was altogether similar. Here it was the vast forests which the occupiers first wished to exploit, to meet the needs of the front or for industry, bridges and roads. Tens of thousands of forced labourers were employed there, 'sheltered' in camps varying from a simple guarded farm to true enclosures encircled by barbed wire. In the case of work, it is easy to understand that it was a matter of production first, and that enclosure in a camp for the period of 'rest' was necessary so that the forced workers did not escape. 'Here, assignment to a Civil Worker Battalion is considered a great disaster by the inhabitants.'³¹

Although they were paid and fed, it was so little and so inadequate, even without the epidemics which ravaged them, that without the militarised organisation of labour, which resembled that of combatant prisoners of war, these people would return to their farms and their workshops. In this case, we may speak of a deportation of proximity, in the front-line zone of occupation: it was the organisation of forced labour which preceded the camps. Reprisals through food deprivation or through forced labour very near the front lines were unprecedented measures with respect to civilians, though they still stopped short of the horrors of the Second World War. This was true even in the case of the ZAB, though there were isolated cases of exceptional sadism among some guards. This was not a disciplinary concentration camp system, but a form of exploiting the labour of occupied populations.

Deportations/punishments/reprisals: hostages in camps, weapons of total war

The civilian prisoners in occupied regions suffered various fates. Some spent the whole of the war in captivity on enemy soil, others were deported for a few weeks or months, often not far from home. They were ‘removed’ and ‘concentrated’.

Traunstein, 4 December 1916, Dear Aunt and Cousin,

I am writing a few words to tell you that I am still in good health and I hope that my card will find you the same, and all the family. I am sending you my photograph. I think you will be very pleased, for it is a long time now since you have seen me, and I think that you will find me much changed. At this moment I am no longer working because of the approaching bad weather. My uncle and Maurice are still working, they do not return to the camp.

Your nephew who thinks of you always.³²

The technique of taking distinguished personalities hostage and sending them to concentration camps lasted throughout the war. Some, very old or sick, died there. Their families gave full vent to their distress:

I beg to implore your paternal goodwill for my unhappy husband, taken away as a civilian prisoner by the Germans, since September 1914. The terrible war has taken everything from us. One of my brothers has been killed, the other is missing, our farm is no more now than a heap of ruins and my husband Monsieur Paul Guillement has been in Holzminden [camp] for three years now.³³

My good mother, 63 years old (Meuse), with whom I have not been able to correspond since the beginning of the war. My poor father taken off to Grafanwör, Bavaria, died there of grief. My eldest brother has been reported missing.³⁴

In 1914 the French interned the officials of imperial Germany in the part of Alsace that they had managed to recapture, and refused to release them despite numerous discussions. Hostages from all occupied regions of the north were ‘taken’ in November 1916 to exert pressure on the French government to exchange them. Within a few hours, men and women could be seen leaving their houses in the occupied north; conditions were still bearable here for people of significance and they were ‘at home’ here. Now they were removed to an uprooted world, in a camp located a thousand kilometres away, and 48 hours by train.

We travelled locked into our compartments [*here they were treated with dignity, no cattle wagons*] and without being able to get out on the platforms at the few stations where the train stopped. [*They were given food but preferred the packed provisions they had brought with them.*] Holzminden, in the middle of the night. We were gathered together on one platform and then another, drawn up in fours to be counted, then separated from the women as well as the old men or those particularly wearied; all of these would be transported in a vehicle to the camp . . . After three-quarters of an hour of painful walking we arrived up a final slope at the entrance to the camp marked by two guards standing sentry in front of a high wire netting fence.³⁵

Holzminden camp had been set up for the first category of civilian prisoners – ‘belligerent enemy’ nationals living in the German Empire in August 1914. It went on to receive deportees from the occupied territories of

Belgium and France, sent there as reprisal hostages. This also happened at Havelberg camp where Auguste Matisse, the artist's brother, was an inmate with hostages from Bohain-en-Vermandois, the town of their birth. Although patriots from Belgium or northern France being punished for their clandestine activities were generally sent to prisons with common rights or to military fortresses, others found themselves in the same camps as civilian hostages.

The conditions described by Dr Carlier at Holzminden did not appear terrible, particularly since food packages sent to them were not restricted, they had space in barracks even if their bedding was hardly comfortable, and their civilian clothes were transformed into 'a form of uniform . . . fitted on the left sleeve with a numbered armband showing their registration number and with two bands on the trousers'.³⁶ But the presence of women in special barrack accommodation disclosed one of the central paradoxes of this war: the women shared the fate of the men. They had been shifted from the 'home front' to the concentration camp.

The camps: from 'triage' to waiting: a place in which to live

We can trace the way that each stage of deportation to the camps was viewed, at least for the occupied populations, from the initial procedures for 'recruitment' to the experience of transportation. The first stage was the 'sorting' or 'sifting', carried out from lists or using identity cards. Criteria of age, gender and general style were noted according to the needs of the moment, and whether people were 'taken' to be put to work as collective punishment for the community (including reprisals for military action carried out at a considerable distance from this zone), or to evacuate the 'useless mouths', who were unable to work and difficult to feed in the large cities.

The civilian prisoners endured this trial under the burden of their double exile: removed from their nation at war, far from their nation under occupation, their perception of imprisonment was of a world in which shame, the sense of abandonment and destitution were constant. National and regional patriotism, the strength of attachment to their country, the

courage of men and even more of women: such was the message that most eyewitnesses wished to communicate when they came to write their testimony. Germans interned in the British Empire generally organised a parade on the Kaiser's birthday and even managed to sing 'Deutschland über alles' despite all attempts to prohibit it, just as the French and Belgians came together to sing the 'Marseillaise' or the 'Brabançonne'.

In *Le monastère noir* Aladar Kuncz, a Hungarian writer interned for four years in France, used fictional form to give a magnificent eyewitness account of all the possible views of the camps.³⁷ He recalled everyone's patriotic spirit, often not without a hidden moral. 'Le cafard', or suffocating depression – the expression taken into the camps from soldiers' and sailors' vocabulary – filtered into every moment. This 'black humour' disclosed something of their sense of isolation and separation. In the chapter of his novel entitled 'Au bord de l'abîme' ('On the Verge of the Abyss'), Kuncz described the serious mental confusion which enveloped many of the internees, with no one entirely spared: 'All these cases were no more than manifestations of the sense of shock which could be identified in every one of us. I only became truly aware of this when my own nervous fears appeared. Then I understood that we were all more or less undermined in the same way.'³⁸

People tried to keep busy, carrying on some form of activity, which might be intellectual, playful, practical, artistic, sporting or part of a group creating sociability within the prison. This created the illusion of not wasting time. There were cultural, manual and sporting activities, classes of all kinds (such as those given by Professor Henri Pirenne, deported for having rejected the enforced use of Flemish at his University of Ghent), celebrations, theatrical performances, planting flowers and vegetables, talks, sporting and literary gatherings, libraries, charades and guessing games, macramé, board games, music and camp journalism.

In most civilian camps throughout the world the degree of freedom offered by captors opened the door to creativity. The internees of the Australian Holsworthy camp produced 155 plays in five years, had a brass band and a choir, and retained their sense of humour: the most appreciated object produced in the camp was a caricature ashtray of the Prime Minister, William Morris Hughes, painted in white, red and black; they took pleasure in putting their ash into his 'empty head'.

Craft items made by civilian prisoners, like their equivalents – so alike and yet so different – the military prisoners of war, shows them all occupied in improving their material and psychological daily lives, struggling against boredom, against time, against the period of imprisonment which for them defined war and occupation. The long-term horizon of the camp was thus broken down into the short-term horizon of diverse activities. The artisanal work of civilians held prisoner during the war was similar to trench art: the internees fashioned and shaped objects within the war to speak of the war, and in the camp they made objects to articulate their experience of the camp.³⁹ Barrack huts for activities – library, talks, card games, wood-working, clubs, charitable works, religious ceremonies, orchestras, drama, winter sports and even traders from the neighbouring town who came to offer their merchandise – everything resembled the military prisoner-of-war camps.

The objects created were paradoxical metonyms: their prime materials came from the camp itself, from the enemy, and this material was transformed into *objets d'art* through the loving care of the craftsmen. They bore witness to the complexity and confusion of feelings among civilian prisoners, in the authenticity of the will to live that these objects expressed, over and beyond this time of suffering and dereliction. Artists sold their output to local people and pornographic subjects were particularly appreciated: they figure with all sorts of other objects in the camps' sale displays of interesting items. But above all there was the effort to reconnect with their own people: hence the constant exchange of letters and packages and the numerous poems, drawings, objects, preferably depicting children, home and family. The very numerous embroideries are revealing of the world inside the camp, particularly when they were made by men. They show a double reversal: imprisoned instead of taking their place as the head of the family, taking up the needle or crochet hook – traditional women's activities – the men adorned photographs of their families with fabric or made wooden photograph frames which could be set up in the barracks. The name of the camp was inscribed and the years spent there, beneath family photographs, little pictures of fabric, wire, wood, letters unsent, prayers, petitions. They became the site for the transfer of experience, even of the experience itself, beyond their actual creation. Their exchange was one of the great vectors of presence in absence, the realisation of the unbearable

nature of the war, and at the same time of the crystallisation of love, of faith, of desires. So people read, wrote, worked wood, metal, animal bones, tree-bark, they prayed, ate, studied, waited, sketched, looked at family photographs, smoked, washed, spread out their washing, looked beyond the barbed wire, waited. Or they went mad, struck by different forms of barbed-wire psychosis, like the Austrian house-painter Heipel, obsessed by his incomprehensible captivity on the Ile d'Yeu. He refused to wash himself or change his ragged clothing: any change from his pre-captivity physical state would represent a second imprisonment. So he became a creator of 'naive art' in this brutal world: 'He set himself to paint his obsessional fortresses on pieces of rag, on blockhouse benches, on walls, on the cement-covered ground, everywhere; one could have said that no space could be sufficient for him to express his bleak vision.'⁴⁰

Conclusion

In a remarkable essay, 'La guerre au vingtième siècle, le vingtième siècle comme guerre' ('War in the twentieth century, the twentieth century as war'), the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka caught the paroxysm of the Great War well: 'The first war was the decisive event in the history of the twentieth century. This is what decided its general character, which showed that the transformation of the world into a laboratory converting into reality reserves of energy accumulated over billions of years *must inevitably* take place by means of war.'⁴¹ The historian Karel Bartocek has suggested a paraphrase of his compatriot's thinking, proposing the formula, 'the camp in the twentieth century, the twentieth century as camp'.

It is clear, in fact, that the 'invention' of the concentration camps has significant symbolic value. Removing men from combat in order to weaken the enemy has always been the goal of any war, and there is nothing new about the capture of military prisoners. On the other hand, the concentration camps of the Great War, generalising and multiplying those of the two colonial episodes of Cuba and South Africa, were innovative: henceforward civilians were also ordinary victims of war en route towards totalisation. The camps became an integral part of the culture of war, a weapon of armies against civilians.

Everywhere in the world at war, the shutting up of civilians judged suspect and treated without any respect for international law as prisoners ‘of war’ became commonplace. In the occupied territories these suspect civilians were, furthermore, victims of reprisals and sometimes deported and/or set to forced labour. These deportations and incarcerations did not lead to mass murder, and yet they confirmed that war against civilians was henceforward woven through with extreme forms of violence. But this phenomenon of the concentration model was not synonymous with the ‘concentration camp system’ as such. Until 1918 we can see these developments as incoherent and often improvised disorder, the consequence of a totalisation process which led to the incarceration of ‘enemies’, whether they were soldiers taken on the battlefield, or civilians, identified and treated like internal enemies, ‘soldiers without weapons’ who had the misfortune to find themselves in the territories overrun or occupied by troops.

The extermination of the Armenians remained distinct: the paradigmatic case of this form of violence against civilians transformed into a ‘crime against humanity’ and genocide before the legal concepts themselves were invented. The Polish Jewish lawyer Raphaël Lemkin intuitively grasped the specificity of the fate of the Armenians when he included it in the more general framework of acts of violence against civilians, pogroms of the war in the East – like that of Bialystok in 1915 – and deportations and forced labour in the West.⁴² Already he felt what the Second World War would confirm and what he would examine minutely in his later book *Axis Rule*:⁴³ that the degradation and then the extermination of human groups was no accidental cruelty, but the very essence of policies of occupation, segregation and incarceration of whomever was deemed ‘the enemy’ in wartime.

1 Hannah Arendt, ‘Les techniques de la science sociale et l’étude des camps de concentration’ (1950) reprinted in *Les origines du totalitarisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), pp. 845 and 851.

2 Giorgio Agamben, 'Le camp comme *nomos* de la modernité', in *Homo sacer: le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), p. 182.

3 Quoted in Philip Foner, *The Spanish–Cuban–American War and the Birth of American Imperialism, 1895–1902*, 2 vols. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), vol. I, p. 111.

4 Hannah Arendt, *Les origines du totalitarisme*, p. 786.

5 Colonel Hubert Jourdain, quoted by Bill Nasson, *The South African War, 1899–1902* (London: Arnold, 1999), p. 241.

6 The president of the ICRC in 1917 at the conference of Red Cross committees in neutral countries on the question of civilian prisoners: Archives of the ICRC, 411/10, 'Introduction sommaire à la question concernant les civils', September 1917, p. 1, my emphasis.

7 Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 122.

8 Alphabetical order was followed in naming the charitable or humanitarian organisations whose archives give information on the deportations.

9 Anthony Splivalo, *The Home Fires* (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1982), p. 117.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 213.

11 Letter of 26 October 1914, cited by Nicolas Ginsburger, 'La guerre la plus terrible des érosions': cultures de guerre et géographes universitaires, Allemagne, France, États-Unis (1914–1921)', 2 vols. (doctoral thesis, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, 2010), vol. I, p. 358.

12 *Mirror* (Sydney), 3 October 1915: ‘If we lose this war Germany will dominate Australia.’ At the time of the vote on conscription in 1917, the right to vote was withdrawn from all those naturalised persons who were born in a country at war against the Empire. Consider the case of two brothers who were fighting, one for France and the other in Palestine, and whose mother, born to German parents, lost the right to vote.

13 Many photographs of indexed internees appear in Gerhard Fischer, *Enemy Aliens: Internment and the Homefront Experience in Australia, 1914–1920* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989).

14 Appeal to the Canadian people, 16 July 1916, quoted by Lubomyr Luciuk, *In Fear of the Barbed Wire Fence: Canada’s First National Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914–1920* (University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 29.

15 Guillaume Apollinaire, *Lettres à Madeleine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999), 30 July 1915, p. 103.

16 Marcel Proust, *Le temps retrouvé* (Paris: Pléiade, 1999), vol. III, p. 765.

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Part IV Bodies in Pain

Introduction to Part IV

Jay Winter and Anne Rasmussen

The militarisation of medicine was an inevitable consequence of mobilisation during the Great War. The outbreak of war bound together military logic and medical logic in unprecedented ways. While combat exponentially increased the need for professional medical care for the wounded and the sick, it also set as a priority the need to maintain the strength of military units by returning as many as possible of the injured and the infirm to their units. This came before other tasks related to preventive medicine and the protection of civilian health. Such a medical war effort required the mass mobilisation of doctors in a military environment dedicated to the treatment of 'bodies in pain'. Those serving the forces thus confronted a difficult balance between doing the sick no harm and maximising the manpower on active service. Helping soldiers recover from war wounds meant returning them to the scene of their injury, and ensuring that untold numbers of men would be wounded again or die on active service.

Among the most difficult forms of injury treated during the war were psychological symptoms. Some doctors saw patients with such symptoms as malingerers; others saw them as being stricken with either psychological or neurological disabilities as real and devastating as any physical injury. These differences in medical diagnosis and treatment were entirely transnational. So was the impossibility of helping many of the men whose bodies and minds transformed emotional states into physical symptoms or motor disorders. No army did conspicuously better than any other in handling these casualties of war; and in the aftermath of war, no state did conspicuously better than any other in helping these men return to productive lives.

Some physicians and administrators wrote their medical history in heroic terms, emphasising their mastery of the traditional epidemics which had decimated armies in past times. This success, limited to the Western Front, was compromised, though, by the explosion in the last months of the war of an influenza pandemic which severely affected both military and civilian life, and exposed the incapacity of public authorities to control it or diminish its ravages.

Impotence in the face of the mutant virus called 'the Spanish flu' was also transnational. The origins of the pandemic are unknown, and so was any effective treatment at the time. A global killer disease disposed of more healthy young adults than did the war itself. Here global history is the only possible context in which to understand the reach and significance of the epidemic. The vast movements of populations, in and out of uniform – troops, men on leave, prisoners, displaced people, refugees, demobilised men, war workers – may have helped spread the disease, but did not cause it. Equally mysterious was its disappearance after 1920. The flu's devastating effects, though, made it clear that only a transnational approach to public health could cope with transnational patterns of epidemic illness. This contributed to initiatives in peacetime to frame health problems in regional or global terms.

In a sense, global history is also the only context in which to place the epidemic of bereavement which accompanied the staggering casualties of the war from its first months until well after the Armistice. How people mourned varied substantially, but mourning practices in all countries bore the marks of the uncanny reversal of generations, requiring parents to bury or to mark the deaths of their children. The suffering produced by the war lasted decades after the Armistice, and scarred the face of family life all over the world. We need to know more about these patterns in the Middle East, in Africa, in Asia and in the Americas as well as in Eastern Europe, where the shadow of war was eclipsed by the shadow of revolution. Then and only then will it be possible to write a truly transnational history of the First World War.

12 Military medicine

Leo van Bergen

Introduction

The First World War was a war of unprecedented slaughter, not only leaving millions dead, but millions wounded, who, as a result of the violence and the unhealthy circumstances in which the fighting – and the waiting – took place, were accompanied by millions of sick soldiers. This made a vast military medical apparatus not only a humanitarian but also a military necessity. Without medical care, manpower shortages would have been even more severe and morale harder to maintain.

However, describing the characteristics of military medicine – or, more generally, medical care in times of war – is anything but easy. War and medicine both have myriad faces, certainly in a war with highly differing fronts, changing tactics and strategies, and in times of quickly altering medical knowledge. Treatment methods differed and changed, as did the individual approach to medical care. Men like Lewis Yealland, Emil Kraepelin or Clovis Vincent wholeheartedly supported the war effort using their medical skills and apparatus as weapons, whereas someone like Theodor Lessing only went to work in a war hospital because it was the one place he could catch a glimpse of the world he had longed for, but which vanished after August 1914: a world of equal individuals.¹ Furthermore, we must bear in mind other dilemmas: a personal one arising from the fact that most medical personnel had to treat enemy wounded too – that is, those responsible for the wounds of other patients they had to treat; and a more important medical–ethical one, coming from the fact that doctors and nurses had to obey non-medical military authorities, who were responsible for all the wounds they had to heal. Loyalty to the patient and loyalty to the army and the cause could move in different directions. Medicine, or

healthcare in general, was not a ‘good’ in itself, but a tool, a skill, to be used for particular purposes in time of war.

Forms of medical care, and their effectiveness, were determined by differences in climate and geography on different fronts. Medical services varied, according to whether armies were linguistically homogeneous (as in the Germany army) or multi-ethnic and multi-lingual (as in the Austro-Hungarian, French and British armies). Radical differences existed according to the availability of medicines and technology and according to whether there was a war of movement underway or trench warfare. Differences existed too about what proper forms of medical care entail: there were widely varying national and local traditions concerning prevention and healing. Religious traditions differed on sexual morality, influencing measures against venereal disease (including its criminalisation). Front-line care, often carried out by young inexperienced physicians, differed from base hospital care given by university physicians, many prominent in their professional communities. It is unhelpful, therefore, to discuss ‘medicine’ as if there were some fixed and generally shared image as to what it was, a profession only influenced by practical matters.

In 1914 a substantial number of physicians found their way to front-line or military base hospitals. In general there was no ‘war enthusiasm’, contrary to myths constructed at the time, but many doctors were eager to get involved. Besides often being proud patriots, they not only believed their oath directed them towards caring for the wounded, but they also saw an abundance of medical possibilities in the unique circumstance of war. In particular, a number of physicians believed war could serve as a giant medical experiment. So in all warring countries they voluntarily joined the military health services (MHS) or one of the auxiliary corps in great numbers, making them one of the largest groups of academically trained professionals participating directly in the war effort.²

The number of MHS personnel proliferated and kept on proliferating, because of the sheer length of the conflict and its unprecedented bloodiness – unforeseen by most. For instance: the British Royal Army Medical Service (RAMC) counted 20,000 doctors and nurses in 1914. In 1918 there were 160,000. The American army had about 500 doctors in 1917. A year later the number had risen to 31,000. By then the Army Nurse Corps

counted 21,500 nurses instead of 400 in 1917.³ These doctors and nurses had to keep watch over millions of sick and wounded in millions of hospital beds, or on stretchers, or on blankets on the floor, or on the floor itself, either inside or outside field hospitals. No matter how vast healthcare provision had become and no matter how hard physicians and nurses worked, certainly during heavy battle, medical care was in fact powerless against the flow of the wounded – at times between an average of 15,000 and 20,000 daily.⁴ What is surprising is not the failures, but the successes in combating wounds and illnesses, certainly on the Western Front .

Medical tasks

The sheer numbers of wounded tell the tale of medical care stretched to its limits and every once in a while beyond them. The staggering variety of wounds contributed to this burden. Some doctors went to war precisely because they expected to encounter wounds never seen before, but most expected clean, small and seldom deadly textbook gunshot wounds. Most wounds, however, turned out to be gruesome . In addition, trench warfare was ideal for spreading diseases caused by rodents, lice, bacteria-ridden filth, human and animal faeces, or cold and damp conditions. On fronts not fixed as sites of trench warfare, disease still ruled the day. When armies were on the march, dysentery was a menace because sanitary measures and the provision of clean drinking water were hard to maintain.

On the whole, disease does not seem to have had a significant impact on the fighting. There are, however, exceptions to the rule, such as malaria in East Africa and Macedonia , where in 1918 soldiers contracted the disease on average not once but three times. In the East African war Allied forces suffered much more from malaria than German forces. Dysentery certainly considerably reduced Allied fighting strength (and morale) in Gallipoli and Mesopotamia . Typhus caused regular breaks in the fighting in the Balkans as did the so-called Spanish flu (influenza pandemic) everywhere in the war's final months. The relationship was often mutual. Military and medical failure caused epidemics. Epidemics contributed to military and medical failure.⁵

Illness remained a major cause of reducing effective man-days at the front. Contemporary standards as to what constituted debilitating illness

differed from those we have today. Many soldiers going over the top were sick by twenty-first-century standards, but during the Great War they defined illness of a debilitating kind differently, and many who were sick did not report their illness, and had they done so many such claims would not have been acknowledged. Unsurprisingly, a very frequent – and hated – form of treatment was for a doctor to tell a soldier to take some medicine and go back to the line.⁶

Being officers and responsible for upholding fighting strength and morale, medical practitioners were not solely doctors, limiting themselves to treating the individual sick and wounded. Some also had to act at times as police agents, judges and guards. They had to detect shirkers and malingerers, to serve as witnesses during court-martials and to decide whether or not a wound or illness was war-related, thereby deciding if a soldier would eventually be entitled to a war pension. For this the doctor had to declare the soldier ‘wounded’ for there to be a chance he would receive compensation after the war. Frequently ‘wounded’ meant sick or wounded as a result of the war, and ‘sick’ meant sick or wounded not as a result of the war.

There is another question surrounding definitions. What did ‘healing’ mean, when only a small minority of sick and wounded did not return to the front? Restoring manpower proved the doctors’ value to the war effort, and thus there was military pressure on them to deem their patients fully fit. Perhaps what mattered most was not fitness itself, but a degree of fitness or illness permitting soldiers to return to active service. Those suffering from skin diseases may have been ill, but not ill enough to be sent down the line. In 1917 men with tuberculosis were declared fit, as it was termed – alongside some psychological ailments – an ‘invisible’ disease. Given the necessities of recruitment, the relaxation of peacetime standards of medical fitness for military service, and in particular the relaxation, due to overwork, of efforts to keep those carrying communicable diseases out of the army, led in 1917–18 to a sharp recrudescence of tuberculosis in France. This disease constituted a real danger on the Western Fronts of the war. Visible wounds were harder to ignore, though some men visibly wounded were sent back to provide support services for those on front-line duty.

The whole structure of medical care changed in wartime. In peacetime a hospital was seen in popular terms by most working people as an institution

hopefully never needed, inhabited by doctors and nurses aiming to discharge patients as soon as possible in the best possible state of health. By contrast, to a sick or wounded soldier a hospital was a route out of misery, a haven of peace, but one partly inhabited by those who aimed not to heal him but to get him back as soon as possible to the health-threatening theatres of violence.

Thousands of doctors – some more than others – put themselves at the service of the national cause. This meant that time and again they had to determine whether someone was shirking or ‘really sick’. Some physicians saw their most important task as discouraging soldiers from avoiding the duty to go on fighting which they as soldiers had. Many had to suppress feelings of sympathy in order to keep up discipline .

The pressures of total war and the sheer volume of wounded and ill soldiers to be treated were bound to cause shifts in doctor–patient relationships. Doctors were officers and outranked most patients, further reinforcing the gap between medical authority and the rights of patients. The case of Clovis Vincent in treating shell-shocked soldiers, discussed in [Chapter 13](#), shows that vestiges of the rights of patients survived the war emergency, though not without a struggle.⁷

In contrast, such a debate on patients’ rights did not occur in Germany, though after the war there were similar conflicts over supposedly punitive forms of treatment in Austria, discussed in [Chapter 13](#). In Germany, as elsewhere, those under medical care were obliged to follow medical advice, making this advice in fact a military order. Medical authority was accepted by most soldiers, though there were some protests in Germany too. Moral suasion was the right of the doctor, many believed; they worked for the good not only of the patient but also of the army and the nation.⁸

To be sure, doctors responded to this dilemma in different ways, but on the whole most accepted that manpower levels had to be maintained. In 1917–18, this problem became even more severe. When fit soldiers were in short supply, doctors had to err on the army’s side in doubtful cases. Whether or not ‘war is good for medicine’,⁹ there is little doubt that medicine was an essential part of modern warfare, as it served to preserve manpower in a war of staggering attrition .

Containing disease and wounds

Particular illnesses followed different paths in different combat zones. Whereas typhoid fever was contained in the West (although still taking thousands of mainly German and French lives), it was a real menace in the East. Conditions there were much worse than on the Western Front, which was close enough to Britain, for instance, for there to be much public interest and scrutiny of medical and sanitary conditions. Gallipoli was further away and subject to more extreme weather and more difficult problems of water supply and treatment. Other armies suffered even more when they faced military reversals. The medical services of the Russian army broke down during the defeat and retreat of 1915.

On other fronts, doctors faced many difficult challenges. On the Eastern Front, in Gallipoli, Salonica, Mesopotamia or East Africa, disease was a constant menace. In East Africa sickness remained the greatest killer among doctors and patients alike. Chaos and collapse threatened repeatedly, in part due to geographical and climatological circumstances. In Gallipoli epidemics were a major problem, exacerbated by command decisions. Military Headquarters did not bother to consult medical officers or react to their communications. Medical men did not take part in the planning stage of the Allied landing. Medical arrangements were at best improvised and often non-existent, certainly in the early months of the operation. Hospital ships were unable to cope with the toll of the battle. At Lemnos hospitals were set up only a couple of months after the operation had started, because of the mistaken belief that the campaign would be swift. Supplies and equipment, for instance for sterilising water, ran short, limiting treatment. The leaders of the Allied landing were men whose reputations were made in colonial wars: Gallipoli was an entirely different matter. However, control over news reports was sufficiently robust to prevent stories of poor medical care and incompetent planning from getting out early in the campaign.¹⁰

This lack of public attention to medical care in 'side shows' of the war was not limited to Gallipoli. At Salonica, the base of the British Balkan campaign, hospitals were in a dreadful state. Nurses often had to sleep on the hard stony ground, and described these medical units as 'the most difficult workplaces established during the war'. Illnesses such as malaria, sand fever, typhoid fever and dysentery raged among patients and doctors

alike. The climate of Salonica and Lemnos presented further complications; at Gallipoli and in the Balkans frostbite was a danger in wintertime. In Egypt there were shortages of supplies, and although there was no mud, medically speaking dust was a problem at least as great, not to speak of the scorpions and flies. Evidently hospital work in the eastern Mediterranean was often considered by some medical personnel to be a bigger challenge than working on the Western Front.¹¹

Public pressure was important at times. The need to treat men with abdominal wounds was a matter of public discussion, even though such men were very unlikely to return to active duty. Special centres for abdominal surgery were set up near field ambulances or *Hauptverbandplätze* (main dressing stations). In consequence, by the last year of the war, the survival chances of those suffering abdominal wounds rose considerably, especially in Allied armies. This was mainly due to the introduction of blood transfusions, to a high degree resulting from American war participation.¹²

On the Eastern Front, major troop movements threatened those under treatment. Many were moved despite their condition, though there were cases where a retreating army simply left the sick and wounded behind, either because movement would have killed them or to avoid being bogged down even more than was bound to be the case. These problems also occurred in the West in 1914 during the German advance through Belgium and France and after March 1918. Only because they kept control of the railway system, in particular around Amiens, did the Allied medical effort avoid collapse during the German offensive of 1918.¹³ Despite all the things that went wrong, medical care on the Western Front was probably the most sophisticated and best managed history had seen to date.

Inspection, initial treatment and evacuation

In all warring countries the first stage of the medical history of enlisted men was going before the medical board. Early on, due to a severe discrepancy between the number of army physicians and the number of enlisted men, the boards' work was more cursory than it was later, though by 1918 manpower shortages certainly provided grounds for George Grosz's caricature of a corpse considered *Kriegsverwendungsfähig* (fit for war

again). The constant demand for soldiers made medical tribunals resemble a conveyor belt, where doctors sometimes had to examine hundreds of fresh recruits by the hour, accepting most immediately for full service and others for limited support service. Later on in the war, a more sophisticated system of classification was introduced in Britain, distributing men into four classes: fit for front-line duty; fit for garrison duty abroad; fit for home duty; and unfit for military service at all. About 50 per cent of all men examined fell into the first two classes. Medical boards were under considerable pressure in the last year of the war to find as many able-bodied men as possible, but they recognised that each unfit man passed as fit for service would need two fit men to carry him from the battlefield when he broke down.¹⁴

Stretcher-bearers, who understandably had to meet certain physical requirements, were the front-line soldiers of the medical war. There was hardly ever enough of them, and they suffered considerable losses. In theory four stretcher-bearers were expected to bring a wounded man back to the first-aid post within the hour. In reality it often took up to eight stretcher-bearers to do so, often taking them several hours, depending on the mud. Certainly during the Third Battle of Ypres, stretcher-bearers were completely worn out after delivering a single wounded man to an aid post. They were in desperate need of rest. Seeing stretcher-bearers having a break or even being fast asleep while wounded men were screaming in the field troubled soldiers repeatedly, but few men could shoulder their human burdens without exhaustion in the heavy rain and gun fire.¹⁵

In the British army the wounded were first brought to a regimental aid post 200–300 yards behind the line. Although bomb craters were sometimes used for shelter, at times these posts were placed in dugouts, ruins or other sites littered with bandages, blood and flies. From there the wounded went to the advanced dressing station (ADS), usually placed near roads and meant for triage: the selection of men for specific treatment, either on medical or military grounds. This, the first line of care, was generally meant to prepare the wounded for their travel further back, if indeed ambulances were available. Only minor and absolutely necessary interventions took place at this stage. Medical staff were in short supply, working around the clock in times of heavy fighting. Not equipped for housing many wounded, these dressing stations were often overcrowded, and remained so when

bombardment made further transport impossible. It was in these posts closest to the front line that most doctors and nurses were killed or wounded

From an ADS, the soldier first went to the main dressing station and then the casualty clearing station (CCS). In 1916 the British had more than fifty CCSs in France and Belgium, housing between 500 and 1,000 patients each. They were the cornerstones of the system of urgent medical care. The CCS (or the German field hospital or other second-line facilities) were in theory the places where the first female nurses were positioned. In principle it was there that the first operations took place, giving them a gruesome character, heightened when anaesthetics were not available. These were necessarily messy, at times filthy, frequently overloaded, with the wounded lying on the ground or outside, not far from stacks of amputated arms and legs in a corner. Soldiers nicknamed them the slaughterhouses, the butchers' kitchens. At first they were called casualty clearing hospitals, but this suggested another more sanitary world entirely. Using this title, so some thought, would undoubtedly raise patients' expectations – which were mostly limited – to an unrealistic level. Over time, better equipment arrived, including X-ray machines, but by then the title 'station' had become too familiar to change.

The basic divide was this one: those wounded or sick expected to recover within a week or so stayed in these stations; others needing more treatment and unlikely to return soon to the front were sent further down the line to convalescence at a home hospital, or to a base hospital if further treatment was needed. In Britain alone these often specialised hospitals expanded from a 40,000 bed capacity at the end of 1914 to a capacity of 365,000 at the end of the war.¹⁶ In these hospitals some degree of standardisation and rationalisation became the order of the day.

In the German army circumstances were slightly different. If German battalions went into action, half of the medical staff went along and half remained at the *Truppenverbandplatz*, the equivalent of the ADS. Aiming to treat the wounded as close to the front line as possible, the Germans (and Austrians) lacked a real equivalent of the British CCS. Instead they set up CCS-like hospitals from the staff of the *Feldlazarette* (field hospitals) of which each army corps had twelve. From there on the wounded were sent to the *Kriegslazarette* (war hospitals). These military hospitals were huge

facilities, sometimes resembling medical villages, with multiple hospitals. Swiss/Dutch doctor Otto Lanz put himself at the disposal of the German army and was sent to one of the numerous military hospitals in Trier to act as consulting physician. On arrival he remarked that the plural 'military hospitals' was incorrect: Trier in fact was one big military hospital.¹⁷ If further treatment was necessary, the sick or wounded soldier was transported to the *Reservelazarett* (reserve hospital) back in the fatherland, often in transformed university hospitals, or to one of the *Vereinslazarette* (additional hospitals) set up by private clubs, organisations or private citizens. As opposed to military hospitals, these hospitals were often highly specialised. In 1917 the Berlin area alone had 140 with a capacity twenty-fold greater than in the pre-war years. In 1920 there were still twenty hospitals in the Berlin area for 2,000 wounded and disfigured men alone.¹⁸

The reserve and additional hospitals were relentlessly crowded. For instance, the psychiatric hospital at Giessen University had registered a total of 27,000 days' treatment or roughly 80 days for each of its patients in 1914. Although many staff members had joined the army, the number of patients treated there rose substantially, and in 1917 the total for days of treatment had risen to 41,000.¹⁹ The same took place in all major combatant countries. It was not only doctors and nurses serving at the front who were close to (or beyond) exhaustion. Life-draining exhaustion, taking years to recover from, was the red thread in the diary of Belgian nurse Jane de Launoy, working mostly in the L'Océan hospital in De Panne, or in the diary of Canadian nurse Frances Cluett. She observed that nurses, having to run all the time, were even more worn down than physicians.²⁰ Although, as in every other facet of the war, there were times of extreme boredom as well, these work regimes often physically and mentally exhausted doctors and nurses, who had to treat thousands of soldiers suffering from horrific wounds. Doctors and nurses coming from ordinary civilian surroundings were at times flabbergasted at seeing the wounds they were supposed to heal. Amazement was their first and sometimes remained their main reaction. When wards were overcrowded, those who were lightly wounded or had less severe conditions – skin diseases, for instance – were immediately sent back to their units to clear space for those more in need of care. Overcrowded conditions also meant that even in base hospitals individual therapeutic interventions were cursory, and that seeming medical

disinterest in the individual soldier–patient was understandable. Not only at the front, but in hospital too, the patient was not an individual but just one of many – a number, a tiny interchangeable part in an enormous health machine. Casualty clearing stations, military hospitals, base hospitals: they were medical factories dealing with the detritus of warfare in all its mental and physical forms. It may have been that some physicians did little to help some of those with the most catastrophic wounds to survive. There was considerable force in Erich Maria Remarque’s statement that hospital showed what war is. Physician–poet Wilhelm Klemm wrote that, when getting up in the morning, every day he had to face ‘war all over again’.²¹

The pressure of work left little time for improvements in procedures or practices. The time for further education was non-existent, and consequently newly arrived doctors were no better or worse than their predecessors. Standards of care dropped at times. Transport was a problem everywhere . The British medical services had great trouble getting their wounded back from the front. The RAMC was small and all kinds of organisations, like the St John’s Ambulance Brigade or the well-known Voluntary Aid Detachment , strengthened their capacity considerably. The RAMC had few motorised ambulances at its disposal and the smallest corps of stretcher-bearers on the Western Front. In 1914 the British Expeditionary Force had no motorised ambulances at all.²² Pre-war planning had clearly failed; and even when a ‘big push’ was underway, the faults in medical preparations quickly became apparent. The first day of the Battle of the Somme produced 40,000 wounded men, as opposed to the 10,000 anticipated casualties.²³ As a result transport of the wounded, starting in no-man’s-land, was a shambles. It became evident in short order that physicians were in an impossible position, and despite heroic efforts, they could not handle the avalanche of the wounded. Public attention to this matter was particularly strong, since the army that went over the top in July 1916 was overwhelmingly a volunteer army, and their families took a keen interest in the kind of care they received when wounded .

The trains transporting the wounded to base hospitals, often arriving after long delays, became a familiar sight in the major combatant countries. Stefan Zweig observed that the same Austrian trains used in the summer of 1914 to transport soldiers to the field of honour were soon carrying silent wrecks back home. These trains bore no resemblance to the clean, polished

carriages in which archduchesses and other ladies of high society, dressed as nurses, had their pictures taken for posterity. They were turned into goods wagons without windows, with only a hatch for air, lit by oil lamps, and during the first months of the war, and later on too, they were full to bursting with the wounded gasping for breath amid the stench of faeces and iodine. The overtired nurses lurched from one man to the next. From time to time a casualty was found to have died. According to Leonhard Frank this was the reason the last carriage of each train was left empty. It would fill up during the journey. In his view the ambulance train was the central metaphor of the conflict, as it literally brought home the horrors of the war.²⁴

This picture certainly applied to the first phase of the war. Hospital trains had an improvised character and were too few in numbers to do the job. At the start of the war the French were forced to use cattle trucks to move the wounded further away from the front: it was said that some men were infected with tetanus as a result. Little improved as the years went on. Soldiers suffering from all kinds of epidemic diseases were put together in one and the same wagon. British trains, often provided by charitable organisations, seem to have been better, but the wrath of the British soldier was focused on the hospital boats carrying them across the Channel, a wrath completely shared by Jane de Launoy, who confirmed how hard it was to travel away from the front.²⁵ And these complaints do not even touch the problems of medical care in the heat of the Middle East, Palestine and Mesopotamia, or in the heat and extreme cold of much of the Eastern and Italian Fronts .

Doctors and patients

There were differences in medical practice in different armies. To control lice infestation, the British emphasised personal hygiene, while the Germans trusted disinfection. For disinfecting, the British used steam; the Germans used chemicals. There were also differences concerning vaccination, which was obligatory in Germany and voluntary in Britain, but more on that below.

German doctors voiced the view that the civilian health situation was worrying, and should not be allowed to deteriorate radically. The way the

war was run from Berlin made such worries both realistic and impossible to rectify. French doctors never expressed such anxieties; soldiers' health came first, for instance in clearing civilians from tuberculosis hospitals to make way for soldiers. Fortunately for them, material conditions in France did not worsen as they did in Germany and Austria-Hungary.²⁶

There was another level on which front and home-front points of view varied in different combatant countries. Doctors treating patients convalescing in their home countries, far from the battlefields, had a different perspective from those treating men just behind the front. Many such physicians were patriots, convinced that the nation's health mattered more than individual health.²⁷ As a consequence, some medical practices collided with front-line experience and practice, in which doctor-patient relationships played a far more important role than some university specialists were accustomed to. Although anything but free from nationalistic sentiments and fully aware that their main task was keeping up morale and fighting strength, military doctors in the field were in practice mainly concerned with crisis management. Many of them had a pragmatic view regarding treatment: after all, they faced the same devastating artillery war that caused such carnage among the men they cared for .

Another difference was in the experience doctors had with health insurance schemes. In 1910 in Germany over 13 million people had health insurance, against only 4 million in France. The British system of health insurance had just got off the ground in 1914, but was extended to munitions workers during the war. German physicians were used to dealing with bureaucracy, and may have had a greater suspicion of men feigning illness or disability in order to get out of the front line and to be deemed eligible for a pension.²⁸

Once trench warfare set in, some of the medical disadvantages of the war of movement receded, and health workers were provided with a more or less fixed place to work nearer the front lines. The wounded could more easily be treated nearer the front, and recovery rates, especially for minor wounds, rose. What some termed *Sitzkrieg* (static war) resulted in a growing number of nurses working nearer to the front lines, although some were unable to break through a kind of cordon sanitaire separating them from the front. For a long time German nurse Henriette Riemann tried to get posted near the front line, but failed. This applied to female doctors too.

Although not absent among German mobilised doctors in 1914, their presence near the front was, according to the Prussian War Ministry, undesirable.²⁹

In France female nurses were also officially barred from the *zone rouge*. French soldier-writer Gabriel Chevalier was relieved when he saw a female nurse after being admitted to hospital. This, he thought, could only mean he was not in 'some ghastly military hospital'.³⁰ However, in the first months of the war, French nurses were caught near the front in the general retreat of the Allied forces, until the Battle of the Marne stabilised the situation. French women had to wait until 1918 before being allowed to serve in front-line dressing stations. This was the result of fierce lobbying by influential women: public claims that women could do the same job as male nurses mattered, and so did some pressure from doctors going to the front, who wanted to take with them the nurses they knew and trusted. But the drainage of manpower was simply too severe to sustain the blanket ban on female health workers from front-line areas.³¹ Nurses, male and female, played an invaluable part in the medical war, and like all others they came to the war with a wide variety of views about it, about the nobility of their service in it, and mostly with a narrow certainty as to the justice of the cause of their side. Many men and women saw nursing as the female equivalent of male soldiering.³²

On diseases and prevention

Infection was a constant enemy, leading to complications which could be fatal. Tetanus killed over 50 per cent of the men contracting it, until the more frequent and better use of sera helped control it. Gas gangrene was feared too, and rightly so. If disinfection did not work, which was often the case, gas gangrene could lead to amputation. And if that did not do the trick, then death was very probable.³³

Even when well-known causes of death were contained, new ones rapidly emerged. Lice caused trench fever, a link already suspected but not proven until 1918. Aside from venereal diseases (between 3 and 8.5 per cent of all disabling conditions, depending on the army),³⁴ trench fever was amongst the most serious threats to manpower. Its symptoms resembled those of

influenza, leading to regular misdiagnosis, as also happened with pneumonia and influenza, especially during the epidemic of 1918–19. These errors require us to treat sickness statistics with great caution. All armies were struck hard by Spanish flu, but it was the American army that was struck the hardest. Almost one in four became infected: more than 20,000 died, against 7,000 in the British army fighting on the Western Front.³⁵ Medical care was virtually impotent when faced with the flu.

About half of the millions of men who fought on the Western Front fell victim at least once, but in many cases multiple times, to illness. The British army's sickness rate for the war as a whole was roughly 60 per cent. Out of the 6 million times British physicians had to treat a patient, 3.5 million times it was to treat illness. A French hospital in 1917 collected statistics as to how many soldiers entered – more than 100,000 – and what was wrong with them. Stomach complaints were numerous, especially diarrhoea. One out of four had some skin disease such as scurvy . A similar number suffered from myalgia or rheumatism. Trench foot , caused by cold and wet conditions, and trench mouth, caused by poor nutrition, were there, as were nephritis and enteritis.³⁶

The chances of German soldiers becoming ill were also at the 50 per cent level. About 160,000 died of sickness, almost one in three from lung conditions caused by cold, rain and poison gas. But ordinary flu and typhus were feared as well.³⁷ Nevertheless soldiers on other fronts were in an even worse position. Epidemics of diseases such as typhus wreaked far more havoc than in the West. For instance, such infections account for the nearly 40 per cent death rate of men serving in the Serbian army and 30 per cent in the Romanian army. By mid January 1915, the whole of Serbia was invaded by typhus. One estimate has it that one in five was hit by this disease, which caused 115,000 deaths out of a total population of 2.5 million people. Prisoners of war were not immune: 70,000 Austrian soldiers died in camps lacking sanitation and care of even the most rudimentary kind.³⁸ The spread of typhus and tuberculosis helped sharpen accusations that the enemy was deliberately propagating disease through malnutrition and forced migration

Considerable effort was put into preventing soldiers from getting ill in the first place, in part, as Andreas Latzko wrote, to ensure that they were

healthy enough to go back up the line to face further injury and death.³⁹ But epidemics were also fought because sick soldiers posed a threat to healthy ones. Medicine is often pictured as selfless and humanitarian, and some of it is, but it is just as much an act of self-defence on the part of the healthy to prevent the spread of infection to the able-bodied.

Keeping the surroundings of army camps safe, for instance by delivering clean drinking water or clearing latrines, was one of the most important parts of military health policy. Nevertheless, epidemics and endemic illness struck time and again in a landscape covered with filth and putrefaction. Trenches were huge dumps, which were almost impossible to keep free of flies (a cause of dysentery), rats or other pests. In addition, not all officers – and not all medical officers – were interested in hygienic measures, and that was true up and down the chain of command.

If general measures of collective hygiene were hard to implement, the individual soldier was held responsible for his health, including avoiding venereal disease. He had to keep fit for the fatherland and a soldier was expected to abstain from ‘unhealthy’ activities. In summary, he had to do everything in his power to stay at his post and not end up in hospital. This made sense in theory, but not in practice in or near trenches filled with water and vermin with corpses all around.⁴⁰ Differences concerning vaccination again partly came from the fact that the Germans used conscription and the British did not until 1916. Compulsory vaccination could have had a deterrent effect on British war recruitment, since it would have flown in the face of voluntary traditions.⁴¹ Besides, there was considerable resistance in the British High Command to mandatory inoculation against contagious diseases; there was a long history of such opposition, and in 1914 only about one in four actually was inoculated. However powerful the arguments of doctors about the benefits of inoculation, never during the war did the British army follow the American and German practice of compulsory vaccination.

However, most British soldiers thought vaccination was obligatory, and went along with the view that medical authority should override the patient’s will, and that keeping up the fighting strength of the army required accepting measures viewed more negatively in peacetime. There was opposition in the ranks: indeed, a man had to be extremely determined and resourceful to resist military and medical pressure. All in all no wonder that

even without compulsion, within two years British vaccination rates had risen above 90 per cent of men in uniform. The results were undeniable. The proportion of British soldiers contracting typhoid fever dropped from 3 per 1000 in 1915 to 0.2 in 1918. The sickness rate among those refusing vaccination in 1916 was fifteen times higher than the average for the army as a whole.⁴²

Based on medical work in its African colonies before the war, Germany had introduced systematic and compulsory vaccination to avoid outbreaks of typhoid fever. In contrast smallpox remained a scourge in Russia, partly because of the absence of inoculation among the peasant population.⁴³

Despite all these difficulties, sickness rates in the Great War were lower than (for instance) those of British soldiers during the Boer War. If Allied forces had neglected hygiene, and the Central Powers had not done so, the outcome of the war could very well have been a different one.

Cardiology and heart disease

The treatment of those suffering from heart ailments was a common preoccupation of physicians in wartime. As a consequence of the war, heart ailments were redefined. Initially some physicians found that the excitement of the early phase of the war seemed to ‘cure’ heart problems, alongside – so it was said – epilepsy and some mental illness. Some physicians adopted a kind of social Darwinism to understand this supposed resurgence of the strength of the people at a time of threat.⁴⁴

It rapidly became clear, though, that the war had negative effects in producing what was termed at the time ‘soldier’s heart’, a cardiac condition for which the state was obliged to provide treatment and pensions. Over time the category ‘soldier’s heart’ was replaced by the more neutral tag of ‘effort-syndrome’, which emerged alongside ‘shell-shock’ and ‘not yet diagnosed-nervous’. As these latter two terms suggest, the cardiac condition observed might have been the consequence of infection or stress arising from hereditary causes. In other words, patients suffering from soldier’s heart were wounded and patients suffering from effort-syndrome were, or at least could have been, sick before they had joined the army. Some German physicians distinguished between organic or honourable complaints, on the

one hand, and psychological and dishonourable ones on the other. Some in France distinguished between provable or real, and unprovable and probably unreal ailments. The doubt about whether conditions were war-related separated the treatment of some disabled men from that of soldiers physically and visibly injured during and by virtue of their military service.

In many cases doctors saw the strain of war at most as a contributing factor. This clearly reflected the nationalistic sentiments of specialists eager to make their contribution towards restoring damaged men to active duty. The dilemma was that showing the importance of their cardiological or internal specialism meant detecting and fixing as many heart problems among the fighting men as possible. Nationalism, however, dictated that 'war' was not to blame. The answer was to recognise the condition but to downplay its war-related character and/or its seriousness. In other words: soldiers with heart problems lacked willpower. In medical journals front-line doctors were more than once accused of exaggerating 'heart-problems', a diagnosis (they insisted) never to be spoken of in the presence of the patient. To talk openly could only prolong the illness and lead the soldier to the conclusion that he had done his bit, and to seek his discharge and claim a pension. For the same reason the hospitalisation of these patients was deemed by some doctors to be out of order. According to Philipp Rauh 'diagnostic guidelines were thus to ignore any complaints of cardiac symptoms and, rather, to rely upon the physician's examination in the context of military fitness'.⁴⁵

Consider the views expressed in a lecture 'On Heart Diagnosis in War', delivered in May 1916 by the Dutch Austrian internist K. F. Wenckebach at the Warsaw conference of the German Society for Internal Medicine. In line with his eugenic beliefs in racial hygiene, Wenckebach underlined the importance of the state's interests taking precedent over the patient's. In wartime it was not only the strong who should make sacrifices: the weak too had to be prepared to give up their health, and if necessary their lives. 'The no longer usable' soldiers with heart complaints were deemed by this man, and by those of like mind, to be inferior weaklings. A heart patient was a costly burden on the state, hindering the war effort. Therefore a 'correct judgement' as to the nature of his condition was an urgent financial as well as medical matter. Reflections on eugenics and the financial implications of medical care and future pensions were widely disseminated

during the war on the German and Austrian side of the lines. It was not unknown in the Allied camp either. Although additional factors played a role as well, this attitude was reflected in German statistics showing a sharp decline in diagnosed heart problems during the war – from 30 per cent of all cases in 1915 and 1916 to less than 10 per cent in 1918.⁴⁶

Not all physicians shared this attitude. At the front itself doctors recognised exhaustion as a consequence of the immense strains of warfare and, as in the case of many psychiatric cases, treatment included a period of rest. It was rare for soldiers complaining of heart problems to be sent back to the front. It is striking that after the Warsaw conference of May 1916, physicians in the field evidently listened to these views, and returned to more flexible forms of diagnosis and treatment. The drop in cause-specific conditions registered is therefore partly just a drop in diagnosis, though we must be cautious in this case, as in all analyses of military medical statistics

On wounds

Infectious diseases were dreaded by soldiers, to be sure, but not as much as wounds and the complications resulting from them. The danger came from all kinds of projectiles: bullets, or fragments of bullets, especially ricochets; grenades, especially those filled with shrapnel, and grenade splinters; and shells, or shell fragments, decapitating, emasculating and eviscerating in arbitrary patterns. They caused gruesome wounds, maiming soldiers for life, if indeed they survived. Those permanently mutilated numbered 30,000 in the German army alone at the end of the war of movement in early 1915.⁴⁷ No photos of them were published in the popular press, though the medical press contained such information in abundance, as part of the effort to instruct physicians as to what they would face at the front.

In 1911 the RAMC training manual estimated that in a future war sick soldiers would outnumber the wounded by twenty-five to one. In reality the ratio in France was roughly two to one. Given the huge number of soldiers who contracted some form of disease, this only proves that the risks of military men becoming casualties of war were sky-high. For example, 56 per cent of British soldiers were wounded, and one in eight of all who served died.

Some estimates suggest that 20 per cent of those injured suffered bullet wounds, and 80 per cent were injured by shellfire. Some reports had it that among French soldiers perhaps 90 per cent were hit by artillery fire. In contrast, in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, 90 per cent of the wounded were hurt by rifle fire and 10 per cent by artillery.

Of soldiers fortunate enough to reach hospital alive, 21 per cent had been hit in the torso, 51 per cent in the arms or legs and 17 per cent in the head. These figures alone show that head and trunk wounds were more likely to be immediately fatal than those to arms or legs. The low percentage of chest wounds recorded is no doubt attributable to the fact that many soldiers hit in the torso did not make it to hospital. Those who died in the field and never reached treatment centres were not included in these statistics.⁴⁸ How many lay wounded, and after a time feverish too, never got any kind of medical help at all? How many never reached hospital through lack of transport? How many could have been saved had there been more stretcher-bearers and less mud? Would the medical care system have been stretched beyond breaking point everywhere had all the wounded reached hospital? No one knows.

Amputees and disfigured men

Amputees and the facially disfigured had no chance of returning to active duty. In both cases, treatment could last for years, though the development of orthopaedic surgery and prosthetic medicine meant that amputees could return to productive work on the land or in factories, at times while the war was still going on.

The disfigured had a harder path to tread, and their place in wartime and in post-war society was always an unsettled and unsettling one. The facially disfigured had often fallen victim to flame-throwers, shrapnel or splinters of exploded shells. Therapy first of all aimed to remove deformed scar tissue and then to make the face as whole as possible through repeated and painful plastic surgery. This was highly skilled and labour-intensive work. Even highly competent and experienced facial surgeons, such as Harold Gillies in Britain, or the Dutchman Johannes Esser working in Vienna, Budapest and Berlin, could only deal with a relatively small number of patients. Most

patients certainly looked better than they had when entering hospital, but their faces were still often deformed. Here the psychological effects of physical injury, discussed in [Chapter 13](#), bear more than a passing thought.

Medical care aimed not only to repair but also to prepare such men to resume their place in society. But what could that be like in the case of the *gueules cassées*, the men with broken faces? Medical care also aimed to reduce the pension lists by giving injured men the care they needed to get back to work. But that was not always possible. One of the solutions to this problem was the manufacturing of face masks to be put on when stepping outside the hospital's safe boundaries. These masks did serve their purpose, but it is evident that they only kept the truth out of sight. Only between hospital walls – or in institutions they themselves created for holidays or other social purposes – could these disfigured men be themselves. The inhabitants – doctors, nurses and other disfigured men – were used to watching them without blinking or looking away out of fear or disgust. Certainly the nurses needed some time to become acquainted with these patients. They were the ones most directly involved with the patients, and fear of them was not uncommon at first. One nurse wrote that he never had imagined what moist, empty eye sockets, smashed or missing jaws, and noses partly or entirely blown away could do to a person's appearance, but now he knew and he could not forget it.⁴⁹

The number of war invalids who survived their injuries was staggering. Already during, but certainly after the end of the war, invalids came to be a normal sight in all the cities of the former adversaries. Germany alone had about 2.7 million permanently incapacitated men out of 13 million who enlisted. Of this total 67,000 were amputees who had lost one or more limbs. The huge toll of disability had serious financial consequences after the war.⁵⁰

Orthopaedic medicine took on more significance in the war period. In Germany state recognition of it as a medical specialism followed the indisputable record of its service to the army, the state and the nation. And this standing rested on the capacity of orthopaedics to help vast armies of disabled men prepare to take responsibility for their lives again as civilians. Prostheses proved that technology could not only destroy, but could rebuild the human body as well. Functionality was essential; prostheses were

advertised in the mainstream press, and information about new devices was shared rapidly across national boundaries and among former enemies.⁵¹

There were national differences in approach to returning invalids to productive labour. In Germany the prosthesis was normally chosen to enable the men to return to the pre-war, often industrial, jobs they had had. This meant that an amputee who had a clerical job in a ministry was entitled to wooden replacements, but if he had lost an arm, he would receive highly technical devices enabling him to type again. In America many war invalids were prepared for work in the agricultural sector.⁵² Restoring the man meant restoring the nation to prosperity. This was easier said than done .

Orthopaedic medicine played an important part in occupational therapy. The more successful it was, some in Germany said, the greater was the chance of reducing the high costs of war pensions, by ‘making tax-payers out of charity cases’. As historian Heather Perry put it, ‘In their wartime work’, orthopaedic physicians and surgeons in Germany were honoured for doing what was necessary for ‘the very salvation’ of Germany.⁵³

In conclusion, it is important to insist on the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the history of military medicine in wartime. Patterns of diagnosis and treatment varied according to geography and climate, public and parliamentary interest and pressure, the level of sickness and the flow and severity of the condition of those wounded during great offensives, the varying levels of knowledge and skills of doctors and nurses, the vagaries of transport, and the stocks of medicines and other essential tools of the trade.

Underlying these differing elements, however, there were some similarities on both sides of the line. The war gave specialists the opportunity to raise their specialism’s status by showing its worth to the war effort. The war also provided an opportunity to try out new forms of treatment or drugs: it was thus a field for socially useful (and at times ethically questionable) medical experiments.⁵⁴ War-related circumstances – the reconfiguration of priorities, changes in scale, the medicalisation of societies at war – triggered the development of public health policies and bureaucracies which redesigned the public health landscape of post-war Europe. The birth of the Ministry of Health in Britain is one instance of this change.

The nature of the conflict also helped strengthen tendencies among doctors who believed that they had to consider the health of army, nation and/or race, rather than solely the needs of the individual. Many doctors shared the views of their contemporaries that everyone had to try to maintain manpower and morale, and that everyone had an interest in saving the state from a crushing burden of war pensions. The conflict between medical and military necessity was played out in myriad ways between 1914 and 1918, and on balance military necessity emerged from the war the stronger of the two. Medical care strengthened the war effort of each combatant army, just as it would do later in the twentieth century in later wars. Some people objected to strengthening the war machines that produced the injuries they had to treat. In 1918 a Dutch nurse and in 1938 a Cambridge medical professor called for a medical strike against the war,⁵⁵ but they were in the minority. Despite the extreme circumstances under which soldiers fought and the extreme constraints doctors in uniform were obliged to accept, the task of maintaining armies in the field was an end which was both accepted and negotiated during the war. Indeed, it is clear that because of the war the citizen soldier had rights to medical care he had not enjoyed in peacetime, and that those rights were in principle the property of all who wore a uniform, or who bore their wounds and disabilities for years after the end of the war. As in every other facet of the war, the negative and positive outcomes of the conflict present a mixed picture – one with major consequences, both for the medical profession and for the societies and individuals it served.

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13 Shell shock

Jay Winter The Great War was a revolutionary moment in the history of the disabled and of disability as a social, economic and political problem. The sheer number of disabled men in combatant nations meant that the treatment and post-war entitlements of those wounded in war became a permanent and highly visible part of the reckoning societies made of the costs of the war.

Among these costs was the care of men whose wounds were either neurological or psychological in character. The distinction between the two mattered, since there were roughly two schools of opinion on those who manifested symptoms of injury without visible wounds. On the one hand, there were those who believed that such individuals suffered from lesions we cannot see: thus all such injuries were physiological in character, and could be treated as such. On the other hand, some physicians and psychologists took the view that there were disabilities which were psychogenetic in character, and they had to be treated in a different way. On balance, the neurologists were prone to scepticism about some claims to war-related disability without evident physical injury; at times they believed such men were malingerers pretending to be disabled. Psychologists were more likely to accept that perfectly healthy men, without a trace of mental illness in their family histories, could be severely damaged without a scratch being visible on them. The psychological effects of heavy bombardment or the enormous stress of combat could produce disabilities even without physical injury to the soldier in question.

Most physicians and serving officers believed that the entire category of psychogenic disability was a cover for fraud. They were reluctant to consider that men who had no detectable traumatic injury could be disabled through military service and not due to a pre-existing condition. To such sceptics, a more likely explanation of paralysis or muteness without injury was cowardice or dissimulation; in short, acting disabled was a tactic to avoid facing the enemy. Such opinions did not disappear at the end of the

war. The stigmatisation of psychologically disabled men continues to this day .

This chapter examines, therefore, the contested medical, political, social and cultural terrain surrounding injuries which came to be known as ‘shell shock’. Here is an instance in which we can see the transnational history of the war in very sharp terms. These debates took place in every combatant army, with each looking over its collective shoulder to see how the others approached the phenomenon. There was no consensus on diagnosis, treatment or definitions of levels of disability or cure. Above all, this chapter on wartime medical history shows that the only way to understand medical and scientific opinion, however ‘fact’-based it was, is through the language in which it was expressed at the time.

Linguistically, there was a great difference between ‘shell shock’, the English neologism for psychological or neurological injury, and words used in other languages for the same set of conditions. In all cases, language mattered; and attention to language enables us to see how it was that in Britain the term ‘shell shock’ escaped from medical discourse to become a metaphor for the damage the war inflicted *tout court*. This was not the case in other countries, and the reasons for such cultural differences are important. In the interwar years, it was not only bodies and minds that were shell-shocked, artists, poets, novelists and film-makers insisted, but so were the societies in which they lived.

Symptoms and diagnoses

Already in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 there was considerable discussion of the need for military physicians to prepare for handling the psychological casualties of war. Ten years later, the problem occurred, but on a scale which turned differences in degree into differences in kind.

From early on in the war, physicians on active military service had to deal with thousands of men presenting a range of disorders which did not seem to have visible or measurable physical origins in wounds or other injuries. There were six groups of such disorders which were reported in the medical literature in the first year of the war. Let us consider these in terms of individual cases.

Stupor

F. S., a German wreath-binder before the war, fell unconscious under bombardment after only two days at the front. In hospital he was said to have been in a 'deep stupor'. He had no idea where he was and suffered from amnesia. Within a month he began to recover his memory. A similar case was that of a Russian lieutenant who suffered delusions after combat in 1914. He said that Germans 'had to be burned and then fought with'. He thought he was the chief of staff, heard shots and shells, and 'would shudder and turn away'. He remained apathetic on evacuation. There were similar cases in all combatant armies. To a French physician 'stupor is probably the most frequent of the mental symptoms of shell shock'. Those in this state suffered from disorientation, delusions, and amnesia. Relapses were frequent.¹

Doctors treated many soldiers who were either completely unresponsive or who reacted only to certain trigger words or sounds. A British soldier buried alive on the Western Front reacted to nothing other than to the word 'bomb'. On hearing it in hospital, he immediately hurled himself under his bed, and would not emerge until reassured that there was no imminent danger. Many other soldiers responded immediately and automatically to loud noises by seeking shelter, long after their discharge from military service.² A French soldier was the only survivor of a direct hit to a blockhouse; ten other men had been killed. Vertigo, tremors and amnesia afflicted this man, who 'would sit hours in a chair or on a bed silent and inactive'. 'Catatonic dementia praecox' was the diagnosis.³

Paralysis

A German soldier aged 18 injured his skull in a fall just before the outbreak of the war. On active service he hurt his left forearm, which remained paralysed in a bent position. Here was, a physician remarked, a 'typical case of hysterical paralysis'. A similar case was that of a German soldier on the Eastern Front. In late December 1914,

while engaged in transport service, on the way back with his horse, he fell into a bog and gradually sank to his neck. Attempts to get the man and his horse out failed. All that saved him from drowning was the

freezing of the bog surface. After four hours he was freed by his comrades, apparently frozen stiff, but with consciousness completely preserved.

A day later he collapsed, and awoke paralysed on his right side. The right side of his mouth was frozen in an awkward position, and his right arm and leg were immobile. Doctors thought that refrigeration and terror combined to produce the paralysis, though they were puzzled by the fact that the onset of paralysis was delayed for a day.⁴

Tremors

A British sergeant aged 32, with eleven years of service, fainted on the retreat from *Mons*. He contracted dysentery, and while he was in an ambulance a shell knocked him into a ditch. He then suffered from a tremor when in company; when alone, it subsided.⁵ A similar case of tremors was reported by a French physician. A French soldier was thrown against a wall by a bursting shell. He was not wounded, though several of his company were killed by the explosion. He started trembling on the way back to his lines, and continued to tremble for a fortnight. His appetite was gone. He was treated behind the lines for 'hysterical chorea', or purposeless and involuntary movement.⁶ His trembling continued after his medical discharge from the army. Any 'sharp noise or sharp command, or recalling to mind of trench service' precipitated general tremors, which deeply 'chagrined' this man. His shame at his condition was evident.⁷

A subaltern in the German army in 1915 was lucky to survive a direct hit on his unit. A few steps from him six of his comrades were killed. He remained with his detachment, and then on his return to base tremors set in and he lost consciousness. The tremors continued thereafter. He suffered from amnesia, 'inhibitions, anxiety and insomnia' for a lengthy period. His physicians stated: 'Here is a case of psychic shock with many traits, such as inhibitions and hallucinations, suggestive of dementia praecox'. It is evident that many soldiers suffered from these variants of what was termed shell shock at the time.

Nervous collapse

An Australian gunner aged 35 was terrified and depressed under shell-fire in France in 1916. He felt his soul was leaving his body and he had nightmares and recurrent thoughts of suicide. In May 1917 he was blown off his feet by a shell, and he began to feel that shells were aimed solely at him. He had tremors and difficulties in breathing. The physician who cared for him termed him 'neurotic', a condition of exaggerated fear that antedated the war. Nonetheless he was incapable of serving, screaming on being aroused from his dreams. He was discharged as unfit for service.⁸

Psoriasis

In July 1915, a French soldier was 'bowled over' by a *marmite* (heavy shell) and wounded by shell fragments. Shortly afterwards he developed psoriasis on his trunk, arms, elbow and leg. This skin condition persisted, and the physicians who treated him said that 'the trauma provoked eczema; the emotion, psoriasis'.⁹ Vignolo-Nutati reported fifty-two similar cases of psoriasis due to 'nervous shock' among Italian troops.

Delusional states

A Russian soldier presented delusions of all kinds in a divisional field hospital to which he was sent. He had been wounded in his left shoulder by fragments of a heavy shell. He heard voices accusing him of being a spy, and he thought he had been caught and was about to be shot by the Germans. He refused to touch anything or even look at German lines lest a message go directly to the enemy, which would then shell the hospital. His explanation was that the shell fragment which hit his shoulder had been 'poisoned and charmed'. This kind of 'paranoia' afflicted a 21-year-old German soldier, an Iron Cross winner, who feared the approach of a Gurkha with a mallet in his hand. The day before, the German soldier had stabbed the Gurkha in the chest, and now awaited revenge.¹⁰

Other delusions were religious in character. A French soldier treated at Salpêtrière hospital in Paris had visions following a wound to his face near his right eye. A rainbow-coloured bird followed him; on examining the bird's face, he found it to be that of the Virgin Mary. He later told his physician he was to be King of France and, like Joan of Arc, he would save the country.

Aggravated underlying or latent conditions

This brief catalogue of some of the symptoms shell-shocked men presented to doctors tells part of the story of the difficulty medical men had in identifying the nature and origin of the disabilities they had to treat. It is evident that many men suffered from more than one ailment, and in addition some physicians were prone to see the problem as arising from a latent or underlying condition.

This was a major problem, as we shall see below, for many disabled men who sought pensions for their war-related conditions. Physicians responded time and again that their problem, however precipitated by military service, was a worsening of a prior disorder, or the transformation of a latent to an active disability. The war thus was not the source of the problem; either pre-war behaviour or heredity was to blame. Alcoholism was believed to be the source of some psychological disorders; so was syphilis, epilepsy and cardiac disease, or ‘soldier’s heart’. We have noted how some physicians saw ‘dementia’ as being accelerated, rather than caused, by injury or by exposure to the violent death of men nearby. This tendency to resist the view that terror could cripple a perfectly healthy, sober, God-fearing man, either temporarily or permanently, had significant consequences for the treatment of psychologically disabled men and for the status of their claims for pensions for war-related disability .

The birth of a phrase: ‘shell shock’

A Cambridge-educated physician, psychologist, and anthropologist, C. S. Myers, was the first to draw attention to a new category of battlefield injury. He did so in an article in the premier British medical journal, *The Lancet* .¹¹ In a four-page clinical report, Myers produced the first published discussion of shell shock – identified as such – by a serving physician. Myers later claimed that the term arose from the ranks¹² and he merely had adopted it. He gave it a medical imprimatur and inadvertently launched a debate about psychological injury in war that is still alive today.

The article had the virtue of presenting the story of three injured men in their own words. They were all disabled, though not physically injured, by artillery fire. The first man was a private, aged 20, injured on 31 October

1914. He told Myers that as he was struggling to disentangle himself from barbed wire, shells burst behind and in front of him, damaging his vision. It hurt to open his eyes, he said, 'and they "burned" when closed'. Crying and shivering, he was brought to hospital, where he told physicians he had lost his sense of taste and smell too; his hearing was unaffected. Myers tried hypnosis and suggestion, with a slight restoration of sense reactions, both there and in London, where he regained some, though not all, of his vision.

The second man Myers treated was a corporal aged 25 who had had his trench blown in by a bomb. He said he had been buried for eighteen hours, and when he was dug out he could not see. He had hallucinations, which were not relieved by hypnosis and suggestion, but his sight and memory of having been buried and rescued gradually returned under light hypnosis. He recalled 'saying a prayer or two' while under the rubble, and offered other details of his remarkable survival. Myers was careful to report that the man's account seemed either exaggerated or inaccurate. One of the man's mates reported that no one could have survived burial for eighteen hours; one hour, though, could have seemed to last a lifetime.

The third man, a private aged 23, was blown off a heap of bricks fifteen feet high by a shell burst. The next thing he remembered was waking up in a cellar, drenched. He speculated that he must have fallen into a pool of water. Myers noted that 'obviously he was in an extremely nervous condition'; 'the slightest noise makes him start'. His sight and sense of taste were impaired and his hands trembled. When examined, his muscles would spasm. He recovered fragments of memory, and recalled an encounter with a physician who had told him he had had a concussion.

'Comment on these cases appears superfluous', Myers concluded. 'They seem to constitute a definite class among others arising from the effects of shell-shock.' Hearing was unaffected, but the other senses and memory were altered by the explosions these men had endured. 'The close relation of these cases to those of "hysteria"', Myers laconically remarked in closing, 'appears certain.'¹³

Comment was anything but superfluous thereafter. It appeared that some kind of commotion had disordered the memory and senses of these three men, but none of them had a physical wound or other injury. Their own accounts suggest that the terrifying nature of their experiences at the front

produced conversion symptoms: that is, physical disabilities the origins of which were primarily emotional in character. That was what ‘hysteria’ signified at the time: a physical expression of an emotional state. Furthermore, there was little indication in these three cases that these men were dissimulating; their physical distress was real enough. And there was no indication that they had suffered from mental illness of any kind before the war. In sum, the extreme conditions of the war on the Western Front, even in its early months, could and did produce a new kind of injury which Myers termed ‘shell shock’. Thus the term was born.

To Myers the aetiology of this new cluster of conditions called shell shock lay in the artillery war, which produced ‘functional’ disorders of either physiological or of psychological origin, or both. By claiming that some symptoms of shell shock resembled ‘hysteria’, Myers let loose a two-word characterisation of war-related psychological injury whose echoes were loud enough to propel it entirely outside the medical landscape.

There was another reason why the term stuck. It is quintessentially English in its verticality: two single syllables captured what was new about the war and some of the damage it caused. Shell-fire, on a scale never seen before, produced conditions never classified before by the medical profession. ‘Soldiers’ heart’ was a nineteenth-century term, but it was too limited to describe the cases Myers and others treated. The equivalents in French or German or Italian – *choc traumatique*, *Kriegsneurose*, *psicosi traumatica* – did not share the economy of expression of the term Myers used, and therefore were less likely to achieve metaphorical or metonymical status. Shell shock said something about individual men, at the same time as it said something about the terrible newness of the war as a whole. As the fully industrialised character of the war unfolded over the next two years, the power of the term ‘shell shock’ to describe the dreadfulness of fighting in that war only increased. And this was so despite the fact that Myers was a careful physician who described a syndrome without being able to say precisely what caused the symptoms he had observed. ‘Shell shock’ was the triumph of language over science; after all, language has a life of its own.

The location of this set of conditions in the domain of ‘shock’ helped embed it in medical terminology, alongside other secondary effects of injury and surgery. To be sure, some physicians resisted the term, and

preferred more opaque terminology, less likely to find a place in the soldiers' vernacular.¹⁴

Once in the public domain, the term was uncontrollable. When Myers came to see patients who had the symptoms of shell shock without having been exposed to artillery fire in close proximity to the front, he tried to qualify his first publication. But he found that, try as he might to shut the stable door, the term had already bolted out of his reach. 'Shell shock' came to signify a mixed bag of imperfectly understood but real disorders, the physiological or psychological character of which were disputed not only between different specialists but within the work of individual specialists like Myers himself. Shell shock was not what we term 'trauma' today, but rather was a category taken at the time to be analogous to surgical shock, a life-threatening condition: both could be treated. Shell shock was a metaphor and a linguistic gambit to help doctors deal with the disabled men whom they treated under the chaotic conditions at the time.¹⁵

The history of shell shock during the Great War is, therefore, not the progression from a physical to a psychological approach to war disabilities, but a mixed story of attempts to use both in caring for the disabled. Myers knew that his diagnosis was resisted by most of his colleagues, but he persisted in advancing his view nonetheless. His opponents were also trying to cope with a rash of breakdowns among serving soldiers. Doctors tried their best to read the illness from the body and the words of the damaged man: some did better than others, then as now .

Treatment

Psychiatric services were organised in different ways in different armies.

Only in the American army was there an established independent department of neuro-psychiatry; in the French army and elsewhere, specialists in this field were simply part of the overall medical service, and suffered from a relative absence of professional autonomy. To be sure, the Americans were latecomers to the war, but that fact may have helped them develop a more sophisticated approach to the treatment of psychologically or neurologically damaged soldiers. In the American army there was even an attempt to screen out 'fragile' recruits, to prevent them from tying up able-bodied men if they broke down under combat conditions. The

manpower constraints of all other major combatants precluded similar practices elsewhere. In all armies there was provision for treatment near the front, and for more difficult cases there was hospital care remote from the combat zones. As in all other aspects of the medical history of the Great War, it is evident that in 1914–15 no one had the slightest idea as to the scale of casualties doctors would have to treat. Planning for the carnage of industrial war was a matter for later conflicts, not for 1914–18.

Physicians from all combatant forces were interested in what other medical men in other forces on both sides said and did about similar cases.

The American physician E. E. Southard presented a summary list of methods of psychotherapy used in 589 wartime cases discussed in the international medical literature. In 1919 he published this list and brief summaries of cases in the hopes of improving the treatment of shell-shocked men in future. From the following list we can get a sense of the options physicians had at their disposal in treating shell-shocked men:

Hypnosis

Verbal suggestion

Fixation

Fascination

Various
Suggestion (Waking)

Verbal

Drug

Apparatus

Autosuggestion

Distraction

Terrorism

Infliction of pain

Persuasion

Will training

Occupation therapy

Isolation Psychoanalysis.¹⁶

The choice of treatment depended on the symptoms of the patient and the predisposition of the physicians treating him. Many men found their symptoms diminished or vanished without medical intervention. One was reported to have been cured by seeing Charlie Chaplin's 'antics' in the cinema; two other mute men started speaking when they heard that Romania had entered the war.¹⁷ F. W. Mott, the distinguished London neurologist at the Maudsley Hospital, who had a strongly physiological view of the origins of mental illness in general and shell shock in particular, was sceptical of Myers's views about hysteria. He reported that one man regained his speech when he fell out of a punt, another when told by a friend that he had spoken in his sleep, and a third when overhearing a doctor's discussion of his case.¹⁸

Mott championed what was termed the 'physicalist' approach to neuropathy, meaning a belief that conditions of the kind grouped under the new heading of 'shell shock' were acquired as a result of concussion or a pre-existing 'neurotic predisposition' or 'disease or aberrant behaviour', like syphilis or epilepsy.¹⁹ Some motor injuries unaccompanied by physical wounds were, in his mind, due to internal damage to the inner ear or brain, but to him other cases were simply theatrical in character, and would vanish soon enough.

Those who believed in recovery through benign neglect, though, had to cope with problems of relapse. Men supposedly cured broke down again, tying up able-bodied soldiers who had to evacuate them, so that they could start on the hard road to physical and emotional stability once again. This was the case whether physicians caring for such men adopted a 'physicalist' approach or if they saw hysteria as the underlying source of the problem. In 1916, during the period of high British casualties during the Battle of the Somme, there was an increasing incidence of men reporting unfit for front-line service with emotional or psychomotor disturbances. This led administrators in the British army to reconsider diagnoses and treatment.

The two lines followed the division of opinion among serving physicians. The army was prepared to see shell shock as either 'commotional' in the

sense of being the result of lesions or damage to the inner ear or brain, as Mott believed, or as a mix of the ‘commotional’ in Mott’s sense, and the ‘emotional’, as C. S. Myers believed .

Consequently, Arthur Sloggett, director general of British Army Medical Services, authorised the designation of two new categories of injury: ‘effects of explosion (wound)’ for men who had been exposed to explosions yielding anxiety and other disorders ‘without producing a visible wound’, or as the result of an internal injury; and ‘nervousness’ for those who suffered from post-explosion states of anxiety of various kinds.²⁰

Sloggett’s directive did not put an end to the internal disputes and difficulties in classifying shell-shocked men. His office added the general label ‘not yet diagnosed, nervous’ to the nomenclature of classification for those who puzzled or exasperated their physicians. Later on, this category was reduced to ‘neurasthenia’, which, as we shall see, was applied more to officers than to men in the ranks. And yet even this category had its doubters. To leave room for these differences of opinion, the Royal Army Medical Corps created yet another distinction, this time between men suffering from ‘shell shock W’ as having wounds arising from enemy action, and ‘shell shock S’ for sickness.²¹ This latter category was evidently suspect to many, though not all, physicians in the army.

Confusion and error were inevitable, and mistakes could have serious consequences. Those who were seen as dissimulators, men trying to avoid the risks of service by acting their illness, could face court-martial and execution. Clarifying the meaning of shell shock therefore was a life and death matter, in more than one sense, and thus a potentially explosive issue. The sensitivities of the War Office were evident in their denial of C. S. Myers’s request in 1916 for permission to publish an article on shell shock in the *British Medical Journal* on the grounds that ‘nothing regarding the disorder should be released’ to the press.²²

Shell shock was a transnational condition. Doctors in all armies consulted the publications of the enemy to equip themselves better to handle what became an epidemic of breakdown of men under fire. They were all familiar with the use of electrical current to treat different forms of shell shock. In the pre-war period ‘electrotherapy’ was a well-established option to treat the mentally ill. Many psychiatrists believed in the therapeutic value

of ‘persuasion’, and took this term to mean encouragement rather than punishment.²³ Others adopted a more coercive approach which resembled what today is termed aversion therapy.

In wartime some doctors swore by the practice. In Germany this treatment was termed the ‘Kaufmann method’, after Dr Fritz Kaufmann, who would place an electrode on the inert limb of a patient and leave the current on for variable periods of time, even up to several minutes. After exercises, the electric current was turned on again, to the accompaniment of emphatic orders to the patient to move previously inert limbs.²⁴ One physician termed such therapy as a ‘highly logical and brutal method’, but it seemed to work. The intention was to induce ‘sharp pain’ through what Kaufmann termed a kind of ‘surprise attack’.²⁵ After German physicians tried to restore function to a paralysed leg for sixty-four weeks without effect, the regular application of discipline and electrodes produced a complete cure in six weeks.²⁶ Unfortunately, two disabled men died under this treatment. The Kaufmann method, in various forms, was also used in the Austrian army and in Britain .

The French physician Clovis Vincent followed a similar pattern of persuading disabled men to break through what he took to be their wilful resistance to recovery from various psychomotor or neurasthenic ailments. In his clinic in Tours, he provided a ‘psychoelectric and re-educative treatment’, of the kind Kaufman had pioneered in Germany. After ‘persuasive talk’, isolation and rest for a few days, the patient was treated by electric current to the affected limb. Then he was ‘re-educated’ by physiotherapy and psychotherapy, reinforcing the positive virtues of overcoming his disability.²⁷

One patient refused to play along. Baptiste Duchamp, a man suffering from deformation of the spine, was sent to Vincent’s clinic but wanted nothing to do with electric shock treatment: ‘I was terrified. Some buddies [*camarades*] told me that the “*torpilles*” were extremely painful and that some men had even died because of them.’ But the authority of the doctor, an officer, was at stake. Vincent told Duchamp: ‘Here it is not the soldier who gives the orders, it is I.’ When faced with Vincent’s insistence on using electrodes, Duchamp punched the doctor, who responded by punching him back.

At his subsequent court-martial, the soldier said, 'I acted without intention, given that I had been electrified [*torpillé*] in the jaw by Dr Vincent. I panicked. I acted involuntarily and without knowing what was happening inside me.' Vincent presented himself as a man of honour, disgracefully set upon by a man of lesser rank. Duchamp's defenders stated that he was the victim of an assault by Vincent. The case reached the popular press, which made Duchamp into a hero. Given the publicity, the tribunal hearing the case worked out a compromise. Duchamp was convicted of striking an officer, but he was given a suspended sentence of six months' imprisonment.²⁸

Immediately after the Armistice, the Austrian medical profession's use of electric current to treat hysterical patients in the armed forces came under scrutiny too. This occurred within the broader framework of an enquiry into 'the gross mismanagement in the command of military bodies, or of other serious violations of their duties', set up as early as 19 December 1918 by the new provisional National Assembly of Austria.

A week earlier, a Social Democratic newspaper *Die Freie Soldat* had published an article on '*Die elektrische Folter*' or torture by electricity in army hospitals. In later articles the newspaper followed up the accusation against two physicians, Dr Wagner-Jauregg and Dr Kozlowski, and based its charges in part on the diary of one patient, Walter Kauders. He had been an officer who, early in the war, was disabled by artillery fire. His medical record was unclear as to the nature of the wound to the head he said he had suffered, but he was still placed on indefinite leave as medically unfit for service. In late 1917 he was still disabled and had difficulty walking. He was sent to Wagner-Jauregg's clinic for further treatment and remained there from 24 November 1917 to 8 March 1918. He was given electric shock treatment on 1 and 24 December by Kozlowski, Wagner-Jauregg's assistant, and further treated by Wagner-Jauregg himself. The doctor walked briskly with him around the room, persuaded, like Kozlowski, that he was malingering. Kauders was ultimately discharged from the clinic and improved slowly.

It was Kauders who provided the commission on military failures with his diary and accused Wagner-Jauregg of having ignored his wounded condition, having treated him with electric shock, and isolating him in a cell

for seventy-seven days without contact with his family. In sum ‘The whole treatment was a system of torture whose purpose was to compel as many people as possible to return to the front.’²⁹

The commission reviewed these charges on 14 October 1920. Wagner-Jauregg, a distinguished physician, later to win the Nobel Prize for medicine, rejected them vehemently. He had examined Kauders and could find not the slightest trace of a head wound or any other injury. He came to the conclusion that he was hysterical, and probably malingering. After delegating shock treatment to his subordinate Kozlowski, he himself tried to talk Kauders out of his broken gait and other hysterical symptoms. He even took Kauders on a brisk march around the surgery, but to no avail. He discharged Kauders from his hospital, convinced he was a malingerer.

The only witness who challenged Wagner-Jauregg was Sigmund Freud , who had known him for thirty-five years. The challenge was indirect. Freud said there was not the slightest evidence that Wagner-Jauregg had failed in his duty or mistreated the patient. ‘I know that the motivating force in his treatment of patients is his humaneness’, Freud stated emphatically.³⁰ He helped ensure that the charges against his colleague would be dismissed.

But there was a sting in the tail of his defence of a colleague. Freud claimed that Wagner-Jauregg was too quick to see malingering when there was a more complex story to tell – the story of neurotic hysteria. Whatever the nature of Kauder’s injury, ‘it was a grain of sand; a neurosis later developed from the small injury, and at the time he was at the Wagner Clinic, he was evidently neurotic. That this was taken as malingering did him an injustice . . . All neurotics are malingerers; they simulate without knowing it, and this is their sickness.’ Being told he was not sick, the patient was offended, and he consequently developed ‘a hostility’ to the physician ‘and a misconception of the latter’s intentions’. Wagner-Jauregg’s treatment had failed; had he himself treated Kauders, Freud said, the patient would have had a better chance of a full recovery .

Wagner-Jauregg would not let matters rest there. He and other colleagues pointed out that psychoanalysis was too protracted a treatment and too expensive to use in a war crisis. To this Freud responded that the source of the problem was the conflict between the doctors’ commitment to the state to cure patients in wartime and their commitment to the patients

themselves. They took short cuts which were based on incomplete diagnoses and on the need to get men back to the front. Here is the essential point: an 'inner contradiction; a contradiction between expediency and a physician's humanity'. Yes, men like Kauders had fled from the war: that is what neurotic people do, they flee from an intolerable reality into illness. The problem for Wagner-Jauregg and all other physicians was that they 'had to play a role somewhat like that of a machine gun behind the front line, that of driving back those who fled. Certainly, this was the intent', Freud said, 'of the war administration'. And such a task was 'irreconcilable' with the physicians' charge to do the sick no harm.³¹

Wagner-Jauregg was duly exonerated, but that was hardly the end of the argument. This exceptional public hearing caught the essential elements of the medical dilemma about shell shock. There was no consensus as to whether it had a solely physiological or a mixed physiological and psychological origin, and there was no consensus as to what constituted either effective treatment or malingering. Doctors and patients both groped their way towards an understanding of conditions more complex and numerous than anyone had anticipated .

The fear of 'pension neuroses' preoccupied the more conservative members of the medical profession, in particular in Germany, who saw cunning in the way some men dissimulated war-related disability.³² Others were less immediately suspicious of the ulterior motives of the men they treated, but had very variable success in relieving or removing their conditions or symptoms. On balance, doctors did the best they could, which many times was simply to put patients in a quiet environment, where some spent the rest of their lives.³³

Aftermaths

The day after the opening of the Viennese commission examining the case of Walter Kauders and Julius Wagner-Jauregg's treatment of him, a film opened in Berlin. It was entitled *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, directed by Robert Wiene. As Anton Kaes has remarked, it told the story of 'the powerful director of an insane asylum who may be crazy or evil, and a shell-shocked patient who may be hallucinating'.³⁴ The teller of the story has fragments of memory, and a sense of a terrible experience he has to

relieve again and again. At the end of the film the doctor says ‘at last I understand the nature of his madness’.

A year earlier, the French film-maker Abel Gance directed a film entitled *J'accuse* about a soldier who goes mad. The hero, Jean Diaz, a soldier-poet with a head wound, begins to lose his mind. He escapes from hospital and reaches his village. There he summons the villagers and tells them of a dream. The dream as we see it starts in a battlefield graveyard with wooden crosses all askew. A huge black cloud rises behind it, and magically, ghostlike figures emerge from the ground. They are wrapped in tattered bandages, some limping, some blind walking with upraised arms, some stumbling like Frankenstein's monster. They leave the battlefield and walk down the rural lanes of France to their villages. Their aim is to see if their sacrifices have been in vain. What they find is the pettiness of civilian life, the advantage being taken of soldiers' wives and businesses. The sight of the fallen so terrifies the townspeople that they immediately mend their ways, and the dead return to their graves, their mission fulfilled. After recounting this dream, the poet, now totally mad, accuses the sun above of standing idly by and watching the war go on. Then he dies.

This sequence of the dead rising from their graves is one of the great scenes of early cinema. Its force is made even more poignant when we realise that most of the men we see on the screen were actual French soldiers lent to Gance by the French army to play in this film. Gance's assistant in the film was the poet Blaise Cendrars, a Swiss-born veteran of the Foreign Legion who had lost his right arm fighting with the Moroccan Division in Champagne in September 1915. He played one of the dead being carried on the back of a comrade in the parade of the fallen.

When Gance edited the film in 1920, he incorporated the march of the victorious armies through the Arc de Triomphe on 11 November 1919, but put an ethereal track of the dead marching home at the top of the screen.

I cite these two examples to suggest that shell shock entered the cinema, then coming into its own as the centrepiece of mass entertainment. Here were delusions of such dimensions that silent film, shown to a public in the dark, captured the drama and the visionary quality of the insane. *Caligari* was more restricted in its appeal than *J'accuse*, though Wiene's film has lasted much longer and is recognised as a cinematic landmark.

Gance's scene of the rising of the dead, imagined by Jean Diaz, was a visual masterpiece, emerging out of a romantic melodrama about war, poetry and madness. Losing his mind, Jean Diaz sees more clearly than anyone else the moral issues of the day. His accusations extend to war itself as an abomination that must be proscribed forever .

The motif of the mad soldier and his visions came into the cinema right at the end of the Great War. In subsequent generations, the same theme returned to the screen with different emphases, but with the same pathos. In the context of war, madness had a clear origin in the terrors of war, further legitimating the standing of the unfortunate men who suffered from this condition in the world outside the cinema.

The same naturalisation of shell shock occurred in fiction. Rebecca West's *Return of the Soldier* was one of the first to address the problem of amnesia. The story is told from the viewpoint of Jenny, the cousin of an officer, Chris Baldry, who has lost his memory on active service. He has no knowledge whatsoever of his marriage, and on his return from the front he is full of his love for Margaret, a woman he had known fifteen years before. To restore him to the present, a psychoanalyst suggests that his wife confront him with the clothes and toys of their dead son. That brings him back to his senses, but that recovery means he can return to the war. No such luck befell Virginia Woolf's character Septimus Smith in her 1924 novel *Mrs Dalloway*. He imagines he is pursued by a soldier who died under his command, and to avoid being taken to hospital he jumps out of a window to his death .

Less dramatic is the characterisation of Lord Peter Wimsey, the classic sleuth in Dorothy Sayers's detective novels. A man of all the talents, he has been an artillery officer, wounded by shell-fire in 1918 and suffering from shell shock. He is said to have been unable to give orders to his servants after the war, recalling the deadly effect of his orders under fire to the men in his command. He has relapses, during which he is faithfully cared for by his former sergeant, and now servant, Bunter.

These references do no more than suggest the infiltration via popular literature of shell shock into the British vernacular of the post-war years. In France, two instances of very different prose may be cited to show the same phenomenon. The French diplomat and playwright Jean Giraudoux told of a

man from the Limousin region of central France, Forestier, who is wounded and loses his mind during the war. He has lost all his papers, and is nursed back to health in German hospitals. His amnesia remains, though, and he constructs an entirely new life as a German intellectual and politician, rising to become German Chancellor. A shell-shocked French soldier leading France's sworn enemy in 1922 was Giraudoux's notion of a wry witticism.

More vicious, but no less wry in character, is the French writer Louis-Ferdinand Céline's central character Bardamu, who pretends to go mad to get out of the war. He and his friend (and the other side of his fractured mind) Robinson make their way to safety, and ultimately Bardamu winds up as director of a hospital for shell-shocked soldiers. The book's title *Voyage au bout de la nuit* ('Journey to the End of the Night') describes Bardamu's efforts to find the hospital for shell-shocked men hidden away from public view in a Paris suburb. The boundaries between madness and malingering are entirely erased in this tour de force, published in 1932, but which remains a classic to this day. I cite these few references to fiction, not because they are the only ones to deal with psychological injury in the Great War, but rather to show the presence of the war's psychological casualties in different cultural forms.

The blurring of the boundaries between the rational and the irrational was at the heart of two movements which grew out of the war: Dada and Surrealism. And the grotesque features of damaged veterans was a leitmotif of the work of German artists like Otto Dix and Max Beckmann, practising the 'new sobriety', a kind of cold clinical stare at the inhabitants of the post-war world.

A range of artistic innovation gave shell shock a visual home in which it has resided to this day. Very recently, the French genre of the *bande dessinée* or illustrated book for adults, has been used to tell the history of *Les soldats fous de la Grande Guerre*. Hubert Bieser, a retired psychiatric nurse, turned to the archives of the hospital at Ville-Evrard, where shell-shocked soldiers had been treated. Bieser tells the story of fifteen such men, the real unknown soldiers of the Great War, through graphic illustrations by Jean David Morvan and Yann Le Gal.³⁵ The popular romantic film *A Very Long Engagement*, directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, which appeared in 2004, is a detective story with an unusual detective: a young woman in a

wheelchair searching for her fiancé; she finds him, having entirely lost his memory after a series of horrors in the trenches.

And in a similarly popular vein, BBC television left millions with images of soldiers trying to simulate madness to get out of the trenches, and of the clearly mad officers who refused to let them go. *Blackadder Goes Forth* was aired on BBC television between 28 September and 2 November 1989, and has become a television classic. Pat Barker's 'Regeneration' trilogy took up the story of shell shock through the lives of prominent writers Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, together with the physician who treated them, W. H. R. Rivers. Barker's genius was to add to the company an entirely fictional officer, Billy Prior, definitely not a gentleman, but rather a working-class bisexual man whose presence helped break down the notion that shell shock was for educated public schoolboys only. The success of her novels, and the cinematic version of them, show the enduring fascination with shell shock in the Anglo-Saxon world.

How far we have come from the brief article C. S. Myers published in *The Lancet* in 1915. And yet there is a cultural continuity here too, a sense of a past shared by these contemporary audiences, in which the soldier driven mad by war stands for the madness of war itself .

Conclusion

The extent and significance of psychological injury in the Great War is still a matter of controversy. There was then and is now no consensus as to the order of magnitude of the incidence of shell shock, nor as to the most effective way to treat it. The stigmatisation of the mentally ill has not disappeared, even with respect to those whose disabilities are war-related.

After the Armistice there were many efforts to consider the extent and the meaning of shell shock. In 1922 the Southborough Commission, set up by the British War Office two years before, reported on its enquiries into the nature of shell shock and the ways it could be treated. In the preface to the report it issued, one officer opined that shell shock was a 'most desirable' condition 'from which to suffer'; it elicited sympathy and seemed to provide a way out of the trenches. That practice could not be tolerated in future. The term 'shell shock' should be suppressed, the report recommended, and those suffering from concussion should be classified

among those with head wounds. C. S. Myers refused to offer testimony to the commission, whose views (hostile to his own) were evident even before it had begun its work. And yet, in its reiteration of older truths, the Southborough Commission still had to engage with newer truths – ones that disclosed that even the bravest soldier could break down when pushed too far. In the evidence produced with the report, there is the moving case of a man referred to as a ‘gallant officer’ who, sighting the riderless horses of all his friends who had been killed in battle, wept and could go no further.³⁶ The testimony of many veterans showed that old notions of heroism had to be refashioned: that courage and cowardice and breakdown mingled in a single mind. Stereotypes about stiff upper lips and manliness under fire could be shored up for a time, but they were in the process of unravelling, a remnant of a culture blown to pieces by the Great War. Shell shock survived these official attempts at damage control; it simply outlived the old guard.³⁷

The degree of under-reporting of psychiatric morbidity among serving soldiers in the Great War is unknown but is almost certainly high. The reasons for under-reporting are multiple: cultural codes of manliness and courage stigmatised breakdown; officers were reluctant to expose themselves to charges of failing to maintain morale; soldiers themselves were unaware of the mixture of symptoms they manifested during and after battle. A generation later, during the Second World War, cultural codes and medical practices had changed. If 30–50 per cent of all British casualties in the bloody and difficult Monte Cassino campaign were deemed to be psychiatric in character, and some estimates put at similar levels psychiatric casualties as a proportion of all casualties suffered by Israeli forces in the Yom Kippur War, then the reported total of 2–4 per cent of all admissions to British military hospitals in the Great War is wildly inaccurate as a measure of the incidence of ‘shell shock’ or other disorders suffered at the time.³⁸

The difficulty is in finding a less than arbitrary way to increase the official figures to offer a better representation of this important part of the medical history of the war. A band of probability described at its lower end at 4 per cent of all casualties and at its upper end at 40 per cent of all casualties in the two world wars may be the best we can do. A mid point could be the best approximation we can offer. Thus if we are correct in assuming that the stress men underwent in battle was comparable in different wars, but that medical standards and cultural codes changed to

enable later generations to report more fully and accurately psychiatric casualties, then to say that roughly 20 per cent of all First World War casualties were psychiatric in character may provide a rough guide to the true incidence of such war-related morbidity in the 1914–18 conflict. Another way of putting the same point is to say that, in the British case, 20 per cent of all soldiers who were unable to return to active service suffered from psychiatric disabilities of one form or another. In the Canadian case, the figure is lower – 10 per cent – suggesting that we should consider the figure of 20 per cent of all casualties merely an approximation of the risks soldiers faced of war-related psychological injury during the Great War.³⁹

Medical historians argue that there is a rough balance between psychiatric and physical casualties in different wars, but that that balance is hidden by medical conventions and prejudices. And yet broader cultural and political distinctions make a difference too. Russian doctors wanted to imitate the strategies their Western colleagues were using, but after the Bolshevik Revolution psychologically damaged veterans slowly disappeared from sight. Instead a much more stoical ‘collective’ approach to suffering for the motherland emerged, full of contempt for Western individualism. The outcome was the astounding claim that there was no shell shock among Soviet soldiers in the Second World War. This is under-reporting with a vengeance, but it warns us to treat with great care comparisons of casualty levels over time.

In the West there were other pathways to under-reporting. There is the claim, made (among others) by Mott in 1919, that in the British forces officers were more likely to suffer from neurasthenia, and the men in the ranks from hysterical disorders.⁴⁰ Why should this be so? The additional burdens of command may have left officers with a sense of guilt for the losses suffered by men under their leadership. The origin of the term ‘hysteria’ in the constrained circumstances of Victorian women has moved other commentators to see trench warfare as a kind of ‘emasculatation’, a paralysis of mind corresponding to the paralysis of movement in a war which was supposed to go differently: from attack to breakthrough to cavalry advances and mass movement. Nothing of the kind took place on the Western Front, or at Gallipoli, or in other sectors of the war. Thus breakdown was the inevitable outcome of masses of men being bound up in

the barbed-wire confines of the front. Mental illness, as Freud put it, was an escape from intolerable conditions.

The problems with this argument are multiple. First, officers suffered from the same absence of movement in battle as the men in the ranks. They led from the front, and suffered casualty rates twice those of their men. Terror, fear, nightmares, dissociation and sleep deprivation were not defined by rank, but were shared by everybody. It is more likely that this distinction is entirely cultural in character, and that it gave the more honourable 'cerebral' title of neurasthenia to psychiatric casualties in the officer corps, and the less honourable 'physical' title of hysteria to psychiatric casualties in the ranks. Thus private soldiers who had nervous breakdowns were violating cultural codes in trespassing into the officers' realm of disability. That may have been one reason why many private soldiers who had what we now see as nervous breakdowns were deemed to have been malingering. They were behaving out of their place in the socially defined medical hierarchy of disabilities. We will never know how many enlisted men suffered from psychiatric conditions that were ignored because of their rank.

A final reason why we need to be liberal in our estimates of psychiatric casualties is the fact that those with physical wounds are rarely, if ever, listed as having psychiatric disorders too. Some doctors took this to be a matter of fact: a physical wound made other disorders appear trivial at the time. But what about the psychiatric consequences of severe disfigurement, to choose but one example? Or of amputation, or of genital wounds, or blindness? All these conditions wind up on one side of the physical wounds/psychiatric wounds divide. For this reason alone, it is reasonable to estimate in a necessarily imprecise way that up to 20 per cent of all Great War casualties were partially or fully psychiatric in character.

Another reason for the widespread underestimation of the psychiatric toll of war is that no one in power wanted to accept the financial costs of recognising the full extent of such disabilities. In Germany the conversation about 'pension neuroses' was not at all hidden, though in other countries such comments were more muted, out of respect for the men who had served at the front. Whatever the rhetoric, there is hardly any doubt that pensions tribunals pinched pennies and reduced or eliminated benefits to those whose injuries were not visible and taken by many to be not

credible either. Thus, whenever you find an estimate of the psychological toll of the Great War, take it as a minimum estimate, superseded in reality by an unspecifiable but substantially greater proportion or number .

There is a dimension to the story of the psychiatric history of the war which is rarely mentioned in the literature. There is no reason whatsoever to assume that women were immune from the same pressures that operated on many men in wartime. Nurses confronted the horrors of war in searing ways, and so did those civilians trapped in war zones or unfortunate enough to live under occupation. Because they were not soldiers, their war-related psychological injuries never get into the statistics. But terror stalked them as surely as it did trench soldiers. Women facing the pogroms which followed the Russian retreat of 1915 in Galicia or the Armenian genocide of the same year knew cruelty and butchery at its worst. Who can possibly claim that the survivors were psychologically unscathed? Restricting the history of 'shell shock' to the story of the men at the front may make sense in terms of a reckoning of how armies treated their own casualties, but it must be avoided at all costs in any attempt to provide a realistic account of the psychological toll of the Great War.

Cruelty to civilians is as old as war itself. But between 1914 and 1918 something new appeared in the language people used to describe the ravages of war. The First World War was the moment when the category of shell shock, or psychological injury, came into public view in many parts of the world, and when it received grudging but undeniable public recognition. This extension of state responsibility for the care of the war disabled was palpable and limited. On the one hand, pensions were granted, but the care of both mentally and physically disabled veterans was undertaken primarily by families, and in particular by women, and with their own meagre resources. On the other hand, psychiatric care of damaged men became a charge on the state which could be minimised but not eliminated, and such a charge had to be borne by polities economically burdened by war debt and by the downward economic spiral of the interwar years. The right to care expanded while the financial capacity to provide that care shrank. The outcome was suffering, misery and the burdening of families who had to live with the men exposed to and damaged by the psychological and physical risks of industrialised warfare .

- 1** E. E. Southard, *Shell-shock and Other Neuropsychiatric Problems: Presented in Five Hundred and Eighty-Nine Case Histories from the War Literature, 1914–1918; with a Bibliography by Norman Fenton, and an Introduction by Charles K. Mills* (Boston: W. M. Leonard, 1919; reprinted 1930), pp. 485–6.
- 2** Jay Winter, *Remembering War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), ch. 2.
- 3** Southard, *Shell-shock*, p. 220.
- 4** *Ibid.*, p. 424.
- 5** *Ibid.*, p. 642.
- 6** *Ibid.*, p. 421.
- 7** *Ibid.*, pp. 422–3.
- 8** *Ibid.*, p. 640.
- 9** *Ibid.*, p. 429.
- 10** *Ibid.*, pp. 213–19.
- 11** C. S. Myers, ‘A contribution to the study of shell shock: being an account of three cases of loss of memory, vision, smell, and taste, admitted into the Duchess of Westminster’s War Hospital, Le Touquet’, *The Lancet*, 13 February 1915, pp. 316–20.
- 12** C. S. Myers, *Shell Shock in France 1914–1918: Based on a War Diary* (Cambridge University Press, 1940), p. 11.

13 Myers, 'A contribution', p. 319.

14 I am grateful to Anne Rasmussen for this point, and for references to the work of Thomas Salmon in the American Expeditionary Force in finding alternatives to the term 'shell shock' in clinical nomenclature.

15 Tracey Loughran, 'Shell shock, trauma, and the First World War: the making of a diagnosis and its histories', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 67:1 (2010), p. 107.

16 Southard, *Shell-shock*, p. 673.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 672.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 674.

19 Edgar Jones, 'Shell shock at Magull and the Maudsley: models of psychological medicine in the UK', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 65:3 (2010), p. 368.

20 Edgar Jones, Nicola Fear and Simon Wessely, 'Shell shock and mild traumatic brain injury: a historical review', *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 164:11 (2007), p. 1642.

21 Loughran, 'Shell shock, trauma, and the First World War', p. 106.

22 A. Sloggett, letter of 25 November 1916, National Archives, Kew, War Office Papers (WO) 95/45, as cited in Jones *et al.*, 'Shell shock', p. 1643.

23 Anne Rasmussen, 'L'électrothérapie en guerre: pratiques et débats en France (1914–1920)', *Annales historiques de l'électricité*, 8 (2010), pp. 73–91.

24 Hans-Georg Hofer, *Nervenschwache und Krieg: Modernitätskritik und Krisenbewältigung in der österreichischen Psychiatrie (1880–1920)* (Vienna: Bohlau, 2004), pp. 304 and 500; Celia Kingsbury, *The Peculiar Sanity of War: Hysteria in the Literature of World War I* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2002), p. 118.

25 K. R. Eissler, *Freud as an Expert Witness: The Discussion of War Neuroses between Freud and Wagner-Jauregg*, trans. Christine Trollope (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1986), p. 306.

26 Southard, *Shell-shock*, p. 792.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 897.

28 Marc Roubesh, ‘A patient fights back: neurology in the court of public opinion in France during the First World War’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35:1 (2000), pp. 29–38.

29 Eissler, *Freud*, pp. 30–1.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 61–72.

32 Paul Lerner, ‘Psychiatry and casualties of war in Germany, 1914–18’, in ‘Shell shock’, special issue of *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35:1 (2000), pp. 13–28.

33 I saw such men in Warwick General Hospital in 1978. Some had been in general care – that is, parked there – for sixty years.

34 Anton Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War* (Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 46.

35 *Vies tranchées: les soldats fous de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Delcourt, 2011).

36 *Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into Shell-Shock* (The Southborough Report) (1922; reprinted London: Imperial War Museum, 2004).

37 Ted Bogasz, 'War neurosis and cultural change in England, 1914–22: the work of the War Office committee of enquiry into "shell-shock"', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24:2 (1989), pp. 227–56.

38 Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, 'Psychiatric battle casualties: an intra- and interwar comparison', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 78 (2001), pp. 242–7.

39 Thomas W. Salmon, 'War neuroses ("shell-shock")', *The Military Surgeon* (Washington DC), 51 (1917), p. 675. I am grateful to Anne Rasmussen for drawing my attention to this reference.

40 F. Mott, *Neuroses and Shell Shock* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), p. 131.

14 The Spanish flu

Anne Rasmussen Manchester, early 1919:

In early 1919 my father, not yet demobilized, came on one of his regular, probably irregular, furloughs to Carisbrook Street to find both my mother and sister dead. The Spanish Influenza pandemic had struck Harpurhey. There was no doubt of the existence of a God: only the supreme being could contrive so brilliant an afterpiece to four years of unprecedented suffering and devastation. I apparently, was chuckling in my cot while my mother and sister lay dead on a bed in the same room.¹

Mozambique, September 1918:

This is the case of the Portuguese steamship *Mozambique*, commissioned for the repatriation of the Portuguese troops which, in the colony of the same name, had taken part in the Expeditionary Force against the German forces in East Africa. Leaving Mozambique on 12 September, it entered the Cape on the 29th where the plague had reached terrifying proportions, raging particularly among the labourers on the docks charged with coaling the ships. On 1 October it left this pestilential volcano and, by the 4th, was crowded with demands on the doctors on board from soldiers affected by the pneumonic flu; the first death was on the 6th; in rapid progression, the count on the 11th was the maximum of 43 deaths in 24 hours . . . The total population of the ship being 952 people, 199 died during the journey to Lisbon, where this dismal ship dropped anchor on 21 October, and eleven other deaths occurred after disembarkation. In other words, the general mortality had reached 22 per cent . . . The 558 soldiers returning from an unhealthy stay and piled together in fourth class had lost 180 of their number, a percentage of 32.2 per cent, nearly one-third.²

France, Second Army, 22nd Regiment of Colonial Artillery (RAC), 10
October 1918:

For three days, the Spanish flu, this fashionable illness, has made its appearance among us and now I am no longer head of the anti-aircraft section, but wholly and entirely the boss of a temporary hospital! In three days, nine-tenths of our number are in bed and I remain alone on my feet with five healthy *poilus*. We can't even fire our guns! A local doctor visits my sick-bay every morning, which gradually fills up, and evacuates the most seriously affected . . . Despite my accounts to Headquarters, no help is sent to me, they are totally uninterested, so off I go to these gentlemen, comfortably settled at the rear and exempt from the material difficulties which I have to face up to every day. How to look after the soldiers without medication, evacuate them without a vehicle, ensure the essential communications, undertake food supplies, and all this without anyone . . . The crown of all this will be that I shall be ill in my turn, the doctor has indeed predicted that everyone will go through it.³

These three brief accounts illustrate several of the characteristic features of the unprecedented episode of pathology generally known as 'the Spanish flu'. It was a case, first, of a phenomenon which touched every region of the world in a brief and concentrated period. From Canada to China, from New Zealand to Africa, there is abundant evidence of the devastation caused by the flu during the explosive pandemic which swept through the final months of 1918. Secondly, these descriptions of the epidemic show the extreme cruelty of a biological catastrophe which echoed and amplified the military catastrophe of the war. Loss was piled upon loss, as in the tragic fate of soldiers like those on board the *Mozambique*, who had survived the war and were on their long way home but were caught by the flu. This was a drama of civilians – women and children, like the mother and sister of Anthony Burgess in Manchester – who, although kept safe from battle, did not escape the fate of a brutal premature death, decimating families. These citations reveal the sense of doom associated with the flu, with no doctor capable of breaking the chain of contagion, and no treatment capable of offering effective treatment for those hit by the disease. Finally, these

accounts underline the connections, difficult to grasp, between the war and the epidemic: the inability to fight in military units hit by the illness, the demoralisation and stress among soldiers in relation to a home front destabilised by the flu, the slowdown in human circulation, the growing complexity in the demobilisation process, all occurring at a moment which was decisive for the outcome of the war.

