The First World War
A Routledge Freebook
Introduction

1 • Introduction: Remembering the First World War Today from *Remembering the First World War*, edited by Bart Ziino

2 • Introduction from *Origins of the First World War 3e*, by James Joll & Gordon Martel

3 • Women's War Work: Remunerative, Voluntary and Familial from *Women and the First World War*, by Susan R. Grayzel

4 • "The Fabric of Europe and the World was Being Remade:" The Armistice and After in Manchester from *The Ordeal of Peace*, by Adam R. Seipp

5 • Hoping for Victorious Peace from *War Time*, by Louis Halewood, Adam Luptak & Hanna Smyth
INTRODUCTION

REMEMBERING THE FIRST WORLD WAR TODAY

This chapter is excerpted from Remembering the First World War edited by Bart Ziino. ©2015 Taylor & Francis Group. All rights reserved.
Introduction
Remembering the First World War today

Bart Ziino

‘Remembering the First World War’ is an expansive topic, and one that has already produced an extraordinary and diverse array of scholarly inquiry. The centenary of the First World War has naturally been a source of considerable debate and stimulus – at least among academics and politicians, and in cultural institutions – for a long time before its realization in 2014 and beyond. That debate has been premised on the obligations, opportunities and not infrequently the anxieties that are entailed in the determination to mark the centenary of the first of the twentieth century’s two catastrophic global conflicts. The politics of the centenary divide between those who see opportunities to remind their (usually national) communities of the significance of their wartime past, and invite their obligation to remember in that vein; those concerned to complicate that past, to challenge older conceptions of events, to rework contemporary relationships with the First World War; and those who prefer either to oppose or ignore the event altogether. This volume takes its cue from that contemporary debate, recognizing that we are now beyond living memory of the war, and yet to all appearances still fascinated by it, and by our own links to its events. That persistent fascination with the war has been rendered by key scholars as a form of resistance to the loss of its living links, and an effort to re-imagine and reassert our connections to the conflict. The politics of that effort remain insistent: what meanings do individuals and societies engaged in remembering the war attribute to the events and experiences of a century ago? In responding to this question, Remembering the First World War focuses on contemporary practices of remembering the war; it seeks to expose the processes by which the war is being remembered today, by whom, and for what purposes.

The tools for this inquiry are familiar: government agencies are managing key commemorative events surrounding the outbreak of the war, major battles and the armistice; new memorials are being constructed on and away from the battlefields; historians are emerging from a plethora of academic conferences and entering the mainstream media with invocations to join in a debate over the complexity of the war and its legacies; museum curators tread a fine line between the expectations of both in their efforts to engage their various publics without antagonizing any one section of them. Film-makers and novelists seek for truths beyond the historian’s constraints of evidence. For those historians who observe,
there will be continuing opportunities to investigate the production and reception of official and unofficial narratives of war, an opportunity that historians in this volume are taking on the very cusp of the centenary.

At the point of the centenary of the First World War, one could easily detect a wide spectrum of attitudes in public forums. The Canadian historian Jack Granatstein, for instance, insisted that not only did Canadians ‘need to remember’ the war but, rather prescriptively, that ‘We really must remember the Great War properly.’ Eminent British historian Hew Strachan looked forward to a more open public and academic engagement with the centenary, such that ‘If we do not emerge at the end of the process in 2018 with fresh perspectives, we shall have failed.’ Others turned their back on the centenary altogether, fearing that its marking would be nothing more than a parochial and narrowly nationalist celebration. In The Guardian in January 2014, journalist and broadcaster Simon Jenkins had already apologized to Germans for an anticipated ‘avalanche of often sickening Great War memorabilia, largely at their expense. … The horror, the mistakes, the cruelty, the crassness of war will be revived over and over again, “lest we forget”.’ Finally, he asked, ‘Can we really not do history without war?’

This kind of debate – conducted here within newspaper columns – certainly has its analogue in the broader public, though there remain fundamental questions to be asked about the nature of public engagement with the First World War more generally. Leading into the centenary, a number of surveys of popular knowledge of the war suggested that for those engaged in remembering the First World War, there was something to worry about in terms of public receptiveness. In Australia, where war commemoration enjoys a privileged relationship with ideas about national identity, focus group investigation in 2010 revealed that ‘There is almost no awareness or anticipation of the impending 100th World War I anniversaries, including the Gallipoli landings and Anzac Day.’ Knowledge of Australia’s war history, the report found, was ‘generally poor’, and declined across age cohorts, though even older Australians ‘often have only sketchy or incorrect knowledge’. Not quite half of the Canadians questioned in 2014 could identify Vimy Ridge as a significant battle of the First World War, and war knowledge very quickly diminished from there.

In Britain too, the research think tank British Future found that despite politicians’ claims about the centrality of the war to national consciousness, ‘what is in fact evident is how little most people know about a conflict that now seems extremely distant and which is often either supplanted by, or conflated with, the second world war’. The even more expansive polling – in seven countries – commissioned by the UK’s British Council, showed similar levels of ignorance, though with local variations. On the other side of the coin, interestingly, polling in Germany suggested broad interest in the First World War, especially among those aged 14–29. All this should not necessarily incline us to the view that ignorance necessarily means apathy: the more significant finding is that despite lapses in discrete knowledge, individuals across age cohorts tended to express a belief – whether sincerely held or socially
expected – that the centenary ought to be marked in a significant way. And indeed, in Australia at least, social researchers found that ‘People do not want detailed historical information’, so much as a knowledge of key events and attitudes. There were, however, ‘quite strong opinions about how ... commemorations should (and should not) feel’.12

That emphasis on feeling is important, especially as none of the combatants of that war remain now to speak directly of their experiences or their conception of the event. Yet the past quarter of a century has witnessed an extraordinary increase in popular and academic interest in the Great War as an event, and in the ways it is represented. Since the 1990s, in several victor nations at least, we have seen increases in attendance at and participation in the anniversaries of the war, burgeoning output of popular histories, novels and films, and increasing political attention to the war in school curricula and commemorative events. Even in potentially less fertile fields, such as Germany, there are those ready to insist on the state’s obligation to confront the past, though based on a leftist concern to perpetuate the message ‘No more war!’13 How do we explain this phenomenon? Part of the answer must be, as David Reynolds points out, that the end of the Cold War decoupled the First World War from the Second, and the persistence with which ‘the twentieth century kept reshaping the Great War in its own light’, thus encouraging an effort to again understand the First World War in its own terms. For Reynolds, the passing of the remaining veterans of the First World War has rendered the task at the centenary ‘not so much remembrance as understanding’.14 And yet people are taking part in forms of remembrance, on a series of levels, to which strong emotions are attached and felt. We must then remain sensitive to the ways in which remembering the war occurs, what meanings are being transmitted, and how understanding of the war is received in the early twenty-first century.

The production of war memory

Several important scholars have in recent years made significant efforts at theorizing our contemporary relationships with the First World War. In doing this they are building on academic endeavours centred on recovering the experiences of those who, during and after the war, conducted their own forms of commemoration, in their own historically specific conditions. This project has led to a much more nuanced understanding of the dynamism of commemoration of an event that engaged entire populations not only in the passions of war, but in the desolation of loss and bereavement. The discourse on ‘memory’ – variously configured – has helped to drive this work, and its key features require some elaboration here, in order to understand the current practices of First World War remembrance being conducted around the world. Jay Winter’s scholarship has been critical. One of the more helpful contributions to memory studies in the last decade and more is his observation that among its practitioners few use the term ‘memory’ in the same way. This is helpful, because one of the more fundamental problems has been a disassociation between individuals who remember
events that they experienced, and the social forces that in their turn shape and reshape private memories over time. The relationship between private memory and the loosely-defined ‘collective memory’ is mutually constitutive: private memories are not perfect recordings of the past, but are shaped by subjective attitudes and social mores that encourage the articulation of some memories, while making others less publicly acceptable. Just as those social contexts can change over time, then, memory itself can change over time. Hiving off the public signs and symbols of ‘collective memory’ from the production of that memory – in the actions of individuals and communities as much as the state – threatens to hollow out the value of memory as a category of analysis.

For this reason Winter has advocated investing the term ‘memory’ with a greater sense of agency, and indeed to prefer ‘remembrance’ as a better descriptor of the processes of memory-making. One can more profitably refer to the acts of ‘remembering’ and ‘forgetting’, rather than to the simple existence of ‘memory’, especially ‘collective memory’, in understanding the dynamism and the politics of memory. This distaste for the passive voice has insisted on a much more responsible examination of how memory is shaped and transmitted in its social and political contexts. As Joanna Bourke has observed, “individuals “remember”, “repress”, “forget” and “are traumatized”, not societies … The collective does not possess a memory, only barren sites upon which individuals inscribe shared narratives, infused with power relations”. Thus does Winter make his preference for ‘remembrance’ over passive terms:

To privilege ‘remembrance’ is to insist on specifying agency, on answering the question who remembers, when, where, and how? And on being aware of the transience of remembrance, so dependent on the frailties and commitments of the men and women who take the time and effort to engage in it.

In this concern, Winter was enriching the work of other scholars who were insisting that what was required was closer attention to the processes of memory-making, especially the relationship between private and public memory, and the reception of the narratives so produced. Alon Confino observed that the study of memory had bifurcated, and concerned itself separately with personal testimonies on one hand, and the representation of the past and shared cultural knowledge by succeeding generations on the other. This ignored the problem of why ‘some pasts triumph while others fail … Why do people prefer one image of the past over another?’ Similarly, Jan Assmann was concerned with the processes of transmitting particular conceptions of the past to subsequent generations when he developed a working definition of ‘cultural memory’. In this conception, cultural memory reflected a process that sought to fix the meanings and significance of particular events beyond the lifetimes of those who experienced them. Here, wrote Assmann, was ‘a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation’.
private memory shapes identity, so too does cultural memory, though on much broader scales, through the cultural channels available to mass society, including memorials, ceremonies, museums, film and literature.