The history of the Spanish flu is not without paradox. From early on contemporaries registered it as a catastrophe, framed in these terms: ‘The Spanish flu killed more people in four months than the whole of the war.’ The oddity is that in the long run it has been little studied by historians: indeed we can reasonably refer to a burial of the story,⁴ as there is no doubt that its significance was absorbed into the story of the war, with the coincidental timing of the ending of these two tragic cycles, even though they were not otherwise comparable. Sometimes the history of the Spanish flu is told in this way: it was the most murderous epidemic since the Black Death of the Middle Ages. But that story ill fitted the heroic tableau of the successes of Western health and medicine in the twentieth century, credit for which was claimed by doctors and administrators alike. Another specific character of the story was that in Asia, where it killed millions, the history of the flu left little trace. The dominant powers wrote the history, which underplayed the story in Asia and focused on the West where the flu was less lethal. Perhaps there are similarities here with the West too, since the flu’s sudden and ephemeral passage swept briefly through societies without creating lasting communities or social identities, or at least without creating the traces of such identities in the archives, in contrast to other epidemic diseases.

If history has failed, and reduced this past to the status of a brief parenthesis in the story of the war, in return memory has taken over the event. Many families retain an individual memory and tell the story. Some lived through prolonged mourning, sharing in the construction of a collective history with a high emotional charge, made up of the small pieces of ordinary lives.

The influenza epidemic during the war

All evidence supports the view that the ‘Spanish flu’ was a clearly circumscribed event, identified at the time as a pandemic which spread through every populated region of the world and even into the polar regions. Three successive waves affected most of the areas concerned for a period of a few weeks in the spring of 1918, the autumn of 1918, and during the winter–spring of 1918–19. It was the second phase, the most virulent and most deadly, peaking in a few weeks of October–November 1918, that formed the ‘health catastrophe’ in the strict sense of the term. Approximately 90 per cent of the total numbers of deaths due to the Spanish flu occurred over the space of four months, from August to November 1918.

In the early spring of 1918 American health authorities identified an outbreak of a flu-type epidemic in the military training camps for recruits. At Camp Funston in Kansas the first signs appeared on 5 March, followed by alarmed discussion at the end of the month on the pneumonic complications which followed this flu.⁵ A succession of epidemic waves was soon registered in the densely occupied barrack accommodation in the central and western United States, which swept through the civilian population around them. From April, the flu arrived in different parts of Europe: in Spain – and this is what, from the spring of 1918, gave the influenza episode its designation among health authorities, defining its presumed geographic origin in Europe; in France, where the first cases were identified in the army at the beginning of May; in Germany, Britain and Northern and Eastern Europe, with the exception of Russia. North Africa, India and China were affected in May, Australia and New Zealand in June. This first wave was characterised by the broad geographical spread of the epidemic, and by its explosive sickness rate. It did register a very limited mortality at this stage, leading civilians to believe that by July 1918 the epidemic had come to an end.

The second wave began in the middle of August 1918 and apparently struck everywhere: in the same week, the ports of Freetown in Sierra Leone, Brest in France and Boston in the United States were affected. The flames spread everywhere in August. The American reports related ‘definite outbreaks of increasing severity’.⁶ In September, Europe as a whole was caught up by it, including Russia. In September and October the United States again, starting in the north-east, together with Canada and Latin

America, were swept from coast to coast; from August to November, and in sequence, Africa from north to south, India, China, Korea, New Zealand; in January 1919, Australia. By this date, almost all inhabited regions were hit by the Spanish flu, apart from some very localised territories where strict quarantine measures proved effective, as in northern and eastern Iceland.⁷

The third pandemic wave was less clearly marked in time, like the symptoms that it presented. Most of the areas affected in 1918, however, experienced a less virulent re-run of the flu during the first half of 1919.

Many official observers stressed the points made by Captain Vaughan, the military leader of the Division of Communicable Diseases in Washington DC: 'The epidemic of influenza . . . came into being and grew in violence as the World War passed through its final stages.'⁸ The height of the flu pandemic paralleled the climacteric of the war in 1918: the German offensives came in the spring; the American Expeditionary Force arrived en masse, the decisive Allied counter-offensive began in the early autumn of 1918.

The pandemic also marked the intense period of the end of the war, the Armistice and demobilisation, with the repatriation of troops and prisoners, and the ongoing pursuit of operations in the Eastern theatres of war. The tragic irony of the story has often been underlined, in which the end of the war coincided with the peak of the flu: in Auckland, New Zealand, it was given the name of 'the Armistice epidemic'.⁹ The happiness felt by victorious populations at the end of the war was absorbed for some in a new grief, which was symbolised in France by the death of the poet Apollinaire on 9 November, not as a result of his head wound, but from the banality of flu. This is what his friend Pierre-Albert Birot said: 'The bells are sounding the end of the war, the guns have pounded out the end of the war and the victory, and I must write of the death of Guillaume Apollinaire.'¹⁰ And so meditations on the flu and the war, and their reciprocal effects, raised questions from contemporaries, before becoming part of historical debates.

The timing of the flu raised questions about the role the war played in causing or disseminating it, and on its effect on the war effort. The question as to the source of the epidemic was debated in the summer of 1918, with several theories in competition. First, each belligerent camp rejected responsibility for the outbreak of the epidemic, just as each had rejected

responsibility for the outbreak of the war in 1914. The accusations, which came from several sources, were predictable. The Allied press echoed suspicions of the German origins of the flu: ‘the epidemic came from the north-east, like other bad things’.¹¹ On the one hand, it was based on the classic experience of epidemics in the West which, from medieval times, had accompanied troops in the wake of wars and circulated from east to west, and especially from the East, which was known as the reservoir of plagues. On the other hand, the health of enemy troops was always suspected of weakness. In citations supposedly from the German press, many articles in the Allied press stressed that the microbe had been found among the Germans in a region that was exceptionally weakened by hunger and privation, and thus constituted the Trojan Horse for the flu to enter Europe: ‘A new sickness is raging among the Germans: it is the *oedema* of the war. It begins with a general weakening, a drop in temperature [sic]. This illness is said to be caused by the lack of dietary fats.’¹² The dreadful hygiene conditions in prison camps supposedly added to this, providing additional vectors to introduce the flu to the prisoners’ home countries when they were repatriated. The first news reports in the medical press on the influenza epidemic that reached France in August linked it to the epidemic raging in Switzerland, which was the country of transit for French prisoners repatriated from Germany for medical reasons.¹³ The theory of the enemy origin of the flu thus developed as part of war cultures which informed the construction of a negative view of the enemy. The epidemic was understood as a weapon at the heart of the enemy’s arsenal, whose devastating mechanisms grew from the enemy’s strategy: ‘the sickness is not only fearful in its virulence, but is the more so in its insidious and treacherous nature’.¹⁴

This accusation was not only metaphorical. The fear of bacteriological warfare, given credibility by gas warfare since 1915, and the enemy’s supposed intention to poison the water supply or the air with a virus – which replayed the ancestral theme of poisoned wells at times of epidemics of plague or cholera – fed the rumours and articles in the popular press. Accusations of the criminal corruption of milk flourished, or contamination of the air by using the vectors of gas warfare – accusations that could coexist with a medical discourse which conjured up images of microbial

contagion, in full post-Pasteurian form, but still did not invalidate the rumours.

The second theory among contemporaries on the geographic origins of the flu, the one which gave it the name of 'Spanish', also concerned the state of war. Although in the nations at war health information, which was particularly sensitive, came under the censor's control, it could circulate freely in Spain, a neutral country where the flu explosion had been spectacular in the spring of 1918: 8 million people were affected, including King Alphonso XIII himself. In Madrid the weekly figures for deaths tripled in May.¹⁵

The health authorities in every country understood very quickly that Spain was not the cradle of the sickness, but this did not destroy the success of its popular name. The flu remained the 'Spanish Lady' in many countries, a formula adding a female metaphor to the thesis of national origin, according to a classic representation of the plagues affecting humanity, but this time in the course of a war which threatened primarily men.

The third hypothesis, developed in the spring of 1918, was that the infection had come from the United States to Europe in the ships of the American Expeditionary Force. This appeared to be confirmed by the coincidence that these troops reached Europe at the same time as the epidemic hit: 80,000 soldiers of the AEF crossed the Atlantic in March 1918, and in April 1918 the first European cases were reported in the French port of Bordeaux and then Saint-Nazaire. From May, 200,000–250,000 American troops were landing in Europe each month. In August the port of Brest, the bridgehead for the arrival of American troops, was also one of the starting points for the second wave of flu to hit France.

None of these hypotheses is established today as the authoritative one to account for the outbreak of the Spanish flu. Without being able to settle a debate which remains open among epidemiologists and virologists, multiple theories are still advanced, derived from epidemiological research on the sources of the flu virus. Some defend an oriental theory, with China, and particularly Canton, as the seat of the virus in early 1918, based on specific conditions relating to a reservoir of animal viruses and of population densities. Here too, the link was made with the war which brought Chinese

workers to Europe, making them vectors of the epidemic. Other scientists, now the most numerous, hold to the theory of North American origin, through the rapid diffusion in the spring of 1918 of a flu virus which affected nearly 200,000 young men across the United States. They came from rural backgrounds, with less natural immunity than urban residents, and were gathered in recruitment camps with no form of quarantine. In 1918 the flu caused the death of 43,000 American soldiers. Some theories, finally, suggest a very specific relationship between flu and war, according to which its extreme virulence and wide dissemination can only be explained by the existence of the virus before 1918. British epidemiologists in particular have been drawn to hypotheses from the studies undertaken by John Oxford in northern France, in areas such as Étaples, a transit camp and strategic centre for the British army for the Battle of the Somme in 1916, an ideal breeding ground for the flu. In *Testament of Youth* Vera Brittain described how these camps were overcrowded with soldiers 'daily pouring in'. This was an ideal space for the spread of illness: it was the railway junction for tens of thousands of soldiers in transit, a hospital centre with 20,000 beds, a site of mixing between troops from every kind of background and generalised exchanges between soldiers and civilians, and an animal reservoir through farming. Add these up and you can see why some believe that the Battle of the Somme would provide the exceptional circumstances favouring an increased virulence of the virus.¹⁶

Whatever the theories on the pattern of the contagion, it is more important to emphasise the preponderant role played by virological and genetic aspects of the Spanish flu and the very rapid adaptation of the virus to humans. That said, war conditions provided extremely favourable conditions for the spread of infectious disease. The war concentrated and mixed men in mass numbers, it occasioned the rapid circulation across continents of troops, some on the way up the line, others being demobilised, others on leave, others who were repatriated civilians. This staggering traffic worldwide provided every circumstance favourable to the emergence of a killer epidemic.

With the flu adding to a state of crisis, and occurring at a decisive moment in the war, it was natural that contemporaries would raise the question as to the effects of the epidemic on the outcome of the war. Everyone knew the epidemic could strike suddenly at the efficient

functioning of the military organisation, rendering troops incapable through illness and putting them out of action on a massive and simultaneous scale in certain units, disorganising human movement and raising the delicate question of transporting flu-stricken men to hospitals – a very difficult and risky procedure for the sick. Entire military units might be put out of action without warning. Between 1 June and 1 August, for example, the British command recorded the temporary incapacity, because of the flu, of 1.2 million of the 2 million present on French territory.

In each of the belligerent camps, the question of the role of the epidemic in the war was interpreted differently. In the case of the victorious nations, the general attitude at Headquarters was that the flu had not affected the course of the war. In the session of the Health Commission of the Allied Nations, which was held immediately after the war, the Allied authorities confirmed, for example, that thanks to the international health efforts and the quality of Allied health services, ‘the health of the troops has not suffered attacks capable of diminishing their fighting value, despite the sometimes extremely difficult circumstances’.¹⁷ In contrast, German authorities, such as Ludendorff, writing after the events, invoked the theory that the flu, an external factor over which the army had no control, played a role in its defeat: thus more than 900,000 German soldiers with flu would have been missing from the spring offensive of 1918.¹⁸

Historians have hesitated before re-evaluating the effects of the epidemic on military operations for lack of convincing data and at the risk of creating a link that never existed. When they did make the venture, it was to suggest that it may have played a determining role in the Peace Conference. President Wilson contracted severe flu and may have been suffering the consequences in the form of a serious post-flu depression at a decisive moment in the negotiations.¹⁹ These attempts to give the flu a strategic role have been treated by many historians with considerable scepticism .

More attention has been paid to the way the Spanish flu fitted into the cultural history of the Great War. The ‘Spanish flu’ was one of those representations of wartime phenomena that circulated widely, however inaccurate it was. In effect, this kind of danger fitted into a public information sphere saturated with rumours and ‘false news’, as analysed by Marc Bloch.²⁰ The flu defied common sense: why did it attack healthy

young adults with greatest virulence? Could a seasonal and ordinary flu claim so many victims? Or was it in fact a kind of pneumonic plague – General Joffre was suspected of being a carrier – or typhus? All these suggestions amplified the fear that generated them in the first place.

Above all the rumour flourished that what was happening was the return of cholera. It was known that cholera was still raging in Central Europe, particularly in Hungary. In the autumn of 1918 the phenomena of asphyxia and cyanosis which followed the pulmonary complications of flu could give the dying a blackish facial colour which recalled some manifestations of cholera. The French linguist Albert Dauzat, in his collection of oral ‘prophecies and superstitions’ born of the war, reported the ‘cholera legend’ as a canonical example of the effects of the war on ‘mass thinking’. In his opinion, the confusion between flu and cholera was scarcely plausible, but it is precisely because endemic flu was known and identified, and usually benign, that the presence of such severe symptoms could arouse incredulity.

He took an example from the Issoire region, in October 1918:

On the 10th of this month, a butcher in the area received the news of the death of his son on the Alsace front: the latter had written, towards the end of September, first that he had caught cold in the trenches, then that he had been evacuated with pneumonia to a hospital, and that his cough was very painful.

The chaplain who announced the death to the parents, with the usual tactful phrases, specified that the young soldier had succumbed to pulmonary flu. All the details fitted and it seemed indeed that no doubt could be raised on this point. Nonetheless, rumour took root instantly that the B’s son had died of cholera. Several persons, who like me had seen the letters, retorted: ‘You don’t die of flu. It must be cholera. The staff officers write what they want to sick soldiers and chaplains.’

Further, the father himself was not convinced: ‘I believe truly’, he confided in me, ‘that this Spanish flu was nothing else but cholera. A nursing orderly from the front, who was here recently on leave, told me that the bodies that were taken away were covered with black spots. That’s clear, isn’t it?’²¹

These rumours imputed to the political authorities and the military command an intention to mislead people cleverly, in line with the ‘eye-wash’ attributed to most propaganda. In Germany, for example, at the beginning of the summer of 1918, rumours spread that the illness was not the product of a microbe but the result of hunger and exhaustion, which the government cleverly minimised so as to hide the degree of malnutrition endured.²² Health information was in fact one of the most sensitive areas of wartime information, particularly when it touched on the threat of epidemic, carefully concealed under coded names, such as ‘sickness 11’ in the French military designation. The military authorities adopted contrasting attitudes: first, they were determined not to be alarmist, playing down the scale of the epidemic phenomenon in order to contain rumours, according to the idea that fear supported the plague, and not indicating its state of weakness to the enemy; but, secondly, giving sufficient information to ensure the effectiveness of health measures of prevention and containment of infectious disease.

Beyond this cultural prism, there were attempts to contrast the case of the Spanish flu with other chapters in the history of epidemic and endemic disease during the war. Here two alternatives emerged. On the one hand, the war created conditions leading to a setback in public health, due to conditions at the front, the much reduced levels of hygiene, the much increased circulation of men or, again, the promiscuity of troop movements and activity. The extreme virulence of the flu made sense when set in this context, where everything was being done to defend the ‘medical privilege of the nation in arms’²³ whatever the effects on civilian health. The nations at war found themselves medically undersupplied in the face of the epidemic and faced its full force without the preventive, diagnostic or therapeutic help that they might have expected in times of peace.

Another argument, based on a biological reading of the epidemic, showed how much the war, in its four years’ duration, had increased the vulnerability of soldiers as well as civilians to stresses linked to the war. This is a contested interpretation to this day. Jay Winter has established, for example, that infant mortality was lower in British cities during the war than in times of peace because of better living standards and a commitment on the part of the government to defend the health of the civilian population.²⁴ This argument raises doubts as to the human exhaustion

approach to the Spanish flu in Britain, but not in Germany, where mortality statistics show worsening material conditions in the second half of the war.

And yet doubts remain as to the linkage of material conditions during the war with the Spanish flu. The states most severely hit by the pandemic, and those where the mortality was greatest, were not the warring nations. It is evident that a multi-faceted model causation has to replace any single causal interpretation in the story of this pandemic.

A pathological event and its complexities

It is clear that there was not one account of the Spanish flu that held sway during the war or afterwards, but a hybrid configuration of multiple narratives. There was no consensus of medical knowledge about the flu, and the unprecedented toll in mortality due to it made the flu of 1918–19 take on the enigmatic and disturbing nature of a pathological killer which had not been mastered, but which presented a puzzle to everyone concerned. It was the search for a scientific account of the illness which directed public health and medical action against it during and after the war.

On the clinical level, the flu epidemic was marked by its swift and devastating nature: incubation was very brief – between one and three days – and people fell seriously ill in a few hours. Victims experienced a wide variety of symptoms: high fever, headaches, intense pain in the muscles and bones, inflammation of the pharynx and throat, a state of prostration and, at the same time, depending on the case, coughs, intestinal pain, nausea, rash, nerve pains and depressive states. During the first pandemic wave, which caused limited mortality, the peak of the illness was brief and people were often described as having a flu-type ‘three-day fever’. The uncertainty lay here in the initial difficulty for the medical world of establishing a common diagnosis for the varied phenomena, apparently unconnected, which could appear as the result of seasonal infections. In the military setting, since 1915 the armies had recorded uncharacteristic episodes of epidemic bronchitis, ‘catarrhal epidemic’, or ‘trench fever’, all of which could seem reasonable guides to what appeared to be fresh outbreaks in 1918. On 15 April 1918, for example, the phenomenon of an ‘epidemic of acute infectious fever, nature unknown’ was recorded in a Bordeaux hospital and reported by an American health officer to his authorities.²⁵

In this search for diagnostic certainty, the denomination of the epidemic as ‘flu’ was a factor. It had an almost performative value. Characterising the epidemic as of the flu type – a banal diagnosis which patients and doctors applied to all sorts of manifestations which had nothing of flu or epidemic about them – diminished its symbolic importance. In the spring and summer of 1918 medical discourse was thus used to relativise the threat, insisting on the designation of ‘flu’ which reduced the fear inspired by the sickness. It was, as confirmed in the British medical journal *The Lancet* on 13 July 1918, ‘of very short duration and so far absent of relapses or complications’ .

The terror raised by the Spanish flu is, however, associated with another clinical approach, particularly applicable to the epidemic wave in the autumn, and stirred by its designation as presenting pneumonic ‘complications’ of the flu. Broncho-pneumonia, pleuro-pneumonia, purulent pleurisy, septicaemia – all could lead to a brutal form of death. The flu could unfold according to a ‘normal’ pattern, but in a minority of cases (estimated at 10–20 per cent in the United States but well over 20 per cent in isolated territories such as African villages, Alaska or the Pacific Islands)²⁶ this ‘particularly malign variety in its pulmonary lesions’²⁷ was exceptionally virulent, with ‘violent and eccentric effects’²⁸ and pathological manifestations – pulmonary, enteric, nervous – likely to terrorise populations, particularly because the illness could develop fatally within a few hours. This was not a case of classic pneumonias – illnesses which constituted major causes of death in ordinary times – but of more serious and more contagious infections. In these cases of fulminating pneumonia, the lungs haemorrhaged and the consequent lack of oxygen provoked the cyanosis which gave the dying patients the bluish or black facial colour so terrifying to those close to them. The lucky ones recovered only slowly from their state of weakness after a period of care and bed-rest.

The second characteristic capable of inspiring terror in the population was the extreme contagiousness of the illness through the respiratory system and simple contact. During the peak of the epidemic, the Spanish flu appeared to run like a powder train through public places, whether they were military, such as camps or the trenches, or civilian, such as schools, ships, prisons, thoroughfares or even entire villages. Everywhere floods of patients pressed into the hospitals when it was possible to admit them, as in

the case of military communities. For example, in the first two weeks of September the hospital at Camp Devens near Boston , which had 45,000 men, took in new admissions at the normal rate of 30–90 per day. On 14 September, more than 500 flu victims entered the doors of the clinic. The chief nurse recorded them thus: ‘One day fifty were admitted; the next day, 300, then the daily average became 500; into a 2,000 bed hospital 6,000 patients crowded’ so that all the space was filled; ‘three miles of hospital corridors were lined on both sides with cots’.²⁹ At the end of September, as reported by Carol Byerly in her study of the flu in the American army, 14,000 cases had been recorded in Camp Devens, or nearly 28 per cent of the camp’s population, leading to 757 deaths .

In an entirely different geographic and social setting, here is another example: in the French village of Cuttoli , in Corsica, a mobilised doctor on leave brought his expertise to the civilian population and made this observation in the autumn of 1918:

A resident of this commune, M.D., went on Saturday to Ajaccio with his daughter-in-law to seek dental treatment; three days after his return, on the Monday, a child died, then M.D. succumbed shortly after. The body of M.D., for family reasons, was not buried as quickly as usual; a close relative was awaited, he came, the coffin was opened, people rushed to the corpse for a final embrace, nine members of the family caught the infectious flu and succumbed. A particular detail, on the very day of M.D.’s funeral a confirmation service took place in the church where the dead man’s body had rested for around an hour and a half. The faithful went in front of Mgr the Bishop then returned together into the church to take part in two religious ceremonies. A few days later, 250 people were attacked by broncho-pneumonia and took to their beds, then 450 out of a population of 1,100 inhabitants, finally 600 cases were recorded with 54 deaths. The epidemic is still today in full expansion.³⁰

Because of the explosive nature of the flu waves and the proliferation of ‘simultaneous centres of infection’, it was very difficult to locate the source of the initial infection. Influenza appeared to advance in all directions, and not only along lines of communication. Close enquiries had to be

undertaken to establish how apparently healthy individuals could become vectors for the flu. In the autumn of 1918 men on leave, who could be the bearers of the illness, were the particular focus of medical surveillance. The very recent bacteriological concept of the ‘germ carrier’, designating asymptomatic individuals as unwittingly capable of spreading the illness, gave credence to the threat.

Other epidemiological problems reinforced uncertainties over the flu nature of the epidemic. By 1918 doctors noted that the preferred victims of the pandemic were young adults, aged between 20 and 40, rather than the age groups more usually vulnerable to flu – young children and old people – as shown by the preceding pandemic in 1889–90. This fact inevitably aroused a range of contemporary reflections on the epidemic. On the one hand, its eminently tragic nature was strengthened, accentuating the idea of a ‘lost generation’ doubly touched by the war and the flu: in other words, according to John Barry’s phrase, it was not good to be a young man at the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. On the other hand, the peculiar age structure of those most heavily affected, which was far from that of familiar flu, suggested its *sui generis* nature and was consequently a further disturbing element. By 1918 the doctors were debating among themselves the reasons for this vulnerability in young adults, offering the hypothesis that the age groups that had already gone through the pandemic of 1889, and were therefore older, were perhaps immunised by it. The differential vulnerability of the populations was, however, little questioned by contemporaries of the Spanish flu. It was only later that the pandemic gave rise to other studies which sought to identify demographic and social elements behind the high death rate, such as studies on the ethnic origins of the groups affected. They showed that ethnic minorities had resisted the flu less well and presented a higher death rate than the populations in which a better economic and social integration appeared to have given a greater degree of immunisation. This was the case, for example, in New Zealand, where the flu caused far greater ravages among the Maoris than among those of Anglo-Saxon colonial descent.³¹

A third body of knowledge about the flu, relating this time to bacteriology, was still no more stabilised or accepted in 1918. The aetiology of the flu, that is the pathogenic agency which caused the illness, was not known. In line with the expectations created by the Pasteur era,

bacteriological identification was needed to provide the single explanation necessary to master the illness, through its exploration, isolation and the development of a vaccine or curative serum. But far from reaching a consensus, the controversy on the aetiology of the flu grew robustly in 1918, with two opposing theories in vigorous competition. One saw the flu as a streptococcal and pneumococcal infection of the respiratory system. In this approach it was a case of relating the unknown element of the Spanish flu to the known one which had constituted the flu epidemic of 1889–90, the first flu pandemic in the modern epoch of rail and steam transport. In particular, the bacteriologists tried to locate in the flu of 1918 the presumed bacillus of this earlier epidemic, *Haemophilus influenzae*, which Pfeiffer, a pupil of Koch, claimed to have identified after 1892 in the sputum of flu sufferers.

The competing theory considered the 1918 flu to be a specific illness, a morbid entity caused by a still unknown germ not yet brought to light. The scientific controversy was lively, and fed by a proliferation of experiments carried out on flu victims in hospitals and laboratories, some of which contradicted the presence of the Pfeiffer bacillus while others defined it specifically as the Spanish flu. The thesis of *Haemophilus influenzae* was confounded by the evidence of an ‘invisible’ pathogenic, or ‘ultra-microscopic’ agent, according to the parallel studies from the Pasteur Institute by Nicolle and Lebailly in Tunis and Dujarric de la Rivière in Paris. In the autumn of 1918 their conclusion that it was a ‘filtering virus’ became the dominant theory accounting for the aetiology of the flu. Yet no one could isolate the germ, and these researches therefore led to no therapeutic advance: evidence of the viral nature of the flu would not finally emerge until the 1930s.

No therapeutic treatment emerged before an understanding of the aetiology of the disease arrived more than a decade after the Spanish flu had faded away. While it was rampant, scepticism reigned, as one doctor emphasised:

There can be no question of a specific medication, since the infectious agent responsible is still unknown; also, many doctors remain sceptical because they know that light flu infections cure spontaneously and that, among the more serious cases, some get better without anyone

being able to attribute to the treatment given a decisive influence on the favourable outcome of the illness.³²

Such uncertainty did not, however, dispense with the need for intervention. At the least, the steps taken were preventive, as administered by the army as the main resource for the soldiers: ‘They gave us tea, brandy, two doses of quinine to take each day, gargles and inhalations of menthol, and despite that, the epidemic continues.’³³ Thus the medical corps looked to traditional remedies to treat the symptoms: fever-reducing medication such as quinine, disinfection for the nasal and catarrhal passages such as menthol and eucalyptus, or methods of any kind from the old medicine chest, such as bleeding. More spectacular were innovations – unprecedented methods to respond to the gravity of the situation. Shock treatments were much sought after, either old-style, but with new applications, such as fixation abscesses, or in new forms, such as injections of antiseptics of camphor oil and ether or injections of colloidal metals, such as colloidal silver or tin. Above all, since the Spanish flu had emerged in the Pasteurian era, vaccines and serums were sought, even in the absence of any precise knowledge of the aetiology of the disease. An intense effort of experimentation undertaken in Europe and the United States, in very varied research sites, led to the development of multiple preventive or curative treatments: three examples were a serum developed from the blood of convalescent flu patients; the anti-diphtheria serum; and what was termed the ‘anti-Pfeiffer’ vaccine’. John Barry has recorded eighteen kinds of operational vaccines in the state of Illinois alone.³⁴ Above all, bacteriologists tried to treat the secondary infections following the flu and to combat the ‘associative microbes’ – pneumococcal or streptococcal – in mixed vaccines, but with very unconvincing results. In light of such a limited therapeutic store and such flagrantly impotent medical knowledge, management of the health crisis rested, in the first instance, on the politics of public health .

An epidemiological crisis in wartime

Beyond the individual dramas and the mourning practices of societies struck by the pandemic, what defined the intense period of the flu crisis is without doubt the disorganisation that it entailed, marked principally by its

brief paroxysmal form. At the peak of the crisis, concrete problems caused by excess mortality had to be dealt with: a sudden increase in burials, the impossibility of keeping excess numbers of bodies in overcrowded hospitals, failure to ensure the individualised treatment of the dead. No doubt the lapses caused by this excess mortality were abnormal, a very localised and short-lived exception, such as was described by Blaise Cendrars on one of his last visits to Guillaume Apollinaire, on 3 November:

we spoke of the topic of the day, the epidemic of Spanish flu which was creating more victims than the war. I have just travelled halfway across France by car, and in a Lyon suburb I watched the incineration of plague-ridden bodies piled up in the fields and sprinkled with petrol, since the city had run out of coffins.³⁵

The trauma of the flu was all the more vivid because it happened against the backdrop of the slaughter in the last months of the war, and when there was still a ban on families recovering their dead relatives and returning them to their villages and towns for reburial. Some saw this time as one of the loss of rituals of separation and bereavement, a kind of ‘decivilisation’, as a result of mass death.

Disorganisation also affected the economic and social fabric of societies hit by the flu. At the peak of the crisis, which differed in different countries, and in waves in spring and autumn, paralysis threatened public services and industrial activity in cities, although without ever entirely interrupting all normal life. In July 1918, for example, at Frankfurt in Germany, one-third to one-half of workers were recorded as absent from the public service sectors, transport and munitions factories.³⁶ The disorganisation of activities affected the medical and hospital sector: although furniture was requisitioned to improvise new hospital centres, the staff were lacking; many were ill with the flu. Nurses were particularly hard hit by the epidemic, and in emergency situations the general staffs authorised their medical personnel to treat civilians.

In this context, how did the politics of public health respond? They cannot be generalised for the nations at war as a whole, which managed the crisis in various ways, but it is possible to define the main patterns in the autumn of 1918. At the level of primary care, the initial instructions stated

that the flu epidemic, with its broncho-pulmonary complications, called for the same measures as used in the case of other contagious diseases. The master-word was for the rapid and strict isolation of flu patients, based on 'personal protection'. A pathological model was used as reference: that of measles, an everyday disease that affected military communities. However, hospital isolation was soon seen to be inadequate, the hospital being in its turn a possible 'seat of epidemic': new isolation quarters had to be set up.

At the highest point of the autumnal wave of the flu, the measures were strengthened: the separation of flu patients from healthy individuals was no longer enough; simple flu cases had to be separated from severe cases. To 'isolate and neutralise the coughing individual', there had to be intervention on the surrounding 'microbial atmosphere'. Further than a distance of 1.50 metres the danger of the contagion diminished. This calculation served as the foundation for the spacing of beds and for reducing the pressure on hospital staff. Ideally, the wearing of gauze masks was recommended, but the measure was applied very variably according to nation: hardly at all in France or New Zealand, but generally in Australia and the United States.

The second order of the day was that of disinfection, collective and individual. It concerned first the environment: the disinfection of buildings, linen and bedding, even the decontamination of public places by sprinkling antiseptics in schools and theatres. Thus generalised hygienic measures of cleansing became a priority for the military general staffs. The prescription also included individual measures of disinfection, with preventive antisepsis of the mouth and naso-pharyngeal passages.

The third order of the day invited intervention in circumstances that may have helped spread the flu or a predisposition to it: the delivery of hot drinks such as tea, alcohol, overeating, an improved diet and increased bread rations, overdone domestic heating and so on. None of these had the slightest basis in medical knowledge, but constituted an irrelevant but real sign that 'something was being done'.

The management of the epidemic had its effect on patterns of general medical care. There was a shift away from isolation, a traditional measure in the face of contagion and in conjunction with contemporary bacteriological knowledge on the flu, to measures that focused on other modes of transmission. As Ricardo Jorge noted in his testimony to the Interallied Sanitary Commission of 1919, 'isolation, the ordinary weapon

for overcoming contagious illness, is inoperative before the violence of a virus which spreads instantaneously across an entire city and jumps over all barriers'.³⁷ The concept of disinfection fitted in with miasma theories, which pointed to the need to act on the environment that mediated interpersonal contagion. The concept of favourable circumstances echoed the formulation of theories which took note of the setting, and not only the causal agent at work. Yet this was not only the reactivation of old nineteenth-century theories, it was a true renewal of responses to fresh questions posed by the flu, and notably that of its extremely rapid diffusion, its pattern of contagion through the respiratory tract, and its puzzling relation to germ carriers. Some people who did not suffer from the outward signs of the flu spontaneously seemed to contract other illnesses, like cerebro-spinal meningitis or *Encephalitis lethargica*. The emergence of the latter new epidemic disease, also known as Von Economo's disease, from the name of the Austrian scientist who described it, reinforced the enigmatic nature of the flu phenomenon. *Encephalitis lethargica* or 'sleeping sickness', which appeared in Central Europe in 1915–16, then spread in France and the United States in 1917, caused a wave of deaths and provoked serious neurological outcomes for those who emerged from it. It disappeared definitively in 1926 after causing nearly 500,000 deaths, without any answer being found to the question of whether it had any causal link with the flu epidemic.

The majority of civilian and military authorities rejected any policy of cordon sanitaire, although this had been the classic model for managing epidemics since the cholera years: there was no closure of frontiers, except in rare cases such as Portugal which was isolated by land from the rest of Europe by a cordon sanitaire, or again in American-controlled Eastern Samoa, which applied a strict quarantine (unlike the western part of the archipelago, taken from Germany by New Zealand at the beginning of the war). The Australian state of South Australia did the same.

Measures of quarantine used in the case of the great pestilential diseases, or health passports and medical surveillance of immigrants after their arrival, were also disregarded. This deliberate decision arose out of military considerations. At this strategic moment it was impossible to limit human circulation. But there was also a sea-change in representations of the contagion. Images of pandemic illnesses, derived from the Western

experience of epidemics, and understood in terms of exotic pests arriving from elsewhere, gave way to the perception of epidemics as constituting a threat which lay close at hand and operated internally. In 1921 the British Minister of Health expressed this new attitude clearly. The Spanish flu, he said, 'is largely an internal problem of each nation; there is no question of shutting the wolf out of the sheepfold, he has been regularly lying down with the lamb for years'.³⁸

Each nation saw the flu as a problem of its internal public health regime. And each gave priority to the preservation of the rhythms of domestic social and economic life, to the detriment of authoritarian measures restricting circulation or extra-domestic activity. In Germany there was a prohibition on meetings and entertainment in Frankfurt on 19 October, but it was lifted on 1 November. Most often, when these restrictive measures were adopted, they were short-lived and limited in scope. The sanitary authorities also often recognised their uselessness: 'Once on the road to prohibitions, we would not know when or how to stop: behind establishments of entertainment there were cafés, churches, public transport, markets, offices, shops, factories. Social and economic life must not be stopped, nor even hindered in any of its forms.'³⁹

The military leadership focused on the need to maintain troop numbers and their preservation in a fit state to fight. Inevitably struggles, sometimes quite severe, ensued between the hygiene sections of the army's health services and the general staff. The two bodies' priorities were at odds, though both were committed to the preservation of the troops' health. After the war Vaughan, one of the eminent representatives of American military health, denounced what he termed 'insane army procedures':

How many lives were sacrificed I can not estimate . . . The dangers in the steps followed in mobilization [were] pointed out to the proper authorities before there was any assembly [of new recruits], but the answer was: 'the purpose of mobilization is to convert civilians into trained soldiers as quickly as possible and not to make a demonstration in preventive medicine'.⁴⁰

The refusal to delay troop crossings in infected ships became the symbol for the disregard by the general staffs for the health of their men. In France the

High Command defended the maintenance of leave periods at any cost, against the will of the health service, even at the height of the epidemic, although it was known that men on leave were a major vector for the spread of the virus and the contamination of civilian populations. Leave came first.

To be sure, there were cross-currents here, and we see other facets of military decision-making which were not indifferent to the health of the soldiers, or to that of the civilians suffering the pandemic as well. The armies could not ignore the individual choice citizen-soldiers made over what concerned their own bodies .

What demographic table can be drawn up for the pandemic? Uncertainty has been the rule for estimates of the total number of victims. In the 1920s, the figures of Edwin Jordan at the University of Chicago were long regarded as authoritative:⁴¹ he estimated the number of dead over the full duration of the epidemic at 21.6 million, related to a world population which the United Nations estimates at 1,811 million inhabitants. According to the estimates of Burnet and Clark, in their table of 1942,⁴² 25 per cent of the population of Europe and the United States contracted flu without complications, and another 5 per cent a severe flu which caused a mortality rate of 0.5–0.6 per cent.

Since the 1990s, the figures have been constantly revised upwards through the reassessment of data on regions of the world which in 1918 were the least well known statistically: African and Asian colonies, Russia, China, India, Latin America.⁴³ On the statistical level, the evaluation of flu mortality posed problems for the health authorities even in the most advanced countries in 1918. Should the pneumonic complications be counted under the heading of flu mortality? The statistical question was rendered all the more complex in that, in most of the countries with a system of public health reporting, the flu was not among those diseases requiring medical notification. Furthermore, a large part of the civilian population escaped any medicalisation, taking into account the briefness of the illness. Everything seemed to contribute to an underestimate of pandemic flu mortality. In 1991, Patterson and Pyle constructed an estimate of 30–40 million deaths.⁴⁴ Using the Jordan data from the 1920s, they recalculated the figures for China, estimated at between 4 and 9.5 million victims, and the Indian figure of 17–18 million deaths, which together constituted nearly half of the total figure. Ten years later a new table,

established by Johnson and Müller, founded on estimates of excess deaths resulting from the flu, spectacularly proposed a new threshold for the estimate of the demographic catastrophe, putting forward the hypothesis of a mortality rate of 2.5–5.0 per cent of the world population: in other words a global total of between 50 and 100 million deaths.⁴⁵

For the societies at war, Patterson and Pyle established a table of 550,000 deaths in the United States (5.2 per thousand), 50,000 in Canada, 13,000 in Australia, 6,000 in New Zealand, 2.2 million deaths in Europe (4.8 per thousand), which broke down notably into: 325,000–350,000 in Italy, 240,000 in France, 235,000 for the United Kingdom as a whole, between 250,000 and 300,000 in Germany, 124,000 in Austria-Hungary and 450,000 in Russia.⁴⁶ These figures do not enable us to estimate pandemic morbidity and the impact which it had on families. Nor do they rigorously estimate the morbidity or mortality of men on active service. To take two examples: in France the best estimate of mortality is that it represented 1.0 per cent of soldiers, or 33,300 deaths in the army, while one man in 67 (or 1.4 per cent) died of the flu in the American army. The wisest course is to treat these data with some scepticism and only accept global estimates with a substantial margin of error .

Epilogue

From its first appearance in 1918, the epidemic refused to fit in with the story of the success of the health services' victory over the epidemics of war. In fact, the suddenness of the flu attack was a test of the sanitary triumphalism which, during the war itself, had established the laboratory as the driving force leading to victory over infectious disease. Taking the war as a whole, and pre-flu health conditions, for the first time in history illnesses in wartime did not kill more than firepower. The Great War had on the contrary seen major progress in the control of wartime disease. The symbol of this success was the effectiveness of the systematic campaign of vaccination of soldiers against typhoid on the Western Front, and to which was attributed the quasi-disappearance of an epidemic which had been raging in 1914.

When the flu emerged, therefore, the health services tried to deny that the pandemic had any connection with the war or their management of it. Léon

Bernard, a senior figure in hygiene in France in the interwar years, claimed that during the conflict ‘menaces [the great pathological plagues] did not appear, the deadly onslaught was arrested, contained and, as it were, strangled’.⁴⁷ He clearly dissociated the flu from the overall health situation.

In the 1920s, however, the health and hygiene authorities published statistics on the epidemic, with the aim of drawing lessons for the next outbreak. To them, the struggle against flu was recognised as a setback in health policies and as a sign of medical impotence. This paradoxically reinforced the need for even greater vigilance in public health work against other killer diseases. The flu faded from the foreground of epidemiological preoccupations between the wars. The new health institutions of the League of Nations made typhus, tuberculosis and malnutrition the most urgent priorities.

The pandemic of 1918 was not without consequences, though. What contemporaries understood to be the defective management of the flu epidemic helped provide political urgency to the creation of a series of central institutions of health – notably the Ministry of Health in Britain (1919) and the Ministry of Hygiene in France (1920). Nations at war could not afford the incessant struggles between authorities in different ministries who had no direct responsibility for public health, but who had a vital interest in it, like the ministries of the Interior and of War.

In the medical domain the flu pandemic, with its virus which spread so rapidly and which was so hard to treat, added an argument many deployed to revise the mono-causal bacteriological model of a single pathogenic agent of infectious diseases. It made sense after 1919 to take account of the multiple factors of their life histories, including war and its effect on the complex ecosystem of the societies they afflicted .

Helen McPhail translated this chapter from French into English.

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15 Mourning practices

Joy Damousi Never before: so much death due to war over so little time. The Great War created an unfamiliar cultural landscape of grieving for mourners, one that seemed as surreal as it was grotesque. The unprecedented scale of the trauma of loss and sorrow left an enduring legacy to those who remained to absorb the impact of individual and national tragedy. ‘I had not thought death had undone so many’, astutely observed T. S. Eliot in 1922 in *The Waste Land*. Rituals of mourning became embedded in cultural life during the interwar years in ways not seen before or since. The end of the war may have signalled an end to hostilities, but the community of mourners it created in its wake – those millions ‘undone’ by death – struggled to escape from the persistent shadow of bereavement. The wide circle of those affected – mothers, fathers, siblings, wives, uncles, aunts, cousins, friends – faced what Vera Brittain described as ‘the long, empty years’ after the war.

It was during these long empty years that mourning became much more than a private matter. Those who died in the war were commemorated publically: monuments and memorials – centrepieces for ceremony – rose to honour and remember the men who had made the ultimate sacrifice. The battlefields where combatants had fallen became places of pilgrimage for mourners who were irresistibly drawn to where the carnage took place, and to the cemeteries where their loved ones were buried, seeking an intimacy with the dead as a way for their own emotional wounds to begin to heal. At the same time, the public process of commemoration, memorial and reconciliation of grief also took on a non-physical form in which artistic expression, spiritualism and religion were utilised to imbue the war and the mourners’ individual loss with meaning and a sense of higher purpose.

The act of mourning and the cultural practices surrounding mourning were inexplicably altered by the mass scale of death in the war and the demographic shifts this level of loss produced. Twice as many men died in action or of their wounds in the First World War as were killed in all the major wars between 1790 and 1914.¹ It is very likely that by 1918 every

household in Britain, and in most of the other countries involved in the conflict, had lost a relative or friend. It is estimated that 3 million Britons lost a close relative.² Of the other countries with major casualties, 1.4 million French and 2 million Germans perished. On the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the casualties suffered by the British army – almost 60,000 – easily exceeded the total of those in the Crimean War, Boer War and Korean War combined. In the British case, death came to 30 per cent of men aged between 20 and 24 in 1914; for those aged between 13 and 19, the statistic was 28 per cent.³ The highest percentage of dead combatants were from Serbia (37 per cent), Turkey (27 per cent), Romania (26 per cent) and Bulgaria (23 per cent). Civilian deaths were also disproportionately high in these areas, with over 6 million civilian casualties estimated in Eastern Europe compared with fewer than 50,000 in West.⁴ Across the continent, and beyond, death and grief were palpable.

Death during wartime meant that the usual long-adhered-to rituals around death and burial were no longer applicable. Traditionally, for the English middle and upper classes, the week-long funeral process involved the gathering of family members and the show of family unity and support. The laying-out of the body in an elaborate fashion characterised these rites. The funeral service offered consolation and the religious ceremonies which marked Christian funerals provided solace for believers. Although some of these practices had become less rigid by the early twentieth century, they were nonetheless still common. In wartime it was impossible to continue in the same way: family members were absent; bodies were buried in the most makeshift manner with no preparation; and frequently modest or ecumenical religious ceremonies were performed, often in haste, with a minimal service, rushed and on the way to the next burial.

Throughout Eastern and Western Europe, burying and mourning the war dead meant eclectic arrangements where familiar and longstanding practices could not be performed. It was often impossible to provide proper burial rites for the dead.⁵ For the families without a body to bury there was no ceremony, and therefore no traditional rites to perform. In Orthodox traditions, the belief that a body not properly buried meant the soul would be restless, unable to find an exit from this life, provided an added sense of urgency and immediacy and produced a heightened anxiety to the need to locate and bury the war dead.⁶ Thus in all nations touched by war there was

no sense of laying the dead to rest and the traditional avenues of mourning were lost. Those left behind were left with what might be termed, in modern parlance, a lack of closure. The bereaved were also often left with a sense of wanting to know more about what the dead had experienced: of wanting to relive their last moments and understand something of what they had gone through. No body, no service, no eulogy, no family and friends to provide comfort at the grave: all this left loved ones in a state of limbo, in search of solace and in need of some kind of reassurance about the spiritual welfare of the departed.

With these factors in mind, the central theme which emerges in a consideration of mourning during and following the First World War is the way in which communities combined new and old rituals to deal with bereavement under these conditions.⁷ A consideration of mourning practices suggests both a continuity and change in dealing with a cultural shift where grief was all-pervasive and ubiquitous after such an astonishing loss of life across so many cultures. It also suggests that public commemoration and community connection became an essential part of this mourning process.⁸

The examination of grief and loss during and after the Great War also highlights the role women played in the creation of the culture of mourning during this period. It was women who assumed the burden of the mourning work in many communities, not least because they made up the bulk of the survivors. There was a belief that mothers across all nations had a particular and special part to play in mourning their dead sons. The shift by historians to an examination of the cultural experience of the war has been reoriented to emphasise women writers and artists as well as mothers, wives and widows of soldiers. In recent times, a new history of the Great War has emerged where women mourners are at the centre of historical analysis of how a community mourns its dead.⁹

When the war began no one could have predicted what it would bring and how it would affect people's lives. 'War enthusiasm' was the term which had been used to describe the reception of war, but this representation of the first few months of the war has recently been challenged.¹⁰ Another representation is of the endearing innocence and a world of untainted tranquillity that would be shattered for ever. But the story of mourning and

the Great War cannot simply be a lamentable tale of the end of a peaceful life once lived which is no longer. A global community of mourners was created, and their melancholy and search for meaning coloured the cultural landscape for a generation and more after the war ended.

Yet survivors grieved for their war dead, I would suggest, in complex and varied ways across cultures, nations and religions. The shifting sands of how and where they sought refuge, and the way they mourned, reflects individuals and communities in trauma and turmoil and cannot be captured with glib generalisations. It is to this web of complex cultural shifts and range of individual and collective reactions to this cataclysmic event that I will now turn.

Individual mourners

The scale of ‘communities in mourning’, as Jay Winter has described them, meant that every part of the social structure of Europe was plunged into a period of bereavement.¹¹ The statistics of those left to mourn these dead are dramatic. There were 525,000 war widows in Germany in 1920; 200,000 in Italy; 600,000 in France; 240,000 in Britain. In France, historians estimate that the inner circle of mourners of the 1.3 million men killed would amount to 2.5 million people. But if the extended family of relatives was included for each soldier, they estimate that in different intensity of mourning the figure would be closer to 39 million.¹² It is startling to remember that there were twice as many bereaved parents as there were soldiers killed.

In these communities the relatives of dead soldiers mourned privately in ways that were highly individualised. The following examples allow us to see the expression of grief in a range of circumstances, and to catch just a glimpse of the extent of the sorrow in which so much of the population was steeped at the time. In some of these cases we can see how the outpouring of public grief made it possible for individuals to connect with others and how these connections allowed some sense of purpose to individuals in their missions to remember their loved ones and recapture some sense of the lives that were lost.

Within this web of sorrow the mourning of women – who subsequently made up the bulk of the population after the war – had a different dimension. For many the grief cut deep. It represented not only individual loss, but the loss of the known world. Nothing would ever be the same after the cataclysm. Women lost husbands, lovers, sons and brothers. Large numbers lost the chance to have families and felt unable to grasp the future that lay before them.

The New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield lost her younger brother, Leslie Beauchamp ('Chummie'), on 7 October 1915, a loss she deeply mourned. Mansfield describes this tragedy as 'the most severe emotional crisis of her life'. Sandy Callister has traced how Mansfield dealt with this mourning through the use of photographs.¹³ She attempted to evoke her brother's presence by surrounding herself with visual material as a way of feeling he was constantly in her presence and remained alive in her memory. These photos are more than a document of her brother's life. They are a memorial to him.¹⁴ Her mourning is a mixture of nostalgia, romance and yearning. Mansfield longed not only to remain close to her little brother, but to continue to share her life with him:

On the mantelpiece in my room stands my brother's photograph. I never see anything that I like, or hear anything, without the longing that he should see and hear, too – I had a letter from his friend again. He told me that after it happened he said over and over – 'God forgive me for all I have done' and just before he died he said 'Lift my head, Katy I can't breathe –' . . . All this is like a long uneasy ripple – nothing else – and below – in the still pool there is my little brother.¹⁵

The lingering image was a romantic one where she pictures him longingly, '[s]itting on the verandah in canvas chairs after supper & smoking & listening to the idle sea . . . my Brother who sat on verandah step stroking a kitten that curled on his knee'.¹⁶ Mansfield felt the loss acutely when she was alone: 'Since I have been alone here the loss of my little brother has become quite real to me. I have entered into my loss if you know what I mean – Always before that I shrank from the final moment – but now it is past.'¹⁷ She spoke about him as a living presence. Writing in December

1915, she stated, ‘My brother I hear often, laughing, and calling “do you remember, Katy?”’¹⁸

Soon the memories turned to nostalgia, but the need to have him near was ever present: ‘When I am alone I feel he is quite close to me – indeed I am *sure* he is – but all the same it is not comfort enough – For he loved life so and he took such a great joy in being alive – That is what makes his death so hard to bear.’¹⁹ She did not seek to indulge in his death, but sought to ‘bear his loss bravely’ for she believed if she did not do so, she would fail in her duty to his memory.²⁰ Keeping his memory alive when she spoke of him to her sister, she remarked, ‘And let’s just remember . . . Can’t you hear his soft boyish laugh and the way he said “oh-*absolutely!*”’²¹ But the pain lingered. She wrote to her friend Dorothy Brett in 1921 of the memories ignited by small reminders, such as a gust of wind:

It has been a fine day. The sun came into this room all the afternoon but at dusk an old ancient wind sprang up and it is shaking now and complaining. A terrible wind – a wind that one always mercifully forgets until it blows again. Do you know the kind I mean? It brings nothing but memories – and by memories I mean those that one cannot without pain remember. It always carries my brother to me. Ah Brett, I hope with all my heart you have not known anyone who has died young, long before their time. It is bitterness.²²

Mansfield’s biographer believes she created a ‘fanatical cult of her brother’, whom she longed to join in death, for she felt that *she* had died, and had developed mystical yearnings for him:

I welcome the idea of death. I believe in immortality because he is not here, and I long to join him . . . I am just as much dead as he is. The present and the future mean nothing to me. I am no longer ‘curious’ about people; I do not wish to go anywhere; and the only possible value that anything can have for me is that it should put me in mind of something that happened or was when we were alive.²³

Mansfield drew comfort in her mourning by surrounding herself with visual imagery of her deceased brother . Across the globe the German artist Käthe

Kollwitz created a visual landscape of mourning which remains distinctive, haunting and evocative. She represents the generation of mothers who lived under the shadow of mourning – a loss which consumed her creative as well as her personal life. In October 1914, Kollwitz's 18-year-old son Peter died in battle in Flanders. Her creative work, as well as her personal letters and diaries reveal the intense grief and prolonged mourning she endured. The notion of sacrifice – in the case of mothers, the maternal sacrifice – could legitimise the cause and call of death. But it never lessened the pain of mourning.²⁴ As many commentators have noted, Kollwitz's maternal identity was intimately connected to the sacrifice of her son. She writes:

January 17, 1916

All has changed forever. Changed, and I am impoverished. My whole life as a mother is really behind me now. I often have a terrible longing to have it back again – to have children, my boys, one to the right and one to the left; to dance with them as formerly when spring arrived and Peter came with flowers and we danced a springtide dance.²⁵

The anniversary of Peter's death in October 1916 was cause for reflection, communication and intimacy with her son:

You are united, all of you who swore you would die for Germany. You are dead two years now, and turned wholly to earth. Your spiritual part – where is it? I can hope for this kind of reunion – that when I too am dead we may find ourselves in a new form, come back to one another, run together like two streams. Do not withhold yourself from me. Perfect your form in mine . . . Sometimes I have felt you, my boy – Oh, many, many times. You sent signs. Wasn't it a sign when on October 13 I visited the place where your memorial is to stand, and there was the same flower that I gave you when you departed?²⁶

She drew inspiration from her son to continue living. 'Strength is what I need', she wrote, 'it's the one thing which seems worthy of succeeding Peter' .²⁷

Another aspect which emerges from this story is the way in which women came to represent the figure of mourning of the Great War. Many

did so with stoicism and fortitude which masked an inner anguish which for many mothers never dissipated. Mourning multiple deaths created an even more oppressive burden of grief, but in the case of mothers who sacrificed not one but many sons to the patriotic war effort, grief was often elevated to a heroic status. For example, the press often reported the efforts of mothers who sacrificed several of their sons for patriotic duty. While a vast majority of them did not develop psychological illnesses, the increased number of cases of melancholic depression among women reported in countries such as France during the war point to the under-recognised occurrence of civilian trauma.²⁸

The level of loss for many women, be it sons, brothers, fathers, husbands or friends, was staggering. Vera Brittain's experience of war powerfully encapsulates the sheer exhaustion of grief and the burden of death when mourning involves several close relatives. Her fiancé, brother and two friends perished in the war. What was the impact of the burden of death and grief which surrounded her? In her assessment, the loss she endured had an impact on her own personal relationships:

Only gradually did I realize that the War had condemned me to live to the end of my days in a world without confidence or security, a world in which every dear personal relationship would be fearfully cherished under the shadow of apprehension; in which love would seem threatened perpetually by death, and happiness appear a house without duration, built upon the shifting sands of chance. I might, perhaps, have it again, but never again should I hold it.²⁹

The announcement of death came as a shock even in the context of war. Waiting patiently for the arrival of her fiancé Roland Leighton, 'after a night and day of wakefulness', she 'went to bed a little disappointed, but still unperturbed'. The next morning she awoke to the 'expected message' that she was wanted on the telephone. But the voice she heard was not Roland, but his sister Clare, 'not to say that he had arrived home that morning, but to tell me that he had died of wounds at a Casualty Clearing Station on December 23rd'.³⁰

Like others who had lost loved ones, the need to know precise details and every moment leading up to death overwhelmed her. She ascertained the

exact details and one question lingered: why did he venture into no-man's-land, in an area where Germans would have fired immediately, the very day before his leave was due. It was, she seems to be suggesting, a reckless act. There was no message from him that he was about to see her and his family soon. She recounted the reworking of these thoughts over and over in her mind as an attempt to come to terms with how he died:

All through the first months of 1916, my letters and diaries emphasise, again and again, the grief of having no word to cherish through the empty years. He had been coming on the leave the very next day – the day after he was wounded, the day that he died – and yet he had never mentioned to anyone to his mother or me, nor the fact that he expected to see us so soon.³¹

The desire to know and the need to connect with all who were involved in his death dominated her narrative. In desperation, she was searching for details of how he died and whether there was any final word from him to her:

For weeks after the news of his death I waited and waited in the hope of a message . . . But when I too had heard from his colonel, and his company commander, and his servant, and the Catholic padre, and a sympathetic officer . . . I knew I had learnt all that there was to know, and that in his last hour I had been quite forgotten.³²

The communication with officers and other personnel regarding details of his death became a part of the mourning process. When her brother, Edward, was killed, an officer, his servant and an acquaintance with the Red Cross wrote to her telling of 'Edward's . . . record of coolness and fortitude on the Somme and throughout the 1917 Battles of Ypres'.³³ But she wanted more and more details which the colonel of his group was reluctant to provide. Determined to find out more details about the final hours of his life, Brittain pursued him. In particular, she was determined to uncover whether her brother was engaged in 'some special act of heroism', which she would never know.³⁴ The anniversary of Roland's death in 1916 reflected the heavy weariness Brittain felt:

December 23rd

The anniversary of Roland's death – and for me farewell to the best thing in my life . . . It is absurd to say time makes one forget; I miss Him as much now as ever I did. One recovers from the shock, just as one gradually would get used to managing with one's left hand if one has lost one's right, but one never gets over the loss, for one is never the same after it. I have got used to facing the long empty years ahead of me if I survive the war, but I have always before me the realization of how empty they are and will be, since He will never be there again. One can only live through them as fully and as nobly as one can, and pray from the depths of one's lonely heart that Hand in Hand, just as we used to do,

We two shall live our passionate poem through On God's serene tomorrow.³⁵

Of course, men too were part of a culture of mourning, especially fathers. Many tried heroically to be stoical and brave, but no amount of patriotic rhetoric could ever compensate for their loss.³⁶ Henry Bourne Higgins, the Australian politician and judge, lost his only child, Mervyn, in December 1916 as he was leading an advance in the Battle of Magdhaba in the Sinai desert as part of the campaign in the Sinai and Palestine. Higgins, who was initially a supporter of the war, was devastated by the loss. Mervyn had left Melbourne for Oxford in 1906 at the age of 19, following in his father's footsteps and matriculating at Balliol College. Despite his distance from home, he remained at the centre of his parents' lives. In 1912 he visited the family, and in the following two years Higgins spent time with his adult son as Mervyn prepared for a career at the Bar. When his parents travelled to England in May 1914, there was little indication of the devastation that would engulf them. As they returned to Australia in 1915, Mervyn was about to depart for Gallipoli – as it would turn out, never to return.³⁷ The news of his death was very public, with all the major Australian dailies and several British newspapers reporting Mervyn's death.³⁸

For Higgins, the severe blow of losing his son left him bereft. His view of the war changed dramatically, and he altered his view from pro-to anti-war. The void created by Mervyn's death was insurmountable; on the first year

without his son, Higgins wrote: ‘The pain is of the living, not the dead. For us, in age, a childless home – and tears.’³⁹

He was later to refer to his grief as ‘hard labour’ for the rest of his life. Higgins saw his link to the future through his son, and endowed the Mervyn Bournes Higgins Bursary Fund to help students at Ormond College at the University of Melbourne and a shield for the intercollegiate boat race. Students and universities continued to interest him.⁴⁰ While some fathers were inspired to exalt the virtues of glory, honour and Empire, Higgins chose to embrace other causes as a way of dealing with his loss. By the 1920s he was promoting peace and disarmament. In 1929, the year of his death, he was the Melbourne president of the World Disarmament Movement. Higgins became convinced that war was not inevitable, and nor was it a part of man’s nature.⁴¹

We can see how one other father dealt with his son’s death through a study of the diary of John Roberts. Roberts, an accountant, lost his son Frank aged 30, on 1 September 1918, at the battle at Mont Saint-Quentin in France. At the age of 58, Roberts was the father of three children and a grandfather. He inhabited the world of public service, finance and business; his life was imbued with the Victorian culture of respectability. In his diary we can see how he developed his own rituals and patterns to structure and contain his deepest emotions. Roberts developed his own private ritual of recording and documenting his son’s movements and treasuring his possessions. He began obsessively amassing information about his son in a scrapbook, assembling the missing pieces of Frank’s death. Losing his son also meant losing an established social pattern which he replaced with a diligent compilation of cuttings and mementos.⁴² In the evening he would pore over Frank’s old letters and copy out portions of them.⁴³ After breakfast he resumed making ‘extracts from Frank’s diary to 30 April 1918 2 days before his death’, and he ‘Copied Frank’s letters from Geelong camp and Duntroon’; in the ‘evening read over more of Frank’s letters . . . took 41 leaves of Frank’s letters [for] typist to copy’. He wrote a memoir of Frank’s life, which ended with the deceptive line of closure, ‘faithful unto death, Sunday 1/9/1917’.⁴⁴

Roberts made contact with other bereaved families and in this exchange began a journey towards shaping a memory of his son. Soon after Frank’s

death, others gathered around: 'Gwen and Will and Edie came and we talked of Frank and Len our eldest ones killed in battle as gallant soldiers. Frank in France and Len in Gallipoli and by such deaths is freedom won.'

In December 1918 Roberts wrote to J. A. Blackmore, 'thanking him for photo of his son buried in same grave as Frank'. He retained links with the Blackmores. In August 1919 he recorded that he had lunched with 'Mr and Mrs Blackmore parents of the soldier buried in same grave as dear Frank'.

The sister-in-law of 'soldier buried near Frank called and I gave her 2 photos of grave'. A Miss Edith Alston called at his office in March 1920, 'and left with me to read Frank's letters to her after his visit to Paris two years ago'.⁴⁵ A fraternity of grieving fathers began to figure in his diary.

Courage in adversity was part of the repertoire of Victorian masculinity, but an uncompromising belief in rigid stoicism could only be enforced if it was not really tested. The war offered such a test. Fathers gained some vicarious glory through their sons, as the young men marched off to prove their manliness in ways not available to the older men. But fathers suffered a dual loss in this process. Their sons had gone, but the values which had given meaning to the sacrifice and which had shaped their own masculine identity were now being challenged. In this shift of values they often felt they had lost their own self-worth, which fuelled further anger and resentment. To rob them not only of their sons, but of much of what they believed, was to leave them 'without honour, without memory, and without heart'.⁴⁶

Some fathers never had the chance to mourn for long. Émile Durkheim, the French philosopher, was devastated by the death of his son André. Just before Christmas 1915, Durkheim was notified that his son had died in a Bulgarian hospital from his war wounds. André had followed his father to the *École Normale* and had begun a most promising career as a sociological linguist. He had been the pride and hope of a father who had seen him as his destined successor in the front rank of the social sciences. His death was a blow from which Durkheim did not recover. He died on 15 November 1917, at the age of 59. Durkheim retreated into a 'ferocious' silence and insisted that the name of his son not be mentioned in his presence. Xavier Leon, his close friend and editor of *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, recalled he imposed on others a 'frightening silence, as glacial as death itself'.⁴⁷

Durkheim became obsessed with his son's disappearance and his own grief. When he heard of his son's disappearance in January 1916, he could not contain his grief, although it was not a surprise. He wrote to Georges Davy, one of his disciples who became a member of the Année Sociologique School – Durkheim's *équipe*:⁴⁸ 'I do not have to tell you of the anguish in which I am living. It is an obsession that fills every moment and is even worse than I supposed. Still, I have been preparing for this blow for a long time'. The image of his son haunted him: 'of this exhausted child, alone at the side of a road in the midst of night and fog . . . that seizes me by the throat'. But his grief became all-encompassing as gradually he shunned company: 'Nothing is so bad as endlessly analyzing one's grief. I have allowed myself to do this too much . . . And that is why I ask my friends not to come and see me at this time, because of the circumstances in which I find myself.'⁴⁹

Durkheim chose meditation to cope with his son's death, although equally he welcomed distractions and intense activity as a way of managing his situation. He wrote in April 1916:

Personally what I need is silence and meditation. I have profited from the over-active life I led in Paris. It proved to me that I was still able to interest myself in things although I no longer had a personal interest in them. Above all, it prevented the suffering from overwhelming me completely, driving it back and localising it. From there it cannot be driven out. But it is perhaps possible to render it less acute. To this task I am applying myself. To achieve this, it is important that I should be left to myself for a while. I feel a great need for that.⁵⁰

A consideration of individual grief points to a variety of responses to mourning. Mansfield surrounded herself with visual imagery of her brother, while Kollwitz devoted herself to a lifetime of expressing her mourning through her artwork. Higgins turned to campaigns of peace while Durkheim found refuge in silence and distraction. Roberts and Brittain both became obsessed with the details of the death of their relatives, with Roberts in particular seeking solace within a community of grievers.

Individual mourning was replicated around the world – in all parts of Europe, Australasia, Asia, Africa and the United States – from wherever and whichever country men were lost. However, mourning had changed in some ways. Communities of mourners gathered as families and relatives sought and found comfort among themselves and among strangers bound by the unique and ghastly circumstances that had befallen them.⁵¹ The outpouring of grief was more acceptable. The search for meaning – both of life and death – more understandable. And much of this was due to the growing culture of commemoration and the diversity of cultural practices taking place in the public arena – an area to which I shall now turn.

War memorials

War memorials are reminders of how communities created sites for the public expression and public recognition of their grief. Memorials served a fundamental purpose in facilitating their mourning as they became a site of pilgrimage for local communities to publicly remember, honour and mourn their dead. Memorials were constructed in vast numbers in what became a widespread movement during the 1920s and 1930s. In the nations whose men had fallen, memorials proliferated across the largest and smallest urban and rural centres, in villages, local suburbs, parks and gardens, schools, universities and workplaces across the globe. Memorials allowed a material attachment to the dead through the lists of the dead on monuments that became a symbol of collective grief. For decades after the war, mourners and citizens gathered at these monuments and memorials. Winter has argued that memorials served as a substitute for the graves of the absent and the missing. The outpouring of grief and sorrow at memorials created new rituals and a new etiquette on how to respect and honour the dead. War memorials in France, Italy and Germany glorified not only the combatants, but also the civilians on the home front for their sacrifices. These reflected an intense grief for the ghastly loss of civilians.⁵²

While memorials differed in style and design across the globe, the favoured representation of war was that which directly replicated what had been lost: the brave soldier. Their uniforms and guns realistically depicted did little to capture the reality of war, with its environment of blood, mud and detritus.⁵³ Goebel introduces another response to the war – that of the

memorial of the ‘sleeping dead’ soldier – which suggested that the war was not over yet, a concept which had some currency in Germany and to some extent in Britain.⁵⁴ The aim of these tombs was to lift the understanding of the war beyond physical death, and refuse to see the soldier as entirely dead. The idea that the soldiers were asleep allowed the ‘bereaved to live with their losses, but not to leave them behind’.⁵⁵

The representation of the soldier, although universal and dominant, was not the only image which became the site of mourning. As Jennifer Windgate notes, the images of mothers assumed a central place in the memorialisation of the war, ranging from the patriotic mother to the bereaved mother and the mother who protects her children against the violence of war.⁵⁶ This latter image – of mothers who shelter their young from battle – is, however, rare, as it carried with it an anti-war message. The work of Bashka Paeff, the American woman sculptor, is especially pertinent here, as her work, especially *The Maine Sailors and Soldiers Memorial* (1926) in Kittery, challenged patriotic motherhood and instead reflected her view that women and mothers had a particular responsibility to promote peace.⁵⁷

The gendering of the mourning and memorial process took yet a different turn in Italy. During and after the war, the public and sculptural memorials relied on maternal representations to convey the mourning process. As Boylan shows, there were also efforts to reflect mourning and memory through male figures in written and visual texts. Through an examination of Gabriele D’Annunzio’s written text *La beffa di Buccari* and Eugenio Baroni’s proposal for a war memorial, the *Monumento al Fante*, Boylan shows how while both images relied on the rhetoric of motherhood – of women as bearers of memory, and on female representations of the nation in their pre-war works – they stray in several respects. In the *Monumento*, male figures become mourners and play what is often considered to be a female role. In *La beffa*, D’Annunzio also creates an all-male culture of mourning and commemoration, while constructing a male personification of the nation. While they are consistent with post-war trends of emphasising life in the trenches, they also diverge from conventional ideas about mourning. Boylan argues that this represents ‘a shifting of the duty of mourning from mother to brother’. But *La beffa* was a great success and the *Monumento* was not because it was seen as unpatriotic. The ‘mourning

mother' was a deeply familiar image to Italians and her image 'redoubled' during the immediate post-war period.⁵⁸ In making men the agents of mourning for the war dead, this was an effort to break from tradition which typically saw women carry images of the nation.

Communities were creative about how they wished to honour but also mourn their dead. In schools and offices honour boards served that purpose, as did avenues of honour consisting of oak trees which lined the streets of country towns. The two-minute silence introduced in Britain to remember the Armistice on 11 November was a commemorative practice which symbolically recognised the need to mourn the dead.⁵⁹ In France this day of remembrance has been described as an expression of civil remembrance; the power of mourning was reiterated with each of the names of the fallen read out.⁶⁰ While it seemed crucial to *visualise* the dead in the process of mourning, this did not always take the form of a replica of a soldier. In Romania, cemeteries and churchyards were favoured places for war monuments, as were local schools where they were placed in or outside the schoolyards.⁶¹ The reading aloud of names of dead soldiers was tied in the Orthodox Christian religion to keeping the memory of the dead alive. The names of the dead were engraved on stone on a public memorial, which was an extension of the traditional practice of keeping lists of the dead honoured by women in the community.⁶²

Indeed perhaps the most powerful site of collective mourning took place not before the figure of a soldier, but in front of the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey, where the soldier was absent from view. The site of an empty tomb could be equally powerful. In 1920 more than a million and a quarter people filed past the Cenotaph in London in the days after 11 November. No fewer than 100,000 wreaths had been laid at these sites.⁶³ In Britain, France and the United States, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier was an effective point for marshalling hundreds of thousands of mourners in a symbolic link between individual and collective mourning.⁶⁴ These memorials generated a political response. Mourning and grief was legitimated by the state as the 'cult of the fallen'.⁶⁵ But these ceremonies and monuments also served the purpose of reassuring families that the dead would not be forgotten, and that their men had not died in vain. It made personal grief public and aimed to ease the pain of mourners by

acknowledging and legitimising their grief.⁶⁶ Not all memorials depicted a fallen soldier. The Monument to the Unknown Hero in Serbia – built to commemorate victims of the war – comprises several female sculptures that represent each of the regions of the country. Similarly, Kollwitz's *The Parents* erected at the military cemetery at Roggevelde in Belgium in 1932, captures the haunting, possessed quality of grieving parents, and offers a counter-figure to the cult of heroes in military cemeteries. The father is rigid and holds in his grief; the mother bows in acceptance.⁶⁷

In a country where civilian casualties outnumbered military deaths, mourning and public commemoration took on an entirely different expression. Serbia was decimated by the war, with an astonishing loss of life, through epidemics, disease and famine as much as through military combat. An estimated 600,000 civilians died in addition to the 615,290 soldiers killed, wounded or incapacitated. Families were destroyed on a significant scale as an estimated 500,000 orphans mourned the loss of both their parents after the war. In a country with so many civilians dead, how did society mourn?⁶⁸

War cemeteries and memorials, days of remembrance and personal memoirs were all mobilised to mourn the dead in Serbia, as elsewhere. But as Bucur and Wingfield note, there is no one single narrative of commemoration, and 'the Serbian monarchy, national and political elites, the military establishment, veterans, survivors, historians, intellectuals, artists, and individual men and women commemorated the war in vastly different ways and for vastly different purposes'.⁶⁹ One dominant theme can be identified. Various groups, individuals and the state sought to represent heroism and sacrifice through images and symbols of the myth of Kosovo Polje. This derives from mythology surrounding the 1389 Battle of Kosovo Polje, which became the basis of Serbian cultural identity. It is concerned with the Serbian knights defeated in Kosovo. Drawing on themes of military bravery, sacrifice, nationalism and justification for war, it evolved through oral folklore, literature and poetry and was strengthened through the Serbian Orthodox Church.⁷⁰ Images of the Kosovo legend were invoked, thus providing the victims, survivors and mourners of the war with a sense of continuity, sympathy and identity with a 'similar sacrifice and loss'.⁷¹ The memory of Kosovo Polje united Serbs around a common purpose. Bokovoy argues that the experience of total war and its

consequences in Serbia created the conditions for the emergence of memory sites for the modern Serbian nation that powerfully invoked the themes, symbols and imagery of Kosovo Polje.⁷²

In some nations, death was understood and managed so that mourning was performed as a ritual incorporated within the war itself. In her study of letters by Bulgarian soldiers, Snezhana Dimitrova concludes that there was a lack of emotion towards death that 'barely reveal[s] any sign of a problematic relation to the horrors of death'.⁷³ Death was considered to be natural, as was fear of death, but this fear did not become a personal crisis. Bulgarian practices meant that the state could manage grief and mourning at home and cultivate a particular mourning practice on the home front. To this end, a special division for arranging and decorating the soldiers' graveyards was founded in 1917 as part of the army's sanitary services. A workshop was established as part of a unit of the army that built graves, crosses and so on. Furthermore, it developed 'soldier graveyards, inscribed the names of the dead on gravestones, and started maintaining and gardening for the military cemeteries at the front. A mourning service was held, a speech on sacred duty accomplished was delivered, thus reconciling the religious and civic sides, the ceremonies were photographed and the pictures were sent home.'⁷⁴ Close attention was paid instead to family and community and soldiers being buried in accordance with folk traditions.⁷⁵

What can be seen across all cultures is the need for memorialisation. Whether it be grand or small, an obelisk or a simple grave, mourners needed a place to focus their grief and longing, a place to help them make sense of their tragedy and to connect in some way with the departed. And it is this latter theme that emerges time and time again, and is common across all rituals of mourning: the desire to connect with the dead soldier. Whether through the physicality of names inscribed, or in standing before a soldier's grave in uniform, or through reflection in silence, mourning was understood in terms of reconnecting with the dead. This was nowhere more apparent than in the pilgrimages undertaken by mourners to the most painful site – that of death itself. And in the case of some cultures there was a search for bodies on former battlefields.

Battlefields and pilgrimages

The Great War ushered in a new way of identifying the war dead, by individualising each soldier who lost his life in the conflict. Laqueur argues the era of a new form of memorialisation took place during the war, when for the first time in British military history burial places were marked. It was an unprecedented inscription of names on the landscape of battle which involved a thousand cemeteries in Belgium and France regarded as a memorial to those lost in the war. This project produced stunning results.

By 1938, when the British Imperial War Graves Commission had completed its task, it had constructed 1,850 cemeteries, most of them in Belgium and France. By 1930, over 550,000 soldiers of the British Empire had been buried in identified and marked graves.⁷⁶

This signified a major commitment to remembrance, but was also a conscious effort to establish individual sites of mourning.⁷⁷ By inscribing and memorialising each soldier, new sites of mourning laid the foundations for generations of mourners who made the pilgrimage to the battlefields. The French too made the physical remains of soldiers a particular site of mourning, identifying the war graves of their dead.⁷⁸

In Italy there was a less uniform approach. The army arranged burial in war cemeteries, but there was a range of rites and various practices of mourning. The response of small towns varied, from those who rejected the idea of establishing monuments by adopting a leftist anti-militarist position, to those who adhered to Catholic practices and mourned their dead by erecting monuments in churches or village cemeteries. In contrast to the British, the Italians did not respond quickly to identify or name the fallen. Official lists were not compiled until the 1920s and local communities made their own lists of the dead.⁷⁹

David Lloyd has described in detail the rituals, patterns and complex purposes the pilgrimage to the battlefields served for grieving parents from Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia during the interwar years. Pilgrimages, he argues, were an opportunity for the bereaved to remember the dead and to come to terms with grief.⁸⁰ Retracing the steps of their sons and visiting their graves was crucial to bringing them closer to the dead and dealing with their grief. It gave mourners an agency in dealing with their loss; the dead became part of the memories of the living and so allowed them to move on.⁸¹ During the 1920s and 1930s bereaved relatives made

the journey to the battlefields as a way of coming to terms with their grief, and for some it became part of their ongoing mourning.⁸²

Pilgrimages were very popular. One hundred and forty thousand British widows and parents visited war graves in 1931, and 160,000 visited in the year before the outbreak of the Second World War.⁸³ Battle sites became cemeteries; however, Britain was the only country which allowed families to have whatever words they wished on the gravestone.⁸⁴ Religious overtones imbued the pilgrimage and religious beliefs were prevalent for many who assumed the physical and emotional journey. On occasion these journeys permitted a kind of interaction with the dead. Some brought personal items such as a mouth organ; others smoked a pipe, 'Just as we used to'.⁸⁵ Others recreated what they took to be the very experiences of their loved ones by retracing the soldiers' steps. One father walked three miles to and from a cemetery near Ypres because 'he wanted to feel that he had traversed the same road that his son had traversed on his last journey on earth'.⁸⁶

Mothers in particular were believed to have a particular role to play, and they travelled to honour their sons from across the globe. Grieving mothers from the USA, Britain and Australia descended on the European battlefields during the interwar years, and women were given a particular place. The British combined their services for veterans, widows and parents, while the French drew a distinction between a private pilgrimage of widows and families and those of ex-servicemen.⁸⁷ Mourning sites were extended at home when civilians retrieved soil from the battlefield. In France soil taken from Verdun – the site of the deaths of almost 700,000 men (362,000 French and 336,000 Germans) – became 'sacralised' soil and was placed before war memorials.⁸⁸

Where the battlefield was also the home front, the pilgrimage was a dramatically different cultural practice. Local rural villages, such as those in Romania, began to negotiate the memory of the dead with state authorities, as locating bones and bodies in nearby former battlefields was undertaken at the local level, involving priests, widows, teachers, police and other members of the community as well as soldiers. In this instance, the memory and commemoration of the dead remained close to home rather than at a distant cemetery.⁸⁹ Even if bodies could not be found of their own sons,

brothers or fathers, relatives could honour them by retrieving and respecting the bones of others who had died by conducting Orthodox funeral rites. The Romanian day of commemoration, Heroes Day, established in 1920, was observed, but local communities created their own rituals and observance of mourning, typically arranged by women, which carried more significance for small towns and villages.⁹⁰

Irrespective of nation, the memory of the dead was seen as an important part of nationalism, but in the defeated countries, the ‘cult of the fallen’ took on a special significance.⁹¹ While the victors created a climate and public culture of mourning, the vanquished responded in different ways, at least publicly. Germany, as Richard Evans notes, was ‘at war with itself, and at war with the rest of the world’ as the terms of peace fuelled ongoing outrage, anger and credulity. Mourning in the German context is invariably discussed in terms of the shock of the defeat, as well as the trauma of individual loss. But the defeat ‘refused to be healed’.⁹² Soldiers felt humiliated and angry that the institutions for which they had fought and for which their comrades had sacrificed their lives were destroyed. They mourned for another order, and the national trauma impressed itself on the country, which often translated into right-wing agitation and shame that turned to violence.⁹³ While there were efforts under Weimar to establish a national memorial day, this did not eventuate until 1934 when the National Socialists declared a Heroes Memorial Day. It was hoped that a national war memorial would unite the nation, but instead it divided it and the experience further emphasised the view that the dead had not been laid to rest.⁹⁴

Remembrance rituals served to justify the war, and mourning took place at an individual, family and state level. Kuhlman has argued that Germany’s National Day of Mourning ‘served as both a benefit and a bother for war widows’. She observes how, on the one hand, widows were revered as the living connection to their husbands, but at the same time this meant that their mourning was prolonged, and they were perpetually positioned within a state of sorrow.⁹⁵ The figure of the mourning woman became a central image in the reinvention of the nation, just as it had been a vital, but unrecognised, aspect of the mobilisation of war itself.⁹⁶

Mediating grief

For a significant number of those left bereft by the war, the commemoration of the dead took on less concrete forms. Many remembered and attempted to evoke or even contact their loved ones through art, poetry, religious practice or spiritualism. They used these less temporal mediums as a way to make sense of what had happened to them, and to answer questions that were essentially unanswerable in a general sense and could only be comprehended or interpreted by each individual.

The experience of the Great War produced some of the most insightful works ever written on understanding the processes of grief, mourning and bereavement. The unprecedented phenomenon of mass death inspired a generation of writers and theorists to look anew at the tragic circumstances that suddenly and dramatically engulfed them and their societies.

In poetry the themes of mediating grief were dealt with by war poets such as Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke, who, among others, have shaped and defined our understanding of the war and the grief that it produced in its wake. For poets like Sassoon the war dominated not only their work but their lives. Paul Fussell comments that: 'Exactly half his life he had spent plowing and re-plowing the earlier half, motivated by what . . . he calls "my queer craving to revisit the past and give the modern world a slip". The life he cared to consider ran from 1895 to 1920 only.'⁹⁷ Others, like Rudyard Kipling, wrote eloquently of the torture and painful loss of his only son, which soon developed into an obsessive preoccupation with death and mourning.⁹⁸

Women too found an outlet of grief through their poetry. Themes of grief and mourning dominate the work of the German poet, Frida Bettingen, who lost her son on 12 October 1914 at Verdun. According to Catherine Smale, this was a turning point in her life. In 1917 she was diagnosed with a depressive illness and subsequently spent prolonged periods in psychiatric clinics. Bettingen's poetry drew directly from her experience of maternal grief and the loss of her son. It is through writing that she confronts and manages her grief, which is all-consuming. Smale argues that Bettingen's verse is an attempt to mediate her own personal experience of loss and that of loss as a universal experience.⁹⁹ She describes the tension between her

desire to recreate the relationship with her son and the impossibility of doing so as a 'funeral for which there are no words'.¹⁰⁰

Käthe Kollwitz's sculpture and artwork became an expression of her mourning. In her striking and stunning sculpture, *The Parents*, she aimed to make them 'simple in feeling, but expressing the *totality of grief*'.¹⁰¹ For many who had been affected by war, it was as if 'they had died' themselves.¹⁰² As Schulte has noted, Kollwitz attempted to create a 'nearness' to her son over the years, 'in ever new ways, invoking the pain which was apparently the only thing that could fill her emptiness'.¹⁰³ She created a memorial space for herself by setting up a room where a shrine was established to honour and commemorate Peter's death. It was here that she mourned his death through prayer, forging a connection with her son: 'The need to kneel down and let him pour through, through me. Feel myself altogether one with him. It is a different love from the love in which one weeps and longs and grieves.'¹⁰⁴

The closeness that she aimed to recreate was difficult, painful and often futile:

Made a drawing: the mother letting her dead son slide into her arms. I might make a hundred such drawings and yet I do not get any closer to him. I am seeking him. As if I had to find him in the work. And yet everything I can do is so childishly feeble and inadequate. I feel obscurely that I could throw off this inadequacy, that Peter is somewhere in the work and I might find him. And at the same time I have the feeling that I can no longer do it. I am too shattered, weakened, drained by tears.¹⁰⁵

Kollwitz has become the iconic figure of the mourning mother of the First World War through both her own personal story and her artwork, which powerfully conveys the ongoing and deep mourning, sorrow and grief of wartime loss.

For devout followers of religion the war was given meaning as God's war. Catholics mourned through the highly ritualised processes of prayer, sermons and evoking soldiers on a given saint's day. The French used such rituals to create 'religious and political memory through mourning'.

Religious imagery mixed with military sacrifices: the sacrifice of the Christian soldier echoed the sacrifice of Christ.¹⁰⁶ Gregory describes the moving story of the Baines family of Putney who sought comfort, solace and consolation for their bereavement in their Catholic faith. Ralph Baines lost three brothers – two on the Somme and the third in 1917. The family structured their grief around Catholic ritual: the local priest delivered a requiem mass; nuns made a shrine to the Baines brothers; Ralph was ordained and he insisted that his sister's fiancé convert to Catholicism. The fact that the church could not take sides, as Catholics on both sides of the battle were being killed, did not diminish the power of the spiritual message for mourners from across the military divide who sought comfort in it.¹⁰⁷

For followers of the Orthodox religion, such as in Russia, spiritual discourses were central in the war effort where religious institutions and rhetoric were key in mobilising Russia for war. The war was interpreted by some Russians as God's punishment for their sins, and soldiers drew on religious idioms to make sense of their actions and their relationship with their fallen comrades. Although the Russian Revolution of 1917 overturned religious authority, Russian Orthodoxy provided a framework of meaning and justification for the war and later memorialisation through ideals of victory and sacrifice.¹⁰⁸ Maria Bucur has suggested that while mourning and commemoration were unprecedented after 1918, for Orthodox communities such as those in Romania, there was a continuity rather than a break in mourning rituals where the cult of the dead was a key aspect of cultural practice and funerary rituals were highly gendered. War commemoration was intertwined with Orthodox religious holidays and commemorations, thus situating wartime mourning within the religious calendar.¹⁰⁹

Winter considers the cultural codes of mourning in three respects – the visual, the verbal and the social – all of which provide ways in which communities can come to terms with mourning.¹¹⁰ One way to recreate such symbolism for some mourners was to connect with the spirit of the dead. The resurgence of spiritualism after the war can be seen as an attempt by families, relatives and especially women to make contact with the dead to assist in their grieving process. The growing popularity of this practice points to attempts to mourn the dead by identification. The growth and appeal of spiritualism after the war is undeniable. Cannadine notes that in

Britain by the mid 1930s there were reportedly over 200 local spiritualist societies and total membership exceeded a quarter of a million.¹¹¹ Spiritualism provided another avenue of hope for contact with the dead for mourners, and many of the practitioners were women. In his *History of Spiritualism*, one of the leaders of the spiritualist movement, Arthur Conan Doyle, describes several instances of the spirits and ghosts of soldiers making contact with their families and of psychic photography identifying their presence. In one such case,

On November 4, 1914, Mrs Fussey, of Wimbledon, whose son 'Tab' was serving in France with the 9th Lancers, was sitting at home when she felt in her arm the sharp sting of a wound. She jumped up and cried out, 'How it smarts!' and rubbed the place. Her husband also attended to her arm, but could find no trace of anything wrong with it. Mrs Fussey continued to suffer pain and exclaimed: 'Tab is wounded in the arm. I know it.' The following Monday a letter arrived from Private Fussey, saying that he had been shot in the arm and was in hospital.

It was reported that mediums successfully identified deceased soldiers. In 1919,

Mrs E. A. Cannock, a well-known London clairvoyant, described at a Spiritualist meeting how a number of deceased soldiers adopted a novel and convincing method of making known their identity. The soldiers (as seen in her clairvoyant vision) advanced in single file up the aisle, led by a young lieutenant. Each man bore on his chest what appeared to be a large placard on which was written his name and the place where he had lived on earth. Mrs Cannock was able to read these names and descriptions, and they were all identified by various members of the audience. A curious feature was that as each name was recognized the spirit form faded away, thus making way for the one who was following.

Within spiritualist circles, photography was identified as a popular mechanism through which to make contact with dead soldiers:

In a number of cases dead soldiers have manifested themselves through psychic photography. One of the most remarkable instances occurred in London on Armistice Day, November 11, 1922, when the medium, Mrs Deane, in the presence of Miss Estelle Stead, took a photograph of the crowd in Whitehall, in the neighbourhood of the Cenotaph. It was during the Two Minutes Silence, and on the photograph there is to be seen a broad circle of light, in the midst of which are two or three dozen heads, many of them those of soldiers, who were subsequently recognized. These photographs have been repeated on each succeeding year, and though the usual reckless and malicious attacks have been made upon the medium and her work, those who had the best opportunity of checking it have no doubt of the supernatural character of these pictures.¹¹²

While in Orthodox cultures, such as Serbian, Russian and Romanian, mourners drew on pre-war religious symbolism and rituals, and situated their mourning within them, in the English context the growth of spiritualism points to an increasing disillusionment among some with existing religious practices and rituals, and a willingness to seek less conventional ways to converse more directly with the dead.¹¹³

‘A sorrow too deep for words’ read one headstone on a British war grave.¹¹⁴ After the war, which claimed an astounding 10 million lives, a generation of grieving mourners searched to find new ways to articulate their grief, commemorate their loss and live with their bereavement.¹¹⁵ On a collective and public scale, rituals of remembrance included sites for the Unknown Soldier, local and regional memorials, national days of remembrance, religious adherence and rites, and pilgrimages to cemeteries on the battlefields. Bereavement had become a universal cultural phenomenon.¹¹⁶ Collectively and individually this represented both a continuity and a necessary change with past practices. The cruel and enduring loss of those who continued to live in the shadow cast by war has allowed the experience of women and mothers in particular to find a place in the history of the Great War. Their journey of mourning is one of the most profound and significant legacies in our study of the war. The experience of the circle of mourners who formed as a result of the war –

from the East or West, of whatever religion, culture or nation – is a part of all our histories. Their sacrifices, too, remain in our memories.

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Press, 2007); Joy Damousi, *The Labor of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

- 10 Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 33–4.
- 11 Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, pp. 29–53.
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- 16 Katherine Mansfield to J. M. Murry, 9 December 1915, *ibid.*, p. 204.
- 17 Katherine Mansfield to J. M. Murry, 16 December 1915, *ibid.*, p. 215.
- 18 Katherine Mansfield to S. S. Koteliansky, late December 1915, *ibid.*, p. 238.

19 Katherine Mansfield to Vera Beauchamp Bell, 26 February 1916, *ibid.*, p. 246.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 200.

21 Katherine Mansfield to Jeanne Renshaw, 14 October 1921, *ibid.*, p. 294.

22 Katherine Mansfield to Dorothy Brett, 19 December 1921, *ibid.*, p. 341.

23 Jeffrey Meyers, *Katherine Mansfield: A Biography* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), pp. 120–1.

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25 Hans Kollwitz (ed.), *The Diary and Letters of Kaethe Kollwitz*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), p. 67.

26 *Ibid.*, entry 13 October 1916, p. 76.

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36 Cannadine, 'War and death', p. 215.

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45 *Ibid.*, 20 September 1918; 28 August 1919; 18 August 1919; 6 March 1920.

- 46** *Our Empire*, 18 February 1920, p. 2.
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- 49** Lukes, *Émile Durkheim*, p. 555.
- 50** *Ibid.*, p. 556.
- 51** Pat Jalland, *Death in War and Peace: A History of Loss and Grief in England, 1914–1970* (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 35–59.
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Part V The Social History of Cultural Life

Introduction to Part V

Nicolas Beaupré and Annette Becker To study the social history of the cultural, intellectual and spiritual life of societies at war we must consider the ensemble of representations of millions of people trapped in the conflict. This goes beyond those in uniform to the civilians for whom they were ostensibly fighting. And it means understanding from within the way each person perceived, internalised, refracted and thereby represented the exceptional nature of the war, its temporal rhythms, the balance between core and periphery, the experience of the separation of loved ones, the experience of injury and overwork in the battlefield or at home, in factories and fields, and the irreversible presence of death and mourning.

The historian of the 1914–18 war has to describe concentric circles of suffering, and of relationships of sociability at work, in political action, in religious or festive practices, in intellectual activity and in the arts. War cultures provide evidence, not so much of the unity of national, social, regional, familial, associative, ideological and aesthetic groups, but of distinctions of gender, age, and changes over time within the period of the war. These war cultures are not only the ‘mental equipment’, in Lucien Febvre’s term,¹ of all, but also the means through which men of faith, intellectuals, scientists, artists, political and military figures, and journalists, made known what they felt or wanted to share in public. As producers and mediators of shared representations, they could thus contribute to the construction of broader ‘social imaginaries’.²

In one way or another, all contemporaries were altered by the war: some grew, others were overwhelmed. These diverse transformations, these cultures of mobilisation, demobilisation and remobilisation, were expressed in words and images by artists, film-makers and writers, by anthropologists, political observers and philosophers. In this way the event – the war – was constructed and reconstructed at the same moment as it was lived. The

moments of memory and forgetting were one and the same, and each person lived them through trauma, silence, repression and the return of the repressed. Though they all shared the same war, each person individually and collectively sought out its particular meaning for themselves. This dialectic between the war endured and the search for its meaning is at the heart of the war literature created by those who fought, and who contributed, intentionally or not, to the construction and diffusion of representations of war from 1914 to the present. Among them, soldier-writers were by no means the only people who wrote or spoke about the war. This multi-vocality, this abundance, this saturation of sense experience emerged directly out of the paradoxes of the conflict – a war fought to reach an enduring peace, a war fought for a broken civilisation to make it whole again, a war full of millenarian enthusiasts obsessed by their fears, both during and long after the war. To condemn the war as an absolute evil made no sense, since to do so separated the vanquished from the victors, for whom and only for whom the war made sense in terms of victory and a liveable peace.

Between the resolute assent to the war at its outset and the increasingly loud and convinced rejection of it among different pacifist currents after the war, there is an entire field of ideas. As Freud observed as early as 1915, that ‘modern’ war produced traumatic consequences no one had prepared for: the slaughter of the young – the lost generation – the armies of the disabled, the massive destruction of property and illusions. A gap had emerged between ‘positive’ progress and the civilising mission of the nineteenth century, and the ‘barbarism’, cruelty and brutalisation of the twentieth, arising out of internalised violence so easily expressed, since it had emerged out of visceral patriotism, and which – accepted or refused, endured or opposed – was refracted in the post-war period in private life or in the fields of the arts, literature and politics.

After the Armistice the war precipitated above all a profound rejection – a rejection made all the more powerful by the apocalyptic thoughts which were seized with such hope and which led later to such profound disappointment. Those who believed in the end of war – including pacifists of many stripes – those who passed through the war to end war, transferred their horror of the enemy into a horror of war. That profound rejection of war makes it difficult for us to understand what drove these cultures of war.

At their core was a dialectic between suffering and consent, which later on transformed some (though not all) societies which had accepted war a bit too readily into societies in which it was more and more unthinkable to engage in it again, to make war or to kill on a grand scale.

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16 Mobilising minds

Anne Rasmussen On 20 August 1914 André Gide wrote in his journal, ‘Doubtless for those who are mobilised, the wearing of military uniform allows greater freedom of thought. For those of us who cannot put on uniform, it is our minds that we shall mobilise.’¹ There can be no clearer indication of the ardent sense of duty felt by non-combatant intellectuals: to fight nevertheless, but with their minds, even at the expense of abdicating their former untrammelled freedom of thought. Wartime was not a time for the critical intellectual. Gide’s words echo what seemed obvious to his contemporaries from the first days of the conflict. For them the war was not to be reduced to military issues, or economic ones: it would be a war of knowledge and ideologies. As the lessons of 1870 had highlighted, ‘modern warfare . . . draws its means from the progress of the sciences’, in the words of Emil Fischer, German Nobel Laureate in chemistry, in 1917.² The challenge was twofold: victory in the Great War would fall to the side able to manage both the needs generated by a ‘scientific’ war and the resources of information systems. The conflict was therefore a confrontation of systems of knowledge and thought, but beyond that also a war of national cultures, one immediately epitomised by the canonical division of *Kultur* and ‘civilisation’. This clash of ideas emerged from a construct fed by propaganda initiatives and by opportunistic literary and artistic works. But more deeply it articulated a conflict of values, representations and imaginings – all the vectors that supplied meaning to the immense investment of the individuals and societies involved in the conflict.

For nearly three decades historians have supported this interpretation by making cultural frameworks a determining element of the totalisation of war. To a degree collective imaginations and systems of representation are blessed with a certain autonomy. The idea that they were nevertheless capable of being influenced, even moulded, by the action of intellectuals, teachers, researchers, writers and other intermediaries within national communities justifies the idea of the mobilisation of minds. To claim to be, depending on your national cultural tradition, a savant, an *Akademiker*, a

scholar or an intellectual at the start of the twentieth century was not merely to practise a profession and social function, it was also to share and express values that forged codes of individual conduct and collective commitments.

Cultural engagement initially took for its prime vector the stream of printed material that ensued from the phenomenal over-mediation that the war provoked from the outset: ‘the paper barrage’ (*das papierne Trommelfeuer*, to borrow the German phrase used to denounce Allied propaganda),³ facilitated by the unprecedented development of networks of communication and information that the war brought into play and that the industrialisation of printed media made possible. The mobilisation of minds coincided as a result with the ‘commissioning’ of the intellectual arena that accompanied the conversion of societies to a war footing on their entry into the conflict, the total engagement to which they agreed, and even the difficult ‘exit’ stage of a conflict that had lasted more than four years. Yet over and above the words and speeches – what was commonly meant by the wartime umbrella term ‘propaganda’ – cultural engagement was based on the deployment of professional expertise and on an immense organisational effort: on the multiple ways of investing in the war, the competencies and bodies of knowledge associated with the intellectual magisterium, and the positions of authority on which the new respect for knowledge by both those in power and the population as a whole rested.

Rather than distinguish between the sphere of propaganda organised ‘from the top down’, on the one hand, and the polymorphous world of scholarly and intellectual intervention, sometimes autonomous, sometimes controlled, on the other, this chapter will seek to see the repertoire of actions brought about by the mobilisation of minds as a continuum. As numerous historical works have underlined, the war was not a monolith, and it aroused among the belligerents phases of demobilisation and remobilisation; cultural engagement was likewise subject to great chronological, national, disciplinary and individual diversity.

The nationalisation of European cultures and imaginings of war

Whenever cultural history has taken on the subject of war, an object with which it was traditionally unfamiliar, it has tended to build into it a study of the weight of the experience, how it is imagined and its representations, as elements of historic causality capable of providing an account of the conflict. Such elements cannot easily be understood in a short-term perspective, so historians have proposed more heuristic approaches by opening up the study of the Great War chronologically. To apprehend it within its two obvious landmarks, conflict breaking out and the cessation of hostilities, did not sufficiently restore the dimension of process to a phenomenon whose globalisation was as much cultural as it was military. From that perspective it has been possible to interpret the theme of the mobilisation of minds in 1914 as the final stage in the process of the nationalisation of European cultures, in which the scientific and intellectual component had played a leading role from the final third of the nineteenth century onwards.

Knowledge functioned before the war in a national framework. 'Through science, for the nation' was the watchword of the various associations for the advancement of science, which turned the part played by knowledge into a determining element of national competitiveness (including future wars). By building close ties between industry, the economy, education and politics, 'the sciences', in the broad sense of systems of knowledge, moved to the heart of economy-and state-building and of national rivalries. States invested massively in universities and technical colleges, created research institutes in the image of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft, built national laboratories and centres of standardisation, while industrialists financed mass production and the conquest of new markets. In the decades that preceded the Great War, 'nation-based sciences' came to be at the heart of the construction of national identities and economies, more so on the continent than in Britain.⁴ In return for this support to the state, scientists and men of letters, whether they contributed to the natural sciences or the technological sphere, to the social sciences or the humanities, demanded political and administrative functions. In the words of one eminent German academician, the physicist and physiologist Hermann von Helmholtz, scientists were to form 'a sort of organised army' that would work 'for the good of the entire nation . . . on its orders and at its costs'.⁵ He foresaw, rightly, that the principal relation between science and the state in the

twentieth century would be its service to the nation at war; science was becoming a major component of the 'warfare state' of the new century.⁶ Once again, we must acknowledge distinctions here: the British Empire, relying on naval power, did not constitute a 'warfare state' before 1914; Germany was closer to the mark.

Intellectuals participated in this movement of the nationalisation of pre-war societies, though not in a monolithic way. Their common history, in Europe in particular, had been a struggle for autonomy and for the establishment of organised and collective forms of intellectual combat, polarised between universality and singularity. We would be wrong, even so, to underestimate the diversity of national figures that they represented and their contrasting modes of integration into the apparatus of the state and the ideologies that nourished them, from membership to secession or radical rejection.⁷ A great distance exists between the model of the intellectual as city-based activist, as it developed in Western Europe in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair, and the model of the Germanic countries of Central Europe, in which great legitimacy attached to intellectual activity and teaching but was accompanied by weak autonomy for *Akademiker*, whose close ties to the political authorities under whose protection they existed have been interpreted as a sign of the 'decline of the German mandarin'.⁸ Very different is the case of members of the Russian intelligentsia, at odds with the repressive policies of tsarist power, or that of Vienna's modernity, in which the pre-war generation had constructed for itself an aesthetic position opposed to the taking of any public or collective stance. This gives rise to a kind of paradox: while divisions as much symbolic as political were deepening between different national cultural traditions, external conditions, and above all those that the war would impose, were doing the opposite and bringing the different European spaces together.⁹

Such expressions of the nationalisation of European cultures created the breeding ground for the development of majority consent for patriotic engagement in the Great War. The mobilisation of minds in 1914 has often been considered to be the last stage in this process. It has thus been claimed in retrospect that the intellectual circles that made themselves propagandists of the national cause and standard-bearers of the discourse about the inevitable and even desirable war were heralds of the future, in a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. These writers, essayists and artists, however,

formed only the intellectual margins, which associated the rejection of their era – which was in the grip of the most severe of spiritual crises as far as they were concerned – with the regenerative virtues of an upheaval for which they devoutly wished and which would be, depending on their own elective affinities, a vector of either moral purification, political revolution or aesthetic modernity. This quasi-eschatological perspective on a future war emerged from a very broad spectrum of political affiliations and the most contradictory expectations. At one pole was an intellectual nationalism in defence of the moral values of conservative societies or the fight against democracy: Rudyard Kipling's apologia for the British imperial cause, for example, as expressed in his involvement in propaganda against the Boers, the pamphlet activism of Charles Maurras of Action française, the pact agreed between numbers of German intellectuals (branded 'pan-Germanists' by their opponents) and the Wilhelmine state, the muscular exuberance of Italian Futurists, or even the militant 'Helvetism' of Swiss intellectuals following in the footsteps of Gonzague de Reynold or Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz. At the other extremity of the political spectrum, revolutionary intellectuals of the European East were placing their expectations on the upheaval that a conflict would bring about: Russia's social revolutionary project, Bulgarian intellectuals' promise of an opening to the West, Romanian intellectuals' hope for national unity. For Lenin, an imperialist war could deliver the civil war necessary for the advent of socialism. Another intellectual configuration articulated the theme of a regenerative war, evoked in very different milieux that all shared the characteristic of rejecting materialist bourgeois culture. In Italy it brought together the Futurists, who had called for the Italo-Turkish War, and original thinkers such as Gabriele D'Annunzio, an advocate of interventionism who saw in the fighting the realisation of a personal adventure, and Giovanni Boine and Giovanni Papini, whose magazine *Lacerba* resoundingly spelt out its declaration of faith on 1 August 1914: 'we love war'. This was a theme shared in Britain by the young writers grouped around the magazine *Blast*, and in Russian neo-Slavophile circles, whose Symbolist poet and essayist Fyodor Sologub felt that the war against Germany would lay the foundations for the spiritual regeneration of the Russian soul. Intellectuals in Austria-Hungary, such as Robert Musil and Hugo von Hofmannstahl, echoed the idea of an inevitable war. In 1913 Stefan George imagined the possibility of war as a purgative to be

administered to a decadent civilisation. In France a survey conducted the same year among university students and published in the review *Opinion* by Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde, under the joint pseudonym 'Agathon', publicised the idea of an intellectual younger generation who shared vitalist sensitivities and a cult of energy and keen national feeling, which right-wing nationalists attempted to exploit.¹⁰ All these intellectuals wished for a change that invited their contemporaries to configure the early years of the century as a pre-war period, and the war itself not as a breakdown but rather as revealing what had already occurred.

Waging ideological war

If citizens were aware of entering into a national conflict comparable to those of the nineteenth century, from the outset they also attributed to it a greater ideological value. It immediately became clear, in both camps, that two concepts of international society were at stake, and even more fundamentally that each camp intended to defend a concept of 'civilisation' – on the side of the Entente – or 'culture' – on the side of the Central Powers. This binary opposition, based on the concepts of the national principle, cultural representations and political identities, gave rise to an immense mountain of polemical writing. Other stereotypical constructs echoed it, based on the elaboration of divisions essentialising cultural representations that were presented as eternal. The most enduring of these – as much in the historiographical debate as anywhere¹¹ – set 'the spirit of 1914' against 'the ideas of 1789': the elements of these mythical philosophies came in all kinds of formulations, particularly in Germany, from the book *Händler und Helden* ('Merchants and Heroes') by the sociologist and economist Werner Sombart in 1915 to the writer Thomas Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* ('Reflections of an Unpolitical Man') published in early 1919. Seen from Germany, the division opposed the *Kulturnation*, the 'desire to be German', the primacy of community over individual, the 'German idea of liberty', and the spiritual and heroic ideal ready for sacrifice for the common good, against the mercantilist and individualist ideal, the product of the democratic tradition, of the legacy of the Enlightenment and the liberal values of British and French society.¹²

These antagonistic constructs set at odds notably Germany against Britain and France, but also projected in other directions: the opposition between 'Teuton' and 'Slav' nourished the cultural project of a continental *Mitteleuropa* with German and Roman roots to be built against Europe's occidental and oriental margins. The construction of these topoi, however propagandist they were in character, had the effect of reinforcing the cultural unification of the belligerents and of supplying the conflict with founding myths of a war in defence of a territory, but also of a cultural ideal.

These abstract notions revealed themselves to be a powerful mobilising factor. They made themselves felt in a brutalisation of discourse, emerging in a rhetoric of disputation that differed radically from the neutral tone of the discourse and regime of scientific certainty that governed the 'normal' horizon of many such professionals. In contrast to the integration within a common literary culture that had formed the outlook of these European intellectuals, war gave birth to a language of rupture whose intention was to convince listeners that the enemy 'civilisation' was the inverse of its own 'culture'. The belligerents of the Entente claimed that they were making war in the name of right, involving an ideological construct and discourses mobilised in support of the ongoing legitimisation of the war effort to which their populations had signed up. The authority conferred by 'science', as much as the reliance on recognised bodies of knowledge, was therefore crucial in a war that defined as its ultimate cause the struggle of true against false. The establishment of 'truth' was the overriding issue, from the first months of the conflict, in the quest for responsibility in three major areas: the outbreak of hostilities, the violation of Belgium's neutrality, and the collection of proof of atrocities committed by soldiers against civilians. To re-establish right against force supplied a legitimate motive for the needs of state censorship and propaganda: it was not about stifling statements of truth, but fighting against lies.

Far from the idea of some 'hysterical alteration' of the literary and scientific communities, diverted by the war from the supposed universality of their magisterium, we should instead emphasise the concordance that existed between the representations intellectuals and scientists made of their professions, of science and of themselves, and their moral and social engagement in a war for the right, in the service of their nation. It was as a

collective personality, not as figures in a private capacity or defending narrow identities, that many among them embarked upon the intellectual war by signing appeals, manifestos and petitions. As Max Planck, rector of the Academy of Berlin, announced at the end of 1914: ‘One thing only we know, that we members of our university . . . will stand together as one man and hold fast until – despite the slander of our enemies – the entire world comes to recognise the truth and German honour.’¹³

In the first weeks of the war, one text above all, ‘An die Kulturwelt’ (‘Appeal to the World of Culture’) – also known as the ‘Appeal to the Civilised Nations’ or the ‘Manifesto of the 93’ due to the number of its signatories – functioned as an emblem. The work of three German writers, Ludwig Fulda, Hermann Sudermann and Georg Reicke, and amended by the Berlin philosopher Alois Riehl, it was made public on 4 October 1914, and soon translated into fourteen languages. It was not the first in a series, nor was it exceptional. Two weeks earlier, on 18 September, fifty-three British signatures ‘of the best known writers of the Empire’ – among them Wells, Kipling, Conan Doyle, Galsworthy and Chesterton – had been attached to a manifesto published in the *New York Times*, a neutral publication, calling readers to arms in the name of ‘Civilisation’. A week later, on 11 October, around 1,100 members of the Russian intelligentsia including Maxim Gorky united in a petition composed by Ivan Bunin and entitled ‘To our motherland and to the whole civilised world’. It was followed in December by a manifesto signed by 250 Russian scientists, including the rector of St Petersburg university, Ervin Grimm, denouncing the violation of the rules of war by the Central Empires. In Germany in the same month a manifesto was distributed by twenty-two universities in which their rectors urged foreign universities to combat their enemies’ allegations, and another signed by 3,016 teaching staff in universities and higher institutes initiated by the philologist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and the historian Dietrich Schäfer, while a league founded in Berlin, the Kulturbund Deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler (Cultural Federation of German Scholars and Artists), with the anatomist Wilhelm Waldeyer at its head, extended the Manifesto of the 93. On 8 July 1915, 1,347 well-known figures, among them 352 academics, subscribed to the *Intellektuellendenkschrift über die Kriegsziele* (‘Intellectuals’ Memorandum

on War Aims’) which proposed a maximalist, pan-German interpretation of war aims and offered its complete support to the armed forces.¹⁴

‘An die Kulturwelt’ nevertheless marked a turning point: it signalled the beginning of the intellectuals’ war. Based on an anaphora through which a sequence of denials resounded – ‘it is not true that . . .’ – it challenged charges of German responsibility for starting the conflict, for the invasion of Belgium, and for atrocities committed against civilians as so many lies emanating from Allied propaganda. Declaring its confidence in Germany’s victory at the end of a just war, the Manifesto of the 93 – among whom were fifteen prominent scientists, including Fritz Haber, Max Planck, Paul Ehrlich, Emil Fischer, Ernst Haeckel, Wilhelm Ostwald and Wilhelm Röntgen, committed ‘in name and honour’ – continued to serve for four years to legitimise the engagement of Allied scientists. It was interpreted as the manifesto of ‘German science’, above and beyond its diversity of disciplines and viewpoints, and it provoked the creation of other similar national entities. On 21 October 1914 approximately 150 British scientists put their names to a ‘reasoned statement’ published in *The Times*, in which they committed themselves to ‘a defensive war waged for liberty and peace’, while the chemist William Ramsay published inflammatory patriotic diatribes in the name of the Royal Society. In France every academic and scientific journal distributed its own response to the ‘Manifesto of the 93’, such as the ‘Appeal of the French universities to the universities of the neutral nations’, published on 3 November. They also moved to exclude their associate members from across the Rhine. At Oxford and Cambridge the Fellows went as far as erasing from memorial plaques the names of German scientists whose work they had previously honoured, developing instead closer links with Canadian, Australian, Indian and South African scholars. Several neutral nations joined the melee, following the example of Portugal’s scientific and artistic institutions which, at the initiative of the philosopher, poet and former president of the provisional government Teófilo Braga, called for the boycott of their German counterparts.

As Max Weber later emphasised, a crisis changes the nature of intellectual controversy: ‘tacitly regulated competition becomes a struggle for the symbolic, if not physical, suppression of the opponent’.¹⁵ For intellectuals of the Entente the ‘Manifesto of the 93’ proved that German science had abdicated in the face of militarism and been led astray by the

political establishment. From this point onwards both camps would place their arguments squarely in the moral sphere, using a moral standpoint to condemn the enemy's alleged crimes, savage behaviour and quasi-anthropological inferiority. 'Scientific barbarism' was denounced as being 'produced by the union of militarism and Germanic culture'.¹⁶ The French philosopher Henri Bergson claimed that it was a scientist's 'simple scientific duty' to 'point out that in the brutality and cynicism of Germany, in its scorn for all justice and all truth, there lies a regression to the state of savagery'.¹⁷ In the words of *The Times*, on 5 January 1915, the 'professor-made war' had arrived.

A prime objective of this mobilisation of minds, fuelled by the war of manifestos, was to furnish a framework of argument for each belligerent's legal system. But a further objective, no less significant in this 'war of right', aimed to win over public opinion, first by seeking consensus in national opinion and then attempting to incite dissension among enemies by weakening the effects of censorship by the blanket distribution of counter-information and the demoralisation of civilians and soldiers – information on the outcome of military operations and the state of the health of troops and civilian populations was the preferred weapon of such counter-propaganda – and, last, by appealing to 'world opinion' that might intervene in the conflict. The winning-over of neutral nations, primarily Italy and the United States, was the principal ambition, but also the mobilisation of populations under occupation. In occupied countries intellectuals could be both agents and targets of campaigns that sought to enrol them in one camp or another. In Belgium and Romania the silence, collaboration or resistance of intellectuals were deemed to be vital issues.

From 1914 onwards specific themes became leitmotifs of these wars of persuasion, particularly those fought over the invasion of Belgium, a central plank in the 'war of right'. 'Plucky little Belgium' became for the Allies a 'sacred land',¹⁸ and the themes of violated innocence and of 'martyred Belgium' offered themselves as symbols of the struggle of civilisation against the 'furor teutonicus'.¹⁹ Against this was constructed the inverse motif of a legitimate defensive war against a population of irregulars and a nation whose duplicity negated the argument of innocence. German scholars participated by identifying the supposed characteristics of the 'Belgian race' and its excesses, deemed to be conducive to guerrilla

warfare: arguments that were officially endorsed in the German White Book of 1915. Numerous journalists and academics contributed to this work of justification, such as the Bavarian archivist and historian Pius Dirr, who in 1917 published a substantial document purporting to demonstrate that Belgium was no more than a ‘französische Ostmark’ (a ‘march’ or border area of eastern France), which invalidated any idea of its neutrality.²⁰ It fell to the historian Karl Lamprecht, commissioned by the Emperor in person, to rewrite and re-evaluate the history of Belgium by highlighting the existential struggle of the Flemish people as the prime historical driver. To do so he revised the standard reference work, *L’histoire de la Belgique* by Henri Pirenne, who at the time was a hostage of the Ghent military government, even though, as Pirenne’s colleague and friend before the war, Lamprecht had enthusiastically introduced his work to German readers. In some intellectual milieux, therefore, the ideological war occasioned a genuine conversion. The same word was used by the journalist Samuel K. Ratcliffe in an article published in October 1917 to describe the atypical situation of collaboration between British intellectuals and the establishment that the war had brought about: ‘a spiritual conversion’.²¹

Mobilising bodies and minds

We should nevertheless remember that the intellectual did not suddenly emerge as the social type best prepared for war. Stereotypes to which a level of Europe-wide anti-intellectualism had contributed made of him a study-bound, writing-obsessed creature, cut off from the realities of his time, far from battle-hardened in body, of doubtful social usefulness, and possessing a peacetime ethos that could only be brutally disturbed by the experience of war. The war additionally turned all the practices of peacetime upside down – intellectual and scientific work, the institutions that sheltered and sponsored it, the exchanges and circulation within intellectual communities. Seen from such a perspective, is it relevant to try to identify pathways of behaviour or of a moral economy that might be specific in wartime? At least we should not label their forms of intervention as monolithic, for their activities bear witness to the diversity of the ideological spectrum, their disciplinary practices and their personal dispositions.

For the intellectual professions – no different from the rest of society in this respect – answering the call to arms was a commitment of the highest priority. ‘Joining up’ was on every generation’s lips: those of the sons, whose martyrologies rapidly invaded the obituary notices of universities and colleges, the columns of journals and the minutes of learned societies; and those of their elders who, like the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, alluded to the humiliation he felt at the age of 37 ‘to find myself too much in safety while so many Frenchmen are going to the slaughter’, and who repeated in August 1914 that ‘I will regret for the rest of my life never having been under fire’,²² or like the rector of Berlin University, Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, who was enthusiastically involved in the general mobilisation and who, when he spoke about the war, began by recalling the sacrifices of his students: ‘A university is not just we who are condemned to stay here; it is the others too, over there, those who have the good fortune and the honour to bear arms for the Kaiser and the fatherland. It is exactly one year since my own son died that fine death.’²³ Doubtless the zeal shown by numerous intellectuals mobilised in the war of words had as its deepest justification the ‘obsession of those who may not contribute to the nation’s defence’, in the words of the mathematician Émile Picard, who himself lost three children in the conflict. To ‘join up’ with their pens was, for the guild of intellectuals who were no longer of fighting age, a means of overcoming the guilt they felt at belonging to a protected generation.

Some joined up despite their age and condition: Filippo Marinetti enlisted at 40; Max Weber, at 50, requested to be recalled as an officer in the reserve; the philosopher Alain at the age of 46, as a radical pacifist excused military service, requested a posting as an artillery gunner – he eventually became a telephonist; Marie Curie shuttled back and forth to the front at the wheel of her radiological vehicles; Hermann Hesse, at 37, unfit for service and resident in Switzerland, tried and failed to enlist at the German embassy.²⁴ Yet in a war in which science and knowledge saw themselves being assigned a growing role, the military enlistment of knowledge professionals could seem to be a misuse of resources. With hopes for a short war dashed in 1915, scientists and men of letters campaigned to be allowed to place their knowledge and their pens, rather than their persons, at the nation’s service. They requested specific mobilisation of their resources and their integration into institutions where they would be useful in their own

field. The press echoed their arguments, which emerged notably in the columns of *The Times* in June 1915, sparked off by the writer H. G. Wells's condemnation of the waste of talent and ability: 'we are to this day being conservative, imitative, and amateurish when victory can fall only to the most vigorous employment of the best scientific knowledge'.²⁵ The superior principle of equality for all in the face of physical sacrifice could be revisited for the benefit of such specialist contributions.

Scientists, lawyers, historians, geographers, sociologists and philosophers would all be able to contribute – the historian to report the origins of the conflict, the sociologist to analyse the collective mentality at work in a military confrontation, the philosopher reflecting on mutations of the idea of right in war – across a broad range of activities and milieux, from university chairs to the columns of newspapers and from laboratories to missions on the battlefield.

The close association of intellectuals with official propaganda produced by state organs constituted a major form of engagement. Writers, lawyers and historians were particularly urged to contribute to the rhetorical and argumentative arsenal intended to legitimise the war of right. In August 1914 the British journalist and Liberal politician Charles Masterman found himself entrusted by the Cabinet with the task of secretly creating a War Propaganda Bureau, identified by its location, Wellington House, where Masterman recruited twenty-five renowned writers and intellectuals – among them Arnold Bennett, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Lewis Namier, John Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy, H. G. Wells and Gilbert Murray – to act as advisers and editors of texts to be used in the war of the manifestos and the promotion of the British cause in neutral nations. The pamphlet became the weapon of choice. Forty-five titles were produced in 1914, 132 in 1915, 202 in 1916 and 469 in 1917.²⁶ Hundreds of thousands of copies were distributed in the guise of personal writings published by private publishing houses: to be more credible, propaganda needed to be remote from its true official origin. Not all offices of government propaganda favoured the use of famous writers. In the United States the Committee on Public Information (CPI), created in April 1917 under the direction of the publicist and publisher George Creel, centralised all propaganda activities, including controls on the press. Scholars were recruited to a division led by the dean of the University of Minnesota, whose task was to produce pamphlets on

the causes and consequences of war, and novelists and short-story writers were selected to write short articles in support of the war effort within a 'Syndicate Features Division'. The CPI organised a propaganda effort without precedent, distributing during the period of US involvement in the war 75 million pamphlets justifying its intervention – and that was without counting the cinema, where Charlie Chaplin was a world-renowned figure.²⁷

Outside government offices, enlistment within universities did not take place under the direction of the authorities; there was, rather, a broad 'self-mobilisation' of all those who belonged to the academic world. The humanities were on the front line of this mobilisation, for the causes of war and its effects were at the heart of a bitter battle of interpretation of what later would be termed 'war guilt'. Historians used the proven methods of their discipline to set out their proofs. In each camp, professional groups made it a point of honour to vouch for facts by recourse to archive documents, which they contrasted with the enemy's use of lies and crude propaganda. Truth based on proven knowledge was a source of right. In September 1914, for example, Oxford University's history faculty published *Why We Are at War: Great Britain's Case*, in which six historians, gathered around Ernest Barker and H. W. C. Davies and all professing different political sensitivities, reconstructed a century of Germanic aggression. This volume, like Gilbert Murray's successful work, *The Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey* (1915), was part of a series of 'Oxford pamphlets' which called upon distinguished thinkers to justify in one booklet after another 'both historically and morally England's position in the struggle'.²⁸ By September 1915, eighty-seven such pamphlets had been published. In France, the champion of national history Ernest Lavisse, the sociologist Émile Durkheim and the mathematician Jacques Hadamard were the originators of the Comité d'Études et Documents sur la Guerre (Committee for War Studies and Documentation), which entrusted its pamphlet-writing to some of the best-known academics in every discipline, men such as Henri Bergson, Charles Seignobos, Charles Andler and Émile Boutroux. By the end of 1915 the Committee had published ten pamphlets with a combined print run of 1,270,000 copies, of which more than a million were translated into numerous languages destined for neutral nations. They concentrated on the origins of war, on pan-Germanism and

the barbarism of the Central Empires in their conduct of the war. Lavisse himself wrote *Germany and the War of 1914–15*, which was distributed to primary schoolteachers, while Durkheim devoted himself to a study of ‘the German mentality’, whose character he identified as morbid and pathological, in line with his analyses of anomic social phenomena. In all these Allied documents, Germany stood indicted in the dock of global opinion.

One of the demands made of those intellectuals who became involved was to broaden their reach and their competence to speak about virtually every public issue. From the heights of his chair at Harvard the German psychologist Hugo Münsterberg participated, until his death in December 1916, in the endeavour to persuade American public opinion in favour of Germany’s cause. Durkheim and Lavisse came together for the production of a booklet that collected twelve *Lettres à tous les Français* (‘Letters to All French People’), of which 3 million copies were distributed in 1916.²⁹ In August 1914 Berlin University inaugurated ‘Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit’ (‘German Lectures in Difficult Times’), a cycle of lectures open to all, which offered lessons in patriotism. The lectures were later published in the form of widely circulated leaflets and even in paperback editions intended for the front and sold for the benefit of a war charity.

Scientists invested their time and energy in speeches about ‘national science’. The French intended to transform what they had painfully experienced since their defeat in 1870 as the hegemony of German science. The Académie des Sciences spoke out publicly to ‘remind ourselves that the Latin and Anglo-Saxon civilisations are those which, for three centuries, have produced the majority of great discoveries in mathematical, physical and natural sciences, just as they have produced the creators of the principal inventions of the nineteenth century’.³⁰ In April 1915 the newspaper *Le Figaro* launched an investigation into ‘The Germans and science’: ‘*Kultur*’, it concluded, while it was certainly fertile in the material field, was ‘sterile on the intellectual front’.³¹ The physicist and philosopher of science Pierre Duhem revised the study in which he had, at the turn of the century, described an empirical ‘English’ way of doing physics in contrast to the ‘continental’ abstract, methodical and rational way. In spring 1915 his lectures on ‘German science’, collected in one volume, henceforth distinguished within continental science a German style, characterised by a

‘geometrical’ spirit, in other words abstract, heavy, obscure and impregnated with Kantian subjectivity, and a French ‘spirit of subtlety’ and rigour. This geometrical, or algebraic, spirit endowed German science with the force of discipline – which acknowledged the material power of Germany – but, leaving it ‘under the orders of an arbitrary and insane algebraic imperialism’,³² could only produce disastrous results. Science was not only led astray by brute force, but shared responsibility for it, encouraging the alienation of human beings by machines and material things, and of individuals by the state and bureaucracy. The San Francisco International Exposition, staged in 1915 with the official participation of thirty-two nations, among them Austria-Hungary, France, Belgium and numerous neutral countries, and the unofficial attendance of Germany, Great Britain and Russia, was notably the occasion for a confrontation of national sciences and techniques accompanied by a compendium of such stereotypes.

These stereotypes enjoyed long currency in the wartime essay-fest, to which all belligerents contributed. Even so, intellectual unanimity was not entirely forthcoming, although those who condemned the propaganda mobilisation were few in number and rarely voiced their condemnation publicly. Sigmund Freud was one of them: ‘The sour servants of science seek in it weapons that will contribute to the struggle against the enemy. The anthropologists declare that this enemy is inferior and degenerate; the psychiatrists diagnose him as suffering from a mental and spiritual illness.’³³ The disappointment Freud experienced at science losing its ‘cold impartiality’ did not stop him from adopting a patriotic position towards the Central Powers. Intellectuals could refuse to join in the general propagandising without questioning the conflict’s necessity or the justice of the cause.

Waging war, each according to his means

Those who worked in other disciplines made their contribution to the conflict, their expertise becoming a more directly operational resource in order ‘to play an active part in the war, each in his own way, each according to his means’, as Durkheim advocated.³⁴ European sociologists and philosophers provided useful expertise for the war’s political conduct. The

Frenchman Hubert Bourgin emphasised that war was a subject fit for the analytical categories of the sociologist: 'Why should war, an immense social event, be exempt from laws that explain the functioning of societies?'³⁵ Georg Simmel called for a new cultural order, at odds with the personal disintegration that had characterised pre-war cultures and ways of life. Max Weber positioned himself as a champion of necessary internal reforms to safeguard the country's unity in the service of victory. If he was persuaded, as the majority of Germans were, of the defensive nature of the war, he nevertheless argued contradictorily about the stakes involved in the war. After his expertise in international law was sought by the German delegation for the Versailles Peace Conference, he took part in drafting the new German constitution.³⁶ In France several Durkheimian sociologists with socialist leanings united behind Albert Thomas, who had once been a student with them at the École Normale Supérieure, to staff his office at the Under-Secretariat of State for Armaments. Social scientists could turn themselves into purveyors of tools, concepts and models to reflect on the running of the economy and men, the organisation of their resources and the optimisation of their abilities. Similar collaboration with government was practised by philosophers such as Henri Bergson, then at the height of his fame at the Collège de France. He was requested by the French government to undertake diplomatic missions to the United States. He crossed the Atlantic four times in 1917 and 1918, was received by Woodrow Wilson, and gave lectures on the Allied cause.

Psychologists, members of a discipline still emerging in universities, documented the ways in which 'war is reflected in the minds of individuals'.³⁷ In Italy the psychologist Agostino Gemelli, a Franciscan, was attached to the armed forces' general staff to study the troops' state of mind and the effects of propaganda, using approaches drawn from crowd psychology.³⁸ The lectures of Gustave Le Bon, who in 1916 published his *Enseignements psychologiques de la guerre européenne* ('Psychological Teachings on the European War'), were his Bible. Psychologists were not only solicited to repair the damage caused by the war to individuals and groups, but also to prepare for and assist the fighting. Walther Moede in Berlin and Wilhelm Wirth in Leipzig pioneered methods of experimental psychology for the selection of vehicle drivers and pilots; Robert Yerkes, president of the American Psychological Association, developed the first

set of non-verbal intelligence tests, which were applied to a million American soldiers; and in France J. M. Lahy carried out psycho-technical studies at the front to select artillery gunners, and other psychologists applied the findings of the Pole Josefa Ioteyko on the physiology of fatigue to measure the depth of exhaustion in combat troops. War thus functioned as a laboratory, a purveyor of exceptional circumstances and producer of *sui generis* phenomena which all offered themselves to scientific observation, while the psychologists lent their expertise to the understanding and management of a powerful constraint imposed on modern warfare, the efficiency of the 'human factor', or what we now term 'human capital' .

Geography , as a scientific expression of space, offered a framework for analysis of the conflict and ways of clarifying it, but beyond that also supplied resources to help keep it going and take part.³⁹ In Germany, in support of the occupation of Poland and under the auspices of the Landeskundliche Kommission of Warsaw (1914), the *Kriegsgeographie* (war geography) movement produced a documented reflection on the borders of the East that served political, military and cultural objectives. In it geographers such as Albrecht Penck developed geopolitical theories and debated with each other the notions of *Mitteleuropa* (Central Europe) and *Zwischeneuropa* (median or intermediate Europe). This geographical expertise was extended to other occupied zones by the geographical commissions of Macedonia (1917) and Romania (1918). Among the Allies, from 1917 onwards, the political emphasis was placed on consultative groups devoted to the territory and borders of the post-war era. In France the Comité d'Études de Paris was created in February 1917 under the guidance of two academics, Joseph Vidal de la Blache and Emmanuel de Martonne. In the United States, the Inquiry, an organisation of academic experts created by Woodrow Wilson, himself an academic, in September 1917, brought together geographers such as Isaiah Bowman with other specialists from historians, sociologists and political experts to earth scientists. All these specialists had as their mission the drafting of documents detailing the territorial claims to be presented at the Paris Peace Conference and to map the future borders of Europe arising from the war. As it happened, their work was not used by Wilson at the time, but this 'think tank' gave him options other than those provided by his own State Department, which despised the 'Inquiry' and its independence.

Other groups of writers contributed to the political work associated with the war effort. Journalists, as mediators, did what they could to control public opinion. This was the remit of organisations such as France's Maison de la Presse, created in February 1916. Journalists also played a part, as many mobilised writers did, in censorship. The recruitment of qualified and reliable censors preoccupied administrations, notably in states with varied nationalities. In the Habsburg Empire, where the government's intention was to contain opinion by strict control of information rather than by propaganda, censorship had to be relaxed from 1916 onwards for a lack of censors and a system to carry out that control.⁴⁰ Generally the role of journalists diminished in proportion to the discredit that fell on propagandist rhetoric, which became tarred with the label of 'brainwashing' and which, exposed to public criticism, somewhat muted its extremes. At the same time, there was an expansion in the numbers and role of war correspondents.

Another category of mediators was that of publishers, whose engagement was measured in the cascade of books, pamphlets and propaganda in every sort of printed form, from tracts to posters, which inundated wartime societies. From the war's first months the printed word proliferated, publishers allowing it to turn into a torrent, within the innumerable collections of works that they devoted to the war.⁴¹

This editorial undertaking was mirrored in the creation of war archives. Libraries spearheaded this, collecting 'traces of the war', producing documentary tools, creating collections. The Weltkriegsbücherei in Berlin was the first in Europe to proclaim its intention to collect exhaustively documents on a global scale, followed by the libraries of Leipzig, Jena, Stuttgart and Munich, and, in the United States, the founding of the Hoover War Collection at Stanford University. A further form of cultural mobilisation lay in activities to 'museify' the war: exhibitions of patriotic propaganda that travelled from town to town in Germany,⁴² or the setting-up of collections of objects and traces generated by the conflict. The Imperial War Museum in London, under the twin banners of library and museum, was built around private collections and soldiers' gifts. It was founded in 1917 on the initiative of the British authorities and formally enshrined by Parliament in 1920 as the repository of imperial memory. Other private collections – such as those of the Leblancs in France and of

Richard Franck in Germany – also took the path of museumhood while the war was still going on. These museums took part in a cultural process with a twofold intention: delivering a documentary message intended to authenticate a true account of the war, and providing a discourse whose register was sacred, sensitised by the presence of the objects on show, with their status of relics and trophies. Heritage thus became the constituent part of intellectual activity during and after the war.

These intellectual vectors, from publishing houses to museums, emerged from private initiatives, sometimes taken over by the state. There were nevertheless also explicit policies to impose what occupying powers understood as ‘culture’ on occupied populations. In Belgium the occupying German authorities, within the framework of its Politische Abteilung (political department), developed from 1914 a Flemish policy, or *Flamenpolitik*, with its own administration and the ultimate objective of annexing Flanders to Germany via the ‘Flemishisation’ of the territory. The new University of Ghent, which was to become the seedbed of a future Flemish elite, opened in October 1916; it was also intended to be the most effective pressure point of the occupying power, which controlled it tightly.⁴³

The cultural frontier was also in the sights of the occupation policy of the Central Powers in Poland, who gave themselves the mission of ‘cultivating’ the Eastern European territories in a state of *Unkultur*. Ludendorff charged this policy with ‘taking up again in the occupied territories the civilising mission that the Germans have carried out for many centuries in these countries’. Warsaw’s German civil administration, intending to incorporate the Polish population into Germany’s war effort, applied a cultural policy that allowed Polish culture a certain room for manoeuvre, in contrast to the repression that existed in Russian Poland. When the primary-school system was re-established and the University of Warsaw reopened its doors in November 1915, both used Polish, not German; the press, museums and theatre were other guinea-pigs of the policy.

Intellectual dissidence: individuals and margins

Resistance to the war was confined to the margins of intellectual life. Restricted as it was, there was nevertheless an intellectual camp that

acquired 'dissident' status in the face of the overwhelming consensus and that assumed various postures of protest against the war and those who waged it.

Some dissidence emerged in the form of organised movements; more often it was the action of single individuals, whose personal trajectories evolved in the course of the conflict. Howard Marten, a leader of the small-scale English movement, the No Conscription Fellowship, founded by a journalist in November 1914, remarked on the diversity of 'men from every conceivable angle of life' who made up its membership, and especially their irreducible singularity:

There were a lot of men who were not in any way organised or attached, but I should call them the aesthetic group: artists, musicians and all that . . . They had a terrific repugnance at war which could only express itself individually. They're not group-minded. They're individuals to the core; so that naturally they would, almost inevitably, take a very personal attitude to that sort of thing.⁴⁴

The resistance of the Bloomsbury Group, humanist in inspiration – articulating itself initially by the refusal to serve – and an expression of academic and literary elites, did not form a collective and unified reaction but a whole gradation of attitudes forged by the experiences each member had of war, especially at the outbreak of conflict.⁴⁵ The dissent of the economist John Maynard Keynes, who nevertheless contributed to the governmental war effort within the Treasury, only to resign in the spring of 1919 from the British delegation to the Paris Peace Conference; the protest of the young artist Duncan Grant who had initially supported Britain's entry into the war; the pacifist but anti-German stance of the writer Lytton Strachey; the militancy of the art critic Clive Bell towards a war whose essence he described as 'purposeless horror' (expressed in resounding pamphlets like *Peace At Once* in 1915); and even the journeys of E. M. Forster after he joined the International Red Cross, represented so many individual positions within a group that was nonetheless bound together by its aesthetic direction and common morality. Bertrand Russell, the author of a 'philosophy of pacifism', was among the strongest voices of British dissent. He was imprisoned in 1918 for publishing an article deemed

offensive to Britain's American allies, and found that his lectureship at Trinity College, Cambridge, would not be renewed.

Across Europe protest against the war, always marginal, was at odds with the controls imposed by censorship, if not with government-sponsored repression. Dissent resorted to various tactics to survive. The most organised forms of protest attempted collective action, launching an offensive of counter-manifestos that appealed for the preservation of Europe's better instincts as the war of national petitions was in full swing: a Russian pacifist manifesto of 1914, for instance, by forty-two writers and intellectuals who claimed to be followers of Tolstoy, or the German 'Aufruf an die Europäer' ('Appeal to Europeans'), launched in October 1914 by the Berlin physiologist Georg Friedrich Nicolai, with the backing of the astronomer Wilhelm Julius Foerster, the philosopher Otto Buek, and Albert Einstein. These texts had little impact and were more often than not distributed in extremely limited numbers. The pacifist Nicolai remained an isolated figure, who left the country in 1917, and from Denmark waged a solitary battle against all compromise by science and universities with the political and military spheres.

To understand this movement, it is necessary to consider different national responses to dissent. If in Great Britain a number of personalities such as George Bernard Shaw contributed to the debate and opposed the pamphletary propaganda, in Germany, by contrast, dissent gained scarcely any following beyond a few avant-garde magazines such as *Die Aktion*. The margin for manoeuvre was in any case extremely limited. It was sufficient for Wilhelm Julius Foerster's son, Friedrich Wilhelm, a philosopher at Munich University, to write an article in 1916 critical of Bismarck's policies⁴⁶ to find himself accused of high treason by the entire conservative press. The best-organised German pacifist movement, the Bund Neues Vaterland (New Fatherland Alliance), which had been created in November 1914, democratic and reformist in inspiration and counting public figures such as Einstein and Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster among its members, was banned by the government in February 1916 after publishing a number of pamphlets. In Vienna Karl Kraus pursued and condemned journalists and intellectuals who contributed propaganda in his regular column in *Die Fackel* (The Torch) entitled 'Among the brainwashers: a small review of the big press for the use of future historians'. Between 1915 and 1917 he wrote

a play, *The Last Days of Mankind*, published in 1919, in which he replayed the propagandist discourse of the daily press. He was promptly prosecuted for 'defeatism'.⁴⁷

It is thus unsurprising that neutral countries should have been chosen as the safe haven for intellectuals whose utterances were being stifled by the censorship of belligerent nations. The French writer Romain Rolland, who from 1914 lived mostly in Switzerland, offers the most illustrious example. It was less the essays in *Au-dessus de la mêlée* ('Above the Battle') that earned him his iconic identification with opposition to the war, than the rallying in his name of a whole pacifist sphere of influence, often far more radical than its initiator. Thus Rolland became the figurehead of an informal network composed of, for example, Maxim Gorky in Russia, Stefan Zweig in Germany, Charles Vildrac and Léon Werth in France. He was also a mentor to the collection of small pacifist magazines that attempted to resist the prevailing atmosphere. Such were the defining characteristics of this dissent – intellectual in origin, addressing itself to intellectuals and feebly distributed – that it did not manage to get its message across or to exert an influence on national opinions.

Other forms of intellectual dissent originated in pre-war European scientific circles seeking to preserve peace in the name of the cooperative links woven in the final third of the nineteenth century in congresses, correspondence and magazines, which had in their eyes established a true 'scientific International'. When war broke out, a section of the academic establishment became alarmed at the deleterious effects the conflict would have on the Europe of knowledge. Those who subsequently refused to remain silent, small in number, were above all citizens of neutral countries, who, like the Dutch physicist and internationalist Hendrik Antoon Lorentz, attempted to play an active part in the preservation of networks of scientific cooperation. It was in the post-war period that their influence made itself most felt, when the reconstruction of international intellectual relations broken off by the war was the order of the day.

Remobilisation, demobilisation: intellectual involvement played and replayed

Intellectual mobilisation was not unchanging throughout the war, but displayed both chronological and national heterogeneity, occasionally among the same individuals. This is most clearly seen in Russia, in the wake of the defeats of 1915 and the growing sense of the war's unpopularity.⁴⁸ Elsewhere, loss of the early elan of mobilisation and scepticism at the length of the war showed themselves in contrasting ways. The bellicose patriotism of the appeals of autumn 1914 was tempered by the same individuals who had drafted them. The physicist Max Planck, for example, who possessed considerable moral authority in the scientific world, had signed the 'Manifesto of the 93'. In response to the *Intellectuals' Memorandum* of 8 July 1915, he joined forces with the non-signers of the 'Manifesto of the 93' such as Einstein, but also with other signatories such as Ernst von Harnack, to challenge the all-or-nothing, pan-Germanist adherence to Germany's war aims – which did not in his eyes diminish his own support for the war effort. Several months later Planck also publicly distanced himself from the 'Appeal to the Civilised Nations'. These occasional works were linked to the spike in propaganda of 1914 and 1915, characterised by attachments that were essentially political and cultural and based on persuasion, and by a powerful movement of voluntary participation of persons, institutions and social structures, and a weak collective opposition to the war.⁴⁹

The deadly and devastating experience of war led frequently to revision of the hopes and fantasies that had been invested in it. Certain idealistic interpretations from before the conflagration, however, resisted the reality and were even confirmed by the combat experience that those intellectuals lived through. This investment in war as a promise of the future was endowed with various meanings. One of the most charged themes was the understanding of a transfiguring war as an individual aesthetic or spiritual adventure. In Russia Nikolai Gumilev, the poet and husband of Anna Akhmatova, interpreted the war as a 'grandiose spectacle', as the ability to feel danger, thanks to which may be pierced the mystery of the soul, whose depths for the poet contain a well of aesthetic, spiritual and even religious inspiration.⁵⁰

The theme of a regenerative war lasted as long as the conflict. It is not surprising that it flourished among non-combatant intellectuals, as harbingers of nationalist propaganda. For the novelist and agitator Maurice

Barrès the conflict was to be an effective remedy to cure the ills under which the 'French soul' languished. It is more remarkable that the theme of regeneration by war was assimilated by intellectuals who were not nationalists and moreover knew the reality of the front lines. The ethnologist and sociologist of religion, Robert Hertz, the son of a German who had taken French citizenship, who claimed his place in the war as a Jew, a socialist and a Durkheimian rationalist sociologist, continually requested his senior officers to send him to more exposed postings. His correspondence with his wife Alice Hertz, a child psychologist, reveals that both of them placed quasi-eschatological hopes in the regeneration that might result from the moral upheavals that emerged from the conflict: 'This time the war will not kill anything of what was viable. On the contrary, all of life's works will be upheld by an invigorated public spirit and a cleansed atmosphere . . . afterwards, with what joy we shall sow our seeds, plant trees and grow our children.'⁵¹ Hertz was killed in 1916. For such progressive intellectuals the war raised the questions of upbringing and education as vitally urgent matters for the new society that would eventually emerge from the chaos.

After the slackening of the urgency of the first mobilisation, a new phase of the process of engagement in 1917 and 1918 coincided with a 'remobilisation' of national effort. It was directed simultaneously at the phenomenon of military and civil disengagement provoked by the corrosive effects of a long war, and at the growing counter-mobilisation in favour of peace or revolution. For the Allied scientific authorities, this remobilisation was chiefly devoted to planning for the end of the war and afterwards. Military success was not to be assumed or counted on, but science had to be integrated into the hoped-for victory. From 1917 the Academies of Science became spokesmen for this remobilisation, carrying it into the universities and learned societies. In France, towards the end of the war, one document in particular replayed the themes of autumn 1914: the letter to the Académie des sciences by five scientists held prisoner in Lille during the German occupation, which, by raising the attacks on civilian populations, asserted the responsibility of the German population as a whole and that of German scientists and intellectuals in particular, and with it the justification of reparations. This was accompanied by a readiness to exclude German scholars entirely from the international community if reparations were not paid. Responses, manifestos, protests aimed at concentric strata of the

public – peers, national opinion, allies and neutrals – formed the basis of the argument for maintaining the mobilisation against the collective ‘scholarly barbarism’ of German intellectuals. From the moment of the American entry into the war, the astronomer George Ellery Hale established collaborative relations between the National Research Council, the body for scientific mobilisation created in Washington in 1916, and the academies of the Entente. Both felt that it was essential to quarantine the scientific activities of the Central Powers. The new body to emerge from this collaboration in July 1919, the International Research Council (IRC), excluded the scientific institutes of Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria for a twelve-year term, with revision of the clause only possible in 1931 on condition of approval by three-quarters of the members. Scientists in the Central Powers perceived their exclusion to be a grave moral iniquity, and an admission of weakness by Allied scientists. Their work hardly measured up to German science, which in 1919 had just been rewarded with the glittering laurels of three Nobel Prizes. Demobilisation in the cultural sphere was a slow and stuttering affair.

Lastly, the cultural remobilisation of the end of the conflict made demobilisation impossible. German scientists had been mainstays of Prussian militarism; in the common view of Allied scholars in 1919 this made them responsible for the brutalisation of the battlefield: for instance, in the first deployment of poison gas in 1915, under the aegis of Fritz Haber. The Treaty of Versailles sanctioned this view with its inclusion of clauses entailing the control, regulation and prohibition of certain scientific research activities and by making it possible to sentence practitioners of science as war criminals.

During the 1920s scientific institutes continued to function within the paradigm of mobilisation. They conformed to the diplomatic model, endorsing the science of the victors and excluding systematically that of the defeated. It was not scientists who showed the way of demobilisation to the politicians, but political leaders who, halfway through the 1920s, put pressure on senior figures in scientific communities to soften the impact of their unbroken mobilisation since the war.

The post-war years were initially a period of mourning in intellectual circles, as in all other social strata. The cultured elites of belligerent nations had paid a heavy price in lives lost, less in the older generation that had

exercised intellectual leadership before the war than among the young generations of apprentices. Students, because they were physically robust and from the ‘appropriate’ social classes, had often served as junior officers, and they were particularly exposed in trench warfare: at Oxford a fifth of those who served had died on the battlefield, and in Berlin the names of 997 students were inscribed on the university war memorial.⁵²

Their absence from their decimated generation was evident to many between the wars. Perhaps here was a source of conservatism: the old carried on in the old ways, since so many of the apprentices, the core of the new generation, were dead.

A sense of bereavement accompanied the abandonment of a universalist intellectual ideal – that of freethinkers pursuing the truth wherever it led. At a time when indictments of all kinds emerged of those responsible for either causing the conflict or lacking the imagination to bring it to an end before 10 million men had died, Julien Benda denounced the ‘trahison des clercs’ (‘betrayal of the intellectuals’).⁵³ The enlistment of thinkers, writers and scientists – the intellectual elite – in the service of national passion seemed to Benda a corruption of the intelligentsia, which had enslaved itself to the nation. The war, in his view, had subverted the very functioning of the intellectual arena. Circumscribing narrow national frameworks, the war had abolished every space for exchange and replaced arenas for controversy with the uniformity of a national consensus, whether freely accepted or imposed.⁵⁴ Between adversaries, in the new *modus vivendi* created by the war, the violence of intellectual conflict had grown exponentially.

From this perspective, the national passions shown by intellectuals during the 1914–18 conflict were denounced as reprehensible, identified with the manicheanism of war cultures and propaganda. Such adversarial thinking even provided for some an explanation as to how the war had been possible at all: those who lived the life of the mind had sold out, preferring nation to reason.⁵⁵

Rare were those who, like Bertrand Russell or the French historian Jules Isaac, indicted ‘science’ or ‘learning’ itself: ‘We have just experienced, for the first time, what scientific warfare is . . . If the war turned into a catastrophe, it is science we must blame for that, and science alone.’⁵⁶ Paradoxically, the award of a Nobel Prize in chemistry to Fritz Haber in

1918 suggested a return to the idealised discourse about ‘pure’ science, independent of all vested interests and targeting only the search for truth. Reflection on the individual responsibility of the scientist remained rare, and a belief in the civilising virtues of science remained firm, as did the conviction that it fell to politicians alone, rather than to intellectuals or scientists, to prevent ‘human power so disproportionately increased that it is transformed to a cause of ruin, war and death’.⁵⁷ And yet ‘human power’ had not won the war without the chemists and engineers, without the application of science to the production of poison gas and explosives on a scale the world had never seen before. The 1914–18 conflict left a disturbing precedent, as Benda had suggested, which led directly to the mobilisation of scientists, thinkers and writers in the service of their countries in the later wars of the twentieth century and afterwards.

Helen McPhail translated this chapter from French into English.

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17 Beliefs and religion

Adrian Gregory

Introduction

For the generation that fought the First World War religious belief and practice were still almost everywhere normal rather than exceptional. Yet the intellectuals of the era were acutely aware that the sea of faith was in retreat. In the Western world religion was facing three challenges. Politically, the century since the French Revolution had seen the emergence of an ideological challenge of organised anti-clerical politics, further compounded by the emergence of self-consciously atheist socialist and anarchist movements. Intellectually, the inheritors of Enlightenment scepticism had received powerful reinforcement from the biblical source criticism that emerged from the German universities and from the promulgation of Darwin's ideas of natural selection as an alternative to divine creation. In his confident post-mortem report on the Deity, Nietzsche was a little ahead of conventional opinion, but he certainly recognised the implications. Finally, social change had undermined the traditional authority of the churches in the Western world; mass movement to cities had broken the ties with the parishes and disrupted the role of religious *rites de passage* in defining individual identity. The two founding fathers of the sociology of religion, the German Max Weber and the Frenchman Émile Durkheim, both prominent just before the war, saw the growth of scientific rationality and the disruption of community as leading to an inevitable failure of traditional religiosity.

But the full picture was not this simple. The nineteenth-century tide of rationality created its own counter-currents. Some of the 'generation of 1914' rejected rationalism. In philosophy, Henri Bergson gained disciples with his 'vitalist' rejection of materialism. The science that was discovering electro-magnetism was sufficiently undefined to embrace the possibility of spiritual communication after death, and spiritualism had an appeal to many

scientific minds. To this fluid mix can be added the impact of exotic Eastern mysticism, promoted by charlatans and honest seekers alike. Even the most traditional religion had a revival: in 1910 American Evangelicals published the five books defending biblical literalism which were labelled 'The Fundamentals', providing the impetus for the eponymous movement.

Religion had not been superseded, it had evolved. The nineteenth century had seen it retreat in the public sphere but often gain an even greater significance within the home. This went hand in hand with the feminisation of the laity of all the main Christian churches. This was most notable in Roman Catholicism where the gulf between the irreligious father and the pious mother became stereotypical. Feminisation contributed to the massive revival in the Marian cult in the nineteenth century, as witnessed by the popularity of Lourdes and the papal dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The appeal and prestige of the female religious orders had never been greater, and nuns had become a significant force in health and educational provision. Protestantism engaged women differently, but with equal power. In the English-speaking world religious philanthropy was central to the identity of middle-class women, and through this mechanism domestic piety would ultimately mutate into militant political activism against sexual immorality and the demon drink.

Furthermore, despite the mass population movements of the century, rural life dominated most of Europe and beyond. Religion as a local force remained strong and perhaps in some cases was even strengthened by churches actively engaged politically and educationally in bolstering the resistance to the anti-clerical challenge. The conservative, imperial and monarchical regimes that dominated most of the world still embraced the church (and the temple and the mosque) as a partner in social control.

Nor was mass urbanisation in itself a royal road to secular rationalism. Life in early twentieth-century cities was often nasty, brutish and sometimes short, and it was above all unpredictable. Illness, accident, unemployment and bereavement were facts of life, and the masses still required some form of opiate as a warm heart in a cold world. Narcosis and cheap entertainment did increasingly provide alternatives, but superstition was as common in the slums as in the fields, and the inner cities could provide the churches with a mission field where they were willing and able to do so.

This was the religious world at the outbreak of war: challenged and contradictory, complex and deep. Would the war weaken or strengthen religion and would faith affirm or oppose the war? The answer would be yes to all of these things.

Acceptance

George Studdert Kennedy, the British army chaplain popularly known as 'Woodbine Willie', claimed that the outbreak of war saw a 'run on the bank of God'. Like the other bank runs of July and August it was short-lived. But we need to be careful in thinking about what was actually happening when previously empty churches filled.

From the very outset established churches were active in promoting popular acceptance of the war. This was particularly marked in Berlin: the crowd on Alexanderplatz on 1 August had spontaneously begun singing the Lutheran chorale 'Gott, tief im Herzen', rather than 'Deutschland über alles' and on Sunday 2 August the court chaplain Bruno Doehring conducted an open-air service in Königsplatz to mark the declaration of war with France. The Kaiser's famous speech to the crowds in Berlin on 4 August was in fact written by the noted theologian Adolf von Harnack and was in the nature of a sermon, 'German faith and German piety are ultimately bound up with German civilisation'. The presentation of the war as one of pious Germans against irreligious French acted as a method of literally presenting the war as having been begun in 'good faith'. But subtleties in the German case can also be found, with variants in the reaction of other churches. The war was also presented as a *punishment* for national sin and therefore an opportunity for national repentance leading to redemption. Much of the reaction to the outbreak of the war at the highest levels of the clerical hierarchies and amongst theologians saw the war as having been caused by sin. There was a fair degree of consensus on what these sins were: materialism, indifference, scepticism and generally a turning away from God. The differences came largely in attributing blame. The culprits were in varying degrees of importance the external enemy, the internal enemy and the 'church' itself.¹

Straightforward language of religious war certainly did appear in 1914. For example, the Slovenian Catholic monthly *Mladost* described the Habsburg monarchy as the ‘magnificent fort of Catholicism and protector of the faith’, Slovenian religious figures gave to the murdered Archduke and his wife the status of martyrs and the Prince-Bishop of Ljubljana, in his war sermon of 9 August, described the Habsburg war effort as being conducted against ‘the enemies of God’. But the context is important: in this rhetoric Slovenian Catholics were presenting a very specific ideological vision of ‘South Slav’ Roman Catholic loyalty to the dynasty distinct from German and Magyar nationalist hegemony and simultaneously from a South Slav vision centred on Orthodox Serbia and looking towards Orthodox Russia. Justified as the war might be, it did not promise the unconditional redemption of a ‘crusade’: in fact the interpretation was traditionally Augustinian – the war might be just, but it was still a ‘scourge’ inflicted by God because of the impious backsliding of the people and repentance was required as well as service.²

In Freiburg in Germany, the Roman Catholic clerics and laity alike similarly saw the war as both justified and a challenge. Roger Chickering notes the common use of the term *Heimsuchung* with its connotation of a test of believers. One priest in a sermon stated bluntly that the war should draw Catholics back from the path of sin to belief in and fear of God. Chickering suggests that although the local Protestants were more drawn to a concept of ‘holy war’ they too used the term *Heimsuchung* and indeed the head of the Protestant Badenese Church referred to the war as ‘the rod of God’s punishment’.³

The higher levels of the church in all countries tended to accuse the enemy of being guilty in an extreme form of faults that were also observable within the nation and Empire. As the Germans accused the French of encouraging atheism through the influence of the *philosophes*, the British, citing Nietzsche and biblical higher criticism, turned the accusation upon Germany. French Roman Catholics turned their fire on both German atheism and the alleged tendency of Lutheranism to worship the state, while trying to exempt Protestant allies as coming from markedly different traditions. Yet despite lip service to the *Burgfrieden* and the *union sacrée*, it frequently proved impossible to resist a swipe at the traditional enemies within. Socialists in Germany and Freemasons and anti-clericals in France

could be seen as enemies of God who had brought down wrath upon the nation by their actions. The failure of both clergy and laity to stem the tide of modern materialism also came in for criticism. Such self-criticism was perhaps most marked amongst Anglicans, who had been agonising about this since the 1850s, but most churches felt the urge. The Scottish Free Presbyterians almost revelled in the war as the punishment they had long predicted.

The young Florentine soldier Giosué Borsi experienced an intense conversion experience just before the war and began to keep a spiritual diary. On Italy's entry into the war he wrote:

War is a terrible scourge, a fearful chastisement thou inflictest on peoples. Although I know that it is often the bloody sign by which Thou recallest them to Thee. I am persuaded that war is the greatest test of the endurance of races, the occasion of their internal concord, the inspirer of obedience of discipline, of sacrifice . . . I am not so inhuman or blood thirsty as to wish it to be long and cruel. Therefore I believe my principal duty as a good Christian is to wish and pray that it may be brief and that peace may come soon, a long peace and a fruitful one.⁴

The official language of the churches was the language of repentance, redemption and revival. But it is unlikely that this is the message that most of the laity were hearing, and it probably played only a tiny and marginal role in the rush to the churches. The many who attended a church service for the first time in years in late July and August 1914 were not attending in order to be rebuked for their guilt. What they were seeking was comfort. When the United States entered the war in 1917 the Syrian Christian Abraham Rihbany captured the real desire of the majority:

I want every soldier who is fighting the battle of freedom and right to feel he is doing the work of a *Christian* soldier . . . I want every American Mother who has a son at the front to feel that the precious gift she has given the Nation has been offered not upon the altar of Moloch, but upon the altar of Christ and of the sacred duty which every free man owes to mankind.⁵

Benjamin Ziemann's nuanced study of Bavaria carefully detaches the upsurge of popular piety from 'enthusiasm' for the war. The typical reaction of the Bavarian peasantry was one of despondency, and the war theology which developed locally was that the war was divine punishment and that pilgrimage and devotion as a form of repentance could mitigate God's wrath. Newly mobilised soldiers prayed for forgiveness and protection and women in particular sought intercession on behalf of their loved ones. The dedication of Bavaria to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in January 1915 reflected this upsurge in emotional religious activity.⁶

Whether the similar upsurges in rural France were motivated by similar concerns is less clear, but certainly plausible. The Vendée, traditional home of Catholic resistance to the secular Republic, unsurprisingly led the way and showed a similar commitment to the symbolism of the Sacred Heart, which had a strong local resonance as a symbol of Catholic rebellion. The demand to modify the tricolour by the addition of this symbol emerged early in the war: indeed it had been prefigured in 1870. By the end of August 1914, Raymond Poincaré, the President of the Republic, complained that he was being deluged by letters from 'priests and women' (a revealing comment reflecting Republican prejudices) to take this step.

Poincaré had famously called for *union sacrée*, but this term is somewhat misleading. In reality the national reconciliation of August leant much more to the left than to the right and there was little official effort to woo 'religious malcontents'. Secular politicians remained suspicious of the intentions of the church and resistant to pressure. The 'Sacred Heart' issue re-emerged forcefully in early 1917, with the demands of the charismatic young woman Claire Ferchaud, herself from the Vendée, that the nation be dedicated to the symbol. Ferchaud, remarkably, was granted an audience with Poincaré. Whilst this might seem to be impressive evidence of a new openness from the secular establishment, it is clear from Ferchaud's own account of the meeting that Poincaré was deeply dismissive of the idea and was simply humouring her. When some of her supporters took up her hint that Poincaré was 'persuadable' by mass petitioning, French official secularism bared its teeth. Louis Malvy, Minister of the Interior, sent out an order banning the modified tricolour and denounced the petitions in the press. When the Archbishop of Tours displayed a tricolour with the addition of the Sacred Heart inside the cathedral the government pressed charges

against him. Simultaneously, Paul Painlevé as Minister of War sought to ban the symbol within the army as an issue of discipline, gaining the support of the conventionally Roman Catholic Marshal Pétain. The instinctive response of the Republican establishment, much heightened in the tense summer of 1917, marked by strikes, plots and army indiscipline, along with the increasingly strong signals in favour of compromise peace from Rome, was to view the Sacred Heart campaign, with its insistence that France could only be saved by divine intervention, as defeatism and subversion.⁷

Did religious leaders generally sanctify war and did they succumb to the temptation to demonise the enemy? Examples on all sides can be found, but should be treated with caution. The most infamous example is the Lent sermon preached in 1915 by the Bishop of London, Arthur Winnington-Ingram, which called for the extermination of Germans for the sake of the Lord. This sermon has taken on enormous interpretative weight as an example of wartime brutalisation, but it passed almost completely unnoticed at the time. *The Times*, which regularly carried speeches and sermons by the Bishop of London, does not mention it at all. It is in fact doubtful that it would ever have been noticed beyond the small immediate audience had not the respected Anglican intellectual Canon Holland condemned it in the pages of the church newspaper. Winnington-Ingram was exceptional and noteworthy even within the Anglican Church for his wholehearted patriotic identification of nation and religion. In an interview with the *New York Times* in November 1914, given while wearing his khaki uniform as chaplain to the London Division, he stated that, ‘I am speaking to you as a Christian and an Englishman . . . As an Englishman I would rather die than see England a German province and as a Christian I would rather die than see the triumph of the German’s new God – might is right.’⁸

A more subtle reproach to enemy ‘blasphemy’ was the ostentatious humility of General Allenby when he conquered Jerusalem. Allenby walked into the Old City, in deliberate contrast to Kaiser Wilhelm who had ridden a white horse in triumph into the city before the war. Allenby let it be known that he would have been ashamed to ride a horse along the route that his Saviour had ridden on an ass. It is perfectly plausible that this was a genuine sentiment. It was also brilliant propaganda.

Atrocities and the destruction of religious buildings fuelled negative stereotypes. Reims Cathedral took on a totemic significance amongst the Entente powers as an exemplar of ‘Hunnish’ anti-Christianity in the German army. The French army had almost certainly used the cathedral as an artillery observation post, and the pictorial representations of the ‘destruction’ of the cathedral were normally deeply misleading, by compounding real damage to secular buildings with the cathedral itself in misleading perspectives. Still, the perception of an unwarranted attack on Europe’s shared Christian heritage was strong.

The war also mobilised sentiment against ‘infidels’ in the vicinity of the front lines and within multi-ethnic empires. The research of John Horne and Alan Kramer has shown clearly that sectarian mythologies helped shape the behaviour of some German Protestant soldiers during the advance into Roman Catholic Belgium and northern France and even in German ‘Alsace’. The fear of treacherous priests and their congregations unleashed fears of ancestral demons dating back to the Thirty Years War and more recently reinforced by the *Kulturkampf*. Similarly in Habsburg Galicia, Orthodox priests were considered enemy agents of Slavophile influence, leading to persecution and the martyrdom of St Maxim Sandovich at Gorlice on 6 August 1914. But prolonged contact could also undermine demonisation. Patrick Houlihan has shown that over time there was an element of day-to-day religious rapprochement between the laity and the clergy of northern France and Belgium and their Roman Catholic co-religionists in the occupying German army.⁹ French Jews, on the other hand, tended to avoid meeting their German co-religionists.

An example of complexity in responses to the enemy is John Estremont Adams, the Presbyterian chaplain of the 6th Gordon Highlanders. At the Christmas truce in 1914 he held a joint service of burial for the British and German dead in ‘no-man’s-land’, reading the 23rd Psalm for the soldiers of both sides. He was the ultimate source for the the ‘Roman Catholic’ Scottish chaplain in the 2005 film *Joyeux Noël*. But he was no pacifist: in 1917 he translated from French into English an account of German atrocities in Lorraine in order to combat war-weariness in the British population. Adams simultaneously wished to treat German soldiers as decent humans and hold to account their political and military leaders. Germany needed to cast out the ‘scoundrels who dragged her into such

decadence'. For Adams the British soldiers' sacrifices would redeem Germany from militarism and Britain from selfishness.¹⁰

It is worth remembering that the churches had a vested interest in the appearance of patriotism. This was particularly true when the church itself was suspect. After the February Revolution in 1917, Prince Lvov's government aggressively sought and obtained the dismissal of the reactionary and 'anti-patriotic' bishops. Under the suspicion of reactionary tendencies, the Orthodox Church clung even more strongly to the concept of 'patriotic war'. As early as 12 March, Bishop Andrej of Ufa addressed a huge open-air crowd outside Kazan Cathedral in Petrograd calling for soldiers to 'Esteem your officers, be submissive to them and the enemy at the front will be broken'. The Synod sent out two obligatory sermons to the clergy backing the 1917 'Loan of Freedom' and the Liberal All-Russian Congress of Democratic Clergy and Laymen opened on 1 June with 'eternal remembrance of the fighters of freedom' meaning both revolutionaries and the war dead. On 4 June a *Te Deum* for victory was held in Red Square in Moscow and an equally premature victory procession was held outside St Isaac's Cathedral in Petrograd. The church printed leaflets quoting Matthew 10, 'I come not to bring peace but a sword', but perhaps a firm indication of the way that parts of the church had quickly adapted to 'Western' liberal interpretation was the telegram sent to Kerensky, by the voice of the 'free church', *Golas rosbonoj cerkvi*, on the eve of the great offensive which stated, 'Call ye louder into the holy battle, into the last decisive battle so that war, that shame of the world, may be conquered by war.'¹¹

The year 1918 saw a rather different political adjustment occurring in Slovenia. Jasic, the Bishop of Ljubljana who had greeted the war in 1914 as a holy cause, had taken a markedly different position. The war had convinced him that the Monarchy was not serious about 'tricameralism' and that, worse, it had strengthened the position of 'irreligious' or even 'anti-religious' German and Magyar nationalism at the expense of shared Catholicism. Perhaps a South Slav state operating across ecumenical lines would be better for Slovenian Catholics than a Habsburg state operating across national lines. Jasic would argue that his patriotic vision was consistent in favour of Catholic South Slav autonomy but that events had made him more confident of achieving that vision in union with Serbia than with Austria-Hungary. In a multi-faith and multi-ethnic continent there

were many variants of both patriotism and religion and many possible configurations.

Some profound religious responses defy easy categorisation in secular terms. In Palestine in 1918, Abdu'l Baha, head of the Baha'i faith responded to news of the Battle of Meggido by announcing that the biblical prophecy of Armageddon had been fulfilled and in response to the end times utilised the faith's worldly goods to purchase food for famine relief for the population of Palestine. His heavenly reward was delayed for a few years but he was subsequently knighted by the British.

Bringing together many of the themes above is the case of the English nurse in occupied Belgium, Edith Cavell. A devout Anglican, she became involved in a network which aided Allied soldiers to escape from German captivity, a duty that she saw as humanitarian, patriotic and religious. She was captured and sentenced to death in 1915. Her execution turned her into the pre-eminent patriotic and Christian martyr of the Allied cause. As such, she contributed to the demonisation of the enemy. Yet her explicit intent was very different. Speaking to the Anglican chaplain before her execution she famously stated, 'patriotism is not enough . . . I must have no bitterness towards anyone'. Her *Imitatio Christi* included acceptance and forgiveness. Paradoxically, the Christian fortitude that made her such a potent propaganda symbol during the war would make her equally appealing as a symbol of reconciliation and even pacifism afterwards. She serves as a bridge between acceptance of war and resistance to it.¹²

Resistance

Support for the war in one case also involved a religious call for resistance to the enemy war effort. On 11 November 1914, Essad Effendi, the Sheikh ul Islam, issued a 'fatwa', a religious ruling, at the request of the Ottoman authorities. Presented as a series of questions and answers it affirmed the religious duty of Muslims within the Empire to support the war effort. This would contribute to an atmosphere where Christians within the Empire were perceived as potential enemies. But more specifically it also called upon the Muslim subjects of Russia, France and Britain and those nations that 'side with them in their attacks on the Caliphate for the purpose of destroying Islam' to rise in rebellion against their governments.

Furthermore any Muslim participating in the war against the Caliphate could expect damnation in the afterlife. This move, which had been widely anticipated, did indeed worry the colonial authorities of the Entente powers and led to the censorship and suppression of Muslim publications as far away as Malaya.¹³

Religious resistance in wartime can be separated into two categories. The first is the role of religion in armed rebellion or active subversion against a combatant nation or empire. Partially Islamic rebellions against Entente empires, encouraged by Turkey and Germany, include to varying extents the Singapore mutiny in the British Indian Army in 1915, the Senussi revolt against British, French and Italian empires in North and West Africa, various ‘guerrilla movements’ in Mesopotamia, Persia and on the north-west frontier of India, and a huge rebellion against the Russian Empire in the Central Asian ‘emirates’.

Christian rebellion was less common, but some of the more ferocious Calvinists of the Dutch Reform Church were central to the short-lived Afrikaner uprising against British rule in 1914–15. The back-country prophet Niklaas van Rensburg appears to have played a key role in persuading General Del Rey to join and lead the rebellion, and the Calvinist piety of Afrikaner women pushed some of their menfolk into the field. Even more striking is the short-lived Chilembwe uprising in Nyasaland. John Chilembwe was a charismatic Baptist preacher who became convinced that the outbreak of war heralded the ‘end times’ and that only his followers would be saved from the cataclysm. Millenarian ideas spread by the ‘watchtower movement’ in South-East Africa allowed him to gather the support of around a thousand followers, leading to a brief and bloody uprising in January 1915, mostly targeted against oppressive white missionaries. The colonial police were able to kill Chilembwe and put down the rising.¹⁴

The Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916 drew heavily on specifically Roman Catholic imagery and inspiration. Indeed two major protagonists of that rebellion, Patrick Pearse and Joseph Plunkett, were noted for their intense piety, whilst a third, the revolutionary socialist James Connolly, was conspicuously readmitted to the church whilst awaiting execution. (On the other hand, one of his fellow martyrs had made a point of eating a rare steak on Good Friday, the eve of the rebel lion!) The Armenian resistance to the

Turks both prior to and after the onset of genocide against the community was also heavily linked, as Armenian nationalism was in general, to a very specific religious identity. In Serbia at least one major leader of the Komitadj partisan bands was an Orthodox priest.

It may be objected that these were not rebellions against the war *as such*, but rather an attempt to transform the war into a struggle against local ethnic and religious enemies. This is undoubtedly true, but of course exactly the same ‘revolutionary defeatism’, effectively working on behalf of the ‘national’ enemy in the short term, was the avowed position of Lenin and the rationale for the October Revolution. In this sense the most extreme socialists were *also* not opponents of war.

Peaceable mass resistance to war measures was perhaps most conspicuous amongst Roman Catholics. In Canada, the Quebecois leader Henri Bourassa wrote on 31 December 1915: ‘In the midst of this bloody orgy, one head stays cool, one voice continues to teach the world, proclaiming this war is infamous and asking kings and people to bring an end to this horrible killing. This voice is that of the pope.’ Bourassa believed that the war was a divine punishment for historic sins against the Roman Catholic Church: the Orthodox Schism, the Reformation and the French Revolution.¹⁵

It is noteworthy that the Roman Catholic Church aligned with ethnic sentiment was the most effective opponent of conscription in the British Empire. Australian Roman Catholics, overwhelmingly of Irish decent, were the key constituency which defeated conscription in two referenda, led by the charismatic Cardinal Mannix. The opposition of the Catholic Church in Ireland likewise limited attempts at conscription in that country and undermined it further when it was finally legislated.

The position of the papacy in favour of a negotiated peace became increasingly explicit from 1914 onwards. Giacomo della Chiesa had been elected to the throne of St Peter’s in September 1914. He had been supported by an unlikely alliance of French and Habsburg cardinals, despite his relatively recent promotion to cardinal. The former believed him to be sympathetic to France due to his connection with his Francophile mentor Cardinal Rampallo; the latter supported him in preference to Rampallo who was strongly vetoed by the German cardinals, at least one of whom, the

Archbishop of Cologne, was also strongly opposed to Della Chiesa and tried to persuade the Habsburg cardinals to oppose him. French enthusiasm gave way to a degree of disillusionment when Della Chiesa, as Benedict XV, emphasised his impartiality. In November 1914 he mooted the idea of a 'Truce of God' for Christmas 1914, a breathing space which would lead to a general peace conference. This call was ignored by all the powers and it is unlikely that the actual Christmas truces of 1914 were more than marginally influenced by this call. Benedict XV vigorously opposed Italian entry into the war; according to one sympathetic critic he was equally afraid of Italian defeat and Italian victory. He also threw the weight of the Vatican behind humanitarian melioration, particularly the condition of prisoners of war in all nations.

There is no reason to doubt that he took a principled personal humanitarian stance against the horror engulfing the continent and that he genuinely believed that the Vatican had to remain 'above the fray'. At the same time he was acutely aware of the realpolitik interests of the church. A prolonged war threatened the faith of believers and the community of the universal church and the specific threat of the destruction of the Habsburg Empire, through defeat, revolution or subordination to the German Reich, would result in the loss of influence across Central Europe and potentially remove a crucial counter-balance to the 'secularist' states. In one respect Benedict was lucky by comparison with Pius XII during the Second World War: his humanitarian moral concerns and Vatican interests dovetailed without contradiction. They also corresponded with his personal piety. His Genoese devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary as 'Queen of Peace', which he made specific in November 1915 and again in May 1917, provided an eschatological enthusiasm for the triumph of the Mother of God as the means to peace. His equally strong personal support for the cult of the Sacred Heart also partly explains the manifest coolness of the Vatican to attempts to annex the symbol by France in 1917–18.

The increasingly public condemnation of the war, described by the Pope as 'futile', created suspicion on both sides. In Italy he was increasingly referred to as 'Maladetto' by nationalists, who suspected him of pro-Austrianism. The still anti-clerical Benito Mussolini suspected priests of manipulating the women who publically protested against the war from late 1916 onwards. Although Benedict broke with the papal tradition of ignoring

the Italian state by directly addressing his peace note to King Victor Emmanuel, the suspicion lingered in anti-clerical circles that he was unreconciled to Italian statehood.¹⁶

The manifestations of the Virgin Mary at Fatima in Portugal were the most dramatic intersection between Roman Catholic qualms about the ongoing war and popular sentiment. The first appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary to three children, most importantly Lucia Santos in May 1917, saw the Virgin stating the need for revival and hinting at messages of great importance. The messages in June and July became more explicitly involved in the politics of the situation, with the claim that prayers with the rosary to Our Lady would bring about the end of the war. In August and September the local administrator, allegedly a Freemason, detained the children, but the final apparition in October 1917, when more than 30,000 people claimed to have witnessed the sun 'dance', saw an explicit call for the end of the war, and a demand to bring the troops home being articulated by Lucia as a message from the Virgin. This was a direct attack on the government policy of sending 4,000 men each month to maintain the expeditionary force in France.

Clerical and monarchist groups had been excluded from the secular government of Portugal (confusingly described as the 'sacred union') but until 1917 had hoped to accommodate with it. The Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon had regularly prayed for 'peace and victory', but it is clear by 1917 that the demand for peace was beginning to operate independently of the call for victory. The Portuguese soldier's prayer book, issued by a Catholic association in 1917, had prominently featured a prayer to Saint Isabel, who in the thirteenth century had performed a miracle to halt a battle between Portugal and Aragon. The prayer called on Saint Isabel, 'mother of peace and the nation . . . give us peace'. Scandals of maladministration and violent labour unrest were undermining the war effort and there can be little doubt that anti-war and anti-government forces embraced Fatima. The church hierarchy, in a pattern familiar from analogous visions with a potential political component at Marpingen and Lourdes, was cautious at the time.

Lucia, who was clearly the main visionary, may also have been particularly concerned with the need for peace. It is alleged that she was extremely worried at the prospect of the conscription of her older brother. There remains doubt as to whether the original vision addressed the need to

dedicate Russia to the Virgin; this part of the vision, so important in the later politics of Fatima, was not a prominent feature in 1917.¹⁷

The role of the Roman Catholic Church in the origins of the Reichstag Peace Resolution is somewhat murky. There is no doubt that Matthias Erzberger retained strong links with the Vatican and was personally devout. At the start of 1917 he began to distance himself, and by extension the Zentrum Party of German Catholicism, from the uncompromising support for maximum German war effort that had characterised his position for the first two years of the war. Thwarted personal ambition may have played a role in this. As it became clear that the 3rd German Supreme Army Command under Hindenburg and Ludendorff had little use for this most talented of German political leaders despite his intrigues on their behalf, Erzberger began to look to a revived Reichstag as a check. Erzberger was in close contact with Rome through the mediation of Eugenio Pacelli, the papal nuncio to Germany (later Pius XII). But although the papacy clearly approved Erzberger's actions it did not instigate them. On the other hand the papal peace moves subsequent to the Reichstag Peace Resolution were almost certainly influenced by it: in fact the papacy seems to have actively tried to support both Pacelli and Erzberger by these moves and in turn this aroused the suspicion of both the more bigoted Prussian conservatives and the leaders of the Entente. The suspicions of Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, that the papal peace note was in some sense 'pro-German' were partially correct: the Pope was trying to strengthen the German moderates against the extremists who were striving for total victory at the risk of ruin.

In summary, the Roman Catholic hierarchy tried with increasing vigour to act as a moderating force from 1917 onwards. This could have domestic consequences: for example, the leadership of the Roman Catholic bishops played a crucial role in the second vote against conscription in Australia in 1917. But by 1917 most of the combatants were led by men who had ideological suspicions of the church: Anglo-Saxon and German Protestants or anti-clerical Freemasons. The Vatican really only had influence at the highest levels in Vienna and the consistent Austrian peace moves were doomed to futility.

Protestant war resistance was a much more individualistic or small communitarian affair. A partial exception was the Fellowship of

Reconciliation in England. An initial meeting on 28 December 1914 at Trinity College, Cambridge, brought together about 130 people to oppose the hatred created in war. It was an ecumenical group including, for example, the Anglican feminist Maude Royden. The secretary was Richard Roberts, a Welsh Presbyterian based in London. The chairman was Henry Hodgkin, a Quaker peace activist. Hodgkin was acting in fulfilment of a vow made with the Lutheran Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze at Cologne railway station on 3 August when they parted at the end of an international ecumenical conference. Siegmund-Schultze for his part would pursue various humanitarian causes during the war and fall foul of the German imperial authorities. Gijsbert den Boggende argued in his doctoral thesis that although the Fellowship of Reconciliation would become predominantly known for its support of conscientious objection, at the outset it had a programme that went far further than mere pacifism. It was driven by a genuine belief that the war could usher in the Kingdom of God, a millenarian view similar to that of some supporters of the war.¹⁸

English mainstream nonconformists generally supported the national cause but were notable for strongly resisting certain ‘totalising’ tendencies in the prosecution of the war. Two issues in particular stood out. All the free churches adamantly supported the right of ‘conscientious objection’ as a condition of agreeing to conscription, which most had opposed. While free church ministers in some cases were keen to support voluntary enlistment they were deeply sensitive to the idea of tender consciences. The Society of Friends had to some extent compromised its unconditional pacifism and many Quakers joined up or undertook war work, but the Society remained united in its insistence that Quakers be allowed to express unconditional pacifism. Others such as the Presbyterians and Congregationalists were not themselves pacifist in doctrine, but vigorously defended the rights of others to be so. The free churches and the vast majority of the Anglican ministry, up to and including the episcopate, also took a firm line of opposition to the bombing of civilians in ‘retaliation’. These stances were frequently unpopular, and many of the laity felt that the church was soft on ‘conchies and Huns’.

In a series of other ways these churches sought to moderate the war. Nonconformists and Anglicans alike fretted over the prospect of moral

degeneration and condemned both army brothels and the revival of compulsory medical inspection of suspected prostitutes.

The humane treatment of German prisoners of war and enemy civilian internees was an unpopular cause embraced by Quakers and others. Liberal theologians kept in contact with their German counterparts through the latter years of the war, leading in time to the foundation of the World Council of Churches. Compared to an 'ideal' stance of Christian pacifism, English Protestants might seem temporising; within the dynamics of 1914–18, their moderating instincts are rather impressive and they deserve fairer treatment.

The strongest form of Protestant resistance to war was conscientious objection to conscription. In the United Kingdom the legislation was quite loosely worded to allow ethical objections to killing motivated by any form of personal belief, although in practice established membership of a historically pacifist religious group massively increased the likelihood of objection being granted. In the United States the objection clause of the Selective Service Act was applicable *only* to members of historically pacifist churches, which included the Christadelphian sect which had been founded after the American Civil War precisely for those for whom objection to military service was a central tenet of their faith. Church membership was defined as membership before April 1917.

In the USA even members of historically pacifist churches frequently suffered under the law. Many of the 'Dutch Anabaptist' pacifists, the Mennonites, Hutterites, Dunkers and Amish were punished for refusing to fulfil alternative civilian service, as were 'new' members of these groups. One paradoxical result was a great migration of these groups from the USA to Canada (west of Ontario), which despite having been longer committed to the war had a much more liberal policy fully exempting them from the war effort. In 1918 the persecution of Mennonites in the Midwest expanded to include the tarring and feathering of several Mennonites, including one pastor in Kansas, for initially refusing to subscribe to the 'Liberty Loan'.

There was little active opposition to the war from the pacifist sects within Germany. The numbers were small anyway: the vast majority of the radical pacifist groups of the Reformation had long since emigrated due to persecution, and the newer groups were small-scale imports largely from

the USA. Such groups were open to suspicion as 'foreign' influences and some reacted quickly to quash potential hostility. The German Seventh Day Adventists, for example, officially dropped their objections to military service and involvement in worldly battles to demonstrate their patriotism. Whether this conformity was motivated primarily by fear of persecution or by a deep desire for acceptance is hard to tell. But the behaviour of the German Jewish community may provide a clue.

Native-born German Jews were overwhelmingly affiliated with Reform Judaism which from the outset had stressed the identity of Jews as patriotic Germans. This identity had been strongly demonstrated in previous wars, but the First World War was perfectly cast for German Jews to emphasise their loyalty, which they did overwhelmingly. Patriotism was highly valued and instinctive. Religious Jews were just as strongly motivated to support the war effort as the lapsed, and some went further, embracing the idea of liberating their co-religionists from the persecution of the Russian 'pogrom-Länder'. French citizen Jews, also well assimilated, similarly embraced the Republic and non-citizen immigrant Jews rushed to enlist in the Foreign Legion. The aftermath of the Dreyfus Affair made the Jewish community grateful to Republican ideology and at the same time sensitive to any slurs of lack of patriotism.

The story in other countries was far more complicated. As a general rule the most assimilated and least religious Jewish communities were the strongest backers of the national effort; indeed there were even nominally Jewish 'Young Turks' in the Turkish Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) government. It was partly in an attempt to counter this perceived 'Jewish' influence that the British turned towards the idea of fulfilling the messianic dream of a Jewish national home through the Balfour Declaration. It was also hoped that such a move would spark enthusiasm for the Entente cause amongst American Jews, both secular and religious.

Before US entry into the war majority American Jewish opinion was probably more drawn to the argument that German forces were liberators. This was also of course the majority opinion amongst German Jews. But as the war dragged on there was an interesting development among a minority of German Jewish intellectuals. The initial impulse to civilise the *Ostjuden* gave way to a growing admiration. The 'medievalism' that had been an indictment of backwardness took on a more attractive aspect. The dogged

inwardness of the *Shtetl* community and the practice of mystical religion as a resistance to nationalism, the state and modernity began to look less like a failing and more like a virtue.

The influence of Hassidic-tinged orthodoxy can be seen in the work of Martin Buber. He had been drawn to the world of the *Ostjuden* even before the war, but after a brief flirtation with liberationist tendencies he returned in 1916 to his effort to incorporate the lessons of Hassidism into a modern theology. The result, *I and Thou*, with its stress on interpersonal connectedness as the essence of spirituality would become the most important theological text of the twentieth century for Jews and Christians alike, and is both a product of the war and, in a profound sense, an act of resistance to it – to the denial of shared humanity that makes killing possible.

Endurance

On 1 January 1915 the Belgian Cardinal Archbishop Mercier provided a pastoral letter to be read out in every church in Belgium entitled ‘Patriotism and endurance’. The German occupation authorities moved quickly to have it suppressed, despite the Cardinal’s insistence that it was ‘pacific’ in intent. Mercier became a hero of resistance in Belgium, but he also contributed to the ability of the population to endure their fate.

Religious faith could assist with enduring the war in two theoretically distinct ways – practical magic and existential meaning. The former might help the believer guard against earthly misfortune by personal prayer, ritual and talisman. The latter could provide consolation in the face of misfortune through acceptance of the purposes of God and hope in the afterlife. Yet in reality these two dimensions were bound to overlap.

It is perhaps tempting to see ‘superstitious’ practices of ritual and talisman as more deeply rooted in the more ‘magical’ practices of Roman Catholic popular piety as opposed to the greater emphasis on personal faith in Protestantism. Yet it is clear that for Anglo-Saxon and German Protestants the vernacular Bible served a remarkably similar purpose to the Roman Catholic rosary, both as physical protection from danger and as contemplative aid for prayer. It is tempting to see such things, as some more austere chaplains did, as simply superstitious practices. But it is worth

remembering that in the face of danger ‘Pascal’s gamble’ was a two-way bet. Religious talismans, like purely superstitious ones, might provide mundane protection from death and maiming. But unlike purely superstitious talismans, they could, in the worst case, act as passports to paradise. Either way they could help control and conquer fear.

However much the French state disapproved, it is impossible to ignore the enthusiasm for the Sacred Heart specifically as a protective talisman, both at the front and in the rear. The Catholic press was full of stories of how units that carried the Sacred Heart banner and individuals carrying badges had emerged unscathed from prolonged bombardments while their less pious colleagues had been slaughtered. Of course, a Voltairean sceptic might respond that this was only likely to be reported when it worked. Similarly the devout Protestant Londoner Private Len Smith, after a near miss that killed many of his comrades, wrote to his parents in May 1915 of his belief that reading the psalms had protected him.¹⁹

The interface between magic and meaning was found in the miracle. Many French Catholics took the idea of the ‘miracle of the Marne’ literally, pointing to the intensive vigils of intercessionary prayers in Paris as having caused the retreat of the German army. In Britain the idea of divine intervention saving the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) after Mons in the form of ‘angels’ grew in strength in 1915, with prominent clergymen, principally but not exclusively Anglican, endorsing the idea of divine intervention. But the ‘angels of Mons’ also constitute a cautionary tale for the historian tempted to lump together all manifestations of the ‘supernatural’ and ‘paranormal’ against the rational. The main critic of the legend was the author Arthur Machen who claimed, with some reason, that his short story ‘The Bowmen’ was the source of the legend. Machen was a pagan occultist, a member of the ‘Order of the Golden Dawn’ who was disgusted by the use of the story to bolster traditional Christianity. Machen believed in magic, but not divine miracles. His position was supported by the Institute of Psychical Research, the main body of ‘scientific spiritualism’, which supported the idea of ‘paranormal’ phenomena, but not ‘supernatural’ ones.²⁰

Indeed it is worth remembering that at the heart of the wartime boom in ‘spiritualism’ in the United Kingdom were men of a distinctly empirical frame of mind, such as Arthur Conan Doyle and Oliver Lodge.

Undoubtedly their personal experiences of bereavement made them more open to wanting to believe in the paranormal, but they also believed that the 'other world' was supported by evidence. In Conan Doyle's case this even led him to be taken in by photographic evidence of 'fairies at the bottom of the garden' in 1917. However improbable, if another explanation was impossible (and he was unable to explain how it could have been faked), it had to be true. Such beliefs were not at all the same as the widespread 'prophecy' in the British army that the war would come to an end when the 'leaning Virgin' of Albert toppled from its precarious position on the church spire, a folkloric superstition in the strictest sense.

More orthodox religious figures worried about the temptations of spiritualism. George Adam Smith, a Scottish minister and vice chancellor of Aberdeen University made a series of speeches in America in 1918, which were collected in a volume dedicated to his two sons killed in the war. After describing wartime religious revival, he noted:

Side by side with this faith, there have been produced, as you know among many of our mourners – more in England than in Scotland – those revivals of 'spiritualism', which the experience of war so often seems to favour. The temptation to seek physical communication with the beloved dead is a very ancient and most natural one . . . we have among ourselves proofs that the habit does weaken the judgement of those who seek the dead by such ways and does taint the characters of the media who profess to satisfy them.²¹

The question of enduring faith, conversion or loss of faith among men serving in the armed forces is almost impossible to answer definitively because of three crucial variables: the pre-war background, the varied nature of war experience and the observer biases in sources.

Sometimes religious faith would produce reactions which to a modern sensibility are repugnant. Borsi noted in his spiritual journal:

This morning at five, not far from our camp at Dolegena, one of our soldiers, a cowardly treacherous deserter who has stained his honour on the field of battle before the enemy was shot. When I learned of it last night, my first feeling was one of horror, pity and repugnance. Yet

justice must be done. Let us hope the soul of this wretch, assisted by one of Thy weeping priests, is now saved, received by Thy infinite mercy . . . our mercy would be weakness.²²

The author would nevertheless find his faith challenged by the sordid deaths of comrades though disease in camps behind the lines. Nevertheless he embraced the personal martyrdom of death in battle which came to him in October 1915. Highly self-consciously religious young middle-class men of this kind could be found in abundance in all the armies, and propagandistic works by Maurice Barrès for France and after the war by Philipp Witkop for Germany collected their testimonies, but historians have rightly distrusted them as unrepresentative. On the other hand, contemporary surveys of religion in the armed forces present their own problems of bias.

Similar religious practices could be treated very differently as evidence by different observers. For example, the types of religious observance among British soldiers found in both the Anglican and Roman Catholic studies of religious belief in the BEF are clearly very similar, but the Anglican report is pessimistic about the spiritual state of the Tommy and the Roman Catholic report quite positive. Both were operating within traditional modes set well before the war, the Anglican report bemoaning the failure of the church to transform the spirituality of the nation, the Catholic one celebrating the advance of the true religion. In most armies reports on soldiers' religion suggest that men who had a robust faith before the war tended to maintain it. This, for example, was the conclusion of the Slovenian enquiry, which also suggested that pre-war waverers might be losing faith. Bavarian enquiries suggested that front-line soldiers were more likely to hold to their faith due to the constant reminders of mortality, and that loss of faith was more likely among troops in the rear areas. But there is also a real suggestion that prolonged exposure to arbitrary death could undermine faith in God's providence. The battles of 1916 may have been something of a turning point for the German armies. At the start of the Battle of the Somme positive references to God and religion are still commonplace in the written accounts of German soldiers, but by the end of 1917 they seem to be becoming rare, except in the accounts of chaplains. Amongst Slovenian soldiers forms of piety seem to have continued, but in

line with the Vatican the desire for and prayers for peace became increasingly prominent and 'victory' became less mentioned.

Throughout the war votive offerings and promises of such offerings remained popular, soldiers pledging to add statues and other icons to shrines if they were spared to return home. Indeed after the war surviving Slovenian troops made a prominent annual pilgrimage to one shrine of the Virgin.

The letters of Indian soldiers serving in the British army show that religion played a significant part in sustaining the men at the front. Both Hindu and Muslim Indians were imbued with a strong sense of 'fate' determining their lives, and in this sense they were pre-adapted for the randomness of industrial war. Religion was also an important way of making sense of the strangeness of the environment. One Muslim Indian soldier in Egypt was struck that Egyptian celebrations of Eid were very different. An apparently proto-Gandhian Hindu soldier wrote of the French civilians:

The morals are also good as regards civilisation, but as regards spirituality I am very sorry. They are all for sensual enjoyments. It seems to me that eat drink and be merry is the motto of their life. They have a Catholic religion which is almost reduced to nothing but etiquettes. And owing to this weakness they are very weak in spiritual morality and at best I come to the conclusion that with the loss of spiritual strength, they will lose their national strength, as India did.²³

In fact civilians were probably aided more consistently by their faith. In rural Bavaria soldiers' widows 'meekly bore their fate' according to one priest. Women also comforted one another with piety: 'Dear God will continue to look after us. He is our best father who takes care of widows and orphans . . . No one who has sought refuge in him has ever been turned away.' The Sacred Heart cult, with its emphasis on humility and self-denial, also helped rural women deal with wartime overwork and impoverishment. This was true in many devout rural areas such as the Vendée, Bavaria and Slovenia. Local pilgrimages and annual ceremonies took on even greater importance, for example Corpus Christi processions in small Slovenian towns.

It is perhaps unsurprising that rural civilians, particularly women, drew great support from the church. This could even be the case in the most practical of matters: communication. In many parts of Europe female illiteracy was still common and the village priest might take on the role of intermediary correspondent between women and their absent husbands. Priests who were already counsellors and confessors were natural sources of support. But one might also speculate that this role was strongest in the areas where rural female piety was already strongest, particularly the 'Counter-Reformation' districts of Bavaria, parts of western France and the Habsburg Empire.

Of course female piety was not unknown in the urban environment. But it seems to have been a more informal and perhaps fragile affair. Work on middle-class London civilians does suggest various forms of Christianity playing an important role as a source of strength and endurance. Likewise some middle-class Parisian women also seem to have found their faith a source of comfort. But evidence of the role of the faith in working-class communities is harder to pin down. Sarah Williams suggests that working-class women used churches as an important social resource for comfort in wartime London. The stability of Anglican attendance figures for Easter communion during the war in the absence of men killed or absent overseas must imply an *increase* in female attendance.²⁴

The war probably had a similar effect in the cities of all the major combatants, increasing the already established sense that religion was in some sense 'women's business'. Just as in the long nineteenth century, this had resulted in providing opportunities for women to attain prominence (for example, see Edith Cavell and Claire Ferchaud above), and at the same time worried the male clerical hierarchy. It is worth remembering that as with all parts of civilian society the war placed the churches under extraordinary pressure. Wartime inflation increased costs, social welfare and charitable expenditures increased the financial burden even further, and key male personnel, both lay and clerical, were absorbed into the war effort. Although the clergy were generally exempt from military service, tens of thousands of the youngest and fittest volunteered as chaplains and in some nations for combatant service. In *Les diverses familles spirituelles de la France* (1917) Maurice Barrès noted 25,000 priests in the army of which only 3,000 were official chaplains. In September 1915 alone 156 monks and

priests were killed in action and 3,754 had been killed by January 1917. One of them, Abbé Gaston Millon, wrote from Verdun in 1916:

I am meditating upon this phrase of Joffre, 'Our victory will be the fruit of individual sacrifice'. Sacrifice remains the one great law. Jesus Christ Himself has given us the example. The church lives through the virtue of her Master and of his disciples, virtue is only acquired through sacrifices, sacrifice unto death.

He was killed on Easter Sunday.²⁵

The result of clerical service in the military was that the increased demand for sacramental services fell very heavily on a diminished pool of older and less healthy priests. In this respect the experience of the clergy mirrored other civilian professions, but with the added burden in the cities where clerical resources were already stretched very thinly before the war. Similarly the physical churches deteriorated due to lack of money for repair, heating and light. In Germany by 1917 the churches were 'persuaded' to give up their bells to the war effort. In the circumstances the hopes for widespread religious revival which had greeted the outbreak of the war were bound to be disappointed. Furthermore, all churches became increasingly aware that hopes for moral revival were optimistic in wartime conditions. Civilians and soldiers alike increasingly sought solace in sex and alcohol as much or more than in prayer, and attempts by the churches to 'police' and suppress such activities created irritation in working-class communities that had always suspected the moral mission of the church to be a cover for middle-class interference in their lives.²⁶

Left-wing contemporaries and many modern historians both socialist and feminist perceived the role of the wartime church primarily as a mechanism of social control by elites. There is doubtless some truth in this, but it seems possible, indeed likely, that the main significance of religion was its role in bolstering the endurance of those elites themselves. It might seem odd to consider the endurance of political and military leaders given their apparent privilege, but the stresses of wartime command could be intense, involving great responsibilities and often supplemented by deep personal loss within families. As the war progressed there seems to have been a marked

tendency in the West for those with explicit and conventional religious belief to cope better than those without.

In the French case the leadership of the army became progressively more devout as the war continued. Joffre had proved robust despite his indifference, but by 1918 the High Command was dominated by men of piety: Foch, Castelnau and Fayolle were strong believers. Fayolle's *Cahier secret* is full of references to his faith, and in a remarkable series of entries during the great crisis of Easter 1918 he explicitly interprets the defeat and revival of the Allied armies in terms of the Passion and the Resurrection. By contrast the anti-clerical Sarrail was ultimately a failure and side-lined. Pétain is a slightly odd case: he was a conventional churchgoer, but at the same time he does not seem to have been strongly motivated by religion and he opposed the cult of the Sacred Heart in the army (which Foch allegedly favoured). Indeed Pétain's preference for the practical and the material over 'faith' and the 'spiritual' marks him out from both Catholic and secular rivals.

The Presbyterian piety of Field Marshal Haig is well known, and his trust in divine providence was central to his capability for endurance in the face of disaster. Trusting in God's favour reinforced resilience in commanders, which might lead them to persist in mistaken policies but equally insulated them from panic. Conventional piety was probably a better source of comfort than heterodoxy or deep spirituality. For example, Moltke the Younger was drawn to more occult religion and this led to the worst of all worlds – a combination of fatalism and doubt. The same appears to be true of Ludendorff, while the conventional Protestants Von Mackensen and Hindenburg were more robust. A similar observation might be made about monarchs: Kaiser Wilhelm, Tsar Nicholas, Archduke Karl and King George all clearly took their religion seriously, but King George, who probably thought about it least, may have derived the most benefit.

David Lloyd George does seem to have benefited from his strong Protestant background, although his religion was perhaps more outwardly than inwardly directed and its principle virtue was the revivalist sermon quality of his rhetoric. Woodrow Wilson shared this quality, but the inward element was more profound: a strange mix of Calvin and Hegel. The great exception was Clemenceau. To describe him as a man without spirituality would clearly be a mistake, but it is best described as eighteenth-century

pantheism and was most strongly expressed in his passion for Monet. His contempt for organised religion was consistent, but at the same time he was able to build a temporary if stormy partnership with Foch, if not without some memorable profanity.

Conclusion

The war certainly had profound impacts on religion. The political upheavals of war created a crisis of church–state relations in many places. In Ireland the Roman Catholic hierarchy openly opposed the introduction of conscription. In Athens in 1916 the archbishop publicly pronounced an anathema on Prime Minister Venizelos in front of a burning effigy of the politician. Revolution induced a crisis in the theology of the German Evangelical Church, which moved from a Lutheran obedience to authority to a position of distrust towards the Weimar Republic. In Russia the October Revolution interrupted a great moment of reform in the Orthodox Church and ushered in a terrible era of persecution. Even in the United Kingdom the established church felt impelled to embark on a process of reform and ultimately democratisation.

The destruction of the Ottoman Caliphate would become a defining event for twentieth-century Islam, and arguably the Caliphate became much more important as a memory than it had been in existence. The war also accelerated the tragic and brutal destruction of the old Middle Eastern churches. The prophecies of Fatima and the memory of Benedict XV would become increasingly central to the twentieth-century papacy. Finally, Buber's wartime encounter with mysticism would help reshape both Judaism and ultimately Christianity in coping with a century of political horror.

Should the First World War be seen as a great war of religion? The answer is a frustrating yes and no. We should probably avoid stretching the definition of religion to the point where the concept of religious war becomes circular and the support for the war in itself becomes a manifestation of a religious sentiment. We need to limit the concept of 'wartime religion' and at the same time be highly sensitive to the nuances and complexities of actual religions in their practices and beliefs. But we

also need to acknowledge that religious practices, language and imagery were intimately engaged in making sense of 'war experience'.

The categories of acceptance, endurance and resistance were not exclusive. The American Alvin York was a devout member of the Church of Christ, but contrary to mythology he never claimed to be a conscientious objector, although he did write on the back of his draft card, which has been preserved, 'I don't want to fight.' He wrestled with whether the war was justified, in part because he was convinced that if it was not he would be killed. He spent two days and a night praying and in the end 'received direct assurance from God' that the cause was just and he would be safe in both this life and the next, so he accepted his conscription. His pastor attempted to get him out of the army on the grounds that his church was pacifist, but York was now comfortable with service. He was a superb marksman from backwoods Tennessee. During the Battle of the Argonne, he famously killed over twenty Germans. He did so automatically in the heat of the moment, but the killing quickly sickened him and he called on the enemy to surrender, which they did. York, with little assistance, took 132 prisoners.

All of York's experience was filtered through his religious framework and he read the Bible continually at the front. The battlefield seemed to him the realm of the Antichrist and Armageddon. He trusted in the Lord to see him through the valley of death. He bonded with comrades in religious discussion. After the fight he mourned above all his friend Corporal Savage with whom he would 'never again talk about his faith and pray'. He also prayed for dead comrades and enemies in a broader sympathy:

I prayed for the Greeks and the Italians, the Poles and the Jews and the others. I done prayed for the Germans too. They were all brother men of mine. Maybe their religion was different, but I reckon we all believed in the same God and I wanted to pray for all of them.²⁷

York killed efficiently, but hated doing it and doubted whether it was right. He endured the front while viewing the war as an abomination. He was confident in his own survival and salvation, but hoped for the same to be granted to his enemies. His faith was never shaken and operated both alongside and at odds with his conventional patriotism. His ambiguities never entirely went away; he was always willing to condemn war, but

equally quick to try to re-enlist in the infantry in 1941. He founded a humble bible school but was not averse to enjoying his new-found fame. In short, he seems an odd and contradictory character, accepting, resisting and enduring the war according to the light of his faith. But York was not unique. In fact it is likely that there were hundreds of thousands like him. Religion helped make war possible, but it also helped limit it.

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2 See P. Bobic, *War and Faith the Catholic Church in Slovenia 1914–1918* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

3 R. Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg 1914–1916* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 72–5.

4 G. Borsi, *A Soldier's Confidences: Spiritual Colloquies of Giosué Borsi*, trans Pasquale Malteses (New York: P. J. Kennedy, 1918), pp. 203–4.

5 Abraham Rihbany, *Militant America and Jesus Christ* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917).

6 Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2007).

7 R. Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

8 A. Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London: SCM, 1978), is primarily responsible for the modern attention to this sermon.

9 J. Horne and A. Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), particularly pp. 104–7. P. J. Houlihan, ‘Clergy in the Trenches: Catholic Military Chaplains of Germany and Austria Hungary during the First World War’ (PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 2011).

10 The earliest account of the burial service is *The Scotsman*, 31 December 1914, p. 3; J. E. Adams, *Their Crimes* (London: Cassell, 1917).

11 J. S. Cutiss, ‘The Russian Orthodox Church and the provisional government’, *American Slavic and East European Review*, 7 (1948), pp. 237–50.

12 Diana Souhami, *Edith Cavell* (London: Quercus, 2010).

13 G. Lewis, ‘The Ottoman proclamation of *Jihad* in 1914’, *Islamic Quarterly*, 19 (1975), pp. 157–63, includes a translation of the fatwa; M. Aksakal, ‘Holy war made in Germany? Ottoman origins of the 1914 *Jihad*’, *War in History*, 18 (2011), pp. 184–99, is the most recent interpretation.

14 I. Linden, ‘John Chilembwe and the New Jerusalem’, *Journal of African History*, 12 (1971), pp. 629–51.

15 H. Bourassa, *Le Pape: arbitre de la paix* (pamphlet, Montreal, 1918), p. 40, my translation.

16 J. Pollard, *The Unknown Pope: Benedict XV and the Pursuit of Peace* (London: Continuum, 1999).

17 F. Meneses, ‘Rejecting total war: government mobilization and conservative backlash in Portugal 1916–1917’, *Ricerche Storiche*, 27:3 (1997), pp. 551–66.

18 Gijsbert Jacob den Boggende, 'The Fellowship of Reconciliation 1914–1954' (PhD thesis, McMaster University, 1986).

19 L. Smith, *Drawing Fire* (London: HarperCollins, 2009), pp. 338–9. A. Becker, *La guerre et la foi* (Paris: A. Colin, 1994).

20 D. Clarke, *The Angel of Mons: Phantom, Soldiers and Ghostly Guardians* (Chichester: Wiley, 2007).

21 Sir George Adam Smith, *Our Common Conscience* (New York: Doran, 1919), p. 171.

22 Borsi, *A Soldier's Confidences*, p. 248.

23 D. Omissi (ed.), *Indian Voices of the Great War* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 65.

24 S. Williams, *Popular Culture and Religious Belief: Southwark 1880–1939* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

25 Maurice Barrès, *Faith of France: Studies in Spiritual Differences and Unity*, trans. Elisabeth Marbury from the original *Les diverses familles spirituelles de la France* (Paris: Émile-Paul Frères, 1917), foreword Henry Van Dyke (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), pp. 35–41.

26 A. Gregory and A. Becker, 'Religious sites and practices', in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, vol. II (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

27 Alvin York's diary and his draft card can be viewed online at: acacia.pair.com/acacia.vignettes/alvin-york-diary. For the strength and persistence of religious motivation amongst US soldiers, see J. Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War* (Princeton University Press, 2010).

18 Soldier-writers and poets

Nicolas Beaupré

The war of 1914 began, no doubt, with the old assumption that the poets should sit in quiet corners writing majestically about it; but that attitude did not quite satisfy readers. The title ‘soldier-poets’ became the brief reference to an altered view of war poetry, though what the extent of the alteration would eventually become was not once foreseeable in 1914.¹

In 1958 the British war poet Edmund Blunden introduced a short pamphlet on the ‘War poets’, commissioned for publication by the British Council to explain the phenomenon of British war poetry to foreigners. As Blunden, poet and former combatant, emphasised, the relationship of poets, and more broadly of the relationship of all writers to the war, was subsequently modified under pressure from the public who wanted to know more about the soldiers’ war. A new figure emerged, the ‘soldier-poet’ who was distinguished from his predecessors, and also from some of his contemporaries, in having front-line experience of the war, as a private soldier or as a commissioned officer (though not on the general staff) or as a stretcher-bearer, hospital orderly or doctor in the dressing stations, first-aid posts and front-line hospitals. Such people had seen ‘death at first hand’.²

This chapter is not an examination of texts and their surface or hidden meanings, which are endlessly reinterpreted and/or used as polemics, most often within a strictly national framework of analysis;³ the present intention is to consider a phenomenon which, under particular national conditions, developed in many of the belligerent countries. Rather than setting out yet another analysis of such writers as Sassoon, Owen, Sorley, Graves or Rosenberg, the focus here is an overview of a singular phenomenon closely linked to literary history and more generally to the political, cultural, social and economic history of the Great War.

One of the responses of societies to the Great War was what can be called the 'literary construction' – in the broadest sense – of the experience of war. As stressed by Paul Fussell, although there had been precedents – the Napoleonic Wars, the wars of German unification, the American Civil War – 'By 1914, it was possible for soldiers to be not merely literate but vigorously literary'. Fussell attributed the importance of the phenomenon of English war poetry and literature to facets of English cultural history:

The Great War occurred as a special historical moment when two forces were powerfully coinciding in England. On the one hand, the belief in the educative powers of classical and English literature was still extremely strong. On the other, the appeal of popular education and 'self-improvement' was at its peak.⁴

Without questioning the national factors which favoured the emergence of this war literature, other structural factors explain the extremely rapid development of combatant literature, whatever its form.

The first of these factors was the high level of literacy in the nations at war. This remained unequal, since countries such as Russia or Romania had a high proportion of illiterate men in their armies. Overall, however, literacy levels were high in the West as well as the East of Europe: in Bulgaria, for example, 89.9 per cent of the population were literate, according to official statistics.⁵ Even in countries with many illiterate adults, the development of literacy was certainly under way.

This literacy, orchestrated by the states or sometimes – particularly in Eastern Europe and Russia – developed independently and voluntarily by a section of the educated elites, was accompanied by a written discourse that legitimised the nature, form and source of political power. As a result, these national and/or imperial forms of discourse could operate as the bearers of cultural and political authority, and were mobilised immediately on the declaration of war. Although such reserves of images – of the self and of others – as ally and enemy, were soon mobilised in a 'top-down' campaign by the belligerent states, they equally constituted symbolic resources, independent of states, on which societies, social groups and individuals could draw.

The war itself and the form that it took account for the development in most of the warring nations of this new category of soldier-writers. Writing and reading joined card games, music and trench art as widespread forms of leisure in the armies. In providing long periods of free time for the soldiers, French warfare, even if it occurred less frequently on the Eastern Front, favoured both writing and reading as mass pastimes. Daily writing, of letters or personal diaries, was certainly not understood as a literary gesture, but it undoubtedly favoured the emergence of ‘front literature’.

Going to war: realities and myths

Jean-Jacques Becker’s pioneering work led to a historiographical revision of the myth of patriotic enthusiasm which fired European societies as a whole in 1914.⁶ Nonetheless, some circles immediately welcomed this outbreak of war and endowed it with elevated meaning. In the front rank were many intellectuals, students and young well-educated middle-class men who formed the substrata from which the soldier-poets and writers were to emerge. The case of young men educated in the British public schools is well known; in Germany and France the soldier-writers and poets also volunteered primarily and above all – with some exceptions – from within these circles. In his publication in 1929 on French war writing, Jean Norton Cru revealed that among his sample of 246 writers, he had found only two or three men who did not have their *baccalauréat*, and that two-thirds had undertaken at least three years of higher studies.⁷ As Samuel Hynes put it, ‘The tale of the Great War didn’t come from the ranks, it came from the middle-class volunteers who became the war’s junior officers.’⁸

In countries with conscription, many young men of these social classes joined their units without waiting to be called up: even when they could have been deferred on account of their education, they volunteered in large numbers. At Göttingen, the proportion of voluntary enlistment from student bodies was often more than 40 per cent, even though most had already done their military service, and could have awaited the call for officers.⁹ Even if the myth of the great masses of voluntary German enlistment has also been revised, it is still wise to be wary of the significance placed on the enlistment of poets and writers in the story they themselves told of their participation in the war.

Within certain social strata, therefore, there was indeed a wave of voluntary enlistment from intellectual milieux in most of the belligerent nations, even if in the case of Russia they seem to have been less numerous than elsewhere. Richard Stites put it this way: ‘Gumilev stood virtually alone. Russia produced no group of well-known “trench poets” like those of other belligerents.’¹⁰ Nikolai Gumilev (born in 1886), a founding poet of Acmeism and married to Anna Akhmatova, enlisted in 1914. In his collection *The Quiver* (1915), we find this sentiment in ‘The Attack’: ‘It is the heart of Russia / Beating strongly in my breast.’¹¹

More remarkable are without doubt the older writers who enlisted despite their age. In Poland, for example, Artur Oppman (pseudonym Or-Ot) enlisted in Piłsudski’s forces at the age of 47. In Britain, C. E. Montague (born 1867), known for his pacifist views, dyed his hair and lied about his age to pass for a younger man. In Germany, the writer Hermann Löns (born 1866) enlisted, refused a position as war correspondent and demanded a posting to the infantry. The great Symbolist poet Richard Dehmel (born 1863) did the same; in his case, the authorities finally yielded to his determination, aware of the public propaganda value of this enlistment. Another writer and academic, Artur Kutscher, who was mobilised in August 1914, noted in his diary: ‘Dehmel himself has enlisted. His portrait in corporal’s uniform which I have seen in a paper has something tragic about it. This great epoch finds us, ourselves, great.’¹² In France, Henri Barbusse (born 1873) acted similarly: he accompanied his enlistment with an open letter in the newspaper *L’Humanité* explaining his pacifist and internationalist political ideas as justification for his action.

Among volunteers from literary and intellectual circles were foreigners and stateless men living in France, who enlisted in the French army or the Foreign Legion. They took on a special symbolic importance and underlined the universal dimension of the French cause in the war. They included Guillaume Apollinaire (then of Polish nationality and Russian citizenship); two Swiss, Blaise Cendrars and Guillaume Binet-Valmer; the Italians Ricciotto Canudo and Curzio Malaparte (who was only 16); and the American Alan Seeger. Canudo and Cendrars, with others, followed their enlistment by publishing a manifesto calling on foreigners to ‘offer their

arms' to their 'second country' and to gather together in a 'solid bunch of wills put to the service of France'.¹³

Józef Piłsudski's Polish Legions, created on 3 August 1914 in Cracow, constituted another particular case. While initially his idea of fighting alongside the great powers to advance the cause of Poland was quite widely distrusted, Piłsudski managed to convince a certain number of poets and writers to take up arms. The experience of the Legions and the war was often decisive, providing the inspiration for their patriotic efforts, and even those who had embarked on a literary or journalistic career before the war, like Feliks Gwiżdż and above all Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, built their fame on their works on the war. This was stronger in the case of the youngest among them such as Józef Mączka, Józef Andrzej Teslar, Wacław Denhoff-Czarnocki or Tadeusz Biernacki, the main author of the hymn of the Legions *My, Pierwsza Brygada* ('We are the First Brigade'). Poems and songs composed by legionnaire-poets thus played a major role in constructing the myth of the Legions during and after the war – as was clearly understood by Piłsudski, who also gave one of them, Jerzy Żuławski, the task of organising the Legions' propaganda newspaper, *Do Broni* ('To Arms'). Żuławski died of typhus in 1915.

The phenomenon of writers enlisting was not confined to 1914, but to varying degrees reflected the sequence of nations joining the war. In May 1915, when most Italians appeared to be hovering between resolution and resignation, writers and poets of all artistic styles enlisted and joined the forces: for example, Gabriele D'Annunzio (born in 1863) in aviation, or Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Ardengo Soffici, Giuseppe Ungaretti and Mario Carli, who, initially discharged because of his short-sightedness, even managed to join the elite troops of the *Arditi*.

The experience of battle, wounds and suffering rapidly became literary source material. Gradually experience of the front became the factor which distinguished soldier-writers from colleagues at home. Above all, their time at the front made some men into writers for the first time. Experience of the front was not enough on its own, however, to explain the emergence of the moral authority granted to soldier-writers.

Emergence and legitimation of the soldier-writer

This literature of the front, the creation of writers in uniform, was of course not the only literary output of 1914–18. There was plenty of other material: popular songs, dramas, poetry, novels and philosophical essays, written by those who had no direct knowledge of the front or of battle. Still, it is evident that there was a veritable explosion of writing during the war. It became the favoured theme for writers who did not see action, but who wrote about it incessantly. Thus, *All's Well*, a collection of patriotic poems written on the home front by John Oxenham (real name William Arthur Dunkerley, 1852–1941) sold 203,000 copies during the war.¹⁴ Very rare were the soldier-poets – apart from Rupert Brooke – who could claim such success. Much writing was initially about the war as seen from the home front; but slowly the vantage point shifted to first-person narratives. This applies particularly to the opening period: in August 1914 *The Times* of London received at least 100 poems each day; then, in 1914–15, the same number each week,¹⁵ most often written by civilians, or perhaps by combatants before they had undergone their ‘baptism of fire’. In Germany, two critics, Carl Busse and Julius Bab, tried to estimate the number of poems published in the press. According to Bab, the *Berliner Tageszeitung* received 500 poems each day in August 1914. This ‘poetic mobilisation’, in its own terms, would be reflected in a cumulative production of 1.5 million poems in August 1914.¹⁶ Émile Willard, author of an unfinished study on French war poetry of 1914–19 states that he ‘had studied the works of 2,120 writers – combatants or otherwise – and deliberately put aside a large number of them’.¹⁷ Jean Norton Cru¹⁸ studied 246 writers of first-person narrative prose published between 1914 and 1928. Here too, deliberately, the sample was not exhaustive. For Britain, a bibliographic study lists 3,000 volumes of war poetry written by 2,225 authors. Of these, a quarter were combatants and three-quarters non-combatants, half of the latter being women.¹⁹ In German, a recent bibliography lists 7,973 titles of war literature of all kinds published between 1914 and 1939, of which 3,585 appeared in the war years alone.²⁰

It is undeniable that the phenomenon of war literature did indeed exist: ‘torrents of papers’ or ‘masses of texts’.²¹ For German-language philosophy and essays on the war alone, Kurt Flasch counted 13,001 essays published between 1914 and 1932. Thus civilian voices had their own dynamic in wartime. The combatant writers and poets were far from alone in speaking

out during the war. Yet soldier-writers would often see themselves as detached from civilian forms of war literature, and used their subject position to claim a particular qualification to talk about the war and its violence. Despite their small number they became well-known and celebrated ‘narrative authorities’²² – even if they were competing with propagandists employed by military authorities to describe the war in the ‘right’ way.

‘War alone can speak clearly about the war’:²³ thus wrote the soldier-writer Pierre-Alexis Muenier in 1918, in his book *L’angoisse de Verdun*. He asserted the authority of those at the front to speak up and to write of their experience of war, in the name of ‘authenticity’, or of what he termed the ‘truth’ of their experience. This deliberate construction of narrative authority is a constant factor among the soldier-writers who berated the ‘eye-wash’ – *bourrage de crâne* in the French expression – of paid official war reporters, and more generally of the press or writers at home . A specific example was Wilfred Owen’s ironic ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’, written in response to the patriotic poems of the intensely patriotic poet Jessie Pope, notably her ‘Who’s for the Game?’ Beyond the pacifist message of the poem, Owen claims that if propagandists had seen what he had seen, their writing would have been very different. His celebrated poem is a jibe against a writer who did not know what she was talking about:

...

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the
froth-corrupted lungs, Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile,
incurable sores on innocent tongues, – My friend, you would not
tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate
glory, The Old Lie: Dulce et decorum est Pro Patria mori.

This legitimising rhetoric of the soldier’s eyewitness accounts could serve political goals, sometimes diametrically contradictory. Although some reinforced the warrior rhetoric of war culture, others took on a pacifist coloration. For example, a group of young Romanian poets and writers of the left who had experience of the front founded a revue entitled *Despeara* (‘The Awakening’) which later became *Chemarea* (‘The Call’) in which they took strong exception to the patriotic poems of Nicolae Iorga on the

pretext that he had no authority to write poetry on a war of which he had no personal experience.²⁴ Franz Pfemfert, editor of the left-wing and avant-garde journal *Die Aktion*, did the same with his 'Lines from the Battlefield' ('Verse vom Schlachtfeld') in which he was able to pass on a pacifist message legitimised by experience of the front. Yet beyond this deliberately political use of the combatant's word, war writing above all aimed to construct and reinforce the legitimacy of this new figure, the soldier-writer.

This new literary figure was constructed both by the writers themselves and by the press and literary circles which took them to their hearts, published them and assured their success and visibility. Ford Madox Hueffer (later Ford Madox Ford) worked initially in Wellington House on British propaganda service. In 1915 he successfully published *The Good Soldier*, which was not a war novel. He then volunteered and reached the front in France in July 1916. In the Battle of the Somme he suffered shell shock and some memory loss. This short but traumatic experience of the front modified his understanding of the war, since the tone in his tetralogy *Parade's End* (1924–8) was entirely different from his earlier novel.

Others moved in the opposite direction, for example Richard Dehmel, who after a period at the front was posted to the censor's office. Walther Bloem, a successful nationalist German writer, was posted to propaganda work after suffering a light wound. The Expressionist playwright Fritz von Unruh, from a military family background, had abandoned a military career before the war to devote his life to literature. At the declaration of war he enlisted and served as a cavalry lieutenant. In 1916 he was summoned by the Crown Prince to write a history of the Battle of Verdun; but instead of a work of propaganda, he produced a strongly pacifist Expressionist novel. He only escaped court-martial thanks to well-placed contacts, and the novel was published in 1919 under the title *Opfergang* ('sacrifice'). Guillaume Apollinaire was also posted to the censorship service after having been wounded, and the Prague writer Egon Erwin Kisch was transferred to propaganda work after a serious wound. In 1922 he published his memoirs of the front, *Als Soldat im Prager Korps*, but it was above all in 1929 that their reissue under a different title, *Schreib das auf Kisch!* met with great success. This type of trajectory was far from unusual and to some extent it complicates the opposition between writers of the front line and authors of propaganda.

Experience of the front line undoubtedly explains, at least in part, the emergence of the particular genre we term war literature. Confrontation with a radically new and strikingly violent existence could encourage writing in some who by writing were liberated either from boredom or from horror. On 4 June 1915 Roland Dorgelès was in despair: ‘But the days are long, the hours very many.’²⁵ After the war he said this: ‘I was open-mouthed, stupid, overwhelmed by it . . . So I had fled my own world, broken all my ties, I believed I was taking the unknown track of a world turned upside down, and on the very day of my departure, I already turned into a war writer.’ In civilian life, he was a tinsmith.²⁶

The newspapers were full of advertisements for pens. Although they were also designed for letter-writing, it was above all for the diaries and notebooks that were another example of the spreading practice of intimate writing at the front. Thus an advertisement in *L’Illustration* of 10 April 1915 promoted a ‘pocket diary’ with integrated pen enabling ‘. . . at the front . . . to note down the incidents of daily life’, on sale at a special price for mobilised men, at 2.75 francs instead of 3.5.²⁷ Similarly, in Germany it was possible to buy a diary-notebook for 1914–15 with the flag of the Reich on the cover and the title ‘Was ich sah und erlebte’ (‘What I have seen and experienced’).²⁸

The emergence of soldiers’ broadsheets or trench newspapers helped stimulate the written literary expression of war experience. For new writers, the newspapers designed for army readership, created by soldiers for soldiers, were very often their first experience of publication. In two years, the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper produced for American soldiers in France would publish 100,000 lines of poetry, mostly written by combatants.²⁹ The same paper asserted that ‘The Army’s Poets are its true interpreters –. The Army Poets are the Spokesmen of the Army’s soul.’³⁰

But the home front had its own role to play in the creation of war literature. Newspaper editors, critics, judges of literary prizes and writers at the rear also helped to establish the reputation of the front-line writers. Often the daily press, however decried as blind by the combatants themselves, played a pioneering role and published soldiers’ poems, narratives and novels. Barbusse’s *Le feu* was published in *L’œuvre* in serial form before its publication as a full-length book at the end of 1916. It

immediately won the Prix Goncourt and enormous success – more than 200,000 copies were sold during the war.