The selectivity involved in this process is important; it demands recognition of the politics of memory and, by extension, the agency of those who work to have their particular memories of war recognized in public. Further, acknowledging the existence of agents of remembrance does not presuppose equal power in shaping popular understandings of the meaning of events. T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, in particular, have elaborated on the nature of the contest conducted between the state, communities and individuals in shaping the wartime past. The politics of war memory, they contend, refers to an unequal power struggle, in which memory is installed at the centre of a cultural world, through that variety of cultural channels:

The politics of war memory and commemoration is precisely the struggle of different groups to give public articulation to, and hence gain recognition for, certain memories and the narratives within which they are structured. The history of war memory and commemoration involves tracing the outcomes of particular struggles, as represented both by those memories which are publicly articulated, and by those which have been privatized, fragmented or repressed.19

The struggles over war memory remind us that the narratives attached to the First World War are not static, or agreed, but are subject to constant contestation, and change over time. This is in the nature of cultural memory, and in recognizing this, we can see the life histories of remembering, at a series of levels – public, private, institutional – and the cultures of remembrance that those processes have bequeathed to the present. In other words, remembering and giving meaning to the past has a history of its own, which can be tracked over time, both for individuals, and for broader social formations.20 Thus our relationship with the First World War is not simply a relationship between now and the events of 1914–18, but one informed by the processes of transmission of familial and cultural memory in the intervening years.

How do we understand ‘remembering’ beyond living memory?

Acknowledging the importance of generational transmission of war memory allows us to look more closely at those who continue to ‘make’ remembrance today, especially as we are now all but entirely disconnected from those with a living memory of the war itself. In one sense, we should expect that as witnesses to the First World War pass away, the cultural memory of the war that remains should become more and more ossified and fixed. The survival of particular narratives of the past is dependent on their engaging with individual memories, which are in turn shaped by those broader narratives.21 Dan Todman has sensitively charted the rarefying of remembering the war over
several generations in Britain, in which the links to direct experience of the war and all its personal complexities have drawn away. In their place, private and detailed understanding of the war has been increasingly populated with national myths developed and redeveloped over the decades following the war. In this, the war becomes ‘more of a symbol – easily shared and commonly understood – than a multi-faceted, personally remembered event’. In a similar way, Harald Wydra refers to the initiation of new generations into cultural memory, in which ‘Societies, like individuals, “learn” habitual acts of performance by forgetting the exact circumstances’ in which such acts are historically and personally located. Such habits of commemoration can be fostered by official ceremonies and memorials, which take on a semblance of concretizing what it is that is not to be forgotten, and so can facilitate a process of disengaging from actual events, while maintaining a sense of dedication to their ostensible meaning. The process here is one of gradual consolidation of complex past realities into a broadly accepted symbolic currency, that yet retains a sensibility that it reflects events worthy of remembrance.

And yet that process – inevitable as it may ultimately be – has not proceeded as relentlessly as we might expect. With the deaths of the last veterans, we are not seeing a transition ‘from memory to history’, so much as between different forms of remembering. The question that has come to occupy historians, given the persistent interest in the First World War, is this: if there are no participants or witnesses left, how do we explain what we describe as ‘remembering’? The short answer is that those who engage in remembrance simply cannot be remembering a war in which they had no part. On the other hand, they are certainly remembering something, and in this they are again remaking the narratives attached to the war. The loss of the last veterans thus becomes a catalyst for the production of new memories of the past, with new modes of production. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker describe the critical moment in which access to witness testimonies suddenly diminished: ‘Then the 1970s and 1980s swept away that version of the war for good. Like it or not, the umbilical cord was severed.’ In its place is something requiring more precise terminology than ‘memory’ alone can muster. Rejecting the idea that individual experiences of war can be transmitted to subsequent generations, Dan Todman argued that ‘historians need to pay particular attention to who is remembering what, to traditions in remembrance and the means by which these are communicated and transmitted, rather than how later generations might inherit ancestral experience’. That is, we need to understand the processes by which we reconstruct the past in the present, rather than how participants’ memories might somehow be perfectly transmitted and received by succeeding generations. In this sense, Todman insists that we must make key distinctions between the ‘experienced and unexperienced past’, and this has led him – and others – to question the utility of the term ‘remembering’ for those born after the events at hand. These are, indeed, processes of a different order and quality to the acts of remembrance conducted by those who themselves participated in the war.
Here, recourse to Winter’s distinction between memory and remembrance becomes more useful again, in that where memory is the preserve of those with direct experience of the war, remembrance allows for the act of remembering — the construction and reconstruction of the past — to be conducted both by those with and those without that experience. To meet the current situation, in which we are actively making meaning of the wartime past without any direct connection to it, Winter has proposed the term ‘historical remembrance’. ‘Historical remembrance’, he explains,

is a way of interpreting the past which draws on both history and memory, on documented narratives about the past and on the statements of those who lived through them. Many people are active in this field. Historians are by no means in the majority.28

The agents of historical remembrance, as Winter says, can be historians, though they share the field with film-makers, novelists, architects, curators and others involved in cultural production. These latter do not necessarily share historians’ obligations to produce evidence, and this may be one factor that gives historical remembrance such vitality and persistence. As Graeme Davison has observed, the myths of the war ‘might flourish even more luxuriantly when … freed from the limitations of historical fact and the human frailties of its surviving representatives. Feeling connected to the past, after all, is not at all the same as being connected with history’.29

As Davison shows, having defined the issue, the task is to explain it. Why has remembrance persisted so powerfully? To this end Winter has labelled the popular fascination with the past and its actors the ‘memory boom’. He tracks two such ‘booms’, the latest of which emerged in the 1970s, and has been intense and enduring. Taking its cue from the Second World War and the Holocaust, its preoccupations are with remembering the victims of the violent twentieth century. An increasing recognition and acceptance of the traumatizing effects of war on individuals, and of their traumatic memories, has brought these people – witnesses – to the centre of how remembering the past has been conducted in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Their testimonies are valued for their access to traumas that must be acknowledged and, as Winter observes, ‘their stories and their telling of them in public are historical events in their own right’.30 In terms of the First World War, we remain obsessed with ‘the soldier’s story’, though as a witness the soldier has increasingly taken on the persona of the victim – of the generals, of the guns, of societies that failed to appreciate them. Understood this way, Winter has characterized the current memory boom as an act of resistance to that drawing away of direct experience of the past that is all too apparent to those who remain. Morbid count-downs to the last veterans of the First World War were only one, if very obvious, sign of that awareness.31 While Winter too could predict the ultimate if gradual emptying of meaning from sites of memory created after the war, he suggested that the memory boom of the late twentieth century ‘may be
understood as an act of defiance, an attempt to keep alive at least the names and the images of the millions whose lives have been truncated or disfigured by war’. Thus would sites of memory created in the urgent need to find meaning and comfort immediately after the war ‘inevitably become sites of second-order memory, that is, they are places where people remember the memories of others, those who survived the events marked there’.

That effort at prolongation is not simply a mimicry of the memories of others; it is an effort at remaking the past in ways that preserve the affective power of participants’ memories. Marianne Hirsch’s theory of postmemory speaks to those who resist the homogenization of cultural memory, especially the children of witnesses to the past, who ‘remember’ those same events only through the stories and images with which they grew up, and their own observations of the continuing effects of past events on parents. Hirsch willingly concedes that postmemory is not the same as memory — it is constituted not by recall, but by ‘imaginative investment’ — but insists that it shares the emotional force of participants’ memories, and so needs to be taken seriously as a form of remembering the past. The widespread practice of family history might also be understood as a mode of ‘imaginative investment’ in the past, with the potential for such emotive connections. Its extraordinary escalation has prompted Dan Todman to suggest that remembering the war as a significant event will be prolonged through those processes of family history: family memory, and the preservation apparatus that supports it — in the form of state archives, personal papers, photographs and memorabilia — helps facilitate a sense of individual engagement with the war, even beyond the capacity of families to do so from their own resources. It is those supports to family history research, he suggests, which may well become the ultimate markers of First World War remembrance in Britain, as they attempt to compensate for the loss of living links to the conflict.

Conceiving of continuing popular interest in the First World War as defiance of the ossification of memory helps us to begin to understand the activities of the agents of remembrance today. There is no sense of condescension here, nor doubting that genuine feelings of connection to the past exist, though as the children of the war generation — the generation so critical in shaping the myths of the war that continue to resonate today — are themselves passing away, we are now obliged to grapple with the ways in which generations without direct connection to those who fought are reconstructing their relationship with the war. This is the concern of *Remembering the First World War*. The book is organized around three key themes, each providing scope to interrogate contemporary production and reception of narratives about the war, at a series of levels and in different international contexts. Part 1 reduces the focus immediately to individuals and their endeavours to engage the wartime past through the practices of family history. Part 2 is concerned with a series of cultural media through which individuals and the agents of cultural production — including the state, novelists, artists, curators and musicians — come into contact and negotiate their efforts at meaning-making in the twenty-first century. Part 3 takes a broader perspective still as it investigates the formulation and
reformulation of national narratives relating to the war, especially where those narratives have been in contest or repressed. Taking long perspectives on the histories of remembrance in several different contexts, this section of the book exposes keenly how very much alive are the politics of memory surrounding the global conflict of a century ago.