After the confused period at the outbreak of war, the reorganisation of literary circles brought a growing awareness that the war was going to last and that the public would not be satisfied with only the censored daily news in the press to keep them informed on the war. The fate of mobilised men became central, particularly since the war in 1914 was marked by particularly heavy casualties. And who better than soldiers themselves to speak of it? Some even reacted more rapidly. Already in September 1914 the big Stuttgart publisher, Cotta, was seeking out writers of war poems with a view to the Christmas festivities. Meanwhile, also in 1914, Cotta's Berlin competitor had founded the *Ullstein-Kriegsbücher* ('Ullstein War Books'), a series of substantial books in pocket size, at reasonable prices with very large print runs (several tens or even hundreds of thousands of copies). A large proportion of its titles presented the experience of war, in the broadest sense. In 1915, the French publisher Berger-Levrault created three collections devoted to the war, one of them specifically dedicated to narratives of personal experience: *La guerre – les récits des témoins*. Its competitor Hachette followed suit with its collection *Mémoires et récits de guerre*.³¹ These publishers set out in search of generally unknown authors for their collections, provided that they were writing about the war and that they were, or had been, at the front. Similarly, Sidgwick & Jackson and Galloway Kyle (under the name of Erskine Macdonald Ltd.) published numerous slight books of poems by novice writers.³² With few scruples, Kyle took advantage of the strong wish among young poets to see their work published to impose draconian contractual conditions; sometimes he did not pay their royalties.

For other publishers, some of their successes paid the rent, like Hodder & Stoughton with their publication between 1916 and 1919 of five war novels by Herman Cyril McNeile, better known under his pseudonym of 'Sapper'. Although modern or Georgian war poetry was generally considered the genre par excellence of British war literature, Sapper's short stories showed that there was indeed war prose, which was responsible for considerable bookshop sales: his first volume, *Sergeant Michael Cassidy* (1916) sold more than 135,000 copies in 1916–18. The other volumes were greeted with similar success – to be multiplied many times after the war for the author, a

decorated captain. He went on to publish more novels and thrillers based on his regular hero, Bulldog Drummond, a demobilised officer.³³

Most publishers extended their collections to include literature from the front. This happened with the Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue française in Paris, Kurt Wolff (specialising in Expressionist literature) in Leipzig or Eugen Diederichs in Iena who published the worker-poets (*Arbeiterdichter*) turned soldier-poets (*Soldatendichter*): in particular, Heinrich Lersch, Max Barthel and Karl Bröger. In London, Edward Arnold devoted thirty books to the war, in the broad sense, in their catalogue of 169 titles published between 1914 and 1918.³⁴ Publishers did not hesitate to promote their authors' contribution to the war as a sales argument. This happened, notably, with Henri Barbusse's *Le feu*: the news release to bookshops noted that he was mentioned in dispatches, rather than citing extracts from the book or the first reviews, as was customary at the time. Next came a polemic in which the *Mercure de France* came to the defence of the author:

The people at the rear who have passed the war softly at home are tempted to blame the writers in the name of pure literature. On the contrary, the young writers who have valiantly fought in the war, who have suffered, who have endured in the trenches, have accepted as very natural the gesture which embeds glorious memories in their literature.³⁵

The stance taken by this review illustrates how difficult it was for the critics to judge this new literature from the front, especially when its literary qualities were not evident. The editor of the *Mercure de France* put it this way:

But there is that death which is simmering at this moment in the trenches . . . And then, who will dare to judge it, this literature from people who have fought in the war? There will be a lost genre, that of the literary critic . . . For a long time there will reign a terrible indulgence, and the bad writers with ill-founded boldness will know how to profit from this indulgence.³⁶

This in no way prevented the *Mercure de France*, even its director Rémy de Gourmont in person, from praising even mediocre works, provided that they were written by soldier-writers. Even if not all critics bowed down before the works and writers of the front, for the most part they observed them with a certain degree of respect bordering on what Gourmont termed indulgence.

The award of wartime literary prizes also reflected this ‘indulgence’. In France, the Prix Goncourt was routinely awarded during the war to soldier-writers and works about the war. The juries of the Prix even took good care to represent all political tendencies and the ‘diverse spiritual families of France’, to take the title of Maurice Barrès’s book of 1917. In Germany, the Kleist Prize operated in a similar way.³⁷

Many writers or university professors did not hesitate to write prefaces to books by completely unknown war writers, thereby legitimating their standing. In this way, the French historian Ernest Lavisse contributed prefaces to three works by soldier-writers, elevating claims as to their future documentary value. The specialist in this domain was the French writer Maurice Barrès, even though he produced his share of ‘eye-wash’ in his daily diary in the *Echo de Paris*. He was even nicknamed the ‘nightingale of the slaughter’, and the Paris Dadaists gave their judgement on him in a mock trial in May 1921. For all that, he was sought out by writers from the front, or by their publishers, to write a preface for their works, and in particular had a considerable influence in the reputation of Jacques Péricard. A previously unknown journalist, Péricard wrote three books on his front-line experience in the war. Afterwards he became a leading figure in the conservative branch of the French veterans’ movement, notably as the inventor of the ritual of the daily relighting of the flame at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Paris. It was Barrès who was responsible for the fame of one of the most popular French war legends, which Péricard had himself reported, the legend known as *Debout les morts!* – ‘On your feet, dead men!’ – in which the dead rose to come to the help of Péricard, left isolated in combat, helped by the dead to repel the Germans in an assault on the Bois Brûlé in April 1915.

In France, we can also see the ‘gunner-poet’ from the pen of the critic Rémy de Gourmont, evoking Guillaume Apollinaire – who himself spoke

of ‘soldier-men of letters’. In 1916 Maurice Barrès mentioned the ‘soldier-writers’, but gradually it was the expression ‘combatant-writers’³⁸ that became standardised in French. From November 1914 a monthly *Bulletin des écrivains de 1914* was launched to act as the link between mobilised writers and the home front. It reported military speeches and literary news and published obituaries of writers killed in action: the concept of the combatant-writer brought together writers-turned-soldiers and soldiers-turned-writers.

In Germany too, the critics presented the concept of *Frontdichtung* (poetry of the front), or of *Soldatendichtung* (soldiers’ poetry). In Britain the expression was ‘soldier-poets’. When the United States joined the war, similar terms soon appeared, for example in a 1917 anthology published in Boston which included a section devoted to the ‘Poets Militant’, from men at the front.³⁹ Semantic slippage also occurred within pre-existing thinking: *Kriegsdichtung* no longer indicated only poetry about the war, but also sometimes work from places where the war was being played out. The same phenomenon occurred with ‘war poetry’.

These terms, serving to designate and to legitimise, survived the war. In France, after the publication of the *Bulletin*, an association of combatant-writers, the Association des écrivains combattants (the AEC) was founded in June 1919. Initially representing eighty founding members, in 1921 it had 264 members. A similar association was created in Belgium in liaison with the French one: the Association des écrivains combattants belges. They also gathered round the *Renaissance d’Occident*, a journal created in 1920. Maurice Gauchez, author of the first Belgian war narrative, *De la Meuse à l’Yser, ce que j’ai vu* (1915), was one of the founders. In Germany, the Nazis, aware of the advantage to be gained from the established legitimacy of the *Frontdichter* (front poets), revived the concept in 1934–5 to found an association of such poets in their turn: Die Mannschaft (‘The team’).⁴⁰ Moreover, Hitler himself, despite exaggerating his front-line service,⁴¹ liked to present himself as a veteran soldier whose *Mein Kampf* (1924) was supposed to be his war narrative. Die Mannschaft, even if Hitler was not a formal member, did not fail to mention him in its publications. Of course, with Hitler, it was a matter above all of exploiting symbolic capital capable of making more glorious an identity allegedly forged at the front.

The death of the poet

The death of writers and poets was an essential element in the legitimation of war literature. Repeated references to their ‘sacrifice’ reinforced the writers’ contribution to the war effort and gave to the cause a quasi-universal dimension. Later, however, the death of poets and writers became the symbol of the irredeemable ‘dead loss’,⁴² of the 10 million men who died in the war, and the loss of any meaning in the war at all.

It is significant that poets and writers, particularly those who died, could be considered to be visionaries proclaiming the grandeur of their sacrifice for the nation, and at a later date the insane or pointless nature of this same sacrifice, even if this latter usage was restricted to a minority during the conflict. Still, it is apparent that a discursive field grew up around the enlistment and death of writers and artists. This rhetoric served to give the national cause a quasi-transcendent character, arising out of the sacred nature of the soldier-poet’s sacrifice. What better expression of this motif than ‘The Soldier’ by Rupert Brooke? In words still iconic, he wrote:

If I should die, think only this of me: That there’s some corner of a
foreign field That is for ever England. There shall be In that rich
earth a richer dust concealed.

Less well known in the Anglo-Saxon world is Heinrich Lersch’s poem ‘Soldatenabschied’ (‘The Soldier’s Departure’), which in Germany reached a comparable degree of fame. The message was no different:

We are free, Father, we are free!
At the depths of our heart, life takes fire, If we were not free, we could
not leave.
We are free, Father, we are free!
You yourself, did you not once shout out beneath the bullets: Germany
must live, even if we must die!

But new meanings emerged to transform this trope. In the explicitly pacifist narratives of the war, enlistment could as well designate the generosity of idealistic youth, their naivety contrasting with the manipulative cynicism of

those – political, military, religious and intellectual authorities – who betrayed their trust. This type of narrative was already present from the outbreak of the war in Romain Rolland's 'Au-dessus de la mêlée' published by the *Journal de Genève* on 22 September 1914. Addressing the young Europeans who were departing for the war, he wrote:

You are doing your duty. But others, have they done theirs? Let us dare to tell the truth to the elders of these young men, to their moral guides, to the masters of opinion, to their religious or secular leaders, to the thinkers, to the socialist tribunes. You have in your hands such living riches, these treasures of heroism! On what do you spend them? This youth, greedy for self-sacrifice, what aim have you offered to its generous devotion? The mutual throat-slitting of these young heroes!

Without necessarily having an explicit political dimension, the death of the poet could equally occur in a tragic and political narrative transforming the soldier-poet into more than a martyr for his nation, in the style of a Theodor Körner (known as 'the German Tartaeus', and killed fighting against Napoleon in 1813), or equally into an idealistic and romantic hero like Byron, dead at Missolonghi in Greece in 1828, or Adam Mickiewicz, who died of cholera in Constantinople in 1855 while he was preparing to form a Polish Legion to join the Crimean War. Jay Winter has shown to what point this romantic dimension embodied in the soldier-writer emerged as an interpretative project providing faces to honour in a war of anonymous industrial death.⁴³ This metanarrative took hold so powerfully that even Wilfred Owen carried around a photograph of Brooke, while Vera Brittain, although suffering the loss of her fiancé and her brother, and who knew the horror of the front from her nursing service, bore witness that Brooke's verse was indeed read in the trenches.⁴⁴

In making them the 'prophets of their own death',⁴⁵ in the phrase of Edwin Redslob, who published an anthology of twenty-eight German writers killed in the war or its aftermath, the death in action of writers made them into romantic heroes and helped to ensure their fame, sometimes long after the war was over. This discourse, already present during the war itself and generally associated with a patriotic reading of the fate of these men,

changed in the post-war period, as the meaning of their sacrifice faded. Pity displaced honour over time.

Rupert Brooke was already well known before his death: *The Times* had published some of his poems. Above all, ‘The Soldier’ had been quoted in a sermon in St Paul’s Cathedral at Easter 1915, a few days before his death of septicaemia on the eve of the landing at Gallipoli. The echo of his death for his nation – disregarding the fact that an infected mosquito bite was the immediate cause – was immense. In June his poems were published in a collection which sold 300,000 copies.⁴⁶ He then became the model which contributed to the establishment of soldiers’ poetry as a genre, sanctifying death for the nation.

The United States in turn had its ‘poet dead in the war’, even before it entered the conflict. Alan Seeger, who had enlisted in the French Foreign Legion, was killed on the Somme on 4 July 1916. He, like Brooke, had foretold his own death in a poem, which became iconic just like Brooke’s:

I have a rendezvous with Death At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade And apple-blossoms fill
the air – I have a rendezvous with Death When Spring brings
back blue days and fair.

...

And I to my pledged word am true I shall not fail that rendezvous.

His poems and letters from the war were collected and published in December 1916. The success was not as spectacular as Brooke’s, but he too had met his ‘rendezvous’ – note the romanticism of the word, contrasting with later poetic titles about ‘meetings’ with the dead or with death. In a single year seven editions and 21,275 copies were sold. By the end of the war the total had reached 38,000.⁴⁷ Consider too the case of the Bulgarian Symbolist poet Dimcho Debelyanov, who re-enlisted in 1916 after the Balkan wars of 1912–13 and was killed the same year. He too was virtually unknown: his poems and letters from the war, collected and published posthumously in 1920, brought him fame.

During the war, and then after it, a veritable cult arose devoted to dead writers, of whom the high priests were very often other writers, soldiers or

otherwise. The case of the German August Stramm illustrates this well. Born in 1874, Stramm was called up to serve as a captain in the reserves. He was one of the oldest representatives of the Expressionist movement and also one of its most radical poets. Having fought on the French front, he was killed on 1 September 1915 not far from Horodec on the Eastern Front. As soon as his death was known, *Der Sturm* announced it on the cover of its September issue. Across the whole page, five lines were presented by Herwarth Walden, the paper's editor:

Captain August Stramm fell on the second of September in Russia.
The soldier and the horseman. The guide.
You, great artist and very dear friend.
You, eternally resplendent.

The obituary notice on the front page took the form of a poem. The four last phrases, without a verb, the repetition of 'Du', the familiar form of 'you', the leitmotif of Stramm's poems and plays,⁴⁸ reflect the form of his poems of death. Walden honoured him in a curious imitation of the dead poet's style.

Subsequently, Walden and the authors of *Sturm* constantly defended Stramm's memory when attacked by conservative critics, so much so that it is reasonable to speak of the 'canonisation of August Stramm'.⁴⁹ Walden also organised *Sturm-Abende* ('*Sturm* evenings') which never failed to honour the revue's dead, notably Stramm and Peter Baum (killed in 1916). The first of these evenings was moreover a *Gedächtnisfeier* (commemorative ceremony) which took place exactly a year after Stramm's death with praise for him and readings of his poetry. Subsequently, each of the evenings included the reading of at least one of his poems. The myth was fed by the ritual.

The same happened in Italy. As shown by Oliver Janz, there were more than 2,000 books of homage (*opuscoli di necrologia*) published during the war and afterwards as acts of homage for the fallen, the *caduti*. Writers, together with military heroes (termed 'martyrs') such as Cesare Battisti, who was hanged by the Austrians, were central to this process of heroisation of the dead, shading into canonisation. Twenty-four of these little books, published between 1917 and 1938, were devoted to the war

poet Vittorio Locchi, author of the famous ‘Sagra di Santa Gorizia’ (‘Festival of Santa Gorizia’), which recounts the Italian assault on Gorizia in August 1916. He was killed in 1917. Eighteen were dedicated to Renato Serra, another writer killed in the war (in 1915) and five to Scipio Slapater (killed in 1915), over the same period. Slapater and Serra also figured in volume xv of the national collection of the work of the creators of victory (*Opere nazionale artefici della Vittoria*) published between 1922 and 1925 in the category of hero-poets (*poeti eroei*). In publishing their letters or extracts from their notebooks, these books of mourning were often also the opportunity to turn dead combatants into celebrated dead writers. In Italy, as elsewhere, death at the front consecrated the combatant as both hero and writer of the war.⁵⁰

Elsewhere, the publication of collected letters fulfilled this function of posthumous literary memory. We are here at the limits of the ‘war literature’ genre, since the writers of these letters were not conscious of creating a literary work. Nonetheless, such publications, often with a preface, formed part of what we could call the cult of the war letter: that is, the shift into the public arena of personal correspondence considered at the time for its testimonial and also political and aesthetic value, with which they were endowed by the preface writers or the publishers. The German professor Philipp Witkop collected the letters of students killed in the war: his book went through many editions and many ideological interpretations during and after the war.⁵¹ In 1920 the Bank of Commerce of Canada published an anthology of war letters from each of its 258 employees killed in the war (out of 1,701 voluntary enlistments).⁵²

In France, homage to writers killed in the war took on a systematic character.⁵³ Although a veritable cult was devoted to Péguy, killed in 1914 in the Battle of the Marne, even the least-known writers were already benefiting during the war from a quasi-routine homage. In 1916 Maurice Barrès and Carlos Larronde published, with Larousse, a first *Anthologie des écrivains français morts pour la patrie* in four small volumes. The Société des gens de lettres even had a commemorative medal struck for the families of dead writers. Gradually a full-scale obituary discourse on the dead writer became established. Often it was written that he died without suffering: the euphemism was, ‘a bullet in the forehead’:

And he stood up, as if defying the machine-gun, as if to summon this death which he glorified in his poems. At the same instant, a murderous bullet broke this noble forehead. He fell, on his side, without a cry, with a faint groan, having had the ultimate vision of the victory so hoped for and finally close at hand.⁵⁴

Whether or not this was accurate was not important. Even Apollinaire, who died of the Spanish flu on 9 November 1918, was very frequently represented with his head bandaged following injury. The wound was better fitted to sacrificial death than the commonplace influenza.⁵⁵ The wound in the head and in the forehead, apart from rendering death in action aseptic and giving an immediate and painless death which preserved the physical integrity of the body, was also a 'beautiful death' facing the enemy. Above all, the 'bullet in the forehead' was evoked for its symbolic dimension. It is the seat of the poet's creative powers that was struck:

And see how in the fighting vengeful for the vile affront, A barbaric bullet has profaned this brow
Once kissed by the loving and thoughtful Muse.⁵⁶

In introducing the theme of profanation by a 'barbaric bullet', the poet adds to the symbolism of the moment a metonymic reading. This bullet, which penetrated the brow of the poet, is Germany itself violating the integrity of the nation – this nation to which assuredly not only the muses but also God would reach down to help the soldiers at the moment of 'vengeful combat' to wash away the 'vile affront' of this defilement. This obituary rhetoric was preserved after the war: the AEC heaped praises on the dead writers, publishing an anthology in 1924–6 containing 560 contributions. The names of these writers were shown on two bronze plaques unveiled in the Pantheon in 1927, and a forest for writers killed in the war was planted at Lamalou-les-Bains in the south of France in 1931. Beyond the posthumous fame of an individual, death at the front, and the way in which it was narrated, often by other writers, combatants or not, also did much to impose the figure of the soldier-writer as the 'spokesman for the Nation in Uniform, and from the present moment'.⁵⁷

Legacies and transformations

The death of the soldier-writers had its own legacy. Notably it contributed to the literary survival of these writers, beyond the uncertainties and loss of public interest in this type of literature. Geert Buelens even maintains that if the Flemish poets of the war fell rapidly into oblivion, it was essentially because they survived the war. Of course there are many other reasons, notably political and linguistic divisions. The review *Renaissance d'Occident* promoted by Maurice Gauchez and other Belgian soldier-writers appeared only in French. And we must note the nature of the Belgian experience of the war, with battle a much less central event than occupation or exile. The suddenness of the invasion meant that the Belgian army was able to mobilise only 20 per cent of its men of the appropriate age.⁵⁸

But writers' death in action cannot on its own explain the legacy of their works. All the former belligerent nations experienced, in varying degrees, a second wave of war literature in which the writers were very often former combatants. Although the work of dead writers continued to be republished, new works also appeared, sometimes written long after the war by authors who had not previously spoken on the subject, or only marginally: for example, in French, Gabriel Chevallier, *La peur* (1930), Jean Giono, *Le grand troupeau* (1931), Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1932); in America, Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), Charles Yale Harrison, *Generals Die in Bed* (1930), William March, *Company K* (1933); or, of course, in Germany, Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* in 1929. Others who had already published during the war, like the Australian Frederic Manning, *Her Privates We* (1930), or the English writers Richard Aldington, *Death of a Hero* (1929), Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (1929) and Siegfried Sassoon, *Memories of an Infantry Officer* (1930), also returned to their experiences of the war at the end of the 1920s. There had been much of importance published earlier in the 1920s, but war literature became big business by the end of the decade.

Even in the case of Russia which had had fewer poets and writers at the front between 1914 and 1917, and above all despite an official historiography which glorified revolution not war, narratives and novels appeared which tried to interpret the war of 1914–17 and represent the

reality of Russian combatants' experiences in the war. Exhuming this little-known literature (apart from the books of Isaak Babel, Ilya Ehrenburg and Mikhail Aleksandrovich Sholokhov), Karen Petrone shows that there was indeed a Russian war literature: for example, Mosei Georgievich Gromov, *For St George* (1927), Sergei Klychkov, *The Sugary German* (1925) or Vladimir Lidin, *The Grave of the Unknown Soldier* (1931), a novel which tells the story of the Unknown Soldier buried beneath the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and who is depicted as a Russian Jew.⁵⁹ This literature set out notably to represent violence and male–female relations, to question Russian national identity or to set this history within that of the Revolution. This was the case in particular of Mikhail Aleksandrovich Sholokhov, who had joined the Bolsheviks in 1918 at the age of 13, in *Quiet Flows the Don* (1934).

In all cases, the writers of war literature were not content solely with 'witnessing' or documenting the life of the soldier at the front. In the telling of battle and military life, in setting them in a narrative, they interpreted and gave meaning to the experience of the war. But this is not all. Leonard V. Smith goes further.⁶⁰ Exploring the case of the French, he shows that the war narrative played an essential role in attempting to 'master', to 'control' experience while, precisely, these 'genuine experiences of the death suffered, of the mutilation and of the death inflicted, resist control'. In order to overcome this destabilisation of the narrative by its focus on dismemberment and annihilation, many authors then turned to broader narrative models to make the war comprehensible and to restabilise their own sense of self. When they are unable to do so, other narrative strategies – those of traumatic memory – appear. By its iterative character, this form of remembrance gives the war a never-ending aspect.

In effect, war literature was written in the search for a stable identity, a subject position they could live with, something usable by men who lived through violence and horror. Stabilising narratives of unstable memories are inherently filled with tension – a tension, Smith believes, to be at the heart of the construction of the identity of the 'trench combatant', of his masculinity,⁶¹ and of what was understood as 'war experience'. This form of self-narrative, or narrative of self-hood in combat, was always fragile, and had limits bordering on trauma. This is why traumatic memories are at the heart of the narratives of many iconic war writers: Wilfred Owen,

Siegfried Sassoon, Ivor Gurney, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Henri Barbusse, Jean Giono and Walter Hasenclever, to name but a few.

There are many lesser-known writers whose work is illuminated by Smith's approach . The Bulgarian poet Geo Milev, author of poems in Bulgarian and German, also tried to give an account of the shattering effects of war experience. Very seriously wounded, he published war poems, and in 1918 a violent anti-war indictment *Grozni Prozi* ('Ugly Writings in Prose'), containing texts on his war and on the German Revolution which he observed in Berlin. Subsequently he was haunted by it, as can be seen in a long poem in German in 1923, 'Meine Seele' (' My Soul'). In it he described notably what appears to be a dispossession of self provoked by trauma:

...

My soul is the deaf sigh of a hungry people
My soul is a pile of
dismembered bodies
At the centre of a sea of blood
In which a
shell explodes
My soul is barbed wire rusty with blood
On which
a dead soldier hangs
My soul is not my soul

...

This disorienting, fragmented and traumatic dimension of war led Walter Benjamin to write that it was not felt as experience at all; in that dead end, the war narrative thus reached its own limits:

With the world war, we have seen the beginning of an evolution which, since, has never stopped. Was it not observed, at the moment of the armistice, that men came back dumb from the battlefield – not enriched, but impoverished in communicable experience? What was widespread ten years later in the flood of war books had nothing to do with any experience.⁶²

Walter Benjamin reiterated this claim in his comments on the war books of Ernst Jünger . War literature touched on what was communicable and what was not communicable about the war.

Some historians have argued that the cultural demobilisation of war literature was reflected in a period of latency and relative silence lasting

about ten years (from 1918–19 to 1928–9). Thereafter a new phase of war writing emerged, in a new period of display characterised by fictionalisation of the experience of war, particularly evident in the success of the many war novels with either a direct or an indirect pacifist message, of the kind Remarque offered in *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

This periodisation is too clear-cut to be true. The process of cultural demobilisation began immediately after the war, and not in the second half of the 1920s; but in many countries, particularly but perhaps not only among the defeated, it remained broadly incomplete. Many of the topoi that came out of the war were capable of surviving beyond 1918, as Ernst Jünger's writing shows.

But it is true that the market for war books shrank in the early 1920s. Jünger initially had to publish *Storms of Steel* at his own expense in 1920 before it was taken up in 1922 by Mittler, a Berlin publisher who specialised in military literature. Publishers complained bitterly of stagnation and authors talked of their difficulties in finding publishers for their work in the immediate post-war years.⁶³ However, this confirmed fall in the number of titles published is not the whole story. In some countries, remarkable books appeared during the early 1920s, such as *Kurvari Petna* ('Blood Stains'), the war diary in Expressionist prose by the Bulgarian Vladimir Musakov, published in 1920,⁶⁴ or *One Man's Initiation* and *Three Soldiers* by John Dos Passos (1920 and 1921 respectively), *The Enormous Room* by e.e. cummings in 1922, and *Parade's End* by Ford Madox Ford between 1924 and 1926. In Germany, Ernst Jünger published his war books during this period, though it took some time to find a public outside the world of the veterans.⁶⁵ Similarly, without reaching the peaks of literary art, some books also met with remarkable success in these years, such as *Mes cloîtres dans la tempête* by the Belgian Franciscan priest Martial Lekeux which became by far the most popular personal Belgian narrative of war.⁶⁶ Published in 1922, its sales reached 115,000 in 1926. It should be noted, however, that Lekeux blended mysticism with bellicosity and was in no sense a pacifist. But some efforts were completely unsuccessful. *Jusqu'à l'Yser*, by Max Deauville, poignant but also ironic and distanced in relation to the warrior rhetoric, sold, according to the admissions of its author, only twelve copies between 1917 and 1937. Even these figures should be taken with caution, since in 1934 Deauville issued a second edition of his book in

Belgium and published several other books on the war.⁶⁷ His second book, *La boue des Flandres*, was even translated into Italian in 1931.

The works of ‘Sapper’ – notably his thrillers – continued to sell relatively well in Britain between 1921 and 1931.⁶⁸ But the German book market offers mixed evidence of public demand for war books. Clearly the political divide occasioned by the defeat and the post-mortems about who was responsible for it created different market ‘niches’, some pacifist, some bellicose. One estimate has it that pacifism, despite the enormous success of *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1,200,000 copies sold in the German edition alone) represented in volume only 5 per cent of the market for war books. Meanwhile, the war diary of the German air ace Manfred von Richthofen did even better than Remarque, with sales of 1,226,000 copies.⁶⁹ Revising the traditional dichotomy between nationalists and pacifists, Jörg Vollmer has proposed a new typology of war literature. He divides it into three groups: the orthodox, located as the direct successor to the patriotic tradition that emerged from the Great War, the heretics of the left, and the heretics of ultra-nationalism, each reinterpreting the conflict in different ways determined by their political stance. However, he too concludes that the heretics of ultra-nationalism and the patriots far outnumbered and outsold the works of men on the heretical left.⁷⁰

Other scholars emphasise formal traditionalism or conservatism in the body of war literature published in the interwar years. This was true even of American war literature, in which the current of disillusionment, while evident, as Steven Trout puts it, should not be exaggerated.⁷¹ Jane Potter makes a similar claim with reference to British war literature:

Our culturally constructed and selective memory of the poetry of the Great War does not reflect what was in fact a ‘very small part of the nation’s poetic response’. We should reasonably pay attention to those poems of patriotism and of protest equally, poems which, while not celebrating the War, do not wholly condemn its aims, and which see the events of those years as ones which tested the spirit of a nation, while causing it almost unimaginable grief in the process. The poetry of the Great War was generated across a continuum in which protest and patriotism, modernists and Georgians, propaganda and remembrance, humour and pathos, coexisted, if uneasily.⁷²

However, Jay Winter has stressed that there is no connection between radicalism in writing styles, usually termed modernism, and a turn against war.⁷³ Certain modernists, such as the Italian Futurists, were able to retain a belligerent imagination, while some of the most traditional forms of prose with religious themes such as the Apocalypse – very present in war literature like Jean Giono's *Le grand troupeau* – did carry a pacifist message.

The debate which simmered in France in 1929–31 around the publication of Jean Norton Cru's two books *Témoins* (1929) and *Du témoignage* (1930) illustrates this well. Cru, himself a veteran of the war, refused to judge the works that came out of the war – even the novels – according to artistic and aesthetic criteria. This was principally why he refused to take war poetry into consideration. In so doing, he rejected the terminology of 'soldier-writer' and preferred the concepts of 'witnesses' and 'testimony' which in his opinion carried a moral dimension. It was not a matter of invoking authenticity or claiming personal experience to write honestly about the war, but to seek the truth, which, once disclosed, must enlighten the reader and bring him to oppose war with all his strength. His truth-seeker, his 'good witness' was a moral witness:⁷⁴

The observer witness, trustworthy, gifted in the clear expression of what he observes and feels, soon adapts his senses and his mind while still maintaining himself in a state of active response to his situation. He sees clearly at the same time as he protests, he notes faithfully at the same time as he asserts himself . . . The most contagious legends will not contaminate this witness . . . and his vision of the war, incomplete but faithful, will have an astounding resemblance to the vision of other soldiers belonging to other sectors, to other periods, to other wars, witnesses equally incomplete but equally as faithful as himself.⁷⁵

According to Cru:

If we veterans, if we could depict our war with enough truth and art for the men of tomorrow, reading us, to feel in their hearts the sufferings sufficiently close to those which we have felt in reality, then the

problem of permanent peace would be solved, war would become impossible, not materially, but more powerfully: impossible to conceive, to accept in the mind.⁷⁶

Jean Norton Cru thus proposed a normative redefinition of the role and even of the identity of the war writer. By no means did all veterans agree, and a lively polemic followed the publication of his two books. At exactly the same time, there had been heated exchanges in Britain over books by Richard Aldington and Robert Graves, and in Germany over *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Cru's *Du témoignage* was very quickly translated into German (in 1932), though not into English. Such polemics illustrate that what soldier-writers wrote mattered; people took them and their works very seriously. This was not just a national but a transnational phenomenon.

Towards a transnational history of war literature: possibilities and limitations

Until recently war literature has been examined almost exclusively within a narrow national framework. Cru wrote only of French writers, Fussell of English ones. It is understandable that historians have stuck to their own language in the search for the ways in which soldier-writers played with and occasionally subverted their own national codes. Yet a transnational history of war literature and the soldier-writers is necessary. There has been an increasing number of comparative studies in this field, but it is possible to go further. After all, the soldier-writer was a global figure and the boom in war books straddled the world. Film helped to spread their messages and increase the sales of their books. The international success of *All Quiet on the Western Front* helped turn war literature into film scripts. In 1930, seven war films appeared on American screens, three of them based on literary works: *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Case of Sergeant Grischa* by Arnold Zweig and *Blaze o'Glory* by Thomas Boyd. Two years later, Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* came to the screen. In Europe, *Les croix de bois* by Roland Dorgelès (1931) and *Vier von der infanterie* (entitled *Westfront 1918* in English) by Ernst Johannsen (1930) were also presented in film versions.⁷⁷

In turn, these films fuelled the market for war books. In France, the success of Remarque's book possibly inspired Georges Valois, a soldier-writer and publisher, who in 1930 launched the collection 'Combattants européens' specifically dedicated to books in translation. It was directed by another soldier-writer, José Germain, who was one of the founders of the AEC. The collection published seven books in 1930, whose authors were a Belgian (Max Deauville), a Czech (Čestmír Jeřábek), a Russian (the nurse Sofia Fedortchenko), a German (Adolfo Artur Kuhnert), an Italian (Paolo Monelli), an Austrian (Joseph Roth) and a Portuguese (Pina de Moraes).

Yet it would be wrong to think that *All Quiet on the Western Front* marked the origin of the transnational spread of war literature. In France, *Opfergang* by Fritz von Unruh had been translated into French in 1924 by Jacques Benoist-Méchin under the title *Verdun* and went through eighteen reprintings (18,000 copies). In Russia, translations into Russian not only of Erich Maria Remarque but also of Henri Barbusse, Ernest Hemingway, T. E. Lawrence, Arnold Zweig and Jaroslav Hašek were circulating in the 1920s and 30s.⁷⁸

The Czech writer Hašek's hero *The Good Soldier Schweik* even appears to have been ahead of Remarque's Paul Bäumer as a truly transnational literary (anti-)hero of the Great War. His adventures, published in Czech in 1921–3, in German in 1926 and in French in 1932, were brought to the screen twice before the Second World War, in 1926 and 1931. The first truly transnational success of a soldier-writer, however, was that of Henri Barbusse and *Le feu*, indicating that the cultural transfer of war literature happened well before the boom in war books in 1928–32. Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon had read Barbusse during the war. *Le feu* appeared in English entitled *Under Fire*, in June 1917. There is good evidence of intertextuality between certain passages in *Le feu* and several poems by Owen, including 'Dulce et Decorum Est'.⁷⁹ Sassoon introduced his volume *Counter-Attack* with a quote from *Le feu* in 1918.

Barbusse was even published in German during the war, as was Georges Duhamel – in Switzerland by the publisher Max Rascher in the collection *Europäische Bibliothek* (European Library). Richard Dehmel quotes Barbusse in the introduction to his war diary, published under the title *Zwischen Volk und Menschheit* (1919). Later, Ernst Jünger also referred to

him. We are clearly dealing with a wartime and post-war circulation of writings by soldiers whose moral authority made sense to other soldiers and to veterans after the Armistice.

The circulation of war literature was even more easily achieved within the Anglo-Saxon world. Anthologies of war poetry in English took care to publish the work of poets from all parts of the Empire, and from 1917 – and even earlier in the case of Alan Seeger – of American poets. The speed with which *Le feu* was translated into English also indicates that the market was there for what soldiers had to say in fiction or in poetry. Cru worried about the veracity of such accounts, but readers were more interested in what may be termed moral veracity – the courage to speak out about the horrors of war and about the dignity of the men who lived through it.

Such patterns of circulation and cultural transfer existed within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. War writing thus played a perceptible role in the diffusion of Expressionism in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian poet and graphic artist Geo Milev had suffered serious facial wounds – he lost an eye and was permanently disfigured. He was cared for in Berlin where his doctor, the Dutch specialist Johannes Esser, was a keen collector of modern art. Milev, who was multi-lingual, met Expressionists in Berlin and contributed to the pacifist review, *Die Aktion*. He translated the avant-garde writers of Central Europe and Russia, including, notably, Alexander Blok. On his return to Bulgaria, he created two Expressionist journals⁸⁰ and exhibited the paintings that he had brought back from Berlin.

The case of Dada and the other avant-garde and/or pacifist artists shows even better the role of neutral nations in the transnational diffusion of this literature.⁸¹ It shows us also that the literature most committed to fighting against war was not necessarily born of personal experience lived in the trenches, but that distance from the war could also generate a political or artistic distancing from the dominant culture in the belligerent nations.

Yet the neutrals did not only provide an impartial interface, they were also the consumers of war literature – which was often distributed during the war by propaganda bureaux, or at least favoured by them. In this way Sweden was a major consumer of patriotic German war literature. In 1922 the translations ceased, but the terrain remained favourable and from 1929 the boom in war books came to Sweden through the translation of German

works – but this time pacifist, to such a degree that when Erich Edwin Dwinger and Ernst Jünger were translated into Swedish they were received by the critics as pacifist denunciations of the war .⁸²

Three points may be made as to the significant differences in the legacy of war literature in different countries and regions. The first is that over time war literature became part of the national canon of some nations but not others. In the interwar years, anthologies helped to spread the message of war writers, which from the 1960s in Britain took off as an integral part of school and university curricula. They are there to this day – part of the national heritage to which young people should be exposed. And yet this is not so in many other places.

The second point is that war poetry – as opposed to war fiction or quasi-fictionalised memoirs – mattered more in the cultural history of some countries than in others. All combatants had poets who wrote about war, but only in the Anglo-Saxon world were there ‘war poets’, a collective honoured with their own plaque in Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey. There we can see the names of very different writers with different views, but in the English-speaking world the collective ‘war poets’ are those who scraped the mud and human remains off the patriotic language of war that was so easily trotted out by the blind and the deluded. War poets showed that war had plenty of honour in it but not a shred of glory.⁸³ This is not a message which resonated in many other parts of the world.

Here we confront a central contrast in the history of war literature. It emerged out of the same cauldron, and yet in some countries it mattered (and still matters) more than in others. The third point to linger on is that the long-term legacy of the soldier-writers and poets of the Great War is radically different in Britain than it is in Ireland or France, and bears little resemblance to its traces in Central and Eastern Europe, where the Second World War and the Holocaust inflected (and still inflect) literary history in very different and indelible ways. The soldier-writers of the Great War may have been truth-tellers, but we are far from knowing in detail what later readers in many countries made of those ‘truths’ about war and the men who endured it. What is now termed *histoire croisée*, or the history of transnational cultural connections, helps establish difference as well as convergence. This is a history that still remains to be written.

Helen McPhail translated this chapter from French into English.

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2 Maurice Genevoix, *La mort de près* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 2012; 1st edn 1972).

3 There are controversies, more or less recent, on the war literatures of France and Great Britain, but without any connection at all between them.

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5 Evelina Kelbetcheva, ‘Between apology and denial: Bulgarian culture during World War One’, in Aviel Roshvald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainments, and Propaganda 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 215–42, at p. 223.

6 Jean-Jacques Becker, *1914: comment les Français sont entrés dans la guerre* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1977).

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8 Samuel Hynes, *The Soldier’s Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York: Penguin, 1997), p. 32.

9 Marie-Bénédicte Daviet, ‘De l’honneur de la corporation à l’honneur de la patrie: les étudiants de Göttingen dans l’Allemagne de la Première

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17 Émile Willard, *Guerre et poésie: la poésie patriotique française de 1914–1918* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1949), p. 189.

18 Cru, *Témoins*.

19 Catherine W. Reilly, *English Poetry of the First World War: A Bibliography* (London: G. Prior, 1978).

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21 According to the expressions of Christophe Didier (ed.), *Orages de papier 1914–1918: les collections de guerre des bibliothèques* (Paris: Somogy, 2008), and of Kurt Flasch, *Die Geistige Mobilmachung: Die deutschen Intellektuellen und Der Erste Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Alexander Fest Verlag, 2000).

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25 Roland Dorgelès, *Je t’écris de la tranchée* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003), p. 292.

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35 'Les belles citations', *Mercure de France*, 1 January 1917, p. 189. The passage which follows is devoted to a young poet, Charles Perrès, who was also proud of his award.

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45 Edwin Redslob, *Vermächtnis, Dichtungen Letzte Aussprüche und Briefe der Toten des Weltkrieges* (Dresden: Wilhelm Limpert, 1930), p. 12.

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59 Karen Petrone, *The Great War in Russian Memory* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), in particular pp. 8–13, 127–64.

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61 The case of nurses who published their accounts, diaries or poems of the war has attracted the attention of historical research for some years now. It is evoked by Margaret Higonnet in [Chapter 6](#) of the present volume. For the references, see also the Bibliographical Essay to this chapter, pp. 679–83.

- 62** Walter Benjamin, 'Le conteur: réflexions sur l'œuvre de Nicolas Leskov', in Walter Benjamin, *Œuvres*, vol. III (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), pp. 115–16.
- 63** See Beaupré, *Écrire en guerre*, pp. 231–2.
- 64** Kelbetcheva, 'Between apology and denial', pp. 230–2.
- 65** Liane Dornheim, *Vergleichende Rezeptionsgeschichte: das literarische Frühwerk Ernst Jünger in Deutschland, England und Frankreich* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1987).
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- 70** Jörg Vollmer, 'Imaginäre Schlachtfelder, Kriegsliteratur in der Weimarer Republik: Ein literatursoziologische Untersuchung' (PhD thesis, Free University of Berlin 2003, available at: www.diss.fu-berlin.de/diss/receive/FUDISS_thesis_000000001060).
- 71** Steven Trout (ed.), *American Prose Writers of the First World War: A Documentary Volume* (Detroit: Thomson and Gale, 2005), p. xviii.
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77 On these films and their producers, see [Chapter 19](#) of this volume.

78 Petrone, *The Great War in Russian Memory*, p. 10.

79 Simon Wormleighton, 'Some echoes of Barbusse's *Under Fire* in Wilfred Owen's poems', *Notes and Queries*, 33:2 (1986), pp. 190–1; Patrick Campbell, *Siegfried Sassoon: A Study of the War Poetry* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1999), pp. 73–4.

80 Lilia Raytcheva, 'Le journaliste Geo Milev (1895–1925), un regard avant-gardiste bulgare', *Le Temps des médias*, 11:2 (2008), pp. 81–97.

81 See [Chapter 20](#) of this volume.

82 Helmut Müssener (ed.), *Anti-Kriegsliteratur zwischen den Kriegen (1919–1939) in Deutschland und Schweden* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1987), p. 17.

83 Jay Winter, 'Beyond glory', in Santanu Das (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to War Poetry* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 100–25.

19 Cinema

Laurent Véray On the eve of the First World War, the film industry was flourishing in Europe and the United States. A widespread and warmly appreciated spectacle in the popular classes as well as among social elites, cinema contributed powerfully to the extension of mass culture, media and information. The outstanding example of this dazzling development was perhaps the success of Pathé, which was the world's leading film company until around 1910.¹ In 1918, as business gradually dwindled, the hegemony of the French cinematographic industry disappeared almost entirely, to the benefit of American productions. At the same moment, cinema emerged as a separate art form – an essential part of the new times, the modern age. As Louis Delluc wrote in 1919, 'an art was born during the war . . . The time will come when cinema, an entirely new art, will impose its full power.'²

The aim of this chapter is to retrace cinematographic activity and its evolution during the war, describing the functioning of what is generally known as 'propaganda'³ through the cinema. We focus on the strategies and stakes established within the framework of 'cultural mobilisation', and offer a critical reading of certain major and recurrent themes on the screen and their relation to the audience in both news and documentaries on the war and in patriotic fictional film. We use various sources for the conditions of production and distribution, and the place of films in societies at war.⁴

War imagined in the cinema before August 1914

Films can transmit the distress and anxieties of their epoch. Between 1905 and 1914 the climate of international political tension, together with scientific expansion, progress and technical innovations, contributed to the renown of certain film-makers who expressed public fears. In these films, there were war scenes between more or less imaginary powers using sophisticated and destructive weapons. *The Airship Destroyer* (1909) by Walter R. Booth – seen in England as a pioneer of film animation – is a good example. We see a young and talented inventor testing one of his

flying machines against an army of dirigibles which are attacking his country and bombing its cities. The special effects, the skilful switching between genuine exteriors and studio sets, and the use of models to show the results of bombardments, make this film a little jewel of science-fiction. Three years later, in Henri Fescourt's *Un obus sur Paris*, a spy has set up an enormous gun in a medieval castle to fire on the capital; his plan is thwarted by a patriotic Frenchman.⁵

The most emblematic case is without any doubt the Belgian film *Maudite soit la guerre* ('Cursed Be War!') made by Alfred Machin . This film, which appeared in June 1914, was supposed to persuade the general public to defend the peace. It shows the fate of two friends, one of whom is engaged to the sister of the other, separated by a fratricidal war declared between two nations, a conflict in which aeronautics and wireless telegraphy are instrumental. This production, in colour and quite ambitious for the period,⁶ had the benefit of help from the Belgian army, which offered two infantry battalions (with invented uniforms), weapons, dirigible balloons and aircraft. This led to spectacular scenes and a disturbingly accurate representation of the future atrocities of war, notably the violence inflicted on civilians. During the First World War, the author of this curious melodrama of anticipation was to become one of the finest news film cameramen in the 'real' theatre of hostilities, working for the Pathé company.

Newsreels and war documentaries

When war broke out, cinema was still seen as a mechanical tool for recording real events. Created in 1908 in France, filmed news opened a window onto the world and attracted curious crowds. Yet professionals of the image, like military and political authorities, had no clear idea of what a cinema of information and propaganda could offer.⁷ Gradually becoming aware of the social power of images, both bodies sought to use them. As with the illustrated press, views of the war were of great interest to commercial companies, which saw them as vital to the public at home, who were hungry for knowledge and insight as to what was happening at the front. Initially cameramen were not authorised to approach combat zones; but finally, under pressure from film professionals such as Léon Gaumont

and Charles Pathé , who insisted that film constituted the most appropriate medium to reach a mass public, in 1915 the Minister for War, Alexandre Millerand , decided to establish two bodies: the Section photographique de l'Armée (SPA) , and the Section Cinématographique de l'Armée (SCA) . An agreement was signed between the French ministers for War and for the Beaux-Arts on one side and the professional unions on the other to meet demands for information at home and propaganda abroad, and to create archival records of the war. As a result, when a camera operator was appointed by the Bureau for Military Information (BIM), on which the SCA depended to film in a specific sector of the front, he was met by a staff officer whose task was to 'guide' him in the selection of his reports: there were subjects that should be kept secret. But these officers, knowing that all the images would be inspected and sifted later, could also be relatively accommodating – a factor which Pierre Marcel , who was in command of the two sections, summarised in the following terms in September 1915: 'The SPCA [Section photographique et cinématographique de l'Armée] must provide loyal propaganda to support genuine documents, and establish archives of which the authenticity is beyond question for the historian who is scrupulous over impartial work.'

After films were developed, titles, sub-titles and inter-titles (frames) were edited and integrated between the images to provide comment.⁸ For films to be put on sale, it was important that they should give a 'strong impression of the material or moral power of the French army and its discipline'.⁹ In the case of films for export to neutral countries, it was essential to create an effective counter-balance to enemy propaganda, and to 'make known everywhere the effort exerted by France since the outbreak of the war'.¹⁰

For this, the army's advice was to take shots of soldiers parading and artillery firing, and to include plenty of shots showing officers acting positively, the fine organisation of the troops, the abundance of equipment and ammunition, and the efficient functioning of food supplies and healthcare services. There had to be plenty of reassuring images, capable of strengthening the *union sacrée*, the bond between soldiers and civilians. In the words of Georges Dureau , editor of the *Ciné-Journal* review , in June 1915: 'Cinema, specifically because it enjoys public popularity, must be a wonderful way to support morale.'¹¹

From that point, films came in series and were all alike. In this early phase of the war, all combatants used film to prove the superiority of their soldiers and their materiel. Industrial weaponry, which in the genuine battlefield created heaped-up piles of dead bodies, was shown as producing material destruction. The representation on national and foreign screens of the ruins of war was thus routine. Shots of ruins, particularly churches, provided filmic evidence of the suffering of the people of France on the one hand, and proved the ‘savagery of German aggression’ on the other.

In the words of the editor-in-chief of the revue *Hebdo-Film*, these images were necessary to ‘sustain within us the healthy hatred of the barbarian and the assassin’. The finest example of the war is surely *Les monuments historiques d’Arras victimes de la barbarie allemande* (Pathé, June 1915). We could also cite the newsreel *Eclipse*, which is devoted to the emblematic Cathedral of Reims, which was regularly shelled by artillery or aircraft, shown in clear silhouette in the final image of the film with the caption: ‘Ils ne l’auront pas!’ (‘They will not take it!’)

Censorship

Whether it was dealing with news, documentaries or fiction, the cinema did not escape the censor’s scrutiny. In France it was first applied to news by local authorities (the prefects or mayors). Then, between April 1915 and March 1917, the press bureau created by the Minister for War was charged with granting approval, based on two criteria: not to alarm public opinion, and not to inform the enemy. All necessary precautions had to be taken to reassure families, particularly in playing down events that were too painful: almost all shots of dying wounded men or of corpses were eliminated (at least if they were French!), while at the same time care was taken not to pass on any item of military information that could be useful to the enemy. This advice was applicable above all to films designed for showing abroad, since they might be seen by spies in the pay of the Germans. Films that were forbidden for distribution were not destroyed, but put in the archives for distribution after the war.

After March 1917, newsreels were censored by a new commission made up of civilians and military men from the SCA, and the ministries for War, Foreign Affairs and the Beaux-Arts. These new censors were somewhat less

severe than those of the press bureau. In January 1917 the SCA united with the photographic section, thus creating the SPCA. Placed under the joint supervision of the Ministry for War and the Beaux-Arts, its objectives were similar to those of the two former services. This administrative shift was matched with great care over production. Ambitious projects were envisaged, such as the full-length documentary *La puissance militaire de la France* created by Henri Desfontaines . Structured in five highly didactic parts ('La France en armes', 'La France entière mobilisée', 'Aviation et aérostation', 'La bataille' and 'Après la bataille') and using a declaration from General Joffre addressed to General Pershing and the American people, the film retraced 'what France has had to do, for three years, to improvise a war for which it had the honour not to prepare'. The film had a considerable impact in the United States as well as in France. Desfontaines explained that the demands of propaganda services abroad had forced him to make a film which was far from an artistic venture:

It is a matter of sustaining morale, of showing responsibility, German crimes . . . and this through images for children . . . The future for our cinematographic art is not uncertain but, for the present, propaganda is to be undertaken and must be done with postcards and not through works of art.¹²

No. 13 in the series *Les annales de la guerre* was a report of June 1917 by Pétain. This sequence is unique for various reasons, first because it is here that we encounter the famous scene showing the general tasting soup and wine, when, realising that he has grimaced, the 'victor of Verdun' is supposed to have stated immediately that these images must never reach the screen.¹³ The suggestion is very probably a myth: the shots in question – two, one for each liquid tasted – really existed, Pétain shows no sign of a sour face, and the shots were indeed distributed at the time. But that is not the point: if we are to believe the views stated after the war by the former head of the SCA,¹⁴ this footage would have been prepared by him in collaboration with one of the general's orderlies. Pétain's moves and gestures in front of the camera would have been meticulously prepared, as confirmed by the cutting of the sequence set up in nine very well-composed shots in perfect continuity. The film was shot barely a month after the general was named head of the French army as Nivelle's replacement

following the disastrous offensives on the Chemin des Dames – and thus at the very moment when serious acts of disobedience occurred in some regiments, which were kept secret by the High Command. From that point, it becomes easier to understand why he took part in this scenario showing him deeply concerned over the fate of his soldiers. In fact it was necessary to show that contact with their leader had been restored, and that confidence was high among the ranks. This personal involvement indicates the extent to which Pétain, more than any other officer, realised the importance of cinema as a means of communication. It enabled him to raise the value of his image and to strengthen the myth of the national hero and saviour of the nation, which had already been present in the press since the Battle of Verdun.

The German case

In Germany the name of Oskar Messer is essential to any discussion of cinema during the war. From September 1914 this pioneer entrepreneur of the film industry produced a filmed newsreel, *Messter-Woche* ('Messter's Week'), presenting accounts of incidents in the war. Three other companies had also obtained permission to shoot newsreels of current events – Eiko, Express and Martin Kopp. Messter, who was more privileged than his competitors, specialised particularly in news about the Western Front. He was also admitted to the Headquarters press service where he worked on regulations for the army's photographers and cameramen. From 1 November 1916, camera shots were supervised by the Militarische Film- und Photostelle (the military film and photographic section) attached to Headquarters.¹⁵ At the same time, the Deutsche Lichtbild-Gesellschaft (DLG) was founded on the initiative of Alfred Hugenberg, chairman of the Krupp steelworks, thus enabling the powerful industrial group – one of the Reich's principal suppliers of weapons – to contribute to Germany's cinematographic policy. Then, at the beginning of 1917, by decree of the Prussian Ministry of War, the military section for film and photography became part of the new cinematic service, the Bild-und Filmart (BUFA), answerable to the High Command of the army and the military departments of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Its newsreels included no views of battle taken at the front, but scenes were recorded during manoeuvres or were reconstructed, or sometimes, as in *Bei unseren Helden an der Somme*

(‘With our Heroes on the Somme’), a mixture of the two. The footage destined for the German public showed many shots of Kaiser Wilhelm II, Hindenburg, columns of troops, the occupied territories, convalescent soldiers, prisoners and materiel seized from the enemy. Shots of strong points destroyed in the West showed the advance of the imperial troops and the superiority of their weapons. Other films, in particular those sent to neutral countries, tried to counter hostile propaganda by proving that Germany was not violating the Hague Convention of 1899. In response to accusations that they were responsible for killing innocent people, the Germans had recourse to filmic images in their own defence. Most often, they sought to show that their troops in the zones of occupation behaved correctly towards the civilian population. This was notably the case with a film entitled *Wir Barbaren* (‘We, the Barbarians’), of 1915. It depicts a German soldier who is not only not pillaging but is in fact attempting to save valuable items in a historic monument from destruction. The insistent accent is on the ‘good behaviour’ of the troops, in an attempt to destroy the images of German soldiers starting fires and other abuses which were being spread around the world through Allied propaganda.

BUFA shot some 350 short films in the various theatres of operation,¹⁶ while the DLG specialised in the production of films about the home front, notably on the major industrial companies. Military interest in the cinema grew gradually,¹⁷ with the High Command paying close attention. Here are Ludendorff’s views:

The war has shown that the image and film were remarkably powerful, when they were used for educational purposes and tools of military and political influence . . . It is equally for these reasons that it is most urgently necessary for the German film industry to be unified, so as to prevent, through too great a dispersal, the nullification of the effectiveness of a weapon of war.¹⁸

Turning the cinema into a ‘weapon of war’ was a strong declaration of ‘the militarisation of the German cinema’¹⁹ which had begun in 1916 and which grew, until on 18 December 1917 it led to the foundation of the Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft (UFA). The secret participation of the Reich government, as well as the contribution of substantial capital from the

Deutsche Reichsbank and big business, turned UFA into a production organisation of impressive dimensions (Messter-Film and Nordisk were bought back). It had its own distribution network, its suite of studios in Germany, and branches and cinemas in most of the neutral countries. Visions of propaganda and commercial considerations were thus once again closely linked. After the Armistice, because of its industrial and economic power, UFA played a decisive role in the evolution of German cinema. It took the international markets by storm, and stood up better than its European rivals against the invasion of Europe by the American cinema, at least for several years.

Britain

British cinema also had considerable success: weekly attendances reached a peak in 1918 with audiences totalling some 20 million.²⁰ From August 1914, all the film companies (Warwick Trading Company, Topical Budget, Gaumont, Jury's Imperial Pictures and Pathé) had sent cameramen to the front.²¹ Conditions for shooting film in Belgium were extremely difficult, and British military authorities, like their French and Belgian equivalents, soon barred access to combat zones. After that the cameramen had ever greater difficulty in getting near the battlefield, and often had to be content with a few anodyne subjects. Yet some of their reportage was astonishing, such as *The German Occupation of Historic Louvain*, *With a Skirmishing Party in Flanders* and *With British Forces in France*, which were fairly realistic evidence of the British troops' advance into ruined cities. The images of the invasion of Belgium reinforced the mobilising representation of German aggression, one of the principal causes evoked by the United Kingdom to justify its entry into the war.²²

Topical Budget's newsreels dealt above all with military subjects filmed in the United Kingdom, giving only an extremely superficial view of events. It was not until the end of 1915 that the British War Office decided to use filmed news for propaganda,²³ but the peregrinations of cameramen at the front ended in relatively disappointing results. The films that they shot in the first six months of 1916 often showed scenes taking place in rear areas of the combat zone. One popular success was *The King Visits his*

Armies in the Great Advance (October 1916), because it gave an unusual and more human view of King George V.²⁴

The collaboration between the commercial sector and the politico-military establishment was interrupted in October 1916 when the British government took matters in hand by creating the War Office Cinema Committee (WOCC). This did not prevent some private companies from continuing to produce films for the authorities: for example, the London Film Company produced *You!* for the Parliamentary Recruitment Committee, a film conceived as a personal address to each of its viewers²⁵ with the question: 'What are YOU doing for your country?' Finally, in November 1917 the WOCC absorbed Topical and a few months later created an entirely official newsreel under the title *The Pictorial News*. As in the other belligerent nations, British documentary images were often used to disprove enemy propaganda.²⁶ For example, *British Fact and German Fiction* (1917), following statements in the German press on the destruction of certain monuments and districts in London, shows images of a policeman filmed at these sites, which are still intact, with a poster showing the date and time to prove it. Such films were of course destined for export to neutral countries. (The last surviving copy of *British Fact and German Fiction* includes inter-titles in Spanish.) Finally, as well as their activity on the Western Front with all the armies of the Empire, British cameramen were sent to the Eastern Front, to Salonica, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Palestine.

Cinema: a modern tool in the service of the modernity of war

In a technological and industrial war, use of the cinema as a modern piece of equipment took many forms. The newspaper *L'Excelsior* underlined this in 1915: 'The cinema occupies so great a place in modern society that, in modern war, there must be some great role for it to play.'²⁷ This was how films were used in the United Kingdom from the beginning of hostilities, to encourage voluntary enlistment before conscription was introduced in 1916. Cinema was also used in the instruction of combatants or medical students on ballistics and aerial observation. In France the use of animated images was directed to the creation of war archives as early as 1915. This was

material of a new kind (indeed this was the first appearance of the concept of 'archive images'), which, it was believed, would form the memory of this human catastrophe. Camera operators had therefore to film damaged sites and monuments in order to preserve images of the different stages of their destruction, to facilitate their post-war reconstruction.

All the governments used film to encourage audiences to buy national defence bonds. *Pour la victoire* (1916) blended several cinematic forms with originality, using fiction, documentary, animated drawings, poster photography and engravings, and texts from official speeches. It showed in two parts sentimental, moral and economic arguments to ensure the success of the national loan, which must hasten the final victory. The first part, 'Under arms' associated the soldier's actions with those of the subscriber, using parallel images from the front, notably the famous shots (staged) of the assault on the Somme, with an animated map of the battlefield showing the armies' movements and changes in the front line to illustrate strategic effects clearly, and (in a fictional sequence) it told the story of a schoolboy whose father is mobilised and who breaks into his money-box to buy a national defence bond. The second part, 'The battle at the home front', relates the bond subscription to the activity of the war industry that it helped to sustain, at the same time showing that it represented an excellent financial investment. This hybrid form of filmed propaganda was designed to reach as wide a public as possible. All means were acceptable in raising funds. In Germany such films were known as *Kriegsanleihe-Werbefilm, der Reichsbank*. Although in 1918 an appeal was made to the famous hero of national mythology with *Jung Siegfried*, in most cases the films played on the fear of the invasion of Germany. For example, *Der Heimat Schikengrab* ('The Trenches of Home'), a blend of fiction and documentary, tells the story of Russian troops pillaging a village on the eastern frontier. Even humour was sometimes used: *Rentier Kulickes Flug zur Front* ('Prosperous Mr Kulike Flies to the Front') shows a businessman who refuses to invest a pfennig in war loans – until the moment when, in a dream, he sees himself transported against his will by air to the Western Front. Frightened, he then sees a part of French territory entirely destroyed (these were authentic aerial views of the ruins of Péronne and Saint-Quentin). Awake again, he recognises how much the country must be grateful to the army for having preserved Germany by sustaining the war beyond the Rhine. Then he hurries to a Berlin bank to buy national defence bonds.

Stars of the screen were also in demand. The actress Henny Porten, considered the leading star of the German cinema,²⁸ played herself in *Hann, Hein und Henny* (1917), a short film in which she meets submariners to encourage the public to subscribe to the seventh war loan. In England, as well as such slogans as 'Save your Money and Save the World!', films or newsreel sequences about the loans also showed individual personalities: the well-known writer Hall Caine was filmed at his desk writing a scenario for the official services (*Pictorial News*, no. 327). In the United States, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford also acted in several films in support of Liberty Bonds, as well as Geraldine Farrar, who had had great success as Joan of Arc in *Joan the Woman* (1916) by Cecil B. DeMille.

Images of women's work

After 1916 films showed women taking part in the nation's efforts, glorifying female labour while disregarding its demands. In France they were also able to show the very impressive metalworking factories which produced military materiel. The films devoted to women at work gave a modern image, echoing their new place in society in the absence of their menfolk, their substantial contribution to every professional activity, their sense of sacrifice and their devotion. This was notably the case in *Fabrication des bombes Wanderen (torpilles) aux usines Niclausse* (undated) and *La main d'oeuvre féminine dans les usines de guerre* (1916), which showed workshops almost entirely full of women at work. Regular exchanges of images between the Allied nations enabled the French public to see how English women were replacing the men who were away fighting. A sequence showed women in the countryside, driving tractors for the harvest and harrowing, in the factory welding, and in the army, with uniformed volunteers in the Women's Legion marching through a London street.

The documentary *La femme française pendant la guerre* (1918) by Alexandre Devarenne was a montage film made up from views of news events shot during the war, introduced by a modest fiction and arranged in relation to each other. The archetypal 'Woman', whether peasant or *munitieuse*, mother, fiancée or nurse, played an instrumental part. It is

well known that women's emancipation through work was often seen by men as a threat: they feared that women would be defeminised, and the risks of confusion of tasks and sexes were denounced. Analysis of newsreels and documentaries shows this clearly: important social changes were linked to women's work, and maternal metaphors proliferated; feminine qualities were emphasised. Even when women were dressed and working like the men, an attempt was made to feminise them, to recall that they remained above all women whose essential task was to repopulate the nation.

Cinema and soldiers' morale

All means were employed to sustain troop morale, notably the provision of cinema halls in camps at the rear. In France it all began with a private initiative during 1915, before the SCA took it over with the introduction of the 'Cinéma aux Poilus'. In 1916 each army corps had at least one mobile cinema available. In addition, the Touring-Club de France distributed small-format Pathé projectors (the Koks) to various regiments, as well as a set of six films available for exchange through free membership. After June 1917 General Pétain, as part of the measures taken to sustain morale, drew the attention of the Minister for War to the need for more cinemas in the base camps:

In the front row of distractions are the skilfully chosen film shows which are enjoyed as much by the troops as among our civilian population. The work of the 'Cinéma aux Poilus' attached to the SPCA in this respect gives the greatest services . . . It would be advantageous to develop this work and to augment its return.²⁹

Pétain's suggestion was implemented after the summer of 1917, when the Camp Cinema was established. In five months the service set up 400 film theatres on the Western Front.

The Germans probably had around 900 'Soldaten-Kino' (soldiers' cinemas).³⁰ Ernst Jünger explains that when his regiment occupied the town of Douchy, in the Aisne, at the beginning of 1916, a barn was used as a cinema for the soldiers.³¹ For the British and Americans, it was the Young

Men's Christian Association (YMCA) that took on the task of organising shows: in 1917, some seventy halls were in operation for the troops. The belligerents also organised showings for the wounded in field hospitals. The programmes included news footage, documentaries and feature films, above all comedies. They included, for the French, the films of Rigadin, Pathé's comic actor, and Charlie Chaplin, who became extremely popular among the Allied soldiers. Sometimes this moment of relaxation and distraction was used to show instructional films, and officers organised what they called 'chats' with the men. In France, numerous clearing or assembly stations were also equipped with a cinema, enabling men on leave who were returning home, or on their way back to the front, to see shows.

From reality to reconstruction

The cameramen's planning depended on the circumstances of filming, the official instructions that they received and technical factors, but were also linked to their professional training and the influence that they underwent in the actual setting of the cinema. This explains the frequent detours for a certain degree of realistic scene-setting. From then on, the frontier between the 'real' and its setting was often blurred. *L'Aide des colonies à la France* (1917) by Henri Desfontaines is a good example. In this documentary, showing France being supplied by its colonial Empire (Morocco, Senegal, Indochina, etc.) with goods and troops, an exchange was shown from a fictional correspondence between a father and his son, a Senegalese rifleman, designed to illustrate the devotion of the colonies to the 'mother country'. This narrative was entirely in line with opinion in the French command concerning 'black forces' and their supposed capacity to excel under the 'hard knocks' on the front. These images were, moreover, picked up by German counter-propaganda – in fact news or documentary films of the war often showed shots of prisoners, French colonial troops, assembled together to pose before the lens (for example in a sequence in *Bei unseren Helden an der Somme*). These 'scene settings' were used for the sarcastic denunciation of the Allies' claim to defend culture and civilisation with black troops. This racism was amplified after the Treaty of Versailles. At the time of the French occupation of the Rhineland, the word was of 'black shame'. This conditioning of German public opinion from the time of the Great War no doubt facilitated the acceptance, after 1933, of Nazi

propaganda that took up this kind of image to demonstrate the supremacy of the Aryan race in Europe.

The nature of the images recorded in situ can be classified in three ways: 'fictional images', 'codified images' and 'barely codified images'. In the first case, the camera operator had great freedom of action: he could organise his subject, invent a story, put it in a scene to make it clearer or give it more dramatic force. In the second case, he watched an event in which he could not intervene directly, except to choose a viewpoint and framing. Finally, in the third category, the operator faced a dangerous situation: not able to grasp it in its entirety, he had to be content with filming whatever he could see as best he could. The resulting image reflected the vagaries of filming. For both technical and security reasons, there was no filming under fire. Therefore nothing was seen of battles, or only bombardments and explosions in the distance, guns firing, and the range of weapons. The most widely used images were of the sideshows of the war: parades, visits by generals or politicians to the front, the daily life of soldiers in the trenches and rest camps. The scenes in which we see men turning to their different leisure activities (handicrafts, gardening, games, etc.) were appreciated: the rear, it was said, 'found here, rightly, the most vivid evidence of the army's excellent state of morale'.³² Filmed current affairs lied above all by omission, since some images, notably those of the death of French soldiers, were banned from the screen. The complete dehumanisation of the battlefield therefore only appeared by implication. In short, there was what could be called a denial linked to a certain form of obscenity inherent in death. If images of bodies were unacceptable, it was because they enabled an unbearable process of identification, and in consequence they could 'shock the families' – not forgetting too that the ethical concerns of certain operators probably led them into a form of self-censorship – hence the multiplicity of shots of dead animals in the devastated landscapes as a metaphor for human death.

On both sides of the front, it was only after the offensive on the Somme that the cameramen were authorised to go into the front lines. Before that they used various forms of subterfuge. Most frequently, with the complicity of the soldiers, they went through simulations of danger or attack. These images, shot in training areas or in relatively calm sectors, even if they were identified as settings for filming, could, however, appear believable because

they were founded on a potential reality. They set up a relationship of resemblance accepted by the public. In 1914–18, although camera operators went on to film many reconstructions of current situations, on the same sites and with the participation of genuine protagonists, without attempting to hide the filmed reality (situations in which the soldiers were imitating, in some way, their own actions for the needs of the camera), none were concerned with the battle itself.

The Somme: a mediatised battle

The great failure of the actual battle documentary approach lay in the impossibility of making direct confrontation visible. Some genuine moments of attack were, however, recorded. It was only on 1 July 1916, in the offensive on the Somme outside the village of Dompierre, that cameramen were permitted to be present close to the lines of fire to film the beginning of an attack. The resulting film shows soldiers in a trench, fitting their bayonets to their rifles, then launching themselves in successive waves, over the protecting parapet, before disappearing at a run across no-man's-land. The technical conditions (the need to stand upright to film, the weight and encumbrance of view-finding equipment, etc.) were a real handicap. It was therefore impossible for the operator to follow the combatants after the beginning of the attack. From that turning point, it therefore became evident that the battle itself would remain invisible.

The Somme was a key moment. Because they expected the offensive to create a decisive breakthrough, to move on from the war of attrition, the British took care to set up what would today be called exceptional 'media coverage'. The cameramen, like their photographer colleagues, took advantage of special permission to circulate relatively freely and were invited to record extensive footage.³³ The films of Geoffrey Malins and John McDowell were used to create a long documentary entitled *The Battle of the Somme*. It showed preparations for the British attack and the very impressive explosion at Hawthorn Ridge, on the first day of the attack, from a mine crater beneath the German lines at Beaumont Hamel. In fact the attack was a reconstruction from some ten shots filmed in a training area, with two soldiers pretending to be killed and above all the immediate post-battle period with the return of the wounded. It includes the terrible

shot of a Tommy carrying the body of one of his comrades on his back, and prisoners, then the burial of the dead. These scenes, which were among the most challenging, were apparently censored for some showings. The production was an effective mobilising and patriotic effort, but at the same time harsh and realistic. For the first time the audience – civilians – were brought into the presence of violent images of the war. The film was an immense success, its impact enormous. It has been estimated that nearly a million Londoners saw it during the first series of showings in the autumn of 1916 and that it was then seen by 20 million viewers throughout the United Kingdom and its Dominions. After attending a showing, the film photographer Geoffrey Malins made the following statement:

I really thought that some of the morbid scenes of the film would hurt the British public. But, in fact, why should they? It was not, after all, anything more than a very watered-down depiction of what happened day after day, week after week in the bloody fields of France and Belgium.³⁴

In response to the British documentary, which was shown in neutral countries, the Germans decided, at the end of 1916 – therefore after the event – to produce a similar film. This montage of disparate elements, bringing together authentic images and reconstructions of attacks, was called *Bei unseren Helden an der Somme* ('With our Heroes on the Somme'). Produced by the very new service of cinematographic propaganda Bild und Filmart (BUFA),³⁵ it was set up in three parts: 'The situation behind the front', 'The advance through the forest of Saint-Pierre-Vaast', and 'The advance near Bouchavesnes'. The critic on *Der Kinematograph* wrote: 'We are aware of the immense victory that cinematography has achieved with this film. It records universal History. Here it fulfils its highest mission.' Another journalist emphasised the sequence at the beginning of the attack, although it was filmed in a training area (the author does not specify which one). According to him, it succeeded fully in suggesting the intensity of the action:

Finally, the attack, at the same time as the mine explosion . . . Is it once more the image, only the image? The most hardened imagination is aroused and with the uproar of battle completes this description of

reality. All the viewers are silent. No one thinks of applauding these scenes. But nor does anyone, either, remain indifferent. Respect for the cinema, which was so disparaged. There, it is making History.

In *The Last Days of Mankind*,³⁶ his dramatic denunciation of the compromise inherent in what was written at the end of the war, the former journalist Karl Kraus, a Viennese polemicist-turned-playwright, recognised the importance of *Bei unseren Helden an der Somme* and acknowledged its significance as a propaganda documentary.

Although the camera operators were limited in their selection, some nonetheless showed apocalyptic views of the front, such as devastated villages, which gave clear glimpses of the horrors of war.³⁷ The presence of such visual references relates events off-screen, in the space not visible to viewers, to the tragedy of the war. This is particularly true of shots of wounded or mutilated soldiers. Their faces, their bodies, their gaze, inhabited by an unspeakable horror, are the most powerful visible indicators of the effects of extreme violence on those directly involved. In effect these bodies cannot be turned into emblematic figures in the service of propaganda. They are first of all men. In part, therefore, the power of certain shots lies in the fact that they create sympathy and connect with the public. Thanks to new films:

The whole of France was able to crowd round the screen, as if the rectangle of white sheeting was the reflection in a mysterious periscope, an eye which had looked across the battlefield. This will prove to be the true agent of liaison between the people of the front and those at the rear.³⁸

It is very difficult to judge how far the news films influenced public opinion. But in view of the context we may suppose that it was not far from what the audiences wanted to see: they were in a situation of anguished waiting, facing a war whose outcome they could not easily see. It was, moreover, evident that neither the authorities nor the production companies were interested, commercially or politically, in moving beyond what was acceptable to the public.

Propaganda through image: a double-edged sword

Even within the framework of controlled propaganda, certain images can escape their users. The way in which the enemy was represented deserves attention. On the map of military operations, the Germans were initially located as aggressors, while France was merely defending itself. The theme of enemy barbarity then became ubiquitous in the press. Of course there was a political purpose in the anti-German discourse, but the authorities by no means held all the propaganda levers. When prisoners were shown, for example, the intention was to show the effectiveness of the offensives. And yet, watching these images, the viewer is struck by the slippage of meaning: in fact they have the effect of blurring the undifferentiated vision of the time, exploding established clichés. The Germans, no longer capable of causing harm, did not match the gallery of caricatural portraits familiar to the audience from other sources. Clearly, these were defeated enemies being exhibited like military trophies set out for the camera: but they did not resemble the ‘bloodthirsty monsters’ presented in a certain type of propaganda, with a wealth of disturbing details. The unpredictable expression of filmed faces tells another story and all at once a disturbing kind of evidence takes over: the enemy, in his physical appearance, is not so different from oneself.

Other symbolic examples of propaganda images could provoke opposing effects, such as information films commissioned by the army health services on surgical operations, practical experiences, special clinical cases. Some were destined for practitioners, reserved for internal use, others were films of popular science projected for public viewing. The most convincing were those on restorative therapy for mutilated and traumatised men: for example, *Traitement des troubles nerveux fonctionnels dans le service du docteur Clovis Vincent* (1916) was shown to the public, as was *Progrès de la science française au profit des victimes de la guerre: une grande découverte du docteur Vincent*. This film was characteristic of the polysemy of certain works of propaganda. Men are seen who are shell-shocked, following each other down a corridor while a doctor applies an electrode to their spines. The patients writhe with pain under the effect of the electric shocks. The film functions according to the logic of the proof:

what is visible creates belief. But at the same time these images of neurosis reveal the totalisation of war on the body. There is no fear at showing images which often approach the limits of the watchable, because they are linked to the pretext of scientific study. The final frame of the film: ‘The admirable results which crown the researches of Doctor Vincent, and the efforts of these collaborators, give back to the Nation healthy men capable of returning to the war.’

Although the content of certain images is not easy to master, the authority of a declaration can be enough to modify its meaning radically. For example, a German propaganda film on the submarine war,³⁹ initially conceived to prove the heroism of the submariners of the Reich, after the Armistice became, in Allied eyes, a real act of accusation of the crimes perpetrated by the Germans. Initially shown by the British Admiralty under the title *The Exploits of a German Submarine U-35*, the film was subsequently shown in the United States and France, entitled *La croisière de l’U-35*. A publicity poster showed the ease with which the meaning of this propaganda film was modified:

The crime depicts the attack itself with complaisancy, lengthily recounted by its own author with the most minute cynicism . . . An archive item in this museum of horrors which forms the Teutonic history of the twentieth century . . . It is a duty for any Frenchman who possesses a screen to show this crushing evidence of the savagery of our ex-enemies for it is a duty for any Frenchman with a heart never to forget, even at the moment when all hatred can cease.⁴⁰

Fiction film: a mythical war

Most fiction films were copied from other forms of popular representation to the extent that they were very unlikely to surprise the public.

Mobilisation deprived the profession of most of its directors, actors and technicians, resulting in anaemic productions. Once the first weeks of paralysis were over, the studios reorganised themselves and in some cases, notably Gaumont, launched themselves into the creation of numerous patriotic films without any official directive. This decision in cinema circles to participate in ‘the national effort’ corresponded above all to a

commercial strategy, since it was meeting a genuine public expectation.⁴¹ The censor, severe in matters of the press, was less demanding towards films of fiction.

The obligation to work for victory justified unconditional support for the patriotic cause. The cinema was not immune to this spirit; all, or nearly all, film-makers who were still active put their talent to the service of the country: 'We asked the cinema to be for us the messenger of truth, the impartial and eloquent witness of our conduct, of our struggle in the defence of Right and Civilisation.'⁴² The directors Louis Feuillade, Léonce Perret, Gaston Ravel and Henri Pouctal were the most prolific in this respect. This patriotic production developed exponentially until 1916, the height of the war of attrition,⁴³ before picking up again in 1918. Between 1914 and 1919 Léonce Perret, a former actor, shot 'patriotic cinemadramas', glorifying the national sentiments of individuals accompanying the most heroic actions⁴⁴ from *Union sacrée* (1914) to *Les poilus de la revanche* (1916). In 1917 he went to the United States to depict Franco-American brotherhood – *Lafayette We Are Here!* and *Lest we Forget*, in which he reconstructed the torpedoing by the Germans of the SS *Lusitania*, with Rita Jolivet, an actual survivor of the shipwreck in 1915, in the leading role.

A galaxy of patriotic films were then created by the director Louis Feuillade, an important figure of the French cinema in 1910–20.⁴⁵ The young director Abel Gance made his first steps in an encounter with patriotic drama. Having written a scenario in January 1915 entitled *Le spectre des tranchées*, which he could not put into production, Gance directed *La fleur des ruines* (1915) and above all *Les gaz mortels* (1916). This was the story of a German spy who sabotages a French factory manufacturing a toxic substance, creating a harmful cloud which threatens a neighbouring town – a metaphor for the use of chemical products for criminal purposes. Other significant war films are *Debout les morts!* (1916) by André Heuzé *Les quatre cavaliers de l'apocalypse*, adapted from the novel by Blasco Ibanez; *La France avant tout* (1915) by Henri Andréani, and *Pendant la bataille* (1915) by Henri Krauss. The archetype of the patriotic film, *Mères françaises* (1917) by Louis Mercanton and René Hervil, was created with the reigning star of the French theatre of the day,

Sarah Bernhardt , filmed as an icon in front of Reims Cathedral , which had been damaged by the enemy.

These films were striking first in their vision of the enemy, the Boche. Stereotypes and caricatures were blended confusingly with the memory of the exactions of 1870 – but in order to avoid any incident in the cinemas, it was forbidden to show German uniforms on theatre stages or cinema screens.⁴⁶ This very restrictive measure explains the strange absence of enemy soldiers in fiction films created in 1914 and 1915. They can be discerned in the distance, without being identifiable: the French were always shown fighting an enemy who remained invisible. The first appearance of German soldiers, thanks to official authorisation, came with the distribution of the film *Alsace* by Henri Pouctal , in January 1916. The daily paper *Le Journal* stated then that no problems arose in the six Parisian cinemas where the film was shown.⁴⁷ From that time, many caricatures of Germans were seen, as in *L'impossible pardon* (1918) in which officers, with their inevitable pointed helmets, behaved like hardened old soldiers: they are seen pillaging a house, taking part in a drinking session and maltreating a young Alsatian woman.

For the Germans, of course, the demonised enemy, the invader, was Russia. To add credence to the concept of a threat from the East, several films evoked the 'exactions' committed by the troops of the Tsar. *Das Tagebuch des Dr. Hart* (1916) by Paul Leni ,⁴⁸ shows all kinds of violence inflicted on the civilian population by Cossacks.

Between 1914 and 1918 the battle sequences evolved considerably. The bogging-down of the war helped to modify contemporaries' perceptions of it. The increasing distribution of news images from the front, the relaxation of censorship and above all, from 1916–17, the arrival in France of American war fiction films that used revolutionary methods, were conclusive. Until 1915, virtually all films gave a vision of the war that conformed to traditional values – honour, patriotism and heroism. The diffusion of these edifying but reassuring representations no doubt helped viewers at the rear to overcome their feelings of distress. Films were also made about songs (*La marseillaise*, *La madelon*, *Le père la victoire*) and of comedies on the war. The character of Rigadin , very popular in France, was thus enlisted for all kinds of narratives with a link to military news which was laughed at.

L'âme du bronze by Henri Roussel , also released in 1917, appeared to break with the reduction of dominant concepts to essentials. Louis Delluc said at the time: 'In there, war is living and true. We are spared the redundancy of a phrase-maker's empty patriotism. They have restricted themselves to the indispensable.'⁴⁹

American films: a breakthrough

After three years of war, the appearance of several American films⁵⁰ was undeniably a fresh advance. These were large-scale productions, benefiting from official support and highly developed in terms of their production, particularly when it came to montage sequences. *Civilisation* (1916), made by Thomas Harper Ince, aroused an unprecedented resonance when it was first shown in Paris in 1917.⁵¹ Colette (Willy) expressed her stupefaction:

The Americans are past masters of crowd scenes, bombardments, battles . . . Marine mine explosions, exploding ambulances, famine, enveloping mud, nothing is forgotten in the breathless display of all the horrors of the war. Frenetic cutting, sixty images a minute at certain moments, try to give us, and succeed in giving us, an impression of tumult, earthquake and universality.⁵²

She added ironically that 'a nation which invents war so intensively is worthy of living next to us'.⁵³

This American modernity was to transform the cinema beyond return, not only in setting out the generic bases of the 'war film' but also in modifying the narrative structures and formal codes for fiction films in general. When the United States joined the war on the side of the Entente powers in April 1917, the American film industry spontaneously offered its services to the government. This was how the very new National Association of the Motion Picture Industry (NAMPI),⁵⁴ bringing together the main companies of production, distribution and development, joined with the Committee on Public Information to produce patriotic films in support of the cause and to benefit propaganda through effective and ambitious filming.⁵⁵ The case of *Hearts of the World* (*Cœurs du monde*, 1918) by D. W. Griffith (although

initially a British government commission to encourage the American entry to the war) is emblematic of the American method. Griffith, armed with official authorisations, visited the Franco-British front on several occasions to shoot documentary material; but when his country joined the war he was cut short and had to modify his scenario,⁵⁶ using various stylistic elements already current and to some extent brought to perfection, such as the parallel montage of several actions, recourse to suspense and the 'last-minute rescue'. But what struck audiences most was the treatment of violence. Battle was shown with terrifying cruelty, bodies pierced through by bayonets. The film had an extraordinary power of conviction, thanks notably to its remarkably varied visual effects:

The idea that one gains of the war in the cinema is going to be seriously overturned by this magnificent imagery of a simple vigour, unknown here . . . The meticulousness, the precision, the sober power, the truth, the tact in the choice of details . . . makes of this film a sort of masterpiece of the American silent art.⁵⁷

We also see in it an important degree of primary anti-Germanism, another major mobilising theme in American propaganda. The cinematographic representation of the German now gave way to the expression of an implacable hatred, of which the archetype of the genre is without any doubt the film *The Kaiser: The Beast of Berlin*, by Rupert Julian, which was shown in Paris in February 1919. At approximately the same moment, another American film director, Charlie Chaplin, known above all as an actor (the frail silhouette of Charlie – or Charlot, as he was known in French – made his first appearance on French screens in 1915), established himself definitively in his work of somewhat atypical propaganda: *Shoulder Arms* (1918). This satirical film, combining the comic with the tragedy of the war, offers a vision of it that is simultaneously funny and touching. Its success at the time was resounding, notably among Allied soldiers who, for the first time, had the feeling of seeing themselves in the features of a fictional character.

From modern film propaganda to film modernism

The pre-war cultural legacy buckled under the violence of the war. Gance, for example, was completely overcome by the shock of the extreme brutality of the war. True, he had not fought, but the war created a psychological problem for him, no doubt the result of a feeling of guilt connected with the atmosphere of killing. This revelation suddenly gave a new orientation to his creative development. The result was the filming of *J'accuse*, a mixture of national values and Christian faith,⁵⁸ a melodrama coloured by mysticism, written in 1917 and filmed at the end of 1918. For the first time Gance offered a critique of the war as such,⁵⁹ in particular in one sequence that shows the resurrection of dead soldiers returning home to reassure themselves that their sacrifice has not been in vain. The scene was inspired by medieval imagery in which effigies of the dead deliver a lesson to the terrorised living, and thus seal the eschatological dimension of the film. The hero, the poet Jean Diaz, who is wounded in the head and is the victim of delirious hallucinations, announces to the inhabitants of his village the return of 'their dead'. The style – the use of fade-outs to black, to dissolves and overprinting, as well as the use of chiaroscuro – accentuates the fantastic aspect in this dream which seems to transform itself into reality. The impression is reinforced by the interplay between actors and montage: the audience's attention is focused alternately on the contorted expressions, the fearful gaze of the villagers and, in reverse shot, on the putrefying bodies, the pale and haggard faces of the soldiers who advance like ghosts. The living, trembling in front of the phantom figures, kneel and pray. In the face of such piety, 'the flock of the dead' finally withdraws. For Jay Winter, 'It is hard to imagine a more vivid representation of apocalyptic theatre'⁶⁰ and it is one of the first attempts to transform the tragedy into collective mourning. This sequence transmits better than any other the resurrectional power of the image which becomes a locus for identification with separation. It is a fine metaphor of the power of film to make the disappeared reappear: the soldiers dead in battle have left a trace of life on the actual film and thus continue to embody themselves on the screen.

In effect, several aspects proper to the cultures at war figure in *J'accuse*, including ideas in opposition to the pacifism and humanism which Gance was to claim later. The film in effect portrays many clichés. In this sense, *J'accuse* transmits the contradictions proper to the period, even if some of

them were attenuated in the course of the modifications which Gance brought to his film. Nonetheless its success was colossal, and its impact spread far beyond French frontiers.

Vendémiaire, also shot in the final months of the war in the natural settings of the vine-growing region of Languedoc, was a masterwork by Louis Feuillade, artistic director of the Gaumont company. Under cover of a patriotic drama, he offered a film in which quasi-documentary realism was not without lyricism and poetry. This was a metaphorical vision in which the symbolism of earth and wine refer to the national soil and the blood poured out by French soldiers in its defence. Like *J'accuse*, *Vendémiaire*, despite the originality of its point of view and its treatment, remained quite close to the current propagandist discourse. It is a film that displays a very pronounced Germanophobe chauvinism: the stereotypical representation of Germans sets them definitively beyond the scope of civilised nations.

The case of *Rose-France* (1919) by Marcel L'Herbier is notable.⁶¹ Supported by the propaganda services, the film was very contentious: this story of a young man in fragile health who escaped the call to serve in the army was seen as provocative. After a violent press campaign the film was withdrawn from the screen even though observers considered that it marked a considerable breakthrough.

Conclusion

The First World War corresponds to a tipping point when images 'caught on the spot', in the phrase of the time, ran alongside classic modes of representation – drawing, painting, cartoons. The scale of the event, and the awareness of the importance of public opinion, gave a new dimension to propaganda in all its forms, and more precisely to photography and cinematography, whose objective was to sustain public morale. But 'propaganda' was less a top-down process of the indoctrination of societies at war by the authorities than a horizontal process, decentralised and relatively spontaneous, of self-mobilisation on the 'home fronts'.⁶² This is clear as far as the production of films relating to military deeds is concerned, since they were shot under the direction of both film professionals and the governments of the nations at war. Although not a

homogeneous ensemble, the films played a part in the colossal efforts made to accompany and justify the war. Convinced of possessing the truth, each camp made use of film to legitimise its actions. Furthermore, convinced that the fate of humanity in its entirety was at stake, the belligerent nations took care to retain the ‘truthful’ elements of this extraordinary event: hence the use – and this was a novelty – of fixed and animated images as archives for history.

Throughout the hostilities, the number of permanent cinemas increased considerably in cities such as London, Paris and Berlin.⁶³ It was also a time when mobile cinemas proliferated in rural areas, and of increasingly frequent organisation of showings for soldiers. In 1918 Georges-Michel Coissac summarised it well: ‘The cinema is an integral part of the war.’ Of course it was difficult, even approximately, to evaluate the effect on the audience of the time. On the other hand, the sources available (ticket sales, articles in cinema magazines or the general press, police reports, etc.) tend to prove the popular success of screenings. The same phenomenon was also observed in Rome, if we are to believe the writer Jean Carrère, the Italian correspondent of the newspaper *Le Temps*:

Worldly social life is half-dead. The salons are closed and the theatres have nothing new to show. But every evening, from 8 pm, at the cinemas with their resplendent frontages, a steady crowd presses forward, disappears inside and crowds together. This is ‘cinema madness’ as the wise people say who, in fact, go there. Madness perhaps, but universal madness, and that is why it is valuable to talk about it. For if I am to believe the accounts of my friends and the reports in the world press, I can see, unquestionably, that what is happening in Rome is happening in the entire world. The cinema has become a general passion, and the war has managed to suppress everything, or change it, except that! What am I saying, suppress? It has developed it and enlarged it in stupefying circumstances.⁶⁴

There can be no doubt that in 1914–18 the cinema became a mass spectacle, and not only as a leisure diversion, since it also played a patriotic role. And if the films in favour of national defence, newsreels⁶⁵ or fictional films pleased the public overall – among other more entertaining programmes –

this can no doubt be explained by the fact that they corresponded to the high stakes of this war, as they were perceived by most contemporaries. It was a war that caused immense sacrifices and sufferings on both sides of the front line, but that no one could imagine losing.

Two distinct and complementary types of image were filmed during this period – those that we call news – in other words those taken on the ground by professionals (cameramen sent to report on the front) – and those that were entirely fabricated (in studio designs or out of doors) for the demands of filmic fiction. In the first case, we see the sites, military materiel and very real bodies. However, only some of the shots taken were shown to the public through newsreels or documentary films. The others were kept as archives. Very particular care was taken over the representation of facts.

The hand-picked images, with their optimistic commentaries, gave a reassuring view of the fate awaiting the soldiers, purged of its more deadly aspects. In fact, the conditions for filming did not make it possible to shoot a real battle. The camera operators therefore had to depend on simulations or reconstructions of the front. In the second case, it was a matter of films shot at the rear by non-mobilised cameramen who tried to present the war on screen with a patriotic gloss. Whatever their artistic value, these inventions were an integral part of the ‘war cultures’: that is, of that ensemble of practices and social representations transmitting the prolonged engagement, under various forms, of so many millions of men and women, throughout the war. And, furthermore, the content of these films was not only derived from the directives of the official propaganda services. For even if distribution of the films was, one way or another, subject to official approval, patriotic preoccupations, commercial stakes and the public’s cultural expectations all came together. This same coincidence of interests reappeared to varying degrees in France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

While the patriotic dramas founded on heroisation, the glorification of the combatants and the unfailing support of civilians remained strongly determined by older representations – at least before the arrival of American fictional films, except in Germany – while still open to influence from other cultural practices, the news images in turn were viewed as further evidence of reality. This belief in the objective reality of the images, widely recognised at the time, today strikes us as illusory.⁶⁶ Yet images

concealed as much as they revealed. However, we must be careful to avoid simplistic judgements that they were nothing but ‘eye-wash’. Veering between truth and falsehood, they certainly gave room to a paradoxical representation, on the one hand massive and realistic, on the other incomplete, sometimes even deceptive. The interest of the images also lies elsewhere: in the part of chance, gaps, latency, deficiency, lapses. Hence the need to adopt a method of reading close to the approach of the historian Carlo Ginzburg, which, to be effective, should lean ‘towards the appreciation of details rather than towards the work considered as a whole’:⁶⁷ and, in this case, the images and their relationship to events off-camera.

Despite fairly strict checks, filming on the battlefield often enabled the recording of evocative signs, revealing indicators that remain among the most striking traces of the war: hence the suggestiveness of the shots of no-man’s-land, of ruins and of the wounded, mutilated men. Additionally, there were the effects of implication in the gaze of soldiers and their gestures to the camera, all of them in connivance with the all-encompassing transmission of the cameraman’s lens. And our sensibilities have changed, the gaze is gradually displaced. The affective and emotional dimension should therefore be taken into consideration, notably for news shots. The intrinsic nature of these images remains in fact much more complex and problematic than first appears. They must be set within changing notions of war itself. This is the reason why contextual analysis of the films – news, documentaries, fiction of all kinds – is necessary and valuable for an understanding of both a whole stretch of world cinema history and world cultural history in the early twentieth century.

Helen McPhail translated this chapter from French into English.

1 Jacques Kermabon (ed.), *Pathé: premier empire du cinéma* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Georges Pompidou, 1994).

2 Louis Delluc, *Comoedia illustré*, 5 November 1919.

- 3 John Horne, 'Propagande et vérité dans la Grande Guerre', in Christophe Prochasson and Anne Rasmussen (eds.), *Vrai et faux dans la Grande Guerre* (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), pp. 76–95.
- 4 Laurent Véray, *La Grande Guerre au cinéma: de la gloire à la mémoire* (Paris: Ramsay, 2008).
- 5 In a different register, since it deals with the navy, we could also cite the film *Le Torpilleur 48-B* (1913).
- 6 A process of mechanical colourisation by stencil introduced by Pathé in 1905.
- 7 Laurent Véray, *Les films d'actualité français de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: AFRHC/SIRPA, 1995).
- 8 In 1915, 156 newsreels were prepared by the SCA for the public, and 400 in 1916 – more than 30 new films each month.
- 9 Instruction relating to the choice of films and shots from the Press Information Office (Bureau des Informations à la Presse), 1 November 1915, Service Historique de la Défense, Vincennes, 5N 550.
- 10 Summary of a report on the creation and functioning of the SCA, October 1917, documentation of the Établissement de conception et de production audiovisuelles de la Défense (ECPAD), Ivry.
- 11 Georges Dureau, 'Le goût du jour', *Ciné-Journal*, 10, 15 June 1915.
- 12 Letter from Henri Desfontaines to André Antoine, 6 June 1918, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Fonds Arts du spectacle.
- 13 Marcel Lapierre quoted by Georges Sadoul, 'Le cinéma devient un art (1909–1920)', in *Histoire générale du cinéma*, vol. IV (Paris: Denoël,

1975), p. 40.

14 Jean-Louis Croze in *La cinématographie française*, 471 (1927), p. 30.

15 Klaus Kreimeier, *Une histoire du cinéma allemand: la UFA* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994).

16 Hans Barkhausen, *Filmpropaganda für Deutschland im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hildesheim: Olms Presse, 1982).

17 Rainer Rother, 'Learning from the enemy: German film propaganda in World War I' in Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *A Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades* (Amsterdam University Press, 1996).

18 Letter from Erich Ludendorff, 4 July 1917, seen as the birth of the UFA. Quoted by Hans-Michael Bock and Michael Toteberg (eds.), *Das UFA-Buch* (Hamburg: CineGraph, Hamburgisches Centrum für Filmforschung, 1992), p. 34.

19 Kreimeier, *Une histoire du cinéma allemand*, p. 41.

20 Nicholas Hiley, 'The British cinema auditorium', in Karel Dibbets and Bert Hogenhamp (eds.), *Film and The First World War* (Amsterdam University Press, 1993), p. 162.

21 Luke McKernan, *The Great British News Film: Topical Budget* (London: British Film Institute, 1991).

22 Bénédicte Rochet and Axel Tixhon (eds.), *La petite Belgique dans la Grande Guerre: une icône, des images* (Presses Universitaires de Namur, 2012).

23 Nicholas Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda during the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1986).

- 24** Nicholas Reeves, 'Official British film propaganda', in Michael Paris (ed.), *The First World War and Popular Cinema: 1914 to the Present* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 27–59.
- 25** In this film, and in most of the propaganda films encouraging war loans, regardless of nation, we see this type of direct speech, with an actor looking straight at the camera.
- 26** Karel Dibbets and Wouter Groot, 'Which Battle of the Somme? War and neutrality in Dutch cinemas, 1914–1918', in 'Cinema during the Great War', special issue of *Film History: An International Journal*, 22:4 (2010), pp. 440–52.
- 27** 'Le cinéma mobilisé', *L'Excelsior*, 26 December 1915.
- 28** The Danish actress Asta Nielsen was also very popular in Germany at this time.
- 29** Letter from General Pétain to the Minister for War, June 1917, Service Historique de la Défense, (SHAT), Vincennes, 16N 2404.
- 30** According to Kreimeier, *Une histoire du cinéma allemand*, p. 41.
- 31** Ernst Jünger, *Orages d'acier* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), p. 58.
- 32** Note relating to the selection of films by the Bureau des information à la presse, 1 November 1915, SHAT, Vincennes, 5N 550.
- 33** Nicholas Hiley, 'La bataille de la Somme et les médias de Londres', in Jean-Jacques Becker, Jay Winter, Gerd Krumeich, Annette Becker and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau (eds.), *Guerres et cultures* (Paris: A. Colin, 1994), p. 194.

- 34** Geoffrey Malins, *How I Filmed the War* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1920), p. 183.
- 35** Rainer Rother, 'Bei unseren helden an der Somme (1917): the creation of a social event', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 15:4 (1995), pp. 525–42.
- 36** Karl Kraus, *Les derniers jours de l'humanité*, trans. (from German) Jean-Louis Besson and Henri Christophe (Marseille: Éditions Agone, 2003), p. 154 (act IV scene 14 in the filmed version). Jean-Louis Besson, 'Les derniers jours de l'humanité: un théâtre martien', in David Lescot and Laurent Véray (eds.), *Les mises en scène de la guerre au xxe siècle: théâtre et cinéma* (Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2011), pp. 39–46.
- 37** Numerous photographs were also published in the illustrated press. Joëlle Beurier, *Images et violence. 1914–1918: quand le miroir racontait la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2007).
- 38** Emile Vuillermoz, 'Devant l'écran', *Le Temps*, 24 April 1917.
- 39** Made in May 1917 on the submarine *U-35*, this film shows the action of the German submarine operating in the Mediterranean for a whole week, beginning with its departure from the naval base at Cattao. The cameraman on board filmed the whole of the surface mission of this warship. We see it reporting to harbour authorities and then sinking six British, Italian and American merchant ships.
- 40** 'Un document formidable: la croisière de l'*U-35*', *Hebdo-Film*, 17 January 1920.
- 41** Joseph Daniel, *Guerre et cinéma* (Paris: A. Colin, 1971), p. 34. Paul Légliise, 'Le cinéma et la IIIe République. 1895–1940', in R. Pichon and R. l. Durand-Auzias (eds.), *Histoire politique du cinéma français*, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie générale de Droit, 1977), p. 32.

- 42 Michel Coissac, *Ciné-Journal*, 42, 1 April 1916.
- 43 Producers then sought rather to soothe the public by offering crime serials, music hall acts, light comedies and sentimental melodramas.
- 44 Laurent Véray, 'Les films patriotiques de Léonce Perret (1914–1919)', in Bernard Bastide and Jean A. Gili (eds.), *Léonce Perret* (Paris: AFRHC/Cineteca de Bologna, 2003), pp. 72–101.
- 45 Alain Carou, Laurent Le Forestier, Bernard Bastide, Corinne Faugeron and Gilles Venhard (eds.), *Louis Feuillade: retour aux sources. Correspondance et archives* (Paris: AFRHC, 2007).
- 46 The police had in fact stated that the audience insulted the actors playing German soldiers, and that there were even sometimes brawls as a consequence.
- 47 'Une autorisation qui s'imposait', *Le Journal*, 22 January 1916.
- 48 This film director was to become an important figure in German Expressionism.
- 49 Louis Delluc, *Le Film*, 28 January 1918.
- 50 Laurent Véray, 'La mise en spectacle de la guerre (1914–1918)', *Cinématèque*, 15 (1999), pp. 116–32.
- 51 Another film supervised by Thomas H. Ince, *The Despoiler* (1915), was also modified and 'brought up to date' when it was distributed by the Établissements Louis Aubert in 1917, under the title of *Châtiment*. Although in its original American version the introductory frame announced that 'the situations described could happen in any area next to a nation at war', in the copy distributed in France it indicated that 'the scene takes place in our time on the Turco-Armenian frontier'. Similarly, the

identity of the main character changes: he becomes Colonel Franz von Werfel, a former German military attaché in Rome in command of Kurdish troops operating on behalf of the Central Powers. The most shocking scenes (acts of violence against civilians, and particularly the rape of a young Christian girl by a barbarian leader in an abbey) could thus be associated with the massacres and deportations of the Armenians by the Ottoman Turks (allies of Germany) after 1915. On *The Despoiler/Châtiment*, see the work of Clarisse Bronchti and Loïc Arteaga, under the supervision of Camille Blot-Wellens, as part of the Agence nationale de la recherche programme ‘La triangle 1915–1919: archives, recherche et histoire du cinéma’, viewable at: www.cinematheque.fr/.

52 Colette Willy, ‘Ce que je pense de *Civilisation*’, *Filma*, 15–30 June 1917.

53 *Ibid.*

54 Founded in June 1916.

55 Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, ‘The film industry and government propaganda on the homefront’, in his *Reel Patriotism: The Movies and World War I* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), pp. 104–27.

56 Russell Merritt, ‘Le film épique au service de la propagande de guerre: David Wark Griffith et la création de *Cœurs du monde*’, in Jean Mottet (ed.), *David Wark Griffith* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, L’Harmattan, 1984).

57 Lois Delluc, ‘Cinéma et Cie’, *Paris-Midi*, 9 April 1919.

58 Abel Gance, ‘Pourquoi j’ai fait *J’accuse*’, *Hebdo-Film*, 13 April 1922.

59 Laurent Véray, ‘*J’accuse*, un film conforme aux aspirations de Charles Pathé et à l’air du temps’, *1895*, 21 (1996), pp. 93–125.

- 60** Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- 61** Laurent Véray, 'Rose-France (1918): de l'influence symboliste aux prémices du modernisme cinématographique', in Laurent Véray (ed.), *Marcel L'Herbier: l'art du cinéma* (Paris: AFRHC, 2007), pp. 15–38.
- 62** Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *La Grande Guerre, 1914–1918* (Paris: Découvertes Gallimard, 1998), p. 64.
- 63** According to Kreimeier, *Une histoire du cinéma allemand*, p. 58, the number of cinemas in Berlin rose from 195 in April 1914 to 312 in November 1918. In 1917 there were around 1,600 permanent projection halls in France, of which 190 were in Paris.
- 64** Jean Carrère in *L'annuaire de la cinématographie* (Paris: Ciné-Journal, 1918), p. 454.
- 65** To give the figures for French production: around 930 films (newsreels, documentaries, medical films, training films, etc.) were shot by the Service cinématographique de l'armée between 1915 and 1919; the proportion of films lost is probably around 40 per cent, with all others currently available at the ECPAD, Ivry.
- 66** It should be specified that all these images, which with time have become 'archives', have been regularly used since that period in what are known as 'montage films': that is, historic documentaries showing the Great War. Their use has not always been rigorous – to say the least – since their illustrative capacity has often been accepted without their specific details or their true meaning being questioned. Laurent Véray, *Les images d'archives face à l'histoire: de la conservation à la création* (Paris: Scéren/Centre national de documentation pédagogique, 2011).
- 67** Carlo Ginzburg, 'Signes, graces, pistes; racine d'un paradigme de l'indice', *Le Débat*, 6 (1980), p. 11.

20 Arts

Annette Becker The link between war and artistic expression is multi-faceted. All warring nations constructed and destroyed the arts through war and introduced many people to them. Whether or not avant-garde in their instincts, artists, like other contemporaries, tried to do their duty in the levelling drama of war. On the military and domestic fronts, they were part of war cultures, joining in more general swings of mood from naive bravado to cruel disillusionment. In their work we see a reflection of more general sentiments shared by everyone at war: disinterested love, fear, complete moral solitude and despair. Love of nation, ardour, enthusiasm, suffering, disarray – were these feelings the ones to be presented in art, to be heard?

It was, after all, the professional duty of those creative in the plastic arts and music to be seen and heard. These artists contributed to the creation of a body of work, and through their representations of the conflict they expressed the profound meaning of the war. However pure and direct they would wish their work to be, they had to choose between their art and the call of warrior politics. They faced a difficult question: can morality, can aesthetics, coexist with war? From works of bellicose exaltation and patriotic self-denial through the expression of resignation, anguish, grief, even rage, protest and rejection – all these were spoken, painted, sung, composed, played, drawn, wept over, engraved; the arts contributed their full and profound revelations to the ‘confusion of feelings’ of societies at war.

War cultures were initially inseparable from the dominant mood of hatred of the enemy, intensified many times over by the suffering felt, for which the enemy was inevitably blamed. Hatred, hardship, patriotism, pain, mourning – all were present in a certain aesthetic disorder, even through kitsch; but was this also not a way of denying the death of art, and therefore death itself? Between the anguish of separation, over news that a loved one was wounded or ill, between the rhythms of ordinary life and the unmistakable marks of the extraordinary moment of war, the vast presence of death endowed every aspect of life with unaccustomed significance.

Works of art made it possible to follow the fluctuations of the war between front line and home front: from communities in anguish to communities in mourning. At the heart of violence lay death and the modernity of the forms of death soldiers suffered: bodies cut in pieces, hundreds of thousands identified only – for the first time in history – as Unknown, with a capital U. But was this extreme violence truly audible, visible, and therefore capable of representation? If any silence, any void, is respected by artists, it is indeed that of death. If there was a rupture, it was here: a world in which, henceforward, children would die before their parents – and it was this particular and unnatural reversal of generations in mourning which, it seemed, would never come to an end.

In November 1917, Sir Edward Elgar's *The Spirit of England* was performed in London. This composition of 1915 drew on three poems by Laurence Binyon which were published at the end of 1914. The texts chosen by Elgar and the musical expression which he gave them are highly revealing: 'The Fourth of August', 'To Women' and 'For the Fallen'. Binyon and Elgar express the patriotic resolve of the combatants in the face of what they saw as enemy aggression. They also state that soldiers at the front could not hold on without the by then feminised 'home front'. Finally, the work ends with a requiem, for death and mourning are the price paid by societies at war. This work by Elgar, like the works of Dupré, Nash, Debussy, Chagall, Reger, Gontchorova or Beckmann, teaches us this unavoidable lesson, through looking and listening.

It is evident that the war stimulated and permanently inflected the activity of so many artists who were of military age. The theme of the fragmented body and soul, dear to the artists of the avant-garde in their fascination with the real and symbolic 'slaughterhouse', probably had its origin in the 'great butchery'. André Breton himself confessed this in relation to Surrealism, which, he said, 'cannot be historically understood except as a function of the war – I mean the war of 1918 to 1938 – in relation simultaneously to the war from which it grew and the one to which it returned'.¹ He used his authority as an artist to leave behind the rhythms of mobilisation and demobilisation in the war, and then to turn to another kind of mobilisation in art, moving from violence to mourning and beyond.

The war before the war

At the end of 1911, the Russian Wassily Kandinsky and the German Franz Marc sent a communiqué from Bavaria, in French, to announce the publication of their *Blue Rider Almanac*. The two artists had their eye on Paris and expected to attract the artists of the avant-garde who lived there, French or otherwise. The expression ‘avant-garde’, created by Félix Fénéon in 1886, comes from military vocabulary. It was highly appropriate for the culture of innovation and rupture that was then being promoted: to demolish the artistic tradition of academic art and to move towards the utopia of an order that would emerge through the destruction of the present. Everything had to be brought out into the open – arts and nations, religions and chronology, the sophistication of the avant-garde, the primitive, the popular. Languages had to become a single tongue – that of ‘humanity’. Novelty and universality were in the air, discussed and argued over.

In his painting *Homage to Apollinaire* Marc Chagall, the Russian artist then living in Paris, brought together all the links, genuine, virtual or hidden, connecting the European avant-garde movements in 1914. With his Serbian friend, the utopian Dimitri Mitrinovic, Kandinsky hoped to establish an annual reference guide under the title of ‘Towards a humanity of the future through Aryan Europe’. The word ‘Aryan’ had little of its later sinister associations.

Although the avant-garde artists practised internationalism – each one an artist in his own country, each one an artist in other lands – we should not exaggerate the intellectual and artistic harmony of these years. In Paris, London, Zurich, Oslo, Munich, Dresden, Berlin, Vienna and then New York (for example, the Armory Show in 1913), exchange operated through competition, emulation and dispute. Although the arguments were principally artistic, intellectual and religious, national distinctions crept in here and there and endured.

In these productive exchanges, many avant-garde artists deliberately conjured up an imaginary war in the hope that it would be capable of transporting humanity to a purer and more modern world. The war to achieve this would be apocalyptic, and many presented its character in their work as a form of fearful warning. Colour and sound were mixed together, as in Ludwig Meidner’s, *Cities under Bombardment*, Kandinsky’s

Improvisation 30 (1913), also called *Canonen*, and *Forms in Combat* by Franz Marc (1914), or they used melodramatic sound, such as in Schönberg's music .

The Balkan wars gave a foretaste of the war to come. The Italian Futurists , whose brutal *Initial Manifesto* against the corrupt art of the day had appeared in Paris in 1909, were the first ones capable of grasping its range. It was they who had trumpeted: 'We want to glorify war – the only hygiene in the world – militarism, patriotism, the anarchists' destructive gesture'. In a radio 'calligramme', Marinetti depicted an antenna announcing the battle of Andriopolis, *Zang Tumb Tuum*. Luigi Russolo, inventor of 'bruitism' cited a letter from Marinetti:

patatraack crashbangs flowing manes neighing iiiiii hurly-burly
clinkings three Bulgarian battalions on the march crook croak (slowly,
in double time) Choumi Maritz o Karvavena officers' cries clashing
sheets of copper pam here (quick) pac there Boum-pam-pam-pam-pam
here and there further all around very loud attention in God's name on
the head chaak amazing! Flame flame flame flame flame flame flame
ramp up the strong out-there.²

The poem imitates the noises of a war he was foretelling, just as Franz Marc's *Les loups* reconstructed its colours and jarring forms.

The summer of 1914 broke everything: friendships, international sharing, commitments. In June 1914, for example, Apollinaire was invited to the Picabia exhibition that was planned for the following year in Berlin. In January 1915 he was ready to go and cross swords with the Germans at the front. His friend Marie Laurencin, whose husband was German, had a narrow escape from a concentration camp in France, and Kandinsky returned to Switzerland to escape internment as an enemy alien in Germany. On 3 September 1914 Kokoschka congratulated Marc on the honour he did to Germany in joining the fighting: 'When the emissaries of our young German art are heard in the future, the idea that we are making a world for ourselves will spread spontaneously.'³

At the same time, Apollinaire was also speaking of a 'new epoch' in his poem *La petite auto* which shows how far the extraordinary moment of the outbreak of the war had shattered daily normality, as the accustomed world

tipped into conflict and hatred of enemies. The poem begins like a childish jingle or a popular song: hence the slippage of a month against actual chronology:

Le 31 du mois d'août 1914
... Nous dîmes adieu à toute une époque Des géants furieux se
dressaient sur l'Europe ...
Nous comprîmes mon camarade et moi Que la petite auto nous avait
conduits dans une époque Nouvelle Et bien qu'étant déjà tous deux
des hommes mûrs Nous venions cependant de naître.