Part 1: Family history, genealogy and the First World War

The great problem for historians today, as I have suggested above, is to understand the persistence of interest and the genuine sense of connection individuals still feel to the wartime past. Perhaps in no other way is the intensity of that interest in the First World War more evident than in the boom in family history, and the emphasis on individual stories of war that pervades the war’s public representations. While the reasons for the explosion in genealogy are of course much broader than an interest in the war itself, the First World War is a critical node around which family history comes into contact with national and international narratives of the past. In Britain, surveys in 2013 found that, despite patchy knowledge of the war, significant numbers of people (almost half) were aware of a family connection to the First World War, while the greater part of the remainder simply did not know if such a connection existed. What this suggests is not just the potential but the reality that families remain key sites at which the past and present converge, and reshape each other. As Jay Winter has observed:

the richest texture of remembrance was always within family life. This intersection of the public and the private, the macro-historical and the micro-historical, is what has given commemoration in the twentieth century its power and its rich repertoire of forms.

It is also the case that personal memories – even simply an awareness – of family members who encountered the war give affective power to remembering in the present, as the resonances of the war that were visible in ancestors’ lives become the substance of remembrance. Winter is rightly insistent on the importance of family transmission of stories about the past to the sustenance of broader narratives. Without such engagement with the past on these levels, public ceremonies can do little to prevent the atrophy of remembrance.

There are two key themes to observe in this section, both revolving around the relationship between family historians and broader public narratives of the war. The first is the impact of a broad recognition in government and cultural institutions of the public appetite for family history as a means of engaging the past, and the subsequent provision of family history resources in ever greater quantities, and with ever greater ease of access. This is a truly international phenomenon that one might trace through the series of local and national archives that have been busily digitizing individual service records, to the efforts to collect and present private records of the war for a mass audience, a theme that has so marked the extraordinary efforts of the ‘Europeana 14–18’ European
This feeds into the second theme, which is the collaboration between family historians and more powerful cultural agents in making meaning of the past, a process that is becoming clearer in the forums established by cultural institutions that allow users to articulate their responses to family history in concert and comparison with others. The rehearsing of family narratives of the First World War thus proceeds much more openly, though not without a level of guidance from the institutions that facilitate it.

In pursuing this analysis, chapters in this section pick up not only Winter’s point above, but Ashplant, Dawson and Roper’s observation that it is the interaction between different agencies of remembering, rather than individual remembering per se, that will become the matter for analysis beyond living memory of the war. James Wallis thus considers the ways in which amateur family history can reshape the contours of modern First World War remembrance, through a study that combines an emphasis on the post-living-memory generation and its capacities to ‘know’ the wartime past, with the work of those who frame First World War history through making particular resources available in particular ways. This includes the Imperial War Museum’s ‘Lives of the First World War’ project, which has substantial aims in seeking ‘to engage everyone in remembering’ through family history. Carolyn Holbrook and Bart Ziino’s concerns are similar, in seeing a mutually constitutive relationship between the conduct of family history in Australia, and the powerful public narratives of the war that offer broader contexts for that research. They nevertheless argue for a recognition of the significant agency of family historians, even those without direct knowledge of ancestors, in shaping war knowledge in the present.

Part 2: Practices of remembering

If family history is one key process of remembrance, then more public forms of representation and negotiation also require investigation. In Part 2, the focus is much more squarely on those involved in cultural production in public: not the faceless ‘state’, but a whole series of professionals and artists who engage in transmitting and, often, questioning versions of the past, including teachers, politicians, historians, curators, artists, architects and musicians. Such people are centrally placed in the struggle over war memory, by choice or otherwise. Indeed they are central to Winter’s conception of ‘historical remembrance’, as they provide some key shared opportunities for conceptions of the past to be reflected, contrasted and reshaped as part of communal, national and transnational groups.

Authors in this section take a broad approach to understanding the war’s more recent cultural products, and the national and transnational histories from which they have emerged. In what ways are public representations of the First World War serving national and international audiences? New memorials, new exhibitions, amended education curricula, as well as new books, films, music and television documentaries and dramatizations are some of the hallmarks of centenary activity around the world, as people mobilize their resources to
engage in what they expect will be a potent and focused period of opportunities for remembrance of the war and its participants. Already some of the themes of that mobilization can be seen in particular quarters, especially in Europe, where the centenary has provoked a rhetoric of fraternity and unity, while some of the tensions of the war, its origins and outcomes, remain difficult to paper over. This is particularly evident in the plethora of exhibitions opened in readiness for August 2014. An exhibition in Brussels entitled \textit{14–18, It’s Our History!} focused on both the Belgian and European dimensions of the struggle, claiming that ‘The entirety of Europe’s history emerged from the First World War.’ In Germany and Austria, exhibitions have promoted a sense of common experience across borders. An exhibition at the Austrian National Library speaks to the ‘common past’ of the countries of the former empire; a joint French/German exhibition seeks to examine not only the differences between the combatants that sustained the conflict, but ‘also how similar the experiences of the soldiers and the artists who served actually were’. Even the Archive of Serbia’s exhibition of key documents, including the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum, drew similar sentiments, as the failure of dialogue and negotiations in 1914, and the ensuing hostilities between neighbours, framed a contemporary ‘obligation to foster trust and understanding’.

Still, tensions were never far below the surface. In 2013 the Serbian Prime Minister expressed fears that centenary commemorations would ‘lead again to Serbian people being accused of triggering the biggest armed conflict in the history of humanity’, and the European Commission abstained from organizing any commemorative events itself, as a way of avoiding immersion in potential dispute over the past. French officials were sensitive to the difficulties of engaging with Germany to mark what was ultimately a German defeat and French victory, while engagement with Turkey was made even more problematic by severe diplomatic strain over recognition of the Armenian genocide. Criticisms of a low-key German approach to the centenary prompted officials at the German embassy in London to reassert that questions of guilt ‘should be left more or less to historians and shouldn’t feature dominantly in politicians’ speeches’, and that the focus of commemoration should be those who died, and on the unity of Europe fostered by the European Union. And again in Serbia, a statue to Gavrilo Princip, assassin of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was erected on the centenary of the event as a tribute to a patriot and ‘freedom fighter’.

Ross Wilson’s provocative chapter opens this section, turning on its head the common criticism that British remembrance of the war is too much defined by cultural products emphasizing mud and futility. He argues that such representations of war are actively selected and redeployed in contemporary British society for a series of ends, not only as a well-accepted shorthand form, but as a way of rejuvenating and reasserting a genuine sense of the trauma that accompanied the First World War as a significant event in British history and identity. Thus does Wilson assert that reference to various cultural media should be understood as framing memory, rather than reflecting the very act of remembering. Ann-Marie Einhaus and Catriona Pennell usefully broaden the scope of
mediation of the war, by insisting that more people will come into contact with the First World War through school than through family, therefore necessitating an understanding of how knowledge of the war is transmitted through education systems. Their chapter shows the surprising complexity in English school teaching about the war, and asks how the classroom affects the transmission of ‘memory’ and in what ways, noting the variety of responses among teachers, and the tensions that can emerge between disciplinary approaches. As elsewhere, the First World War in the classroom is subject to the same tensions between feeling connected to the past, and being connected to history, that are seen elsewhere in the volume.

Annette Becker’s contemplation of new museums and installations on the former Western Front elaborates her ongoing concerns with the representation and obscuring of violence in public art and exhibition, and the dangers of feeling and empathy overwhelming the obligations of historians. Reading the Western Front as a site for the international assertion and negotiation of remembrance narratives, she is encouraged by efforts at representing the war’s totality, the breadth of its impacts and the persistence of its legacies. Finally, in this section, Peter Grant and Emma Hanna interrogate the efforts to shape the aural dimensions of remembrance over time, arguing that at times music has been central to debate over war commemoration, and that it remains a potent vehicle for discussing the nature of remembrance today, through its engagement with, and occasional subversion of, changing mythologies of war in Britain. The chapter’s long historical sweep allows us to see the installation of a canon of musical remembrance, as much as we might detect the same in literature and film, and its reproduction in the present through performance in private and public. Yet music promises, as much as any other medium, continued contestation and reflection on the war and contemporary relationships with it. Together these chapters offer ways of understanding not only how debate over the war is carried on, but how the experiential and emotive force of the past – even in the history classroom – is integral to popular engagement with the wartime past today.

**Part 3: The return of the war**

Today the war is emerging again even in political climates in which remembrance of 1914–18 previously struggled to thrive. In this final section of the book, the lens opens wider again, to examine the reconfiguration of national narratives relating to the war, in the context of long histories of contestation, dominance and repression of the narratives of war nurtured in families, communities and alternative political formulations of the nation. It aims particularly to expose how the processes of remembrance discussed in previous sections of the book have their place in defining national – and in some cases international – relationships to the war over time. The politics of memory surrounding the war in these places, as we will see, are very much alive.

In its material outcomes, the war destroyed empires and created new nations, demanding a search and a contest for new narratives of nationhood. It intervened
in and aggravated domestic political divides in ways that remain palpable today; authors in this section all acknowledge this presence of the war in contemporary politics in a series of case studies that allow them to tease out the roles that efforts to acknowledge the First World War can play. Current practices must be seen in the context of long histories of remembrance, state sanctioned and not. The case studies included here are hardly exhaustive, so much as they showcase the ways in which participation in commemoration of the First World War remains a political act, as much as it also tends to private sentiment. In doing so, they speak not only to the presence of the war a generation beyond those who fought it, but its likely uses beyond its own centenary.

Karen Petrone’s study of Russian efforts to reintegrate the First World War with Russian history is perhaps the most extreme example of the recuperation of a ‘lost history’, though she notes well that the process of recuperation is necessarily contested. Petrone’s analysis of centenary projects is sensitive to the efforts of Russian elites to rehabilitate the war as a time — outside the Soviet era — when Russia was a major international power, and to the level of purchase these conceptions might gain in Russian society generally. Attention to current memorial-building projects helps to define the kind of memory the Russian state is seeking to construct, and Petrone warns that the new history of the First World War projected in public in Russia may turn out to be as partial as the one projected under the Soviets.