The 31st of the month of August 1914
... We said farewell to a whole era Raging giants stood over Europe . .
.
We understood my friend and I That the little car had taken us
into an era that was New
And although we were already two grown men Still we were
newborn.

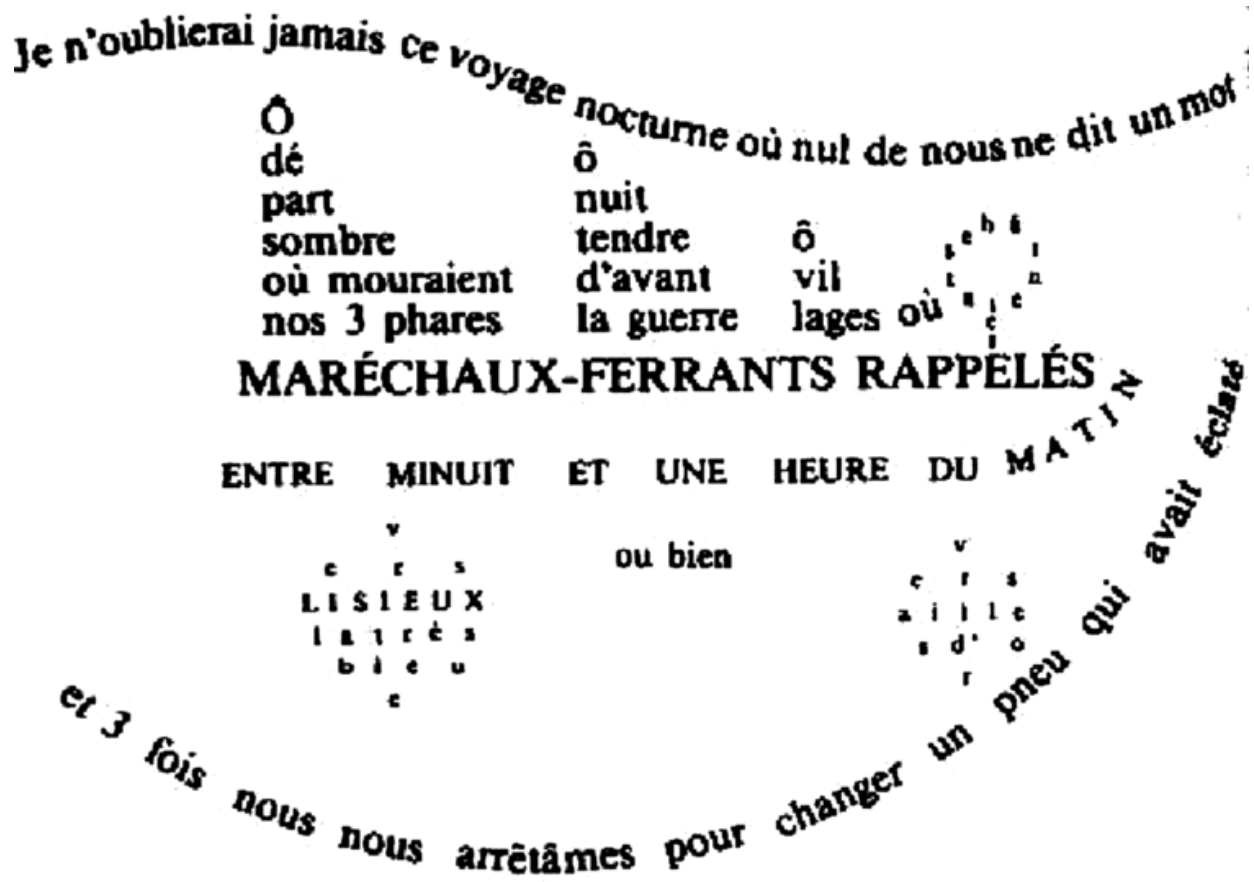


Figure 20.1 Apollinaire’s Calligramme included in the poem ‘La petite auto’: the words shape the front (and lights) of the car entering the war.

The art critic-turned-volunteer soldier metamorphosed into a practitioner of the plastic arts, using drawings in and through his words like the Futurists or the Cubists, comrades who used words in their works. Here the broken form reaches the fundamental site, the front. *La petite auto* provided a metaphor for the race towards a modernity that was both desired and sometimes deeply painful. The mention of farriers, so essential to the mobilisation of horses, was also an imperious reminder of these contradictory times emerging from the nineteenth century. Here Apollinaire expressed with prescience what Walter Benjamin would state later: namely, the insignificance of individuals in the radical experience of this particular war: ‘A generation which went to school in a horse-drawn tram’, Benjamin noted, ‘found itself in open country with nothing recognisable except the clouds and, at the centre, in a field of forces crossed with tensions and destructive explosions, the tiny and fragile human body.’⁴

Artists go to war

Artists, like many other combatants, were not only mobilised in the passive sense of the term: initially, at least, the majority consented actively to the war, seeing it as just and cleansing both at home and on the front line. Voluntary enlistment was understood to be a commitment to a life-or-death struggle between good and evil. Patriotism became a mystique of loyalties understood along absolute national lines. The fervent certainty of self-defence against aggression from ‘the Other’, the enemy, was an eclectic combination of religious feelings and the feelings of patriotism as expressed, for example, by the Russian artist Natalia Gontcharova in a series of woodcuts in 1914, *Mystical Images of the War*. French nationalist roosters proliferated in Raymond Duchamp-Villon’s works and his enlistment in a cavalry regiment helped him to refine his Futurist equine sculptures. Ernst Barlach’s simultaneously modern and medieval sculpture, *The Avenging Angel*, represented for this convinced nationalist ‘the essence of the war, the crystallisation of the assault on each obstacle’. In 1915, in a significant engraving in the tradition of an *image d’Epinal*, Raoul Dufy depicted a tricolour rooster entitled *The End of the Great War*. How could anyone possibly dare to speak of the end of the Great War in March 1915? Like many others, Dufy understood clearly that the war was ‘great’ before it was long; he linked its duration and its outcome, which would inevitably be favourable for his country, to the purity of the Allied cause; he located himself between eschatology and the denunciation of his enemies in this balancing act so characteristic of combatants in their horrified fervour. Drawings were typical of this commitment in works designed for postcards by the Russians Vladimir Lebedev or Lavrov, and in the proliferation of high-quality caricatures in German and British magazines. The same was true in music: in September 1914 Max Reger, seized with the nationalist enthusiasm to which he was determined to respond, composed *A Patriotic Overture* into which he incorporated references to ‘Deutschland über alles’. At the same time he was already planning a requiem: the descent into hell. The ‘holy war’ wished for by Kazimir Malevitch and many artists determined to take up the struggle with this old world of which they ‘were weary’,⁵ quickly proved to be a time of death and mourning.

Artists were moved by guilt, conviction or a mixture of the two to reflect on what they could give their country if they did not fight. Many felt that

despite the situation there was no ‘war art’ or music or painting – there was only ‘art’. Debussy attempted to go on proving this even as he composed war-related works, such as ‘La berceuse héroïque’ (‘Heroic Cradlesong’) in honour of King Albert of the Belgians. On the home front, charitable works provided the venue for personal statements, and composers, painters and sculptors were invited to organise concerts or offer paintings, drawings or scores for sale, with profits going to funds for the wounded or prisoners.

Such artistic currents were related to both charity and propaganda. Americans, who were still neutral, were particularly solicited: in Paris, for example, Lili Boulanger, who in 1912 had composed a premonitory ‘Pour les funérailles d’un soldat’, agreed with her sister Nadia to join the Comité franco-américain du Conservatoire on the model of the Committee of American Students of the École des Beaux-Arts, and in 1915 the writer Edith Wharton published a bilingual book, *Le livre des Sans-Foyer*, with profits going to homeless refugees.⁶ General Joffre and the former American President Theodore Roosevelt wrote prefaces for it, while fifty-seven French, British, Russian and American writers and artists contributed texts, works of art or musical scores. Most of them chose a work from their pre-war stock or from those that represented wounds and the distress of war. Stravinsky settled for his *Souvenirs d’une marche boche*, a sort of caricature of military music, not particularly German apart from an echo of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.⁷ For some, giving up the music of the great Beethoven was so painful that they chose to regard him as Flemish. The work of German composers was withdrawn from concert programmes in Paris, beginning with Wagner – adored yesterday but now unacceptable – while Vincent d’Indy even called for the ‘de-Germanisation of the streets of Paris’ by the removal of Prussian musicians from street names.⁸

Once more combining the military and home fronts, exhibitions were mounted in all the capitals. They emphasised military sacrifice and sold works for the benefit of combatants. The vast metal nail-studded statue of Hindenburg, unveiled in Berlin in September 1915 to commemorate the victory at Tannenberg, was typical of a patriotic art which united a vision of national grandeur with the task of adorning the cities. Exhibitions denounced enemies, and the Pantheon in Paris was used to display works of art, ancient, medieval or modern, which were ‘attacked’ – damaged by the violence of a war that was always labelled ‘German’. Others worshipped their own as heroes, as in the *Panthéon de la Guerre* visited by hundreds of thousands of

Parisians: it was a panorama of the war displaying in one gigantic fresco the civilian and military personalities who were leading the Allied cause.⁹

Artists on the front line: between consent, propaganda and suffering

On every front artists, whether mobilised or enlisted volunteers, found a true source of inspiration in the spectacle of the war. Here are Fernand Léger's words: 'There was this extreme poetic atmosphere at the front, which excited me to my roots. Good God! What faces! What expressions! . . . I was dazzled by the breach of a '75 open in full sunshine . . . it taught me more about my development in the plastic arts than all the museums in the world.'¹⁰

Max Beckmann and Otto Dix shared similar thoughts: 'I had to have this experience: how someone beside me could fall suddenly and be finished . . . I am a man of the real. I must see everything. I must have direct experience of all the pitfalls in life. That is why I volunteered.'¹¹ They oscillated between fascination with the war and fear in the face of horror, hence their equivocation, for they were witnessing beauty, violence and despair all at the same time. Franz Marc analysed this aestheticised and affirmative view of the violence of war:

It is unbelievable what this mad war draws out of us. If only it also drew it out of our people! But they remain stuck like flies in the binding glue of events right in front of them . . . What else can be done in this time of madness than to hold one's head and think? If not, one goes mad.¹²

In Germany and Britain, 'official' artists were given the task of accompanying military units in order to present the war as they saw it. The fact that they were 'war artists' does not mean that they were conformists without talent: as mobilised men they were young, generally open to modernity, and their knowledge of the front prevented them from painting images derived from historical themes, particularly since they were usually free to make their own choice of subject. As a result, they simultaneously expressed respect for suffering and despair in the face of death and

destruction. David Bomberg painted Canadian soldiers digging a tunnel for mine-laying at Ypres; the Vorticist fragmentation of his work reflected the bodies torn apart when the mines exploded.

The artists' output – and not only that of the avant-garde, for there was a vast production of frequently second-rate quality which perhaps showed even more of the cultures of the warring societies – is highly revealing of general views of the war. Initially, the artists concentrated above all on atrocities committed by the enemy. This is understandable: if it is always difficult to represent death, even when accusing the murderer of a crime, was it not almost impossible when artists recognised that they shared in the banalisation of violence? The representations of atrocities were not simply 'eye-wash' or an expression of resistance to the reality of death: they are almost the only way in which to represent the intensification of the conflict, showing up its 'barbarity' – a parallel way of denouncing the *real* atrocities of maiming and killing on the front. Exaggeration prepared the ground for mystification, and then for oblivion.

Debussy gave this artistic trajectory its most famous musical form with his 'Noël pour les enfants qui n'ont plus de maison' ('A Christmas carol for children who no longer have a home') with vengeful words against Germans guilty of atrocities – yet the music remains firmly in a purely Debussy-esque mode:

Noël! Petit Noël! . . .
Punissez-les! Vengez les enfants de France! Les petits
Belges, les petits Serbes et les Polonais aussi! . . .

[Noel! Little Noel! . . . *Punish them! Avenge the children of France!*
The little Belgians, the little Serbs and the Poles too . . .]

In his folklore-style woodcuts, Kazimir Malevitch railed against the Germans and the Austrians, but in some cases this hatred was more subtly expressed. Everything in the paintings of the soldier-artist Eric Kennington shows the extreme exhaustion of the soldiers, with their empty gaze. One man lies asleep on the floor of the barn which is a makeshift billet, and the artist depicts himself at the centre of all this exhaustion, which might seem

pointless – but the pointed *Pickelhaube* carried off as a trophy is an inescapable reminder of the enemy.¹³

Representations of the ruins of thousands of churches – beginning with the ever present Cathedral of Reims, which even inspired thoughts of leaving it in its damaged state as permanent proof of German disgrace on French sacred ground – are there to confirm both consent to sacrifice for one's country and hatred of the Other. Amédée Reuchsel composed a symphonic tableau for orchestra, organ and choir, *La cathédrale victorieuse*, 'august victim of a sacrilegious holocaust'.

The fact that innocent children of God and defenceless women had been particularly targeted (by the 'true' criminals) and used (in hostile propaganda) appears logical in the view of the conflict as a war of religion, a crusade against the barbarity of enemies without conscience, the incarnation of morality and civilisation denied. Three-dimensional representations and musical compositions rivalled literature in this. The French artist Otto Friez, in an immense canvas from 1915, showed the triumph of German death with torture orchestrated by the Devil/Kaiser in which the world of God, justice and truth struggles with the world of the Devil, death and lies. This faith emerges everywhere: the Munich artist Max Feldbauer painted French or Belgian snipers with gallows expressions; in Italy, it was the Austrians who were hated by the painter Mario Sironi as he appeared to illustrate the popular song:

O Austriaci di razza galera Inhumani crudeli e senza cuor . . .
(O Austrians in your racial prison / Cruel, inhuman and heartless . . .)¹⁴

The American George Bellows probably went furthest in his bold depiction of atrocities, in vast, almost hyperrealist canvases in which sadistic soldiers were violently illuminated by the naked bodies of their human-shield victims. And yet some combatants sought to distance themselves from the excesses of the rear: 'Two things which wring my heart: destruction by order of a ruffian Emperor of the Cathedral of Reims and the public savaging by a Frenchman [Saint-Saens] of Goethe, Schiller and Wagner. Again the first of these actions was directly in the character of our enemies. The second was not in ours.'¹⁵

When they were not depicting barbarity directly, at the limits of visible or audible caricature, artists showed little of the horrors to which civilians were subjected, but there were remarkable exceptions. André Devambez, Giuseppe Caselli, Abel Pann and Théophile Steinlen showed French, Italian, Russian, Serbian and other civilian refugees on the move. Ever larger bundles, old men leaning on their sticks, children clinging tightly to their mothers, open carts piled up with evacuees: they are departing, anonymous. Where are they going? Nowhere and everywhere. Ernst Barlach's initial enthusiasm collapsed at the invasion of Serbia, among the Christian women whom he now represented as Virgins of Sorrow burying their children and their fathers along the roads of their exodus.¹⁶ In 1917 in Oslo, the capital of a neutral country, even Edvard Munch depicted a crowd panicking as rumours of war flashed among them. Because by chance his military mission had brought him into contact with civilians, Beckmann evoked the horror of this facet of the war. 'The terrible chill of the atmosphere in a conquered town . . . A savage world'.¹⁷ Otto Dix used his sharp powers of observation not only on the battlefield but when viewing civilians caught in the ruins of their houses. Some of his etchings are entitled: *Lens est bombardée, Maison détruite par les bombardements (Tournai), La folle de Sainte-Marie-à-Py (Lens is shelled, House destroyed by the bombardment (Tournai), The madwoman of Sainte-Marie-à-Py)*. What we see is a mother ravaged by the death of her child, mad with grief, mad with horror .

Representing or camouflaging the war?

Some praised the ability of the arts to speak the truth about the war: 'the secret and passionate language of music alone could well transmit the grandeur of the sacrifices of our soldiers and all the violent sights which still ring in our ears'.¹⁸ Others, however, remained convinced that the war could not be represented. For Debussy, there 'was no war music'. To one soldier who pressed him to 'translate into music the strange beauty of nights at the front', the composer was precise:

These things cannot be 'shown', it would be shabby, compared to the reality. Could one attempt, at the very most, a transposition? What would always be missing: the atmosphere, the colour of the sky, the faces of men and, above all, the heroism of your soul, in such moments

as those. Look at drawings of the war, see how, with very few exceptions, they are 'theatre', false to be more accurate, at least that is how I see it.¹⁹

In order not to 'make believe', either in hearing or seeing, and far from a realism that was inevitably impossible, there remained the 'camouflage' of the war, and it was to this that many artists applied themselves. Camouflage services were created everywhere to meet military needs. This enabled large numbers of artists ('shirkers' in some eyes) to move beyond the contradiction between aesthetics and destruction, and sometimes to avoid madness. The presence of these avant-garde artists at the very heart of military efficiency was one of the paradoxes of the war. It was played out in ruptures of style, modernism and modernity. To camouflage was in effect to conceal an object, to disguise its military presence from the enemy, to make it less visible, and hence more effective. It was also to contradict the reality of the war by enabling the creation of another war, in seeking to align combatants and means more closely with the dangers of armies and artillery, or to see without being seen. Gertrude Stein perceived this rearrangement of and through the war landscape clearly, and linked it to the avant-garde of Picasso and André Mare: 'A composition without a beginning or an end, a composition on which one corner was as important as another corner, in fact the composition of cubism' .²⁰

Camouflage sometimes went so far as to hide the drama of war entirely: thus Henry Valensi became the official artist at the Headquarters of General Gouraud, and his *Expression des Dardanelles*²¹ used camouflage to perfection to hide the horrors under the 'Futurist' modernity of shell bursts, coloured geometric lines criss-crossing the painting, zigzags in curved echoes of waves – sounds? shells? – superimposing themselves on tiny warships, on infinitesimal gun-carriages. Here was modernity without war.

Elsewhere, there was modernity within war, even against war: Otto Dix shone the light on a pile of dead men, on the living, a heap of the living dead, of flares, which traced the contours of the landscape during or after the battle: trenches, barbed wire, cries, scattered limbs, skeletons and beings that crawled, flattened under the hell of fire.²² Dix's night is no longer camouflage, it is the disclosure of the extreme: light and dark, life and death, struggle and denial, as confirmed by the Belgian painter Jules Schmalzigaug,

a pupil of the Futurists, who committed suicide in exile in the Netherlands in 1917:

Unfortunately this concept of Marinetti's, of the superior life of mechanisms and machinery, like a savage God of Antiquity dominating the existence of individuals and of society, has been shown to be only too true in the current war. What is the point of courage and heroism at the front if entire populations are competing in their fervour to feed the machine-idol with steel and explosives?²³

And yet at the same time, in particular because of the unwearied activity of the German-born art dealer Daniel Kahnweiler in the service of Cubism, the plastic revolution of the French artist Braque and the Spaniard Picasso was accused of being 'German art' – Kubism with a K. French musicians were also tearing themselves apart over their musical vision: Debussy, convinced that his colleagues d'Indy and Saint-Saëns were too academic and were therefore not exempt from Germanic influences, referred to them as *bochards* or, in today's terms, 'German clones'. When *En Blanc et Noir* appeared in December 1915, Saint-Saëns furiously accused Debussy of being a Cubist 'capable of atrocity'. Everything that assaulted the eyes, or seemed inaudible, could only be German *Kultur* and responsible for cultural atrocities – in a word Kubist. Did this push the non-combatants Picasso and Juan Gris to 'return to order' in which this rupture entirely exceeded the war, playing itself out beyond it, as the work of Matisse in these years would encourage one to think? This discounts the drawings presented to the refugees from the town of Matisse's childhood now under enemy occupation, Le Cateau-Cambrésis.

The Italian Futurists Gino Severini and Giacomo Balla, together with Vorticists like Christopher Nevinson, the Russian Aristarkh Lentulov and the American Marsden Hartley, who was fascinated by the awful death of a Prussian officer whom he loved, tried to show the modernity of the industrial war in their paintings. Gino Severini was bold enough to call his fragmented representation of cannons, helices, flags and rivets 'Visual Synthesis of an Idea, War'.²⁴

And the cartoonists, in *Punch* or *La Baïonnette* as well as in *Simplicissimus*, often took against modern art, in particular avant-garde

exhibitions which continued to be organised during the war. It was the graphic artist Olaf Gulbransson who best sketched these contradictions and convergences, showing a wounded soldier reacting to an exhibition of paintings: caricature as the protest of art in war.²⁵ Gulbransson had the gift of composing his drawings like the works of the avant-garde, showing his main figure from behind, surprising the viewer by the splitting up of forms. But now it was the war which sliced and deconstructed. In one of his much mocked paintings, the deconstruction of forms in Cubist style allowed the artist to show wounded men full-face. The characters of avant-garde art, without features, without noses, without mouths, are shown on the battlefields with terrible realism. The wounded spectator comments: “‘The war’”, is that what he calls his little picture? Bah! But it’s not as horrible as that.’ The cartoon offers a double bird’s-eye view, between the war as lived by the soldier and the war as represented, between avant-garde experiments and dissimulation. His design prevents the reader from seeing the reaction (disgust? embarrassment? rejection?) of the wounded man in the face of the violence that he has experienced, except to suppose that it is the reflection of his own face – now become literally unshowable – that is represented in the picture .

Thus creativity endured in the war, for the war, or against the war: plays, cabarets, masques, camouflage, concerts of chamber music with instruments brought from the rear or the result of the soldiers’ craft skills, revues, ‘negro’ art, adaptation of objects, songs, language, slang, theatre for the troops, quick-change performances. Artists’ words, war words, all mixed up together, muddled, often in hatred but sometimes without obvious emotions.

In 1917 jazz reached Europe with the regimental bands of black American soldiers, who were segregated from the white soldiers, in a musical Atlantic crossing that was to change the acoustics of Europe and the world with its convulsive pulsing. Meanwhile, from New York Marcel Duchamp was to add his voice to those changing the way of looking at the world, when he bought a urinal from the sanitary-ware company J. L. Mott Iron Works, turned it upside-down and wrote on it ‘R. Mutt’, the date ‘1917’ and the title ‘Fountain’. The object followed in the wake of his first ‘ready-made’ images, a chance encounter with an object. In New York Duchamp was far from the war; but Apollinaire (who may have seen Duchamp behind Mutt) immediately and intuitively understood the radical novelty of the work, probably because of his familiarity with the war and with trench art. Surely

this industrial war could be described as a vast 'ready-made', in which objects of daily life were decontextualised and renamed, even identified in another language, perhaps soldiers' slang, poets' punning and violins constructed in the trenches?

Suffering and disillusionment, from sacrifice to madness

Artists did not escape the general evolution of perceptions of the war: after the illusions of its early stages, they discovered the full extent of its tragedy. Although they continued to hold on, like any one of their trench companions, disillusionment, splits and fragmentation increasingly formed in the web of their representations. At the front, as at the rear, artists changed because the war turned out to be different from what they believed it would be. The British critic Edmund Gosse expressed this in relation to the poet Siegfried Sassoon: 'The bitterness of Lieutenant Sassoon is not cynical, it is the rage of disenchantment, the violence of a young man eager to pursue other aims, who, finding the age out of joint, resents being called upon to help to mend it.'²⁶ At the end of 1915 the enthusiastic patriot Max Regner lamented: 'It can't last much longer! . . . We will come out of this terribly weakened. It is dreadful! And those who unleashed this war have drawn down on themselves the worst curses of humanity for all eternity.'²⁷

The mood of romanticism and exaltation had given way to brutality, violence, death and mourning. The Swiss artist Félix Vallotton shrank before his idea of showing the 'real' war: 'From now on I no longer believe in blood-soaked sketches, in realistic painting, in things seen, or even experienced. It is meditation alone which can draw out the essential synthesis of such evocations.'

Edouard Vuillard painted a prisoner under interrogation. Everything is low-key, grey, immensely sad. Everyone plays his part and that is all. The soldiers of Dunoyer de Segonzac, Otto Dix, Wyndham Lewis, Théophile Steinlen, Christopher Nevinson and Will Dyson became increasingly lost, plunged into this hell of mud. Mathurin Méheut went so far as to depict the execution of a deserter, while Adrien Ouvrier attached himself to daily life in the trenches, restoring a human face to the soldiers. This re-humanisation of the soldiers through their portraits and their 'normal' activities – men who

were eating, drinking, reading or writing letters, sleeping, laughing, praying – was also achieved through photographs. At the time they were not seen as works of art, as they are today, for many reasons. The musicians shown playing in a string quartet under shelling show us the resilience of the sounds and the performer-soldiers.

As with all the combatants, the truth of the ‘eyewitness’ became the standard authority about the war. Only those who had suffered at the front were considered worthy of representing the death of men and of nature. This also explains why the sufferings of civilians, and women in particular, received little attention. Sometimes war factories were recorded and women munitions workers were shown. The Australians who travelled through England on their way to the front or returning home were more struck by the civilian populations: hence George Lambert’s portraits of soldiers, sometimes showing them in pubs with barmaids. However, civilians reappeared in post-war images of mourning, in particular those by women artists, such as the Australians Hilda Rix Nicholas, who painted the terrible *Desolation*, and Dora Meeson.

Like everyone else in the armies, the soldier-artists were torn apart by shells, gassed, torpedoed at sea, suffered accidents in ambulances or munitions lorries, were drowned, became ill with typhus and cholera, wound up in prison camps, were brought down in their aircraft, became victims of traumatic shock, and were exhausted, like the writer Siegfried Sassoon who described his nights in hospital in July 1917: ‘My brain was screwed up tight . . . I was being worried by bad dreams: the floor seemed to be littered with fragments of mangled flesh. Faces glared upwards, their hands clutched at a neck or belly.’²⁸

Gradually, photographs and drawings of tree-trunks shorn of their crowns, with shattered stumps of branches, became metaphors for wounding and death, for headless men, a front without men, men missing or crouching on the ground, powerless and almost invisible. The Nash brothers, John and Paul, made a speciality of these landscapes of war from which men had virtually disappeared. On the other hand, the wounded were increasingly visible, in the first-aid posts of Osip Zadkine or John Singer Sargent’s line of men in *Gassed*, while George Grosz or Beckmann showed them in hospital, in the morgue or being buried. Ambulances and hospitals became the subject

of choice because they opened the way to see suffering far from the heroisation of battle.

It was surely Conrad Felixmüller who showed most clearly the trauma of war, in a red and black engraving of 1918, *Soldier in Shelter*: the man is as disjointed, as geometric as the cross of his military decoration, while an orderly watches him through the peep-hole of his room which has become a prison cell: he is incarcerated in his illness of war, for ever.

Sounds and images inflict wounds, but they can also heal. Doctors who were also artists, such as Howard Kemp Prosser at St John's Hospital in London, experimented with the therapeutic power of music and colours in the face of traumatic shock in their attempts at chromotherapy and music therapy.

As an artist, Fernand Léger brought these fronts and these hospitals together savagely with everything veiled and camouflaged:

Hospital, '*Harmonie en blanc*' all is cold and silent, the smallest gesture makes a sound, everyone looks – a tiny breath of air takes on enormous proportions. It is wholly back to front. Here, everything is meticulous.²⁹

The war was grey and camouflaged. Light, colour, even sound were all forbidden on pain of death. A life of blind men where everything the eye could register and perceive must hide and disappear. No one has seen the war, hidden, disguised, on all fours, earth colour, the useless eye saw nothing. The whole world has 'heard' the war. It was a vast symphony which no musician or composer has ever matched: 'Four years without colour'.³⁰

Turning to religious art, from triptych to requiem

How could the war be shown with artistic weapons inherited from the past, recent or remote, applied to the radical modernity of the war? How could the impossibility of the future be represented, how could the sky, the ruined cities, the landscapes, be shown when they were empty, perhaps for ever? Artists frequently turned to religious imagery for a response to the difficult challenge of depicting the atrocities and the killing without ever losing sight of mourning and compassion. The many and ever growing numbers of

requiems, or popular songs, bore the traces of the moment. 'You will say a *de profundis* when you hear it said that I am on the battlefield to die for Italy.'³¹

Messianism, hope, despair, apocalypse, redemption, suffering, sacrifice, crusade, punishment – all were depicted, engraved and sculpted. Four themes from shared religious foundations formed the basis of them: the Massacre of the Innocents, the Apocalypse of St John, Christ's Passion and Resurrection, and the Sorrows of the Virgin. To some extent this Christian imagery respected each nation's dominant faith and the frontiers between Catholicism and Protestantism, while taking on a universal meaning which included Judaism and those who practised no religion at all. Religious representations and the chosen media, triptych or wood engraving, became a metaphor for the sufferings of the war, between consent, sacrifice under a different name, and rejection – recast as trial or despair. The absence, or eclipse, of God could equally be shown as a form of spiritual anguish. This can be seen in Christopher Nevinson's painting, *Paths of Glory*, which shows two soldiers lying flattened, face-down on the ground, annihilated by death. These men were annihilated a second time by the censors of the War Office who considered the work impossible to exhibit: Nevinson then covered the picture with a strip stating, 'Censored', leaving nothing to be seen except a corner of a battlefield, full of the detritus of war in which only the sole of a boot and a helmet are identifiable, simultaneously very near and very far from the human presence.³²

The only way in which disillusioned artists could survive in the conflict was to work for peace and to be creative in their resistance to the barbarity of the war itself. In 1914, when news of his friend August Macke's death reached him, Franz Marc wrote, 'The insatiable war is enriched by one more heroic death, but German art is impoverished by the loss of yet another artist.'³³ Marc himself would be killed at Verdun in 1916. The Futurist Umberto Boccioni died from a fall from his horse; the very distinctive and promising Vorticist sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska died in the offensive in Artois in 1915; his German equivalent, Wilhelm Lehmbruck, shocked and incapable of recovering from the war, committed suicide in 1919. Albéric Magnard died at home when his property was invaded in 1914. Enrique Granados was drowned when the steamer bringing him home from a series

of concerts was torpedoed in 1916. The Spanish flu carried off the poet Guillaume Apollinaire and the Austrian artist Egon Schiele.

In his wooden sculpture of Christ, with the date '1918' branded on his forehead, Karl Schmitt-Rottluff demanded 'Did not Christ appear to you?' Beckmann went further in his presentation of ravaged apocalypse in his *Resurrection*, which was deliberately left unfinished. The work can only be seen as a Last Judgement in which men, dead or burdened with pain, are exhibited in the drama which traps them in the void of their sufferings. The vast legs of one figure appear to turn into a scythe dripping with dark blood, black as the star which dominates a catastrophe that it can no longer illuminate.³⁴

Grief, mourning and despair replaced the chimera of a world reborn in the purity of a spiritualised war. Only derision, cynicism and sometimes compassion could survive in the new world: hence the Christ of George Grosz who wears a gas mask and cries out: 'Shut your mouth and do your duty.'³⁵ In the very perceptive comment by Günther Anders, in contemporary eyes the engraving could have only one meaning: to Christ the war was an outrage, the gas mask doubling his crown of thorns. But it caused a scandal because an artist was an easier target for denunciation than the war.³⁶

For after these great massacres of the war death was still not banal. It remained incomprehensible and unbearable, leaving individuals and societies in a state of shock. Threefold images proliferated in painting, in part because of their obvious links to the past, and because the symbolic form of the Trinity also offered deconstruction – the breaking-up necessary to the representation of fragmented bodies. These visions, shattered by horror and distress, were in symbiosis with the message of Christianity, moral abandonment, the reversibility of sufferings, the imitation of Christ and the Virgin, and of country. Multi-panel images functioned like the war: they were fragmented, multiplied, refracted, impossible to reassemble in a single image, in a single space, at a single moment. They also expressed the anachronism of religious painting in a time of war, one of the finest proofs of the impossibility of setting such events in a conventional way. More was needed. In Georges Rouault's *Miserere*, begun during the war, continued during the following twenty years, and only made public after the Second World War, grief and despair have replaced the hope of a world reborn in the

purity of a spiritualised war. And who can believe that the soldiers of Stanley Spencer (in his war memorial frescoes in the Sandham Memorial Chapel, Burghclere, 1928–9) will truly experience resurrection? As can be seen in a preparatory sketch, his intention was precisely to show only bodies that were infirm, incapable of standing upright, incapable of raising themselves up from among the dead. Each of Käthe Kollwitz's mothers, similarly, has become like a pietà, weeping, without hope for the morrow, all revolutionary or vengeful instincts dried up and lost in the face of mourning. All these works show a Good Friday without an Easter Sunday to come, and even the staunch Catholic and conservative French painter George Desvallières, in his 1927 poster design for the film *Verdun, vision d'histoire* by Léon Poirier, showed a return of the dead: terrifying skeletons who cannot find rest. The Austrian pianist Paul Wittgenstein, who lost his right arm on the Russian Front, asked five composers of different nationalities – Ravel, Schmitt, Strauss, Britten and Prokofiev – to write a work for the left hand. Ravel's *Concerto for the Left Hand*, his most dramatic work, was first performed by Wittgenstein in Vienna in 1932. Was it really the score which brought them together or was it more likely the utopian wish for the resurrection of art in a damaged world?

Demobilisation as part of mobilisation: mobilisation as part of demobilisation: from Dada to the new objectivity

Some chose exile from the war from its outset, whether they were mobilised or chose not to be mobilised. Some met in Switzerland. In Geneva, the Belgian Franz Masreel encountered Romain Rolland, like him a volunteer with the International Red Cross, and founded a newspaper, *Les Tablettes*. This was his platform for black-and-white drawings and cartoons against the war, and in 1917 Masreel published the remarkable series of ten wood engravings, *Debout les morts*. The most spectacular image represents two decapitated orderlies who carry their own heads on a stretcher: one wears a pointed helmet, the other a French *képi*.

In Zurich, the Dada movement emerged around the Cabaret Voltaire in 1915. To some extent the Dadaists needed the war to be born, prosper and die, but they could not admit this and their private mobilisation was their

commitment to demobilisation from the war. They expressed the grief of war by their declaration of 'No', choosing international uproar and havoc: 'Was it not necessary to find a common point between Russians, Romanians, Swiss and Germans? It has created such a witches' sabbath as you can hardly imagine; a noisy rumpus from morning to night, a sort of great dizziness with trombones and African drums, a kind of ecstasy with castanets and Cubist dances.'³⁷

In maintaining the cosmopolitan tradition of the avant-garde, Dada was never far from the war, however, as Hugo Ball commented in 1917: 'If our abstract pictures were hung in a church, it would not be necessary to cover them on Good Friday. Desolation itself has turned into a picture.'³⁸

Without crusading, but with determination, the Dadaists displayed the nothingness of the war. Their internationalism was felt to be the most intolerable provocation. Many of them came from the margins of Europe – Romania, like Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco, Bohemia, Hungary, eastern Germany, Russia or Poland. The first consequence of the war was to pull these territories apart and reassemble them, to eliminate the former centres and make new ones.

Therefore those who had fought and those who had escaped the front, through illness (Grosz), wounds (Beckmann) or malingering (Jean/Hans Arp, whose double first name demonstrated the difficulty of being Alsatian), shared the same games, the same 'jokes' of demobilisation, with those who from the beginning had held back from the war. They all preached the need for the fresh suicide of a world that was scarcely emerging from its bellicose self-destruction; their nihilism was so well suited to the disastrous circumstances of post-war Europe that in the end they became mobilised in a new form of war in which the weapons were derision, humour, defamation, scatology, scandal for scandal's sake – a form of art for art's sake – and, dominating everything, anti-militarism. To some extent their total art took over from total war. The *Almanach Dada* quoted with humour those who vilified their unclean foreign origins and tried to subvert the dominant values of those years: fighting, belief in one's country, the state of mourning, commemoration. All of these were destroyed through the dynamite of their words, paintings, cabaret evenings, dramatised parodies of parliamentary debates or invented court cases, even real ones in which they were defendants and which they immediately sought to turn into new *happenings*.

Their movement became more violently politicised in Germany, where they immediately set themselves up to operate against the Republic, seeing it only as a continuation of the Empire. In July and August 1920, at the first International Dada Fair, these artists, who considered the by-products of war art, scrupulously created, supremely worthy of disdain, in return praised them once they were subverted. Unintentional kitsch marked the alienation of the various warring populations, but kitsch re-evaluated proved the aesthetic superiority of the Dadaists: hence the Berlin ‘sculptures’ such as *Mannequin of a Soldier with a Pig’s Head*, or another showing an iron cross in place of the genitals, a gas mask ‘protecting’ them casually. Anti-militarist cartoons and photo montages, Otto Dix’s painting *Butchery* – showing butchers with pigs’ heads, freshly returned from the battlefields, their tattooed regimental markings clearly visible – stated forcefully that Germany herself was bleeding through the belt-buckles of these soldiers, marked ‘Gott mit uns’. The response of the Dadaists to the murderous assaults of the war and the anti-Spartakist repression in January 1919 was hinted at both in graffiti in public toilets and in the carvings left by soldiers in abandoned quarries where they had sheltered during the war .

The art of the mid 1920s, reflecting what was termed the ‘new objectivity’ in Germany, continued to express traumatic shock, now a metaphor for the rupture caused by the war. They rejected all asepticisation of the wounds of war, all forms of demobilisation; their invalids and handicapped men were at war for ever, not only as a metaphor for violence and brutal instincts but in the reality of bodies and souls taken over permanently by the blast of war. Those who returned from the war were shown amidst the varied detritus of the war, and ‘civilisation’ was mocked as a false world, full of relics, fine art, kitsch, massacres, lacerating destruction and wounds. Monstrous prostitutes recalled the monstrosity of the front: Eros and Thanatos embracing in all their ugliness. Otto Dix used every tactic to force his contemporaries into confronting the brutality of the war and the brutalisation of the post-war political field. In *Prague Street*, the most elegant street in pre-war Dresden, two war invalids meet without seeing each other, as before the war, but the bourgeois and the beggar are now no more than disjointed puppets in a two-dimensional space, similar to the plaster busts in little shops of erotic objects, between sado-masochism and horror show. The two invalids have lost any possibility of sexuality while the shop-window is overflowing with it. And the dog carries in his mouth a newspaper on which

the headline 'Juden Raus' can be seen. The disabled veterans continue to display their medals, showing that their national pride is unchanged. Had they understood something or nothing? These artists tell us that Europe is 'undemobilisable', particularly in Germany.

[Dix] . . . had seen Germany at war, had judged it, had condemned it to death, without reprieve, for the crime of capital ugliness and abjection . . . A German, he accuses Germany. He walks there as if in a stinking prison . . . The war of machinery has been machined by human machines, made up of spare parts, interchangeable, assembled, in series . . . it is the final stage of abjection, the multiplication of anonymous and disgusting life, vermin-humanity.³⁹

Conclusion: from Parade to degenerate art

For the stage curtain of the ballet *Parade* in 1917, Picasso played between Cubism and modernity, Spanish neutrality and the triumph of the Latin culture of France and Italy – tricolour patriotism in which the crowns of glory for the heroes were undoubtedly also mortuary crowns. Which one prevailed? And what did it really mean to hear and see Satie and Diaghilev? After the Harlequins on the stage curtain and various reprises of this figure from the Commedia dell'arte, that beacon of Latin art and thus the 'return to order', in 1921 Picasso painted *Trois musiciens*. All agreed that Apollinaire could be seen as the Pierrot with the clarinet, and Picasso himself was Harlequin. The dead poet was now camouflaged for ever by his friend – so thoroughly camouflaged (one could say hidden) that Picasso presented himself as Harlequin as if to make up for not having needed to camouflage himself as a soldier at the front during the war. This painting is truly in the spirit of Jean Cocteau, a 'trompe l'esprit' or a conjuring trick, in which colours, shadows and lights create three men even as it distorts them. These three musicians are neither musicians nor living men, but good friends from before the war transformed by and through the conflict. In a very few years it would be the name Surrealism, invented by Apollinaire specifically for the programme notes to *Parade*, which André Breton would adapt for his own benefit, as a survivor of the war and its demobilisation. Would he always manage to remember the camouflage of wartime, like so many other artists across Europe and the world? Many Surrealists, such as Max Ernst,

had seen certain paintings by the insane from pre-war times and had been very impressed by them. The Surrealists' adherence to Dadaism and then to Surrealism, their knowledge of the works by these mentally sick men, their interest in the art known as 'primitive' and the period of the Great War, can often be linked.

In 1937, when the Nazis were organising their Munich exhibition of degenerate art, they used one of the ironic songs which had been written on the walls of the Dada fair in 1920 – 'Take Dada seriously, it's worth it.' They did so deliberately, to attack the artists of the 650 works that they designated abominations; they showed them a final time and destroyed them, for they were 'insults to the heroes of the Great War . . . a military sabotage'.⁴⁰ Nazi mobilisation against all 'degeneracy' led them to destroy the art of the 1920s, this 'aesthetic Jewish gangrene': where the Nazis saw only heroism, these artists had immediately seen misery, suffering and disillusionment. All would have agreed: this art, these artists, in their immense diversity, owed everything, or nearly everything, to the ruptures of the war.

Helen McPhail translated this chapter from French into English.

- 1 André Breton, *Situation du surréalisme entre les deux guerres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945).
- 2 Letter by Marinetti quoted by Luigi Russolo, *L'art des bruits, manifeste futuriste* (1913) (Paris: Allia, 2003).
- 3 Oskar Kokoshka to Marc, 3 September 1914, in Franz Marc, *Écrits et correspondances* (Paris: École Nationale supérieure des Beaux Arts, 2006), p. 427.
- 4 Walter Benjamin, 'Le conteur' (1936), in *Œuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), vol. III, p. 116.

- 5 Guillaume Apollinaire, 'Zone', in *Alcools*, in *Œuvres poétiques* (Paris: Le Pléiade, Gallimard, 1956).
- 6 Edith Wharton (ed.), *The Book of the Homeless (Le Livre des Sans-Foyers): Original Articles in Verse and Prose Illustrations Reproduced from Original Paintings and Drawings* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916).
- 7 Esteban Buch, 'Composer pendant la guerre, composer avec la guerre', in *La Grande Guerre des musiciens* (Lyon: Symetrie, 2009), p. 150.
- 8 And, singularly, Meyerbeer, so the anti-Semite d'Indy thus killed two birds with one stone.
- 9 Mark Levitch, *Panthéon de la Guerre: Reconfiguring a Panorama of the Great War* (Kansas City: University of Missouri Press and the National World War One Museum, 2006).
- 10 Fernand Léger quoted in *Fernand Léger, Rétrospective*, exhibition catalogue (Saint-Paul-deVence: Fondation Maeght, 1988), p. 153.
- 11 Otto Dix, quoted by Iain Boyd Whyte, 'Otto Dix's Germany: from Wilhelmine Reich to east/west divide', in *Otto Dix*, exhibition catalogue (London: Tate Gallery, 1992), p. 28.
- 12 Marc to Paul Klee, 26 October 1914 and 29 December 1914, in Marc, *Écrits et correspondances*, pp. 431 and 436.
- 13 *The Kensingtons at Laventie* (1915), Imperial War Museum, London.
- 14 A. Savona and M. L. Straniero, *Canti della Grande Guerra* (Milan: Garganti, 1981), vol II, p. 583.

- 15 Jean-Jacques Bernard to Gabriel Marcel, 25 September 1914, fonds Marcel, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.
- 16 *Femme de la steppe (Elegie serbe)* and *Fosse commune* (1915), lithographs, Ernst Barlach Lizenzverwaltung, Ratzeburg.
- 17 Max Beckmann, 'Lettres de guerre', in *Écrits* (Paris: École Nationale des Beaux-Arts, 2002), pp. 145–6.
- 18 Henri Malherbe, *La flamme au poing* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1917).
- 19 Claude Debussy, *Correspondance (1872–1918)* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 24 October 1915.
- 20 Gertrude Stein, *Picasso* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; 1st edn 1938), p. 138.
- 21 Oil on canvas, 123 × 161 cm. Musée d'Histoire contemporaine, BDIC, Hôtel National des Invalides, Paris.
- 22 Otto Dix, *Signaux lumineux*, gouache on paper, 40.8 × 39.4 cm, Städtische Galerie, Albstadt.
- 23 *Jules Schmalzigaug, un futuriste belge* (Brussels: Cahiers des Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts de Belgique, 2010), p. 67.
- 24 Gino Severini, 'Visual Synthesis of an Idea, War' (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1914).
- 25 Olaf Gulbransson, 'Bei den Futuristen', *Simplicissimus*, 7, 16 May 1916, p. 82.
- 26 See Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: The Bodley Head, 1990), p. 191.

- 27** Quoted by Buch, 'Composer pendant la guerre', p. 141.
- 28** Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, quoted by Bruno Cabanes, in B. Cabanes and A. Duménil (eds.), *Larousse de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Larousse, 2007), p. 291.
- 29** Fernand Léger to Louis Poughon, April 1917, in 'Fernand Léger, une correspondance de guerre', *Les Cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne* (1997), p. 82.
- 30** Fernand Léger cited in *Fernand Léger, Rétrospective*, p. 52.
- 31** Savona and Straniero, *Canti della Grande Guerra*.
- 32** The painting, of 1917, can be seen in the Imperial War Museum, London.
- 33** Marc, *Écrits et correspondances*, p. 326.
- 34** Both paintings are in the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.
- 35** George Grosz, *Hintergrund*, no. 10, 1918.
- 36** Günther Anders, *George Grosz* (Paris: Allia, 2005; original German edn 1961).
- 37** Richard Huesenbelk, *Almanach Dada*, bilingual edn (Paris: Éditions Champ Libre, 1980).
- 38** Hugo Ball, *Dada à Zurich: le mot et l'image (1915–1916)* (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2006).

39 Marcel Ray, 'George Grosz', *Les cahiers d'aujourd'hui* (1920), pp. 27–33.

40 *Gemalte Wehrsabotage*, cited in the catalogue of the 1937 exhibition in relation to the *Mutilés de guerre à l'autoportrait* by Dix, which was destroyed after the exhibition. Exhibition entitled 'Entartete Kunst, 1937, Degenerate Art, the Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany', Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1991.

21 War memorials

Bruce Scates and Rebecca Wheatley Almost four years after the Great War had ended, Emily Luttrell, 66 years of age and the mother of fifteen children, wrote to the Australian Prime Minister:

I . . . Beg that your Government will take into consideration my appeal and help me to visit my dear one's resting place there was seven of our sons went to the war . . . surely I have won the right to ask such a small favour which was promised by the state government.

Unlike France and the United States, Australian governments never promised concessionary fares to the families of dead soldiers. But the perception of a promise having been made is equally significant. Emily Luttrell employed the language of citizen over that of supplicant: her son Arthur's sacrifice had earned a 'small favour' from the nation. The Commonwealth thought otherwise. It 'would be rather dangerous to [agree] to these requests', a memorandum to the Prime Minister explained, '[and] such privileges might well be abused'. How was never explained.¹

Like the vast majority of the bereaved, Mrs Luttrell never visited the grave of her son. Australia's soldiers were buried far away. The decision not to repatriate bodies denied next of kin the traditional processes of mourning considered elsewhere in this volume. And even for French and American families the difficulties in recovering remains battered by war and the elements were formidable. Mrs Luttrell may never have seen her son's grave, but she did visit his surrogate tomb – his memorial. The names of all seven sons who served were carved in native hardwood and displayed at the entrance of Hobart Town Hall in the island state of Tasmania. Arthur's name was inscribed in parchment, placed in a casket made of pure Tasmanian zinc and buried in the Domain, a civic reserve where the war dead were first commemorated. A tree was planted in his honour, almost certainly by Mrs Luttrell herself. And in 1925 the citizens of Hobart raised Australia's first state memorial. A tall and stately obelisk, its nobility denied

the sordid reality of death on distant battlefields; here the absent became present again.

Hobart's memorial was one of many. Despite attempts to tally and classify local, civic, parochial and municipal commemoration, we can only estimate the number of such monuments raised the world over. Much hinges on the definition of a 'war memorial'. As Mrs Luttrell's experience suggests, commemoration took myriad different forms. A granite pylon endured. More ephemeral, but no less important, were the flowers and messages laid at its base and photographs of the men they honoured – the grim collection of letters and personal effects from men who never returned. A memorial can be individual or collective, a private act of remembrance or a public commemoration, a material object, a ritual, a monument of solid stone or portable 'commemomabilia'. Käthe Kollwitz's commemorative woodcuts are memorials, as is her haunting sculpture to the memory of her son, the cemetery where he was buried, even his room in which she created a cultic memorial space. Contemporary definitions of war memorials were equally wide-ranging. Canada launched an Art Memorial Fund to honour 'great deeds' in the war; in Australia, the Anzac Fellowship of Women, a body devoted to the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families, styled themselves a living memorial; in France the broken faces of men damaged by war represented as compelling a site of memory as any statue cast in bronze.

This chapter will largely focus on civic memorials, arguably the most important form of public art in the twentieth century. This style of war memorial was comparatively new. Until the late nineteenth century, commemorative structures had honoured victories and victorious commanders, not massive human loss.

Few of these memorials are alike. And even the simplest structure carried a myriad of meanings. Like most objects of material culture, war memorials 'possess biographies whose social and cultural resonances are multi-layered' and diverse. Once taken for granted, they are now the subject of robust scholarship. Early scholars read memorials as expressions of national pride; now there is a heightened awareness that sites of memory are created not just by nations but also by small groups of men and women who do the work of remembrance. Nationalism was no doubt a powerful frame of reference, but these monuments also had another meaning for the

generation who passed through the trauma of war. That meaning, as Prost and Winter have noted, ‘was as much existential as artistic or political, as much concerned with the facts of individual loss and bereavement as with art forms or with collective representations, national aspirations and destinies’. Memorial scholarship has thus witnessed a shift from high to low politics with ‘multi-vocality [now the] order of the day’. Art historians have examined their rich aesthetic heritage; semioticians have wrangled with their symbolism, cultural geographers have mapped the meanings of memorial spaces.²

This chapter will explore the architecture, choreography and afterlife of remembrance. It will examine the grammar of memorials. What features do they have in common and why did communities choose one form over another? Memorials were markers for absent bodies. But what became of the bodies themselves and how were they commemorated on the battlefields that stretch across Europe? Finally the meaning of a memorial was never set in stone; their ‘afterlife’ extends long after the passing of the generation who made them. How have the meanings of memorials shifted over time and how have they facilitated forgetting as well as remembering?

Making a memorial

Memory activists drove the memorial project the world over. Letters to the press advocating one proposal or another invariably begin with commemorative credentials: ‘I am the mother of four who have fallen’; ‘As a father of an only son lost in France’. ‘Fictive kin’, as Winter has dubbed them, often asserted as strong a claim as blood relations. Red Cross workers, soldier support associations and groups devoted to the care of their dependents had long acted as intermediaries between military authorities and the civilian community. When the war ended, they turned to the task of commemoration. Often memorials bear their signature: ‘The Lest We Forget Club’ raised a stone soldier in Lacombe, Canada; ‘erected by the Stawell Girls Remembrance League’ is carved beneath a similar structure in Australia. The memorials raised by these emotional communities express pride, patriotism and sorrow. But perhaps their foremost purpose was consolation. Winnipeg’s Soldiers’ Relatives Association chose to remember the moment peace was declared, and selected a bronze soldier ‘triumphantly

whirling his tin hat in the air'. 'I wanted to do a happy soldier', sculptor Marguerite Taylor explained, 'so the bereaved wives and mothers would not be too much saddened when they looked at it.' Winnipeg's statue was appropriately dubbed 'the Next-of-Kin memorial'. Returned soldiers' associations constituted a third commemorative stakeholder. Well resourced, politically connected and often organised along quasi-military lines, veterans' groups were quick to speak in memory of departed comrades. Bolstered by what has been called the 'myth of war experience', these soldier networks retained their salience long after the war was over. 'Erected by their comrades' is carved at the base of many a memorial.³

Memory activists dominated the debates that attended the making of virtually every memorial. A mayor, a parliamentarian or a minister of religion might be called on to chair a public meeting in the town hall, church or *mairie*, but memorials were local rather than government initiatives. The state played little part in popular deliberations.

Of course there were exceptions. In France and Belgium governments offered subsidies to communes but only if their memorials conformed to certain guidelines. State sponsorship proved even more significant in the defeated countries. Political uncertainty in the Weimar Republic made it difficult to fund or build memorials, and both veteran associations and the bereaved often declared their opposition to lavish monumental art. Communities commemorated in spite of that. The graves of 'fallen heroes' were tended by their families; municipalities raised modest plinth and pillar to 'sons we mourn'; 'heroes' groves' (forests of oak symbolically sheltering the dead) were planted across Austria and Germany. But this personal remembrance, usually centred on church and cemetery, was overwhelmed by the public, state-sponsored commemoration that followed. Throughout the 1930s, with the reassertion of German nationalism, favoured Nazi artists raised an army of Teutonic memorials. Animated by what Mosse calls the cult of the dead, these monuments valorised redemptory sacrifice for the nation. The Nazi state also removed memorials inimical to the spirit of National Socialism. Ernst Barlach's portrayals of distress, death and despair, were condemned as modernist and 'degenerate'.⁴

Whatever their aesthetic or political preference, artists were integral to the making of memorials. Their hands crafted a community's tribute, their suggestions often inspired it. They hosted the competitions that selected

winning designs, discussed their merits in professional journals, mounted exhibitions, delivered public lectures and displayed 'magic lantern slides'.

Artists, like the bereaved, issued their own distinctive claim to the community's conscience. A booklet produced by the Royal Academy praised 'the imaginative and intellectual' above the vulgar and commonplace.

The experts were often disappointed. The form a memorial might take was not just a matter of aesthetic choice; it was determined by the resources the community could call on and the industry's structural constraints. A Sussex village may have longed to commission fine allegorical statuary, a Midwest American town may have aspired to an ambitious programme of civic improvement. But they raised a simple obelisk, or purchased a stone soldier because it was cheaper. Bronze figures are more common in the UK and the US than they are in Australia or New Zealand. It was difficult to get a bronze figure cast in the under-industrialised countries: a Canadian sculptor could have the work done in London; such traffic from the antipodes was rare.

Limiting as these choices are, commemoration also licensed invention. Public meetings called for any worthwhile proposal, press columns offered design boards for would-be architects, the untrained but inspired turned their hand to art. And alongside the monuments we have, historians should consider projects imagined. As early as 1915, the *Architectural Review* called for 'a national memorial' in the heart of London. One such proposal planted a Gothic cathedral beside the Houses of Parliament, another a pylon soaring between a pair of classical temples. Neither was built. At the other end of the world, these dreams were just as fanciful. An enthusiast in Hobart suggested 'a chain of Stone Memorials from the extreme south to the north . . . across the ocean to Melbourne then on and on London . . . France and Belgium . . . touching South Africa [en route]'. Each memorial would host a lighthouse: a 'sacred' symbol of commemoration and a practical aid to navigation all at once. It is easy to dismiss these schemes as the work of cranks. But they alert us to the enormous creative energy of the war memorial movement, its quest to bridge the periphery and the metropolis, its visionary élan.

Memory activists may have directed these discussions but these unauthorised projects suggest that the war memorial movement was a

deeply democratic one. True, some committees, like those convened in the close-knit parishes of rural England, reflect older systems of power and patronage. And often an uneasy alliance of memory activists prevailed. Even so, every issue to deal with a memorial – its shape, cost, location, even the manner of fund-raising – was a matter of strenuous debate. And many opposed memorials altogether. Again the case of Hobart is instructive. Organisers sought support from a wide range of social agencies, and boldly approached the same trade unions that had led the anti-conscription campaign. Trades Hall sent a curt resolution in reply: ‘recognising that wars are capitalistic in origin . . . [we] decline to take any part in your committee and point out that any monies available would be better devoted to the relief of the War Victims and the dependents many of whom are destitute’.⁵

The utilitarian debate

The needs of the destitute shaped the parameters of the utilitarian debate.

Many expressed their opposition to a purely ornamental memorial. Monuments, the critics asserted, were ugly as well as useless, the rash of cast iron horrors disfiguring America in the wake of the civil war being a case in point. They kept alive ‘the war spirit’, critics complained, and were ‘relics of barbarism’. Finally, monuments were at odds with modernity. A modern monument, Lewis Mumford crisply remarked, was simply a contradiction in terms.⁶

Mumford expressed the progressive spirit in America, and it was in the United States that utilitarianism found its strongest voice. There, many advocated living memorials: community houses, stadiums, libraries and other such institutions devoted to individual and municipal improvement. Enthusiasts dubbed them ‘Liberty buildings’ and claimed they captured the democratic spirit of the war. But utilitarianism was much more than bricks and mortar. Across the world its advocates called for better pensions for veterans, land grants for soldier settlers, aid for widowed mothers and their children. The Imperial Order of the Daughters of Empire alone raised over half a million dollars in scholarships for the soldier orphans of Canada.

It is tempting to align utilitarian movements with progressive or labour opinion but the politics of commemoration is seldom as simple as that.

There was a deeply conservative dimension to journals like *The American City*, its rhetoric of community a bulwark against class and ethnic upheaval.

Conservative politicians in Britain supported the idea of a hospital extension as the local memorial as strongly as their opponents on the left, while some Labour politicians advocated monuments. And in all sections of the community there was a reluctance to compromise remembrance with utility. Who would remember the purpose of a memorial hospital, the critics asked? And how could a memorial cinema be sacred to the memory of the dead? In the Welsh community of Barry a woman called on all mothers 'to wake up and protest against the Memorial Hall'. The very suggestion was 'wicked': 'it will be used mostly for dancing and the brave ones who shed their lives for us would be forgotten'.⁷

Balancing competing views, many communities opted for multiple commemorative projects. Sensitive to the charge that a memorial children's hospital might promote pacifism, a pair of mounted guns, trophies of the battlefield, were stationed at the entrance to Victoria Hospital in London, Ontario; Hawaii's Natatorium, a swimming pool frequented by children, was flanked by plaques naming the dead. Often such concessions were aimed at appeasing veteran opinion, a commemorative stakeholder sometimes as divided as the bereaved. In Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain returned soldiers' halls combined commemorative spaces with social amenities, the portraits of dead heroes lining billiard rooms and libraries. And often communities were unsure if the proposal they were considering was sensibly utilitarian or piously commemorative. How did one classify avenues of honour planted at once to beautify roadsides and to honour the fallen? The memorial lychgates raised at the entrance of English churches were deeply symbolic; traditionally used as a staging place for a coffin on its way to a service, they symbolised the passage from life into death. But they also served a practical purpose, sheltering parishioners from the elements. Contemporaries were divided over the virtues of war museums and whether their purpose should be both educational and 'liturgical'.

The utilitarian debate troubled both sides of continental Europe. It is true that the French built 'monuments aux morts', rather than war memorials, steadfastly disavowing practicality. The taste for utility, as Ken Inglis has astutely observed, was Protestant and voluntarist in character, and

‘reinforced by a spiritual modernity in the face of death which had made more inroads into Protestant than Catholic cultures’. In France, a memorial meant a monument: ‘nobody thought of proposing that funds collected for commemorating the war should be devoted to . . . public charity’. But even that generalisation must be qualified. Abbé Alfred Keller’s war memorial in the fourteenth *arrondissement* of Paris was a housing project for ‘humanity in distress’. Model apartments for widows were festooned with the names of the fallen. ‘You honour the dead’, Desvallières’s mural in the courtyard declared, ‘by an act of living’.⁸

Funeral forms

Honouring the dead invited the use of funeral architecture. Crosses stood as the centrepiece of some of the earliest war memorials. A symbol of Christian sacrifice, they appeared on honour rolls raised across the Empire, marking those who had made the supreme sacrifice. Crosses, often fashioned from the debris of war, identified the first battlefield graves; some were repatriated home and reverently installed in churches as memorials. A cross also provided the framework, structurally and symbolically, of the first street shrines raised across East London in 1916. One such shrine in Hackney listed the names of all the men from the street who joined the colours on framed parchment surmounted by a wooden cross. Historians are divided as to whether the street shrine movement should be seen as a spontaneous outbreak of popular emotion or a movement manufactured by wartime evangelicalism. What is beyond dispute is that the cross featured on these first flimsy tributes and offered a template for the permanent monuments that followed. Across the globe enterprising monumental masons turned their trade to commemorative art.

A simple geometric form accommodated infinite variation. The crucifix and Celtic Cross conjured up redemptive suffering and sacrifice. The Eleanor Cross, originally marking the progress of Queen Eleanor’s funeral cortege to Westminster, ‘primarily represented the grief and loss of loved ones’. An Iron Cross was mounted on the memorial plinth in Tübingen, Germany, a symbol of both Christian sacrifice and military valour; a Maltese Cross was raised in the centre of Lagos, Portugal – a shabby attempt to retain colonies in Africa imbued with the qualities of a crusade.

Whatever form it took, to raise a cross was an act of devotion. ‘To our beloved who died that we might live’, reads the memorial at Whitegate by Cork Harbour, ‘We women here have set the holy cross.’ Above the inscription are the names of twenty-six dead: three Aherns lead the column, followed by two Colemans, two Condons, two Fitzgeralds.

Reginald Blomfield’s Cross of Sacrifice (which, along with Lutyens’s Stone of Remembrance, served as a defining feature of imperial war cemeteries) was faithfully replicated throughout Britain and beyond. Carved from grey granite in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, honey-coloured sandstone from the Derwent valley of Tasmania, the gleaming white of Lincolnshire limestone in Newark, Nottinghamshire, the cross expressed ‘the cultural Federation of the British Empire’.⁹

As with many memorials, the symbolism of Blomfield’s cross was deliberately ambiguous. The cross was paramount to Christian observers; it slipped from the view of others who focused on the sword at its centre. Its martial and spiritual properties were less important in the commemorative lexicon than its direct association with war graves overseas. The greater the distance from Europe, the more powerful that appeal. 12,000 km from the killing fields of France and Belgium, Adelaide’s League of Loyal Women chose Blomfield’s sword of sacrifice as the centrepiece of their city’s Memorial Garden. Set above surrogate graves in the shape of plots of rosemary, it was designed to ‘call to mind those other gardens’ stretched across Flanders and the Somme.¹⁰

The loyal women of Adelaide hoped to link ‘the graves of the front with the homeland’, but in France itself the cross was largely absent from commemorative architecture. This is surprising. Wayside crucifixes marked many battlefields and the most frequent French image of the front was that primitive grave marker, the *croix de bois* or wooden cross. By the end of the war, it was ‘the privileged sign of French loss’. The absence of a cross on French war memorials is one of the starkest instances of the state shaping a commemorative culture. The secular Republic prohibited its use except in the immediate vicinity of a church or a graveyard. But regional variations sometimes flouted centralised guidelines from Paris. Crosses, Annette Becker’s study has noted, take root in strongly Catholic provinces like Alsace and Lorraine. They are also woven into the fabric of secular commemoration. A cross may not stand out against the skyline, but it is

featured on the shield of Joan of Arc, appears as a crucifix beside the hand of a slain soldier or (in emblematic form) in the *croix de guerre*.¹¹

With the cross denied precedence in *monuments aux morts*, other forms of funeral architecture took its place. The stele, or obelisk, is described by Antoine Prost as the ‘canonic form’ of French commemoration. Erected in a space ‘symbolically dominated by the Mairie’ it ‘list[ed] the names of the dead together with the time-honoured inscription: the commune of – To its children who died for France’. To use it was to ‘speak the official language of the Republic, not the language of local tradition and sentiment’. It was also the language of veteran groups who dominated commemorative discourse.¹²

In France, monuments of this type were typically quite bare. Local traditions and sentiments dictated otherwise elsewhere. Arguably the simplest obelisk (or its allied variants of pillar, triptych or column) was the most effective. A pointed pillar was commonplace in Italy where it evoked past imperial grandeur. In Australia and New Zealand, many communities were drawn to the symbolism of a broken column. It signified, a speaker at Orawai declared, a life cut short ‘for us’. But this was also a medium that invited embellishment. Obelisks were topped with pedestals, convenient platforms for statuary; a globe was mounted on a pillar at the seaside suburb of Manly, New South Wales, honouring men who crossed the oceans and did not return; the citizens of Toora, Victoria, chose a lantern, simultaneously a reference to the flame of freedom and a useful civic amenity.¹³

The cross was at one extreme of commemorative architecture, Edwin Lutyens’s supremely non-denominational Cenotaph at the other. First raised in Whitehall as a temporary memorial to the Empire’s fallen, the Cenotaph (literally an empty tomb) was seen by many as the most appropriate symbol of the absent dead. Lutyens hoped to breathe new life into classicism, mounting a symbolic coffin or sarcophagus on a perfectly proportioned pylon. Devoid of vertical or horizontal lines, the memorial achieved a kind of weightlessness. Its bulk diminishes as it rises, subtle curves in the structure creating an optical illusion called *entasis*. At once simple and sophisticated, ancient and modern, the Cenotaph caught the imagination of the hundreds of thousands of people who passed it during the peace celebrations in 1919; by popular demand a temporary structure of timber

and plaster was rendered permanent in white Portland stone. Sanctified by its association with the tomb of the Unknown Soldier nearby, symbolically set at the heart of the Empire, and saying so much ‘because it said so little’, this ‘timeless’ memorial proved readily marketable as a commemorative form. It also spoke *across* the Empire, the absence of Christian notation transcending differences of religion and race. Replicas of the Cenotaph were raised in many an imperial outpost: in Singapore and Hamilton (Ontario), Hong Kong and Bermuda, Auckland and Johannesburg. Most bear Lloyd George’s inscription ‘To the Glorious Dead’ but memorials made space for the indigenous as well as imperial: ‘Opdat Ons Nie Vergeet Nie’ reads the Cenotaph installed in South Africa’s largest city. Many remarked on the Cenotaph’s ‘magical’ quality: allied to the spiritualist movement that flourished in the early 1920s this was a place where the bereaved felt the presence of the lost.¹⁴

The Cenotaph also had its critics, particularly in Christian constituencies. Some have argued that the entombment of Britain’s Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey, an elaborate act of mourning considered elsewhere in this volume, was the Church of England’s response to Lutyens’s disturbingly disembodied memorial. Conservative Catholics also derided this ‘pagan’ and primitive structure. For others, the principal virtue of the Cenotaph, its eloquent emptiness, served only to underscore their loss. As with every memorial the response was subjective. But as was the case with utilitarianism, commemoration offered scope for compromise. Bradford placed a soldier, bayonet fixed and thrusting forward beside the immobile purism of Lutyens’s Cenotaph. Chadderton in Manchester added a solemn soldier in mourning, and Burnley represented all three services alongside the bronze figure of a mother ‘overwhelmed with emotion’ laying a wreath in memory of her son. These compositions may have cluttered Lutyens’s minimalism but they expressed, in the words of one newspaper columnist, ‘the emotion felt in the human heart’. More importantly they were inclusive, paying homage to key commemorative stakeholders in the community: the veteran, the bereaved, the absent dead.¹⁵

The Cenotaph’s ‘weightlessness’ distinguishes it from the heavy monumentalism of much neoclassical architecture, and that alerts us to a crucial dichotomy in commemorative culture: verticality, Winter has observed, ‘is the language of hope’, horizontal forms ‘the language of

mourning'. The appeal of the vertical, or, as one critic put it, 'man's unappeasable desire for the perpendicular', inspired memorial towers the world over. Standing 133 feet high, the University of Toronto's Memorial Tower was one of the most costly war memorials in Canada. It included an arched colonnade, bearing the names of 620 men and one woman, all members of the university, who fell in the Great War. Memorial towers like this often served a utilitarian purpose. Equipped with a clock face they reminded the community of lives frozen forever in time. Many, like the towers in Wellington, New Zealand, and Simcoe, Ontario, also served as carillons. A bell tower, enthusiasts argued, was commemoration at its most democratic. Blinded soldiers might never gaze on their memorial but all could hear the bells. Such memorials were attuned to the commemorative calendar. Advocates of a carillon as Victoria's national memorial suggested a sombre tone on Anzac Day, marking Australia's baptism of fire, and a 'joyous Peel on Armistice Day' signalling the end of war. Inventive commemorators called for electric lighting in gold or silver, 'capable of suggesting . . . Sorrow or Joy as occasion demands'. These comments show how ancient structures embraced the challenge of modernity: they also alert us to the sensory impact of a memorial: its tactility, audibility and visual presence. Finally, they suggest the span of the commemorative project.

Larger memorials, as we will see, were designed to tower over the communities that raised them – structures that demanded remembrance. But the monument aesthetic was also subdued – even intimate – in character: a tablet laid in a corner of a church; a cross raised at the roadside; the epitaph on a mother's grave in honour of a son taken by the war.¹⁶

Life in art

Beyond the monumentalism of arch and obelisk, cenotaph, cross and tower, flourished a parallel world of commemorative sculpture. Soldier statues can be found the world over, carved from Italian marble, cast in bronze in the foundries of Manchester, designed and manufactured by 'The American Doughboy Company, Georgia'. Catalogues published in Canada offered clients 'representative war memorials': soldiers raising a rifle, soldiers waving a hat or, as a variation on the theme, a marching soldier accompanied by a female 'Victory' brandishing trumpet and wreath. Dramatic as these compositions were, most mass-produced soldier statues

were passive figures, standing at ease, with rifle down at their side or, as befits a symbol of mourning, with arms reversed. Some 'have an air of mourning their own death – standing, but drained of life'. D. H. Lawrence described the archetypal Anzac statue, mounted on a tall pedestal, overlooking names of the fallen: a 'pallid, delicate fawn-coloured soldier standing forever stiff and pathetic'. With a simple change of kit and headwear, the 'digger' statue was transfigured to a 'Tommy' in Britain, a 'Doughboy' in the United States, a French 'poilu' or New Zealand Anzac. Virtually identical mass-marketed soldiers stand in communities rural and urban, large and small. Popular and vulgar they might have been, but we should be wary of dismissing them as commemorative clichés. The choice of a standard figure was not just the cheapest and most convenient option; it also allowed people to situate a sense of loss they shared with the whole nation in the particular context of their own community. That sense of community encompassed empire as much as nation. Many memorials were transnational productions: a generation of architects and sculptors toured the globe from one commemorative commission to another.¹⁷

Like the monumental genre, commemorative sculpture offered a range of artistic possibilities. The neoclassical flourished. In the mid 1920s, having unveiled war memorials across the country, General Sir Ian Hamilton complained that 'a sort of bastard Greek sculpture' had taken hold in England, sculptors choosing only 'the best looking lads' as their models. Robert Tait McKenzie's portrayal of *The Homecoming* in Cambridge exemplifies this trend: a handsome, floppy-haired undergraduate, skipping down the road as if returning from a country jaunt. The figure served a political purpose: 'being whole and unmaimed, [it] diverted attention from the horror of the war . . . The splendid physiques belied the reality of pre- and post-war poverty, malnutrition and disease.' The same was true of Germany. A bas relief of a wounded soldier adorns the memorial plaque raised at Tübingen cemetery . The figure is naked and reclining, reminiscent of a Greek warrior crammed into the tympana of the Parthenon. 'How did the heroes die?', the inscription asks, 'Fearlessly and loyally', it replies. This kind of imagery was commonplace in Italy, where what has been called 'gladiator' memorials stood in direct line from the classical tradition. But neoclassicism could also accommodate biblical allusion. A statue of the Boy David, naked and bearing a sword, commemorates 'the glorious memory of the Machine Gun Corps' in Hyde Park, London . Two Vickers

machine guns are encased in bronze at his feet: mechanised warfare that tore flesh to pieces eerily juxtaposed with a perfect intact body. In each case, these memorials belie the brutality of war, contributing to what Becker calls the 'sterilisation (*aseptisation*) of violence and death'. It also solved a dilemma for the makers of memory. As Henry Newbolt remarked, it seemed 'impossible to honour men who have been guilty of barbarous cruelty'.¹⁸

The new sculpture, represented by such talented practitioners as Charles Sergeant Jagger and Alexander Carrick, did just that. Neither was interested in sanitising combat: their soldiers embodied the violence they had seen. Hamilton thought the Royal Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner made every other memorial seem 'weak and ineffective'. Jagger's bayonet-wielding killers were not just the real thing but 'the real thing in the rough'.¹⁹

Figurative art reflected the gender politics of its age. A number of feminist scholars have explored the exclusion of women in commemorative sculpture, or their valorisation as classical abstraction. Their unease was shared by contemporaries. Critics regretted the tendency among some

English sculptors to flank memorial designs with partially clad mythological characters personifying Grief or Victory: expanses of female flesh in close proximity to the wounded or dying soldier distracted onlookers from a memorial's higher task. With the exception of Edith Cavell (whose martyrdom ensured remembrance) women's role as nurses is seldom acknowledged. Nor is that of munitions workers, who also died as a result of war service. Alternatively, the female form embodies the nation:

Marianne and Britannia, Mother Latvia in the War Cemetery at Riga, carrying wreath and flag, 'Newfoundland' in St John bearing torch and sword. But by far the most common memorial female motif is that of the sacrificial mother. In 1934, the Italian commune of Prato commissioned a sculpture in honour of the dead. Carved in the likeness of a Roman legionary, a soldier is transfigured as an angel, wings lifting the fallen up to heaven. The figure supports a grieving mother. Despite the imperialist allusions, the tenderness of his embrace offered comfort to the bereaved and carried the implicit promise of reunion after death.

Memorials privilege men, and white men at that. In the Dominions there was some departure from the dominant imperial model. Frank Lynch's statue of a New Zealand soldier in Devonport depicts a muscular, self-

assured young man – British stock perfected in an outpost of empire. Hat removed, shirt and boots undone, he strove to convey the informality and self-reliance mythically embodied in the Anzac. But only one statue of a Maori soldier was raised in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Racial inequalities were even starker in South Africa. A sculpture in Dundee depicts a white soldier standing over his turbaned counterpart; memorials honour ‘the sons of England’ by name but seldom acknowledge those ‘faithful men of the native and coloured race’. Imperial memorials depict ‘the British race’ and they are sculpted (for the most part) by Britons. Commissions were denied to artists of questionable (read German) antecedents. Alarmed that a bas relief of suntanned diggers was ‘too dago-like in appearance’, the architect of Melbourne’s Shrine of Remembrance dismissed the celebrated Italian sculptor Pietro Porcelli and employed a junior Australian artist in his place.²⁰

The ethnicity of the British Empire was seldom represented in figurative sculpture: images of death on the battlefield were even less common. A memorial’s mission was to console: death is distanced, symbolic, represented by name, alluded to (as in Lutyens’s Cenotaph) by absence. But the exceptions are compelling. A greatcoat barely covers the body of Jagger’s butchered gunner on the Royal Artillery Memorial, ‘HERE WAS A ROYAL FELLOWSHIP OF DEATH’ carved beneath it. On Sydney’s Anzac Memorial, Raynor Hoff’s figure of a dead soldier is naked; lifted to the sky on a shield borne by three grieving women, he is limp, emaciated, a sacrificial victim of war rather than a warrior.

Images of death and suffering were more easily accommodated in a Catholic artistic tradition. Dying *poilus* are scattered across the French countryside, sometimes consoled by grieving women, often clutching a tricolour. In Italy and elsewhere, memorials mirror the form of the *pietà*, a medieval composition transposed onto the twentieth century, the suffering of the soldier likened to the passion of Christ. As Winter has noted, the *pietà* expressed ‘the sadness of millions who had lost their sons’, whose eyes are drawn to the fallen cradled in the Madonna’s arms. In Germany, by contrast, the ‘sleeping soldier’ memorial denied the finality and brutality of death, transforming bodies butchered by war into symbols which people could see and touch. In Munich the faultless body of a ‘sleeping’ German soldier is laid out in a crypt for burial like a medieval knight. The

inscription to 13,000 heroic sons of Munich holds multiple meanings: ‘Sie werden auferstehen’ (They will rise again).²¹

The span of commemorative sculpture was impressive. Most importantly of all perhaps it enabled a shift from soldier to civilian as the focus of commemorative art. Alleman and Boutry’s sculpture *Melancholia* depicts scenes of deportation, an inclusive tribute ‘to the people of Lille , soldiers and civilian’ who resisted German occupation. In a nearby park, Felix Desruelle’s *Monument aux Fusillés* portrays the execution of ‘resistance’ leaders, its imaginary evocation of a firing squad rare in the genre of commemorative art. In the ‘martyred cities’ of Belgium ‘the trilogy of combatant–executed–deportee is found on numerous memorials’, the theme of ‘tenacious resistance’ uniting them all. Across the Channel, the borough of Poplar commemorated some of the first victims of aerial bombardment. Eighteen schoolchildren were killed when a squadron of German bombers raided East London in 1917. Poplar’s child-angel prefigured a new kind of war.²²

Figurative sculpture may well have expressed a new age of total war but it also worked within ancient heraldic traditions. The Saint George and the dragon motif is common in Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. As Vance has observed ‘this century old icon . . . was like a medieval morality tale in which the good and virtuous Knight triumphed over the forces of darkness’.²³ But both sides claimed the discourse of righteousness. In Reitersweisen in northern Bavaria St Michael rides into battle wearing a German helmet. Such memorials, as Stefan Goebel has noted, ‘offered reassurance by eliding the war with a set of chivalric notions, notions which suggested a triumph over violence itself’.²⁴ Joan of Arc, who was canonised in 1920, encapsulated that same chivalric ideal: a figure of faith and patriotism that transcended the sordid cruelty of war.

Animals were also made bearers of nationalist symbolism: the Gallic rooster and the British lion, the stag of Scotland and the dragon of Wales enlisted to serve the purposes of commemoration. The new world seized on this chance to invent traditions of its own. Unveiling the statue of a bronze eagle in Madison, Wisconsin, the mayor proclaimed that this fearsome but ‘strikingly beautiful’ symbol typified the spirit of the American people at war.²⁵

Real animals were also granted commemorative spaces. Horses who served the Empire are honoured by plaques, church tablets and water troughs. Phyllis Bone's tribute to 'the humble animals that served and died' – a frieze of heads adorning the Scottish National Memorial – extends to reindeer, elephants, dogs, and ('the tunneller's friends') canaries and mice. Sometimes animals are literally incorporated into commemorative culture. Saddened by the death of their mascot, the officers of a British regiment had the dog stuffed and mounted as a memorial.²⁶

Whatever its artistic excesses, sculpting animals conveyed an intimacy rare in war memorials. In Chipilly on the banks of the Somme an artillery man cradles the muzzle of a wounded horse, revealing the tender bonds between man and beast. A similar purpose was served by the iconic image of Private Simpson and his donkey, a sculpture which stands on the Shrine Reserve in Melbourne, softening the hard masculine character of the Anzac mythology and the great stone edifice looming behind it. Simpson was a medic rather than a soldier; aided by a donkey he relieved the suffering of the wounded on Gallipoli until his own (Christ-like) sacrifice. 'This gentle story', as one Red Cross worker put it, 'leads our thoughts into the quiet ways of compassion and kindness.' These were emotions seldom elicited by war memorials.

The choreography of remembrance

Opting for a particular type of memorial was one challenge that faced communities, the question of where to site such structures another. The two choices were closely related. Lutyens's Cenotaph lent itself to a close urban setting: it would have seemed puny and unsubstantial perched on a hilltop. Avenues of honour were planted at the entrance of towns and cities and at stadiums servicing suburban communities on their outskirts. Memorial cairns, towers and even lighthouses were raised on the summits of Scotland and along the coast of Britain. In Elizabethan times their beacons shone in vigil across the countryside; in the 1920s they called communities to remembrance. The site itself, whether donated by a philanthropist or acquired by a council, helped determine the character of the memorial built on it. Many communities insisted memorials should only be raised on

consecrated ground, preferring churchyards and cemeteries to secular civic spaces.

As the case of the beacons suggests, spaces are seldom empty: they are imbued with cultural and historical associations. Those who crafted memorials sought out places of origin and departure. Monuments were placed beside wharves from which young men sailed to war or installed outside school grounds, with Laurence Binyon's pledge, 'They shall grow not old', carved beneath them. A stately obelisk was raised on Dunsmore in Warwickshire where the 9th Regiment of the British army paraded before King George V before marching to their deaths at Suvla Bay. Again historical reference strengthened commemorative purpose. The obelisk (the adornment of many a great estate) was positioned at the junction of an old Roman road cutting through the heart of England. A similar spire was raised at Manikau Heads on the North Island of New Zealand. Dedicated to a single soldier son, it looks out on the 'great expanse of sea' that claimed him.

And over eighty years since they were first erected, memorials remind us that the men and women who died were not just the casualties of a military machine: they belonged in fact, to schools and neighbourhoods, factories and estates, workplaces and communities. London's butchers raised a memorial on the iron gates of the Smithfield meat market – two Roman maidens bearing wreaths of victory belying the industrialised slaughter of the Great War. At the other end of the world, an honour board in Sydney's Department of Education buildings commemorates the teachers of New South Wales. Its inscription, 'To our Fellow Officers', carries class distinction beyond death. British cyclists are commemorated on Meriden village green. In Entringen, Germany, the *Turnverein* (gymnastics club) raised a tribute to its 'fallen heroes': a slab of rock, reminiscent of a tombstone, overlooking the soccer field where they played. All these memorials reflect wider social networks and patterns of belonging, symbols of civil society. Wherever they were sited they shared one common imperative: 'They were built as places where people could mourn. And be seen to mourn . . . a framework for and legitimization of individual and family grief'.²⁷

The battlefields themselves were obvious settings for memorials, a theme we will consider shortly. But monuments were also raised in other places

associated with a soldier's sacrifice – in hospital grounds where they died and local cemeteries where they were buried. Mindful that Private Thomas Hunter sailed across the world to die for the Empire, the *Peterborough Advertiser* proposed a 'mortuary pillar' reaching up to the sky with a kangaroo on top as a memorial for his grave. More conventional was the ball-cornered obelisk at Camp Merritt in New Jersey. It was dedicated not so much to the men who died at war, as to the soldiers and nurses who died of influenza when they returned.²⁸

Some memorials nestled easily within a pre-existing heritage landscape. In cities throughout the British Empire, 'memorial precincts' are cluttered with monuments to the dead of the Crimea, South Africa and other imperial adventures; France's Unknown Soldier was entombed beneath Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe, Italy's beneath the tomb of Victor Emmanuel II. In other cases memorials sought to transform urban landscapes. Inspired by the City Beautiful movement, American townships were reshaped as memorials, Indianapolis being a case in point. There the Memorial Plaza accommodates a Cenotaph, a Memorial Spire and an Obelisk Square. Five housing blocks were demolished to make way for the plaza, the needs of the city's poor being deemed secondary to this 'opulent' homage to the dead. A carefully orchestrated choreography elevated memorials within urban space. Edinburgh's Memorial Chapel and Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance were sited to be seen from every corner of their cities. The latter was built in white stone, visible by day and floodlit by night, the last thing travellers would see on leaving the city, the first thing to greet them on their return. The tower raised in Kansas City was nothing short of a visual performance: a gold light installed at its summit likened to a burning pyre. Some memorials even claimed the space around them as 'holy ground', their sightlines jealously guarded from commercial encroachment. Many became the ornamental centrepiece coveted by commemorator and town-planner alike – Luytens's India Gate, an adornment to New Delhi, being a case in point.

Elsewhere the theatre of commemoration is more restrained, more confined, but no less effective. In small French villages communities lived in close proximity to their memorial, a sacred if secular space often marked out by a square of artillery shells set in the earth. Many communities raised their monuments at the symbolic centre of their cemetery. Almost

invariably, the stele was taller than any other memorial, intentionally elevated above the squat tombs of the dead.

Commemorative imperatives

Whatever memorial type was chosen and wherever it was situated, almost all have two crucial features in common. The first was the imperative to name. Names were chiselled in warm Cotswold stone and cold Italian marble, cast in furnaces across Europe and America, etched in honour rolls fashioned from Australian hardwood, inscribed on parchment, vellum and paper. The region of Courcellette in northern France replaced all the street signs with names and deaths from the Great War, such as Joseph Coste Killed for France 24 September 1914 Street. In the United States otherwise functional, red-brick Liberty Buildings were imbued with commemorative purpose by names.

Naming served a number of functions. It democratised the way war was remembered, acknowledging individual loss in a new collective culture of commemoration. At the same time, it recruited the war dead as symbols of national identity. Names embodied ‘a sort of civic pedagogy’, examples of ‘imitable virtue’. But naming also offered a less abstract solace than patriotism. A name on a memorial signified the body families could never (in most cases) bury or mourn; it brought men ‘out of the anonymous unreality of loss and emptiness’.²⁹

Just who should be named and in what circumstances were issues of debate. Most communities resolved to name only the dead, underscoring their memorial’s purpose as a surrogate tomb. The sanctity of names was enhanced by ‘banishing’ from memorials the names of those who might traditionally have been mentioned. When the mayor of Swansea added his name to the town’s modest monument, it caused an outcry. The local Ex-Servicemen’s Labour League resolved to prise the offending tablet from the memorial’s base and ‘cast it into the sea’. This fellowship of death was implicitly democratic: many memorials list the names alphabetically regardless of decorations or rank. A lieutenant colonel’s name is listed below a private’s on a Roman arch in Carlow, Ireland. In Germany fatalities are often ordered by the date of death, the surge of names on the memorial walls at Rottenberg cemetery signalling the disastrous offensives of 1918.³⁰

But naming only those who died generated its own inequalities. It diminished the sacrifice of others who went to war and overlooked those who died of war-related causes after their return. In Witwatersrand, veterans of the South African Scottish Regiment redressed that injustice, erecting a memorial in Brixton cemetery to comrades ‘who after serving and after surviving the perils of the Great War died on their return from Active Service’. A fear that some would be excluded, or that the sacrifice of the few might be elevated over the many, also drove some communities to list all the men (and sometimes women) who served. In Australia, one of the few nations of the world to field an entirely voluntary army, all the men who served are usually listed on memorials. Voluntarism gave a ‘hard edge’ to Australian commemoration; the names missing on a memorial ‘were those of the eligible, the shirkers, and their absence was a substantial dishonouring’.³¹

Naming was a simple enough matter in small communities. In villages the world over modest pillars carry the names of neighbours, workmates and loved ones. Just three names were recorded on a memorial in Atimino in Tuscany, but to a small village numbering barely a hundred in 1920, those names fathomed immeasurable loss.

The larger the community, though, the greater the challenge of naming. In the case of capital cities in particular, the need to name helped determine a memorial’s size and shape. It was not just classical training that attracted many architects to Grecian design: the sweeping colonnades of a temple offered ample space for names. Listing names on parchment rather than on stone also offered an economy of commemoration. Scottish architects were tasked with honouring 100,000 dead in a twelfth-century chapel already crammed with Gothic and nationalist symbolism. The names of the fallen were recorded, sealed in a wrought iron casket, ‘enriched by the images of St Andrew and St Margaret’ and placed ‘on one of the highest pinnacles’ overlooking Edinburgh.³²

‘Books of Remembrance’ were also produced by businesses, churches and other institutions. In France each diocese published a ledger, honouring every pastor who served with the troops. These formal records list individuals with the common bond of their involvement in the same institution and their shared destiny: death in the Great War. Naming the

dead, in monuments, in ceremonies, in the ritualised roll-call every November, kept alive their memory, offering ‘a kind of resurrection’.

Names signified a specific lifetime and a single family’s loss.³³

Entombing names was another commemorative practice charged with significance. Lutyens’s memorial to London’s Civil Service Rifles is a simple structure. Carved from a single block of limestone and framed by the arches of Somerset House, it honours 1,240 young men who laid down pens and lives for their country. ‘Their names are recorded on a scroll placed within this column’, the monument proclaims. And beneath that inscription follows the names of the places that claimed them: Loos, the Somme, Flers, Courcellette. The same surrogate burials attended the creation of avenues of honour – ritualised tree plantings commemorating the dead. Caroline Gilbert planted three such memorials in King’s Park, Western Australia, for a son killed in France, another at Beersheba and a third lost (quite literally) in Belgium. Young Albert, his mother was told, was simply ‘blown to pieces’; his comrades ‘gathered up different parts of him’ and buried what they could in the mud. Side by side, these memorials served to reunite her family; and beside each young eucalypt she set a metal plaque recording a dead son’s name.³⁴

Names were not the only words carved on war memorials: didactic as much as commemorative structures, most carry inscriptions. The literal meaning of a monument is ‘something that reminds us’, and the phrase ‘in memory of’ echoes across the globe as a litany to the dead. ‘Memory’ was magnified by incremental meanings. It was ‘proud’, ‘honoured’ and ‘grateful’, a noble and redemptory sacrifice that offered an example to all who followed. We never read of ‘regretful memory’, ‘angry memory’ or ‘broken-hearted memory’. Purposefully selective, these memories were crafted to console rather than regret. Indeed there was a sense that these men had not died at all: ‘Who Dies if England Lives?’ asks a brooding figure of mourning at West Kirby, the sculptor’s hand at variance with the engraver.³⁵

The language of inscriptions was classical and archaic, lofty and vernacular. It ranged a literary spectrum encompassing Lord Tennyson and Victor Hugo, Rudyard Kipling and Sir Henry Newbolt. The last two were commissioned to draft appropriate lines for the national memorials in Wales and England; trusty wordsmiths of the Empire, they created a genre that

Paul Fussell would call ‘high diction’. It is ‘a romantic, essentially feudal language’ designed if not to conceal then to soften the horrors of war. ‘They gave their lives’ embodied a great deceit, ennobling the industrialised carnage of mass conscripted armies. Few memorials carry pacifist sentiments, whatever the intention of their founders. In Gentioux, France, the sculpture of an orphan points towards the names of the fallen and an angry rather than heroic inscription: ‘Cursed be War’.³⁶

Inscriptions and memorials generally can be read as nationalist ciphers. The idea of naming dead soldiers of all ranks was first considered during the French Revolution, in order to identify the dead as citizens of the revolutionary state. But a reading of memorials that sees them only as a reflex of nationalism diminishes their rich cultural resonance. Most inscriptions, as we have seen, link names to locality: in French town, English village and American city specific communities pay homage to *their* dead. They commemorate those who died for ‘this province’, ‘this district’, even (in the case of Bleskop, South Africa), ‘this valley’. These are actual and immediate communities, not some more abstract, distant entity of nation or state.

Naming was one imperative, the quest for permanence was another. Memorials were set in stone – and usually the hardest stone communities could find. Granite was often chosen in preference to sandstone, even though it was more expensive to quarry and infinitely harder to work.

Victorians built one of the largest memorials in the world of Tynong granite. Silver grey in colour, its whiteness akin to purity, the Shrine of Remembrance still shines like a beacon across the city of Melbourne. But the principal argument was always one of permanence. Victoria’s memorial would stand for all time, its 6,000 tons of stone never to weather or decay.

The symbolism was apparent to everyone. Bodies rotting in the mud of Flanders, bleached by desert winds, or blasted to pieces by high explosives had found an everlasting memorial. The perfect classical lines of the Shrine would render them whole again.

This quest for permanence often involved a rejection of modernity. The mass production of gravestones and memorials was ‘condemned as a profanation’ in post-war Germany. Cemeteries, lined by avenues of oak, were marked by *Urkraft* – boulders emblematic of the nation’s solidity and strength. Shaped like altars, they retained their natural contours – rugged,

authentic, meant to endure through all time. Memorials thus evoked myths of origin; ideally they were crafted from the earth from which the soldiers came.

National memorials

War memorials were, with a few notable exceptions, local initiatives, but alongside this mass movement to establish community memorials were formidable commemorative labours by the state. Much of this activity centred on battlefields. These local and national commemorative cultures existed in a kind of symbiotic relationship. As Becker has noted, ‘The war memorials of the *communes*, like those of the parishes and guilds, list names whose bodies are unknown, in the same ways as ossuaries pile up bodies without names.’ Both put the memory of the war dead into some tangible form. These two modes of remembrance sometimes competed, families lobbying governments for the repatriation of the dead. In Italy, fascist commemoration centred on mass cemeteries displacing more localised and intimate expressions of grief. At Redipuglia cemetery the dead are still conscripted to serve the nation, with the word ‘PRESENTE’ (a soldier’s reply at roll-call) raised above their graves.³⁷

While community memorials evoked qualities of personal intimacy and emotional presence, national monuments spoke with the distant authority of the state. Douaumont Tower rises up above the fields of Verdun, its four crosses dominating the horizon. The Canadians planted their memorial on Vimy Ridge, the haunting statue of a mourning mother gazing out at eternity. The British Memorial to the Missing at Cape Helles was visible to every ship entering the Dardanelles, ‘a modern day Colossus’ symbolically straddling the Narrows. Architecture thus achieved the purest of ironic inversions: swallowed up by the earth the missing now mastered the landscape. American monumental architecture proved the most ostentatious, ‘a mighty column’ rising 175 feet above a ruined village. The intention, the American Battle Monuments Commission explained, was to make their memorials ‘sufficiently imposing to attract tourists [to the battlefields long] after the evidences of the war have disappeared’. Invested with such symbolism, battlefields became memorials: Verdun, Vimy and Gallipoli were part of a ‘metonymy of sacrifice’ and nation.³⁸

Making the memory of the war dead ‘tangible’ again involved the imperative to name. All these national memorials incorporate tributes to the missing: Lutyens’s edifice at Thiepval on the Somme or Blomfield’s Menin Gate at Ypres were designed to carry their burden of names. These massed lists of missing men were intended to confirm the individuality of every soldier. Ironically, it may have done just the opposite. What Sassoon dubbed ‘intolerably nameless names’ pile up with alphabetical precision.

And again, the inequality of naming troubled the architects of commemoration. In an extraordinary proposal the Australian Prime Minister demanded a fake grave for every missing soldier, believing every soldier’s family should have the right to choose an epitaph. Even in German cemeteries, where the collective reigns over the individual, an attempt was made to transcend the anonymity of massed burials. Isaiah 43:1 cries out from the cluttered earth of Langemarck: ‘I have called you by your name.’

National memorials were built to be seen; they were also built to last. Ancient and enduring stone was the medium of commemoration – bronze, the Canadian Battlefield Memorial Commission warned, would only be melted down by the next invading army. All these memorials were of a bulk and scale designed to outlast the ages. In France and Belgium alone the Imperial War Graves Commission raised 1,000 crosses of sacrifice and 560 stones of remembrance, a project likened to the labour of the pharaohs.

Defying time again involved recourse to classical allusion. And again the American example is the most flamboyant. General Pershing described his nation’s monuments as ‘poetry in stone’. It was not just the grand scale and sweeping colonnade of neoclassical architecture: at Chateau-Thierry two Grecian figures, one brandishing a sword, stand hand in hand to symbolise the unity of America and France.³⁹

Nature was also harnessed in the work of remembrance. Imperial cemeteries were likened to English gardens, German cemeteries to mighty forests of oak. The symbolism of tree and wood was specifically German, symbolic, as Hindenburg himself put it, ‘of individual and communal strength’.⁴⁰ It also evoked a timeless cycle of death and renewal, promising resurrection to the war dead. Oak groves ring several cemeteries designed by Robert Tischler, chief architect of the Volksbund deutsche Kriegsgraberfursorge (the German War Graves Commission). Rather than marking each individual’s grave, an imperative in imperial graveyards,

Tischler preferred collective commemoration: a stark group of dark rough-hewn crosses honour all the fallen, most of whom were buried en masse. In time Tischler's cemeteries would evolve into *Totenburgen*, fortresses of the dead, the hallmark of fascist commemoration.⁴¹

Clearly, different national memorials reflect different commemorative cultures. Unlike the American and British approach (with their almost slavish attachment to classicism), some French memorials did embrace modernism; the French also employed the ossuary, an economical solution to the disposal of the war dead but one at odds with individual commemoration. Unlike German cemeteries, which are dark and almost claustrophobic, imperial and American cemeteries work with space and light. The secular republics of France and the United States adopted a Latin cross as a grave marker; mindful of the need to represent an empire at war, the Imperial War Graves Commission opted for a tombstone. And a longing to claim some foreign field as one's own generated a medley of nationalist symbolism. The South African memorial at Delville Wood raised a Voortrekker double cross of consecration in place of Blomfield's Cross of Sacrifice; American cemeteries are guarded by eagles and 'native Indians'; in the Newfoundland battlefield memorial at Beaumont-Hamel, a caribou stands over the bodies of the dead.

Finally, like war itself, national commemoration involved winners and losers. It was not just that the vast stretches of French countryside set aside to honour American and British dead contrasted with the meagre allotments conceded to their enemy. Or that the missing had no grave and hence no inscription. Some soldiers simply stood outside the ambit of commemoration. In 1917, the newly formed Bolshevik government renounced involvement in an imperialist war and with it the memory of over a million war dead. In France and Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia, émigré communities laboured to raise memorials to their dead. Russian Orthodox chapels, replete with neo-medieval symbolism, asserted a sense of nationalism outside national borders and spoke of an exile's longing for a land they had lost. Finally, for all the rhetoric of common sacrifice, inequalities marred imperial commemoration. Noting that 50–60,000 native African troops 'fell during the war' and that no real records had been kept of their graves, the Imperial War Graves Commission came upon the simple expedient of declaring the entire force 'Missing'.

There was not much point in building a memorial: ‘the Colonial Office [was] of the opinion that [it] would not be intelligible to the average East African native’. In the end, the statue of a native bearer was raised in Nairobi, a quaint aside to a war that destroyed entire African communities.⁴²

Afterlife

Memorials were built to endure, to ‘stop time’ and to ‘block the work of forgetting’. But memory also has a shelf life. As several scholars have noted, ‘the power of these memorials to arouse feelings and arguments drains away with the passage of time’. At one level, memory was overtaken by modernity. War memorials have been shunted aside by road works and relocated by town planners. Those that remain in their civic landscape are often compromised. Memorial gardens have become playgrounds for picnickers, joggers pace down avenues of honour, tourists ascend remembrance towers and photograph the view. In a secular age it has proved difficult to demarcate any space as sacred. Lille’s main memorial is one of many examples. Skateboarders play on the pavements where veterans and bereaved once paraded and grieved. Once symbols of civic pride, many memorials fell into neglect in the late twentieth century. And some memorials fell victims to their own ambition: Lutyens’s soaring arch at Thiepval has been weakened by the wind tunnel it created; water has corroded the foundations of massive monuments raised to last for all time. Finally, there was the question of legitimacy. The generation that raised these memorials believed they marked the war to end all wars, but the names of a new generation of war dead were added within their lifetimes. Then came the fatalities of Korea, Vietnam and Iraq. Many memorials now bear an open tribute to ‘All Subsequent Conflicts’. In that sense, they have failed.⁴³

Perhaps, as Robert Musil once remarked, it is the fate of all monuments to become invisible. And few would dispute that the true meanings of these memorials died with the generation that created them. There is a point where a memorial becomes a monument, bleached of personal investment, a mute edifice of stone. But the passing of war memorials into obscurity was by no means inevitable or unchallenged. In the interwar years, war

memorials were sites of fierce contestation, as pacifists, communists and veterans debated the merits of disarmament. Some laid wreaths of red poppies symbolising their support for the British Legion, others festooned memorials with white poppies proclaiming their support for peace. These debates were revived in the anti-war movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

Banners were draped over statuary, CND symbols splashed across stonework and slogans took issue with lofty patriotic diction. Long symbols of nationalism, memorials in turn became the target of nationalist movements. At the height of the Suez crisis in 1956, Arab independence fighters unseated Charles Webb Gilbert's equestrian tribute to the Desert Mounted Corps, reclaiming possession of the Canal it guarded. In Ireland, the memory of the Great War had always sat uncomfortably in a country struggling with the legacy of colonialism. IRA bombs blew several war memorials to pieces, making commemoration yet another casualty in a long civil war. In parts of the old British Empire memorials have become an index of sentiment to the imperial past: preserved in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad, but largely forgotten in India where comparatively few were raised. And just as there is no one meaning carried by a memorial, even the most brazen attack on these commemorative symbols can be read in different ways. In 2008, the bronze laurel wreaths adorning the Johannesburg Cenotaph were wrested from the stonework. Casual vandalism? Opportunistic theft? Political protest? Who can say?

In that light a memorial's capacity to 'arouse feelings' extended deep into the twentieth century. And ironically at the very moment when the Great War has passed from memory into history they have found a new lease of life. The burgeoning interest in memorials, their rediscovery by family members, their reverent restoration by a dedicated community of carers, and the proliferation of internet sites, is at once a product and symptom of the 'memory boom' – an attempt to situate a personal family story in a wider historical framework. As the boundaries of Europe are reconfigured, the post-communist nations of Russia, Bulgaria and Poland are reclaiming their lost memorials.⁴⁴

New memorials have also been raised by a new generation of memory activists. In the 1990s, Australia, New Zealand and Canada entombed their own Unknown Warriors, an act of retrospective remembrance advancing a post-colonial and nationalist agenda. In the 1920s, the Unknown Warrior

was a tragic but heroic figure. There is no heroism in the Shot at Dawn Memorial in Staffordshire, a bound and blindfold young soldier of 17, one of over 300 British troops shot for 'cowardice or desertion', awaiting execution by his countrymen. The same discourse of victimhood suffused a memorial raised in Hyde Park to 'All animals who suffered in war'. Amid a menagerie of elephants, horses, pigeons and camels, an inscription proclaims 'THEY HAD NO CHOICE'. Nor did most of the conscript armies who 'served'. Retrospective remembrance embraces groups marginalised or altogether ignored by an earlier epoch of commemoration. In 1996 Dun Laoghaire Harbour Trust set a plaque by the recovered anchor of RMS *Leinster*, lost with '501 passengers, crew and postal workers' in 1918; in 1995 Queen Elizabeth dedicated a monument in Soweto to African troops drowned when the *Mendi* capsized in 1917. In Germany we also see the rise of counter-memorials, repudiating a militarist past. Old memorials frame the politics of a new Europe, as Mitterrand's and Kohl's clasped hands at Verdun (or Queen Elizabeth's celebrated visit to Phoenix Park, Dublin) remind us. Conversely, in Turkey, new memorials serve an older nationalist agenda. Once the bodies of 'Mehmetçiks' were scattered in unmarked graves across the battlefields of Gallipoli. Now they are considered martyrs to both Islam and the modern Turkish state and are honoured with symbolic headstones. This long-contested ground on the peninsula has been reconfigured as a kind of commemorative theme park. On the heights of Chunuk Bair a massive figure of Atatürk stares down the New Zealand memorial, statues of giant soldiers charge across the battlefields, and the old front line is held by wall after wall of explanatory plaques. Some of these memorials carry a message of reconciliation. At Lone Pine the sculpture of a compassionate Turkish soldier carries a wounded 'Englishman' back to his lines. The new national memorial at Helles features a bas relief depicting Mehmetçiks and Anzacs in an embrace. Mythology has always been woven into the fabric of commemoration. The resurgence of what is called the 'Çanakkale spirit' conceals the brutal reality of the Gallipoli campaign.

Memorials still contrive to 'arouse emotion', evoking an affective reinvestment in the past. The memory boom remains as an act of defiance, 'an attempt to keep alive at least the names and images of the millions whose lives have been truncated or disfigured by [the Great War]'. To mark its centenary, an international project proposes to project in lights the name

of every fatality. Such an (impossible) aspiration revives the commemorative excesses of the 1920s, and signals to this day that enduring imperative to name.⁴⁵

We would like to express our enduring debt to Ken Inglis, whose papers laid the foundation for this project. Thanks are also due to Annette Becker, our guide to French memorials, and Rae Frances for critical comment.

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- 3 Marilyn Baker, ‘To honour and remember: remembrances of the Great War, the next-of-kin monument in Winnipeg’, *Manitoba History*, 2 (1981), pp. 8–9; George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
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7 Angela Gaffney, *Aftermath: Remembering the Great War in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), p. 35.

8 Ken Inglis, 'The homecoming: the war memorial movement in Cambridge, England', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27 (1992), pp. 585–6; Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 165. Desvallières was a French artist who commanded a battalion during the Great War and also lost his son in the fighting.

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10 Cited in Scates, *Return to Gallipoli*, pp. 31–3.

11 Daniel J. Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 64; Annette Becker, *War and Faith: The Religious Imagination in France, 1914–1930* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), pp. 7, 117, 130.

12 Antoine Prost, *Republican Identities in War and Peace: Representations of France in the 19th and 20th Century* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

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Part VI A Reckoning: Costs and Outcomes

Introduction to Part VI

Jay Winter

Reckoning the costs and consequences of the Great War is fraught with difficulties. The first, as Antoine Prost's chapter on 'The dead' shows, is that we do not have a firm statistical base to answer the disarmingly simple question as to how many soldiers died. Every combatant country asked the question, but the answers were anything but rigorous. Prost's calculations raise the total of war-related mortality among men in uniform above 10 million. This is a higher estimate than previous scholars have reported, and when set against civilian war-related mortality, provides further evidence of the staggering damage the war did to the societies which fought it.

The living who survived the war dwelled in its shadow in a host of ways. Those with injuries to body and mind, visible or hidden, were everywhere. They needed care, which was provided with varying degrees of adequacy by the state they had served. In fact women did most of the caring within families. The war was also a presence in the lives of their children, even though they had not been alive or conscious of it at the time. An array of organisations formed by veterans flourished after the war to help restore the lives and the respect ex-soldiers deserved, and to preserve the bonds between them. Some were politically active, others less so. All confronted the question as to how to make the transition from war to peace. Some contributed to the paramilitary organisations and parties of the interwar years. Revolutionary and counter-revolutionary violence had lives of their own, but, like the movements towards decolonisation that emerged at the same time, their origins lay in the Great War itself. However, rather more veterans demobilised not only by putting on civilian clothes again but also by putting off the hatreds and bitterness of war, and they did this by taking their movements to an international level. No less important for the living were the multiple legacies left by the wartime mobilisation of the home

front, which modified both the structures and language of class and gender, and also the victory and defeat, which profoundly modified the framework in which the living had to come to terms with the war.

We have emphasised throughout this three-volume history of the Great War that its character was transnational and global. It entailed huge movements of populations, technologies, armaments and ideas. It created a flood of refugees, the presence of which helped create humanitarian efforts that spanned the globe. Writing the history of the war from a transnational perspective does not at all diminish the significance of national histories, which still have to be written, especially as we pay full attention to countries beyond the iron triangle of Britain, France and Germany whose rivalries and conflicts were at the heart of the war's origins. The history of the Great War is too immense for one historian to tell it exhaustively. Only by joining together have we been able to provide a rough summary of the scholarship of the latest generation on a conflict that has shaped our own lives. In so doing we contribute as historians to the reckoning that our societies make one hundred years afterwards, in commemorative acts large and small, of a war the world had never seen before.

22 The dead

Antoine Prost

Before the current war, and after the last one, people did not die: they came to the end. Properly, sheltered, in a bedroom, warm in a bed. Now people are dying. And this death is soaking wet, it is muddy, dripping with blood, death by drowning, bogged down, slaughter. The bodies lie frozen on the ground which, gradually, absorbs them. The most fortunate depart wrapped in canvas, to sleep in the nearest cemetery.¹

The First World War marks the shocking appearance of mass death in Europe. Half a century earlier, the 620,000 dead of the American Civil War were a foretaste of a sort,² but this war, the Great War, was a hecatomb without precedent, with losses on a truly monstrous scale. Witnesses are unanimous in their descriptions of the battlefield as a vast slaughterhouse. This was where civilisation disappeared, with its dead and its living assigned to separate places: here, soldiers lived in promiscuity with dismembered bodies, putrefying, desecrated, abandoned or summarily buried more or less where they fought. The dead were inescapable: bodies to be stepped over or trampled on, bones uncovered while digging a fresh shelter or enlarging the trench, fragments of boots or uniform scattered around, decomposing remains crawling with worms. Not to mention the smell of rotting corpses.

Death at the front could not be the well-prepared and well-ordered death of the past – the death of a sick man whose last breath passes in a bed, surrounded by family affection, perhaps after a sacred rite. No – from 1914 men faced brutal and bloody death. In war men die alone, cut down by a bullet, a shell burst, or after despair and agony. In earlier wars the fighting stopped and the stretcher-bearers could spread out across the battlefield to bring in the wounded. Now battles had no clear ending. Shells continued to rain down. The wounded hoped for stretcher-bearers who did not come, or who waited for nightfall and risked missing the men who needed them.

The obsessive presence of death haunted the soldiers. Of course they were not always in the front line, nor always in very active sectors. The tight grip of danger sometimes relaxed, but such moments of respite were mere interruptions – it would be necessary to go back ‘up there’, and up there the killing would begin again. For them, the concept that they were led to the slaughter was not a metaphor but a belief: they hoped to remain alive, but they saw their comrades disappear one after another, and knew that their luck could not continue indefinitely – their turn must surely come. ‘We are the sacrificial victims’, says the ‘Chanson de Craonne’, a French soldiers’ elegy for the lives they would never lead. Sometimes, indeed, as they marched up the line, they passed territorial soldiers beside the track, digging the graves that awaited them.³ They knew they were caught in a war of attrition that could only end with the extinction of vast numbers of them. They lived with the familiarity and expectation of death, like the soldier who compared himself to ‘a man condemned to death, awaiting the result of his appeal’.⁴ The best they could hope for was a ‘good’ wound, serious enough to take them away permanently from the front, but not too bad, so that their spared life would still be worth living. The long drawn-out torture of artillery bombardment has been described, notably by the French soldier-writer Maurice Genevoix, but little has been said about the unremitting burden of death, simultaneously uncertain and unavoidable, a burden which led men who were young and full of life to wish for mutilation in order to escape it.