Vedica Kant investigates a struggle in Turkey between two narratives of the Çanakkale/Gallipoli campaign, that reflects a contemporary contest over the nature of the Turkish republic itself. Kant catalogues the long dominance of a secular narrative that sees Çanakkale as the point to which the origins of the republic, and its key figure Mustafa Kemal, can be traced. The challenge to that narrative emerges through the soft Islamism of a long-entrenched government, which is intent on highlighting the republic’s religious foundations, as a way of reconciling it with a much longer Ottoman history. The public rhetoric and new memorial-making that underpin that narrative, Kant argues, have not gone uncontested, and indeed, the stakes in debate over the past remain high in Turkey.

In Ireland too, the stakes are high, and here too the war was integral to the processes of founding the Irish republic and Northern Ireland, though in the republic the war did not feature in its founding narratives. Keith Jeffery traces the several factors that made remembrance of the First World War so difficult in Ireland, while arguing that there was never total amnesia or total commitment to forgetting the war and those who participated in it. Here, the links between local agents and national myths are teased out to show the circumstances in which Irish service in the First World War can eventually find a place in the civic culture of the Irish republic. The centenaries of the war and 1916 might provide opportunities, but they are loaded too with challenges.

The politics of divided communities also inform Karen Shelby’s examination of the war in Belgian politics, in which she examines Flemish commemoration of the war as an expression of dissent from incorporation in the broader Belgian
state. In particular, her chapter analyses the political symbolism of a tombstone, writ large in the memorial tower erected as a symbol of Flemish sacrifice, and harnessed to demands for Flemish independence. In a Belgian state without a dominant culture of remembrance, that symbol remains today a point around which the politics of division can coalesce.

Finally, Sabine A. Haring’s examination of several generations of Austrian reconstruction of the First World War returns us to the difficulties of understanding the war beyond the events that succeeded it. The National Socialist era necessarily made difficult not only reference to the Second World War, but to the First, and the 1950s saw reversion to a nostalgic vision of the Habsburg Empire. Though historians led an increasing awareness of the First World War from the 1980s, the war remained, Haring argues, confined to the margins of national narratives. Even in the midst of the centenary, the war that gave shape to modern Austria continues to be formulated anew.

Conclusion

The centenary of the First World War has several potentialities, and indeed its only certainty – as this volume attests – is that the purposes to which remembrance is put will vary widely in relation to historical and current political contexts. Where remembrance of the war has historically been persistent, we should certainly expect to see the perpetuation of existing narratives of the war, and the performance of a ‘habit of commemoration’, in which participants are not necessarily encouraged to look beyond what they already ‘know’ about the significance of the First World War. That process will be assisted, no doubt, by the emotional connections people are still making to the war, through its personalization in their own family histories, or the cultural products of the war that emphasize individual experiences as the key avenue to the wartime past. Historians might be genuinely suspicious of the capacity of personal feeling to provide the foundation for an enduring and intelligent connection to a complex past. On the other hand, the persistence of powerful emotional responses to the war and those who fought it does not immediately shut down the possibilities for the fresh perspectives that so many historians are now demanding. Rather can they provide the impetus to seek broader, more complex comprehension of the war, where it is made publicly available. In Winter’s schema of historical remembrance, historians are only one group among numerous active agents; our unease about the limited space we occupy should push us to embrace our own role as makers of the past in an attempt to rework popular narratives of the war, in ways responsible to the evidence and to the people of the past. One does not want to forego the potential for directing the affective connections people are insistently making with the past, awaiting a time when the last flourishing of popular remembrance of the First World War has exhausted itself, and the field is abandoned to us. Perhaps that time is not too far away: the experiential factor may, indeed, be most telling in a remembrance event set to last more than four years. Still, those who emerge
in 2018 may yet be more inclined to seek a more complex understanding of what had propelled their forebears through that original trial, and what produced the perspectives on the world that would shape the century that followed.

Notes


6 Ibid., 70.


11 Strachan, ‘First World War anniversary’.

12 How Australia May Commemorate the Anzac Centenary, 70, 67.


21 Ashplant, Dawson and Roper, 18.
24 See Ashplant, Dawson and Roper, 45.
27 Ibid., 24.
28 Winter, Remembering War, 9.
30 Winter, Remembering War, 6.
32 Winter, Remembering War, 12.
35 Todman, Great War, 229.
36 ‘Polling data’, in Do Mention the War, 33; Bostanci and Dubber, 7.
37 Winter, ‘Sites of memory and the shadow of war’, 65.
38 Ibid., 72.
40 Ashplant, Dawson and Roper, 12.


47 See Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, especially part 1. Also Christina Twomey, ‘Trauma and the reinvigoration of Anzac: an argument’, *History Australia* 10:3 (December 2013), 85–108.
CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is excerpted from
Origins of the First World War, Third Edition

by James Joll & Gordon Martel.
© 2006 Taylor & Francis Group. All rights reserved.

Learn more
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 still seems to mark the end of an era and the beginning of a new one, even though we can now see that many of the social, political, economic and cultural developments of the later twentieth century were only accelerated rather than produced by the war. The experiences of the war, and especially of the trench warfare on the Western Front, have entered deeply into the language and imagery of the countries of Western Europe and continue to haunt the imagination of writers and artists born years after the war ended. Its immediate consequences – the Russian Revolution, the political and social upheavals of 1918–22 all over Europe, the redrawing of the maps with the emergence of new national states – have determined the course of history in the twentieth century. This alone would be enough to account for the continuing interest in the causes of the war, but there are several other dimensions and perspectives to our views of the crisis of 1914.

The immediate origins of the war are better documented than almost any other question in twentieth-century history. This is largely because from the start the argument about the responsibility for the outbreak of war had great political importance; and with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919, the question of war guilt – Die Kriegsschuldfrage – became one of intense political and emotional significance. The first reaction in the victorious countries after the end of the war was to put the blame for its outbreak on the Germans. Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles – the ‘war guilt’ clause – stated that ‘Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to the Allied governments and their nationals imposed on them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.’ Elsewhere in the treaty the moral
blame was made even more explicit and was attached particularly to the person of the German emperor: ‘The Allied and Associated Powers publicly arraign William II of Hohenzollern, former German Emperor, for a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties.’ This individual indictment of Kaiser Wilhelm was the result partly of a blind instinct for revenge on the part of the public in Britain and France: ‘Hang the Kaiser’ had been a popular slogan in the British general election of November 1918. But the demand for a formal trial of Wilhelm II was also the result of a more considered, though not necessarily more accurate, diagnosis of the role of the emperor and the Prussian military caste in the origins of the war. Already in 1914 Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign secretary, was obsessed with the evils of ‘Prussian militarism’, and in the armistice negotiations at the end of the war President Woodrow Wilson had stressed the necessity of getting rid of the kaiser and doing away with what he called ‘military masters and monarchical autocrats’.

During the latter part of 1919 and early 1920 there were vigorous attempts by the British and French governments to bring the kaiser to trial and to persuade the government of the Netherlands, where Wilhelm II had taken refuge, to hand him over. The British and French were extremely angry with the Dutch, and in the despatches of the British minister at The Hague one can see the accumulated bitterness at four years of Dutch neutrality. David Lloyd George was particularly virulent against the Dutch and their refusal to see the kaiser’s personal responsibility in the same light as he did. In the Supreme War Council he ranted against the kaiser, and his phrases were embodied in the note sent to the Netherlands government demanding his surrender. The kaiser was, Lloyd George maintained, personally responsible for ‘the cynical violation of the neutrality of Belgium and Luxemburg, the barbarous hostage system, the mass deportation of populations, the carrying away of the young women of Lille, torn from their families and thrown defenceless into the most promiscuous environment’. The rhetoric was in vain, as were the threats to break off diplomatic relations with the Netherlands and even to impose economic sanctions. The Dutch government maintained its dignified refusal either to surrender Wilhelm II or, on the analogy of Napoleon, to banish him to Curaçao in the Dutch West Indies.

The attitude of the Netherlands government made the idea of trying the kaiser and of pinning responsibility for the war on him personally impossible to realize. The search for responsibility became less immediate and moved to another level. By the middle of the 1920s the idea was
gaining acceptance that the war was the result of a faulty system of international relations. It was, according to this view, the existence of a system of alliances dividing Europe into two camps that had made war inevitable, and the ‘old diplomacy’ was blamed for making sinister secret international agreements that committed countries to war without the knowledge of their citizens. As the Manchester Guardian had put it in 1914: ‘By some hidden contract England has been technically committed behind her back to the ruinous madness of a share in the violent gamble of a war between two militarist leagues on the Continent.’ This view had been strengthened by the policies of the American administration after the United States had entered the war in April 1917. President Wilson was much influenced by the British radical tradition which, throughout the nineteenth century, had criticized secret diplomacy and called for a foreign policy based on morality rather than on expediency, on general ethical principles rather than on practical calculations about the balance of power. Thus, when in January 1918 he enunciated his famous ‘Fourteen Points’, which were to serve as the basis for a just peace, he stressed the need for ‘Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.’ The foundation of the League of Nations as an integral part of the peace settlement of 1919 encouraged the belief that a new system of international relations was about to come into being in which diplomatic bargains and secret military agreements would be abolished and international relations conducted by consensus before the eyes of the public and under their control.