This searing experience mattered far more than the possibility of having to inflict death themselves. Recent historiography has laid much emphasis on the experience of killing during the war, and evidence on this subject is difficult to interpret. Of course death was not only suffered, it was also administered: men were trained as snipers and in ‘mopping up’ enemy trenches. But despite everything it seems that only comparatively few soldiers killed at close quarters.⁵ The most striking feature of the Great War, compared to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 or the Pacific campaign of 1944–5, was precisely the secondary role of face-to-face confrontations. In 1914–18 it was the artillery that destroyed the enemy; it was quickly understood that the enemy trench could hardly ever be captured if the preliminary bombardment had been ineffective and when large numbers of soldiers remained unhurt there. This primacy of increasingly powerful and

available artillery dominated the effects of a war in which industry could produce seemingly unlimited torrents of steel to destroy the enemy. To understand the scale of the problems created for nations at war by this industrial death, it is important first to see it clearly.

Calculating the number of war dead

Strictly speaking, a comprehensive total for the number of deaths caused by the war should also take account of civilians affected. The difficulty here is one of identifying the civilian deaths which should be directly ascribed to the war. Together with the indisputable victims of artillery bombardment or various atrocities, it would be reasonable to take account of all those who died as an indirect consequence of the war, from malnutrition or lack of medical supplies or services to administrative muddle. But how, for example, can we evaluate the excess mortality due to the Allied blockade imposed on the Central Powers? In some countries civilian victims outnumbered military deaths. In the Ottoman Empire, quite apart from the Armenian genocide, the figure has been advanced of at least 1,500,000 civilian deaths from famine or malnutrition.⁶ Those living in more developed countries, with good means of communications, reliable public authorities and an organised health system, suffered much less than those in the Eastern European or Asian states, from the Baltic to the Persian Gulf. For these reasons, such a grand total of war-related deaths cannot be drawn up, but it is heavy.

The calculation of military losses alone is scarcely easier, and most works on the First World War present lists of figures without explaining what they cover or how they have been established. The result is a certain level of confusion.

It is useful initially to resist the preparation of a total per nation. The states which emerged from the peace treaties sought to calculate what the war had cost them, and several writers have suggested figures for Poland, Czechoslovakia and so on. And yet the confusions of *ex post facto* calculations concerning places whose borders shifted are evident. Is it right to integrate into French losses the dead of Alsace-Lorraine who served in the German army, as this logic would require? But how would it be possible to evaluate the number of Czech or Polish soldiers killed while wearing the

uniform of the German, Austro-Hungarian or Russian armies? These writers have derived the total number of dead of the imperial armies from the percentages of soldiers from the various nationalities. By adding the number of Polish dead obtained by these calculations for the trio of German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian armies, a total of Poland's dead can be presented.⁷ But this cannot be a realistic total. First, the territories considered as Polish by the three imperial armies did not coincide exactly with Polish frontiers in 1919. Secondly, there is no authority to confirm that there were as many dead as there were Polish soldiers in these armies: Headquarters was able either to engage Polish contingents in military operations in order to spare their own nationals, or, conversely, to hold them back, through a distrust of their commitment to combat and potential fraternisation with local populations. For the Reichswehr it was preferable for men from Alsace to serve on the Eastern Front. Finally, as we will see, the losses of the armies were themselves calculated approximately; to apply percentages to one ethnic group or another could only give even more unreliable estimates. Better to avoid this and calculate losses not per nation but per army.

And it was indeed the armies which generally supplied the main statistics – but Headquarters was more interested in the living than the dead and needed to know above all how many soldiers they could put into the line. The German figure illustrates this statistical priority. To obtain the total number of losses, it added the number of soldiers missing to the total of men killed at the front, and then the figure for men in hospital, wounded or ill; from this figure it subtracted those who were deemed medically fit for service again.⁸ Such a figure did not amount to an estimate of battle deaths, since not all the missing were dead – some had been captured, while others were wounded and evacuated in the chaos of battle. Their regiment was not kept informed of the whereabouts of many soldiers and took some time to locate them. In addition, among the wounded and sick men lost to the army, some were indeed dead, in a proportion which varied according to the quality of the health services⁹ – yet many soldiers recovered but were judged by the army to be unfit for service and sent back home. To calculate the dead, it was thus necessary to ask the Red Cross for the names of prisoners and some assurance that they were alive. The fate of sick and wounded men also had to be followed, a matter which took time.

This complex network of dispositions of individual soldiers wounded, killed or missing underlay the evolution of statistics of war-related casualties. The French army published totals every month from the Armistice until 1 August 1919, and the number of dead grew month by month, while that of the missing diminished, sometimes because missing men were discovered alive. Meanwhile the numbers of confirmed deaths grew, slowly but surely, including the post-Armistice deaths in hospital of wounded men who were still living on 11 November. On the other hand, military records registered deaths only according to regiment or unit; soldiers who died after returning to civilian life, even if this was the result of their wounds, as with some gas sufferers, were not included. Such factors make it impossible to produce a precise figure for deaths during the Great War.

A final question arises before any systematic calculation is possible: should the men who died of sickness – from the Spanish flu, perhaps – be taken into account? In certain cases the answer may have heavy implications. For the Ottoman army, for example, deaths through sickness, at around 467,000, were more numerous than the total of dead and missing (243,600) and those who died of wounds (68,000).¹⁰ According to whether or not they were included, the total could vary by up to twice the initial figure. For the French army, this meant 75,000 deaths due to sickness had to be added to the 1,325,000 dead in battle.

As some writers have included some deaths from sickness in their calculations and not others – since not all of them use the same end dates – the suggested totals differ, and sometimes very substantially, as shown in [Table 22.1](#) (see the Appendix to this chapter). We have tried to review these figures, taking into account, for all armies, deaths due to sickness and prisoners of war who died in captivity. This process should provide as rigorous as possible an estimate of the total number of soldiers who died while on active service up to a date around the middle of 1919.¹¹ This is the purpose of the final column in the table.

It thus seems that in several cases the generally accepted calculations are underestimates, either because they ignore prisoners who died in captivity (Russia) or the wounded and sick (the Ottoman army), or because they did not include the whole of the period (United Kingdom, Germany). The war

led to very considerable human losses. Were they equally substantial for all nations?

The question is very much to the point: it would be interesting to know if the various populations, using 1914 definitions, paid proportionally the same price for the war. But to compare the number of deaths per thousand inhabitants as a basis for calculation would hardly make sense, since variations in demographic patterns meant that the number of adults available for mobilisation varied from one country to another. Taking the proportion of mobilised men aged between 15 and 49 killed on active service avoids this bias, but the uncertainties noted above indicate the need for care in comparing them.¹² Losses were particularly heavy for nations such as Serbia, Romania and Turkey, where statistics are least reliable and the disorganisation and shortfalls in sanitation or food most severe. Losses for the French and the German armies were very similar (16.8 per cent of mobilised men killed in the French army, 15.4 per cent of Germans), both of them higher than British losses (12.3 per cent).

We will not go further into the demographic study of losses. In all armies the youngest soldiers paid the highest price, cutting into the age pyramid for more than half a century. Nor will we consider further which battles were the most murderous, for the answer depends on the historian's choice of date for the end of the battle. We must recall that the first months of the war were the most deadly, like the opening days of battles (1 July 1916, the Somme; 16 April 1917, the Chemin des Dames; 24–5 April 1915, Gallipoli). In this sombre rhythm of deaths during the fifty-two months of war, it is hardly surprising to observe the impact of the great battles, yet nothing was as deadly as the first months, as armies encountered the onslaught of machine guns and artillery in the war of movement.

To take the measure of mass death, we must focus on its scale, but such a calculation in and of itself is inadequate for even a glimpse of its impact. From this perspective, it is what happened to the body after the soldier was killed that matters. How did the armies deal with this vast array of dead men?

During the battles: the armies and the dead

Informing the families

The death of soldiers posed several problems for all armies. They first had to inform the families and deal with their response. The families lived in a permanent state of apprehension: the death of the loved one was a silent and constant threat, which the soldiers' postcards or letters attempted to deflect.¹³ The military system had to reassure those closest to them. When they moved up the line and knew that they would not be able to write for several days, men warned their family not to be anxious at receiving no news. Nonetheless, any interruption in the arrival of letters was a bad sign.

The services within the different armies assigned to informing families of the death of one of their own were frequently overwhelmed. Further, they waited for the death to be confirmed before announcing it. For this reason the bad news often came from a comrade of the dead man, or from his officer who wrote privately to send the news of the death, presenting it in the least disturbing way possible. They sought to console the close relatives, telling them that the dead soldier had not suffered, that his last thoughts had been of them; they encouraged them to take pride, despite their loss; he was 'a fine man, loved by his comrades, who had generously sacrificed his life'. But the families were not entirely convinced by these soothing suggestions: they wanted to know the truth. This involved approaches to the authorities or to comrades.

Above all, they waited for official confirmation, which was slow to reach them. Announcements were phrased in a laconic or stilted bureaucratic style in letters or telegrams, adding to the pain of the moment, in France as in Great Britain or Germany.¹⁴ In Australia, the authorities charged clergymen with the task of transmitting the information, in the hope that they would find the right words to soften the blow.¹⁵ In France, it was the mayor's duty to inform the families; in the villages, the obligation was often passed to the mayor's secretary, frequently the only civil servant in the village, who in nine cases out of ten was the village schoolmaster. The present author recalls a schoolboy of the time recounting how a policeman would come into the classroom and whisper something to the schoolmaster, who would then give the class some work to do. Dressed in black, he would seek out the parents to tell them of the death of a son. During his absence, the pupils would wonder together, 'Whose house is he going to?' But the confirmation might

take a very long time to come, because very frequently the bodies of the dead could not be found. Sometimes the remains were scattered or buried by shell bursts, or they had not been recovered and were rotting away between the lines. In all the armies the missing – those who did not answer to their names at the next roll-call – were as numerous as the identified dead. The hope survived that these men had been taken prisoner, and the Red Cross was asked to make enquiries.

The delays were sometimes almost unbelievable, above all when the effects of distance were added to those of bureaucratic functioning. Anne Simons was an Australian woman whose son was killed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, the day following the dawn landing. In May she received a telegram announcing that he was missing; in June, another telegram announced that he was wounded; in August, a soldier wrote to let her know that her son was dead; in October, the Red Cross put him on a list of wounded men, then in November on a list of wounded and missing. In February 1916 she learned from the Red Cross that according to the testimony of a soldier, he had never been seen after the landing. The following month, the Department of Defence told her that her son was probably dead, which it confirmed in a telegram in October 1916, but which Anne said she never received. But from April 1916 she received a pension, and in 1917 her son's personal effects were returned to her. Finally, in May 1921 she learned that his name was carved on the Lone Pine memorial at Gallipoli, erected long after he vanished from sight.¹⁶

The earliest burials

Families who lived closest to the battlefields, or who were particularly wealthy, posed other problems for the armies; they wished to retrieve the body of their loved one and to bury him at home, joining others of his family. Immediately after the Battle of the Marne, family members scoured the battlefield seeking the remains of their lost relatives, despite the fact that the French army, like the British, had forbidden this intrusion of civilians into the front lines. From November 1914 the French General Headquarters forbade all exhumation, and in April 1915 the British Headquarters followed suit.¹⁷ As long as the war continued, it was the duty of the armies alone to take care of soldiers' remains, register their place of burial and identify them with certainty.

As soon as there were deaths, there were graves. Whichever side they belonged to, the soldiers did their best to bury their comrades individually and tried to preserve their identity, for example by placing essential details in a bottle stuck in the ground by its neck or by writing at least his first and family names on an improvised cross or a rifle stuck in the ground, the butt in the air: the body was owed the honour and protection of named individual identity. Circumstances prevented any proper laying out of the dead, but when possible the soldiers placed their comrades' bodies in a restful pose, as discovered in recent archaeological investigations of mass graves. They gave them as decent a burial as possible, near the place where they were killed or in village cemeteries further behind the lines. The burial was accompanied by a brief ritual. In all camps a chaplain, if available, presided over the burial and led the prayers. Funeral traditions were respected: the French buried their Muslim dead facing Mecca. Germans, French, British and Austrians marked the graves with a more or less rudimentary wooden cross, and the Germans even did their best to set up headstones¹⁸ – an assertion of humanity in the face of the dehumanisation of war.

Meanwhile, the High Command was faced with a colossal task. It was required both to protect the dignity of the dead and to provide sanitary conditions for soldiers amidst the miasmas and smells of rotting corpses. This preventive and hygienic concern inspired a flow of instructions, such as the use of quick-lime or other procedures – cremation was envisaged – to accelerate the decomposition of corpses and to clean and sanitise the battlefield.¹⁹ When the dead were too numerous, swift mass burial was undertaken, while scattered graves gradually disappeared through the continuation of fighting, the movement of units or lack of upkeep. Many were regrouped behind the front line area. When the fighting was not too intense and units were stationed for a fairly long time in the same sector – more frequent in the German than in the French case – the High Command organised makeshift cemeteries or military sections in the communal cemetery.

All these graves represent an essential feature: they are individual. Traditionally, officers had been buried in a named grave and ordinary private soldiers had lain anonymously in mass graves. The recognition of every soldier's right to an individual grave was something entirely new, confirming the fundamental equality of all who served. It was a democratic principle,

part of modern society, with conscription in some countries and the identification of the army with the nation everywhere. This had first been established in the United States, in their Civil War cemeteries. But this precedent was probably unknown in the old world and did not inspire the construction of war cemeteries.²⁰ At the outbreak of the war the operational regulations for the French army still specified mass graves for its private soldiers,²¹ but this was now an outdated approach and was disregarded, as we have seen. In July 1915 the French High Command gave instructions that no more mass graves were to be created, and that corpses should be buried either individually or in trenches of ten bodies side by side, not piled up on top of each other.²² Parliament established this principle formally in a law of 29 December 1915: 'Any soldier who has died for France has the right to a grave in perpetuity at the expense of the State.'

National differences

The preoccupation with burying the dead emerged quickly in all the nations affected, but it was put into effect in different ways in the various armies. The Austrian army was particularly attentive to this duty, and in the 1916 war exhibition in Vienna, one room was devoted to soldiers' graves. In Galicia, after the victorious breakthrough in the spring of 1915 between Tarnow and Gorlice, the High Command established a special unit, under the command of Major Broch, to bury the bodies of the 90,000 soldiers of all nationalities, but primarily Austrian and Hungarian, that were scattered across the battlefield.²³ Calling on architects, sculptors and artists of all nations, Broch constructed nearly 400 cemeteries. Set as close as possible to the battle sites, often on a hill-top or beside a road, these small cemeteries accommodated between three and four hundred bodies in the case of the largest, around forty for the smallest. Their architectural designs varied greatly, some using grave-marker crosses and others headstones.²⁴ Overall, however, these are intimate places of reflection, very different from Western military cemeteries and their layouts.

Broch and his teams benefited from exceptional circumstances: the war was continuing well to the east of the sector where the bodies for burial still lay after the breakthrough of 1915. To the north, circumstances were similar, but very little is known of how the German army managed the dead in the area controlled by Ober Ost, and still less for the Russian side, where the

memory of the Revolution has occluded that of the war.²⁵ It seems that the graves here were generally collective. On the Western Front, on the other hand, the fighting continued without lasting respite. The German, French and British armies did not divert large numbers to build temporary cemeteries, while fluctuations in the front line often forced them to abandon those that they had built. Here, therefore, wartime graves were overwhelmingly temporary. As no one foresaw that the war would leave so many corpses behind it, these provisional burial grounds were generally quite small, but over time they grew in size; the cemetery at Chalons-sur-Marne, for example, was already impressively extensive when it was painted in 1917 by Félix Vallotton. By the end of the war, the department of the Marne alone had 220 French and 212 German military cemeteries.²⁶

From the beginning of the war, however, differences appeared between France and Great Britain. The French army was content to deal with the most urgent issue, the purchase of the necessary land for the creation of numerous military cemeteries, both French and Allied. On 29 December 1915 a simplified procedure for the declaration of eminent domain was instituted by law, enabling prefects to take the necessary official measures when municipalities or private landowners would not cede the land willingly. The surface was calculated according to the number of graves anticipated, at a rate of three square metres per grave. But the military engineers' service charged with constructing military cemeteries had no underlying design: its mission was limited to 'defining the cemeteries, enclosing them and putting them in proper condition to receive the bodies'.²⁷

On the British front, the Red Cross was very active. One of its teams, directed by Fabian Ware, had been aware since October 1914 of the need to identify and register the graves of dead soldiers. At the beginning of 1915 he therefore undertook the task of establishing collection cemeteries and registering all soldiers buried, with their name, regiment and rank whenever possible.²⁸ He mobilised leading architects – Edwin Lutyens, Reginald Blomfield and Herbert Baker – as well as the most famous landscape gardener in the United Kingdom, Gertrude Jekyll, to consider the organisation of military cemeteries and improve those that already existed. His actions came to be recognised by the army and government with official status: on 13 April 1917 an imperial conference approved the transformation of this service into an autonomous agency, charged with the registration of

all the war dead of the British Empire and to take care of their burial. The Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) was created by Royal Charter on 10 May 1917.

While in the other combatant nations the real organisation of military cemeteries began after the Armistice, it was much more advanced in Great Britain and the Dominions. At the time of receiving its charter, the IWGC had already established seventy cemeteries and registered 150,000 graves on the Western Front, more than 2,500 in Salonica and over 4,000 in Egypt. It had set up three experimental cemeteries behind the front line. In January 1918, all these ideas and works of construction led to the report which it had requested from the director of the British Museum, Sir Frederick Kenyon . He required each cemetery to be enclosed and have a shelter and a chapel, and that each grave must be marked by a headstone, carefully aligned, giving the name of the soldier, his rank, the date of his death, his regiment and its badge. Two characteristic monuments for each cemetery were added to this list of requirements: the cross of sacrifice, designed by Blomfield , and the altar stone of remembrance by Lutyens . On the eve of the Armistice, the doctrine of the IWGC was established, and its record was already impressive.

When the fighting stopped: the dead between their armies and their families

Should the dead be restored to their families?

As long as the war continued, the question of knowing whether the bodies belonged to the armies or to their families remained in suspension.²⁹ It was relatively easy to keep families away from the military zone, and the reasons for their exclusion were obvious. As soon as the fighting came to an end, however, this was no longer enforceable, and parents immediately began to appear. Braving the ban, they scoured the battlefield to find the grave of their loved one and to reach agreement with impromptu funeral undertakers to recover and remove the body and bury it close to his own family.³⁰ The pressure of families in mourning was very heavy in all countries, and led to differing policies.

When the United States entered the war, American authorities immediately undertook to repatriate the remains of the soldiers who died. Although losses were more numerous than anticipated, the promise was kept: six families out of ten requested and obtained the return of their dead.³¹ The remaining 30,900 American dead were buried on the continent in the care of an organisation similar to the IWGC, created in 1919 and confirmed in perpetuity in 1923 as the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC). The ABMC quickly set up six large military cemeteries in France and one in Belgium; in May 1919 an official commission in France had already cited the cemetery at Romagne-sous-Monfaucon (Meuse) as an example. These are large cemeteries with generous proportions – four square metres for each grave, but without specific designation for the pathways, shrubs and open space aligning the rows of crosses or Stars of David in Carrara marble. Designed for visitors arriving from a distance, the cemeteries included a chapel open to all faiths, together with accommodation for the American superintendent in charge of the cemetery that was suitable to receive visitors and if necessary house them overnight. This highly planned concept of strong monumentality, in a traditional neoclassical style that was in total contrast with modern industrial war, was designed to enhance the American participation in the Great War which more numerous and more intimate cemeteries would have rendered less visible. These cemeteries constitute a manifesto of the United States on the old continent.³²

In the United Kingdom, however, the IWGC considered that all the dead of the war should in principle be buried together at the site of their sacrifice. The return of the bodies would have introduced a flagrant inequality between the rich and the poor and would often have led to a distinction between the officers, many from the middle and upper classes, and their mostly working-class soldiers. Ware also wanted to ensure that the officers and soldiers from the Dominions would not be separated from the English or Scots, to affirm the union and the strength of the Empire. In his mind, the military cemeteries became manifestations of the Empire. He was fully aware of the resistance that this refusal to demobilise the dead could cause: his plans were conceived to overcome this difficulty.

The IWGC worked hard to win the confidence of the families in keeping them informed about their dead, the circumstances of their deaths, the site of

their burial and all the details that they longed to know. The Commission aimed to create beautiful cemeteries, with graves carefully maintained and planted with flowers, to show the grieving families that their dead were honoured as well as, if not better than, they could manage themselves. By the time the IWGC received its charter, it had already sent 17,000 photographs to families to show how it had buried the man they mourned. To enable them to feel that these graves were theirs, the Commission provided for the carving at the foot of each headstone of a short text (sixty-six characters or spaces) proposed by the family. In December 1918, 7,000 families consulted had responded on this point, and very few had manifested any hostility or dissent.³³ To clarify its plans, in 1919 a brochure written by Rudyard Kipling , himself the father of a missing soldier, was widely distributed by the IWGC, containing illustrations of the plans for cemeteries and headstones of different faiths.³⁴ Australia, which had decided not to repatriate the bodies of its ‘Diggers’, similarly distributed up to 60,000 copies of an illustrated book to convince the families that their dead would be properly honoured.³⁵

Without all this intensive work of thought and information undertaken even before the Armistice, the IWGC could not have achieved its intention of burying all the dead of the United Kingdom and Dominions on the continent.³⁶ Opposition was growing, rallying influential public figures who called for resistance to this ‘tyranny’, demanding crosses on the graves and freedom for families to recover the bodies of their dead. The question was settled in a major debate in the House of Commons on 4 May 1920, including a tiny reduction in the funding allotted to the IWGC.³⁷ In fact it was the Commission’s fundamental policy that was in question: the principle of headstones as well as the non-restitution of the bodies. In a climate of high emotion, the debate, in which Winston Churchill , then Minister for War, spoke last, ended in favour of the IWGC. Its intentions were never to be seriously challenged again.

France had put off any thinking on military burials until after the war. It was therefore not until November 1918 that a National Commission, established to draw up and present a policy on this subject, observed the confrontations between partisans and opponents over the principle of restoring bodies to the families.³⁸ During this period, and despite all bans, families came to agreement with more or less professional funeral

undertakers for the clandestine exhumation and transport of remains which were more or less accurately identified.³⁹ This practical situation made compromise necessary: forbidding the restitution of the body to the family would be difficult to implement, and the state would not come out well if it tried. For a short time a three-year ban on exhumation was envisaged, to enable the necessary identifications to proceed, to be certain that the right body was restored to the right family.⁴⁰ But the pressure was too great: the Finance Bill of 31 July 1920, which established the status of military cemeteries, recognised families' right to the restoration and transfer at state cost of the body of their relative who died for France.

Under the application of this law, some 240,000 bodies were restored to their families in an operation which required the establishment of an administrative authority to manage the families' requests and a logistical service to transport the coffins. In 1921 and 1922 the army organised special trains to take wagons loaded with coffins for distribution across the departments, delivering several coffins, sometimes dozens or even more, at each stop.⁴¹ The local authorities paid their respects to them before the families took them home, where they were the object of another and less official form of homage before being buried according to tradition. Over time and space, in a blend of military and religious rituals, soldiers' bodies were thus demobilised from the army and reappropriated by their families: a transition from public to private, from collective to individual, from formality to intimacy.

But the restoration of bodies to their families created discrimination between those who could visit a grave frequently and those who could not. To remedy what was seen as an injustice, a law dated 29 October 1921 granted the families the right to an annual pilgrimage, with travel to the grave of their relative at public expense. Italy introduced a preferential rate for families who wished to visit graves at the front, and in 1921, like France, granted them the right to recover the bodies of their family members at public expense.⁴²

Raising and burying the bodies

Whether or not they were returned to their families, the bodies first had to be exhumed. Some already lay buried in temporary cemeteries, but many were lying in scattered graves from which all identification had been lost through

the effects of weathering or fighting. Many others were buried at the time of their death and had gradually decomposed; here and there bones and fragments of clothing were impossible to identify. They had to be sought out systematically, gathered and identified wherever possible. To some extent this process had begun during the war itself, but what remained to be done was considerable and could not be deferred.

The end of fighting changed the situation dramatically. On the one hand, the battlefield was now overrun by tourists and casual traders who sometimes removed bones and various debris as souvenirs or as saleable items. On the other hand, farmers returning to their land were determined to bring it back into cultivation rapidly – often leading to the final loss of the last traces of dead soldiers. Tribunals were faced with farmworkers who had torn open forgotten graves with their ploughs,⁴³ and although Verdun was declared a ‘red zone’ and closed even to walkers, few battlefields could be preserved from cultivation.

Clearing the battlefields of this industrial war was an industrial undertaking in itself: metre by metre, tens of thousands of hectares needed detailed examination. The army was not capable of such a task. The British recruited a labour corps of unemployed former soldiers – more than 4,000 in the first months of 1919 – but this was still not enough. The French army called on immigrant labourers, Chinese or Indo-Chinese, and reached agreement with independent funeral undertakers to raise bodies, identify them and bury them. The payment for these workers not being an all-in price, some ‘improved’ their situation by dividing a single corpse between two coffins. Thousands of coffins had to be made to house these skeletons as they were raised; even reduced to six planks (four sides, bottom and lid), they represented colossal bargains agreed by unscrupulous traders whose sawmills were not big enough to produce such a huge number of coffins. Hence there was a degree of dishonest dealing – coffins which burst open as they were loaded on to a lorry. The inevitable scandals, denounced by the popular press, did nothing to enhance confidence in the state’s ability to give their dead the burial they deserved.⁴⁴

The collecting of bodies that were scattered, or that had suffered hasty and summary burial, took some fifteen years. Between 1926 and 1935 – thus well after the end of organised retrieval operations – 122,000 French or German bodies without graves were found on the battlefields of the Western

Front.⁴⁵ Even today, bodies are found occasionally. In 2008, at Fromelles (Nord), the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the successor to the IWGC, discovered eight mass graves where 250 Australian soldiers had been buried by the Germans, slightly behind their lines.⁴⁶ In May 2013, people touring the battlefield of Verdun found a human bone protruding from a shell hole, in the destroyed village of Fleury. Subsequently 26 bodies were discovered in this intensively visited site.

The remains that were retrieved and gathered in this way awaited their final place of burial. In its Article 225 the Treaty of Versailles prescribed that: 'The Governments of the Allies and their associates and the German Government will ensure that the graves of soldiers and sailors buried in their respective territories are respected and maintained.' As a result, it was the French who constructed the German cemeteries. In Turkey, where many Australian and New Zealand soldiers had died, the Treaty of Sèvres (10 August 1920) gave the Allies full and entire ownership of the ground that they chose for their cemeteries and memorials, as well as the access roads (Article 218). This satisfied the claims of the Australians, who refused to bury their dead in enemy territory. In relation to these plots of land, Turkey retained her sovereignty over matters of public order or in dealing with any acts of violence or abuse of power, but undertook to acquire in due course the terrain considered necessary, and to permit visits and possible exhumations. In return, the Allies undertook not to use these territories with extra-territorial status for any other purpose – commercial, military or naval.

On the ground made available in this way the various nations gathered together the burials from several temporary cemeteries to form the military cemeteries which we can visit today. In the department of the Marne, the number of French and German military cemeteries dropped from 220 and 212 respectively in 1919 to 34 and 11 respectively today.⁴⁷ These permanent cemeteries present individual features which have emerged from the various national projects.⁴⁸

The British, American and French cemeteries

Three categories can be identified. For the first, for identified individuals, body and name were available and individual burial was required. The second was that of bodies which could not be identified by name. The third represented dismembered remains: soldiers without an intact body or a

name. Together, the two latter categories presented as much of a problem as the first. For the Battle of the Somme in 1916, the German army knew of 86,000 men missing or not identified, alongside 72,000 identified bodies.⁴⁹ Out of 60,000 Australian dead, only 38,000 had been reliably identified,⁵⁰ and in the French army a little under half. How to honour them? The Australian government proposed to establish a named grave for all soldiers, including those in the third group for whom there was no body.⁵¹ This solution of the empty grave was quickly put aside by the IWGC, partly because of the high costs that this would have entailed and partly because of the lie that it represented and which risked discrediting the Commission in the eyes of the families. In return, it decided to bury the soldiers of the second group, a corpse without a name, under a headstone bearing the formula proposed by Kipling, whose son had never been found: 'Known unto God'. The French did not adopt this, and buried nameless French and German bodies in mass graves or ossuaries.

For the IWGC, however, it was essential to preserve the names of soldiers who were never identified or whose final resting place was unknown. It therefore decided at a very early stage, like the American ABMC, to carve these names on a memorial in the form of a monumental wall specifically dedicated for this purpose in the main military cemeteries. The memorial wall in the largest British cemetery, Tyne Cot near Ypres, records 34,000 names of the missing in this way. But the number of names was too great to set all of them on the cemeteries' walls, hence the decision to create separate memorials close to the most costly battles, such as the Somme or Passchendaele, which rapidly became sites of pilgrimage. The largest are the Menin Gate at Ypres, designed by Blomfield and bearing the names of 55,000 missing soldiers, shown by regiment, and at Thiepval (Somme), for which Lutyens created a design with surfaces large enough to carry the names of approximately 74,000 soldiers.

The Americans followed British thinking and carved the names of their missing on monumental walls. Some of the German mass graves also do so at the entrance to the cemetery. At Langemarck, for instance, a mass grave holding the remains of some 25,000 soldiers, a *Kameradengrabe*, is surrounded by bronze plaques bearing 17,000 names. France, however, was less concerned to preserve the names. Anyone looking for names at the ossuary at Douaumont, where it is estimated that the remains of 130,000

French or German soldiers are gathered, will be disappointed. The names are the subject of another project, defined in the law of 25 October 1919: all of the dead would be recorded – not simply the missing. All the names were to be entered in registers to be deposited in the Panthéon, and the state would present each commune with a book of remembrance bearing the names of those who had died for France who were born or lived in the commune. But the project dragged on,⁵² while in all the British cemeteries registers were carefully preserved which gave the names of all those buried there, with location references and plans for the individual graves. In France it was in fact the communal war memorials which ensured the preservation of the names: local authorities seized the initiative of the abandoned national project.

The British cemeteries were not created by a public authority. The IWGC was an independent imperial agency, administered by a council on which the Dominions were represented. All contributed to the cost. Further, in order to escape budgetary fluctuations, it had succeeded in gaining sufficient capital endowment to ensure adequate revenues for its activities in principle.⁵³ Benefiting from substantial means, Ware and the IWGC succeeded in completing their architectural and landscaping project, a considerable enterprise. The headstones had to be commissioned from many private companies and for many years 4,000 headstones were despatched across the English Channel each week. But Ware did not subcontract the layout of the cemeteries, and in 1921 the IWGC employed 1,362 gardeners.⁵⁴ Its six nursery gardens on the continent produced the flowers and shrubs that it needed, and 100,000 km of hedges were planted.⁵⁵ The homogeneity of the model of British cemeteries owes much to this pattern of creation: the teams of the IWGC acquired knowledge and skill which were then without parallel and which account for the beauty of these cemeteries and give them their British, country-garden atmosphere. At Tyne Cot, for example, the flowers of different species, colour and height which adorn the graves of each row are planted symmetrically in relation to the central pathway. The space in all the British cemeteries is designed in relation to the Cross of Sacrifice, on which the carved sword motif gives a medieval note.

Elsewhere, however, the foreign location imposed some constraints on the IWGC model, particularly in the Gallipoli peninsula. Each Cross of Sacrifice had to be set in such a way that it cast no shadow on Muslim soil outside the

enclosure. The climate also inflicted its rigours; attempts to landscape the cemeteries in Australian style, in particular by planting wattles – the Australian national acacia – failed. The fear of seeing headstones stolen or vandalised led to them being replaced by blocks of stone resembling lowlying desks which were suitable for carving the requisite inscriptions and were less vulnerable. The model of the British cemetery adapted itself to local conditions.

Although the American military cemeteries, like the British, are generally landscaped with plantations of trees and wide lawns, the spatial relationships are not the same, and no flowers interrupt the dazzling rows of crosses made of Carrara marble. The French cemeteries were created later: model plans were drawn up in 1928,⁵⁶ and the Ministry of Pensions constructed them on the cheap, using ground acquired by the Génie, the corps of military engineers.⁵⁷ Here was no architect's planning, but strictly regulated standards: three square metres per grave, including paths, no more than 90 cm between the rows of graves, no tree closer than 2 metres or hedge less than 50 cm from the boundaries of the cemetery, and a specific pattern for the surrounds of mass graves. Initially no flowers were included in the plan.⁵⁸ The only structures were functional: a toolshed and sometimes a very simple monument with a central cross where wreaths could be laid.⁵⁹ Symbolism was limited to a central flagpole bearing the tricolour flag. It was not until 1931 that the aesthetic poverty of these Republican necropolises was acknowledged. The law of 11 July 1931 granted a credit of 50 million francs for their design and improvement, which enabled the wooden crosses to be replaced by reinforced concrete crosses,⁶⁰ but the initial decisions on the tight layout of the graves was unchanged. For this reason, French military cemeteries stand out for their density. The American cemetery at Romagne occupies 53 hectares for 14,246 graves, while at Douaumont a slightly larger number of French graves occupies a mere 17 hectares.

All these cemeteries respect the religious identity of the dead individual. The headstones in British cemeteries are all of the same design, which gives a great sense of homogeneity to their pattern; at the same time, depending on the religious beliefs of the dead man, a cross, a star of David or a crescent was carved beneath the regimental insignia, with the military identity of the dead man and the date of his death. The Americans carved a star of David in the place of the cross for Jewish soldiers. The French provided headstones

for non-Christians, and orientated Muslim graves towards Mecca; they were the only ones to have provided stones for atheists without any religious inscription – a requirement of the secular French state.

This secular concept did not allow the state to construct for itself either monumental crosses or religious structures. The chapels at the great French military cemeteries, at Notre-Dame-de-Lorette in Artois, Douaumont at Verdun with its ossuary, Dormans in the Marne or Le Vieil-Armand in the Vosges, are thus private initiatives of Catholic inspiration. Committees, generally including the local bishop, a general and important public figures who organised subscriptions to build up funds, chose the architects and oversaw the project. The administration was content to give them the necessary authorisation and land.⁶¹

Between the individual and the nation there is scarcely room in the French military cemeteries for communities. The Dominions of the British Empire were not simple communities; they had a distinct political autonomy and an identity which the Great War allowed them to emphasise: for Australia, it marked the birth of the nation. The great memorials at Vimy for the Canadians, at Villers-Bretonneux for the Australians, and some others,⁶² are more national statements of high diction than sites of piety for the dead whose sacrifice is to some extent remobilised. By its height, the Vimy memorial evokes mourning less than it expresses the pride in the victorious seizure of a position which dominates the entire landscape. Even if they reflected the enduring fervour of communities of mourning, their erection was primarily a political act on the part of the governments concerned. The French colonies did not have this independent status, and although funerary identities were respected, the participation of North African or Senegalese troops in the battles was not indicated in separate symbolic forms. A monument to Jewish soldiers was inaugurated at Douaumont in 1938, to the west of the ossuary, but only a barely visible stone, erected some years earlier, paid homage to Muslims, for whom a burial area of some 600 graves bears witness of their sacrifice. A monument was dedicated to them in 2006 to the east of the ossuary, balancing the Jewish memorial, which shows how attitudes have changed. In this respect public thinking, and understanding within public authorities, have evolved over the century.

Italian and German cemeteries

The case of the Italian and German cemeteries differs because of a break in their development. The first Italian cemeteries were there to show respect for the cause and the men who died for it. They were frequently quite small, with decor taken from war materials: barbed wire, helmets and shells, in direct evocation of the realities of battle.⁶³ Italian fascism, on the other hand, in later years gathered the graves into some forty large cemeteries, designed by well-known architects and sculptors. Often laid out round a *via eroica*, these impressive ensembles are monuments to the glory of eternal Italy, 'triumphs of military death'.⁶⁴ In the largest, at Redipuglia, inaugurated in 1938, an esplanade crossed by a triumphal way leads to a massive porphyry sarcophagus, the grave of the Duke of Aosta, the commander of the army which fought here. Under Mussolini the leaders were not the equals of the soldiers. Beyond, a monumental stairway of twenty-one steps serves as grave for 40,000 identified soldiers. Each of the two mass graves at the top holds the remains of 30,000 unknown dead soldiers. The names of the identified dead have not disappeared – they are carved on bronze plaques which adorn the face of the steps up the stairway – but private grief has been banished here, as in other *sacrarii* such as that of Monte Grappa. 'The sinister and grandiose fascination exercised by the manifestations of state death'⁶⁵ challenges the very principle of individual graves: it is the opposite of the IWGC cemeteries, which undoubtedly celebrate the British Empire but which were conceived above all to welcome families coming to reflect by the grave.

German cemeteries in France were initially organised by the French army, which took care to locate them away from places seen as sacred by the French nation: the main German cemetery for Verdun is thus at Consenvoye, 14 km from Douaumont. Furthermore, the French were not generous in planning and granted them small plots of land, which forced the Germans to create the semi-collective graves which are a characteristic feature of these cemeteries. From 1926 France authorised a powerful preservation society, the Volksbund Deutscher Kriegsgräberfürsorge, to maintain and develop them.⁶⁶ For this purpose, the Volksbund turned to charitable contributions and voluntary efforts, notably from students during their vacations. It commissioned the support of a well-known architect, Robert Tischler, who shared the vaguely medieval and Nordic ideologies of the 'Heroes' forests', the *Heldenhaine*, given its theoretical framework in 1915 by the architect-

landscape designer Willy Lange.⁶⁷ Taking his references from the Teutonic Knights, Lange proscribed whatever was not authentically Germanic, such as roses – reputed to be Latin – and proposed planting on each grave a truly German tree, an oak or a fir. The power and longevity of the oak symbolised life born of sacrifice and thus justified death; in this way the cemetery became a heroic location.⁶⁸ The trees planted by the Volksbund have grown and give the German cemeteries their own quietly impressive ambience.

The inspiration did not waver elsewhere, though the interpretations varied according to the cemetery, the date of its installation, the space available, *etc.* The layout in particular affected the graves. The initial crosses in tarred wood, chosen by the French services, were replaced by crosses in metal or stone, or sometimes small square tombstones, in regular lines. The crosses generally bore the name of one or two dead men on each arm; the tombstones always show several names, sometimes around twenty. Spatial constraints here reinforce ideology: individual identities are protected but the emphasis is on the collective essence of battle comradeship.

The dead of the war weighed heavily on the societies which joined in the conflict. We could list here the stages of mourning, from the secret ties of affection cut short to the intimacy of family memories, to local and then national commemorations. But mass death is present not only in memories: it is also represented, much more materially, in public spaces, in war memorials and monuments and military cemeteries.

The war of 1914 created this specific architectural project which has made its permanent mark on the landscapes where men at war were engaged. Without counting military sections within communal cemeteries, the list is long: 832 British cemeteries in France, 192 in Belgium, 35 at Gallipoli; 198 German cemeteries in France, and 265 French cemeteries. The military cemeteries can be seen from far off in the great cultivated plains: in more built-up areas, they are less visible but they are still there – indicated to visitors or pilgrims, maintained and respected. Vandalism here is sacrilege. The dead are still there, lying in the hundreds of cemeteries which the Great War has left behind, as its most lasting legacy.

Beyond national differences, these cemeteries share one feature: they are sacred spaces. The tourists who explore them lower their voices spontaneously as they enter, and it is difficult to think of children playing

ball on the grass or along the paths. Military cemeteries are part of the sacrality of death. In this sense, they differ little from civilian cemeteries.

A distinction can be made, however, because these are the graves of young men whose lives were taken when they had scarcely begun, and because the death of young men is more poignant than that of the old. They are different above all in the number and alignment of the graves, which speak of mass slaughter. The dead soldiers are lined up as they were in life, for review: military order reigns. With this, the army and the nation assume responsibility for these dead men, while the number of the graves renders the scale of the sacrifice immediately visible. The collective is thus articulated on the basis of the individual: in the army of the dead who lie in the ground, each soldier preserves his identity – and all had everything in life before them, until the war cut them down.

The military cemetery is a place of pilgrimage for the distant descendants of the dead or missing, who still come to mourn at ‘their’ grave as they do at their family graves; but it is also an official site which from time to time becomes the setting for ritual ceremonies. It offers an invitation to meditate on a double mystery: that of these broken lives, and that of the state which sacrificed them. The military cemeteries present to our contemporaries the sacrifice of a generation and the strength of the state in a manner which is more evident, more immediate, more poignant than any other symbol. It is entirely right that the historian Jules Isaac, who fought in the war, ended the chapter in his history textbook that he devoted to the Great War with the photograph of a military cemetery. Although it is by no means the final word, the military cemetery constitutes the result of the war, its most lasting outcome and the strongest symbol of mass death.

Appendix

Table 22.1. *Estimate by army of total number of soldiers who died during the First World War*

Country	Urlanis (1972)	Winter (1986)	Overmans (2003)	Winter (2010)	'Chemins de mémoire'	Janda	Westmoreland	Estimate
Russia	1,811,000	1,811,000	1,800,000?	1,800,000	1,700,000	1,850,000	1,700,000	1,997,500
France	1,327,000	1,327,000	1,327,000			1,322,100		
French colonies	71,000	71,000	78,000			75,700		
France + colonies	1,398,000	1,398,000	1,405,000	1,375,800	1,390,000	1,397,800	1,357,800	1,400,000
Great Britain	715,000	723,000	750,000		776,000	722,785		761,000
Australia	60,000	60,000				59,330		60,000
Canada	61,000	61,000				59,544		61,000
India	54,000	54,000				62,056		54,000
Newfoundland						1,082		
New Zealand	16,000	16,000				16,645		16,000
South Africa	7,000	7,000				9,050		7,000
Others						45,967		
Total Dominions	198,000	198,000	180,000		164,000	253,674		198,000
Total British Empire	913,000	921,000	930,000	908,371	940,000	976,459	908,371	959,000
Italy	578,000	578,000	450,000	578,000	530,000	680,000	462,391	600,000
United States	114,000	114,000	117,000	114,000	114,000	213,799	50,585	87,900
Japan			1,000	300		1,344	300	300
Romania	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,706	158,000	335,706	335,706	250,700
Serbia	278,000*	278,000	250,000?	278,000	40,000	127,535	45,000	278,000
Belgium	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,716	44,000	45,500	13,716	38,700
Greece	26,000	26,000	25,000	26,000	12,000	23,098	5,000	26,000

Country	Urlanis (1972)	Winter (1986)	Overmans (2003)	Winter (2010)	'Chemins de mémoire'	Janda	Westmoreland	Estimate
Portugal	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,222	8,000	8,145	7,222	7,200
Montenegro			13,000	3,000		3,000	3,000	3,000
Total Allies	5,135,000	5,421,000	5,296,000	5,380,115	4,936,000	5,662,386	4,889,091	5,648,300
German Empire	2,037,000	2,037,000	2,037,000	2,037,000	1,950,000	1,808,555	1,808,546	2,037,000
Austria-Hungary	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,460,000	1,100,000	1,047,000	1,496,200	922,500	1,457,000
Ottoman Empire	804,000	804,000	325,000	804,000	400,000	600,000	325,000	772,000
Bulgaria	88,000	88,000	88,000	87,500	100,000	101,224	75,844	87,500
Total Central Powers	4,029,000	4,029,000	3,910,000**	4,028,500	3,497,000	4,005,979	3,131,890	4,353,500
TOTAL	9,164,000	9,450,000	9,206,000	9,408,615	8,433,000	9,668,365	8,020,981	10,001,800

Notes

* Includes Montenegro.

** The total report in this publication is erroneous.

Sources B. T. Uralnis, *Guerre et populations* (Paris: Éditions du Progrès, 1972); Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 75; R. Overmans, 'Kriegsverluste', in G. Hirschfeld, G. Krumeich and Irina Renz (eds.), *Enzyklopädie Erster Weltkrieg* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2003), p. 663; Jay Winter, 'Demography', in J. Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 249; 'Chemins de mémoire', DMPA website; Lance Janda in Spencer C. Tucker (ed.), *World War I:*

Encyclopedia (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2005), vol. 1, p. 273; I. P. Westmoreland in S. P. Tucker (ed.), *The European Powers in the First World War: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 172–3.

Additional sources and notes

For all nations other than those mentioned below, I have used the estimates in Winter, ‘Demography’. I have not used Winter’s estimates in the cases cited below. Here I explain why and offer other citations.

Austro-Hungarian Empire

The figures conventionally cited come from Leo Grebler and Wilhelm Winkler, *The Cost of World War to Germany and to Austria-Hungary* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1940), who took them from General Kerchnawe, *Die Totenverluste der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie nach Nationalitäten* (Vienna, 1919). In a study brought to my attention by Ruediger Overmans, Wilhelm Winkler, *Statistisches Handbuch des gesamten Deutschland* (Berlin: Deutsche Rundschau, 1927), offers estimates of 812,000 Austrian war deaths and 645,000 Hungarian war deaths. It is not clear if these figures include Bosnian deaths, estimated at 56,500 by Max-Stephen Schulze, ‘Austria-Hungary’s economy in World War I’, in Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison, *The Economics of World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 81, which, if added to 953,200 Austrian war deaths and 733,000 Hungarian war deaths, produces a total for the empire of 1,686,200.

France

Antoine Prost, ‘Compter les vivants et les morts: l’évaluation des pertes françaises de 1914–1918’, *Le Mouvement social*, 222 (January–March 2008), pp. 41–60, includes colonial and non-French troops, as well as deaths due to illness contracted on military service, and roughly 75,000 deaths from illness not imputable to war service.

German Empire

Sanitätsbericht über das Deutsche Heer (Berlin: Miller, 1934), vol. III, provides an estimate of total deaths of 1,973,701, but this does not include those who died after 31 July 1918 and leaves out naval deaths. The estimate of Ruediger Overmans using figures from the Zentralnachweiseamt für Kriegerverluste und Kriegsgräber is certainly more realistic. The publication *Wirtschaft und Statistik* (1925), p. 29, puts the total of German war deaths at 2,055,000. Unlike other estimates, it sets deaths in German colonies at 14,000 and not 1,185.

Italy

Giorgio Mortara, *La salute pubblica in Italia durante e dopo la guerra* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1925), p. 29, gives good reasons to revise upwards the official figure of 578,000 deaths. I am grateful to Jean-Yves Manchon for having brought this work to my attention.

Ottoman Empire

Edward J. Erikson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), appendix F, p. 241, considers the figure of 804,000 deaths to be an overestimate. His total is 771,844, composed of 175,220 killed in action, 61,487 missing in action, 68,373 died of wounds and 466,759 died of disease. These figures were used in Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005). Erik Jan Zürcher, 'Between death and desertion: the experience of the Ottoman soldiers in World War I', *Turcica*, 28 (1996), pp. 235–58, offers these statistics: 325,000 killed in action, 60 000 died of wounds, 400,000 died of disease, totalling 785,000 war deaths. It is not clear whether the deaths of Arab soldiers are included in this total.

Russian Empire

Peter Gatrell, *Russia's First World War: A Social and Economic History* (London: Longman, 1989), p. 246, cites 181,900 prisoners of war who died

in captivity. This figure has been added to the total.

United Kingdom

Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 71–5, states that 41,000 officers and men died between 1 October 1918 and 30 September 1919, but he did not include them in his total, which is reproduced in Winter, ‘Demography’. I have included them because it is logical to believe that the majority of these men had been wounded earlier, or were men previously listed as missing in action.

United States

Michael Clodfelder, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts: A Statistical Reference to Casualty and Other Figures, 1618–1991* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992), vol. II, pp. 782–9, provides, following one set of official statistics, a total of 126,710, and according to another set, 120,144 American soldiers who died in the war. These figures include those who died of illness. But according to the second set of statistics, 38,815 died in the United States, where accurate statistics were more easily kept. I have used the first estimate, and have deducted the number of soldiers who died in the United States.

Helen McPhail translated this chapter from French into English.

1 Louis Mairet, *Carnet d’un combattant (11 février 1915–16 avril 1917)* (Paris: C. Crès, 1919), p. 294.

2 Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008).

3 At Beaurieux and Mourmelon: see Thierry Hardier and Jean-François Jagielski, *Combattre et mourir pendant la Grande Guerre (1914–1925)* (Paris: Imago, 2001), p. 206.

4 Maurice Pensuet, letter to his parents on 14 April 1917 in *Écrit du front* (Paris: Tallandier, 2010), p. 349.

5 Antoine Prost, 'Les limites de la brutalisation: tuer sur le front occidental, 1914–1918', *Vingtième siècle, revue d'histoire*, 81 (January–March 2004), pp. 5–20.

6 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey, a Disputed Genocide* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), pp. 60–1.

7 Marci Handelsman, *La Pologne: la vie économique et sociale pendant la guerre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1933).

8 *Sanitätsbericht über das Deutsche Heer (Deutsches Feld-und Besatzungsheer) im Weltkriege 1914/1918* (Berlin: Verlag von E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1934), vol. III, fig. 146 *et seq.*

9 In Turkey, mortality ran at 50 per cent for sick Turkish soldiers, against less than 20 per cent for German soldiers. A German nurse indicated that 40–50 per cent of the sick admitted to the hospital where she worked died of hunger or exhaustion even before they could be treated; Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres*, p. 60. Eric Jan Zürcher, 'Between death and desertion: the experience of the Ottoman soldiers in World War I', *Turkica*, 28 (1996), pp. 235–58 confirms this situation.

10 See the notes to [Table 22.1](#).

11 For Russia it is not possible to establish a date with precision.

12 Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (London: Macmillan, 1985), table 3.4, p. 75. We have adjusted the rates calculated by Winter by applying our own calculations.

13 In the French army, 4 million letters and cards on average were sent from the rear to the front each day, and 1.8 million from the front to the rear.

14 Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1995). French translation: *Entre deuil et mémoire: la Grande Guerre dans l'histoire culturelle de l'Europe* (Paris: A. Colin, 2009), ch. 2.

15 Kenneth Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne University Press, 2005), pp. 97–8; Joy Damousi, *The Labor of Loss; Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 19.

16 Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss and the Great War* (Fremantle: Curtin University Books, 2004), p. 175.

17 Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2010); Stéphane Tison, *Comment sortir de la guerre? Deuil, mémoire et traumatisme (1870–1940)* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011), p. 72.

18 Hardier and Jagielski, *Combattre et mourir*, p. 216, give photographs illustrating this labour on the German front.

19 Anne Rasmussen, 'La règle et le consentement: hygiénistes, médecins et militaires à l'épreuve du cadavre dans la Grande Guerre', in Giorgio Cosmacini and Georges Vigarello (eds.), *Il medico di fronte alla morte (secoli XVI–XXI)* (Turin: Fondazione Ariodante Fabretti, 2008), pp. 215–60.

20 King George V, visiting British military cemeteries in 1922, declared: 'Never before in history have a people thus dedicated and maintained individual memorials to the fallen', quoted by George Mosse, 'National cemeteries and national revival: the cult of fallen soldiers in Germany', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14:1 (1979), p. 8.

21 Luc Capdevila and Danièle Voldman, *Nos morts: les sociétés occidentales face aux tués de la guerre* (Paris: Payot, 2002), p. 77.

22 Yves Pourcher, *Les jours de guerre: la vie des Français au jour le jour entre 1914 et 1918* (Paris: Plon, 1994), p. 467. A decree from GHQ on 22 February 1915 already provided in principle for individual graves but discussed at length the use of mass graves and quick-lime. See M.-S. Bloquert-Lefevre, 'Les sépultures militaires sur le territoire national 1914–1918' (MA thesis, University of Paris-IV, 1992), pp. 64–5.

23 The total figure for the burials per cemetery given by Rudolf Broch and Hans Hauptmann, *Die westgalizischen Heldengräber aus den Jahren des Weltkrieges 1914–1915* (Vienna: Ges. für Graphische Industrie, 1916). This work has recently been republished in Polish: *Zachodniogalicyjskie groby bohaterów z lat wogny światowej 1914–1915, przedtad filologiczny Henryk Sznytka, opracowanie, wstęp I przpisy Jerzy Drogomir* (Tarnow: Muzeum Okregower w Tarnowie, 1996).

24 Pavel Pencakowski, 'Monumenti dimenticati agli "eroi di nessuno": i cemeteri austriaci di guerra nella Galizia occidentale', in G. Fait (ed.), *Sui campi de Galizia. Gli italiani d'Austria e il fronte orientale: uomini, popoli, culture nella guerra europea* (Rovereto: Museo storico italiano della guerra, 1997), pp. 461–79.

25 Aaron J. Cohen, 'Oh, that! Myth, memory and World War I in the Russian emigration and the Soviet Union', *Slavic Review*, 62:1 (2003), pp. 69–86; Melissa K. Stockdale, 'United in gratitude: honoring soldiers and defining the nation in Russia's Great War', *Kritica*, 7 (summer, 2006), pp. 459–86. Moscow's large military cemetery was demolished in 1926.

26 Tison, *Comment sortir de la guerre*, p. 216.

27 Circular by Gallieni, then Minister for War, dated 17 February 1916, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, 6 V 11239. I am grateful to Laurent Veysièrre for having facilitated my access to these documents.

28 Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, pp. 3ff.

29 Jenny Edkins, *Missing: Persons and Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 131ff.

30 Pourcher, *Les jours de guerre*, pp. 471–9, shows from judicial archives examples of proceedings undertaken against the activists in these irregular exhumations.

31 G. Kurt Piehler, ‘The war dead and the Gold Star: American commemoration of the First World War’, in John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 168–85, offers a higher percentage, more than 70 per cent, but which probably includes soldiers who died in the United States itself. See the notes to [Table 22.1](#).

32 Ron Theodore Robin, *Enclaves of America: The Rhetoric of American Political Architecture Abroad 1900–1965* (Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 58–62; James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond* (New York: Praeger, 1988), p. 96.

33 Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, p. 44.

34 Imperial War Graves Commission, *The Graves of the Fallen* (London: HMSO, 1919). This little book of 18 pages can be consulted on-line on the website of the National Library of Australia: www.nla.gov.au/apps/doview/nla.aus-vnr782301-p.pdf.

35 *Where the Australians Rest* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1920). See Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007), ch. 4.

36 Canadians who died in Britain could be repatriated, but not those who died on the continent. Jonathan Franklin Vance, *Death so Noble: Memory*,

Meaning and the First World War (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), p. 60.

37 The debate can be studied on-line: <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1920/may/04.imperial-war-graves-commission>.

38 Archives nationales (AN), BB18/2607, dossier 1484 A 18, session of 31 May 1919.

39 Béatrix Pau, 'La violation des sépultures militaires 1919–1920', in 'La mort', special issue of *Revue historique des armées*, 259:2 (2010), pp. 33–43.

40 The examination of proposals for a law with this intention was undertaken at the meeting on 31 May 1919 of the Commission nationale des sépultures militaires, AN, Pierrefitte, BB18/2607, dossier 1484 A 18. It approved the proposal, but only because the ban was temporary.

41 Tison, *Comment sortir de la guerre?*, has studied this operation in detail, pp. 83ff. At the station of Châlons-sur-Marne, for example, the twenty-five-wagon train of 21 July 1921 delivered three wagons containing 135 coffins addressed to various communes in the department. Between 20 March 1921 and 23 August 1925, 163 trainloads followed, carrying the bodies of 4,435 soldiers for this department.

42 Royal decree of 15 October 1920 no. 1494, replaced by the royal decree of 16 June 1921, no. 931, then by the law of 11 August 1921, no. 1074. Information kindly supplied by Pierre-Yves Manchon.

43 Pourcher, *Les jours de guerre*, p. 461.

44 Pau, 'La violation des sépultures militaires, 1919–1920', pp. 33–43; Béatrix Pau, 'Le marché des cercueils 1918–1924', *Revue historique des armées*, 224:3 (2001), pp. 65–80; Béatrix Pau, 'La dénonciation du scandale

des exhumations militaires par la presse française dans les années 1920’, in Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, *Les médias et la guerre* (Paris: Economica, 2005), pp. 611–35.

45 Capdevila and Voldman, *Nos morts*, p. 87.

46 Julie Summers (ed.), *Remembering Fromelles: A New Cemetery for a New Century* (Maidenhead: CWGC Publishing, 2010).

47 Tison, *Comment sortir de la guerre?*, p. 216.

48 Antoine Prost, ‘Les cimetières de la Grande Guerre, 1914–1940’, *Le Mouvement social*, 237 (October–December 2011), pp. 135–51.

49 Reinhart Koselleck, ‘Les monuments aux morts, lieux de fondation de l’identité des survivants’, in *L’expérience de l’histoire* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), p. 155.

50 Ziino, *A Distant Grief*, p. 3.

51 Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the Battlefields of the Great War* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 58–9.

52 Marie-Thérèse Chabord, ‘Le livre d’or de la Première Guerre mondiale: un projet sans suite’, *Revue historique de l’Armée*, 29:2 (1973), pp. 76–82.

53 In 1926 the IWGC obtained from the governments of the United Kingdom and the Dominions the principle of an endowment fund, which was long and difficult to put into operation. Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, pp. 138ff.

54 Julie Summers, *Remembered: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (London, Merrell and the CWGC, 2007), p. 32.

55 Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, p. 125.

56 Anne Biraben, *Les cimetières militaires en France: architecture et paysage* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005); Yves Le Maner, 'Les caractéristiques nationales des nécropoles', available at: www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecalsais.fr.

57 Service de l'état-civil, des successions et sépultures militaires et des primes de démobilisation. The head of this service was an Assistant Quartermaster General in December 1920, AN, Pierrefitte, 20040041, art. 1.

58 A circular of 24 February 1927 banned any individual ornamentation.

59 Plan in the archives at Vincennes, Service historique de la Défense, 4 Vt 304–3. This box also contains the standard plans for mass graves such as those that can be seen at Notre-Dame-de-Lorette.

60 Bloquert-Lefevre, 'Les sépultures militaires sur le territoire national 1914–1918'.

61 Of the 14 million francs needed for the ossuary at Douaumont, only 2 million came from state funds to ensure its completion.

62 Delville Wood at Longueval for the South Africans, Beaumont-Hamel for Newfoundland, Messines Ridge in Belgium for New Zealand, Neuve-Chapelle for Indian troops and Lutyens's India Gate in Delhi, in territory then under British rule.

63 Gregory Alegi, 'Redipuglia, il cimitero perduto', *Nuova storia contemporanea*, 5 (2001), pp. 107–16; Mario Isnenghi, 'La mémoire assujettie au régime', in Mario Isnenghi (ed.), *L'Italie par elle-même: lieux de mémoire italiens de 1848 à nos jours* (Paris: ENS Rue d'Ulm, 2006), pp. 327–8, first published in Italian as *I luoghi della memoria* (1996).

64 Mario Isnenghi, *L'Italie par elle-même*, p. 329.

65 *Ibid.*

66 I am grateful to Rose Malloy for supplying this information and the text of the agreement between Belgium and Germany.

67 Willy Lange, *Deutsche Heldenhaine* (Leipzig: Weber, 1915); Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914–1940* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 75ff.

68 G. Brands, 'From World War I cemeteries to the Nazi "fortresses of the dead": architecture, heroic landscape and the quest for national identity in Germany', in Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (ed.), *Places of Commemoration: Search for Identity and Landscape Design* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), pp. 215–56.

23 The living

John Horne After the war, the living had to deal with a conflict that had killed over 10 million soldiers plus an unknown number of civilians and had left a deeply uncertain future. This chapter will consider some of the ways in which they did so between the wars. The loss of those who had died while fighting for nation or empire was double-edged. It was that of the dead themselves who had understood only too well (after the early months) the risk they ran. But it was also that of the bereaved, who had to live with the loss. As the poet Charles Sorley put it before he was killed at the Battle of Loos in October 1915: ‘Their blind eyes see not your tears flow . . . It is easy to be dead.’¹

While the war continued and its outcome was unknown, the space for mourning and remembrance was limited. Once it was over, the living could mourn the dead openly and name the price that both had paid. Commemoration expressed the relationship between the living and the dead as a ‘sacrifice’, and did so at every level from the intimacy of the home to the abstraction of nation and empire. The exception was Russia where public recognition of the dead of the Great War, as opposed to the Revolution and the civil war, was minimal, though private memories abounded.

The dead thus defined the living. Yet the relationship was three-way, not two-way, since it included the war and whatever it might signify during the remaining lifetimes of the living. Depending on its result (victory or defeat) and also on later events, the war could mean very different things, but it was hard to avoid the question of whether the result justified the suffering. The answers shaped how the living viewed their own war experience as well as how they mourned the dead.

The living operated in another dimension – the future. As after any difficult or traumatic episode the future provided the hope of escaping from the past or at least of integrating it into the business of life and diminishing its power. Resuming work in a world changed by the war, starting a family,

inventing a political or ideological future to justify the past, or resurrecting a pre-war past to cope with the future – these were just some of the ways in which the living addressed both the dead and the war.

The flow of time was central. Even for those afflicted by disability, mental trauma or irreparable personal loss, the war was not static. Its political impact changed in the face of events, such as economic crises, social tensions and the renewed threat of war in the 1930s. The veterans became anxious lest their ‘sacrifice’ be forgotten. It is no accident that the term ‘collective memory’ was coined in the mid 1920s by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who was one of the heirs of Émile Durkheim’s school of sociology, itself decimated by the war. While not a soldier, Halbwachs was deeply affected by the conflict, but in a telling lapse he suppressed it in his studies.² For some the war faded, for others it remained an aching presence, while still others could be ambushed by it when they least expected. As the war grew more distant there was an interplay of memory and forgetting.

How the living confronted the dead, the war and the future was thus shaped by the unfolding timescale of the interwar period and by the circumstances of the countries involved, as well as being infinitely refracted through personal experience. Yet the war bequeathed certain frameworks to the living, and these will provide the headings for the following discussion.

First, without retracing the mourning and memorialisation addressed by previous chapters, we shall consider how the dead defined the living.³ We shall then look at how combat created specific communities of survivors – bereaved mothers and widows and handicapped and able-bodied veterans. A different survival was that of the civilians in the former war zones and occupied regions who had to rebuild their lives and communities, often physically.

The idea of ‘sacrifice’ was not confined to those who risked their lives in the trenches or on the high seas, even if their ‘ultimate sacrifice’ dominated wartime social morality. Industrial and agrarian mobilisation – and the inflation, shortages and protest that accompanied them – created a new society on the home front, with its own vocabulary and its own demands for recognition and longer-term change. ‘Total’ mobilisation meant a rigorous audit of the economies, social structures and politics of the countries involved, one that many failed. Deciding its implications for the future was

a further legacy of the war for the living. Finally, the difference between ‘victory’ and ‘defeat’ was fundamental. Depending on whether the nation had ‘won’ or ‘lost’, wartime sacrifice and its lessons for the future took on very different meanings. The living had to decide not only what the war meant but also when – or even whether – it was over.

The dead and the living

Mortality on the scale of the Great War disturbed the ways in which the living absorbed both death and the dead into the normal cycle of demographic and family renewal. By the early twentieth century, Western societies had gained sufficient control over public health and social conditions that death rates (including those of mothers in childbirth and infants in the first year of life) had declined to the point where most children survived to adulthood and then outlived their parents. Death itself was generally played down, though when by chance people died ‘before their time’ the tragedy seemed all the greater. However, Freud noted in 1915 that:

War is bound to sweep away this conventional treatment of death. Death will no longer be denied, we are forced to believe in it. People really die, and no longer one by one, but many, often tens of thousands in a single day. And . . . ; the accumulation of deaths puts an end to the impression of chance.

Freud drew the (for him) logical conclusion that in order to make life ‘tolerable for us once again’, civilised man must take a ‘backward step’ and give death the key role in defining life that he had ‘so carefully suppressed’.⁴ Whether or not one shares his psychological premises, Freud put his finger on the fact that how they came to terms with the war dead, whose very youth seemed to have inverted the normal order of things, would shape the living across the interwar period and beyond.

The process occurred through what might be thought of as three concentric circles. The innermost was the loss of a loved one, whether family member, friend, lover or spouse, whose absence occasioned sharp and often enduring grief. The second circle was that of mourning, which

made a temporary community of those who had known the dead in order to share grief and offer consolation. In the wake of mass death, mourning became a wider ritual for the collective dead of the war – from the village, neighbourhood or regiment to the nation. The third and broadest circle, commemoration, gave mourning an enduring public form. Potentially, it consecrated the dead with a message as to what their sacrifice (and that of the bereaved) might mean.

The interlocking nature of the three circles helps explain the hold of the dead over the living. It would be wrong to think that even the societies most affected were demographically devastated by the war. Most soldiers came home. Immigration renewed the labour force where (as in France) it was depleted. By varying the age and class of the men they married, women could still find partners and establish families. However, the dead were connected in multiple ways to the worlds from which they came. These worlds consisted not only of their families but also of the schools and workplaces where they had been civilians and of the comrades with whom they had fought. If we add what Jay Winter has called the ‘fictive kinships’ that linked people in mourning who were unrelated to the kinships of real families, we can see how the epicentre of individual grief expands, mourning extends to whole communities and commemoration becomes a national affair.⁵

To this must be added deep shock at the youth of so many of the dead, which created a palpable sense that the future had been amputated. Demographically, the ‘lost generation’ was a myth. Emotionally and even intellectually, it seemed all too real, and explained why the post-war world might not live up to the sacrifice of those who had died for it. The writer and broadcaster, J. B. Priestley, a household name in interwar Britain, reflected in the 1960s that ‘Nobody, nothing will shift me from the belief, which I shall take to the grave, that the generation to which I belong, destroyed between 1914 and 1918, was a great generation, marvellous in its promise.’⁶

Of the three circles, grief is the hardest to analyse because it is the most private. As Joy Damousi has shown in [Chapter 15](#), the strongest evidence comes from the literate middle and upper classes. Nonetheless, there is no reason to suppose that the feelings they recorded were not replicated elsewhere in society. Grown-up children were the hardest to replace within

a lifecycle, which explains why the grief of parents was especially hard to assuage. Lady Violet Cecil, whose son George died aged 18 fighting with the Guards in September 1914, inserted an 'In Memoriam' notice in *The Times* twenty years later: 'I shall remember while the light lasts, and in the darkness I shall not forget.'⁷ Käthe Kollwitz only found comfort when she understood that the bereaved had lost as much as the dead, and changed the project for a statue of her son Peter, killed at the battle of Langemarck in October 1914, into one of herself and her husband grieving as parents.⁸ Although potentially compensated by other relationships, the loss of a lover, husband, sibling or friend could also reshape an entire life. Vera Brittain, who lost both fiancé and brother, is one of the best-known examples (see [Chapter 15](#)).

Collective mourning for the war dead consoled some of the bereaved, though how many we cannot say. The French poet Jane Catulle-Mendès initially found no solace in patriotic platitudes for the loss of her beloved son, Primice, killed in 1917. At the end of a book, published in 1921, she wrote: 'I had the most beautiful idea, the idea of the fatherland / It has killed my son.'⁹ Yet later, through the imagined voice of her son, she accepted his death as a sacrifice to France.¹⁰ Rudyard Kipling, who with his wife Carrie was equally devastated by the disappearance of their son Jack at the battle of Loos in 1915, caught the relief that collective rituals could bring in a poem written for Armistice Day, 1923:

When you come to London stone (Grieving – grieving!) Bow your
head and mourn your own With the others grieving.¹¹

Yet mourning the collective dead went beyond individual bereavement to express a communal sense of loss. It was a powerful popular response, which, in tandem with official policies, forged enduring rituals of commemoration.

This is especially evident in Britain and France. Lloyd George's insistence that the dead should be placed at the heart of the victory parade in July 1919 with a temporary cenotaph (empty tomb) so caught the public imagination that it was turned into a permanent monument by its architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens, who later recalled:

The plain fact emerged . . . that the Cenotaph was what the people wanted . . . It was a mass feeling too deep to express itself more fitly than by the piles of good fresh flowers which loving hands placed at the Cenotaph day by day. Thus it was decided by the human sentiment of millions that the Cenotaph should be as it now is.¹²

The inauguration of the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in both countries the following year (in Westminster Abbey in London, under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris) also won public endorsement. Together with the two-minute silence, they formed an Armistice Day ritual that was as much secular as religious and which placed the sacrifice of the dead at the heart of victory and the national memory of the war.

The same process occurred across the British and French empires and (with variations) in other societies that could claim ‘victor’ status. Defeat, on the other hand, brought dissent and often conflict over what the war had meant so that national commemoration was difficult if not impossible – a point to which we shall return. Yet the need for collective mourning was equally strong in all the societies that had gone through the war and it occurred in the diverse settings where the dead had lived, even (with limits) in Russia.¹³ As Bruce Scates and Rebecca Wheatley show in [Chapter 21](#), memorials sprang up across the world in a bewildering variety of styles that reflected the communities from which the dead had come. They had their counterpart in the military cemeteries and battlefield monuments that replaced the chaos of war along the former fronts. They were further refracted through memorials in schools, churches and workplaces, so that each soldier might be commemorated at a number of sites. A decade of memorialisation created a geography of remembrance that inserted the dead into the landscape of the living and choreographed the homage paid to them – from annual ceremonies at home to the battlefield pilgrimages which, by the late 1920s, drew tens of thousands, especially to the Western Front.

Despite these prodigious efforts to lay them to rest, the dead still troubled the living. In most religious cultures, if not at some more basic level, the recovery and disposal of the body (by burial or burning) is intrinsic to mourning. Yet modern firepower meant that often not even the bodies survived, and this was even more the case with death at sea. During the war, the missing were (like Kipling’s son Jack) those whose fate was unknown.

After the war they gradually became the dead with no known remains. The power of the Unknown Soldier (adopted by all the countries that had taken part in the war) as well as of the Cenotaph came in part from their ability to fill this absence symbolically. Many Europeans (who bore the brunt of the military losses) drew on deep religious reserves to cope with individual bereavement and communal mourning, but there was no revival of formal religion in the interwar years. Perhaps for that reason, and also because mass death raised feelings of guilt in civilians who had supported the war and in soldiers who had survived it, the dead continued to haunt the living, blurring the line between life and death.

This was evident in the vogue for spiritualism, famously promoted by Arthur Conan Doyle (who lost a son in the war), which women practised in particular and which, on one reckoning, had a quarter of a million followers in Britain by the mid 1930s.¹⁴ It was also present in the fidelity of veterans to dead comrades and may have had something to do with the post-war upsurge in their memoir literature. Roland Dorgelès ended one of the most famous French war novels, *Les croix de bois* (1919), by imagining the war dead arising from under their fragile ‘wooden crosses’ and ‘roaming . . . through the eternal night looking for the ungrateful living who have forgotten you already’.¹⁵ On 12 July 1936, thousands of French and German former soldiers met at the ossuary of Verdun, filled with fragments of bodies retrieved from the battlefield, where, in the presence of the dead and swept by the searchlight from the ossuary’s tower, they swore an oath to uphold peace.¹⁶ The dead were an unbidden presence, but one the living could address in many ways.

Communities of sacrifice

Two groups in particular spoke for the dead – bereaved women and veterans – representing the home and the fighting fronts respectively. French veterans staked their claim when they vetoed a plan to move Armistice Day to the nearest Sunday on economic grounds and took the lead in the local ceremonies. British veterans (who failed to stop the same thing happening) proved to be less prominent than women in the rituals of remembrance. The poppy campaign, for example, was a largely female endeavour organised by the Women’s Section of the British Legion.¹⁷ In Italy, bereaved mothers

played a key role, including designating the body of the Unknown Soldier (a choice made by the military in France and Britain).¹⁸ But the claims of both groups hinted at a deeper process whereby those most affected by the war, whether women or men, formed communities of survivors in order to find a place in post-war society and integrate wartime sacrifice into the world of the living.

Survival meant seeking help with the material hardship left by the war – the death of a breadwinner for the widow, broken health or physical disability for the handicapped, the loss of a job or career advancement for the able-bodied veteran. It also meant joining with those who had undergone the same experience. This combination of lobbying and sociability produced a set of identities that kept the war alive down to 1939. None of the identities was exclusive. People who were widows, bereaved mothers and veterans (even when disabled) had other roles. There was always a distinction between the broader identities and the activists or professionals who spoke for them. Yet the communities of survivors were structured enough to produce numerous, often influential, organisations that fought for their causes and addressed their needs.

Mothers bereft of their sons made little claim on the state because their loss did not usually deprive them of material (as opposed to moral) support. Bolstered especially in Catholic countries by the Marian tradition, their public role was diffuse but secure. This was not the case with widows. Their numbers (600,000 in France, over 500,000 in Germany, and 200,000 each in Italy and Britain) posed the question of the state's obligation to the victims of the war. Yet their status was always open to revision, including remarriage.¹⁹ Since wartime states had granted separation allowances to soldiers' wives, the same logic suggested that war widows should receive pensions. Yet these might be conceded belatedly (as in Germany), and like the allowances, the pension was less than a living wage.²⁰ In order to support their family, many widows faced the same need to work as women during the war, though the return of the men now made this harder.

Women protested individually and organisations spoke up on their behalf. The League of Loyal Women in South Australia believed that 'war widows are among the dependents who require special consideration'. The president of the Returned Soldiers' Association in Melbourne stated in 1923 that in the 'early days of the war any man who said that the widows of deceased

soldiers would someday be unable to secure medical treatment would have stood in danger of lynching'.²¹ Yet war widows had to stay faithful to their husband's memory and combine devotion to their orphaned children with supplementing a meagre pension. They were assigned a subordinate status in the cult of the war dead, though in reality they bore much of the burden of family survival after wartime bereavement. Their right to a pension was subject to moral surveillance, with sexual liaisons, illegitimate children and even remarriage seen as betrayal. Raymond Radiguet's 1923 novel about the unrepentant wartime love affair of a youth and the wife of a soldier, *Le diable au corps* ('The Devil in the Flesh'), scandalised contemporaries precisely because it showed how women's sexuality could subvert male sacrifice. Shadowed by this suspicion, facing material difficulties, but with their lives often still ahead of them, war widows were the least cohesive and visible of the communities of wartime sacrifice.

The opposite was true of veterans, given the scale of military service even in countries like Australia and Ireland that refused conscription. While ex-servicemen's associations were not new, their power and prominence were. Disabled veterans began to organise while the war was still in progress. Worldwide there were some 8 million of them, with 750,000 in Britain and one and a half million in Germany.²² They ranged from amputees and the blind to those with stomach wounds and gas-damaged lungs, plus chronic maladies. Facing a double marginalisation – from the army to which they could not go back and from a civilian life to which it was hard to return – their degree of handicap usually set their level of pension. Perhaps the most isolated were those whose faces had been destroyed. But every disability was a daily reminder of the war. Ironically, this was truest of all for those who seemed intact but whom the war still held in the grip of 'shell shock'.²³

The disabled posed even more starkly than war widows the question of how the nation discharged its responsibility to those who had suffered on its behalf. The answers showed the importance not only of victory or defeat and of prevailing civic and political cultures but also of the capacity of the disabled to assume their own future. Crucially, this meant turning what had traditionally been seen as charity into a right. But the cost was considerable. War pensions, including those of widows, took 6 per cent of the British

budget by the early 1930s and 20 per cent in Germany.²⁴ Nor was material support necessarily the same thing as moral recognition.

At one end of the spectrum, the Russian handicapped received neither public acknowledgement nor state support since the Bolsheviks would only grant pensions to Red Army invalids. At the other end, British employers were not obliged to take on the handicapped (though they were encouraged to do so) and pensions remained well below wages for the able-bodied. Yet if philanthropy, including the poppy drive (Britain's biggest charity between the wars), failed to make good the difference, it did help reintegrate the disabled into the nation by recognising their contribution to victory. Weimar Germany placed the disabled veteran at the heart of its attempt to rebuild the nation through progressive social policies and the best pensions and sheltered job provision in Europe. But in a country wracked first by defeat and then by financial upheaval, the pensions of the war disabled turned into a bitter political wrangle between left and right.²⁵ French disabled veterans, by contrast, built a powerful movement framed by the Republican ethos of citizenship that demanded, and received, relatively generous treatment as a right, and in the administration of which the disabled themselves took part through the Office of the War Handicapped.

The general veterans' movements emerged in response to demobilisation and the difficult return to a peacetime economy. Although the position varied from country to country, there were some common tendencies. While supporting their disabled colleagues, their principal demands were access to jobs and unemployment relief. The topography of the movements was as varied as the beliefs and backgrounds of those who composed them. They ranged politically from right to left, while socially they reflected both the civilian worlds from which the soldiers came (including different professions) and also the military contexts in which they had served (with associations by rank and regiment). Yet, with few exceptions, the organisations that prevailed were those that overrode this complexity (without effacing it) and incorporated all former soldiers on a geographical basis without distinction of grade. In effect, they reframed a wartime identity in terms of an idealised and egalitarian comradeship and inserted it into the landscape of peacetime.

In so doing, they reflected the differences of civic culture and national circumstances already referred to. In 1921, the British Legion, under the

patronage of the former Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig , established its supremacy on a non-political basis. Membership peaked at 400,000 in 1938, representing 20 per cent of surviving veterans. While drawing attention to the inadequacy of state provision for returned servicemen, the British Legion mainly addressed the shortfall by presiding over the charitable mobilisation in recognition of the soldiers' sacrifice.²⁶ The American Legion, founded by General Pershing to contain the soldiers' anger at the slow pace of demobilisation, was overtly patriotic. Yet despite (or perhaps because of) this, the Legion campaigned for a soldier's 'bonus', or compensation for lost civilian pay. This reflected the lack of a national military service tradition in the USA, but it was one of the most radical veterans' demands made anywhere. Impossible to realise in the post-war economic slump, it was converted into a life insurance policy payable in the future. When at the height of the Depression in 1932 the veterans marched on Washington to demand their 'bonus', they were bloodily dispersed. But the precedent gave rise to the generous G.I. Bill of the Second World War.

Bread-and-butter issues were no less important for the prevailing German veterans' bodies, the nationalist Stahlhelm (steel helmets) and the centre-left Reichsbanner Schwartz-Rot-Gold (named after the Republican colours of Weimar Germany). However, dissent over defeat and the legacy of the war kept the two bodies openly antagonistic to each other. In France, two organisations also prevailed over a plethora of more specific bodies, the centre-right Union Nationale des Combattants (UNC) and the centre-left Union Fédérale (UF). However, the overriding ethos of the Republican citizen-soldier, which had been so important for the disabled, proved equally crucial here. Despite some tensions over politics (notably during the Depression in the 1930s), the two bodies collaborated on the vital business of veterans' benefits, establishing a joint National Confederation that in 1930 secured a pension for *all* veterans from the age of 50, with an increase at 55.²⁷

The French veterans' achievement was remarkable. By the end of the 1920s, they were the largest civic movement in the country with nearly 3.5 million members, or one in two veterans and one in four adult males. The politics and the social and regional basis of the UNC and UF remained distinct. But this was trumped by a common belief that veterans alone had

the right to bear witness to the war and that their sacrifice had, like the war itself, been somehow beyond politics.

Was this true more generally? The veterans' sacrifice was a moral capital that various political forces tried to exploit. Both fascism and National Socialism courted the veterans and invoked the myth of the 'front soldier' to justify the reorganisation of society under a war-hardened elite. Veterans certainly played a role in the Central European counter-revolution in 1919–21 and also contributed to fascist paramilitary violence throughout the interwar period. Some also gravitated to communism. But these were minorities. More typically, veterans used their moral capital to preach their own message of reconciliation with former enemies, seen increasingly as potential comrades. The UNC joined the UF in 1929 in a plan to organise peace in the name of 'our noble war dead who gave their lives to end all war'.²⁸ While the Stahlhelm never took this route, the Reichsbanner, which remained the larger organisation, did. It was critical of the Treaty of Versailles but agreed that Great War veterans should draw a lesson of peace from their own past. On this evidence, German veterans were divided, but the majority were neither militarist nor revanchist.

The conversion of the veterans' sacrifice into a distinctive message about the war and the future – and hence the dead – is clearest of all internationally. By the mid 1920s, an overarching confederation, the CIAMAC, had emerged at the League of Nations in Geneva (just as so often happened at the national level), and it won the support of the major veterans' organisations on the centre-left across Europe. A more conservative body, the FIDAC, began life by only coordinating veterans from the Allied states.²⁹ But it too eventually met with the former enemy. Both bodies pursued the task of securing veterans' welfare as a matter of right. This was especially the case for the CIAMAC, which was influenced by the leaders of the French UF, including René Cassin, an international lawyer who had been disabled with a stomach wound in 1914. But in addition to tackling material questions (including technical matters such as prosthetics), both groups also drew on the veterans' own sense of community to promote peace between former enemies and to try and outlaw war. Without this, veterans' welfare would count for little.

Reconstructing the war zones

A different kind of survival was that of the regions which had been occupied or fought over during the war. The Second World War disrupted communities and destroyed towns and cities so extensively that rebuilding both was one of the most visible means of coming to terms with the conflict in a process that lasted decades. The destruction in the First World War was more narrowly concentrated and there was no icon of civilian victimhood equivalent to Coventry, Dresden or Hiroshima. Yet in the areas concerned, reconstruction dominated how the living dealt with the war.

Occupation coincided with the overall experience of the conflict only in Belgium and Serbia, and even there a national army had remained in the field. The German atrocities during the invasion of 1914 were etched into the memory of the Belgian localities concerned and found expression in monuments and ceremonies.³⁰ But in both Belgium and Serbia, the army embodied eventual national liberation, and so the difficult post-war reconstruction of both countries (including the return of substantial numbers of refugees) took place without any integrating collective memory of wartime civilian experience. In Poland and the Baltic states, repairing the destruction occasioned by the wartime fighting (about which we know all too little), and coming to terms with enemy occupation, were both subsumed into the post-war conflicts that gave birth to the new nation-states. It was these rather than the war that provided them with their founding legitimacy.³¹ German-occupied north-eastern France was doubly marginalised in national memory because it comprised only one segment of the country and had been liberated by the army, confirming the sacrifice of the soldiers. Unlike in the Second World War, therefore, occupation did not supply a major framework of understanding for coming to terms with the war.

This was not the case, however, with the destruction on the former Western Front. This had occurred mainly on French territory and shocked contemporaries deeply, the more so because it resulted not only from industrialised firepower but also from the deliberate and widespread destruction deployed by the German army as it withdrew to the Siegfried Line in 1917 and then retreated at the end of the war. The entire zone was in effect a mass cemetery and also provided the ruins that had come to

symbolise the war for international opinion – from the shattered medieval Cloth Hall at Ypres (in Belgium) to the destruction of Reims Cathedral and the pulverised ruins of many French villages and towns. In places, the front was a lunar landscape so bereft of trees that visitors were struck by the eerie silence – until they realised there was no birdsong. Half the territory where the war had been fought needed some remedial activity, with nearly a quarter requiring major reconstruction and a small percentage was so contaminated that it was beyond use.³² French insistence that the Germans cover the full cost of reinstating what had been one of the richest agricultural and industrial parts of the country, and compensate the civilian victims, stemmed from this unprecedented level of human destruction.

A million and a half refugees had fled what became occupied France, and few civilians were left on either side of the former front. Yet while families clamoured to return (and some did so illegally) the authorities tried to keep them away for two years as a mixed workforce of German prisoners, Chinese labourers and Polish immigrants cleared the debris and filled in the trenches, often at the cost of their own lives. By 1921, however, the infrastructure had been sufficiently restored that the real work of rebuilding could begin. The government established a ‘charter’ of indemnity for war damage (to be funded by German reparations) and for over a decade communities that had re-established themselves in purpose-built huts, tents and even cellars, gradually moved back into rebuilt farms and houses.

Were they restoring the past or constructing something new?

Superficially, the eclectic mix of traditional styles (laced with Art Deco experimentation in towns like Saint-Quentin and Reims) suggests a strong desire to rebuild the pre-war world. Yet closer observation indicates discreet modernisation, with a law of 1919 imposing the latest town planning (wider streets, zoned industrial areas), and every opportunity was taken to update the industrial infrastructure, notably in the coalfields. Some parts of the north-east surged past pre-war levels of productivity and population, while other areas never fully recovered from the war. Nonetheless, reconstructing the north-east helped make French levels of economic growth the highest in Europe in the later 1920s. Moreover, the symbolic importance of regenerating the site of such destruction attracted international support, especially from American philanthropy. Anne Morgan, daughter of the banker J. P. Morgan, channelled aid to the rebuilding the department of the

Aisne, where the Carnegie Foundation also financed the reconstruction of the destroyed village of Fargniers as a model settlement, complete with a library. Despite the isolationist turn of public opinion in the United States after the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles, American capital (and diplomacy) remained fully engaged in the recovery of France and Europe.

Inevitably, there was friction between the need to remember and the desire to rebuild. After the war it was proposed to leave the shell of Reims Cathedral as an accusatory monument to German 'barbarism'. Early visitors to Ypres urged the same solution for the Cloth Hall, which symbolised the salient for three-quarters of a million British and Dominion troops who had fought there. In the end, both were rebuilt. In fact, the military monuments and cemeteries were themselves part of the work of reconstruction, and one of the ways in which memory and regeneration were reconciled. In 1927 the French Minister of Public Works, André Tardieu, declared a little prematurely that reconstruction was complete. But a decade after the war, the landscape had been transformed, a point not lost on 'pilgrims', including veterans. For the Bickersteth family in 1931, on their third visit from England to the grave of their son and brother, Morris, on the Somme, it seemed part of the healing.³³

The audit of war

The Great War could only be pursued to its conclusion because civil society and the state mobilised their resources to supply the arms, food and psychological support without which the soldiers could never have kept fighting. The home front was a parallel universe connected to the soldiers' world but one with its own beliefs and structures, which also helped distinguish it from pre-war society. Class relations were redefined, as some groups lost out to others whose bargaining power was strengthened, such as munitions workers and industrialists. Gender was reordered in the ways discussed earlier in this volume as women took on previously masculine forms of work while they continued to sustain the family.

A distinctive morality expressed relations on the home front. It drew on the sense of a national or imperial community forged in 1914 and pivoted on the personal sacrifice of the soldier. But it also served to condemn the groups and behaviour that allegedly transgressed the common ideal: for

example, women in the countryside, whose men risked death at the front, vilified male workers mobilised to the war factories as ‘shirkers’ (for which there was a word in every language).³⁴ Yet workers denounced the ‘profiteer’ (often the industrialist) whose wealth contrasted with harsh conditions in munitions production. Consumers blamed ‘hoarders’ and ‘speculators’ (including peasants) for soaring prices. Where nationality was an issue (Ireland, Austria-Hungary), ethnic tensions compounded those of class with other accusations of exploitation and betrayal.

All this suggests a searching audit of the economic and social capacities of the nations and empires involved. The ultimate responsibility for resolving the conflicts and ensuring the minimum consensus needed to pursue the war lay with the state, which in all cases had assumed unprecedented powers of intervention. As conditions deteriorated in the second half of the war, change, reform and even revolution (as the Tsar rejected any idea of broadening the government for a more effective war effort) entered the language of mobilisation. Victory or peace remained the overriding concern, but the price of achieving them seemed to imply political changes that different groups projected onto the post-war world as additional goals for the war itself. Whether it was the British labour movement demanding the ‘conscription of capital’ as well as of men, the German opposition’s vision of a war to democratise the fatherland as well as to defend it, or more radical ideas of working-class self-government, such as those that emerged from the February Revolution in Russia, the war itself had become a force for change.

Consequently, the year of peacemaking and demobilisation (discussed by Bruno Cabanes in Volume I of this History) saw the return not just of the soldiers but also (metaphorically at least) of the civilians, who had to demobilise the home front and translate its tensions and visions into the post-war world. Of course, the war had actually finished a year earlier in Russia, so that much of Eastern Europe slid into revolution, ethnic conflict and civil war as the Great War reached its endgame on the other fronts. By the time the German soldiers marched home and the Allied leaders opened the Paris Peace Conference in January 1919, two months before Mussolini founded the fascist movement in Milan, the war had metamorphosed into politics and transformed the ideological horizons of the post-war world.

This explains a fundamental feature of the immediate post-war period. Sheer exhaustion and the desire of soldiers and civilians alike for peace had determined which societies, their military efforts faltering, failed the audit of war. But even the 'victorious' states signed the various armistices with palpable relief. The urge to go home was overwhelming. German soldiers were welcomed by towns and villages relieved to have them back. Allied soldiers grew restive at delays in demobilisation imposed by the protracted peace process. Reform and revolution of whatever kind were not a cause but a *consequence* of the ending of the war, which had been driven above all by the imperatives of victory and peace.

Yet once the end came, the charge of energy that had mobilised the home fronts switched to reconstructing the post-war world, often in the face of dislocation and the demise of pre-war states and regimes. Fatigue, indifference and disillusionment coexisted with powerful surges of millenarian belief, whether in class equality, as promised by the Bolsheviks, the new democracy preached by Woodrow Wilson, or radical nationalism. Gabriele D'Annunzio embodied the latter when he seized the Adriatic town of Fiume for Italy in September 1919 with a group of legionaries. So did the *Freikorps* fighting for the counter-revolution in Central Europe.³⁵ Reform plans abounded as societies struggled to implement (or contain) the forces unleashed by wartime mobilisation in the transition to the post-war world.

In these ways, the home front remained a tangible reference point for the living. The Bolshevik Revolution and the Russian civil war may have been a chaotic descent into Hobbesian violence with its own internal dynamic, but their class antagonisms owed much to the protest movements that had emerged in Moscow, Petrograd and elsewhere in 1916–17 amid the denunciation of wartime society. Conversely, the forces of order that struggled to contain the working-class radicalism unfurling across Europe and North America in 1919–20 were haunted by a mythic Bolshevik conspiracy (replete with Moscow gold and tinged with anti-Semitism) that added another enemy to that of wartime. French right-wing opinion superimposed the Bolshevik on the *Boche*, and a poster published by a business group for the November 1919 election pictured the Russian revolutionary as a cut-throat, just like earlier depictions of the Hun. The nascent fascist squads that helped break the Italian factory occupations in

September 1920 attacked the Socialists as the ‘enemy within’, aided and abetted by Moscow, as Mussolini had done during the war.

In Central Europe and Italy, the aura of wartime elite forces, such as the German storm troopers and Italian *Arditi*, inspired the counter-revolution. But in France and Britain, it was the home front that informed the reaction to major strike waves in 1920 and 1921, which were seen as an attack on the nation. In both countries, students and middle-class men formed ‘civic unions’ to break the strikes and maintain essential activities, while in France the women’s Red Cross societies made their services available in what Prime Minister Alexandre Millerand called ‘a civic Battle of the Marne’. The morality of wartime was omnipresent. Peasants from one French village, for instance, opposed a national rail strike because the workers were ‘so well housed and paid and . . . were exempt during the war from the suffering that we peasants endured in the trenches, let alone the cruel anxieties of our families’.³⁶ The ‘shirkers’, in other words, were holding the nation to ransom.

The social relations of sacrifice on the home front echoed across the 1920s, not least because the wartime inflation that so disturbed the relationship between different groups continued to foster class hostility (outside Russia) down to the Depression. Conservatives, moreover, saw communism less as the politics of class within the nation than as a perpetual reminder of the war – an enemy that threatened the nation from without.

Nor were they alone in this. The Third (Communist) International saw capitalist nations as enemies in the only war that counted – that between classes. Antonio Gramsci, the communist leader who languished in Mussolini’s gaols, famously analysed class politics as either a ‘war of movement’ or a ‘war of position’. The home front had become the battleground.

Yet within this overarching ideological conflict, the living had to restore the wealth and productive capacity they had lost to the war. Here too the home front was vital. Nations came to understand themselves more clearly through the war in societal as well as political terms. The economic mobilisation had encouraged trade unions, business organisations and consumer groups to defend their members’ interests while contributing to the common effort.³⁷ Quite apart from revolutionary situations, economic justice and social entitlement proved crucial issues in the transition to

peace. In Britain, France and Germany, various constituencies demanded sweeping reforms as the price of wartime sacrifices on the home front as well as in recompense for the soldiers, who joined in the process as they reassumed their civilian lives. Inevitably, demobilisation placed change on the agenda, and, just as inevitably, change was resisted in the name of a return to pre-war certainties. While the process played out differently in cities such as Munich and Manchester, the one convulsed by revolution, the other marked by municipal reformism with a backdrop of militant protest, the 'language of reciprocity' in both cases drove a belief that the post-war settlement must reflect the social obligations of wartime.³⁸

The results were mixed. Plans such as those advanced by the British and French labour movements for the nationalisation of vital industries in the common interest (let alone the more sweeping industrial democracy advocated by many German workers' and soldiers' councils) stood little chance of realisation in the face of strenuous opposition by industrialists, investors and a swelling middle-and lower-middle-class reaction to the wartime strength of labour. A short economic recession in the early 1920s (which German inflationary politics avoided but which became chronic in Britain) deprived workers of much of their bargaining power. As the tide of protest ebbed, it revealed the contours of a post-war society that had changed less than at first seemed likely, outside the implosion of tsarist Russia.

But the legacy of wartime mobilisation meant the pre-war world could not be restored. Contemplating Britain in 1922, the commentator Charles Masterman remarked: 'The shock has been severe . . . but the structure endures', yet he also noted that, in spite of the slump: 'Intelligent and vigorous young men are [asking]: "What did you fight the war for? For whose benefit has victory been obtained?" . . . Accompanying this distinctive criticism of the present social order there is also a vision of "better things".'³⁹

This judgement on Britain applies more widely. Some social reforms were achieved, notably the eight-hour day in response to the fatigue and overwork of the war years. The state remained more interventionist in the social and industrial field, something that economic liberals blamed on the war. As Gerald Feldman and Charles Maier showed in an older vein of social history, the reordering of 'bourgeois Europe' in the 1920s entailed a

‘corporatism’, or structured relationship between the interests of capital, labour and the state, that originated in the mobilisation of wartime economies and was adapted to the needs of post-war recovery and growth.⁴⁰

This was nowhere more evident than in Germany where, in November 1918, business and labour leaders forged an agreement on wages and conditions, including mutual recognition of each other’s organisations, which had the support of both the army and the Socialist-led government.

The so-called *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, or ‘work society’, gave the nascent Weimar Republic vital social ballast during its turbulent early years. As was the case more generally in the post-war democracies, the price of stabilisation was negotiated change, and much of the negotiation harked back to the war.

Gender was no less important than class in the transition of the home front to peacetime. Recent historiography has, with good reason, stressed the conservative implications for women. We have already seen the role they played in mourning and in dealing with the cost of the war to individual families. As returning soldiers and discharged male war workers sought to assert themselves in shaping the post-war world, it was perhaps inevitable that they should cast their efforts into even sharper relief by reaffirming traditional views on women. True, women received the vote in many countries (Britain, Germany, the USA), and often with reference to their wartime service. But this was usually part of a broader suffrage reform that addressed the unanswerable entitlement of disenfranchised men who had fought in the war. In France, where all men had the vote, women remained without it.

Furthermore, the demographic cost of the war (even if not a ‘lost generation’) made maternity and the birth rate matters of public concern, especially in France, whose population was stagnant. Women’s sexuality was more tightly controlled, as legislation in the early 1920s made contraception more difficult and increased penalties for abortion. Allowances for large families became a significant form of welfare payment. In other countries men invoked their war service to defend gendered pay differentials as a ‘family wage’. In Russia alone were the norms of ‘bourgeois’ family life briefly contested by radical experiments in the communal raising of children. The Depression and the threat of a new

war in the 1930s only reinforced the family-centred view of women's roles, including in Stalin's Russia.

Yet it seems hard to believe that the changed roles and public endorsement of women in the war should have left no trace. Simone de Beauvoir recalled a post-war meeting addressed by Robert Garric, a charismatic Catholic who had discovered class solidarity in the trenches, as being decisive in her political education and determination to pursue the path of independence. Not everyone was Simone de Beauvoir, though Vera Brittain channelled her grief into activism on behalf of peace and the League of Nations.⁴¹ But alternative models of womanhood (the bachelor girl, the blue-stocking) marked the 1920s, as did styles derived from wartime (shorter skirts, bobbed hair) and ideals of sexual and personal freedom. Women resisted official blandishments (as strong in fascist Italy and Nazi Germany as in Republican France) by maintaining the trend to smaller families. Perhaps the real point is that the war produced greater diversity in women's roles and so turned gender into one of the main fields in which the living contested what the post-war order meant.⁴²

Cultures of defeat, cultures of victory

Much of how the living addressed the war was common to all the belligerent states that had taken part in it. The way it turned out, however, divided them deeply. To see the war crowned with victory or vitiated by defeat meant radically different frameworks for coming to terms with it. The victory parades of 1919 were an Allied affair. So too was the creation of a national ritual that acknowledged the cost of the war but presented it as the price for liberating the fatherland (France), saving 'civilisation' (the British Empire) or achieving or securing national independence (Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia). Quite different was the plight of the former Central Powers. Austria and Turkey had painfully to construct smaller nation-states from the implosion of multi-ethnic empires, while Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria all lost territory and people. Division over the meaning of the war in Germany prevented the building of a monument that could rally the nation. Only in 1931 was the tomb of an Unknown Soldier created in the Neue Wache guardhouse in Berlin – too late to play the required role even had this been possible.⁴³ Hungary, which lost large

minorities to surrounding states (especially Romania) by the Treaty of Trianon, did experience a consensus but it was one of national mourning.

Had the military verdict had the hard-edged permanence of a quarter of a century later, the defeated might have accepted it more easily, even internalised it. But this was not so. While the German army could not win in November 1918, neither had it demonstrably been defeated, whatever projections either side might make. The sheer cost of overcoming the stalemate had ended the war short of a decisive outcome. For the Germans (and not just the army), defeat seemed less total than the Allies stated. For the Allies, the fact that victory could not be proclaimed in the enemy capital left a nagging fear that it was correspondingly insecure, which made its symbolic imposition on the enemy all the more important.

Wolfgang Schivelbusch has proposed the idea of a 'culture of defeat' in order to explain how the Germans understood the war in retrospect.⁴⁴ In reality, the Armistice deprived Germany of the means of further resistance. But many Germans felt that a suspension of hostilities at least entitled them to participate in the peace process, which the Allies refused. They also believed the army to be unvanquished. The new Socialist President, Friedrich Ebert, told returning troops on 10 December 1918 that: 'No enemy has defeated you. Only when the enemy's superiority in numbers and resources became suffocating did you relinquish the fight.'⁴⁵ This made the peace treaty not only a *Diktat* but also harsh and unfair. To injustice was added enemy treachery. The 'hunger blockade' was felt to be illegal (see Volume II of this History) and Allied propaganda directed at the home front was seen in the same way.

All this was contrasted with a chivalrous Germany. Allied charges of German atrocity and misconduct (which strongly influenced the Peace Conference) were repudiated. In 1927, Field Marshal Hindenburg, who was then President of the Republic, inaugurated a war memorial built on the site of the 1914 victory over the Russians at Tannenberg in East Prussia in the form of a Teutonic Knights' castle, with twenty unknown soldiers, and he used the occasion to declare that the German army had fought 'with clean hands' for an honourable cause. Unjustly defeated Germany bathed in nostalgia for a golden past, variously identified with Bismarck's Germany, the 1813 war of 'national liberation' against Napoleon, or an older medieval and *völkisch* dreamtime, which could all too easily become a vision of

future redemption. It was but a step for the military (including Hindenburg) to mythologise the home front as the ‘enemy within’ that had ‘stabbed’ the army in the back.

It might be asked whether a ‘culture of victory’ characterised some or all of the Allied countries. The interAllied rituals suggest this. They amounted to a transnational process of reconciling a positive outcome to the war with the human price paid, often with the main Allied military and naval leaders in attendance. In the case of France, the ‘culture of victory’ was tempered by the compromises of coalition diplomacy and a concern that in the face of a Germany unchanged behind the facade of democracy, what had been won at such cost on the battlefield might yet be lost in the politics of peace. This fear reached its paroxysm in the Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr in January 1923 in an effort to prevent Germany renegeing on reparations. In other words, the enemy remained the enemy, just as it did in the German ‘culture of defeat’. There was also an ‘enemy within’, in the form not only of the small Communist Party, which declared its solidarity with the German proletariat during the occupation of the Ruhr, but also the Socialist Party and moderate trade union movement, which had rejected the Treaty of Versailles as punitive.

Neither form of ‘culture’ represented the totality of opinions on the war in the societies concerned. Each was strongest on the political right (and in the German case in the army) but both nonetheless had a broader power of attraction that made them a significant framework for understanding the war. The Franco-Belgian ‘invasion’ of the Ruhr recreated a war atmosphere in Germany, triggering an outpouring of nationalist propaganda that castigated the French for their ‘barbarism’ in using West African soldiers (and paralleling Allied atrocity accusations in 1914). While we have more to discover about the ‘culture of victory’ in various countries, it is clear that in Czechoslovakia it shaped official mythology and popular views about the Great War as a crusade for the ‘democracy of humanity’ that had resulted in national independence – with the Sudeten Germans a dissenting minority.⁴⁶

Italy and Yugoslavia might be considered hybrid cases. In the first, the inability of the liberal state to derive a credible culture of victory from the outcome achieved opened the way to fascism, which took the war to be a quasi-defeat that necessitated both a revanchist foreign policy and the overthrow of the parliamentary regime. Interwar Yugoslavia faced the

problem of integrating Croats who had been defeated in the Austro-Hungarian army (and who had their own vision of a devolved South Slav state within the Habsburg realm) into a triumphant Serbian ‘culture of victory’, replete with the Allied rituals. Russia, of course, occupied a separate zone in which a pacifist internationalist culture repudiated the idea that 10 million dead had any meaning but the need to overthrow ‘imperialism’.⁴⁷

Ten years after the outbreak of war in 1914, Europe still seemed mired in the hostilities and controversies bequeathed by the conflict. But in the second half of the 1920s there occurred a halting but unmistakable process of ‘cultural demobilisation’ by which the reciprocal antagonisms were converted into a shared repudiation of war itself, and wartime mentalities were at last dismantled in favour of collaboration and even a measure of reconciliation.⁴⁸ The kernel of the process was the need to end the occupation of the Ruhr and restabilise the German economy. But this broadened into Germany’s acceptance of its new frontiers in the west by the Locarno Treaties of 1925 and its rehabilitation as a diplomatic partner when it entered the League of Nations in 1926. The French and German foreign ministers, Aristide Briand and Gustav Stresemann, were the architects of the process, and the British Foreign Minister, Austen Chamberlain, closely supported them.

Neither Briand, who had been Prime Minister at the time of Verdun, nor Stresemann, who was a conservative nationalist during the war, was a woolly idealist. Each remained a hard-headed pragmatist concerned with national security and (in Stresemann’s case) the revision of the Treaty of Versailles, especially with regard to Germany’s so-called ‘war guilt’. Both also faced strong criticism from those who continued to embrace the cultures of defeat and victory. But their ascendancy over their respective country’s foreign policy in the second half of the 1920s is only explicable by their construction of a political future in which a significant number of the living could at last hope to resolve the meaning of the war. Both men insisted that the war had been a catastrophe for Europe and that whatever their differences in the future, France and Germany should never fight each other again. Briand welcomed the German delegation to the League of Nations at Geneva with words that were flashed around the world by the

wire services and which stated that the war – all such war – was finally over.

Is it not a moving spectacle . . . that barely a few years after the most frightful war that has ever convulsed the world, when the battlefields are still almost damp with blood . . . the same peoples which clashed so roughly meet in this peaceful assembly and affirm mutually their common desire to collaborate in the work of universal peace? . . .

Messieurs, peace for France and Germany means that the series of painful and bloody encounters that has stained every page of history is over, over too, are the long veils of mourning for sufferings that will never ease. No more wars, no more brutal and bloody solutions to our differences! . . . Away with rifles, machine-guns, cannon! Make way for conciliation, for arbitration, for peace!⁴⁹

The ‘cultural demobilisation’ of the second half of the 1920s was supported by international contacts between numerous groups and interest organisations, not just veterans but also Catholics, Socialists, intellectuals, trade unionists, industrialists and bankers. The League of Nations, which was mainly a European creation (the USA having withdrawn when it rejected the Treaty of Versailles), became its hub. It provided the basis for Briand’s 1929 proposal (with Stresemann’s support) for a ‘European Union’. Of course, in the long run the process failed, unable to deal with either the financial crash or the rise of the Nazis to power. But it was the strength of the hopes invested in it that explains the increasingly desperate attempts to avoid – or to confront only as a last resort – the resumption of war, whose spectre the living had not really managed to dispel any more than they had that of the dead.

However hard, counting the cost of the Great War was unavoidable whether the measure was personal grief or mass death on a scale that implied a staggering capacity for human self-destruction. Reckoning the outcome, however, was a different matter, because the standpoint was necessarily subjective and also because the war set in train far more than it could resolve.

Few would have disagreed that the world was more uncertain than before. Was it also more violent? In many ways this seems equally obvious. The living certainly worried about the effects of mass killing on men who would return to civilian life. But the evidence is less clear-cut. George Mosse raised the issue as a matter of historical interpretation twenty-five years ago, when he argued that the war had brutalised German politics, with more direct political violence after 1918, less state willingness to deal with it and a dehumanised stereotyping of enemies.⁵⁰ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker have underlined the ‘messianic expectations’ generated by the Great War and the ways in which these fed interwar political brutality and the even greater violence of the Second World War.⁵¹

Yet other historians have pointed to the relative ease with which soldiers returned to normal life, prompting the sobering thought that, when sanctioned by the state and apparently required by the survival of the nation (or other group), humans can engage in mass slaughter with good conscience and no disintegration of their personality.⁵² Research on psychological trauma and also domestic violence after the war may qualify this view. But all that we have seen about the nature of collective mourning and the turn against war in Europe from the mid 1920s (a reality that both Hitler and Mussolini had to reckon with as they proposed new wars) argues against a general brutalisation of interwar politics as a result of the Great War.

Specific causes, by contrast, lie in the breakdown of social order, the weakening or collapse of the state and the struggles to establish the ethnic make-up of new countries. Brutalisation was, in other words, the product of defeat (or in Italy of perceived defeat) and of the implosion of prior regimes in the ‘shatter zones’ of Eastern Europe.⁵³ To this we should add the willingness of victor nations to repress with real brutality the upheavals that the war provoked in the colonial world, notably in Egypt, India and Ireland.⁵⁴ Yet once the violence had emerged, the war’s precedent shaped politics in the ways already suggested, with military models for nationalists and fascists, violent class stereotyping under communism, and a more general readiness to adopt uniforms, accept the authority of local leaders and pump out inflammatory propaganda than before 1914.

How the living reckoned the outcome of the war in political and diplomatic terms really came down to when they felt it was over. Had it ended in 1919–20, with the peace treaties; in June 1927, when Briand and Stresemann accepted the Nobel Peace Prize; in 1936, when Hitler tore up the Treaty of Versailles and reoccupied the Rhineland; in June 1940 when he gazed over Paris, the Paris that the German armies had failed to reach during four and a half years in 1914–18; or in 1945, when, this time, the Allies ‘dictated’ a far harsher peace in Potsdam? It could be any of the above, which is another way of saying that not only the cost, but also the outcome of the Great War lasted at least a generation, if not longer.

1 ‘When you see millions of the mouthless dead’, in Jon Silkin (ed.), *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry* (London: Penguin, 1979), p. 89.

2 Annette Becker, *Maurice Halbwachs: un intellectuel en guerres mondiales 1914–1945* (Paris: Éditions Agnès Viénot, 2003), pp. 149–241 (‘Refouler la guerre?’)