The search for an explanation for the outbreak of the war in terms of the nature of the international system – a view summed up in the title of an influential book published in 1926, The International Anarchy 1904–1914 by the Cambridge classicist G. Lowes Dickinson – was aided by the publication by most of the governments involved in the war of numerous volumes of documents from their diplomatic archives. The first attack on secret diplomacy in which the publication of documents was used to discredit opponents was launched before the end of the war when Leon Trotsky, the first foreign minister of the Bolshevik regime, ordered the publication of the secret treaties entered into by the tsarist government, greatly to the embarrassment of Russia’s allies France and Britain. Then, after the German revolution of 1918, the republican government authorized the eminent socialist theoretician Karl Kautsky to prepare a volume of documents from the German archives on the events immediately preceding the outbreak of war. Subsequent German governments
believed that one way to refute the allegations of Germany’s war guilt was to show the detailed working of the old diplomacy and to demonstrate that the methods of all governments were much the same and that therefore no specific blame should be attached to the Germans. Accordingly, between 1922 and 1927, 39 volumes of German diplomatic documents were published under the title *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette* (The High Policy of the European Cabinets). This German initiative, which aimed at countering the allegations of Germany’s war guilt, meant that other countries felt obliged to follow the example and show that they too had nothing to hide. Consequently the *British Documents on the Origins of the War* appeared in 11 volumes between 1926 and 1938; the French *Documents Diplomatiques Français 1871–1914* began publication in 1930, though the last of the volumes did not appear until 1953. Eight volumes of Austro-Hungarian documents were published in 1930 by the government of the Austrian Republic, but the Italian documents were only published after the Second World War. Members of the Russian diplomatic service who remained abroad after the revolution published selections from their embassy archives, and the Soviet government printed a quantity of archive material in the 1920s and 1930s.6

This mass of published documentary material meant that, even though the government archives themselves in many cases remained closed until after the Second World War, historians had a great deal of evidence on which to base an examination of the diplomatic relations among the powers. The study of the diplomatic history of the nineteenth century and of the background to the First World War became one of the most important branches of historical investigation. A number of distinguished historians developed the idea of the autonomy of diplomatic history as a branch of historical study and so seemed to confirm the view of the great nineteenth-century German historian Leopold von Ranke that it is the foreign policies of states that determine their internal development and decide their destiny. It is because of this generation of historians and the students trained by them that we know more in greater detail about the history of the relations between states in the years before 1914 than in almost any other period. Many of these historians were still concerned with the allocation to the belligerent governments of responsibility in one form or another: Pierre Renouvin in France and Bernadotte Schmitt in the United States inclined to put the blame on Germany; another American, Sidney B. Fay, on Austria-Hungary; the German Alfred von Wegerer on Russia and Britain (to name only a few). The most monumental of these detailed studies, that by the Italian journalist and politician Luigi Albertini, appeared only after
the Second World War had begun and it was some years before it achieved international recognition; and by then the focus of the discussion was changing.7

After the Second World War, for which the immediate responsibility was generally accepted to be that of Hitler and the National Socialist government of Germany, the discussion of the causes of the First World War tended to be linked to the discussion about the causes of the Second. How far did the Treaty of Versailles, and especially the ‘war guilt’ clause, contribute to the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler?8 To what extent was there a continuity in foreign policy between Wilhelmine and Nazi Germany? The notion of a continuity in German aims between 1914 and 1939 was familiar enough to Anglo-Saxon historians from their reactions to the Second World War – A.J.P. Taylor’s The Course of German History is one of the best examples – when for some of them, indeed, the tradition of Germany’s inherent wickedness went back to Otto von Bismarck or Frederick the Great or even Luther.9 For many conservative German historians, although they were ready to accept German responsibility for the Second World War, it was extremely painful to face the fact that the notion of Germany’s ‘guilt’ in the First World War was still flourishing outside Germany. This partly accounted for the vehemence of the controversy aroused in Germany by the publication of the Hamburg historian Fritz Fischer’s work Griff nach der Weltmacht in 1961, which showed not only the extent of German annexationist aims in the First World War but was also believed by some critics to have suggested that the German government deliberately went to war in 1914 in order to attain them.10 Worse still from the point of view of many of Fischer’s German colleagues, he suggested that there might be some continuity between Germany’s aims in the First World War and those in the Second. It did not aid Fischer’s cause or reputation in his own country that his arguments were applauded by historians working in the communist German Democratic Republic (East Germany), where one of the leading historians, Fritz Klein, saw nothing new or controversial in the suggestion that Germany bore the main responsibility for the outbreak of the world war and that ‘the demand for extensive war aims was determined primarily by the leading economic circles, and that the aggressive war policy of the German Reich was merely a continuation of policies pursued long before 1914.’11 The ‘Fischer thesis’ dominated discussions of the war’s origins for several decades. German historians in particular devoted themselves once again to dissecting imperial Germany’s foreign policy from Bismarck to the collapse of the regime in 1918. In comparison, there was
no new synthesis that generated much enthusiasm, nor was there anything like the Fischer debate to arouse controversy concerning the policies of each of the other great powers – in contrast to the debates of the 1920s, where Russia, France, Austria-Hungary and Britain were individually or collectively held responsible. Although the distinguished historians writing in Macmillan’s ‘Making of the Twentieth Century’ series, which commenced publication in the 1970s, offered comprehensive interpretations of the foreign policies of Germany (Volker Berghahn), Britain (Zara Steiner), Italy (Richard Bosworth), France (John Keiger) and Russia (Dominic Lieven), they did not assign responsibility – or guilt – to the states they studied. The publication in 1991 of Samuel Williamson’s *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* was different; although he offered a comprehensive and systematic study of Austrian foreign policy before 1914, he also argued that it was this policy that caused the outbreak of a general, European war in July and August. Although the book appeared thirty years after the publication of *Griff nach der Weltmacht* Williamson had been inspired to challenge the focus on Germany long before 1991: in an early essay he declared that he wished to reopen the debate over July 1914 and put Fischer in a ‘less embracing’ context by reminding scholars ‘of what the participants in 1914 readily perceived: that Vienna, though troubled and possibly anachronistic, was a great power capable of independent action and decision’. Nevertheless, that argument has aroused no controversy similar to the one inspired by Fischer – perhaps because the ‘guilty party’, the Habsburg Empire, no longer exists and no one has a vested interest in defending it against its critics.

One aspect of Fritz Fischer’s work that was particularly important for the discussion of the causes of the First World War was the suggestion, made almost incidentally in *Griff nach der Weltmacht* but developed in his next book, *Krieg der Illusionen*, and carried further by several of his students and followers, that it was domestic political and social pressures that determined German foreign policy before 1914. One of the leading proponents of this view, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, argued that Germany’s aristocratic and industrial elites manipulated the expression of political opinion by mobilizing interest groups in order to protect their own positions at the top of society and to mitigate the challenges posed by democracy and socialism. In Wehler’s view Wilhelm II was merely a cipher, a *Schattenkaiser* (shadow emperor) who merely did the bidding of the oligarchs who controlled the structure of German society. This ‘Bielefeld school’ approach has been more strenuously challenged by John Röhl in a series of works that focus on the kaiser, his personality, and the personalities
of the men who surrounded him. German policies, he argues, were not determined by anonymous forces or oligarchies, ‘but by men of flesh and blood, with all their emotions and vanities’. His meticulous scholarship and careful dissection of the decision-making process has added enormously to our understanding of pre-war Germany.

Nevertheless, the assertion of the *Primat der Innenpolitik* in reaction against the Rankean *Primat der Aussenpolitik* has made historians look again at the domestic political situation in Europe before 1914 – and certainly each of the books in the ‘Making of the Twentieth Century’ series reflected this new emphasis. The spread of this view was helped by the fact that in the 1960s many American historians and political scientists were analysing contemporary American foreign policy, including the origins of the Cold War and of the war in Vietnam, in terms of economic interests and pressure groups, so that it seemed natural to apply similar models to Europe before 1914 and to believe that, in Arno J. Mayer’s words, ‘the decision for war and the design for warfare were forged in what was a crisis in the politics and policy of Europe’s ruling and governing classes’. These ideas came close to the Marxist explanation that wars are inherent in the nature of capitalism and that the internal contradictions of capitalist society had by the beginning of the twentieth century reached a point where war was inevitable.

Such explanations can take us very far away from the immediate situation in 1914 and involve us in a consideration of the entire economic and social development of Europe for several centuries. One historian has attempted to embed Mayer’s argument in the July crisis itself, by suggesting that the men in positions of responsibility during the crisis were those from the governing classes who had been born into the pre-industrial Europe of the mid-century, that they had been educated in schools that taught traditional values at a time when traditions were rapidly changing, and that, particularly in Austria-Hungary, the tremendous stress that the assassination placed them under led them to react emotionally and irrationally. Ideally, no doubt, an account of the causes of the First World War would lead to a moment of profound Hegelian insight in which everything in the world would be related to everything else and all the connections and patterns would become clear. However, this book has a more modest aim and will attempt to look at some of the reasons that have been suggested as to why this particular war occurred at this particular time.

Our explanations form a pattern of concentric circles, starting with the immediate decisions taken by the political and military leaders in the crisis
of July 1914, decisions in which their characters and personal idiosyncrasies necessarily played a part. But these decisions were themselves limited both by previous choices and by the constitutional and political framework within which they were taken. They were influenced by recent international crises and by the diplomatic alignments contracted over the previous forty years. They were the result of an intricate relationship between the military and civilian leaders and of long-term strategic plans and armament programmes. They were subject to domestic political pressures, in both the short and the long term, and to the conflicting influences of different economic groups. They depended on general conceptions of each nation’s vital interests and of its national mission. Moreover, the decision to go to war had to be acceptable and comprehensible to the public and to the soldiers who were going to fight; the reasons for going to war had to be expressed in language that would meet with an emotional response. And that response depended on long-standing national traditions and the constant repetition of national myths.

The aim of this book is to look at the decisions of July 1914, decisions that determined the outbreak of this particular war at that particular time, and then to consider some of the factors that inspired those decisions and, perhaps more important, limited the options available. When we read an account of the crisis of July 1914, we often feel that the reasons the politicians themselves were giving are somehow inadequate to explain what was happening and we are tempted to look for some deeper and more general cause to explain the catastrophe. We are often struck, as Albertini was, when he considered the decision-makers of 1914, by, as he put it, ‘the disproportion between their intellectual and moral endowments and the gravity of the problems which faced them, between their acts and the results thereof’.18 This is perhaps unfair in so far as they did not and could not know what the results would be or realize that the war they decided to fight would not be the war that actually followed, and that it would turn out to be longer and more destructive than any of them had ever imagined. It is pointless to speculate whether they might have chosen differently if they had known what the consequences of their choice would be. Their decisions must be examined within the context of what was open to them in 1914. As Isaiah Berlin wrote, ‘What can and cannot be done by particular agents in specific circumstances is an empirical question, properly settled, like all such questions, by an appeal to experience.’19 The difficulty is, however, that the evidence we have about the factors determining what could or could not be done in the specific circumstances of July 1914 is vast, and it is not easy to decide which factor was dominant
in any particular decision. All we can do is to look at the kinds of explanation that have been suggested and try to see how far they account for the decisions actually taken. Accordingly, this book discusses some (but by no means all) of the suggested ‘causes’ of the war and tries to see how much each contributed to the development of the crisis of 1914.

As we have seen, many people in the 1920s blamed the international system, the existence of rival alliances, the armaments race and the evil influence of the ‘old diplomacy’, and this indeed set the scene within which the crisis developed. Once it started, the freedom of action of the civilian ministers was limited, often more than they realized, by the strategic plans and decisions of the general staffs and the admiralties, and these in turn were linked to the vast arms programmes that were a feature of the period immediately preceding the war. While some have seen the cause of the war in the international system or the plans of the military and naval authorities, others have blamed financiers and industrialists and the whole economic structure of international capitalism. What were the economic pressures for peace and for war? Then again, should we accept the idea of the _Primat der Innenpolitik_ and look for the causes of the war in the domestic social and political problems of the belligerent countries and the belief that war might provide a solution to them and avert the threat of revolution?

The war of 1914 has seemed to some the climax of an era of imperialism: many have believed that it was imperial rivalries that led inevitably to war, so we must also attempt to analyse what part these played in creating the situation in July 1914. Finally, we can try to see how the mood of 1914 – the political, intellectual and moral beliefs of the age – helped to make war possible and provided a scale of values to which governments could appeal once they had decided on war. In what follows, each chapter is devoted to a different type of explanation. This list is by no means exhaustive, but if we try to see how far each explanation fits what happened in July 1914, how far the different categories of historical phenomena relate to the decisions taken during the crisis, we may begin to form, not a complete picture of the causes of the First World War, but at least a sketch of the complex and multifarious factors that contributed to it.

References

1 See, for example, Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London 1975); Eric J. Leed, *No Man’s Land: Combat and Identity in World War I*
(Cambridge 1979); Modris Eksteins, Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age (Boston, Mass. 1989).


9 For example, Rohan Butler, The Roots of National Socialism (London 1941).

10 Fritz Fischer, Griff nach der Weltmacht (Düsseldorf 1961), Eng. tr. Germany’s Aims in the First World War (London 1972); Krieg der Illusionen (Düsseldorf 1969), Eng. tr. War of Illusions (London 1974). For the controversy over Fischer’s views, see ‘Further Reading’.


13 See the two volumes of essays celebrating Fischer’s sixty-fifth and seventieth birthdays: Imanuel Geiss and Bernd Jürgen Wendt (eds), Deutschland in der Weltpolitik des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts (Düsseldorf 1973), and Dirk Stegmann and Peter-Christian Witt (eds), Industrielle Gesellschaft und politisches System (Bonn 1978).
Among Wehler’s numerous works see *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Cologne 1969); and *Das deutsche Kaiserreich 1871–1918* (Göttingen 1973), translated by Kim Traynor and published as *The German Empire 1871–1918* (Leamington Spa 1985).


W. Jannen Jr, ‘The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914’, in Samuel R. Williamson Jr and Peter Pastor (eds), *Essays on World War I: Origins and Prisoners of War* (New York 1983), pp. 55–81. ‘Values internalized during youth may become irrelevant. Traditional roles are no longer socially rewarded. People are no longer sure about what is expected of them. Elites may become uncomfortable with what they perceive as a decline in the traditional respect and deference due them. The uncertainty and ambiguity brought about by rapid change will be perceived as threatening. . . . Persistent failure to cope with threat can induce high levels of anxiety; both leaders and the populace may come to feel that they are facing a “life or death” situation’ (p. 64).


CHAPTER 3

WOMEN'S WAR WORK
REMUNERATIVE, VOLUNTARY AND FAMILIAL

This chapter is excerpted from
Women and the First World War
by Susan R. Grayzel.
© 2002 Taylor & Francis Group. All rights reserved.
RECRUITMENT, MOBILISATION AND EXPERIENCE

One of the more visible changes in women’s lives during the war came with their entrance into a wide range of occupations, some of which had never before included women. What quickly became clear was that given the mass mobilisation required by total warfare, the entirety of the nation needed to contribute. As male waged labourers were lost to the armed services, women filled their ranks, finding employment on a scale neither seen before the war nor sustained afterwards. Women entered not only wartime factories, but also banks and places of business and government as clerks, typists and secretaries. They were found running trams and buses, delivering milk, and even joining newly-created armed forces’ auxiliaries and becoming police officers. With a bit of regional variation, women worked on the land and sustained agriculture. Not all women who were employed during the war were new to the world of waged work and few indeed were new to unwaged work. Thus while the war caused some women to shift jobs, it enabled others to join the paid workforce for the first time. However, this chapter will examine the totality of women’s work, from waged labour to family maintenance.

Already within the first year of the war, women’s paid employment increased by 400,000 in Britain, and this was before a mass demonstration in July 1915 where women, organised by feminist leaders such as Emmeline Pankhurst of the suffragette Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), with the encouragement of politicians like David Lloyd George, demanded the ‘right to serve’ (De Groot, 1996: 69). From the outset, some women were motivated by patriotism and others by necessity and some by both. For instance, certain groups of women entered the workforce directly as ‘replacements’ for absent husbands or for dead ones. Of the nearly 14,000 women employed as street-car workers in Germany in late 1915, 20 per cent were married to workers in that occupation who had been mobilised into the army (Daniel, 1997: 55). Across Europe, other women took over small family businesses or ran farms. Contemporary published accounts of women and the war emphasised women’s atypical occupations, and they
also expressed concern that such new roles or new incomes did not change their ‘essential’ nature and that women would still place family, and in particular child-rearing, first.

As the war continued, both Britain and Germany saw campaigns to conscript women’s labour. In December 1916, Germany enacted the ‘Auxiliary Service for the Fatherland’ law in order to shift workers from civil to military industries and to mobilise more of the population by requiring all adult males between the ages of 17 and 60 to perform ‘war work’ (Daniel, 1997). The leaders of the German women’s movement urged that women also be included, even if not on the identical terms as men, as did some members of the German High Command [Doc. 5]. However, the final legislation was a compromise between trade unions, employers and the government, and ultimately excluded women, for fear they would displace male workers and also because they had a more important task as wives and mothers (Daniel, 1997). This made the decision of women to participate in the workforce voluntary, and Germany never saw the same rates of participation as other belligerent states, in part because of trade union opposition (Daniel, 1997; Frevert, 1989). In Britain, the decision to institute conscription in 1916 followed the creation of a National Register in August 1915, recording the age, sex and occupation of all men and women between the ages of 16 and 65 (Wilson, 1986). Prominent leaders of the women’s movement urged that women be included in the Register and hoped that when conscription occurred, they would be included again. Instead, despite public comments advocating ‘compulsory service’ for women, this was deliberately not enacted (Grayzel, 1999). Thus while overt compulsion was not a factor in any wartime state and some states made it easier for women to work outside the home than others, many women through various means thus sustained their nations at war.

WAGED WAR WORK IN FACTORIES

A common vision appeared across belligerent Europe during the war of the feminine and heroic munitions worker: costumed in workmanlike clothes, pulling a lever, carrying an artillery shell, an integral part of the nation’s arsenal. The women who went into the factories, quite literally providing the hands that armed the men of the war zones, became important figures in wartime propaganda. They also played an essential part in supporting the war effort, even if they generated controversy [Doc. 6].

Did women’s factory work, particularly in the vital and rapidly growing munitions industry, represent a break from the past? After all, women factory workers were not anomalies in any European nation prior to 1914. Despite the importance of the stories of upper-class or middle-class wives who found solace in the production of weapons to preserve or avenge
their husbands’ lives, very few of those employed by wartime factories came from these sections of society. 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. The strength of predominantly male unions, however, helped ensure that women’s work did not threaten male wages or, ultimately, their access to jobs.

Although the exact number of women who worked in the munitions industry during the war is unknown, it provided employment for more working-class women than other types of war work. Some moved from previous employment in textile factories and most worked primarily for financial rather than patriotic reasons. Many married working-class women sought factory work because the separation allowances paid by the state to maintain their families while the male breadwinner served in the armed forces proved insufficient. Overwhelmingly, however, women gladly left domestic service for the better pay and greater personal freedom afforded by factory work. Munitions workers might put in long hours and have difficult working conditions, but servants often worked longer hours and laundresses’ working conditions were often worse. Moreover, the wages paid to women for munitions work, while not always the equal of male counterparts, were certainly higher than most women had previously received (Braybon, 1981; Griffiths, 1991; Pyecroft, 1994; Watson, 1997; Woollacott, 1994b).