3 See [Chapters 15](#) (‘Mourning practices’) and [21](#) (‘War memorials’)

4 Sigmund Freud, ‘Thoughts for the times on war and death’ (1915), in Penguin Freud Library, vol. XII: *Civilization, Society and Religion* (London: Penguin, 1985), pp. 57–89 (here pp. 79–80, 89)

5 Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 30

6 J. B. Priestley, *Margin Released: A Writer’s Reminiscences and Reflections* (1962), quoted in David Cannadine, ‘War and death, grief and mourning in modern Britain’, in Joachim Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (London: Europa, 1981), pp. 187–242 (here p. 199)

7 Quoted in Pat Jalland, *Death in War and Peace: A History of Loss and Grief in England, 1914–1970* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 55

8 Winter, *Sites of Memory*, pp. 108–33

9 Jane Catulle-Mendès, *La prière sur l'enfant mort* (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1921), quoted in Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Cinq deuils de guerre 1914–1918* (Paris: Noesis, 2001), p. 242

10 Audoin-Rouzeau, *Cinq deuils*, pp. 256–61

11 Quoted in Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919–1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), p. 38

12 Cannadine, 'War and death', p. 221

13 Karen Petrone, *The Great War in Russian Memory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011)

14 Cannadine, 'War and death', p. 229

15 Roland Dorgelès, *Les croix de bois* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1919), p. 343

16 Antoine Prost, *In the Wake of War: 'Les Anciens Combattants' and French Society 1914–1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1992), p. 75

17 Gregory, *Silence of Memory*, p. 111

18 George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 97

19 Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 71

(figures)

20 On German widows, see Robert Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War, 1914–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 141–53

21 Damousi, *Labour of Loss*, p. 83

22 Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 1 and 193

23 See [Chapter 13](#) above (‘Shell shock’)

24 Cohen, *War Come Home*, p. 194

25 Whalen, *Bitter Wounds*, pp. 131–79

26 Gregory, *Silence of Memory*, p. 98 (figures)

27 Prost, *In the Wake of War*, p. 38

28 *Ibid.*, p. 37

29 Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés de Guerre et d’Anciens Combattants (CIAMAC), or International Conference of the Associations of War Disabled and Veterans; Fédération Interalliée des Anciens Combattants (FIDAC), or Interallied Veterans’ Federation

30 John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001). [Chapter 10](#) above (‘Populations under occupation’)

- 31** Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (eds.), *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War, 1917–1923* (Oxford University Press, 2012)
- 32** Hugh Clout, *After the Ruins: Restoring the Countryside of France after the Great War* (University of Exeter Press, 1996), pp. 19–58
- 33** Jalland, *Death in War and Peace*, pp. 79–81
- 34** E.g., *embusqué* (French), *imboscato* (Italian), *Drückeberger* (German)
- 35** Robert Gerwarth, ‘The Central European counter-revolution: paramilitary violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary after the Great War’, *Past and Present*, 200 (2008), pp. 175–209; John Woodhouse, *Gabriele D’Annunzio: Defiant Archangel* (Oxford University Press, 1998)
- 36** John Horne, ‘Defending victory: paramilitary violence in France, 1918–1926: a counter-example’, in Gerwarth and Horne, *War in Peace*, pp. 216–33 (here p. 223)
- 37** Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 114–22
- 38** Adam Seipp, *The Ordeal of Peace: Demobilization and the Urban Experience in Britain and Germany, 1917–1921* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 234
- 39** C. F. G. Masterman, *England after the War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1922), pp. 4, 89
- 40** Gerald Feldman, *Arms, Industry and Labor in Germany, 1914–1918* (1966; new edn Providence, RI: Berg, 1992); Charles Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (Princeton University Press, 1975)

41 Simone de Beauvoir, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* (1958) (London: Penguin, 1963)

42 For an important study in this sense, see Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Post-War France, 1917–1927* (University of Chicago Press, 1994)

43 Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, pp. 97–8

44 Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning and Recovery* (2001) (London: Granta, 2003), pp. 189–288

45 *Ibid.*, p. 203

46 Mark Cornwall, ‘Mémoires de la Grande Guerre dans les pays tchèques, 1918–1928’, in John Horne (ed.), *Démobilisations culturelles après la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Noesis, 2002), pp. 89–101 (here p. 90)

47 Petrone, *Great War in Russian Memory*, pp. 178–83

48 John Horne, ‘Introduction’, in Horne, *Démobilisations culturelles*, pp. 45–53

49 Achille Elisha (ed.), *Aristide Briand: discours et écrits de politique étrangère* (Paris: Plon, 1965), pp. 177–84 (here p. 178)

50 Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, pp. 170–4

51 Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14–18: Understanding the Great War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), pp. 35–6, 236–7 (here p. 236)

52 Antoine Prost, 'Les limites de la brutalisation: tuer sur le front occidental, 1914–1918', *Vingtième siècle*, 81 (2000), pp. 5–20; Jon Lawrence, "Forging a peaceable kingdom: war, violence and the fear of brutalization in post-war Britain", *Journal of Modern History*, 75:3 (2003), pp. 557–89

53 The term 'shatter zone' was first used by Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide* (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 81

54 On this, see Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, 'Introduction', in Gerwarth and Horne, *War in Peace*, pp. 1–18

24 The Great War at its centenary

John Horne It is no accident that this Cambridge History of the First World War should be published on the centenary of the conflict. The fact confers no intrinsic insight or merit on it. But it does, by way of conclusion, invite reflection on the place of the Great War in the world today, on how various societies have commemorated it, and on the traces that it has left at both a national and a global level.

Measuring the present by the past and the past by the present is how modern societies use historical time to understand the world they live in. Anniversaries, jubilees and centenaries are the commemorative markers of that process. But history as historians practise it is not the same thing as commemoration or even collective memory. Historians more than most others engage in the dialogue of the present with the past. But they make it their professional business to study the past for its own sake – to reconstruct an episode like the Great War as contemporaries lived and perceived it, even though they apply ideas and concepts coined with hindsight in order to do so. The aspiration recognises that, for all its connectedness to the present, the past is a very different place. Commemoration is rooted in the present, and thus starts from the familiar. History seeks out the unknown and the unfamiliar in its effort to explain what is new about the past and what deserves our attention. That is what this History has tried to do.

Yet in the process, the practices of commemoration and the evolution of collective memory become part of the historian's subject. For they have their own history, which is that of the traces left by the episodes that caused them and the changing awareness over time of their importance. That is particularly true of the Great War.

The three volumes of this History have shown that as the first mass event of the twentieth century, and possibly of history, it touched the entire planet. The death of some 10 million soldiers, mainly European, and of millions more civilians by the direct or indirect impact of the conflict, scarred families and communities and left long memory traces. The same is true for

the millions of men from the European empires who fought and worked in Europe or who went to other fronts in distant parts of the colonial world. The influenza pandemic of 1918–19, while not caused by the war, was related to it and spread by it. More than any previous epidemic, it was global.

Of course, later events – the Great Depression, the Second World War, decolonisation and the Cold War – were also mass episodes that simultaneously divided the world and drew it together by means of dislocation and conflict. They too left profound memory traces and, like the Great War before them, also resulted in multiple commemorations as well as international institutions and new codes that sought to address the upheaval and suffering that they caused. Yet the Great War was, if not the template, then the origin of what Jay Winter has called the ‘memory boom’ of the twentieth century.¹ It is those memory traces, those commemorative traditions – or their absence – that allow historians to evaluate the place of the Great War in contemporary awareness.

From the start, the Great War had commemorative power owing to its perceived status as a turning point in history. As it began, the European states were in the midst of marking the centenaries of the battles that had ended the previous turning point, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, with Borodino commemorated in 1912 and Leipzig in 1913. Waterloo was still to come, only to be cancelled by the next great turning point in 1914.

During the war, contemporaries were acutely aware of living through ‘historic times’, as shown by the instant histories of the conflict that proliferated while it unfolded. Nor did this change afterwards. The bitter quarrel over ‘war guilt’ between the former belligerent states in the 1920s was in effect a polemic over the historical significance of 1914. The Second World War eclipsed the Great War but did not dispel its long historical shadow. As noted in the Introduction to this History, the fiftieth anniversary marked a further shift in the war’s significance as the immediacy of its successor receded and the archives were opened. Changing attitudes to war as such, after two global conflagrations, cast the human cost of the earlier conflict into sharp relief just as many of its aging veterans looked back on its place in their own lives.

Developments in the last half-century help explain the current visibility of the war. The living trace has not entirely gone. Across the centenary

years, there will be a few alive who still remember the war as children, who can recall going hungry in Germany, Russia or Austria-Hungary, or riding on their parents' shoulders in the Armistice Day crowds of the Allied states, or who, in any of the countries concerned, have spent a lifetime without the memory of a father. But the last veterans have died within the past decade. And in a conflict which, unlike the Second World War, was defined by its soldiers more than by its civilian victims, the state funeral given to the last French *poilu*, Lazare Ponticelli, in 2008, the death that same year of his Austro-Hungarian equivalent, Franz Künstler, who had fought with the artillery on the Italian Front, or the demise a year later of Harry Patch, a machine gunner wounded at Passchendaele who was Britain's last combat soldier, marked the point at which the war passed definitively into history.

Yet other changes since the 1960s have brought the Great War closer to us, especially in the dramatic quarter-century since 1989. The fall of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany ended the 'short' twentieth century that began with the Great War and was marked by a clash of secular faiths (fascism, communism, democracy) that arose from the war and found expression in its even more terrible successor.² During the Cold War, the Second World War seemed the real caesura and historians developed a field labelled 'contemporary history', *Zeitgeschichte* or the *histoire du temps présent* in order to address a continuous present that began in 1945. The last phase of the short century loomed larger than its more distant origins. This is shown by the biggest controversy over the First World War during these years, which arose when the German historian Fritz Fischer argued not only that Germany caused the war in 1914 but also that this was related to Hitler's subsequent aggression. Whether true or not, the claim was inflammatory because it undermined West Germany's desire to treat the Nazi past as exceptional. In Soviet Russia and the Eastern Bloc, the First World War was dismissed as an imperialist conflict whose real importance was that it gave birth to the October Revolution, whereas the 'Great Patriotic War' of 1941–5 was seen as the century's pivot.

The turning point of 1989 refocused the start of the short century. It was not just the aftershock of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, when Sarajevo endured a brutal artillery siege from 1992 to 1996, that seemed to bring the cycle of violence back to its beginning in the Bosnian crisis of 1908–14. In other ways, the world of pre-war and interwar Europe resurfaced as the

significance of borders diminished, Europeans moved about the continent with unprecedented freedom, and the profile of a lost *Mitteleuropa* re-emerged. Berlin became once again what it had been in the era of the First World War: one of Europe's great capitals and a point of contact rather than division between the East and West of the continent.

In a different way, the assault by economic 'monetarism' on the role of the state in the 1980s and 1990s, along with the free-market capitalism that rode triumphant down to the banking crash of 2008, evoked the world before 1914, which had known an extended period of economic growth based on the integration of world markets, relatively free trade and the dominance of sterling. What some have seen as a first period of 'globalisation' was disrupted by the economic upheaval of the war (dealt with in Volume II of this History) before it ended in the Wall Street Crash in October 1929. It did not fully resume for fifty years.

The replacement of the bi-polar world of the Cold War with a multi-polar world of growing complexity also reawakened parallels with the diplomatic tensions before the Great War – once the brief illusion that history had somehow come to a full stop had been swept aside by the continued flow of events.³ True, the moment of 1914, when a bi-polar world had finally been created by the opposed alliance systems, and had then gone to war, remained a sombre warning during the Cold War. Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August* was compulsory reading in the White House during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. But what has proved tantalising since 1989 has been a sense of the contingency of the Great War, or at least of the alternative scenarios that might have resulted in more even paths of economic development, more harmonious social relations and less devastating relations between sovereign states, thus averting the 'short' twentieth century.⁴ These changed perspectives suggest that a case could be made for a long twentieth century that found its level at either end of the turbulent middle decades.

Yet it would be wrong to imply that these viewpoints hold sway across the world. Fundamental to the Great War was the process by which nation-states were either confirmed as the organising unit of European politics where they already existed or were brought into being where they did not, notably with the collapse of the dynastic multi-national empires in the eastern half of the continent (tsarist Russia, Austria-Hungary and Ottoman

Turkey). Moreover, it was the war that crystallised the aspiration to national self-determination across much of the colonial world as it became embroiled in the process of wartime mobilisation. While those aspirations were only realised after 1945, the politics of national rights began to challenge the European empires just as these appeared to have reached their apogee in the interwar period. It is thus logical that the memory, and above all the commemoration, of the Great War should be a mainly national affair and shaped by subsequent national histories. This contrasts with the Second World War whose destructiveness and global implications resulted in a distinct register of memory over and above that of the nation, with genocide, nuclear annihilation and universal human rights as the axis of reference.⁵

Moreover, the scale and outcome of the Second World War served to obscure some of the key features of its predecessor and to condition its overall visibility in the various countries concerned. Awareness of the Great War has been most consistent in the ‘Western Front’ countries, especially Britain and France. This is also true of the former British settler Dominions – Australia, Canada, New Zealand and to a lesser extent South Africa – which forged national myths at Ypres and Gallipoli, Palestine and the Somme.⁶ In some respects we find here the traces of that fragile ‘culture of victory’ discussed in the last chapter. Yet even in these societies, the memory of the Great War has been anything but fixed. Because the Second World War in Europe was decisively and, in terms of losses, predominantly an Eastern Front struggle, British and French casualties remained higher in the First World War.⁷ In time, it was this conflict that came to stand for the catastrophe of military violence, whereas the Second World War acquired very different connotations in the two cases – national epic in Britain, divisive trauma in France. So ubiquitous has the ‘pity of war’ become for public understanding of the Great War that British military historians struggle to gain a hearing for their case that the British and Dominion armies successfully mastered siege warfare on the Western Front and won a ‘forgotten victory’ in 1918.⁸ In France, opinion divides over the ‘incomprehensible’ resilience of the *poilus*, as one historian put it. This can be explained by national cohesiveness, coercion in a class-ridden society, or by a combination of the two in stubborn endurance. But none from the 1920s onwards have denied the ‘bloody horror’ of the *poilus*’ experience.⁹

The lingering shadow of the ‘culture of defeat’ helps explain the converse marginalisation of the war in contemporary Germany. There has been no lack of academic interest in the subject, with a cultural history of the war ‘from below’ (linked to *Alltagsgeschichte*, or the history of daily life) that has flourished since the 1990s.¹⁰ But this has not been matched by public interest, which remains focused on the greater catastrophe of the Second World War. Nor should this surprise us. For Germany between the wars was bitterly divided over the defeat of 1918, the reversal of which became the driving motive of Nazi foreign policy after 1933. The more than 5 million German military dead of the Second World War, and above all the definitive defeat of 1945, relegated the First World War to the role of harbinger of the later tragedy. The major exhibition organised by the German Historical Museum in Berlin on the ninetieth anniversary of the war in 2004 had only a limited public impact.¹¹ Whereas the Great War has inspired popular novels and films in Britain and France, it is the Second World War that plays this role in Germany.

Different but comparable memory paths determine the trace of the First World War in other ‘defeated’ countries. The 1919 Treaty of Trianon remains a nationalist site of mourning in Hungary, with new monuments still being erected to protest against it. But that is because it marked the downfall of ‘Greater Hungary’ and the loss of territories to Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and above all Romania – losses that were confirmed by the Second World War and so form part of current Hungarian life.¹² In Italy, Mussolini supplied the response to a ‘mutilated victory’ in 1919 that had supposedly ‘betrayed’ the aspirations of Italian nationalists. But divisions and ambivalence over the fascist period, and over the anti-fascist resistance, have dominated Italian awareness of contemporary history in the past twenty years, so that the Great War (despite military deaths twice those of the Second World War and a flourishing professional historiography) is mainly seen as the overture to fascism. Only on the north-eastern rim of the country, where the fighting took place, is the war a powerful presence.¹³

One could pursue this picture of diverse national memories almost endlessly. In Eastern Europe, the fall of communism re-exposed the memory of the interwar nation-states whose formation or confirmation had been the result of the Great War. In cases such as Romania, which sided

with the Allies in 1916, or Czechoslovakia (from 1993 the Czech Republic and Slovakia), whose nationalist elites identified with the Allied effort, the post-war state formulated its own variant of a ‘culture of victory’ which, confirmed by the outcome of the Second World War, made the Great War part of the national epic. Elsewhere, peoples that joined the war as part of multi-national empires, and only formed nation-states as a consequence of the war, found it hard to construct a national history from the conflict itself – unless the timeframe of the war encompassed the revolutions, counter-revolutions and nationalist wars that prolonged the Great War down to 1923 in much of East-Central Europe, the Balkans, Turkey and also Ireland, as explained in vol. II of this History.

Poland illustrates the point. Three and a half million Poles fought (and nearly 400,000 died) in the opposing armies of three empires – Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary – while the new Polish Republic inherited the combat zones, and hence the cemeteries, of the Eastern Front. Yet the Unknown Soldier buried in Warsaw comes not from any of the battles on the Eastern or Western Fronts in which Poles participated (though these are listed on the national war memorial) but from the 1919 war between Poland and the Ukraine. The Great War, according to a leading Polish historian, remains a ‘forgotten war’.¹⁴ The retrospective lens of the nation makes it hard, if not impossible, to capture the wartime experience of the multi-national empires that vanished with the war itself.

This diversity of national memories will shape centenary commemorations, especially at the level of officialdom. The ceremonies will include gestures of reconciliation between one-time antagonists. Recognition of the enemy’s heroism and suffering is a classic trope of diplomacy that allows past conflict to be overcome in the name of a shared future. Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand, hand in hand before the monument at Douaumont in 1984, stood in a tradition dating back to the 1930s that used Verdun as a symbol of Franco-German reconciliation. It acquired new importance after 1950 as a foundation stone of the European Union, and it will provide one of the keys to commemorating the Great War at a European level.

Something similar but on a far smaller scale has affected Ireland. Northern Ireland Unionists had long claimed an exclusive memory of the Battle of the Somme in 1916 where the 36th (Ulster) Division, composed of

loyalists opposed to Irish Home Rule, distinguished itself in combat. The Easter Rising in the same year became the legitimating myth of both independent Ireland and Northern Nationalists, with the result that the large-scale volunteering of Nationalist Irishmen in the British army, including the 16th (Irish) Division, which also fought on the Somme, was for decades marginalised in the memory of both parts of the country. Since the Belfast Peace Agreement of 1998, 'parity of esteem' for the Rising and the Somme, and recognition of Nationalist Ireland's role in the war, has been a vital if occasionally contested development.¹⁵ The symbolic national politics of 1914–18 are not over, since they continue to do real work in coming to terms with the past.

Yet without neglecting national perspectives, this History has argued that after a century only a transnational and global approach can account for the nature of a conflict that involved so much of the world and transformed its paths of development. Measuring the significance of the war from that angle means looking beyond national 'memories' or reading them at a tangent and seeking out their silences.¹⁶ Using the changed perspectives since the fiftieth anniversary, and especially since the seventy-fifth anniversary in 1989, we find the traces of the Great War close to the surface of contemporary life whether as a military conflict, in its violence towards civilians, or through its impact on politics and the state.

The military war, which all three volumes of this History address in different ways, rightly holds the centre of our attention because even though it was not the first industrialised war (that dubious honour goes to the American Civil War), the Great War was the first global experience of an extended conflict that translated the technology of the second Industrial Revolution (steel, chemicals, high explosives and the internal combustion engine) into combat.¹⁷ It did so, moreover, by means of a siege warfare in which whole nations were mobilised behind their defensive lines in order to defeat the enemy, either by renewed offensive warfare or by the slow attrition of the enemy's will to fight. The trench systems, the occasional moves forward and the relentless Allied advance of the last hundred days, are still etched in the ground. The Second World War enabled all sides to attack civilians en masse by aerial bombing – something that technical constraints prevented in the First World War. The urban monuments of the Great War are, with a few exceptions, memorials to combat on distant fronts

and oceans rather than over the cities themselves. But the Second World War invented no conventional battlefield more destructive than Verdun and the Somme.

Not all the fighting conformed to this dominant paradigm. A new equestrian monument and children's playground in Beersheba, Israel, commemorates a famous cavalry charge conducted in October 1917 by the Australian Light Horse against the Turkish army as it retreated across Palestine. British troops invading Iraq in 2003 were astonished to discover the large war cemetery at Basra, which was the base for the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force in 1914–18. A campaign that resembled nineteenth-century colonial warfare more than the Western Front, including the Turkish siege of the British at Kut-Al-Amara in 1915–16, nonetheless resulted in high mortality on both sides, with far more of the 'missing' commemorated at Basra (some 40,000) than there are actual graves. The large Indian Forces Cemetery at Basra reminds us of the disproportionate role played by colonial units outside the three main fronts in Europe, although at Gallipoli and in Macedonia they also encountered the bloody stalemate of trench warfare. Given the dissolution after 1945 of the imperial framework in which they fought, it may be that the real monument to the Indian, African and Asian soldiers who fought and worked in the war lies in their written testimonies and oral traditions, such as those of the West African soldiers who served in the French armies, traced by Joe Lunn in Senegal. ¹⁸

We remain appalled by the human cost of the military conflict. But in a global sense, we still have a patchy vision of it. The late George Mosse reminded us that in visiting the manicured war graves along the Western Front we are moved by an older Romantic tradition of sacred landscapes in which the beauty of nature is intended to act in a cathartic and consolatory sense. Leaving aside his question of whether it is right to commemorate unspeakable violence by such sanitised means, he showed us that what we are in fact visiting is a resolutely post-war creation.¹⁹ These are the 'sites of mourning' that helped 'the living' come to terms with vast numbers of 'the dead' – and in a way that did prove a template, subsequent war cemeteries being created on the same pattern. But the process was very uneven.

On the Western Front, the Germans were confined to fewer cemeteries than the Allies and had to use black metal to mark their graves. If the Austro-Italian Front is comparable to that in Belgium and France, the

Eastern Front, the Balkans and Turkey were a different matter again (except at the Dardanelles, where Allied practice set the tone). Post-war chaos and a Soviet Russia that barely recognised the Great War dead, followed by the changing borders of 1945 and decades of neglect under communism, mean that only now are we in a position to trace that same warfare on the Eastern and other fronts, including the cemeteries and monuments (such as they may be) that commemorate it. As Antoine Prost has shown in [Chapter 22](#) above, we do not even have accurate figures for military mortality in all the countries involved. And if relatively few European soldiers fought and died in the highly mobile warfare in East Africa (and other parts of subtropical Africa), the same is not true for the indigenous auxiliaries who literally carried the logistics of war on their shoulders, and of whom over a hundred thousand perished with barely any acknowledgement.²⁰

Our moral sensibility in the face of this scale of loss is doubly shaped by the war. A striking feature of the response to mass death at the time was the insistence on naming the individual victims (without hierarchy of rank) in a geography of mourning that multiplied sites of commemoration at the front and at home. New ways were found – the Cenotaph, the Unknown Soldier – to remember those who had no known ‘resting place’. It was as if the answer to the anonymity of mass killing was to particularise those who had been killed, something again anticipated by the American Civil War, and which would shape responses to both smaller and greater disasters, including genocide, in the century after 1914.²¹

Yet if the sensibility and rituals (the two-minute silence, reading the names) have become part of our collective make-up, what also shocks us is the sheer scale of military loss in the two world conflicts compared to more recent changes in the nature of warfare. The Cold War maintained the idea of national mobilisation and the possibility of all-out conflict in Europe (it was, of course, a hot war elsewhere) and the long war between Iran and Iraq from 1980 to 1988 was the last to echo the fighting of the First World War – almost uncannily so. But in our era of asymmetrical warfare, polarised between terrorism and guerrilla combat on the one hand and high-tech weaponry used by professional soldiers on the other, the militarisation of Western societies in the first half of the twentieth century has been decisively reversed.²² Even France, which invented the Nation in Arms, has abandoned conscription. This makes the casualties sustained by the armies

of the Great War, including those that have not yet been fully recognised, more remote from us, and their acceptance by contemporaries, if not ‘incomprehensible’, one of the hardest things to explain. The ‘pity of war’ seems all the greater.

If the military dimension has been central to national understandings of the war, the reverse is the case with civilian suffering. Nowhere is the difference clearer between the traditional registers of memory of the Great War and the transnational focus increasingly adopted by that fourth generation of historians referred to in the Introduction of Volume I of this History. Subject after subject discussed in this History, especially in this volume, has been brought to light by the changed perspectives of the last quarter-century – from war crimes to refugees and national minorities to occupied populations. The realities of ethnic war in the former Yugoslavia, of genocide in Rwanda and of paramilitary violence in West Africa and the Sudan reawakened memories of civilian suffering in the Second World War, and by extension posed the question of their antecedents in the Great War.

Intellectually, the change in viewpoint has by definition been transnational rather than national. It arose from the vitality of that alternative register of memory already referred to whereby universal human rights, crimes against humanity and genocide supplied a measure not just for the brutalities of the Second World War but also for the future. The marginalisation of the UN during the Cold War hampered the implementation of human rights law internationally, but the turning point of 1989 renewed its visibility and application. Other developments reinforced this tendency. ‘Second-wave’ feminism looked at war in terms of gender (explored earlier in this volume) and among other things focused attention on rape, starting with the mass rapes committed by Bosnian Serb forces in the early 1990s.²³ The UN War Crimes Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and now the International Criminal Court at The Hague, have given legal force to the human rights in question, reaffirming their use as categories of analysis for earlier conflicts.

This is neither arbitrary nor anachronistic. As already observed, historians forge their tools from the present in which they live, and the only test in using them is whether they faithfully uncover real aspects of the past. In the case of the Great War, civilian suffering was hardly a new subject: the contemporary record was full of it. Allied denunciation of ‘German

atrocities' during the invasion of France and Belgium in 1914, German accusations of the 'Hunger Blockade' that 'starved' the populations of the Central Powers, Allied condemnations of callous U-boat warfare against 'innocent' civilians – these formed the moral charge-sheet of the war and were the subject of a good deal of the propaganda that vilified the enemy. But precisely for that reason, civilian suffering was gradually displaced from public attention (without entirely losing its accusatory force), especially among those who chose to see the entire war as an 'atrocities' that could only be accounted for by the manipulative power of propaganda. Moreover, much of the violence in question occurred on the margins of the nation, whether in occupied territories, in civilian and military prison camps, or among minority populations. Even in north-eastern France and Belgium, where civilian suffering remained strong in regional memory, the dominant narrative was that of the military effort that had brought victory. The same was true of Serbia. In large parts of eastern and north-eastern Europe, occupation belonged to the pre-national category of experience that ended after 1918.

For these reasons, transnational frames of reference have proved essential to the renewed understanding of violence against civilians. First, they expose what might be called the 'differential calculus' of atrocity in history, whereby the politics of the accusers define the 'crime' more than its intrinsic reality does. The genocide of the Ottoman Armenians, discussed in Volume I of this History, is a good example. While contemporaries understood that a new threshold of violence had been crossed when the Young Turks sought to exterminate the Armenian minority in 1915–16, the political importance of the act was calibrated to match the subordinate place of Turkey among the Allies' enemies. Of course the 'great game of genocide' has not been confined to the Armenians. The genocide of Europe's Jews just over a quarter of a century later only assumed full prominence after 1989, when the ideological antagonisms of the Cold War had ended and it became the defining point of Second World War remembrance. It is no accident if the Ottoman Armenian genocide achieved prominence in its wake. But it requires the removal of the 'differential calculus' to place both Anatolia and the genocide at the heart of the war. The same is true for occupied populations, prisoners of war and others.

Secondly, a transnational framework is just as vital when it comes to explaining these particular forms of violence. Using a single-nation framework to account for something that had two sides or more is to misunderstand it. As several chapters in this History have pointed out, a global dynamic drove the economic mobilisation of both sides. British maritime dominance and the weapon of the naval blockade reduced the access of the Central Powers to foreign credit and supplies while allowing the Allies to draw on global resources and their own empires to prosecute the war. Unrestricted submarine warfare and increased exploitation of German- (and Austrian)-occupied Europe was the predictable response. Each side eroded the fragile status of the non-combatant and drew civilians into the war while assigning sole responsibility for this to the enemy.

Likewise, the emphasis on nationality that lay at the heart of the war was in fact transnational. It allowed for a political and cultural process of mobilisation by exclusion as well as inclusion, so that the figures of the spy, the traitor and the 'enemy within' were omnipresent. But the extent to which the exclusion became physical let alone mortal varied with conditions and with the prevailing forms of nationalism in the different states. Ottoman Turkey was the extreme case. A regional cycle of violence had begun in the two Balkan wars of 1912–13, which created a fragile state in the hands of nationalist activists, many of whom were refugees from European Turkey. Entry into the Great War, followed by a Russian invasion (supported by Russian Armenians) and the Allied landings at the Dardanelles resulted in what would later be called 'genocide'. The current Turkish state sees the issue as one of mutual responsibility to be settled with present-day Armenia in a classic process of diplomacy (something only possible once former Russian Armenia had gained independence after the break-up of the Soviet Union). Armenians consider it a matter of victimhood by virtue of universal human rights. The conflict is not just one of facts and interpretation but of registers of 'memory' .

Finally, a transnational understanding of the violence against civilians has allowed for comparison across time, especially with the Second World War.

Whether or not one chooses to see 1914–45 as a single episode – a European or global civil war – it was the violent core of the twentieth century. With 'contemporary history' losing focus as a self-contained period after 1989, it became logical to look further back to the links between the

two world wars.²⁴ The search is now on for what one might call the genealogies of violence in the first half of the century, especially as these relate to escalating brutality towards civilians. Whether it be the growth of ‘concentration camps’ from their colonial origins, paramilitary violence as it translates military into political violence and back again, or ‘ethnic cleansing’, the Great War was brutal in its own right and the incubator of greater brutality to come.²⁵ That is why we should not be surprised to find genocide (albeit of different kinds) at the heart of both world wars, accounting for some 6 to 8 per cent of the war dead in the First and 10 per cent in the Second.²⁶ In a world that has not lost its capacity for genocide, the Great War seems close to us.

Neither the enormous military effort nor the economic mobilisations that relentlessly pressured civilian society would have been possible without the transformation of politics and the state, as Volume II of this History has shown. From the perspective of the last quarter-century, it is hard not to conclude that, at least in the Western world, the ‘short’ twentieth century ended with the demise of the last major state – the USSR – still modelled on the mobilisation for ‘total war’. In reaction to the events of Tiananmen Square in 1989, China began its own evolution towards market communism three years later. Of course this did not abolish dictatorships or ‘states of exception’ – the emergency authority that can turn democracy into tyranny – or eliminate ideological fundamentalism.²⁷ But it does suggest the end of a specific trajectory that began with mobilising societies for war in 1914–18 and posed a threefold challenge – to the authority, the legitimacy and the reach of the state.

Just as historians have traced the role of war and taxation in the rise of the early modern state, it could be argued that the Great War triggered the modern ‘warfare state’ and did so in communist, fascist and democratic variants.²⁸ The fascist kind embodied a ‘total mobilisation’ of society (about which Ernst Jünger fantasised in the wake of the Great War) along with a charismatic politics favoured by defeat and the subordination of legality to authority that marked the arrival of both Mussolini and Hitler in power.²⁹ The outcome was an unstable polity dedicated to war and foreign expansion in which both the grievances of the Great War and the idealised memory of its wartime community (purged of internal enemies) and of the ‘front-line soldier’ played important roles.³⁰

The communist version of the warfare state was doubly rooted in the Great War. For the crisis that brought it about was not only the failure of tsarist Russia's war effort but also the remobilisation for war and civil war in 1918–20, using the ideological and organisational tools of the Bolshevik Party. In the chaos of the revolutionary years, a command economy administered by the party cadres and backed by terror and sweeping persecution created the model that would be modified in subsequent years until Stalin's 'second revolution' in the 1930s. This gave it the form in which it would triumph over the Nazi war effort on the Eastern Front in 1941–5. The sclerosis of that same warfare state from the 1950s, as it sought to reacquire legitimacy and adapt Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe to the consumer-driven economies of the Cold War era, led to its expiry in 1989–91.

One upshot of the end of Soviet Russia has been to remove the distinction between an imperialist First World War and the immaculate conception of the new regime in the October Revolution. The extended timeframe of the Great War is more important in the case of Russia than almost anywhere else, for it allows the revolutionary process to be understood as part of the war as well as related to longer-term developments in Russian history. No one can say there would have been no Revolution without the war, but the Revolution that happened was deeply affected by the war. While this still elicits little recognition in Russia, where public awareness of the war remains low, a major international research project conducted by 'Western' and Russian historians is dedicated to just that proposition.³¹

Liberal democracies – or rather some liberal democracies – clearly proved the most adept at meeting the challenges of both world wars and readjusting to peace. But they also experienced the longer-term influence of the 'warfare state' and in ways that are perhaps not over yet. This was partly a fiscal matter. The Great War permanently increased state expenditure as a proportion of GDP from well under 20 per cent before 1914 in the major European states to between 25 and 35 per cent in the interwar period, a figure that was raised again by the Second World War and post-war Keynesian policies to levels of above 40 per cent.³² But it was also a matter of what the money was spent on. The origins of the welfare state pre-date the Great War, and social class would have reshaped politics in the liberal democracies anyway. That is one reason why it is too simple

to hold the world wars responsible for the demise of laissez-faire liberalism or high levels of state expenditure – though that is how it appeared to many contemporaries. In 1936 the distinguished liberal historian, Élie Halévy, declared that ‘the era of tyrannies’ dated from August 1914 and that it included not just fascism and communism (which he saw as non-identical twins) but also the socialist traditions of Britain and France.³³

What is true is that the two world wars made the entitlement to welfare and healthcare a wartime issue because mass sacrifice rewrote the social contract on which the state was founded. The wars added pensions for handicapped veterans and for the families of those who had been killed.

They also focused attention on family size as a determinant of the conscription cohort, and thus of national security, leading many countries to fund programmes to support the birth rate. In these ways, the two world wars helped create welfare states in Europe and more ephemerally in the USA. If the process was only fully realised with national reconstruction after 1945, the claims and ideas were articulated during the Great War, informing the social agenda of demobilisation in 1919. Neo-liberal politics, which since the 1980s have sought to restrict claims to social and health benefits and to reduce state budgets, have thus taken on one of the most enduring legacies of both world wars.

The wartime transformation of politics was not just an internal matter for the different societies concerned but also reshaped the global balance of power between states. Fundamentally, it signalled the end of a Eurocentric world. When the French poet Paul Valéry wrote in 1919: ‘We modern civilisations [like those of antiquity] now know that we too are mortal’, he was addressing the hubris of a pre-war Europe that had imagined it would remain forever the hub of the globe.³⁴ However, the scale and repercussions of the displacement were masked in the interwar period by the relative effacement of the two states, the USA and the USSR, which would redefine world power in bi-polar terms after a further round of European self-destruction in 1939–45. Although Japan was also defeated in that conflict, its prior bid to create the first Asian colonial empire, which had been powerfully reinforced by the First World War, hastened the end of European colonialism in Asia.

In the 1920s, however, it was possible to ignore Valéry’s intimations of mortality and imagine that in the absence of the USA, which had declined

to ratify the Paris Peace Settlement, and the Soviet Union, which was busy stabilising the Revolution, Europe might remake its own destiny by a process of reconciliation in a supra-national framework. Such ideas ranged from the practical to the visionary. But what they had in common was a profound rejection of war, not just in the abstract but the Great War, which both Briand and Stresemann, the French and German Foreign Ministers who forged the rapprochement between their two countries, agreed had been a disaster. The plans included Briand's proposal for a European Federal Union. They centred on the League of Nations, which was a largely European affair.

Judged by the even greater disaster of the Second World War, these were 'the lights that failed'.³⁵ Yet seen from the standpoint of 1989, and all that has happened since, the verdict may be different. For the interwar plans for Europe were both an inspiration and a warning to the European movement that developed after 1945 and which adopted the indirect path of economic integration rather than the high road of federalism. Support came from the same political currents – liberals, reformist socialists and Christian democrats – as earlier. A deeply European commitment to finding an alternative to war produced a unique experiment in modified sovereignty and economic integration. It underpinned Franco-German reconciliation in the West during the Cold War and provided the basis for reunifying Germany and reintegrating Europe after 1989. It was only logical that foreign policy and defence, the staples of national sovereignty, should be its weak points, for it was the opposite of a 'warfare state'.³⁶ That the project should, with the crisis of the single currency after 2010, confront its inner contradictions without apparently threatening European peace is a measure of the distance travelled since 1914.

The centenary perspective on the Great War is open-ended for several reasons. Whereas the previous historical turning point in European history had been seen in retrospect as the end of an episode, the centenary of the First World War commemorates a beginning, and that is even truer for 2018 than 2014. Nothing is ever final, and the legacy of the French Revolution and Napoleon went on to shape nineteenth-century Europe, contributing to the Great War itself. But the Great War resolved far less than it set in train.

The gulf between expectation and outcome, whether for the decision-makers or the millions of ordinary men and women who formed the armies

and home fronts, has rarely been greater. Yet the organisation, imagination and sheer endurance needed to sustain such a military conflict, with the global ramifications that are only now apparent, required a result that justified the effort.

In the impossibility of achieving that result, lies the ambiguity of the Great War, which best defines its legacy for the century. It began with the military endgame, which, for all the Allied insistence that it was a victory, resulted in an Armistice that was conditional, allowing the German army and nationalist right to claim that it was less than a defeat.³⁷ It continued in a peace process conducted under the aegis of an American president who billed it as a crusade for democratic sovereignty, but who never imagined that a message meant for Europe might be taken up as self-determination for the colonial world. The vision soured for Europe even before Woodrow Wilson failed to secure the Senate's endorsement of the Treaty of Versailles, leaving the field to the inevitable power politics of the peace conference.

The bitterness of the dissatisfied fuelled the burgeoning violence in the 'shatter zones' of the former multi-national empires in Eastern Europe and in parts of the colonial world (Egypt, India, China).³⁸ The winners struggled to underpin their fragile sense of victory with a stability (both social and political) that proved elusive. Everywhere the cost in terms of death, mourning and physical or mental suffering was the unyielding measure by which the outcome was judged.

The responses ranged from the urgent belief in new utopias to bitter despair, and included both irony and a sense of tragedy at a war whose outcome, even if it seemed justified, had been bought at such a price. They were, in short, the reactions that helped define the intellectual and emotional landscape of much of the twentieth century, and they still seem familiar today. This makes the cultural and artistic life of the war (examined in this volume) especially important, for it is here that we sense some of the clearest connections to the present. One might ask whether the extreme emotions and fragmented nature of the war experience made it intrinsically 'modern'.³⁹ In *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975) Paul Fussell showed how the violence of combat could actually be filtered through traditional cultural forms, in his case the Romantic poetics of the English soldier-writers, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and Edmund Blunden – though he felt this came at an artistic price.⁴⁰ As Jay Winter confirmed in

his pioneering *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (1995), European (and we must now add colonial) peoples drew on religion and established cultural values to cope with the extremities of the Great War and its aftermath, which required healing and consolation as much as contestation.⁴¹

Yet the artistic avant-garde also went to war (and in the case of the Dadaists, protested against it) and the experience by no means blunted their experimentalism.⁴² Futurists and Constructivists embraced the Russian Revolution with their radical aesthetics. Radicals and revolutionaries felt the war had broken up the old order, and could only be redeemed by a new one. In the wake of the war, modernists created the intellectual and artistic culture of Weimar Germany, even if they did so as ‘outsiders’ and were bitterly contested by conservatives, haunted by the lost war and a vanished past.⁴³ There is no space here to address the question of whether the cultural and artistic responses to the greater extremities of the Second World War marked continuity or a rupture with those of the First World War. The point is that the experiences of the Great War far exceeded by their complexity any particular set of cultural responses, either on the part of artists and intellectuals or more generally. They evoked a gamut of reactions that are recognisable in subsequent responses to the wars, revolutions and civil conflicts of the twentieth century.

Central to this was the experience of the ordinary individual – the common man and woman. A multitude of soldiers’ letters had already given this expression during the war, including those of colonial soldiers and workers who, even if illiterate, sent back accounts via public scribes to their villages in India or the remote Algerian countryside.⁴⁴ After the war, many veterans published their experiences, and if there was an obvious bias to the educated and literary, these were nonetheless men who had served as junior officers, at the heart of the fighting.⁴⁵ The modern war novel and war film – cinema having acquired a mass audience during the conflict – emerged from this process. Henri Barbusse’s best selling novel, *Under Fire*, was published during the war itself, based on the author’s front-line experience.

It tells the story of a ‘squad’ of ordinary men as they make their way through the war, certainly not masters but neither quite victims of their fate. Used by Erich Maria Remarque in his runaway success, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which was published as a novel in 1928 and turned into

Hollywood's major film on the Great War in 1930, the same format has since become the vehicle for exploring how individuals deal not just with the violence but also the vastness of a war that threatens to overwhelm them – from Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1986) to Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (1998).⁴⁶

The cultural history that has driven much of the scholarly interest in the Great War over the past twenty-five years has emphasised the local and the particular – the individual, the couple and the small group – as well as larger patterns of experience. The subnational matters as much as the transnational. There has been a parallel public interest in the Great War as family history and personal story, as shown by the appetite for newly discovered war literature or dramatic reconstructions in novels and television programmes. As the first mass event of the twentieth century, the Great War generated a huge source base whose extent we are still discovering. It allows us to particularise the fundamental ambiguity of the war with individual faces, and to suggest something of the variety of 'ordinary' experience.

Commemorations are rooted in the present. But for that reason they have a life of their own. It is impossible to predict the interest and activity that the centenary of the Great War will generate both within the different countries concerned and hopefully between them, not just in official ceremonies but also in museums, the media and local history organisations – the whole rich field of public history and the civic sphere. The only certainty is that, history itself having moved on, the post-centenary perspective on the conflict will have altered. If this gives a provisional note to the foregoing chapters, that is appropriate. The one thing a centenary History of the First World War should not be is a monument.

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- 2 Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994); Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 1998).
- 3 Most famously by Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992), pp. 328–39.
- 4 For reflections in this sense see Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), pp. 457–62 ('What if?'); Gerald Feldman, 'Mobilizing economies for war', in Jay Winter, Geoffrey Parker and Mary R. Habeck (eds.), *The Great War and the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 166–86 (here at pp. 167–71); Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (eds.), *An Improbable War? The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture before 1914* (Oxford University Press, 2007); and Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), pp. xxvi–xxvii.
- 5 Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945–1995* (Oxford University Press, 2006); Laurence van Ypersele, 'Mourning and memory, 1919–45', in John Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 576–90; Antoine Prost and Jay Winter, *René Cassin* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), pp. 269–318.
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8 Gary Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory. The First World War: Myths and Realities* (London: Headline, 2001). See also Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon, 2005); Brian Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

9 For the quotations, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *La Grande Guerre des Français, 1914–1918* (Paris: Perrin, 1994), p. 7; for two studies of contemporary perceptions of the war in France, Christophe Prochasson, *14–18: Retours d'expérience* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008), and Nicolas Offenstadt, *14–18 aujourd'hui: La Grande Guerre dans la France contemporaine* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010).

10 E.g., Gerhard Hirschfeld, Gerd Krumeich and Irina Renz (eds.), *Keiner fühlt sich hier mehr als Mensch . . . Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Essen: Klartext, 1993); Bernd Ulrich and Benjamin Ziemann, (eds.), *Frontalltag im Ersten Weltkrieg: Wahn und Wirklichkeit. Quellen und Dokumente* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1995), translated as *German Soldiers in the Great War: Letters and Eyewitness Accounts* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2010); Gerhard Hirschfeld, Gerd Krumeich, Dieter Langewiesche and H. P. Ullmann, (eds.), *Kriegserfahrungen: Studien zur Sozial und Mentalitätsgeschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Essen: Klartext, 1997); Bernd Ulrich, *Die Augenzeugen: deutsche Feldpostbriefen in Kriegs und Nachkriegszeit, 1914–1933* (Essen: Klartext, 1997).

11 Rainer Rother (ed.), *Der Weltkrieg 1914–1918: Ereignis und Erinnerung* (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2004).

12 Juliet Kinchin, “‘Caught in the ferris-wheel of history’: Trianon memorials in Hungary’ in Matthew Rampley (ed.), *Heritage, Ideology and Identity in Central Eastern Europe: Contested Pasts, Contested Presents* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), pp. 21–40.

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15 John Horne (ed.), *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008; new edn 2012).

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23 Raphaëlle Branche, Fabrice Virgili, Isabelle Delpla, John Horne, Pieter Lagrou and Daniel Palmieri (eds.), *Viols en temps de guerre* (Paris: Payot, 2011), pp. 7–24.

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- 34** Paul Valéry, ‘Crise de l’esprit’ (1919) in *Œuvres*, vol. I (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), p. 988.
- 35** Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History, 1919–1933* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
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25 Visual essay: civil society

Annette Becker ‘The contradiction between presence and absence which we still encounter today when we look at images has roots in our experience of the death of others. The image presents itself to us in the way the dead do, through their absence.’¹ According to Hans Belting, traces of life braided together with death, and images of extreme violence, as in the case of war, present a double absence: that of the moment the image was created, and that of the moment they are viewed now, a century after the Great War. And yet to understand representations of war we must look at them. The images that have survived disclose the possibility, almost certainly illusory, of forming a visual sense of disaster. Can this revelatory power of the photograph also be found in other forms of presentation – drawings, paintings, film, objects, even the most familiar ones? Those images that give us a sense of ‘here and now’ come from all the fronts. Going beyond the front lines, this essay explores the multiple fields of vision presented by civil societies in wartime, all of them filled with damaged men and women. These images enable us to descend into the visual abyss of war, of wounds, of death, and of memory.

First we can see the mirror image of the battlefield in the home front, an immense kaleidoscope of situations framed by the military fronts, which themselves are dizzyingly complex manifestations of a global war over time becoming total war. We observe fronts of invasion and of refuge, fronts of occupation, fronts of work and overwork, fronts of prisoner-of-war camps and of camps for interned civilians, fronts under fire from the air, fronts of medical treatment, of the battle against wounds and disease, fronts of mourning and of remembrance, at home, in hospitals, in cemeteries.

These images provide us with narratives of intimacy, and of responses to the upheavals in the social order, in the sexual division of labour and authority, and in the orderly succession of generations. It is not only that children die before their parents, but that those who survive are wounded, diminished, shell-shocked. In his *First Australian Wounded at Gallipoli Arriving at Wandsworth Hospital, London* (Fig. 25.1), George Coates paints the global trajectory of the war: from Australia to the Ottoman Empire to

London, men and women, nurses and soldiers, suffering, red crosses,
compassion. Observers look down on the wounded from a gallery: a hospital
theatre in the theatre of war.



Figure 25.1 George Coates, *First Australian Wounded at Gallipoli Arriving at Wandsworth Hospital, London*. Painting, Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

In Fig. 25.2 we see French soldiers in the Dardanelles watching a Muslim burial, like respectful anthropologists. The Italian artist Pietro Morando (Fig. 25.3), an anonymous French artist (Fig. 25.4) and the American photographer Lewis Hine (Fig. 25.5) confront the incongruity of barbed wire and watchtowers, the search for refuge – women and children again, holding on, fleeing, giving up.



Figure 25.2 Muslim burial – the placing in the coffin, March 1917. From the photo album of a French officer during his campaign in Macedonia.



Figure 25.3 Pietro Morando, *Civilians in a Camp*, drawing. Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra, Rovereto.



Prisonnières Françaises. Lager Holzminden. 11

Figure 25.4 G. Halbout, *Women Arriving at Holzminden Concentration Camp.*



Figure 25.5 Lewis Hine, *Refugees in Eastern Europe*.

Otto Dix is a German soldier on the inner front of suffering and madness. Whereabouts? It does not matter: in his war civilians cry out in their madness, faced by the death of their children (Figs. 25.6–25.8). Then there is the spectrum of religious faith, from orthodoxy to talismans (Fig. 25.9), alongside personal faith, enduring despite all the individual's suffering (Fig. 25.10).



Figure 25.6 Otto Dix, series 'The War' (1923-4), etching no. 33, *Lens Being Bombed*.



Figure 25.7 Otto Dix, series 'The War' (1923-4), etching no. 39, *House Destroyed by Aircraft Bombs (Tournai)*.





Figure 25.8 Otto Dix. series 'The War' (1923-4). etching no. 35. *The*

Madwoman of Sainte-Marie-à-Py.



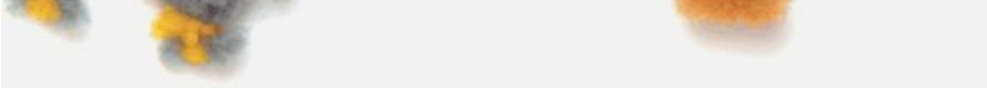


Figure 25.9 Nénette and Rintintin, woollen figures.





Figure 25.10 African stick.

In the post-war years, a number of images became iconic, subject to reflection and mobilisation, whether by pacifists or by the guardians of the memory of what they saw as the heroism of the battlefield. The publication of picture-books on the war provided rich material for those measuring its costs and consequences. Referring at times to the same photographs, cropped or resized or captioned in different ways, these books created a source of images constituting a visual memory of the war which divided in two: the ones that emphasised losses and the ones that emphasised patriotic exaltation (Figs. 25.11 and 25.12).

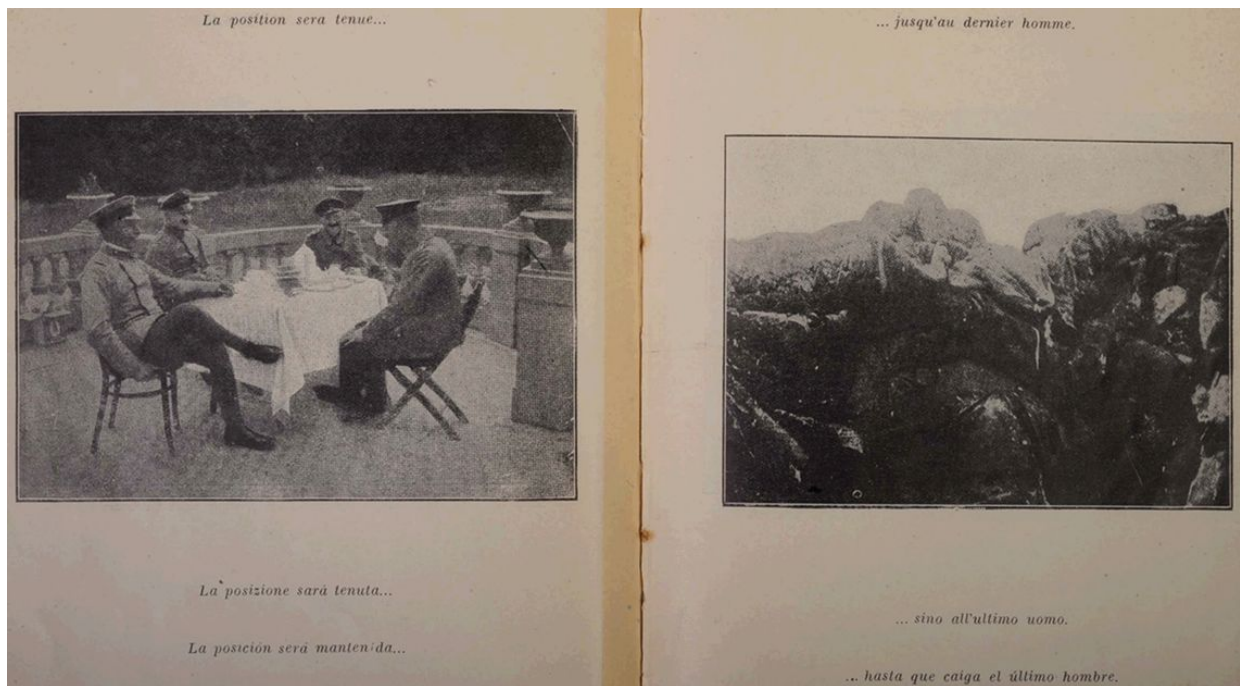


Figure 25.11 Pages of two books: *War against War* by Ernst Friedrich, pp. 14–15, ‘La position sera tenue . . . jusqu’au dernier homme’ (French edn), opposite the collection of photographs chosen by Ernst Jünger, *Das Antlitz des Weltkrieges* (1930), pp. 100–1.

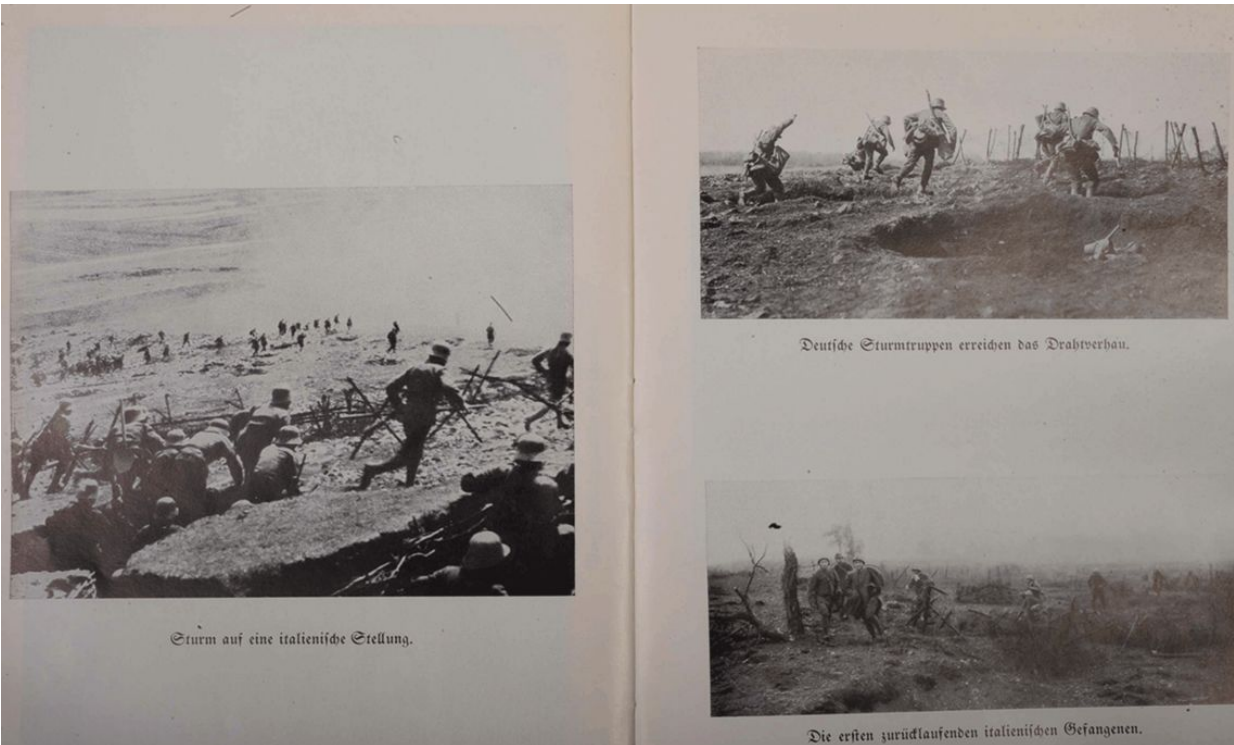


Figure 25.12 ‘Sturm auf eine italienische Stellung’, ‘Deutsche Sturmtruppen erreichen das Drahtverhau’, and ‘Die ersten zurücklaufenden italienischen Gefangenen’.

Trusting images more than words, some artists and photographers used all possible forms of illustration to represent shell shock, mutilation, prostheses and disfigurement. Those suffering permanent wounds to body and/or mind were never demobilised. They were the proof of the horrors of war, and in the vanquished countries they bore the shame of defeat. The Russian artist Zinoviev, a quasi-Surrealist even before Apollinaire invented the word in 1917, gathers soldiers and naked women together under the gaze of a strange soothsayer who has nothing to say about the future (Fig. 25.13). They are carrying their own heads towards an ambulance, capturing the absurdity, the black irony, and the pacifist’s rejection of war. In the work of Conrad Felixmüller (Fig. 25.14) the trauma of the war is captured in a black and red etching of 1918. The man is as disembodied and as geometric as the Iron Cross on his chest. An orderly observes him through the peep-hole of his room, which has turned into a prison cell: he is incarcerated in his war wound for good. The psychiatrist and artist Henry Tonks represents hallucinations in the form of a portrait of a disfigured man (Fig. 25.15). But

for others, and particularly for physicians, casts and dressings (Fig. 25.16) are their professional instruments and a sign of their innovative work and success 'thanks' to the war. Here is the context in which to place the drawings of the British facial surgeon Henry Tonks (Fig. 25.17). Prosthetic limbs are a sign of progress grafted onto men to enable them to go back to agricultural or industrial labour (Fig. 25.18).



Figure 25.13 Alexander Zinoviev, *Phantasme* (1916).



Figure 25.14 Conrad Felixmüller, *Soldier in the Madhouse* (1918), etching.



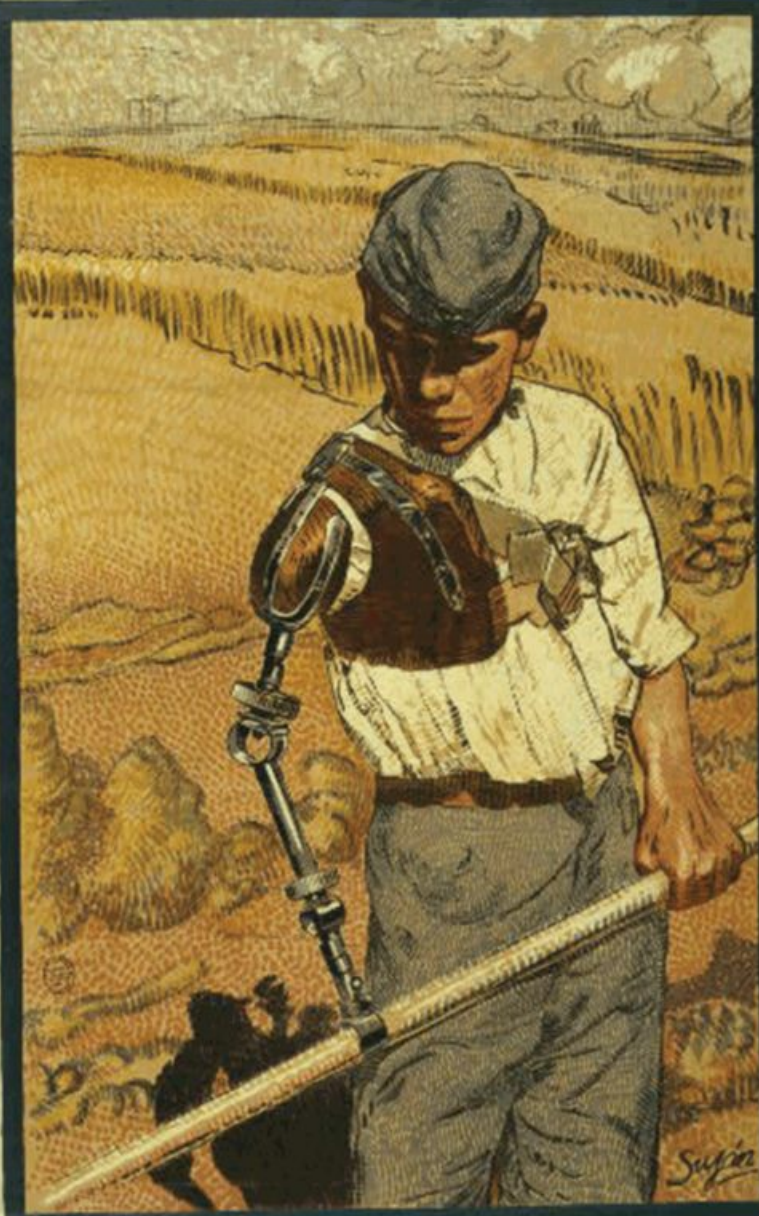
Figure 25.15 Henry Tonks, portrait of a disfigured man, pastel sketch.



Figure 25.16 Plaster casts of mutilated faces.



Figure 25.17 Henry Tonks, drawing of facial wounds.



WILHELM GIESEHARTZ KUNSTWERKSTÄTTE

LANDES- Eröffnung am 18. Juli
KRIEGSFÜRSORGE-AUSSTELLUNG
POZSONY JULI-AUGUST 1917

Figure 25.18 Pal Sujan, *Landes Kriegsfürsorge-Ausstellung*, exhibition in Poszony, July–August 1917. Prosthetic limbs grafted onto men to enable them to go back to work.

Given that it was virtually impossible to photograph or film soldiers in battle, artists were the ones to capture the violence of war through their images. Similarly, the pain of the wounded could only be captured indirectly or through visual symbolism. Ruins, the destruction of the countryside, broken trees or homes became metaphors for the bodily and emotional destruction caused by the war (Fig. 25.19).



Figure 25.19 Paul Nash, *We are Making a New World* (1918).

And yet, Walter Benjamin warned us: ‘What gives something authenticity is all that it contains that is transmissible, its material life and its power of historical testimony, which itself rests on its durability. In the case of a

reproduction where its material life escapes us, we find that its power as testimony is also undermined.’² In wartime, suffering might be captured by an image, but once reproduced, what iota of reality is left in it? As in photography, the negative of death can yield something positive, something alive. But that is hardly the case with a life during and after the cataclysm of war; war turns life into its opposite. Images provide one way of measuring the terror induced by mass death and the irreducible specificity of each act of mourning. Everyone suffers the death of loved ones alone.

Military cemeteries and monuments are extraordinary sites where men from all over the world have been gathered. We find traces of Chinese labourers killed by the ‘Spanish flu’ and buried in Picardy ([Fig. 25.20](#)), African prisoners of war who perished in the far east of the German Empire.

At Putna, on the border of today’s Romania and Ukraine, there is a Moldavian war memorial where a French soldier who came there in 1917 is depicted with a weeping widow and orphan whom he was unable to protect, praying to the Virgin Mary ([Fig. 25.21](#)).



Figure 25.20 Chinese military cemetery, Noyelles, France.





Figure 25.21 War memorial, Putna, Romania.

War memorials are scattered throughout the various home fronts, transforming time into space. At Boorowa in Australia (Fig. 25.22) there is a war memorial in the form of a clock whose numbers are replaced by the acronym 'ANZAC'. Time is indelibly marked by the Anzac experience – one to be kept alive 'lest we forget'.

No one among these people knew these horrors . . . Photographs of battlefields, these eviscerations of war, the photographs of the war wounded form the most dreadful documents that I have ever seen. There is nothing in criminology which tells us as much about the ultimate meaning of cruelty . . . No writer, however great, can match the power of the photo.³

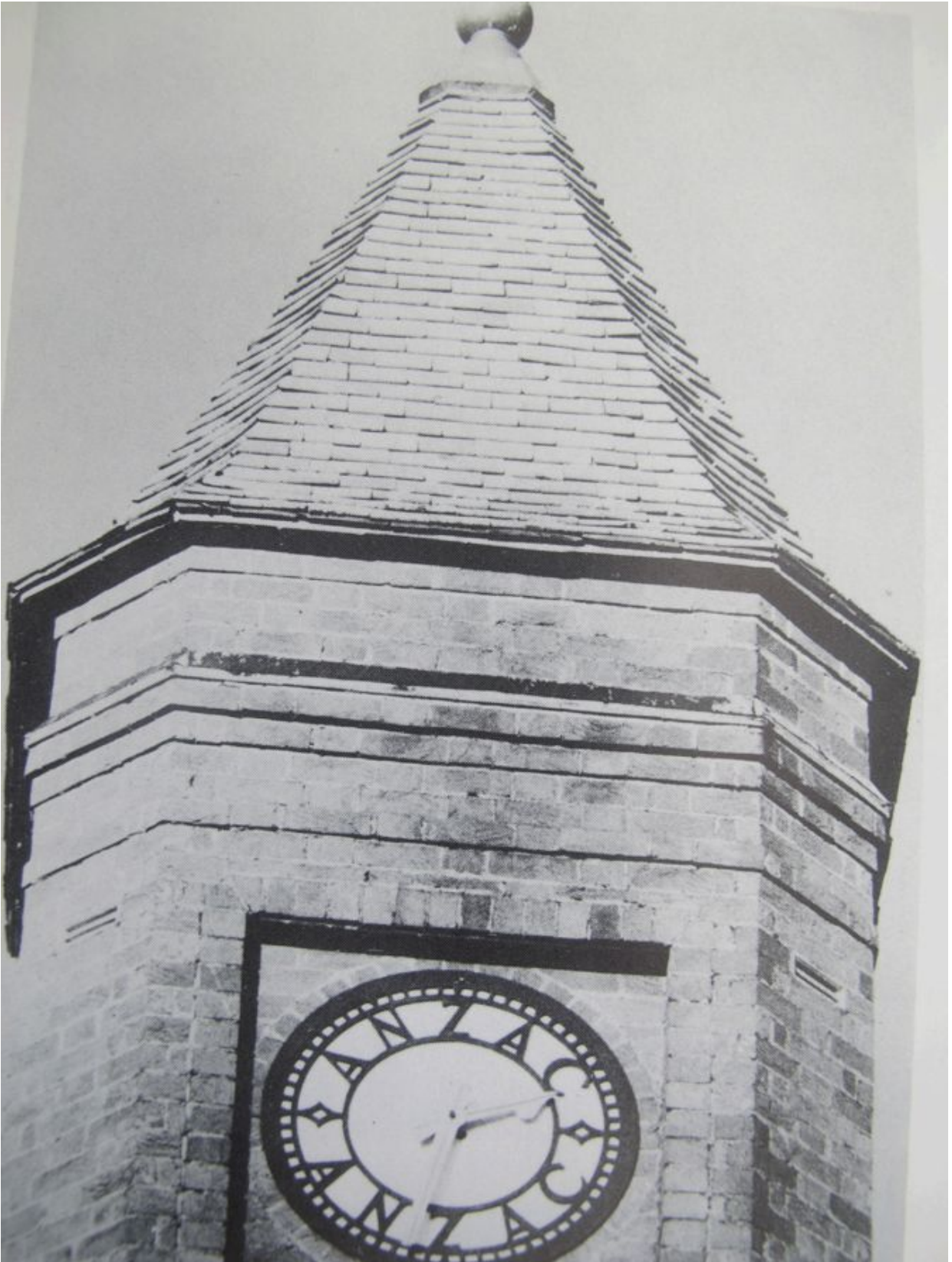


Figure 25.22 War memorial, Boorowa, NSW, Australia.



Figure 25.23 George Grosz, *Dedicated to Oskar Panizza* (1917–18).



Figure 25.24 Käthe Kollwitz, *The Parents*, German military cemetery in Vladslo, near Dixmuid, Belgium.

In 1934 the avant-garde sculptor Brancusi gave to the women of Târgu Jiu in Romania, where he was born, a war memorial which encompassed the whole city. It is a stone 'table of silence', surrounded by twelve empty chairs (Fig. 25.25). Even the Apostles are marked by their absence; there are no guests at this commemorative feast. Here is a site of empty houses, a tiny and un-heroic triumphal arch, an abstraction of Brancusi's already abstract sculpture *The Kiss*; we only see the lovers' eyes, through which all that remains is their tears. At the other end of the city, in steel, cast-iron and brass, is a giant *Unending Column*, a geometric set of vertebrae, 30 metres high, standing by means of the skill of an engineer – abstract, set in relation to other elements recalling war and technical progress, and yet without survivors or heroes. In this commemorative landscape, as in Brancusi's column, mourning never ends.



Figure 25.25 Emile Brancusi, war memorial, *Table of Silence* (1934–7), Târgu-Giu, Romania.





Figure 25.26 Emile Brancusi, war memorial, *Unending Column* (1934–7), Târgu-Giu, Romania.

- 1 Hans Beltrung, *Pour une anthropologie des images* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), p. 185.
- 2 Walter Benjamin, ‘L’œuvre d’art à l’ère de sa reproductibilité technique’, (first version) in his *Œuvres*, vol. III (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), p. 176. (Original German version, 1936.)
- 3 Kurt Tucholsky (1890–1935) alias Ignaz Wrobel, ‘Une arme contre la guerre’, *Die Weltbühne*, 22:8, 23 February 1926, cited by Olivier Lugon, *La photographie en Allemagne: Anthologie de textes (1919–1939)* (Paris: Jacqueline Chambon, 1997), p. 23.



1 Widow's dress, 1914.

Casualties in the first five months of the conflict were greater than at any other phase of the war. The bloodbath made bereavement an immediate reality in wartime; mourning did not await the end of the conflict. It was there from the beginning.

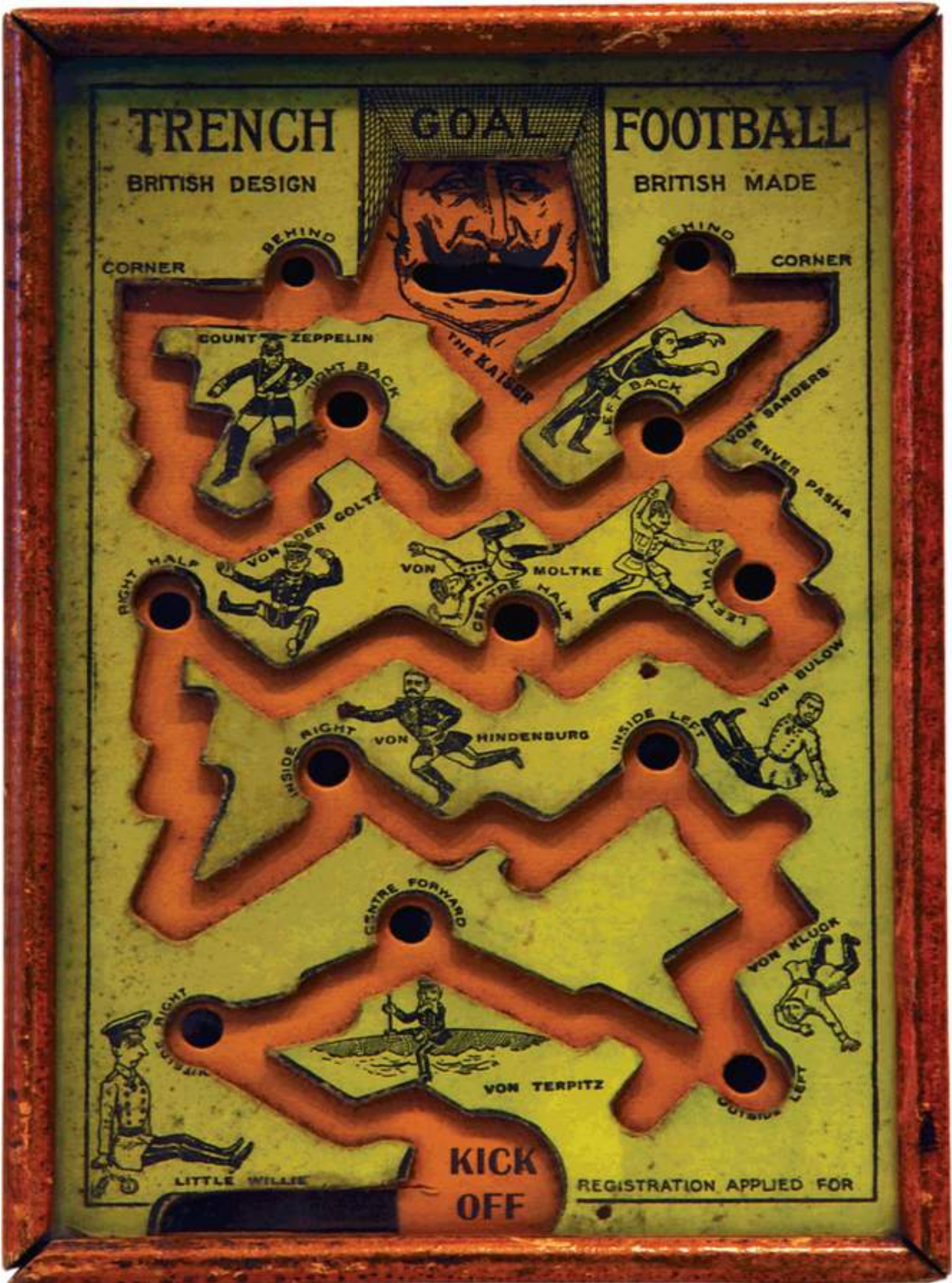




2 Widow and son in black. 7 March 1915, Bethune, France
Contemporary language termed children 'orphans' when their fathers died in the war. The face of this child hints of their fate, captured by Albert Camus in his posthumously published autobiography, *The First Man*.



3 Clemenceau the tiger, ceramic.
Children's toys and household trinkets took on the coloration of the war. Leaders were domesticated from the start of the conflict. This toy celebrated the appellation 'the Tiger' for the French premier, who embodied the unshakeable determination of the French people during the war.



4 Game of trench football.

'British made' and 'British designed', this board game cashed in on reports that British soldiers 'kicked off' the Battles of Loos in 1915 and the Somme in 1916 by booting a football into no-man's-land.



5 Skittles: bowling over 'Kamerades'.

Grand Bazar Parisien, Saint Briec

This papier-mâché model of war as an exercise in skittles was part of a vigorous production of bric-a-brac for domestic consumption in wartime. Laughter was a way of bearing the burdens of war, not of ignoring them.





6 Toys of the Louvre, 1917.

From the cover of a toy catalogue sold by the Louvre for Christmas, 1917. These images of toys and paper cut-outs of soldiers with women in attendance added a touch of elegance to the grimness of war. These were clearly made for an elevated social class.



7 German Women in Wartime, by Kate Holff. *Kriegsbilderbogen-Woche*, No.4, Berlin, 1916

This design of various forms of female labour in wartime bypassed elegance for some bracing reality. Backbreaking agricultural labour shared space with women's postal work, teaching and child-rearing. Industrial work, in contrast, is not portrayed.

LES FABLES DE LA FONTAINE
LE LOUP
ET L'AGNEAU





8 Wartime seduction, according to the *Fables* of La Fontaine. Sexual foreplay on a French postcard presenting a wolf in uniform and a lamb with modestly downcast eyes. Her chaste resistance is not recommended.



9 Refugees on the road, helped by soldiers.

The elderly woman, with her back to a British soldier helping to manoeuvre a wagon of refugees, was one of millions of civilians on the road throughout the war. In the Great War the refugee on the move became the icon of the twentieth century.



10 Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, *Civilians under German Occupation*. France, 1915

This lithograph was by a well-known artist who painted the poor and the downcast. A student of theology, Steinlen added a Madonna and child sketched on the lower right of the drawing. The vivid presentation of the young and the aged being transported under the gaze of German soldiers caught the outrage of Frenchmen at the fate of their compatriots behind German lines.

An der
Somme



11 Guide to tourist attractions on the Somme for German soldiers. 'With 321 illustrations', this guide book presents opportunities for tourism available to the occupying German army. Boredom was a constant worry to military authorities seeking licit alternatives to illicit distractions for men behind the lines.

AVIS

Les citoyens français

Auguste EVRARD, maire d'Anguilcourt,

Aristide FRICOTAUX, maire d'Anguilcourt,

Auguste DERBOIS, garde champêtre,

ont été fusilés dans la citadelle de Laon le
14 Mars 1916 parce qu'ils avaient caché deux
soldats français.

Vervins, le 19 Mars 1916.

L'Inspekteur d'Etape.

The risk of hiding French soldiers evading capture behind the lines was made starkly apparent in this German army notice of 1916. The brutality of military occupation in France and Belgium was matched all over Eastern Europe and in the Balkans.



13 French nurses attending to wounded soldiers. Women entered the narrative of the war through contact with male bodies. Nurses were subject to the same hazards of shelling as were the walking wounded for whom they provided comfort and something to drink both near and behind the front.



14 Georges Duhamel playing the flute.

The surgeon–writer Duhamel, author of *Civilisation 1914–1917* (1918), a title to be read as an oxymoron, won the Prix Goncourt in 1918. During the war, he struggled with fatigue over extended periods operating on wounded men. Facing this avalanche of suffering, he played the flute when he could, to keep his balance and his sanity.



15 Georges Duhamel's flute and surgical bag. Duhamel's family left the instruments of his wartime life to the Historial de la Grande Guerre at Péronne.



16 Embroidery, 'After Combat', by G. Wéllèle.

This is an *image d'Epinal*, a popular art form, depicting the medical care one French soldier received immediately after he was wounded and taken prisoner. He spent three years in captivity in Mumsdorf prisoner-of-war camp in Saxony. Being a prisoner, he could not use a gun; instead his use of embroidery, a conventionally female art form, shows some of the ambiguity of gender roles in wartime.



17 *Madness*, lithograph by Jean Veber, 1914.

In September 1914, Veber, a nationalist cartoonist before the war for the journal *Gil Blas*, presents the shock of war etched in blood on the face of a French soldier returning from battle.



18 *Suffering*, drawing by Alexandre Zinoviev.
Arriving from Russia in Paris in 1909, Zinoviev joined the French Foreign

Legion. His image of a man whose foot was blown off was a rare instance of artists representing soldiers without limbs. Suffering and death were portrayed, but (with exceptions) dismemberment was by and large taboo. After the war, many artists addressed this.



19 *Dead Sentry in the Trench*, probably a suicide, lithograph by Otto Dix. Germany, 1924

Part of Dix's 1923–4 series 'The War', this print of a soldier's skeleton shows that other soldiers probably kept it in this position. Had the soldier decided to end his life this way, his helmet would have been blown to pieces.



20 *Christ Speaking to the Soldiers* by Will Longstaff.

Painting, Oil on Canvas

An Australian artist of religious or spiritual allegories, Longstaff captured the sense that on the battlefields of France and Belgium, both the dead and the sacred were alive. Soldiers' suffering was likened to the passion of Christ, and became one of the Christian clichés of war.





21 Trench art: crucifix made out of bullets by B. Riou (1915).
'A memento of the campaign of 1914–15', this original use of bullets to

fashion a crucifix is mounted on a Golgotha displaying an artillery piece. Artillery mutilated and killed with much greater efficiency than did single cartridges.



À MON ÉPOUX CHÉRI


TERRIBLE GUERRE, toi qui m'a enlevé mon bien-aimé où tu n'as mis à la place plus que des pleurs et n'a pas voulu notre bonheur.

Tu m'as fait quitter ma robe d'épouse pour prendre le grand voile de la veuve éplorée. Pourquoi! Étais-tu jalouse de notre bonheur?

À trente-huit ans, mon mari bien-aimé, tu as quitté ta femme chérie pour venger ta Patrie me laissant peu d'espoir et à trente-neuf ans, après un an de souffrances endurées, tu m'as quitté, hélas pour toujours, me laissant le cœur brisé.

Maintenant pour me consoler, il ne me reste plus qu'à aller m'agenouiller sur cette pierre glacée.

*Adieu mon mari chéri
Je te pleurerai toute ma vie.*





22 Widow's enameled memorial plate, 'To my dear husband'. Addressing war directly – 'Dreadful war' – this widow poured out her heart over the loss of her husband killed at the age of thirty-nine, leaving her only to kneel 'on frozen stone'. This object is a personal relic of the relentless slaughter in the last years of the war.



IN
LOVING
MEMORY
OF

CAPT D.L.H. BAYNES. M.C.
115 SIEGE BATT RGA

KILLED
IN
ACTION
14/10/18



23 Battlefield cross of D. L. H. Baynes, killed 1918, returned to family. An undergraduate at Clare College, Cambridge, Baynes died on 14 October 1918. His mother donated the wooden cross over his grave to his college, which in turn donated it to the Historial de la Grande Guerre, Péronne.





24 Henri Barbusse in the trenches.

Winner of the Prix Goncourt in 1917 for his semi-autobiographical novel *Under Fire*, Barbusse captured the rough language of the infantry, and used the prize to found a veterans' organization L'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants (ARAC). In the 1920s he became a leading Communist writer, but never again matched the power of *Under Fire*.

20 Avril 1915

Les obus miaulent en boche
comme chat~~g~~-volants, en débanché
Les notes, chantent en poils
Infrépidés et résolus.
C'est le printemps: des ~~piés~~ ^{la reine}
Blanchit en l'air. Flo raison.

Je pars ottes mont et val et plain
Je suis agent de liaison.
Le rossignol chante qu'il m'aime
Mon cheval s'appelle houlou.
C'est un monton et c'est un bap;
Il est comme l'Amour lui-même
Guillaume Apollinaire
Le brigadier J. de Kozłowski
38^e Rgt Artil. de camp.
45^e batterie
secteur postal 59

25 Guillaume Apollinaire, autograph manuscript, 20 April 1915.
This draft poem, dated 20 April 1915, is signed by Apollinaire both in his nom de plume and in his original Polish name. He gained French citizenship through his voluntary military service, but died just before the end of the war of the Spanish flu.



26 Solidarity: veterans of the Great War and one widow. Veterans of several countries in a pose of brotherhood with male comrades and one widow, with numbers identified on the back of the photo. The fictive kinship of the survivors of the Great War gave the veterans' movements a powerful coherence in many countries, and in France a pacifist mission.



27 Prosthetic eye, nose, eye glasses and skin.

A British prosthetic mask to enable disfigured veterans to cover their wounds and rejoin civilian life. In part, post-war surrealism grew out of the mutilation of millions of bodies and minds during the war.

Bibliographical essays

1 The couple

Martha Hanna

The history of the married couple during the Great War is situated at the intersection of three distinct historiographies: the combatant's connection to the home front; the history of domestic life in wartime; and the history of affect, emotions and sexuality during and after the war. Scholars who have worked in these fields, even when they have not concentrated exclusively on the experiences of married couples, have contributed significantly to how we understand married couples and their experiences of the war.

Fundamental to our understanding of how soldiers thought about, imagined and remained connected to the home front, and especially to their wives, parents and children at home, is Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau's *Men at War 1914–1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War*, trans. Helen McPhail (Oxford: Berg, 1992). Marie-Monique Huss provides an analysis of postcards from the war years to reveal how European society visualised connections between husbands and wives in *Histoires de famille, 1914/1918: cartes postales et cultures de guerre* (Paris: Noesis, 2000). On letter-writing and its centrality to wartime marriage, see Martha Hanna, 'A republic of letters: the epistolary tradition in France during World War I', *American Historical Review*, 108:5 (2003), pp. 1338–61, and Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine: Paul and Marie Pireaud in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). For an analysis of the affective connections between British combatants and their families at homes – husbands and wives as well as sons and parents – see Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (University of Chicago Press, 1996), ch. 3; Helen B. McCartney, *The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), ch. 5; and Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester University Press,

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2 Children

Manon Pignot

The historiography of children's experiences of the Great War is still largely dependent on a national approach, a state readily explained by the nature of the sources, which tend to be fragmentary and diffuse, making their collection difficult for foreign researchers, and by the necessity of in-depth knowledge of cultural, educational and familial systems.

The subject of children has traditionally been approached through the history of the family, within grand overviews; the same holds true for the historiography of the First World War, but here we restrict ourselves to works that are child-oriented. If we except two foundational works published in 1993, the majority of references indicated here have been published since 2000, an indubitable sign that the exploration of this still new field of study is far from over.

As for the history of youth, it has been approached first and foremost from a social and political point of view, notably through the history of youth movements, such as Gudrun Fiedler's *Jugend im Krieg: Bürgerliche Jugendbewegung, Erster Weltkrieg und sozialer Wandel 1914–1923* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1989).

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War cultures

Among the studies defining or discussing the notions of 'war cultures' and 'children's mobilisation' are Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *La guerre des enfants 1914–1918: essai d'histoire culturelle* (Paris: A. Colin, 1993; new edn 2004); Eberhard Demm, 'Deutschlands Kinder im Ersten Weltkrieg: Zwischen Propaganda und Sozialfürsorge', *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift*, 60:1 (2001), pp. 51–98; Andrea Fava, 'Riflessioni e spunti di ricerca sulla "mobilitazione dell'infanzia"', in Maria Cristina Giuntella and Isabella Nardi (eds.), *La guerra dei bambini: da Sarajevo a Sarajevo* (Pérouse: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1998), pp. 69–78.

Several works concentrate on the specific study of the cultural effects of the Great War on children's literature, games and toys, or school, such as Aaron J. Cohen, 'Flowers of evil: mass media, child psychology and the struggle for Russia's future during the First World War', in James Marten (ed.), *Children and War: A Historical Anthology* (New York University Press, 2002), pp. 38–49; Andrew Donson, 'Models for young nationalists

and militarists: youth literature in the First World War', *German Studies Review*, 27 (2004), pp. 575–94; Olivier Loubès, *L'école et la patrie: histoire d'un désenchantement, 1914–1940* (Paris: Belin, 2001); Sonja Müller, 'Toys, games and juvenile literature in Germany and Britain during the First World War: a comparison', in Heather Jones, Jennifer O'Brien and Christoph Schmidt-Supprian (eds.), *Untold War: New Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 233–57; Michael Paris, *Over the Top: The Great War and Juvenile Literature in Britain* (London: Praeger, 2004).

War and deviance

Among the fields most recently studied, the impact of the war on juvenile behaviour is still being explored. To begin with the phenomenon of underage enlistment by young adolescents: Tim Cook, "He was determined to go": underage soldiers in the Canadian Expeditionary Force', *Social History*, 41:81 (2008), pp. 41–74; Manon Pignot, 'Entrer en guerre, sortir de l'enfance? "Les ado-combattants" de la Grande Guerre', in Manon Pignot (ed.), *L'enfant-soldat. XIXe–XXIe siècle: une approche critique* (Paris: A. Colin, coll. 'Le fait guerrier', 2012), pp. 69–89; Richard Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War: Their Own Stories for the First Time* (London: Headline, 2005).

Another approach to studying the impact of the war on youth is the study of juvenile delinquency: see Victor Bailey, *Delinquency and Citizenship: Reclaiming the Young Offenders 1914–1948* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Sarah Bornhorst, *Selbstversorger, Jugendkriminalität während des Ersten Weltkriegs im Landgerichtsbezirk* (Ulm: UVK, 2010); Dorena Caroli, 'Les enfants abandonnés devant les tribunaux dans la Russie pré-révolutionnaire 1864–1917', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 38:3 (1997), pp. 367–85; Aurore François, *Guerres et délinquance juvénile: un demi-siècle de pratiques judiciaires et institutionnelles envers des mineurs en difficulté (1912–1950)* (Bruges: La Charte–die Keure, 2011); David Niget, *La naissance du tribunal pour enfants: une comparaison France Québec (1912–1945)* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009).

On children's experience of violence in wartime

Selected references on children confronting the violence of war and its repercussions on their generation: Margaret R. Higonnet, 'Picturing trauma in the Great War', in Elizabeth Goodenough and Andrea Immel (eds.), *Under Fire: Childhood in the Shadow of War* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), pp. 115–28; Antoine Rivière, "'Décisions spéciales": les enfants nés des viols allemands abandonnés à l'Assistance publique pendant la Grande Guerre (1914–1918)', in Raphaëlle Branche and Fabrice Virgili (eds.), *Viols en temps de guerre* (Paris: Payot, 2011), pp. 189–205; Andrea Süchting-Hänger, "'Kindermörder": Die Luftangriffe auf Paris, London und Karlsruhe im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre vergessenen Opfer', in Dittmar Dahlmann (ed.), *Kinder und Jugendliche in Krieg und Revolution* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2000), pp. 73–92. In the Ottoman Empire, and in particular in Anatolia, children's experience of violence is inseparably associated with their experience of the genocide. Several accounts have played an important role in our knowledge of the event as it was lived by children, and also in the memorialising of the massacre by the third or fourth generation: Fethiyé Cetin, *Anneannem* (2004), French edn: *Le livre de ma grand-mère* (Paris: Éditions de l'Aube, 2006); Ayse Gül Altınay and Fethiyé Cetin (eds.), *Torunlar* (Istanbul: Metis Yayinlari, 2009), French edn: *Les petits-enfants* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2011); Thea Halo, *Not Even My Name: A True Story* (New York: Picador, 2001).

To confront the violence of war is necessarily to confront the question of bereavement in all its forms. Several studies focus on bereavement and its aftermath in the post-war period: Olivier Faron, *Les enfants du deuil: orphelins et pupilles de la nation de la Première Guerre mondiale (1914–1941)* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001); Bruce C. Scates, 'Imagining Anzac: children's memories of the killing fields of the Great War', in James Marten (ed.), *Children and War: A Historical Anthology* (New York University Press, 2002), pp. 50–62.

Last, two recent studies that attempt to examine the impact of the war on the adults-to-be of the children's generation of 1914: Andrew Donson, 'Why did German youth become fascists? Nationalist males born 1900 to 1908 in war and revolution', *Social History*, 31 (2006), pp. 337–58; and Bérénice Zunino, 'Pacifisme et violence: femmes et enfants dans la pédagogie de la paix d'Ernst Friedrich', *Les cahiers Irice*, 8 (2011–12), pp. 111–36.

3 Families

Jay Winter

To write about families at war requires attention to a vast literature, touching on diverse themes in demographic, sociological, political, anthropological and literary history.

On the demographic history of the war, see the collective history of Paris, London and Berlin published in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1997–2007). For Britain and for comparative statistics, see Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (London: Macmillan, 1985).

On the upheaval in family life, see Jay Winter and Richard Wall (eds.), *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1987); Manon Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie: génération Grande Guerre* (Paris: Seuil, 2012); Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany 1914–1923*, trans. Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2007); and Erica A. Kuhlman, *Of Little Comfort: War Widows, Fallen Soldiers, and the Remaking of the Nation after the Great War* (New York University Press, 2012) For mourning practices, see Pat Jalland, *Death in War and Peace: Loss and Grief in England, 1914–1970* (Oxford University Press, 2009); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), chs. 2 and 11; and D. Cannadine, 'War and death, grief and mourning in modern Britain', in J. Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (London: Europa Press, 1981), pp. 187–242.

On the possibility that there was a crisis in patriarchy during the war, see Elizabeth Domansky, 'Militarization and reproduction in World War I Germany', in Geoff Eley (ed.), *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), and for the opposite view see Jay Winter, 'War, family, and fertility in twentieth-century Europe', in John R. Gillis, Louise A. Tilly and David Levine (eds.),

The European Experience of Declining Fertility, 1850–1970 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 291–309.

On state policies to help children whose fathers died in the war, see Olivier Faron, *Les enfants du deuil: orphelins et pupilles de la nation de la Première Guerre mondiale (1914–1941)* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001), and Antoine Prost and Jay Winter, *René Cassin et les droits de l’Homme: le projet d’une generation* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), ch. 2.

On the insight of writers on the devastating effects of the war on their family lives, see Doris Lessing, *Alfred and Emily* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008), and the interview with Pat Barker by Kennedy Fraser, ‘Ghost writer’, *New Yorker*, 17 March 2008, pp. 41–5. An astonishing and unfinished account of family life lived in the shadow of the Great War is Albert Camus’s *Le premier homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995).

On the politics of the rescue of women and children in the aftermath of the Armenian genocide, see Keith David Watenpaugh, ‘The League of Nations’ rescue of Armenian genocide survivors and the making of modern humanitarianism, 1920–1927’, *American Historical Review*, 115:5 (2010), pp. 1315–39.

On letter-writing and codes of communication between soldiers and families, see Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie*, and Aribert Reimann, *Der grosse Krieg der Sprachen: Untersuchungen zur historischen Semantik in Deutschland und England zur Zeit des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Essen: Klartext, 2000).

4 War work

Laura Lee Downs

The question of women’s war work has produced an extensive literature, one that is centred not only on the world of paid labour but on the various forms of unpaid work (nursing, ambulance-driving, charitable work, etc.) that women undertook in wartime. As recent historiography has stressed, those ill-paid or unpaid labours extended, in a time of total war, to the ever more burdensome work of raising – and more particularly feeding – a family.

On waged labour, you can begin with Gail Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War* (London: Croom Helm, 1981); and Gail Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914–1918* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2003); Barbara Clements, *Daughters of Revolution: A History of Women in the USSR* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1994); Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake (eds.), *Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ute Daniel, *The War From Within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War* (Oxford: Berg, 1997); Laura Lee Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality: Gender Division in the French and British Metalworking Industries, 1914–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); and Laura Lee Downs, ‘Les mairaines élues de la paix sociale? Les surintendantes d’usine et la rationalisation du travail en France, 1917–1935’, *Le Mouvement social*, 164 (1993), pp. 53–76; Mathilde Dubesset, Françoise Thébaud and Catherine Vincent, ‘The female munition workers of the Seine’, in Patrick Fridenson (ed.), *The French Home Front 1914–1918* (Oxford: Berg, 1992); Jane McDermid and Anna Hillyar, *Midwives of the Revolution: Female Bolsheviks and Women Workers in 1917* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1999); Françoise Thébaud, *La femme au temps de la guerre de 14* (Paris: Stock, 1986); and Françoise Thébaud, ‘The Great War and the triumph of sexual division’, in Françoise Thébaud (ed.), *A History of Women in the West*, vol. v: *Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Deborah Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls: Women Workers in World War One* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998); Angela Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend: Munitions Workers in the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Luigi Tomassini, ‘Industrial mobilization and the labour market in Italy during the First World War’, *Social History*, 16:1 (1991), pp. 59–87; and Luigi Tomassini, ‘The home front in Italy’, in Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996); On various types of work, paid and unpaid, that were conceived as patriotic services, see Margaret Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories from the Homefront* (Providence, RI: Berg, 2000); and Margaret Darrow, ‘French volunteer nursing and the myth of war experience in World War I’, *American Historical Review*, 101:1 (1996), pp. 89–106; Henriette Donner, ‘Under the cross: why VADs performed the

filthiest task in the dirtiest war: Red Cross volunteers, 1914–1918’, *Journal of Social History*, 30:3 (1997), pp. 687–704; Billie Melman (ed.), *Borderlines: Genders and Identities in War and Peace, 1870–1930* (London: Routledge, 1998); Janet Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914–1923* (Oxford: Berg, 2007).

On the linked issues of domestic labour, consumption and social protest one can usefully consult Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Laura Lee Downs, ‘Women’s strikes and the politics of popular egalitarianism in France, 1916–1918’, in Lenard Berlanstein (ed.), *Rethinking Labor History: Essays in Discourse and Class Analysis* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Barbara Engel, ‘Not by bread alone: subsistence rioting in Russia during World War I’, *Journal of Modern History*, 69:4 (1997), pp. 696–721; Peter Gatrell, *Russia’s First World War: A Social and Economic History* (London: Longman, 2005); Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Daniel Kaiser, *The Workers Revolution in Russia, 1917: The View from Below* (Cambridge University Press, 1987); Daniel Kaiser, *Moscow Workers and the 1917 Revolution* (Princeton University Press, 1981); Diane Koenker and William Rosenberg, *Strikes and Revolution in Russia, 1917* (Princeton University Press, 1989); Giovanna Procacci, ‘Popular protest and labour conflict in Italy, 1915–1918’, *Social History*, 14:1 (1989), pp. 31–58; Giovanna Procacci, ‘La protesta delle donne delle campagne in tempo di guerra’, *Annali Cervi*, 13 (1991), pp. 57–86; Stephen Anthony Smith, ‘Gender and class: women’s strikes in St Petersburg, 1895–1917, and Shanghai, 1895–1927’, *Social History*, 19:2 (1994), pp. 141–68; Richard Wall and Jay Winter (eds.), *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1997–2007).

On the gendered politics of social welfare and social control, see Gisela Bock, ‘Poverty and mothers’ rights in the emerging welfare states’, in Françoise Thébaud (ed.), *A History of Women: Toward a Cultural Identity*

in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Elizabeth Domanksy, 'Militarization and reproduction in World War I Germany', in Geoff Eley (ed.), *Society, Culture and the State in Germany, 1870–1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); R. M. Douglas, *Feminist Freikorps: The British Voluntary Women Police 1914–1940* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999); Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Susan Grayzel, 'Liberating women? Examining gender, morality and sexuality in First World War Britain and France', in Gail Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914–1918* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2003); Philippa Levine, "'Walking the streets in a way no decent woman should": women police in World War I', *Journal of Modern History*, 66 (1994), pp. 34–78; Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914–1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1993); Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work and Welfare in Canada* (University of Toronto, 2000); Young-Sun Hong, 'World War I and the German welfare state: gender, religion and the paradoxes of modernity', in Geoff Eley (ed.), *Society, Culture and the State in Germany, 1870–1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

5 Men and women at home

Susan R. Grayzel

There is an ever growing body of literature that addresses the experiences of women and, to a much lesser extent, men beyond the official battle zones. The following are good starting points, but by no means stopping points, for those wishing to learn more.

For a general overview of civilians as such, see Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World At War* (New York University Press, 2011); for family and domestic life, see Catherine Rollet, 'The home and family life', in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities At War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, vol. II: *A Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 333–5, and Richard Wall and Jay Winter (eds.), *The Upheaval of*

War: Family, Work, and Welfare in Europe, 1914–1918 (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

For an introduction to women's experiences, see Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (Harlow: Longman, 2002); and the wonderful collection of primary sources found in Margaret R. Higonnet, (ed.), *Lines of Fire: Women Writers of World War I* (New York: Plume, 1999). For men and women, see the essays in Gail Braybon (ed.) *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914–1918* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and John Tosh (eds.), *Masculinities in War and Peace: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester University Press, 2004); and Margaret R. Higonnet et al. (eds.), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

For specific case studies on a country-by-country basis, see, for Australia, Bruce Scates and Raelene Frances Scates, *Women and the Great War* (Cambridge University Press, 1997). For Austria-Hungary, Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Marsha L. Rozenblit, 'For fatherland and Jewish people: Jewish women in Austria during World War I', in Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee (eds.), *Authority, Identity, and the Social History of the Great War* (Providence, RI: Berghahn, 1995). For France, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *L'enfant de l'ennemi: 1914–1918* (Paris: Aubier, 1995); Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: humanitaire et culture de guerre* (Paris: Noesis, 1998); Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); Martha Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine: Paul and Marie Pireaud in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Ruth Harris, 'The "child of the barbarian": rape, race and nationalism in France during the First World War', *Past and Present*, 141 (October 1993), pp. 170–206; Helen McPhail, *The Long Silence: Civilian Life under the German Occupation of Northern France, 1914–1918* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999); and Françoise Thébaud, *La femme au temps de la guerre de 14* (Paris: Stock, 1986). For Great Britain, see the comparative studies of Laura Lee Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality: Gender Division in the French and British Metalworking Industries, 1914–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Susan

R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State in Britain and France* (Cambridge University Press, 1993); as well as Johanna Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace, 1914–28* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989); Nicoletta F. Gullace, *'The Blood of Our Sons': Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester University Press, 2009); and Janet S. K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). For Germany, Ute Daniel, *The War from Within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War*, trans. Margaret Ries (Oxford: Berg, 1997); Belinda Davis, *Homes Fires Burning: Food, Politics and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Elizabeth Domansky, ' Militarization and reproduction in World War I Germany', and Young-Sun Hong, 'World War I and the German welfare state: gender, religion, and the paradoxes of modernity', both in Geoff Eley (ed.), *Society, Culture and the State in Germany, 1870–1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996). For Italy, Allison Scardino Belzer, *Women and the Great War: Femininity under Fire in Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). For Russia, Barbara Alpern Engel, 'Not by bread alone: subsistence riots in Russia during World War I', *Journal of Modern History*, 69 (1997), pp. 696–721; Peter Gattrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during the First World War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). For other parts of Eastern Europe including Romania and Serbia, see Maria Bucur, 'Between the mother of the wounded and the Virgin of Jiu: Romanian women and the gender of heroism during the Great War', *Journal of Women's History*, 12:2 (2000), pp. 30–56; Jovana Knezevic, 'Prostitutes as a threat to national honor in Habsburg-occupied Serbia during the Great War', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 20:2 (2011), pp. 312–35; and essays in Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (eds.), *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). For the United States, Lottie Gavin, *American*

Women in World War I: They Also Served (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1997); Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

For works that treat the political aspects of wartime domestic life, including aid for women and children, the role of women's organisations, and the struggle for women's suffrage, see Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890–1970: The Maternal Dilemma* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Birgitta Bader-Zaar, 'Women's suffrage and war: World War I and political reform in a comparative perspective', in Irma Sulkunen, Seija-Leena Nevala-Nurmi and Pirjo Markkola (eds.), *Suffrage, Gender and Citizenship: International Perspectives on Parliamentary Reforms* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009); Gisela Bock and Pat Thane (eds.), *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States 1880s–1950s* (London: Routledge, 1991); Alison S. Fell and Ingrid Sharp (eds.), *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914–1919* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); and Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700–1950: A Political History* (Stanford University Press, 2000).

For works on gender and anti-militarist action at home during the war, see Frances H. Early, *World without War: How US Feminists and Pacifists Resisted World War I* (Syracuse University Press, 1997); Jill Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham: Feminism and AntiMilitarism in Britain since 1820* (London: Virago, 1989); David S. Patterson, *The Search for Negotiated Peace: Women's Activism and Citizen Diplomacy in World War I* (New York: Routledge, 2008); and Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton University Press, 1997).

Finally, for differing assessments of gendered post-war legacies, see Françoise Thébaud, 'The Great War and the triumph of sexual division', trans. Arthur Goldhammer, in Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot (eds.), *A History of Women: Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994), pp. 21–75; Joy Damousi, *The*

Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (Princeton University Press, 1993); Erika A. Kuhlman, *Of Little Comfort: War Widows, Fallen Soldiers, and the Remaking of the Nation after the Great War* (New York University Press, 2012); and Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: The Reconstruction of Gender in Postwar France* (University of Chicago Press, 1994).

6 At the front

Margaret Higonnet

Studies of women as nurses and auxiliaries were already appearing during the war, sometimes as chapters within the wider topic of women's work. Jules Combarieu, for example, devoted a chapter to nurses who had won medals of honour in *Les jeunes filles françaises et la Guerre* (Paris: Colin, 1916). Thekla Bowser's *The Story of British V.A.D. Work in the Great War* (London: Imperial War Museum, 2003; 1st edn 1917) included chapters on VAD service during air raids, in French hospitals in the 'zone of the armies', and in Serbia and India. German women leaders likewise reported on women's nursing and auxiliary work: on this subject, see Marie Elisabeth Lüders, 'Frauenarbeit in der Etappe und im besetzten Gebiet', *Deutscher Tagesanzeiger*, 28 August 1918.

Immediately following the war, Eva Shaw McLaren celebrated Elsie Inglis's work by editing *A History of the Scottish Women's Hospitals* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919). The Scottish Women's Hospitals, which sent a large number of women doctors to the front lines during the war, have continued to generate detailed studies: the French part of the story is told in Eileen Crofton, *The Women of Royaumont: A Scottish Women's Hospital on the Western Front* (East Linton, East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 1997); a collage of voices from the Eastern Front was put together by Audrey Fawcett Cahill (ed.), *Between the Lines: Letters and Diaries from Elsie Inglis's Russian Unit* (Edinburgh: Pentland, 1999); and Monica Krippner focuses on Serbia in *The Quality of Mercy: Women at War, Serbia 1915–18* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1980). Leah Leneman surveys medical women's work, with an emphasis on doctors, in 'Medical women at

war, 1914–1918’, *Medical History*, 38 (1994), pp. 160–77. A broad range of approaches to the history of British nursing in this period is provided in Christine Hallett and Alison Fell (eds.), *First World War Nursing: New Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

Lucy Noakes traces the struggle to establish auxiliary services in Britain in *Women in the British Army: War and the Gentle Sex, 1907–1948* (London: Routledge, 2006). British auxiliaries and the controversies over their mobilisation are also discussed by Diana Shaw, ‘The forgotten army of women: Queen Mary’s Army Auxiliary Corps’, in Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), pp. 365–79; Jenny M. Gould, ‘Women’s military service in First World War Britain’, in Margaret R. Higonnet *et al.*, *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987); and Krisztina Robert, ‘Gender, class and patriotism: women’s paramilitary units in First World War Britain’, *International History Review*, 19:1 (1997), pp. 52–65.

For Australian medical staff, recent work includes Ruth Rae, *Veiled Lives: Threading Australian Nursing History into the Fabric of the First World War* (Burward, NSW: College of Nursing, 2009), and Kirsty Harris, *More than Bombs and Bandages: Australian Army Nurses at Work in World War I* (Newport, NSW: Big Sky, 2010). Irish nursing is addressed in Yvonne McEwen, *It’s a Long Way to Tipperary’: British and Irish Nurses in the Great War* (Dunfermline: Cualann Press, 2006).

Modern historians of wartime French nursing include Françoise Thébaud, *La femme au temps de la guerre de 14* (Paris: Stock, 1986), a general book that set the groundwork for subsequent studies; Margaret H. Darrow included a sophisticated chapter on nursing in *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); Yvonne Knibiehler, who set war nursing into the context of a century of change in *Cornettes et blouses blanches: les infirmières dans la société française 1880–1980* (Paris: Hachette, 1984), focused on the war in ‘Les anges blancs: naissance difficile d’une profession féminine’, in Évelyne Morin-Rotureau (ed.), *1914–1918: Combats de femmes – les femmes, pilier de l’effort de guerre* (Paris: Éditions Autrement, 2004), pp. 47–63.

A helpful early German sourcebook containing reminiscences and excerpts from the diaries of many nurses is Elfriede von Pflugk-Harttung (ed.), *Frontschwester, ein deutsches Ehrenbuch* (Berlin: Bernard & Graefe, 1936). Useful data on the history of German nurses and auxiliaries appears in Ursula von Gersdorff's *Frauen im Kriegsdienst 1914–1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1969). One of the few critical studies of attitudes governing the history of nurses is Regina Schulte, 'The sick warrior's sister: nursing during the First World War', trans. Pamela Selwyn, in Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Harvey (eds.), *Gender Relations in German History: Power, Agency, and Experience in the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (London: UCL Press, 1996). The conflict between uniformed nurses and salaried auxiliaries not in uniform is laid out by Regina Bianca Schönberger, 'Motherly heroines and adventurous girls', in Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (eds.), *Home/Front: The Military, War, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Berg, 2002), pp. 87–114.

Several studies have been devoted to Italian women's medical service, starting with Italy's entry into the war in 1915: Stefania Bartoloni, *Italiane alla guerra: l'assistenza ai feriti 1915–1918* (Venice: Marsilio, 2003), presents military nursing, hospital trains and front-line first aid, together with an overview of diaries and memoirs, many of which recount work at the front. Nurses' work at the front is also the focus of her earlier collection, Stefania Bartoloni (ed.), *Donne al fronte: le infermiere volontarie nella grande guerra* (Naples: Jouvence, 1998). The record left by nurses is well laid out by Allison Scardino Belzer, *Women and the Great War: Femininity under Fire in Italy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

The American story begins before the country's entry into the war, as shown in the wide-ranging history by Dorothy and Carl J. Schneider, *Into the Breach: American Women Overseas in World War I* (New York: Viking 1991). From 1917 onwards, the creation of national service organisations to mobilise army nurses as well as other volunteer groups and auxiliaries is traced by Susan Zeiger, *In Uncle Sam's Service: Women Workers with the American Expeditionary Forces, 1917–1919* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999). Chapters on medical organisations and relief organisations also figure in Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva:*

American Women in the First World War (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

Eastern European women's contributions are an understudied field, but there are a few focused accounts such as Maria Bucur, 'Women's stories as sites of memory: gender and remembering Romania's world wars', in Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (eds.), *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 171–92; and Maria Bucur-Deckard, 'Remembering the Great War through autobiographical narratives', in Maria Bucur (ed.), *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), pp. 73–97.

Serious studies of women soldiers are inevitably focused on the Eastern Front: Richard Stites and Ann Eliot Griese, 'Russia: revolution and war', in Nancy Loring Goldman (ed.), *Female Soldiers – Combatants or Noncombatants? Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1982); Melissa K. Stockdale, "'My death for the motherland is happiness": women, patriotism, and soldiering in Russia's Great War, 1914–1917', *American Historical Review*, 109:1 (2004), pp. 78–116; and especially useful for the ample documentation, testimony from the period, and attention to the controversial image of the soldier is Laurie S. Stoff, *They Fought for the Motherland: Russia's Women Soldiers in World War I and the Revolution* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006).

7 Gender roles in killing zones

Joanna Bourke

A bibliography of gender and *combat* is necessarily narrower than one about gender and *war* more broadly defined. This selective bibliography is only representative of a much larger literature and does not claim to be comprehensive.

For a useful overview about the relationship between gender and combat, including valuable theoretical summaries, Joshua Goldstein's *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) remains the best single-volume text. An excellent overview of some of the historiographical controversies is provided by Jay

Winter and Antoine Prost in *Penser la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), published in English as *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

The socialisation to violence is addressed in a number of monographs. In the British context, helpful accounts can be found in Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857–1914* (Manchester University Press, 2004); and Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994). Andrew Donson's *Youth in the Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority in Germany, 1914–1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010) offers a particularly insightful account of the specificity of historical processes of socialisation. Donson argues that the war accentuated gender roles, and he also traces the complex ways in which German boys and girls were socialised into violence in ways that differed from elsewhere in Europe.

Two interesting volumes that problematise the home/military front dichotomy are Susan R. Grayzel's *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), and Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum's edited volume *Heimat-Front*, (Frankfurt: Campus Publishers, 2002), published in English as *Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth Century Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

Most monographs focus on the gendered experience of combat in one nation-state. A particularly rich history exists in the context of the Soviet Union, where women served in combat both as individuals in general units and in all-female combat units. One example is Laurie S. Stoff, *They Fought for the Motherland: Russia's Women Soldiers in World War I and the Revolution* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006). In the British context, Lucy Noakes's *Women in the British Army: War and the Gentle Sex, 1908–1948* (London: Routledge, 2006) deals with the tensions between the desire by many women to be accepted within the army and the anxieties of British officers and politicians. Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), provides a nuanced account focusing on British masculinities, as does Janet S. K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and*

the First World War in Britain (Cambridge University Press, 2004). For a book that spans the twentieth century, Angela K. Smith's edited volume, *Gender and Warfare in the Twentieth Century: Textual Representations* (Manchester University Press, 2004), provides a gendered analysis based on literary texts. Masculinity and femininity in twentieth-century wars are the theme of Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake's edited volume *Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1995). For a unique account based on the experience of men and women in the north of Ireland, see Jane G. V. McGaughey, *Ulster's Men: Protestant Unionist Masculinities and Militarization in the North of Ireland, 1912–1923* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012). Ethnic and racial tensions are also explored in books such as Mark Whelan's *The Great War and the Culture of the New Negro* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), in which he argues that African American servicemen forged an image of the 'New Negro', which fused martial heroism with patriarchal gentility and authority.