What did these women do? The munitions industry in wartime Britain encompassed a wide range of activities controlled by the Ministry of Munitions. These included, in addition to producing weapons and ammunition, the manufacture of everything the army needed from textiles to food. Within factories, women performed a full range of tasks, from running machines to welding. The work was often risky, because producing ammunition put women in contact with dangerous and even deadly chemicals, and industrial accidents were not uncommon. Exposure to materials such as TNT caused jaundice, and so-called ‘canary girls’ were easily identified by their yellow skin. Moreover, poisoning, whether by TNT or other chemicals, injured or killed some female workers and so too did explosions in munitions factories (Thom, 1998; Woollacott, 1994b).

Like the army, wartime factories brought together people from a wide variety of backgrounds. A mixture of ages, ethnicities, regions, as well as classes, to a certain extent, and nations, as women from Australia, Belgium, Canada, South Africa and the West Indies, to cite just a few examples, found work in British factories (Woollacott, 1994b). In general, these women took the place of both unskilled men (as ‘substitutes’) and skilled workers (as ‘dilutees’).
In either case, the question of pay became a heated one; if women earned less than men for the same job, they undercut male employment. On the other hand, paying men and women equally seemed far too radical and, some argued, unfair since male workers were undoubtedly superior. As a compromise, women and men were paid the same for piece work, but not for time rates (Thom, 1998). Women war workers also met with hostility from male workers, and it required government intervention to allow for the full use of their labour. And it was labour that became accepted largely because it was ultimately cheaper and easily exploitable, especially under wartime conditions (Thom, 1998).

As was the case with Irish men serving in the British army, the situation of Irish women workers in the munitions factories of Britain was more complicated than that of other British subjects. Wages for women were higher in English factories than for those in Northern Ireland or Dublin, and single Irish women were made aware of this by advertising campaigns that tried to recruit them. While such a financial incentive may have been persuasive, nationalist organisations like Sinn Féin produced their own wartime propaganda against helping the British war effort, which must have exerted its own kind of pressure on women workers. Certainly, the presence of Irish women in wartime factories cannot necessarily be attributed to the same motivations as English women. In some cases, outright conflict broke out between Irish and English women munitions workers over the former’s ‘anti-patriotic’ behaviour. After one 1917 incident at a shell-filling factory in Hereford, an escalation of conflicts between Irish workers who sang Sinn Féin songs and insulted soldiers and English ones who objected to this, the Irish workers found themselves sent back home (Culleton, 1999; Woollacott, 1994b: 43).

France saw women entering new fields and in greater numbers, but it did not witness the same seemingly explosive growth of women into wartime factories as did Britain. In part, this occurred because France already had one of the highest rates of female participation in its labour force (Robert, 1988: 253). The serious recruitment of women, the workforce of last resort, into new war industries began in 1915, and yet by late 1917 the number of women working in commerce and industry combined was only 20 per cent higher than before the war. By 1918, only 25 per cent of the munitions factories’ workforce was female (Dubesset et al., 1992: 185–6).

As was the case in Britain, female workers came from a wide range of backgrounds. Despite popular images of such workers being young girls, many were older and married. Few had any previous experience in such fields as metalworking but most had previously worked outside the home. Such war work, as was the case in Britain, carried certain risks and involved harsh conditions. First, there was the extraordinary pace of work with work periods of thirteen days before a day off, enforced overtime without
an increase in wages, and strict discipline imposed by supervisors (Downs, 1995: 50–5). In addition, many male workers, especially union officials, were hostile to the introduction of women in their factories, fearing that they would drag down wages and dilute the strength of unions because, in France, as elsewhere, women’s wages were kept below those of men (Dubesset et al., 1992).

Despite the continuing wage differential between men and women, French women still sought wartime factory jobs out of financial necessity. Money, not patriotism, was the major incentive for working. With male heads of households’ wages gone and replaced by an inadequate allowance for the family, which also did little to keep up with inflation, women worked to meet their families’ material needs. That the better earnings now available to them increased their social status was not insignificant either (Downs, 1995). Furthermore, as the war continued, women’s earnings rose dramatically compared to their state before the war (Robert, 1988: 257–8). Despite the increased money available to women factory workers, the end of the war saw a marked decrease in women’s industrial labour in France, particularly among married women. The reasons for this were both voluntary – some women chose work that was less difficult and a few chose not to perform waged work at all – and involuntary, as men replaced the women who had replaced them. The demobilisation of women in France, as elsewhere, was often abrupt and left many women in dire economic straits, with neither jobs nor unemployment benefits (Dubesset et al., 1992: 208). Even women who continued to work in the metalworking trades experienced the sexual division of labour anew, and were restricted to low-skilled, usually repetitive and lower-waged jobs.

Of all participant nations, Germany saw among the lowest number of women participating in its wartime factory work. This reflected prewar patterns of female labour participation and that, in part because of pressure from trade unions, women’s compensation proved insufficient compared with state welfare to recruit them in large numbers. Here, as elsewhere, those who entered the war factories were not strangers to waged work for most had shifted from other trades to wartime industries and most women factory workers were classified as ‘unskilled’ (Daniel, 1988; Dobson, 2001). In Germany, the system of family allowances also meant that women could choose not to enter factories, and furthermore, employers did little to encourage their participation (Feldman, 1966: 302). Thus, there is no obvious pattern suggesting that the war brought women into the factories, despite serious government efforts in the second half of the war to mobilise them in the face of a labour shortage (Daniel, 1997: 277).

Some German women, particularly those with dependent children, were unlikely to enter ‘skilled’ munitions work because they assumed such jobs would not last beyond the end of the war. The amount of labour
needed to sustain families in the economic conditions of blockaded Germany also dissuaded these women from pursuing waged labour in addition to their other labour (Daniel, 1997: 277–8). Others found state support which did not keep up with inflation so inadequate that even without the threat of having welfare suspended if a woman refused to work, they entered the workforce. Still the female wartime factory worker generally came from the ranks of those already employed as domestic servants and agricultural and textile workers. Once participating in the wartime workforce, women found themselves performing tasks that had previously been characterised as ‘male’ in metalworking or chemical industries (Daniel, 1997). Moreover, the public impression remained that women’s work had changed radically as women now took on such previously male-defined tasks as delivering mail or using pneumatic drills (Frevert, 1989). Women’s union participation was far below their rate of participation in the workforce, which left them even more vulnerable as unions looked out for the interests of male workers first (Dobson, 2001: 141). All of their new opportunities were limited, and this becomes clear when considering that after the December 1916 Auxiliary Services Law, making war work mandatory for German men, was passed, and industrialists obtained the ‘skilled’ workers they wanted, they fired women workers (Feldman, 1966: 302). This pattern repeated itself after demobilisation, when many jobs held by women during the war were given to men (Bessel, 1993).

Russian women, like their German counterparts, experienced harsh living conditions due to the scarcity and cost of basic necessities, and responded to this crisis by seeking waged work in urban areas. As was the case elsewhere, jobs vacated by men called up into the army awaited them. Some educated women were able to move into office jobs previously held exclusively by men, but more striking changes came in the factories. Between 1914 and 1917 the percentage of women in Russian industry grew to 43 per cent from 26 per cent, and more dramatic developments occurred in fields like metalworking and chemical production (Clements, 1994: 29). It was also the case that women left seasonal work and more traditional female occupations in search of better wages in larger wartime factories (McDermid and Hillyar, 1999). One thing that distinguished Russian women from those in other nations was that they essentially worked a ‘double shift’, spending almost as much time searching and standing in line for food and fuel as they did in working for pay. They also worked long hours with unpaid overtime for minimal wages (McDermid and Hillyar, 1999).

Italian women, whose country had joined the war in 1915, also quickly became part of the mobilised industrial workforce. At the war’s conclusion, there were approximately 200,000 such workers, comprising about 22 per
cent of this workforce (Tomassini, 1996: 579). Despite measures taken to ‘protect’ these women by providing dormitories and canteens, this brought many of them into public activities in new ways (Adamson, 1999: 327; Tomassini, 1996). Traditional family structures and work cycles also impinged on the recruitment of women workers from the countryside. For instance, most married women would not do night work without their husbands’ permission (which usually was not forthcoming) and many insisted on returning to agricultural labour in the spring. In addition, once male workers could be punished for workplace protests by being sent off to fight or to prison, while women were not, women became much more active in unions (Tomassini, 1996: 580). This did not mean that women were completely free since they were still prevented from leaving one job for another at will. Nor did it mean that the Italian government did not have to confront public opinion concerned about the potential exploitation of women and children in wartime factories. Given these new roles, women not only formed a core component of the workforce, but they also became far more active participants in strikes, especially in 1917, than they had been before the war (Tomassini, 1991: 72).

As was the case elsewhere, the situation of Austrian women demonstrates that once initial unemployment for factory workers disappeared, women were in demand because mass mobilisation soon produced a labour shortage (Sieder, 1988). In Austria, estimates suggest that nearly one million women entered the waged workforce during the war. One dramatic result was that in greater Vienna, after 1915, almost half of all metalworkers were women (Sieder, 1988). Women even performed jobs that had previously been the sole province of men, such as welding or using lathes. Unsurprisingly, women’s earnings were often only one-third of those paid to men. This in part reflects women’s lack of participation in unions until the very end of the war. With the war’s conclusion, moreover, many women were pressured into leaving wartime factory work so that jobs might be available to returning veterans, presumed to be heads of families. This did not meet with widespread resistance, even though here, as elsewhere across Europe, some of the women being thrown out of the factories did not have a male breadwinner to turn to, and the plight of widows was particularly acute (Sieder, 1988).