A more comparative approach is taken by Susan R. Grayzel in *Women and the First World War* (Harlow: Longman, 2002) (she focuses primarily on Europe and its colonies, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but she also explores the global dimension in the contexts of Japanese, Indian and African societies) and Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur's edited volume *Gender and War in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). Imperial masculinities at war are the focus of Santanu Das's edited volume *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), which explores gender and race in the context of China, Vietnam, India, Africa, France, Belgium, Germany, the Ottoman Empire, Jamaica, Britain, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.

Masculinity and trauma are perceptively analysed by Eric J. Leed in his pioneering *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 1979). This is also a theme in Joanna Bourke's two volumes about American and British experiences of combat: *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Press, 1996) and *An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London: Granta, 1999). The relationship between masculinity and sexual violence is explored by Joanna

Bourke in *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present* (London: Virago, 1999). Ana Carden-Coyne's *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism and the First World War* (Oxford University Press, 2009) provides a carefully crafted argument about masculinity, mutilation and reconstructing masculinities during and immediately after the war, as do Julie Anderson's *War Disability and Rehabilitation in Britain: 'Soul of a Nation'* (Manchester University Press, 2011) and Deborah Cohen's *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). In *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester University Press, 2009), Michael Roper makes a strong argument for the role of families in the emotional survival of combatants. In the French context, Leonard V. Smith's *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers' Testimony of the Great War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007) explores men's initiation into combat, death and killing, and survival. For a comparative British–German perspective, see Alexander Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale, and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

8 Refugees and exiles

Peter Gatrell and Philippe Nivet

For general comments and the point of view of activists, see Herman Folks, *The Human Costs of War* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), and Ruth Fry, *A Quaker Adventure: The Story of Nine Years' Relief and Reconstruction* (London: Nisbet, 1926). A classic packed with data compiled from numerous sources is Eugene M. Kulischer, *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948). For an anthropological work of great insight, see Liisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago University Press, 1995). Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: humanitaire et culture de guerre 1914–1918, populations occupées, déportés civils, prisonniers de guerre* (Paris: Noesis, 1998), is a pioneering work including the history of refugees. Philippe Nivet, *Les réfugiés français de la Grande Guerre, 'les*

Boches du Nord' (Paris: Economica, 2004), throws much light on the Western Front.

A fine synthesis on the history of Belgian war refugees is available in Michael Amara, *Des Belges à l'épreuve de l'exil: les réfugiés de la Première Guerre mondiale, France, Grande-Bretagne, Pays-Bas* (Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2008). For the chaos produced by occupation and displacement in Belgium, see Sophie de Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre mondiale* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004). An important work on administrative arrangements concerning Belgian refugees is Peter Cahalan, *Belgian Refugee Relief in England during the Great War* (New York: Garland, 1982). See also Tony Kushner, 'Local heroes: Belgian refugees in Britain during the First World War', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 18 (1999), pp. 1–28. For problems on the Allied side, see Pierre Purseigle, "'A wave on to our shores": the exile and resettlement of refugees from the Western Front, 1914–1918', *Contemporary European History*, 16 (2007), pp. 427–44, and for the flight of refugees to the Netherlands, see Evelyn de Roodt, *Oorlogsgasten: Vluchtelingen en krijgsgevangenen in Nederland tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Zaltbommel: Europese Bibliotheek, 2000).

For material on various aspects of the aftermath of the war in Eastern Europe, consult Nick P. Baron and Peter Gatrell (eds.), *Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in the Former Russian Empire, 1918–1924* (London: Anthem Books, 2004). There is much of general interest in Mark Levene, 'The tragedy of the rimlands: nation-state formation and the destruction of imperial peoples, 1912–48', in Panikos Panayi and Pippa Virdee (eds.), *Refugees and the End of Empire: Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration in the Twentieth Century* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2011), pp. 51–78, and in Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), which is an original interpretation of population and cultural politics in the Baltic region.

For scholarship on Italian refugees displaced in Austria and Italy, see Bruna Bianchi (ed.), *La violenza contro la popolazione civile nella Grande Guerra, deportati, profughi, internati* (Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, 2006), as well as Matteo Ermacora, 'Assistance and surveillance: war refugees in Italy, 1914–1918', *Contemporary European History*, 16 (2007), pp. 445–60.

On Austria, see David Rechter, 'Galicia in Vienna: Jewish refugees in the First World War', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 28 (1997), pp. 113–30, and Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). The latter is an informative monograph on a neglected topic.

The first attempt at a comprehensive history of population displacement in tsarist Russia is Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). See also his essay, Peter Gatrell, 'World wars and population displacement in Europe in the twentieth century', *Contemporary European History*, 16 (2007), pp. 415–26, as well as Joshua A. Sanborn, 'Unsettling the empire: violent migrations and social disaster in Russia during World War I', *Journal of Modern History*, 77 (2005), pp. 290–324. For Russian scholarship, see A. Kirzhnits, 'Bezhenstvo', in *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia* (Moscow: izdatel'stvo sovetskogo entsiklopediia, 1926), vol. v, cols. 176–8; A. N. Kurtsev, 'Bezhenstsy pervoi mirovoi voiny v Rossii', *Voprosy istorii*, 8 (1999), pp. 98–113; and S. G. Nelipovich, 'V poiskakh "vnutrennego vraga": deportatsionnaia politika Rossii 1914–1915', in A. Kruchinin (ed.), *Pervaia mirovaia voina i uchastie v nei Rossii 1914–1918* (Moscow: Gotika, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 51–64. See also the important studies of tsarist policy and its consequences by Eric Lohr, 'The Russian army and the Jews: mass deportations, hostages, and violence during World War I', *Russian Review*, 60 (2001), pp. 404–19; and Eric Lohr, *Nationalising the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). On the zemstvos, see Olga Pichon-Bobrinckoy, 'Action publique, action humanitaire pendant le premier conflit mondial: les zemstvos et les municipalités', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 46 (2005), pp. 673–98, and the much older Tikhon Polner, *Russian Local Government during the War and the Union of Zemstvos* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1930). For a first-person account, see Violetta Thurstan, *The People who Run: Being the Tragedy of the Refugees in Russia* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916). For Jewish life in this turbulent period, see Steven J. Zipperstein, 'The politics of relief: the transformation of Russian Jewish communal life during the First World War', *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, 4 (1988), pp. 22–40. On the Ukraine, see the first study available on refugees: Lubov M. Zhvanko, *Bizhenstvo*

pershoi svitovoi viini v Ukraini, 1914–1918rr: dokumenti i materialii (Kharkov: KhNAMG, 2010).

On the origins of ethnic cleansing in this period, see T. Hunt Tooley, ‘World War I and the emergence of ethnic cleansing in Europe’, in Steven B. Várdy and T. Hunt Tooley (eds.), *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 2003), pp. 63–97.

On the Armenian genocide, see Leshu Torchin, ‘Ravished Armenia: visual media, humanitarian advocacy and the formation of witnessing publics’, *American Anthropologist*, 108 (2006), pp. 214–20, and Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913–50* (Oxford University Press, 2011). This is an outstanding study of population displacement including the fate of Armenians in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. For some useful data, and some controversial interpretations, see Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821–1922* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1995). On the post-genocide rescue of forced converts, see Keith Watenpaugh, ‘The League of Nations’ rescue of Armenian genocide survivors and the making of modern humanitarianism, 1920–1927’, *American Historical Review*, 115:5 (2010), pp. 1315–39.

On Serbia, see Muriel Paget, *With our Serbian Allies* (London: Serbian Relief Fund, 1915), and Andrej Mitrović, *Serbia’s Great War 1914–1918* (London: Hurst, 2007). For a first-person account, see M. I. Tatham, ‘The great retreat in Serbia in 1915’, in C. B. Purdom (ed.), *Everyman at War: Sixty Personal Narratives of the War* (London: Dent, 1930), pp. 374–9.

9 Minorities

Panikos Panayi

Despite the emergence of the minorities question at the end of the Great War and its significance in the history of interwar Europe, we do not yet have a synthesis of the history of ethnic groups during the conflict, especially one that compares immigrants, dispersed groups and localised populations. This means that we need to piece together the experiences of minorities as a whole by utilising work on individual nation-states, which has emerged in recent decades. A starting point for the treatment of

outsiders in both world wars on a global scale is Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia during the Two World Wars* (Oxford: Berg, 1993). For a broader theoretical perspective, see Anthony D. Smith, 'War and ethnicity: the role of warfare in the formation, self-images and cohesion of ethnic communities', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 4 (1981), pp. 375–97.

Much work has recently emerged on the treatment of German minorities. The pioneer in this area was Frederick C. Luebke, who published two important works: *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974) and *Germans in Brazil: A Comparative History of Cultural Conflict during World War I* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987). For issues of loyalty in the USA more generally during the Great War, see Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford University Press, 2010). Much work has surfaced on the position of Germans in Britain during the Great War, including J. C. Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain, 1914–1918* (London: Garland, 1986); Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War* (Oxford: Berg, 1991); Thomas Boghardt, *Spies of the Kaiser: German Covert Operations in Great Britain during the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Nicoletta F. Gullace, 'Friends, aliens and enemies: fictive communities and the Lusitania riots of 1915', *Journal of Social History*, 39 (2005), pp. 345–67; Stefan Manz, *Migranten und Internierte: Deutsche in Glasgow, 1864–1918* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2003); and Panikos Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain: German Civilian and Combatant Internees during the First World War* (Manchester University Press, 2012). Several scholars have also tackled the position of Germans in the British Empire, notably Gerhard Fischer, *Enemy Aliens: Internment and the Home-Front Experience in Australia, 1914–1920* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989); and Andrew Francis, *'To Be Truly British We Must be Anti-German': New Zealand, Enemy Aliens and the Great War Experience* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012). Beyond the English-speaking world we can also point to a series of volumes that have dealt with the position of Germans in Russia, above all Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). In addition, Dittmar Dahlmann and Ralph

Tuchtenhagen (eds.), *Zwischen Reform und Revolution: Die Deutschen an der Volga* (Essen: Klartext, 1994), and Victor Dönninghaus, *Die Deutschen in der Moskauer Gesellschaft: Symbiose und Konflikte (1494–1941)* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2002), contain important sections on the First World War. Daniela Luigia Caglioti, *Vite parallele: una minoranza protestante nell'Italia dell'Ottocento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006), covers the Great War experience of the Germans in Italy. As a 'reverse' study, Matthew Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany: The Ruhleben Camp, 1914–18* (Manchester University Press, 2008), provides an excellent account of the position of an Allied minority in Germany.

Since the pioneering efforts of Vahakn Dadrian in particular, the Armenian genocide has increasingly moved to the centre of scholarly interest. Dadrian's *The History of the Armenian Genocide* (Oxford: Berghahn, 1995) sums up much of his work. Other key volumes include Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: History, Policy, Ethics* (London: Macmillan, 1992); Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (London: Constable, 2000); Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford University Press, 2005); and Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1996), deals with the consequences of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire for Muslims. Key works on the population exchange between Greece and Turkey following the end of the war include Bruce Clark, *Twice a Stranger: How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (London: Granta, 2007); and Dimitri Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece* (London: Hurst, 2002). Renee Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2003), sums up much of the most important research on this theme.

There is no one study that covers the European-wide experience of Jews during the Great War, although David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews of Europe 1789–1934* (Oxford University Press, 1999), deals with the key themes. Both German and Austrian Jews have received attention in recent

decades. For the former see, for example, Egmont Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969); Derek Penslar, 'The German-Jewish soldier: from participant to victim', *German History*, 29 (2011), pp. 423–44; and Tim Grady, *The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory* (Liverpool University Press, 2011). For Austria, see David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001); and Marsha L. Rozenblit, 'Sustaining Austrian "national" identity in crisis: the dilemma of Jews in Habsburg Austria, 1914–1919', in Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit (eds.), *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2005). Works that cover the Jewish experience in Russia include Mark Levene, 'Frontiers of genocide: Jews in the eastern war zones, 1914–1920 and 1941', in Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia during the Two World Wars* (Oxford: Berg, 1993); and Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827–1917: Drafted into Modernity* (Cambridge University Press, 2009). Both of these offer excellent insights. The leading work on French Jewry during the Great War is Philippe E. Landau, *Les Juifs de France et la Grande Guerre: un patriotisme républicain* (Paris, CNRS Éditions, 1999). Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876–1939* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), contains an important chapter on the First World War.

Major volumes on the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the emergence of nationalism and successor states include Leo Valiani, *The End of Austria-Hungary* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1973); Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815–1918* (London: Longman, 1989); and Mark Cornwall (ed.), *The Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (Exeter University Press, 1990). Benno Gammerl, *Untertanen, Staatsbürger und Andere: Der Umgang mit ethnischer Heteronität im Britischen Weltreich und im Habsburgreich 1867–1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), offers a comparative analysis of nationality in the Habsburg and British empires.

A starting point for Irish experiences, and the position of a variety of ethnic groups in Britain, is Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland*

(Oxford University Press, 2012). David Fitzpatrick in particular has dealt with Ireland in works that include David Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Ireland in the First World War* (Dublin: Trinity History Workshop, 1986); ‘The logic of collective sacrifice: Ireland and the British army, 1914–1918’, *Historical Journal*, 38 (1995), pp. 1017–30; and *The Two Irelands, 1912–1939* (Oxford University Press, 1998). See also Karen Stanbridge, ‘Nationalism, international factors and the “Irish question” in the era of the First World War’, *Nations and Nationalism*, 11 (2005), pp. 21–42; and Richard S. Grayson, *Belfast Boys: How Unionists and Nationalists Fought and Died Together in the First World War* (London: Continuum, 2009).

Much work has recently emerged on the recruitment of foreign workers and troops during the Great War. As a starting point see the excellent overview provided by Christian Koller, ‘The recruitment of colonial troops in Africa and Asia and their employment in Europe during the First World War’, *Immigrants and Minorities*, 26 (2008), pp. 111–33. Germany has received much coverage, including Friedrich Zunkel, ‘Die ausländischen Arbeiter in der deutschen Kriegswirtschaftspolitik des I. Weltkrieges’, in Gerhard A. Ritter (ed.), *Entstehung und Wandel der modernen Gesellschaft: Festschrift für Hans Rosenberg zum 65. Geburtstag* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970); and Jochen Oltmer, ‘Zwangsmigration and Zwangsarbeit – Ausländische Arbeitskräfte und bäuerliche Ökonomie im Deutschland des Ersten Weltkrieges’, *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, 27 (1998), pp. 135–68. There is also an excellent chapter on the Great War in Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labour in Germany, 1880–1980: Seasonal Workers/Forced Laborers/Guest Workers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990). For France, see two outstanding articles: John Horne, ‘Immigrant workers in France during World War One’, *French Historical Studies*, 14 (1985), pp. 57–88; and Tyler Stovall, ‘The color line behind the lines: racial violence in France during the Great War’, *American Historical Review*, 103 (1998), pp. 737–69. The best volume on Britain remains Peter Cahalan, *Belgian Refugee Relief in England during the Great War* (New York: Garland, 1982), which covers a group that provided an important source of labour.

10 Populations under occupation

Sophie De Schaepdrijver

There is as yet no synthesis of European military occupations during the First World War. Sophie De Schaepdrijver (ed.), 'Military occupations in First World War Europe', special issue of the journal *First World War Studies*, 4:1 (2013), assembles contributions on northern France, Belgium, German-occupied Poland, Serbia, Romania and Ukraine, as well as on forced labour in the West and the East. Reinhold Zilch's *Okkupation und Wahrung im Ersten Weltkrieg: Die Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Belgien und Russisch-Polen, 1914–1918* (Goldbach: Keip, 1994) is a rare comparative work, offering a close analysis of exploitation through currency manipulation. A framework to interpret Germany's occupations, specifically in the West, is suggested in Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). 'Caught between the lines', ch. 4 of Tammy M. Proctor's *Civilians in a World at War, 1914–1918* (New York University Press, 2010), makes good use of private diaries written by civilians under military occupation. The chapters on Romania and Belgium in Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), are still useful. Of particular interest is Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius's synthesis on 'German-occupied Eastern Europe', in John Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 447–63; see also Dennis Showalter, "'The East gives nothing back": the Great War and the German army in Russia', *Journal of the Historical Society*, 2:1 (2002), pp. 1–19.

Research on the German occupation of France has enjoyed a revival, with recent work by Annette Becker, *Les cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupees* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), and Philippe Nivet, *La France occupee 1914–1918* (Paris: A. Colin, 2011). See also James Connolly, 'Encountering Germany: Northern France and the Experience of Occupation during the First World War' (PhD thesis, King's College London, 2012), and Larissa Wegner, 'Deutsche Kriegsbesetzung in Nordfrankreich 1914–1918' (PhD thesis, Universitat Freiburg, in progress): the latter offers a rare view of the German perspective. For Belgium, research has further developed since the publication of Sophie De Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Premiere Guerre mondiale* (Amsterdam:

Atlas, 1997; Frankfurt: P.I.E.–Peter Lang, 2004); there is an overview in Sophie de Schaepdrijver, ‘Belgium’, in John Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 386–402. Michael Amara and Hubert Roland have superbly edited the reports by the head of the political department of the Government-General in Belgium, *Gouverner en Belgique occupée: Oscar von der Lancken-Wakenitz – Rapports d’activité 1915–1918. Édition critique* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004). Regarding governance and local authorities, see also Benoît Majerus, *Occupations et logiques policières: la police bruxelloise en 1914–1918 et 1940–1945* (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 2007). Great strides have been made in the scholarship on resistance, specifically secret intelligence, including its cultural impact: Laurence van Ypersele and Emmanuel Debruyne, *De la guerre de l’ombre aux ombres de la guerre: l’espionnage en Belgique durant la guerre 1914–1918. Histoire et mémoire* (Brussels: Labor, 2004); Emmanuel Debruyne and Jehanne Paternostre, *La résistance au quotidien 1914–1918: témoignages inédits* (Brussels: Racine, 2009); Emmanuel Debruyne and Laurence van Ypersele, *Je serai fusillé demain: les dernières lettres des patriotes belges et français fusillés par l’occupant 1914–1918* (Brussels: Racine, 2011); Jan Van der Fraenen and Pieter-Jan Lachaert, *Spioneren voor het vaderland: de memoires van Evarist De Geyter 1914–1918* (Kortrijk: Groeninghe, 2011). The deportations and forced-labour measures of 1916–18 are analysed closely in Jens Thiel, *‘Menschenbassin Belgien’: Anwerbung, Deportation und Zwangsarbeit im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Essen: Klartext, 2007). One longer-term interpretation of the war in Belgium is analysed in Sophie De Schaepdrijver, ‘“That theory of races”: Henri Pirenne on the unfinished business of the Great War’, *Revue Belge d’Histoire Contemporaine*, 41:3–4 (2011), pp. 533–52.

For Ober Ost, the work by Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2000) is indispensable; still fundamental is Aba Strazhas, *Deutsche Ostpolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg: Der Fall Ober Ost 1915–1917* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993). German-occupied Poland has seen a renewal of scholarship since the late 1950s/early 1960s works of Werner Conze and Werner Basler: Jesse Kauffman’s PhD dissertation, ‘Sovereignty and the Search for Order in German-Occupied Poland, 1915–1918’ (Stanford University, 2008), will

form the basis of a forthcoming book. Deportation and forced labour in both Ober Ost and the German Government-General of Poland are studied in Christian Westerhoff, *Zwangsarbeit im Ersten Weltkrieg: Deutsche Arbeitskräftepolitik im besetzten Polen und Litauen 1914–1918* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011). The Austro-Hungarian occupation of Poland remains relatively under-examined, but great progress has been made regarding the occupation of Serbia, analysed and interpreted very convincingly by Jonathan Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 2009). The PhD dissertation by Jovana Knežević, ‘The Austro-Hungarian Occupation of Belgrade during the First World War: Battles at the Home Front’ (Yale University, 2006), makes good use of diaries. Heiko Brendel, who is working on a dissertation regarding Montenegro, has started to publish his first findings: ‘Der geostrategische Rahmen der österreichisch-ungarischen Besetzung Montenegros im Ersten Weltkrieg’, in Jürgen Angelow *et al.* (eds.), *Der Erste Weltkrieg auf dem Balkan: Perspektiven der Forschung* (Berlin: Wissenschaft Verlag, 2011), pp. 159–77. The joint occupation of Romania has been studied by Lisa Mayerhofer, *Zwischen Freund und Feind: Deutsche Besetzung in Rumänien 1916–1918* (Munich: Martin Meidenbauer, 2010). Work by David Hamlin on this topic is forthcoming. The occupation of Ukraine, late in the war, against the background of disintegrating empire, is the object of a massive edited volume by Wolfram Dornik *et al.*, *Die Ukraine zwischen Selbstbestimmung und Fremdherrschaft 1917–1922* (Graz: Leykam, 2011). For the occupation of Vardar-Macedonia by Bulgaria, a little-known theatre, see the excellent comparative study by Björn Opfer, *Im Schatten des Krieges: Besetzung oder Anschluss – Befreiung oder Unterdrückung? Eine komparative Untersuchung über die bulgarische Herrschaft in Vardar-Makedonien 1915–1918 und 1941–1944* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005). The Austro-Hungarian and German occupation of northern Italy, post-Kaborid/Caporetto, has been studied, with a keen eye for demographics, by Gustavo Corni in a series of articles and chapters, such as ‘Die Bevölkerung von Venetien unter der Österreichischen-Ungarischen Besetzung 1917/1918’, *Zeitgeschichte*, 17:7–8 (1990), pp. 311–29.

As noted in the chapter, occupations by Entente powers have remained outside its remit largely because of their transitory nature; recent work includes Mark von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland: Occupations*

and *Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914–1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007); Peter Holquist, ‘The role of personality in the first (1914–1915) Russian occupation of Galicia and Bukovina’, in Jonathan Dekel-Chen *et al.* (eds.), *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 52–73; Christoph Mick’s carefully documented and moving *Kriegserfahrungen in einer multiethnischen Stadt: Lemberg 1914–1947* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); and Petra Svoljšak’s work on Italian occupation in the Isonzo region, ‘The social history of the Soča region in the First World War’, *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für soziale Bewegungen*, 41 (2009), pp. 89–109.

11 Captive civilians

Annette Becker

Only in the last dozen years or so has historical scholarship integrated research on civilian internees during the war. This is despite the fact that published sources on this subject have been in print for decades.

Among memoirs and literary sources, the following are important: Shloymé Ansky, *The Enemy at his Pleasure: A Journey Through the Jewish Pale of Settlement during World War One* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002) (translated from Yiddish); Annette Becker (ed.), *Journaux de combattants et civils de la France du Nord dans la Grande Guerre* (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Septentrion, 1998, new edition with two new memoirs, 2014); François Laurent, *Des Alsaciens-Lorrains otages en France: 1914–1918: souvenirs d’un Lorrain interné en France et en Suisse pendant la guerre*, ed. Camille Maire (Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1998); Israel Cohen, *The Ruhleben Prison Camp: A Record of Nineteen Months’ Internment* (London: Methuen, 1919); J. M. Decelle, B. Grailles, P. Marcilloux and F. Schoonheere (eds.), *1914–1918, Le Pas de Calais en guerre, les gammes de l’extrême* (Dainville: Éditions du Conseil général du Pas-de-Calais, 1998); Archives du Nord (ed.), *Guide des sources de la guerre 1914–1918 dans le Nord* (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Septentrion, 2009); Claudine Wallart (ed.), ‘Souvenirs d’un otage du Nord, par le Docteur Carlier’, document preserved in the Archives départementales du Nord, Lille, edited in *Revue du Nord*, 325 (April–June 1998), pp. 122–201; e. e.

cummings, *The Enormous Room* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922); Aladar Kuncz, *Le monastère noir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1937) (first published in Hungarian, 1931); Florence Daniel-Wieser, *Otages dans la Grande Guerre: dessins de prisonniers et civils lorrains* (Nancy: Éditions de l'Est, 2005); Clémence Leroy, 'Sous le joug: journal d'occupation, 1914–1918' (typescript, Historial de la Grande Guerre, 2010); Anthony Splivalo (a Dalmatian imprisoned in Australia), *The Home Fires* (Fremantle: Arts Centre Press, 1982); Mary Ethel McAuley, *Germany in War Time: What an American Girl Saw and Heard* (Chicago: Open Court, 1917); France, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Deportation of Women and Girls from Lille* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1916); Arnold Toynbee, *Le massacre des Arméniens: le meurtre d'une nation, (1915–1916)* (Paris: Payot, 2004; 1st edn 1915); Armin T. Wegner *e gli Armeni in Anatolia, immagini e testimonianze* (Milan: Guerini, 1996).

The following are some general works which refer to civilian prisoners and camps for civilians during the First World War: Giorgio Agamben, 'Le camp comme *nomos* de la modernité', in *Homo sacer: le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue* (Paris: Seuil, 1997); Jean-Marc Berlière and Pierre Fournié (eds), *Fichés? Photographie et identification, 1850–1960* (Paris: Éditions Perrin, 2011); Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth (eds.), *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2011); Michael Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 1985); David Olugosa and Erichsen Casper, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010); Jan Patočka, *Essais hérétiques sur la philosophie de l'histoire* (Paris: Verdier, 1981; first published in Czech, 1975); Tony Kushner and Katherine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1999); Sylvie Thénault, *Violence ordinaire dans l'Algérie coloniale: camps, internements, assignations à résidence* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2012).

On German colonialism, see Jürgen Zimmerer and Michael Perraudin (eds.), *German Colonialism and National Identity* (London: Routledge, 2011); Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herreschaft über Afrikaners: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* (Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2001); Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard and Gilles Boëtsch (eds.),

Zoos humains: au temps des exhibitions humaines (Paris: La Découverte, 2004).

On camps for civilians during the First World War, see Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14–18: Retrouver la guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000); Annette Becker, ‘Les déplacements de population pendant la Grande Guerre: exodes, refuges, camps, travail forcé’, *Témoigner. Entre Histoire et mémoire, Getuigen, Tussen Geschiedenis en Herinnering, Revue pluridisciplinaire de la Fondation Auschwitz*, 110 (September 2011), pp. 18–28; Annette Becker, ‘Suppressed memory of atrocity in World War I and its impact on World War II’, in Doris Bergen (ed.), *Lessons and Legacies*, vol. VIII: *From Generation to Generation* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008); Annette Becker, ‘Art, material life and disaster: civilian and military prisoners of war’, in Nicholas Saunders (ed.), *Materiality of Conflict: Anthropology and the Great War, 1914–2001* (London: Routledge, 2004); Annette Becker, ‘La genèse des camps de concentration, Cuba, Guerre des Boers, Grande Guerre’, in ‘Violences de guerre, violences coloniales, violences extrêmes, avant la Shoah’, special issue of *Revue d’Histoire de la Shoah*, 189 (July–December 2008); Annette Becker, ‘The emergence of the concentration camps’, in M. Cattaruzza, M. Flores, S. L. Sullan and E. Traverso (eds.), *History of the Shoah*, vol. I: *The Crisis of Europe, the Extermination of the Jews and the Memory of the Twentieth Century* (Turin: UTET, 2005), pp. 14–24; Bruna Bianchi (ed.), *La violenza contro la popolazione civile nella Grande Guerra: deportati, profughi, internati* (Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, 2006); Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914–1918* (New York University Press, 2010). Nicholas Saunders, ‘Civilians behind the wire’, ch. 7 in *Trench Art, Materialities and Memories of War* (Oxford: Berg, 2003) has a very useful synthesis; Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

On prisoners of war and civilian prisoners, see Odon Abbal, ‘Le Mahgreb et la Grande Guerre: les camps d’internement en Afrique du Nord’, in *Les armes et la toge, Mélanges offerts à André Martel* (Montpellier: Centre d’Histoire Militaire et d’Études de Défense Nationale, 1997); Heather Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France, and Germany 1914–1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

On different regions see the following works. For France and Belgium, Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: humanitaire et culture de guerre, populations occupées, déportés civils, prisonniers de guerre* (Paris: Noesis, 1998); Annette Becker, *Les cicatrices rouges 14–18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010); Annette Becker, 'From war to war: a few myths, 1914–1942', in Valerie Holman and Debra Kelly (eds.), *France at War in the Twentieth Century: Propaganda, Myth, Metaphor* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2000); Annette Becker, 'Prisonniers civils et militaires de la Grande Guerre, images de la guerre totale', in Philippe Buton (ed.), *La guerre imaginée* (Paris: Seli Arslan, 2002); Annette Becker, 'Des vies déconstruites, prisonniers civils et militaires', in Anne Duménil, Nicolas Beaupré and Christian Ingrao (eds.), *1914–1945: l'ère de la guerre, violence, mobilisation, deuil*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Agnès Viénot, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 234–54.

Jean-Claude Farcy, *Les camps de concentration français de la Première Guerre mondiale (1914–1920)* (Paris: Anthropos-Economica, 1995); Emmanuel Filhol, *Un camp de concentration français: les Tsiganes alsaciens-lorrains à Crest, 1915–1919* (Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2004); Marie Llosa, 'Les camps d'internés civils de l'Aveyron (1914–1919)', *Bretagne 14–18*, 3 (May, 2002), pp. 123–56; Hervé Mauran, 'Les camps d'internement et la surveillance des étrangers en France, 1914–1920' (thesis, University of Montpellier, 2003); Hervé Mauran, 'Une minorité dans la tourmente: évacuation, internement et des Alsaciens-Lorrains en France (1914–1919)', *Bretagne 14–18*, 3 (May 2002), pp. 111–22; Helen McPhail, *The Long Silence: Civilian Life under the German Occupation of Northern France* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001); Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée, 1914–1918* (Paris: A. Colin, 2012).

Jean-Louis Pilliat, *Alsaciens-Lorrains internés en France: Besançon 1914–1919* (Colmar: Do Bentzinger, 2004). Jens Thiel, 'Forced labour, deportation and recruitment: the German Reich and Belgian labourers during the First World War', in Serge Jaumain *et al.* (eds.), *Une guerre totale? La Belgique dans la Première Guerre mondiale: nouvelles tendances de la recherche historique* (Brussels: Archives générales du Royaume, 2005).

On Italy, see Gustavo Corni, *Il Friuli occidentale nell'anno dell'occupazione austro-germanica 1917–1918* (Pordenone: Edizioni Concordia Sette, 2012); Gustavo Corni, 'L'occupazione austro-germanica del Veneto 1917–18, sindaci, preti, austracanti e patrioti', *Rivista di storia contemporanea*, 3 (1989), pp. 380–409.

On Britain, see Len Barnett, *Internment of Enemy Aliens in Great Britain, within the Empire and at Sea during 1914* (London: Len Barnett, 2004); J. C. Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain, 1914–1918* (London: Garland, 1986); David Cesarani and Tony Kushner, (eds.), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 1993); Richard Dove (ed.) 'Totally Un-English?': Britain's Internment of 'Enemy Aliens' in *Two World Wars* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005); Panikos Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain: German Civilian and Combatant Internees during the First World War* (Manchester University Press, 2012); Matthew Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany: The Ruhleben Camp, 1914–18* (Manchester University Press, 2008); Matthew Stibbe, 'A community at war: British civilian internees at the Ruhleben Camp in Germany, 1914–1918', in Jenny Macleod and Pierre Purseigle (eds.), *Uncovered Fields, Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Matthew Stibbe, 'A question of retaliation? The internment of British civilians in Germany in November 1914', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 3 (2005), pp. 1–29.

On Germany, see Lewis Foreman, 'Musicians in Ruhleben camp', *First World War Studies*, 2:1 (2011), pp. 27–40; Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880–1980: Seasonal Workers/Forced Laborers/Guest Workers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990); Mark Levene, 'Frontiers of genocide: Jews in the eastern war zones, 1914–1920 and 1941', in Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia during the Two World Wars* (Oxford: Berg, 1993).

On Australia and New Zealand, see Gerhard Fischer, *Enemy Aliens: Internment and the Homefront Experience in Australia, 1914–1920* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989); Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War* (West Melbourne: Nelson, 1980); Andrew Francis, "'To Be Truly British We Must be Anti-German":

Patriotism, Citizenship and Anti-Alienism in New Zealand during the Great War' (PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2009).

On Canada, see V. J. Kaye, *Ukrainian Canadians in Canada's Wars*, ed. John B. Gregorovich (Toronto: Ukrainian Canadian Research Foundation and Ethnicity Books, 1983); Bodhan S. Kordan, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada during the Great War* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Frances Swyripa and John Herd Thompson, *Loyalties in Canada during the Great War* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1983).

On Russia, the Eastern Front and the Balkans, see the following works: Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War One* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Jonathan Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Olga Pichon-Bobrinskoy, 'Action publique, action humanitaire pendant le premier conflit mondial: les zemstvos et les municipalités', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 46:4 (2005), pp. 673–98; a special issue of *Kritika*, 10:3 (2009), including Laura Engelstein, "'A Belgium of our own": the sack of Russian Kalisz, August 1914', pp. 442–73. See also Jovana Knežević, 'The Austro-Hungarian Occupation of Belgrade during the First World War: Battles at the Home Front' (PhD thesis, Yale University, 2006); Anita Prazmowska, 'The experience of occupation: Poland', in Peter Liddle, Ian Whitehead and John Bourne (eds), *The Great World War, 1914–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), vol. 1, 108–32; Nicolas Werth, 'Réfugiés et déplacés dans l'Empire russe en guerre', in S. Audoin-Rouzeau and J. J. Becker (eds.), *Encyclopédie de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Bayard, 2004), pp. 156–74; Nicolas Werth, 'Les déportations des "populations suspectes", dans les espaces russes et soviétiques, 1914–1953', *Communisme*, 78–9 (2004), pp. 11–43.

On internment in the case of the Armenian genocide, see Volume I, [Chapter 22](#) of this History, and the following: Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World*

(Cambridge University Press, 2010), especially ch. 3, 'Participating and profiteering: the destruction of the Armenians, 1915–23', pp. 77–93; Raymond Kevorkian, *Le génocide des Arméniens* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006). This is the most up-to-date summary of research: see especially his 'La deuxième phase du génocide (automne 1915–décembre 1916)', and on concentration camps, in particular, pp. 775–852. In addition, see Raymond Kevorkian, 'Camps de concentration de Syrie et de Mésopotamie (1915–1916): la deuxième phase du génocide', *L'actualité du génocide des Arméniens* (Créteil: Edipol, 1999); Annette Becker, 'L'extermination des Arméniens, entre dénonciation, indifférence et oubli, de 1915 aux années vingt' in 'Ailleurs, hier, autrement: connaissance et reconnaissance du génocide des Arméniens', special issue of *Revue d'Histoire de la Shoah*, 177–8 (2003), pp. 295–312; Annette Becker and Jay Winter, 'Le génocide arménien et les réactions de l'opinion internationale', in John Horne (ed.), *Vers la guerre totale: le tournant de 14–15* (Paris: Tallandier, 2010); Annette Becker, 'Voir, ne pas voir un génocide: l'exemple des Arméniens', in C. Delporte, L. Gervereau and D. Maréchal (eds.), *Quelle est la place des images en histoire?* (Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2008).

12 Military medicine

Leo van Bergen

There have been many studies which have touched on facets of the history of military medicine. Among them is John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (New York: Viking, 2004). Although the relationship between the war and the Spanish flu is unclear, no medical history of the war can ignore this pandemic – one of the three deadliest in history. Barry's book is essential reading on it. See also [Chapter 14](#) of this volume.

On disability and the wounded, see first Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996). The armies of invalids and otherwise disabled men had important implications for the war effort, the history of pensions and the history of gender categories and conflicts. This is essential reading on all these matters. There is much of interest on this subject in Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany 1914–*

1939 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). Hers is a valuable study of the disabled but in a comparative perspective dealing with Britain and Germany. An important study on facial injuries is Sophie Delaporte, *Gueules cassées de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Éditions Agnès Viénot, 2004). Her earlier publication, *Les médecins dans la Grande Guerre 1914–1918* (Paris: Bayard, 2003), is an equally pioneering work.

Imperial medicine has its historians too. There is Eran Dolev, *Allenby's Military Medicine: Life and Death in World War I Palestine* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007). Although a bit tainted by admiration for Allenby, Dolev offers a well-documented picture of the British medical success in waging one of the most important 'side shows' of the war.

For decades German medical historians have focused on the Nazi period. Compared to Britain, German monographs on their side of the story of medicine and the First World War are rare. The following two books present numerous articles on diverse aspects of German and Austrian medicine during the 1914–18 conflict, and provide insights into the peculiarities of medicine in the context of science, social Darwinian ideas and nationalism: Wolfgang U. Eckart and Christoph Gradmann (eds.), *Die Medizin und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Freiburg: Centaurus, 1996); and Hans Georg Hofer, Cay-Rüdiger Prüll and Wolfgang U. Eckart, *War, Trauma and Medicine in Germany 1914–1939* (Freiburg: Centaurus, 2011).

Medical history in wartime includes the way medical practitioners developed ideas about society and war in general. Susanne Michl focuses on the language and discourse of (mostly university) physicians in medical journals, and compares the German with the French medical communities. See Susanne Michl, *Im Dienste des 'Volkskörpers': Deutsche und französische Ärzte im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

Leo van Bergen, *Before my Helpless Sight: Suffering, Dying and Military Medicine on the Western Front 1914–1918* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), focuses on the Western Front on both sides of the line. He throws light on British, French, Belgian and German medical care, taking into account physical and psychological conditions and forms of treatment. He does not take as his point of departure the doctor and the nurse, but rather chooses

the patient as the central character in the medical war, all too frequently set aside in favour of the ones wearing the white coats and deciding their fate.

On nursing, see Christine E. Hallett, *Containing Trauma: Nursing Work in the First World War* (Manchester University Press, 2009). Although often partly or totally ignored by medical historians, nursing played an essential role in the medical care of the sick and the wounded, not only because they were the ones translating medical diagnosis into practice, but they were the ones supporting the patients in their hours of need and despair. Hallett's book, although confined to English-speaking patients and nurses, is essential reading.

The best book we have on the British side of the story of the medical war is Mark Harrison, *The Medical War: British Military Medicine in the First World War* (Oxford University Press, 2010). Harrison's work on the 'medical war' is outstanding. He does not focus solely on the Western Front (where the medical line, in his view, did not collapse, although it was certainly stretched to the limit at times), but looks at other British fronts as well. There the medical story had more mixed results.

Jeffrey Reznick, *Healing the Nation: Soldiers and the Culture of Caregiving in Britain during the Great War* (Manchester University Press, 2004), focuses on convalescence – the medical space the wounded occupied between having been declared healthy (fit for service) and being sent home. He shows the stigma attached to the walking wounded, and explores their strategy for reasserting their dignity.

13 Shell shock

Jay Winter

The best collection of case histories of soldiers treated for psychological or neurological disorders during the First World War was by an American physician, E. E. Southard. His unique compendium was published as *Shell-shock and Other Neuropsychiatric Problems: Presented in Five Hundred and Eighty-Nine Case Histories from the War Literature, 1914–1918; with a Bibliography by Norman Fenton, and an Introduction by Charles K. Mills* (Boston: W. M. Leonard, c. 1919; reprinted 1930). A similarly essential source on the emergence of shell shock as a diagnostic category is C. S.

Myers, *Shell Shock in France 1914–1918: Based on A War Diary* (Cambridge University Press, 1940). For an adversarial point of view, see F. Mott, *Neuroses and Shell Shock* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919).

A special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35:1 (2000), addresses shell shock in comparative perspective. See, in particular, the introduction by Jay Winter, and these two articles: Marc Roubeshush, ‘A patient fights back: neurology in the court of public opinion in France during the First World War’, pp. 29–38; and Paul Lerner, ‘Psychiatry and casualties of war in Germany, 1914–18’, pp. 13–28.

On the British side of the story, there is an abundant critical and narrative historical and medical literature from which to choose. The 1922 report on shell shock was recently reprinted. See *Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into Shell-Shock* (The Southborough Report, 1922) (Imperial War Museum, London, 2004). Readers will find insights in all of the following: Fiona Reid, *Broken Men – Shell Shock, Treatment and Recovery in Britain, 1914–1930* (London: Continuum, 2009); Ben Shepherd, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the 20th Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Peter Leese, *Shell Shock: Traumatic Neurosis and the British Soldiers of the First World War* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Edgar Jones, ‘Shell shock at Magull and the Maudsley: models of psychological medicine in the UK’, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 65:3 (2010), pp. 365–8; Tracey Loughran, ‘Shell shock, trauma, and the First World War: the making of a diagnosis and its histories’, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 67:1 (2010), pp. 91–106; Celia Kingsbury, *The Peculiar Sanity of War: Hysteria in the Literature of World War I* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2002); Ted Bogasz, ‘War neurosis and cultural change in England, 1914–22: the work of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into “shell-shock”’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24:2 (1989), pp. 227–56; Peter Barham, *Forgotten Lunatics of the Great War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), and Michèle Barrett, *Casualty Figures: How Five Men Survived the First World War* (London: Verso, 2007).

An excellent study of Australian psychological casualties and their treatment may be found in Martin Crotty and Marina Larsson (eds.), *Anzac Legacies: Australians and the Aftermath of War* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010).

On rates of psychological casualties over time, see Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, 'Psychiatric battle casualties: an intra-and interwar comparison', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 178 (2001), pp. 242–7.

On the French side of the story, see Anne Rasmussen, 'L'électrothérapie en guerre: pratiques et débats en France (1914–1920)', *Annales historiques de l'électricité*, 8 (2010), pp. 73–91; and Gregory Mathew Thomas, *Treating the Trauma of the Great War: Soldiers, Civilians, and Psychiatry in France, 1914–1940* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009). A recent *bande dessinée* on shell shock in France is Hubert Bieser, *Vies tranchées: les soldats fous de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Delcourt, 2011).

On Austria, see Hans-Georg Hofer, *Nervenschwache und Krieg: Modernitätskritik und Krisenbewältigung in der österreichischen Psychiatrie (1880–1920)* (Vienna: Bohlau, 2004); and K. R. Eissler, *Freud as an Expert Witness: The Discussion of War Neuroses between Freud and Wagner-Jauregg*, trans. Christine Trollope (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1986).

A suggestive use of film to show the shadow of shell shock in cultural life is Anton Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

14 The Spanish flu

Anne Rasmussen

The pandemic we call the Spanish flu is the subject of an entire historiographical field, distinct from that of the Great War. The bibliography on this subject is very extensive, covering on the one hand the range of geographical areas affected by this global pandemic, and bringing together on the other a group of disciplinary approaches – epidemiological, medical, public health, demographic, anthropological – which can intersect with historical approaches, but without relating to them exclusively. Although there can be no question here of presenting a full synthesis of this bibliography, the different orientations are indicated which have been undertaken in the study of the influenza pandemic of 1918, noting in

particular those which accord importance to interactions between the flu and societies at war.

In the strict meaning of the phrase, there was no historical study of the flu epidemic during the decades after it. However, statistical tables of the pandemic from health authorities proliferated: suitable, or so it was believed, to give lessons for the future to public health authorities. For historians there are sources of the first importance, in particular: on the United States, War Department, Office of the Surgeon General, *Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War*, vol. IX: Joseph F. Siler, *Communicable and Other Diseases* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1928); on Great Britain, Ministry of Health, *Report on the Pandemic of Influenza, 1918–1919*, Reports on Public Health and Medical Subjects IV (London: Ministry of Health, 1920); on New Zealand, House of Representatives, *Report on the Influenza Epidemic Commission*, Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives nos. 1–7 (Wellington, 1919); on France, Henri Pottevin, ‘Rapport sur la pandémie grippale de 1918–19 présenté au comité permanent de l’Office international d’hygiène publique’, *Bulletin mensuel de l’Office international d’hygiène publique*, 13:2 (1920), pp. 125–81; on Germany, Reichswehrministerium, Heeres-Sanitätsinspektion, ‘Grippe’, in *Sanitätsbericht über das Deutsche Heer im Weltkriege 1914–1918* (Berlin, 1934), vol. III, pp. 121–3; on Portugal, Jorge Ricardo, ‘La grippe’, *Rapport préliminaire à la Commission sanitaire des pays alliés* (Lisbon: National Press, 1919).

The emergence of the flu as a historical object is often undertaken in comparison with the flu-type pandemics of the second half of the twentieth century. Indeed such comparisons have stimulated historical research on the unequalled precedent of 1918. For an account of this history, see Howard Phillips, ‘The reappearing shadow of 1918: trends in the historiography of the 1918–1919 influenza pandemic’, *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 21 (2004), pp. 121–34.

Some scholars concentrated on the sum of individual experiences of the epidemic, as in Richard Collier, *The Plague of the Spanish Lady: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918–1919* (1974; London: Allison & Busby, new edn 1996), which in 1974 constituted the first publication in a popular style, taking as its subject the pandemic catastrophe ‘seen from below’ and its victims, based on published testimony and interviews.

Recently, a new trend has added to our knowledge of the Spanish flu – environmental history, which puts the focus on the properly biological dimension of the pandemic and re-evaluates the impact of other epidemics on the course of history. A representative example is the work of Alfred W. Crosby, *Epidemic and Peace, 1918* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), reissued under the title of *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). It seeks to evaluate the effects of the flu on the outcome of the war and the peace of 1918, in analyses which have been submitted for criticism.

More broadly, the interactions between flu and war have led to few specific studies, apart from the following: Jürgen Müller, 'Die spanische Influenza 1918–19: Einflüsse des Ersten Weltkrieges auf Ausbreitung, Krankheitsverlauf und Perzeption einer Pandemie', in Wolfgang U. Eckart, and Christoph Gradmann (eds.), *Die Medizin und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1996), pp. 321–42; and Marc Hieronimos, *Krankheit und Tod 1918: zum Umgang mit der spanischen Grippe in Frankreich, England und dem deutschen Reich* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2006).

A third orientation is demographic and informed estimates in figures of victims of the war of 1918. From the first overall table established by the epidemiologist of the University of Chicago, Edwin O. Jordan, *Epidemic Influenza: A Survey* (Chicago: American Medical Association, 1927), which was used as the point of reference for nearly fifty years, all the new estimates tend to increase considerably the figures of flu mortality. Particularly noteworthy are David K. Patterson and Gerald F. Pyle, 'The geography and mortality of the 1918 influenza pandemic', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1 (1991), pp. 4–21; and Niall P. A. S. Johnson and Jürgen Müller, 'Updating the accounts: global mortality of the 1918–1920 "Spanish influenza" pandemic', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 76 (2002), pp. 105–15.

As well as the strict statistical approaches, there is scholarship at the intersection of demographic and social history that provides accounts of the effects of the morbidity and mortality caused by the flu, and to question the intersecting impact of the war and the flu in societies, such as, for example, Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985); Alice Reid, 'The effects of the 1918–1919 influenza

pandemic on infant and child health in Derbyshire', *Medical History*, 49 (2005), pp. 29–54; S. E. Mamelund, 'A socially neutral disease? Individual social class, household wealth and mortality from Spanish influenza in two socially contrasting parishes in Kristiania 1918–19', *Social Science and Medicine*, 62 (2006), pp. 923–40.

A fourth orientation, which we may date from the 1990s, places the epidemic of 1918 within the orbit of the social history of medicine and the history of the politics of public health. Work in this spirit includes Martha L. Hildreth, 'The influenza epidemic of 1918–1919 in France: contemporary concepts of aetiology, therapy, and prevention', *Social History of Medicine*, 4:2 (1991), pp. 277–94; Sandra Tomkins, 'The failure of expertise: public health policy in Britain during the 1918–1919 influenza epidemic', *Social History of Medicine*, 5:3 (1992), pp. 435–54; Eugenia Tognotti, 'Scientific triumphalism and learning from facts: bacteriology and the "Spanish flu" epidemic', *Social History of Medicine*, 16:1 (2003), pp. 97–110.

Fifthly, a more global approach to the pandemic of 1918 has been possible with the arrival of social history in this field, and the combining of studies on societies at war suffering from the flu, on a larger or smaller scale, and which in particular take the urban space as their locale. See, in particular, Fred R. van Hartesveldt (ed.), *The 1918–1919 Pandemic of Influenza: The Urban Impact in the Western World* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992); Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, vol. I (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

The first syntheses on the flu as a global phenomenon, with a transnational approach and calling on all the disciplines concerned, appeared in the 2000s. Notably, see Howard Phillips and David Killingray (eds.), *The Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918–1919: New Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2003), the proceedings of the first international interdisciplinary conference on the flu of 1918, held in South Africa in 1998, which constitutes a reference work with a detailed bibliography by nation. Ten years later, a conference held at the Institut Pasteur added to our knowledge, against the backdrop of recurrent threats of a flu-style pandemic. Its proceedings may be found in Tamara Giles-Vernick and Susan Craddock (eds.), *Influenza and Public Health: Learning from Past*

Pandemics (London: Earthscan, 2010). Alongside these studies, Wilfried Witte, *Tollkirschen und Quarantäne: Die Geschichte der Spanischen Grippe* (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 2008), provides a brief international synthesis.

Finally, the national level is the one on which the greatest number of studies have appeared, making it possible to take account, in a more or less focused way, of the effects of the flu on societies at war. In particular the following should be mentioned.

On the United States, John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (New York: Viking, 2004); and Carol R. Byerly, *Fever of War: The Influenza Epidemic in the U.S. Army during World War I* (New York University Press, 2005).

On Germany, Eckard Michels, “‘Die spanische Grippe’ 1918/19: Verlauf, Folgen und Deutungen in Deutschland im Kontext des Ersten Weltkriegs’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1 (2010), pp. 1–33; Manfred Vasold, ‘Die Grippe-Pandemie von 1918–19 in der Stadt München’, *Oberbayerisches Archiv*, 127 (2003), pp. 395–414.

On Britain and the British Empire, Niall Johnson, *Britain and the 1918–19 Influenza Pandemic: A Dark Epilogue* (London: Routledge, 2006); Robert J. Brown, ‘Fateful Alliance: The 1918 Influenza Pandemic and the First World War in the British Context’ (PhD thesis, Syracuse University, New York, 2006); E. D. Mills, ‘The 1918–1919 influenza pandemic: the Indian experience’, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 23 (1986), pp. 1–40; Geoffrey W. Rice, *Black November: The 1918 Influenza Pandemic in New Zealand*, 2nd edn (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2005); and Howard Phillips, ‘*Black October*’: *The Impact of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic of 1918 on South Africa* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1990).

On France there has been no synthetic work on this subject, but there is a thesis in preparation on the epidemic by Frédéric Vagneron (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris) that will fill this gap. For some elements of the story, see Lion Murard and Patrick Zylberman, *L’hygiène dans la République* (Paris: Fayard, 1996); and Anne Rasmussen, ‘Dans l’urgence et le secret: conflits et consensus autour de la grippe espagnole,

1918–1919’, *Mil neuf cent, Revue d’histoire intellectuelle*, 25 (2007), pp. 171–90.

15 Mourning practices

Joy Damousi

The leading works in the field of mourning practices and the war are Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Pat Jalland, *Death in War and Peace: A History of Loss and Grief in England, 1914–1970* (Oxford University Press, 2010); David Cannadine, ‘War and death, grief and mourning in modern Britain’, in Joachim Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (London: Europa, 1981); and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14–18: Understanding the Great War*, trans. Catherine Temerson (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).

In the context of Germany, patterns of mourning are explored in compelling ways in Alon Confino, Paul Betts and Dirk Schumann (eds.), *Between Mass Death and Individual Loss: The Place of the Dead in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Berghahn, 2008); and Tim Grady, *The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory* (Liverpool University Press, 2011).

For memorials and remembrance, leading works are Thomas Laqueur, ‘Memory and naming in the Great War’, in J. R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton University Press, 1994); Daniel Sherman, ‘Bodies and names: the emergence of commemorations in interwar France’, *American Historical Review*, 103:2 (1998), pp. 443–66; Annette Becker, *Les monuments aux morts: patrimoine et mémoire de la grande guerre* (Paris: Éditions Errance, 1988); and Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne University Press, 2005).

The key scholarship that has especially looked at mothers and widows includes Erika Kuhlman, *Of Little Comfort: War Widows, Fallen Soldiers and the Remaking of the Nation after the Great War* (New York University Press, 2012); Suzanne Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs:*

World War I and the Politics of Grief (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2007); Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). Other key texts include Karin Hausen, 'The German nation's obligations of the heroes' widows of World War I', in Margaret Randolph Higonnet *et al.*, *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 126–40; and Robert Weldon Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War 1914–1939* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1984).

For families in mourning, see the following: Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Cinq deuils de guerre: 1914–1918* (Paris: Noesis, 2001); Jay Winter, 'Forms of kinship and remembrance after the Great War', in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 40–60; and two chapters in this volume: [Chapter 21](#), by Bruce Scates and Rebecca Wheatley on 'War memorials', and [Chapter 3](#) by Jay Winter on 'Families'.

For an examination of pilgrimages, an excellent text is David Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada 1919–1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998). The major work on American mothers is Lisa M. Budreau, *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919–1933* (New York University Press, 2009), and, in the Australian context, Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the Battlefields of the Great War* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

On the Eastern European experience of war and mourning, the work of Maria Burcur has made a major contribution through her scholarship in *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); and 'Edifices of the past: war memorials and heroes in twentieth century Romania', in Maria Todorova (ed.), *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory* (London: Hurst, 2004). In addition, 'Between the mother of the wounded and the Virgin of Jiu: Romanian women and the gender of heroism during the Great War', *Journal of Women's History*, 12:2 (2000), pp. 30–56, provides important contextual material on mourning.

On religious observance, Annette Becker's *War and Faith: The Religious Imagination in France, 1914–1930* (Oxford: Berg, 1998) is a seminal text. For exemplary explorations of the role of religion in communities, see Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), and for soldiers and religion, see Jonathan H. Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War* (Princeton University Press, 2010).

16 Mobilising minds

Anne Rasmussen

There are relatively few comparative studies of the mobilisation of intellectuals. Among the most useful is Roshwald Aviel and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainments, and Propaganda 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), a collection which has a chapter on each European combatant state.

For synthetic studies of the cultural history of the war, first see Jean-Jacques Becker *et al.* (eds.), *Guerre et cultures 1914–1918* (Paris: A. Colin, 1994). Wolfgang J. Mommsen (ed.), *Kultur und Krieg: Die Rolle der Intellektuellen, Künstler und Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996), focuses on Germany. On Italy and Germany, see Vincenzo Calì, Gustavo Corni and Giuseppe Ferrandi (eds.), *Gli intellettuali e la Grande Guerra* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000), which also includes a chapter on Russia.

There is much of interest on intellectuals in more general studies of mobilisation and demobilisation. See, in particular, John Horne (ed.), *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), as well as John Horne (ed.), 'Démobilisations culturelles après la Grande Guerre', special issue of *14–18: Aujourd'hui, Today, Heute*, 5 (2002).

Studies of mobilisation return to the problem of propaganda, the pioneering work on which is Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques in the First World War* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1927). For more recent work on propaganda, see John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities*,

1914: A History of Denial (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); Christophe Prochasson and Anne Rasmussen (eds.), *Vrai et faux dans la Grande Guerre* (Paris: La Découverte, 2004).

On different facets of intellectual mobilisation and the media – press, publishers, collections, exhibitions – see Troy R. E. Paddock (ed.), *A Call to Arms: Propaganda, Public Opinion, and Newspapers in the Great War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004); Mary Hammond and Shafquat Towheed (eds.), *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Christophe Didier (ed.), *Orages de papier 1914–1918: les collections de guerre des bibliothèques* (Paris: Somogy, 2008); Susanne Brandt, *Vom Kriegsschauplatz zum Gedächtnisraum: die Westfront 1914–1949* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2000).

On the manifestos of 1914, and in particular the German ‘Manifesto of 93’, see Jürgen and Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Anruf an die Kulturwelt: Das Manifest des 93 und die Anfänge der Kriegspropaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Frank Steiner, 1996); Bernhardt vom Brocke, ‘Wissenschaft und Militarismus: Der Aufruf der 93 “An die Kulturwelt” und der Zusammenbruch der internationalen Gelehrtenrepublik im Ersten Weltkrieg’, in William M. Calder, Hellmut Flashar and Theodor Lindken (eds.), *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), pp. 647–719; and Anne Rasmussen, ‘La “science française” dans la guerre des manifestes’, *Mots: les langages du politique*, 76 (2004), pp. 9–23.

On pre-war intellectuals, the generation of 1914 and the debate on the intellectual turn during the war, see Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Roland Stromberg, *Redemption by War: The Intellectuals and 1914* (Lawrence, KS: Regent’s Press, 1982); Barbara Besslich, *Wege in den ‘Kulturkrieg’: Zivilisationskritik in Deutschland 1890–1914* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000).

On the question of the myth of the ‘ideas of 1914’ and their foundational effects on the German war effort, see Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Steffen Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft oder Volkstaat: Die*

'Ideen von 1914' und die Neuordnung Deutschlands im ersten Weltkrieg (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003).

There is much of interest on the comparative dimension of the mobilisation of intellectuals and scientists in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, vol. II: *A Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 2007). See, in particular, the chapters on exhibitions and universities. See too Aleksandr Dmitriev, 'La mobilisation intellectuelle: la communauté académique internationale et la Première Guerre mondiale', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 43 (2002), pp. 617–44; Jay Winter, 'The University of Oxford and the First World War', in Brian Harrison (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 3–25.

On the war and different academic disciplines, there is much of interest. On philosophy, see Peter Hoeres, *Der Krieg der Philosophen: die deutsche und britische Philosophie im ersten Weltkrieg* (Zurich: Schöningh, 2004); Philippe Soulez (ed.), *Les philosophes et la Guerre de 14* (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1988). On history and historians, see Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, 'The role of British and German historians in mobilizing public opinion in 1914', in Benedikt Stuchtey and Peter Wende (eds.), *British and German Historiography, 1750–1950: Traditions, Perceptions, and Transfers* (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 335–71. On geographers, see Nicolas Ginsburger, "'La guerre, la plus terrible des érosions": cultures de guerre et géographes universitaires, Allemagne, France, États-Unis (1914–1921)' (doctoral thesis, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, 2010).

On science in general, see David Aubin and Patrice Bret (eds.), 'Le sabre et l'éprouvette: l'invention d'une science de guerre, 1914–1939', special issue of *14–18: Aujourd'hui, Today, Heute* 6 (2003); Elisabeth Crawford, *Nationalism and Internationalism in Science, 1880–1939* (Cambridge University Press, 1992); John L. Heilbron, 'The Nobel science prizes of World War I', in Elisabeth Crawford (ed.), *Historical Studies in the Nobel Archives: The Prizes in Science and Medicine* (Tokyo: Universal Academy Press, 2002), pp. 19–38; Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus, *Les scientifiques et la paix: la communauté scientifique internationale au cours des années 20* (Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1978); Anne Rasmussen, 'Réparer, réconcilier, oublier: enjeux et mythes de la démobilisation scientifique

1918–1925’, *Histoire @ politique. Politique, culture, société*, 3 (2007) (www.histoire-politique.fr); John Heilbron, *The Dilemmas of an Upright Man: Max Planck as Spokesman for German Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

Most studies of the mobilisation of intellectuals remain on the national level. Among useful works on particular countries see, on Germany, Eberhard Demm, *Ostpolitik und Propaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002); Kurt Flasch, *Die geistige Mobilisierung: Die deutschen Intellektuellen und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Alexander Fest Verlag, 2000); and Fritz Stern, *Einstein’s German World* (Princeton University Press, 1999). On Austria-Hungary, see Jozo Džambo (ed.), *Musen an die Front! Schriftsteller und Künstler im Dienst der k.u.k. Kriegspropaganda 1914–1918*, 2 vols. (Munich: Adalbert Stifter Verein, 2003); and Mark Cornwall, ‘News, rumour, and the control of information in Austria-Hungary, 1914–1918’, *History*, 77 (1992), pp. 50–64. On Belgium, see Mark Derez, ‘The flames of Louvain: the war experience of an academic community’, in Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), pp. 617–29; Sophie De Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre mondiale* (Brussels: Archives et Musée de la Littérature, 2004); and Bryce Dale Lyon, *Henri Pirenne: A Biographical and Intellectual Study* (Ghent: E. Story-Scientia, 1974). On the United States, see Peter Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: British, American and Canadian Propaganda and Fiction 1914–1933* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987); and Alan Axelrod, *Selling the Great War: The Making of American Propaganda* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). On France, see Martha Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect: French Scholars and Writers during the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Christophe Prochasson and Anne Rasmussen, *Au nom de la patrie: les intellectuels et la Première Guerre mondiale, 1910–1919* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996); Christophe Prochasson, *14–18: retours d’expériences* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008); ‘La guerre du droit’, special issue of *Mil neuf cent. Revue d’histoire intellectuelle*, 23 (2005); Annette Becker, *Maurice Halbwachs: un intellectuel en guerres mondiales, 1914–1945* (Paris: Éditions Agnès Viénot, 2003); Michael Klepsch, *Romain Rolland im Ersten Weltkrieg: Ein Intellektueller auf verlorenem Posten* (Cologne: Kohlhammer, 2000); and Yaël Dagan, *La Nouvelle Revue française entre*

guerre et paix, 1914–1925 (Paris: Tallandier, 2008). On Britain, see George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Gary S. Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester University Press, 1992); Michael Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War 1914–18* (London: Macmillan, 1981); Jonathan Atkin, *A War of Individuals: Bloomsbury Attitudes to the Great War* (Manchester University Press, 2002); Jo Vellacott, *Bertrand Russell and the Pacifists in the First World War* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981). On Italy, see Mario Isnenghi, *Il mito della Grande Guerra* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997). On Russia, see Hubertus Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

17 Beliefs and religion

Adrian Gregory

There is currently no full-scale international overview of the role of religion in the First World War, and this is perhaps the largest single gap in the historiography of the conflict.

In English-language historiography an important landmark was the publication of Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London: SCM, 1978), which made substantial use of Anglican archives. While it undoubtedly contributed to the serious investigation of the subject, it was also predicated on an assumption of failure: the basic argument is that the church failed to oppose the war and this failure undermined the authority of established Christianity with the population at large. While this view might be theologically defensible, there are serious historical problems with it. A somewhat more nuanced view can be found in A. J. Hoover, *God, Germany and the War: A Study of Clerical Nationalism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1989), which is both more willing to see the clerical nationalism of established churches within its historical context, and also examines the degree to which Christianity moderated some of the excesses of nationalism. A powerful and controversial contribution on the role of popular religion is Annette Becker, *La guerre et la foi* (Paris: A. Colin, 1994), translated as *War and Faith* (Oxford: Berg, 1998). Using a functionalist approach derived ultimately from Durkheim,

Becker also has no difficulty in seeing the war as a religious war, but rather than seeing this as a deviation from Christian pacifist ideals sees the sanctification of violence as central to the conflict. Far from leading to disillusion, Becker views the war as having strengthened rather than damaged religion in France. To some extent this is a product of national perspective. A somewhat different view of popular religion can be found in Benjamin Ziemann, *Front und Heimat; Bayern 1914–23* (Essen: Klartext, 1997), translated as *War Experiences in Rural Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2007). Although religion is only one part of this classic work, it is a very important one: the account is highly nuanced, showing elements of disillusion alongside enduring faith-based practices both at the front and among civilians.

Jonathan Pollard, *Benedict XV: The Unknown Pope and the Pursuit of Peace* (London: Continuum, 2000) was a thoughtful re-evaluation of a figure sometimes seen primarily and unfairly as a diplomatic failure. In the landmark reconsideration by Michael Snape, *God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars* (London: Routledge, 2005), the author comprehensively rejects Wilkinson's view of religious failure, pointing to the degree to which religion comforted and sustained soldiers and was valued for this. Recently Jonathan Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War* (Princeton University Press, 2010), has tried to put religion back at the centre of the American experience of war and also argues that religion, particularly religion broadly defined, played an important role in the way that Americans interpreted the war, both while they were experiencing it and subsequently.

Adrian Gregory and Annette Becker, 'Religious sites and practices', in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), vol. II, pp. 383–428, is an attempt to explore the comparative history of wartime religion on the home front, while A. Gregory, *The Last Great War* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), argues for the centrality of a broadly defined religious framework in understanding the British home front.

Four very recent monographs, P. J. Houlihan, 'Clergy in the Trenches: Catholic Military Chaplains of Germany and Austria Hungary' (PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 2011, available at <http://proquest.umi.com>); E.

Madigan, *Faith under Fire; Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War* (London: Macmillan, 2011); G. Baroid, *The Disarmament of Hatred: Marc Sagnier, French Catholics and the Legacy of the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 2012); and P. Bobic, *War and Faith: The Catholic Church in Slovenia* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), are evidence of a fast-developing interest in this topic.

Non-Christian religion during the war has been even less well served. There is no single overview of Islam and the war, although Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (Oxford University Press, 2001), makes some useful observations on the call for jihad by the Ottoman leadership in November 1914 and the subsequent responses. D. Omissi, *Indian Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Macmillan, 1999), shows a wide range of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim responses in soldiers' letters. D. Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War One* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), deals with one of the most sensitive issues in a sensitive manner. A. Roshwald, 'Jewish cultural identity in Eastern and Central Europe during the Great War', in A. Roshwald and R. Stites, *European Culture and the Great War* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 89–127, has a lot to say about reactions to the war in the Jewish Orthodox heartland. Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (Oxford University Press, 2001), examines a population with a range of positions on the religion and assimilation axes.

18 Soldier-writers and poets

Nicolas Beaupré

Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford University Press, 1975) is a foundational text for the study of soldiers' writing during the 1914–18 conflict. Fussell restored to 'war poetry' its historical and cultural location. The two principal arguments of the book – that there emerged an ironic vision of the war primarily but not exclusively from the soldier-poets, and that this body of ironic writing formed the basis of what he terms 'modern memory' – have been considered and contested, notably by Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War in English Culture* (London: The Bodley Head, 1990), Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of*

Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History (Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Martin Stephen, *The Price of Pity: Poetry, History and Myth in the Great War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996). Fussell's book nonetheless remains a permanent point of reference, explicit or implicit. Fussell's identification with his subject has been criticised, for instance in James Campbell's words: 'the scholarship in question does not so much criticize the poetry which forms its subject as replicate the poetry's ideology'. See James Campbell, 'Combat gnosticism: the ideology of First World War poetry criticism', *New Literary History*, 30:1 (1999), pp. 203–15.

There is now an entire field of research on war literature and poetry, animated by the invigoration of history, and in particular cultural history, by the linguistic turn. More and more scholarship in this field is comparative in character, though frequently still focused primarily or exclusively on the Western Front. An exception is a very useful international anthology edited by Tim Cross, *The Lost Voices of World War One* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988), though the survivors are excluded. We still do not have a synthesis on the global level, or even the European level, of a phenomenon evident among all the combatants.

On Great Britain, Ireland, the Dominions and the Empire, we have the following bibliographies: Catherine W. Reilly, *English Poetry of the First World War: A Bibliography* (London: G. Prior, 1978); Sharon Ouditt, *Women Writers of the First World War: An Annotated Bibliography* (London: Routledge, 2000). On facets of the British story, see Bernard Bergonzi, *Heroes' Twilight* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962); Roland Bouyssou, *Les poètes combattants anglais de la Grande Guerre* (Toulouse: Association des publications de l'Université de Toulouse, 1974); Agnès Cardinal, Dorothy Goldman and Judith Hathaway (eds.), *Women's Writing on the First World War* (Oxford University Press, 1999); Patrick Deer, *Culture in Camouflage: War, Empire and Modern British Literature* (Oxford University Press, 2009); Christine E. Hallett, 'The personal writings of First World War nurses: a study of the interplay of authorial intention and scholarly interpretation', *Nursing Inquiry*, 14:4 (2007), pp. 320–9.

Mary Hammond and Shafquat Towheed (eds.), *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan,

2007); Samuel Hynes, *The Soldier's Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York: Penguin, 1997), which extends to later twentieth-century wars too. See also Tim Kendall (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of British and Irish War Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 2007); Kate McLoughlin (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Sharon Ouditt, *Fighting Forces, Writing Women: Identity and Ideology in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1994); Jane Potter, *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print: Women's Literary Responses to the Great War 1914–1918* (Oxford University Press, 2002); Susanne Christine Puissant, *Irony and the Poetry of the First World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Catherine W. Reilly (ed.), *Scars upon my Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War* (London: Virago, 1981); Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005).

On the British Empire, a pioneering work is Santanu Das (ed.), *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

On French Canada, see Michel Litalien, *Écrire sa guerre: témoignages de soldats canadiens-français 1914–1919* (Outremont: Athéna Éditions, 2012).

On Australia, see David Kent, *From Trench and Troopship: The Experience of the Australian Imperial Force, 1914–1919* (Alexandria, NSW: Hale and Iremonger, 1999); Graham Seal, *Inventing Anzac: The Digger and National Mythology* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press 2004); and the classic study, Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years* (Sydney: Macdonald, 1974).

On the United States, we have two books by the same author: Steven Trout (ed.), *American Prose Writers of the First World War: A Documentary Volume* (Detroit: Thomson and Gale, 2005), and *On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919–1941* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010). See also Mark W. van Wienen, *Partisans and Poets: The Political Role of American Poetry in the Great War* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

On Germany, there is a rich literature which focuses essentially on Expressionist or pacifist poetry for the 1914–18 period, and on the confrontation of pacifist and nationalist war fiction in the 1920s and 1930s. There is even a specialist journal on the subject: *Krieg und Literatur / War*

and Literature edited by the Erich-Maria-Remarque Archiv in Osnabrück. A useful bibliography is Thomas F. Schneider, Julia Heinemann, Frank Hischer, Johanna Kuhlmann and Peter Puls, *Die Autoren und Bücher der deutschsprachigen Literatur zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Universitätsverlag Osnabrück, 2008).

Among scholarly studies, see Waltraud Amberger, *Männer, Krieger, Abenteurer: Der Entwurf des 'soldatischen Mannes' in Kriegsromanen über den Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1984); Thomas Anz and Michael Stark (eds.), *Krieg. Die Dichter und der Krieg: Deutsche Lyrik 1914–1918* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1982); Patrick Bridgewater, *The German Poets of the Great War* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); Helmut Fries, *Die grosse Katharsis: der Erste Weltkrieg in der Sicht deutscher Dichter und Gelehrter*, 2 vols. (Konstanz: Verlag am Hockgraben, 1994–5); Bernd Hüppauf (ed.), *Ansichten vom Krieg: Vergleichende Studien zum Ersten Weltkrieg in Literatur und Gesellschaft* (Hain Hanstein: Athenäum, Forum Academicum, 1984); Hermann Korte, *Der Krieg in der Lyrik des Expressionismus* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1981); Hans-Harald Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller: Der Kriegsroman der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1986); George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers* (Oxford University Press, 1990); Wolfgang G. Natter, *Literature at War, 1914–1940: Representing the 'Time of Greatness' in Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Karl Prümm, *Die Literatur des Soldatischen Nationalismus der 20er Jahre (1918–1933): Gruppenideologie und Epochenproblematik*, 2 vols. (Kronberg: Scriptor Verlag, 1974); Rainer Rumold and O. K. Werckmeister (eds.), *The Ideological Crisis of Expressionism: The Literary and Artistic German War Colony in Belgium 1914–1918* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1990); Thomas F. Schneider, *Kriegserlebnis und Legendenbildung: Das Bild des 'modernen' Krieges in Literatur, Theater, Photographie und Film* (Osnabrück: Universitätsverlag Rasch, 1999). Thomas F. Schneider and Hans Wagener (eds.), *Von Richthofen to Remarque: Deutschsprachige Prosa zum I. Weltkrieg* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003); Margrit Stickelberger-Eder, *Aufbruch 1914: Kriegsromane der späten Weimarer Republik* (Zurich: Artemis, 1983); Jörg Vollmer, 'Imaginäre Schlachtfelder. Kriegsliteratur in der Weimarer Republik: Eine literatursoziologische Untersuchung' (PhD thesis, Free University of Berlin 2003; online publication: www.diss.fu-berlin.de/diss/receive/FUDISS_thesis_000000001060).

In France, too, the work of soldier-writers has long interested specialists in history and literature. A particularly lively debate surrounds the 1993 republication of a 1929 book analysing soldiers' writings by Jean Norton Cru, *Témoins* (Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1993).

Among scholarly studies on French soldier-writers, see Annette Becker, *Apollinaire: une biographie de guerre* (Paris: Tallandier, 2009); Gérard Canini (ed.), *Mémoire de la Grande Guerre: témoins et témoignages* (Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1989); Laurence Campa, *Poètes de la Grande Guerre: expérience combattante et activité poétique* (Paris: Garnier, 2010); John Cruickshank, *Variations on Catastrophe: Some French Responses to the Great War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Yaël Dagan, *La Nouvelle Revue française entre guerre et paix 1914–1925* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008); Martha Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect: French Scholars and Writers during the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Almut Lindner-Wirsching, *Französische Schriftsteller und ihre Nation im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004); Frédéric Rousseau, *Le procès des témoins de la Grande Guerre: l'affaire Norton Cru* (Paris: Seuil, 2003); Nancy Sloan Goldberg, *En l'honneur de la juste parole: la poésie française contre la guerre* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993); Leonard V. Smith, *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers' Testimony of the Great War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007); Eliane Tonnet-Lacroix, *Après-guerre et sensibilités littéraires, 1919–1924* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1991); Carine Trevisan, *Les fables du deuil. La Grande Guerre: mort et écriture* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001); and Émile Willard, *Guerre et poésie: la poésie patriotique française de 1914–1918* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1949).

On Belgium, we lack a rigorous study on the subject of soldier-writers. But see these works: Philippe Beck, 'Les écrivains du front belge: groupements, revues, littérature de guerre et antimilitarisme', *Interférences littéraires*, n.s. 3 (November 2009), pp. 163–76; Geert Buelens, 'Like seeds in the sand: on (the absence of) Flemish war poets', in Serge Jaumain *et al.* (eds.), *Une guerre totale? La Belgique dans la Première Guerre mondiale: nouvelles tendances de la recherche historique* (Brussels: Archives générales du Royaume, 2005), pp. 597–614; Nicolas Mignon, *Les Grandes Guerres de Robert Vivier (1894–1989): mémoires et écritures du premier*

conflit mondial en Belgique (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008); and Sophie De Schaepdrijver, 'Death is elsewhere: the shifting locus of tragedy in Belgian Great War literature, *Yale French Studies*, 102 (2002), pp. 94–114.

On Italy, the focus has largely been on the participation of the avant-garde in the war, in particular the *Arditi* and the *Alpini*. Oliver Janz has studied the discourse of death in public and private space. Among scholarly studies, see Mario Isnenghi, *Il mito della grande guerra da Marinetti a Malaparte* (Rome: Laterza, 1973); Oliver Janz, *Das symbolische Kapital der Trauer: Nation, Religion und Familie im italienischen Gefallenenkult des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Tübingen: Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, 2009); Marco Mondini, *Alpini: parole e immagini di un mito guerriero* (Rome: Laterza, 2008); Angelo Ventrone, *La seduzione totalitaria: guerra, modernità, violenza politica 1914–1918* (Rome: Donzelli, 2003).

On Austria-Hungary, there is no authoritative survey of the writings of combatants during the Great War. The following studies are useful nonetheless: Jozo Džambo (ed.), *Musen an die Front! Schriftsteller und Künstler im Dienst der k.u.k. Kriegspropaganda 1914–1918*, 2 vols. (Munich: Adalbert Stifter Verein, 2003); Eberhard Sauermann, *Literarische Kriegsfürsorge: Österreichische Kriegsdichter und Publizist im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2000).

On Poland, see Krzysztof A. Jeżewski, *W blasku legendy: kronika poetycka Życia Józefa Piłsudskiego* (Paris: Éditions Spotkania, 1988); and Andrzej Romanowski, 'Przed złotym czasem': szkice o poezji i pieśni patriotyczno-wojennej lat 1908–1918 (Cracow: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 1990).

On Russia, the best study is Karen Petrone, *The Great War in Russian Memory* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011). See also Christine E. Hallett, 'Russian romances: emotionalism and spirituality in the writings of "Eastern Front" nurses, 1914–1918', *Nursing History Review*, 17:1 (2009), pp. 101–28.

Beyond national studies, there are a number of useful comparative studies to consult. Among them are Nicolas Beaupré, *Écrire en guerre, écrire la guerre: France, Allemagne 1914–1920* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2006); Peter Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: British, American and Canadian*

Propaganda and Fiction 1914–1933 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987); Frank Field, *British and French Writers of the First World War: Comparative Studies in Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); Martin Löschnigg, *Der Erste Weltkrieg in deutscher und englischer Dichtung* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1994); Elizabeth A. Marsland, *The Nation's Cause: French, English and German Poetry of the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1991); Helmut Müssener (ed.), *Anti-Kriegsliteratur zwischen den Kriegen (1919–1939) in Deutschland und in Schweden* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiskell International, 1987); Jean-Jacques Pollet and Anne-Marie Saint-Gille (ed.), *Écritures franco-allemande de la Grande Guerre* (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 1996); Adam Piette and Mark Rawlison, *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century British and American War Literature* (Edinburgh University Press, 2012); Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainments, and Propaganda 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Klaus Vondung (ed.), *Kriegserlebnis: Der Erste Weltkrieg in der literarischen Gestaltung und symbolischen Deutung der Nationen* (Munich: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980).

19 Cinema

Laurent Veray

There is no single work on the history of cinema during the Great War, which covers the production, direction and distribution of newsreels, documentary films and fiction films. We need to point to works of a more general or specific nature which inform us about films of different kinds produced in different countries for different purposes. We can group these materials under four headings.

First, among general histories of cinema, there is information on the Great War in the following. On France, Richard Abel, *French Cinema: The First Wave (1915–1929)* (Princeton University Press, 1987); Jacques Kermabon (ed.), *Pathé: premier empire du cinéma* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Georges Pompidou, 1994); Jean Mitry, *Histoire du cinéma*, 5 vols. (Paris: Éditions Universitaires, 1987), in particular, vol. II: *Art et industrie, 1915–1925*; and Georges Sadoul, *Histoire générale du cinéma*, 5 vols.

(Paris: Denoël, 1974), in particular vol. iv: *Le cinéma devient un art 1909–1920 – La Première Guerre mondiale*.

On Germany, there is Klaus Kreimer, *Une histoire du cinéma allemand: la UFA* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994); on the United States, Richard Koszarski, *History of the American Cinema*, vol. III: *An Evening's Entertainment: The Age of the Silent Feature Picture, 1915–1928* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). On Russia, see Jay Leyda, *Kino: histoire du cinéma russe et soviétique* (Lausanne: L'Âge d'Homme, 1976), in particular, ch. 4, 'Dans l'Empire qui s'écroule (1914–1917)', ch. 5, 'D'une révolution à l'autre', ch. 6, 'Moscou-Odessa-Paris (1917–1921)' and ch. 7, 'La paix, le pain, la terre (1917–1920)'. On Italy, see Gian Piero Brunetta (ed.), *Storia del cinema mondiale*, 5 vols. (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), in particular vol. I, the chapter entitled 'Cinema e prima guerra mondiale'.

Secondly, there are publications on the fictional representation of the Great War in film, in which authors focus on national cases. See, in particular. Joseph Daniel, *Guerre et cinéma* (Paris: A. Colin, 1971); Karel Dibbets and Bert Hogenkamp (eds.), *Film and the First World War* (Amsterdam University Press, 1994); Michael Isenberg, *War on Film: The American Cinema and World War I* (London: Association University Press, 1981); Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, *Reel Patriotism: The Movies and World War I* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997); Michael Paris (ed.), *The First World War and Popular Cinema: 1914 to the Present* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999); and Laurent Véray, *La Grande Guerre au cinéma: de la gloire à la mémoire* (Paris: Ramsay, 2008).

The American journal *Film History* recently devoted a special number to the First World War, in which there is material on cameramen, newsreels in France, German censorship, the reception of the film on the Battle of the Somme in the Netherlands, and on the Film company Nordisk. See Stephen Bottomore (ed.), 'Cinema during the Great War', special issue of *Film History: An International Journal*, 22:4 (2010). There is also material to be found in collective works. See, for instance, Gian Piero Brunetta, *La guerra lontana: la prima guerra mondiale e il cinema tra i tabù del presente e la creazione del passato*, which is a brochure of 70 pages drawn from a meeting entitled 'La Grande Guerra, esperienza memoria immagini' (Convegno Internazionale, Rovero-Trento, 6–18 May 1985); Russel Merritt, 'Le film épique au service de la propagande de guerre: David Wark Griffith

et la création de *Cœurs du monde*’, in Jean Mottet (ed.), *David Wark Griffith* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1984); Laurent Véray, ‘*J’accuse*, un film conforme aux aspirations de Charles Pathé et à l’air du temps’, *1895*, 21 (December 1996), pp. 93–125; Laurent Véray, ‘La mise en spectacle de la guerre (1914–1918)’, *Cinémathèque*, 16 (Autumn 1999), pp. 116–31; Laurent Véray, ‘Les films patriotiques de Léonce Perret (1914–1919)’, in Bernard Bastide and Jean A. Gili (eds), *Léonce Perret* (Paris: AFRHC/Cineteca di Bologna, 2003), pp. 72–101.

Thirdly, on newsreels, visual war documentaries, and their production and place within cultural mobilisation, see, as a primary source, Geoffrey Malins, *How I Filmed the War* (London: Imperial War Museum Department of Printed Books in Association with the Battery Press, Nashville, 1920). The secondary literature on documentaries in different combatant countries includes the following. On Britain, Luke McKernan, *The Great British News Film: Topical Budget* (London: BFI Publishing, 1992); Nicholas Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda during the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1986). On France, Laurent Véray, *Les Films d’actualité français de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: AFRHC/SIRPA, 1995). On Germany, Hans Barkhausen, *Filmpropaganda für Deutschland im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hildesheim: Olms Presse, 1982).

There is also material on cinema in the following collective works or journals. On Britain, Steve Badsey, ‘*Battle of the Somme*: British war propaganda’, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 3:2 (1983), pp. 99–115; Nicolas Hiley, ‘La bataille de la Somme et les médias de Londres’, in Jean-Jacques Becker *et al.* (eds.), *Guerre et cultures* (Paris: A. Colin, 1994), pp. 193–207; Nicholas Reeves, ‘Film propaganda and its audience: the example of Britain’s official films during the First World War’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 3 (July 1983), pp. 463–494. On Germany, Rainer Rother, ‘“*Bei unseren Helden an der Somme* (1917)”: the creation of a social event’, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 13:2 (1993), pp. 181–202; Rainer Rother, ‘Learning from the enemy: German film propaganda in World War I’, in Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *A Second Life: German Cinema’s First Decades* (Amsterdam University Press, 1996), pp. 185–92. On Belgium, Bénédicte Rochet, ‘Plongée au cœur des prises de vues du service cinématographique de l’armée belge: un matériel visuel de la Grande Guerre à multiples usages’,

in Bénédicte Rochet and Axel Tixhon (eds.), *La petite Belgique dans la Grande Guerre: une icône, des images* (Presses Universitaires de Namur, 2012), pp. 111–29.

Fourthly, the corpus of newsreels shot during the First World War has become over time the ‘archive’ from which later men and women have created filmic and television documentaries on the conflict. The use of such archives is rarely rigorous – to say the least – and even today such filmic material is used solely for decorative or illustrative purposes, disconnecting the films from their specific character. On this problem, see Laurent Véray, *Les images d’archives face à l’histoire: de la conservation à la création* (Paris: Scérén/CNDP, 2011).

20 Arts

Annette Becker

Primary sources on this topic include private diaries, correspondence, writings by artists, musicians and critics, as well as the works themselves, plastic or musical. The list could be extended substantially, to include exhibition catalogues and monographs on individual artists and musicians. Instead, I have limited my citations to principal anthologies, to works cited in the text, and to the publications of historians, art historians and musicologists on this topic.

Essential works include Guillaume Apollinaire, *Correspondance avec les artistes, 1903–1918*, ed. L. Campa and P. Read (Paris: Gallimard, 2009); Jerome Eddy, *Cubists and Post-Impressionism* (Chicago: McClurg & Co., 1914); Gérard-Georges Lemaire, *Les mots en liberté futuristes* (Paris: Jacques Damase Éditeur, 1986); Luigi Russolo, *L’art des bruits: manifeste futuriste* (Milan: Direction du mouvement futuriste, 1913); Franz Marc, *Écrits et correspondances* (Paris: École Nationale supérieure des Beaux Arts, 2006); Jean Cocteau, *Photographies et dessins de guerre*, ed. Pierre Caizergues (Arles: Actes Sud, 2000); Jules Schmalzigaug, *Un futuriste belge* (Brussels: Cahiers des Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts de Belgique, 2010); Hugo Ball, *La fuite hors du temps: journal 1913–1921* (Brussels: Éditions du Rocher, 1993). Robert Motherwell (ed.), *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology* (Cambridge University Press, 1951; reprinted

1981); Marc Dachy, *Archives dada: chronique* (Paris: Hazan, 2005); Michel Giroud (ed.), *Dada, Zurich/Paris, 1916–1922* (Paris: Éditions Jean-Michel Place, 1981); Marc Bloch, *L'histoire, la Guerre, la résistance*, ed. and preface Annette Becker (Paris: Gallimard, 2006).

The following is a list of references to general studies on the work of artists and musicians in wartime. Many of these take the form of collective works, which give an idea of the diversity of approaches adopted over the last dozen years on war cultures: Grove Dictionary of Art, *From Expressionism to Post-Modernism: Styles and Movements in 20th Century Western Art*, ed. Jane Turner (New York: Grove, 2000); L. Brion-Guerry (ed.), *L'année 1913: les formes esthétiques de l'œuvre d'art à la veille de la Première Guerre mondiale*, 3 vols. (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1973); Annette Becker (ed.), 'Une Grande Guerre, 1914–années trente', special issue of *20–21 siècles. Cahiers du centre Pierre Francastel*, 4 (Winter 2006–7); M. Branland and D. Mastin (eds.), 'De la guerre dans l'art, de l'art dans la guerre: approches plastiques et musicales au xxème siècle', special issue of *Textuel*, 63 (November 2010).

Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainments and Propaganda, 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Arnaldo Javier (ed.), *1914! La vanguardia y la Gran Guerra*, exhibition catalogue (Madrid: Museo Thyssen Bornemisza, 2008); Annette Becker, 'The visual arts', in John Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Richard Cork, *A Bitter Truth: Avant-Garde Art and the Great War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); Christophe Didier (ed.), *Orages de papier 1914–1918: les collections de guerre des bibliothèques* (Paris: Somogy, 2008); Emilio Gentile, *L'apocalypse de la modernité: La Grande Guerre et l'homme nouveau* (Paris: Aubier, 2011) (originally in Italian, 2008); Stefan Goebel, 'Exhibitions', in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War, Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, vol. II: *A Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); Laurent Lebon and Claire Garnier (eds.), *1917*, exhibition catalogue (Metz: Centre Georges Pompidou-Metz, 2012); Rainer Rother (ed.), *Der Weltkrieg, 1914–1918: Ereignis und Erinnerung*, exhibition catalogue (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2004).

Theda Shapiro, *Painters and Politics: The European Avant-garde and Society, 1900–1925* (New York: Elsevier, 1925); Catherine Speck, ‘Women artists and the representation of the First World War’, in ‘War and other catastrophes’, special issue of *Journal of Australian Studies*, 60 (1999); Jay Winter, ‘Painting Armageddon: some aspects of the apocalyptic imagination in art: from anticipation to allegory’, in H. Cecil and P. Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996).

On camouflage, Cubism, religion and visual anthropology, the following are useful: David Cottingham, *Cubism and the Shadow of War: The Avant-garde and Politics in Paris, 1905–1914* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Christopher Green, *Cubism and its Enemies: Modern Movements and Reaction in French Art, 1916–1928* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987); Peter Harrington, ‘Religious and spiritual themes in British academic art during the Great War’, *First World War Studies*, 2:2 (2011), pp. 145–64; Adrian Hicken, *Apollinaire, Cubism and Orphism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Elizabeth Kahn, *The Neglected Majority: The ‘Camoufleurs’*, *Art History and World War One* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984); Tim Newark, *Camouflage* (London: Thames and Hudson/Imperial War Museum, 2007); Claire O’Mahony, ‘Cubist chameleons: André Mare, the *camoufleurs*, and the canons of art history’, *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 3:1 (2008), pp. 11–31; Nicholas Saunders, *Trench Art: Materialities and Memories of War* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); and all the collected works edited by Nicholas Saunders.

On photography, see Joëlle Beurier, ‘Death and material culture: the case of pictures during the First World War’, in Nicholas Saunders, *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory and the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2004); Joëlle Beurier, *Images et violence 1914–1918: quand ‘Le Miroir’ racontait la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Nouveau Monde Édition, 2007); Jane Carmichael, *War Photographers* (London: Routledge, 1989); Gervereau Laurent *et al.* (eds), *Voir, ne pas voir la guerre: histoire des représentations photographiques de la guerre* (Paris: Somogy-BDIC, 2001); Jean-Marie Linsolas, ‘La photographie et la guerre: un miroir du vrai?’, in Christophe Prochasson and Anne Rasmussen (eds.), *Vrai et faux dans la Grande Guerre* (Paris: La Découverte, 2004); Thomas Schneider, ‘Narrating the war in pictures: German photo books on World War I and the

construction of pictorial war narrations’, *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 4:1 (2011), pp. 31–50.

On specific aspects of cultural life in wartime, see the following, organised by nation. On Germany, see J. Lloyd, *German Expressionism, Primitivism and Modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991); Wolfgang Mommsen, ‘German artists, writers and intellectuals and the meaning of war, 1914–1918’, in John Horne (ed.), *State, Society and Mobilisation in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2007). Wolfgang Mommsen (ed.), *Kultur und Krieg: Die Rolle der Intellektuellen, Künstler und Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996); Peter Paret, ‘The great dying: notes on German art, 1914–1918’, in his *German Encounters with Modernism, 1840–1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 133–43; Claudia Siebrecht, *The Aesthetics of Loss: German Women’s Art of the First World War* (Oxford University Press, 2012); Claudia Siebrecht, ‘The Mater Dolorosa on the battlefield: mourning mothers in German women’s art of the First World War’ in H. Jones *et al.* (eds.), *Untold War: New Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); *Allemagne années vingt, la nouvelle objectivité*, exhibition catalogue (Musée de Grenoble, 2003); *L’autre Allemagne: rêver la paix (1914–1924). Histoire, art et littérature*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Historial de la Grande Guerre, Cinq continents, 2008).

On Britain and the British Empire, see James Fox, ‘Business Unusual: Art in Britain during the First World War, 1914–18’ (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2011); Paul Gough, ‘A Terrible Beauty’: *British Artists and the First World War* (Bristol: Samson and Co., 2010); Paul Gough, ‘“Exactitude is truth”: representing the British military through commissioned art works’, *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 1:3 (2008), pp. 341–56; Paul Gough, *Stanley Spencer: Journey to Burghclere* (Bristol: Samson and Co., 2006); Meirion and Susie Harries, *The War Artists: British Official War Art of the Twentieth Century* (London: Michael Joseph in association with the Imperial War Museum and the Tate Gallery, 1983); Peter Harrington, *British Artists and the War: The Face of Battle in Paintings* (London: Greenhill Books, 1993); Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: The Bodley Head, 1990); Sue Malvern, *Modern Art, Britain and the Great War:*

Witnessing, Testimony, and Remembrance (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004); Dean Oliver and Laura Brandon, *Canvas of War: Painting the Canadian Experience, 1914 to 1945* (Ottawa: Canadian War Museum, 2000); Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art and the Great War* (University of Toronto Press, 1984); Jonathan Vance, *Death so Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997).

On France, see Philippe Dagen, *Le silence des peintres: les artistes face à la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Fayard, 1996); Kenneth Silver, *Vers le retour à l'ordre: l'avant-garde parisienne et la Première Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989), a translation of his *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914–1925* (Princeton University Press, 1989).

On Russia and the Eastern Front, see Aaron J. Cohen, *Imagining the Unimaginable: World War, Modern Art, and the Politics of Public Culture in Russia, 1914–1917* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008); Hubertus F. Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); E. Pétrouvia and J. C. Marcadé (eds.), *La Russie à l'avant-garde, 1900–1935* (Brussels: Europalia, 2005); Krisztina Passuth, *Les avant-gardes de l'Europe Centrale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1988).

On music, these are useful: S. Audoin-Rouzeau, Esteban Buch, Myriam Chimènes and Georgie Durosoir, *La Grande Guerre des musiciens* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009); Annette Becker, Sophie-Anne Leterrier and Patrice Marcilloux, 'Musique et cultures de guerre', in *Chefs-d'œuvres et circonstances* (Archives départementales d'Amiens, 2000); Didier Francfort, *Le chant des nations: musiques et cultures, 1871–1914* (Paris: Hachette, 2004); Jane Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music from the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (New York University Press, 1999), and *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France, 1914–1940* (Oxford University Press, 2005); Philippe Gumpłowicz, *Les résonances de l'ombre: musique et identité de Wagner au jazz* (Paris: Fayard, 2012); Dominique Huybrechts, *Les musiciens dans la tourmente: compositeurs et instrumentistes face à la Grande Guerre* (Princeton, NJ: Scaldis, 1999); Kate Kennedy and Trudi Tate (eds.), 'Literature and music of the First World War', special issue of *First World War Studies*, 2:1

(2011); Alain and Nicole Lacombe, *Les chants de bataille: la chanson patriotique de 1900 à 1918* (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1990); and Glenn Watkins, *Proof through the Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

21 War memorials

Bruce Scates and Rebecca Wheatley

Even before memorials had been built, architects, art critics and a host of commemorative stakeholders sought to explain them. This foundational literature took many forms, from penny pamphlets issued to raise funds for under-costed projects, to detailed interrogations of a memorial's purpose and symbolism. As early as the 1920s, professional journals had identified war memorials as their own distinctive genre, with the *Architectural Review* attempting a global survey. National memorials, or those of sizeable states or provinces, prompted their own interpretive literature, often designed to guide visitors through commemorative spaces. Despite their sometimes didactic nature, this literature emphasised the dual purpose of memorials – statements not just of national or imperial loyalty but also of personal grief.

For two examples, from opposite sides of the globe, see Ambrose Pratt, *The National War Memorial of Victoria – The Shrine of Remembrance: An Interpretative Appreciation* (Melbourne: W. D. Joynt, undated but c. 1934); and Ian Hay, *'Their Name Liveth': The Book of the Scottish National War Memorial* (Edinburgh: Scottish War Memorial, 1931).

A revival of interest in war memorials in the late twentieth century first approached them as ciphers of national identity, emphasising their role in legitimising the war and bolstering the authority of ruling elites. See Bob Bushaway, 'Name upon name: the Great War and remembrance', in Roy Porter (ed.), *Myths of the English* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing, History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford University Press, 2002), ch. 17; James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond* (New York: Praeger, 1988); George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford University Press, 1990); G. Kurt

Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 1995).

Memorials were also central to Pierre Nora's ambitious study of national image, symbol and ceremony. *Les lieux de mémoire* presented monuments and other texts as bearers of collective memory and examined the ways in which landscape, memory and place intersect. Pierre Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 4 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999–2010).

As the memory boom progressed, and the memory of war was subjected to new and ever more detailed scrutiny, war memorials became a vigorous branch of cultural history. A close examination of commemorative practice informed modernist and traditionalist interpretations of how the Great War was remembered. It also fostered a more nuanced and multi-vocal approach to the study of memorial culture. The work of what has been called 'the social agency school' argued that memorials were personal as well as ideological statements. Created by the community rather than constructed by the state, they were attempts, as Jay Winter persuasively noted in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), to express and resolve the emotional traumas caused by war. See, for example, Annette Becker, *Les monuments aux morts: patrimoine et mémoires de la grande guerre* (Paris: Errance, 1988); Patrizia Dogliani, 'Les monuments aux morts de la grande guerre en Italie', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 167 (1992), pp. 87–94; Angela Gaffney, *Aftermath: Remembering the Great War in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998); Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919–1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); Krystyna von Henneberg, 'Monuments, public space and the memory of empire in modern Italy', *History and Memory*, 16:1 (2004), pp. 37–85; Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2004); William Kidd and Brian Murdoch (eds.), *Memory and Memorials: The Commemorative Century* (London: Ashgate, 2004); Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge University Press, 2000); Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford: Berg, 1998); Jane Leonard, 'Lest we forget: Irish war memorials', in David Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Ireland and the First World War* (Dublin: Trinity History Workshop, 1986); Chris Maclean

and Jock Philips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials* (Wellington: GP Books, 1990); Daniel J. Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (University of Chicago Press, 1999); Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Jonathan Vance, *Death so Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), and ‘Remembering Armageddon’, in David McKenzie (ed.), *Canada and the First World War* (University of Toronto Press, 2005); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory: Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Alan R. Young, “‘We throw the torch’: Canadian memorials of the Great War and the mythology of heroic sacrifice’, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 24:4 (1989–90), pp. 5–28.

Most of the studies cited above are set within national boundaries, but scholars have also adopted a comparative approach to the study of memorial culture. Transnational scholarship has also encouraged historians (and others) to think outside of national silos, recent work on memorials raised by expatriate Russian communities being a case in point. We have yet to recover the archaeology of memorials raised on the Eastern Front. William Kidd and Brian Murdoch (eds.), *Memory and Memorials: The Commemorative Century* (London: Ashgate, 2004); Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Arguably the attempt to classify, codify and count war memorials is most advanced in France, where Prost’s pioneering work identified five types of French monument, each with its own style, iconography, inscription and location. The swathe of memorial websites established in recent years (led by the UK Inventory of War Memorials) has opened up new possibilities for quantitative study and could foster a better understanding of popular engagement with memorial culture. Antoine Prost, *In the Wake of War: Les Anciens Combattants and French Society, 1914–1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1992); Antoine Prost, *Republican Identities in War and Peace: Representations of*

France in the 19th and 20th Century (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Antoine Prost, 'Verdun', in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 4 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996–8); United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials, www.ukniwm.org.uk.

Sharpening the focus, Geoffrey Moorhouse's study of the memorial raised by the small English town of Bury, *Hell's Foundation: A Town, its Myths and Gallipoli* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), suggested that beneath all the varied public discourse there remained a 'hidden transcript' about the war, a memory preserved at a familial and personal level, and one very much at odds with the rhetoric about the war. Retrieving such memories requires more study at a local level, and recent scholarship suggests that every memorial frames its own social history. Art critics and architectural historians have done much to advance this project. Mark Connelly, *The Great War, Memory and Ritual: Commemoration in the City and East London, 1916–1939* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002); A. Greenberg, 'Lutyens' cenotaph', *Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians*, 48 (1989), pp. 392–5; Bruce Scates, *A Place to Remember: A History of the Shrine of Remembrance* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Bruce Scates, '[It] ought to be as famous as the Statue of Liberty': the forgotten history of Tasmania's cenotaph – Australia's first state war memorial', *Tasmanian Historical Studies*, 14 (2009), pp. 53–78.

An interest in the cultural construction of the body has informed work on figurative memorials, and the role memorials play as surrogate tombs for an absent body has been a founding assumption of memorial literature. Implicit in this is the practice of naming. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14–18: Understanding The Great War*, trans. Catherine Temerson (London: Profile Books, 2002); A. Booth, 'Figuring the absent corpse: strategies of representation in World War I', *Mosaic: A Journal for Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 26:1 (1993), pp. 69–85; Stefan Goebel, 'Remembered and re-mobilized: the "sleeping dead" in interwar Germany and Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39 (2004), pp. 487–501; T. W. Laqueur, 'Memory and naming in the Great War', in J. R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 150–67; T. W. Laqueur, 'Names, bodies and the anxiety of erasure', in Theodore R Schatzki and Wolfgang Natter (eds.), *The Social and Political Body* (New York: Guildford Press, 1996), pp. 123–

41; Catherine Moriarty, 'The absent dead and figurative First World War memorials', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, 39 (1995), p. 15, 'Private grief and public remembrance: British First World War memorials', in Martin Evans and Ken Lunn (eds.), *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), and "'The returned soldiers bug": making the Shrine of Remembrance', in N. Saunders and P. Cornish (eds.), *Contested Objects: Material Memories of the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2009); David Sherman, 'Bodies and names: the emergence of commemoration in interwar France', *American Historical Review*, 10:2 (1998), pp. 443–6.

Feminist analysis has widened this field. For the complex gender politics of memorials, see J. A. Black, 'Ordeal and re-affirmation: masculinity and the construction of Scottish and English national identity in Great War memorial sculpture 1919–30', in William Kidd and Brian Murdoch (eds.), *Memory and Memorials: The Commemorative Century* (London: Ashgate, 2004); Ana Carden Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism and the First World War* (Oxford University Press, 2009); Joy Damousi, *Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Ken Inglis, 'Men, women and war memorials: Anzac Australia', *Daedalus*, 116:4 (1987), pp. 35–59; Katie Pickles, *Transnational Outrage: The Death and Commemoration of Edith Cavell* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Regina Schulte, 'Käthe Kollwitz's sacrifice', *History Workshop Journal*, 41 (1996), pp. 193–221; Catherine Speck, 'Women's war memorials and citizenship', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 11:23 (1996), pp. 129–36.

Historians of religion have been surprisingly slow to consider memorials. The notable exceptions include Annette Becker, *War and Faith: The Religious Imagination in France, 1914–1930* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), and Ken Inglis's magisterial *Sacred Places* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1998). For an introduction to a psychoanalytic approach, see Brian Daines, "'Ours the sorrow, ours the loss": psychoanalytic understandings of the role of World War I war memorials in the mourning process', *Psychoanalytic Studies*, 2:3 (2000), pp. 291–308.

Although civic monuments have been best served by literature, memorials also took the form of war trophies, museums, art and a host of amenities. K. S. Inglis, 'A sacred place: the making of the Australian War

Memorial', *War and Society*, 13:2 (1985), pp. 99–126; Susanne Brandt, 'The memory makers: museums and exhibitions of the First World War', *History and Memory*, 6:1 (1994), pp. 95–122; Sue Malvern, 'War memory and museums: art and artifact in the Imperial War Museum', *History Workshop Journal*, 49 (Spring 2000), pp. 177–203; Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art and the Great War* (University of Toronto Press, 1984); Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006, ch. 10.

There have been a number of studies of the entombment of unknown warriors, a practice adopted by many nations in the aftermath of war. This was a case, as Gillis noted, of 'remembering everyone by remembering no one in particular'. J. R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton University Press, 1994). For a pioneering study see Ken Inglis, 'Entombing unknown soldiers: from London and Paris to Baghdad', *History and Memory*, 5 (1993), pp. 7–31; Joanna Bourke, 'Heroes and hoaxes: the Unknown Warrior, Kitchener and "missing men" in the 1920s', *War and Society*, 13:2 (1995), pp. 41–63.

The literature on the making of the cemeteries of the Great War is extensive and examines both architectural form and narratives of pilgrimage. D. W. Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919–1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998); Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1985); George Mosse, 'National cemeteries and the national revival: the cult of the fallen soldiers in Germany', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14 (1979), pp. 1–20; Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the Battlefields of the Great War* (Oxford University Press, 2006); Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon, 2005); Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australia's War Graves and the Great War* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007).

22 The dead

Antoine Prost

The topic of death and the dead of the Great War has been considered primarily within studies of war losses, country by country. The only inclusive study is by Boris Tsesarevitch Uralis, *Wars and Populations* (Moscow: Éditions du Progrès, 1917) (French translation, *Guerre et populations*, 1972). The notes to the table in [Chapter 22](#) of this volume give the references for demographic works for each country.

The main studies on the exhumation and burial of the dead concern essentially France and Great Britain. For France, we have Yves Pourcher, *Les jours de guerre: la vie des Français au jour le jour entre 1914 et 1918* (Paris: Plon, 1994); Luc Capdevilla and Danièle Voldman, *Nos morts: les sociétés occidentales face aux tués de la guerre* (Paris: Payot, 2002); Thierry Hardier and Jean-François Jagielski, *Combattre et mourir pendant la Grande Guerre (1914–1925)* (Paris: Imago, 2001), and also the recent work by Stéphane Tison, *Comment sortir de la guerre? Deuil, mémoire et traumatisme (1870–1940)* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011). Two studies look at the scandals provoked by the first burials: Béatrix Pau, ‘La violations des sépultures militaires 1919–1920’, *Revue historique des armées*, 259 (2010), pp. 33–43; and Béatrix Pau-Heyries, ‘Le marché des cercueils (1918–1924)’, *Revue historique des armées*, 224 (2001–3), pp. 65–80.

For Britain, the central story is that of the Imperial War Graves Commission, beginning with the booklet by Rudyard Kipling, *The Graves of the Fallen* (London: HMSO, 1919). The history of the IWGC by Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil: A History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission 1917–1967* (London: Constable, 1967), has been reprinted. Julie Summers approached the subject in 2007 in an illustrated book: *Remembered: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (2007), and in 2010 looked at the latest CWGC cemetery, in *Remembering Fromelles: A New Cemetery for a New Century*. These two books are published by the CWGC.

Few studies have dealt with military cemeteries. For Galicia we have a catalogue published in 1918: Rudolf Broch and Hans Hauptmann, *Die Westgalizischen Heldengräber: Aus den Jahren des Weltkrieges 1914–1915* (Vienna: Gesellschaft für Graphische Industrie), which was later published in Polish: *Zachodniogalicyjskie groby bohaterow z lat wojny swiatowej*

1914–1915, przekład filologiczny Henryk Sznytka, opracowanie, wstęp I przepisy Jerzy Drogomir (Tarnow: Muzeum Okregowe w Tarnowie, 1996). Pawel Pencakowski devoted an interesting article to them: ‘Monumenti dimenticati agli “eroi di nessuno”’: i cimiteri austriaci di guerra nella Galizia occidentale’, in Gianluigi Fait, *Sui campi Galizia (1914–1917): gli Italiani d’Austria e il fronte orientale: uomini, popoli, culture nella guerra europea* (Roverato: Materiali di Lavoro, 1997), pp. 461–79. French war cemeteries were studied initially by Anne Biraben, in *Les cimetières militaires en France: architecture et paysage* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2005), but the archives of the construction services must be located to take this further. The American cemeteries have been studied by Ron Theodore Robin, *Enclaves of America: The Rhetoric of American Political Architecture Abroad 1900–1965* (Princeton University Press, 1992). The British cemeteries, on the continent and at Gallipoli, in Egypt or in Mesopotamia, are well covered in the Imperial War Graves Commission histories already cited. Further material appears in the article by Thomas W. Laqueur, ‘Memory and naming in the Great War’, in John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 150–67. Finally, the Italian and German cemeteries have not yet received systematic study, but the article by George Mosse, ‘National cemeteries and national revival: the cult of fallen soldiers in Germany’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14:1 (1979), pp. 1–20, offers some stimulating insights.

Pilgrimages to military cemeteries have been studied, notably by David Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada 1919–1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), and by Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the Battlefields of the Great War* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Without returning here to the studies of war memorials and monuments to the dead, the many works which examine the history of mourning and memory present in general the history of war graves, their upkeep and their uses. Examples of these are Mark Connelly’s *The Great War, Memory and Ritual: Commemoration in the City and East London 1916–1939* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002); Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1919–1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); or Daniel Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon, 2005).

The case of Australia has been studied with particular care, in part because of the distance between the families and the graves: see Joy Damousi, *The Labor of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss and the Great War* (Fremantle: Curtin University Books, 2004); and Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007).

23 The living

John Horne

Two studies of the cultural legacy of the Great War are vital for tackling many issues raised in this chapter: George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), and Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

The definition of the living by the dead is partly covered by [Chapters 15](#) ('Mourning practices') and 21 ('War memorials') and their associated bibliographical essays. Fundamental is David Cannadine's essay on 'War and death, grief and mourning in Modern Britain', in Joachim Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (London: Europa, 1981). Also important are Joy Damousi, *The Labor of Loss: Mourning and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), and Pat Jalland, *Death in War and Peace: A History of Loss and Grief in England, 1914–1970* (Oxford University Press, 2010), while Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau provides a moving portrait of five processes of mourning in *Cinq deuils de guerre 1914–1918* (Paris: Noesis, 2001). Adrian Gregory's study of *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919–1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994) remains indispensable for a host of questions related to the commemoration of the Great War in Britain. On the particular anxieties associated with 'the missing', see Neil Hanson, *The Unknown Soldier: The Story of the Missing of the Great War* (London: Doubleday, 2005). For battlefield 'pilgrimages', see David Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia*

and Canada, 1919–1939 (Oxford: Berg, 1998). Karen Petrone, *The Great War in Russian Memory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), provides crucial insights into the unique perspectives on the war for Russians under Bolshevism. For the demographic aspects, especially relating to Britain, and also the myth of the ‘lost generation’, see Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (1986; 2nd edn, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

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Ersten Weltkriegs und ihre internationalen Kontakte, 1918–1939 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011).

How civilians remembered and came to terms with the occupation of north-eastern France is touched on by Annette Becker, *Les cicatrices rouges: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), and Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée, 1914–1918* (Paris: A. Colin, 2011). However, the reconstruction of the former Western Front still awaits its historian. So far, there is just the superb historical geography of the reclamation of the countryside by Hugh Clout, *After the Ruins: Restoring the Countryside of Northern France after the Great War* (Exeter University Press, 1996).

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collapse with violence, a comparative view is given by Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (eds.), *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War, 1917–1923* (Oxford University Press, 2012). A magisterial history of the efforts at reconciliation and reform in the interwar period is Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History, 1919–1933* (Oxford University Press, 2005), while the relationship of this to early ideas of European integration is considered in Carl Pegg, *Evolution of the European Idea, 1914–1932* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

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