Even in the United States, where wartime conditions only existed for a few years (1917–19), similar patterns of changing jobs within what had been women’s waged work and of allowing women to take ‘non-traditional’ jobs emerge. One key difference to consider, in contrast with the European states just discussed, lies in the divergent work patterns and opportunities available to white and African American women. Overall, the number of African American women employed in such occupations as servants and cleaners decreased between 1910 and 1920, while the number employed in
fields ranging from office work to semi-skilled manufacturing workers increased markedly. Despite this, the overall increase in numbers of women in the workforce was minimal (Greenwald, 1980: 13) [Doc. 9].

One reason for these changes, even prior to the United States’ entry into the war, came from the labour shortages produced by the marked decrease in immigrants from Europe after 1914. This prompted the consideration of two new sources of labour: white working women and rural black men and women. Within wartime industries themselves, white women occupied an extensive range of manufacturing positions; often the jobs that these women left in domestic, industrial and clerical spheres fell to black women (Greenwald, 1980). Whenever possible, women chose to avoid domestic service, and some African American women were quick to explain that even the less desirable factory work now available to them was preferable to the restrictions imposed on them as well as the lower wages they had had as servants (Greenwald, 1980). Beyond material rewards (and monetary ones were crucial for most women) came the sense that their war-related work was also worth something more, it was respected and vital for the nation – a message repeated in a variety of wartime media (Greenwald, 1980).

Women in a nation like Australia, far removed from the combat zones and yet deeply involved in the war in Europe, also entered into new venues for waged labour. Here, about 15 per cent of the male labour force left to participate militarily in the war, which created some opportunities for women workers (Crew, 1989: 28). These remained limited as even during the war Australian industry was not dominated by it. Thus the war did relatively little to alter women’s wages for factory work as, for example, war bonuses, meant to counteract the effects of the rising cost of living, remained higher for men than for women (Crew, 1989).

As we have now seen, wartime women entered new types of employment within factories and some entered the factories themselves for the first time. This was certainly the case in all belligerent nations as mass mobilisation and the war’s duration ultimately produced labour shortages. Examining women’s wartime factory work across a wide comparative perspective reveals marked similarities in terms of new opportunities for waged and skilled work that was previously restricted to men, shifts from domestic to factory, and from rural to urban work. It also yields some interesting contrasts in the number of women employed, the type of women employed, and the ‘success’ of the entire enterprise. There are some intriguing interpretations of the varying degrees of success that governments had in mobilising women. Is it merely a coincidence that the countries that lost the war, Germany and Austria-Hungary, had the greatest difficulty in getting women out of homes and into wartime factories? Is it unremarkable that Britain and France succeeded because they not only mobilised all available labour but also suppressed and/or avoided strikes
and turmoil (unlike Russia)? Obviously, this factor is not solely responsible for the war's outcome. Nonetheless, if we think of wartime conditions as a whole, the capacity of nations like Britain to mobilise a female workforce by gaining the support of trade union leadership, in contrast to Germany where such leadership opposed it, helped the war effort both in terms of supplying material support and bolstering morale. This suggests that military strength alone may not have been enough to secure victory.

SOCIAL WELFARE AND POLICE WORK

By bringing so many women into wartime factories, the war also brought to the surface anxiety about this ‘new’ female workforce. This can be seen in efforts to assure their correct moral behaviour as well as their health. Of primary concern was that women should not jeopardise their reproductive capabilities. As a result, in places like Britain, France and Germany, the war also opened opportunities for a new kind of middle-class employment, that of the workplace welfare supervisor, and of social workers more generally (Downs, 1992; Hong, 1996; Woollacott, 1994b).

In France, voluntary efforts to provide canteens for women workers began with the entrance of women into factories in increased numbers. Then, in May 1917, feminist leader Cécile Brunschvicg organised an association to train women to become welfare supervisors. This formal step was meant to elevate a charitable task into a profession, and the association started a school, which by the war’s end had trained and placed 50 such women in factories. Welfare supervisors reported directly to employers, not to the state, and were meant to link management and its female workforce. Their dual task was to ensure that production flourished (so they had the ability to discipline workers) and that the well-being of women, especially as real or potential mothers, was maintained so that the family and, by extension, the nation would not suffer (Downs, 1992).

In Britain, two types of women worker looked out for women engaged in wartime factory work: factory inspectors and welfare supervisors. The former, empowered by law since the end of the nineteenth century to monitor the working conditions of women in factories, were responsible for such things as safe and clean facilities and the treatment of workers in terms of work and compensation. The newer role of welfare supervisors arose under the auspices of the Ministry of Munitions, which in 1915 created a Welfare Department. Its primary role was to ensure adequate production through an efficient and healthy labour force and, as a result, women welfare supervisors under its direction took charge of canteens, first aid and rest rooms.

They also assumed a role as ‘moral guardians’, designed to manage petty disputes, pilfering and immoral behaviour in part by offering
appropriate social and recreational activities. These included showing films, organising dances and exercise. Given the class divide between middle-class supervisors and the working-class women they supervised, it is not surprising that tensions emerged, especially as some supervisors had the capacity to hire and fire as well as to punish violations of the rules. As in France, much depended on the individuals: some were viewed as strictly working for management; others were viewed as being as concerned with the genuine welfare of women workers (Woollacott, 1994b).

In Germany, middle-class women came to function as a bridge between the state and working women. A leading government official believed that only with the assistance of women overseeing welfare agencies would the necessary female labour force be mobilised. The numbers of women welfare assistants in factories greatly expanded, from twenty before the war to 900 by October 1918. In addition, women’s organisations played a crucial role in organising voluntary welfare services for women workers (Frevert, 1989: 160; Hong, 1996).

If welfare supervisors and inspectors could be seen as extending women’s appropriately ‘nurturing’ role into a new sphere, one of the war’s most striking changes for many observers came in the employment of women in roles previously closed to them. British contemporaries were particularly struck by women in uniform, which sometimes required masculine attire. Observers now found women employed as conductors on trams and buses, and acting as cleaners, porters, guards and ticket collectors on trains. Women also took on visible roles as road sweepers, window cleaners and postal workers (Braybon, 1981).

In addition, one of the more discernible challenges to gender roles came in the form of women police, as new organisations emerged to provide a female force to monitor the behaviour of women during the war. Among these, two stood out: the Voluntary Women Patrols, sponsored by the National Union of Women Workers, and the more uppercrust (and suffragette) Women Police Service (WPS). In contrast to the women patrols, the WPS saw itself as an independent body that could coerce appropriate social (and sexual) behaviour from men and particularly women, and root out the ills of the male police force as well. Women employed in both organisations performed the basic task of policing – the street patrol – taking on the job of, among other things, separating couples found in public parks and thoroughfares. In general, the type of women who became policewomen differed from those taking on other more traditionally masculine trades. They were more likely to be older, married, and from the upper-middle and elite classes. Their authority rested on a combination, then, of class privilege and official sanction (Bland, 1985; Douglas, 1999; Levine, 1994; Woodeson, 1993).
Employment for women within medicine grew during the war both because of the expansion and professionalisation of nursing services and of new opportunities for medical training and for women doctors. Given the difficulty of securing medical education for women prior to the war, few women were in position, at first, to offer their services as doctors, and their efforts to participate were not always welcomed. This differed from the reception that greeted women who wanted to nurse. The opportunity to serve as a wartime nurse was presented to women as offering them a way of directly helping the military and, by extension, the nation. It kept women subservient to male doctors and it drew on their allegedly natural capacities for caring and nurturing. In short, it did not offer a direct challenge to conventional gender roles. However, nursing exposed many relatively sheltered young women to some of the war’s most visceral horrors, and in so doing, changed their lives.

At first, women doctors who offered their services to the military or government directly were rejected. Thus, those who went had to organise themselves, find their own way to where they were needed, and set up shop. The exact numbers of American women doctors, for instance, are hard to come by as some freelanced while others served with the Red Cross or in the American Women’s Hospitals, which they created in order to find work for themselves (Gavin, 1997; Schneider and Schneider, 1991). Those American women who did serve overseas, including at least two African American women, found that their lack of official military status could prove a real obstacle in dealing with fellow doctors and sometimes with patients (Jensen, 1998). In Russia, some women doctors worked beside men in field hospitals, although here, too, in small numbers (McDermid and Hillyar, 1999).

The war also opened the doors for women’s medical education in Britain, if temporarily. Many of these women took over the functions of male doctors who joined the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), and Dr Jane Walker, for example, became an adviser to both the Ministry of Food and Ministry of Munitions. Yet female physicians also insisted on serving in areas where they could care for wounded soldiers, and the War Office, reluctantly at first but then with greater acceptance, allowed them to do so (Leneman, 1994b: 161).

In 1915, the War Office gave Drs Louisa Garrett Anderson and Flora Murray, co-founders of the Women’s Hospital Corps, permission to establish a military hospital in London. Opened in May 1915, the Endell Street Hospital grew in size throughout the war, serving some 26,000 patients until it closed in 1919. In many ways, it was easier for women to serve the military in Britain as several officials actively discouraged the idea of British women doctors treating soldiers near the firing line. However, by
mid-1916, the need for physicians on the Western Front had grown so much that women doctors were actively recruited for hospitals in Malta. By the war’s end, some of these women had been transferred to Salonika, Egypt, India, East Africa and Palestine (Leneman, 1994b: 170–1).

The largest British medical endeavour completely run by women was that of the Scottish Women’s Hospitals (SWH) founded by Dr Elsie Inglis, a leading Scottish suffragist. This organisation began by launching an appeal through the Common Cause, the newspaper of the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), in September 1914 to raise money for medical services that would be offered by women. By the end of October, sufficient funds had been raised to allow the SWH to create its first hospital in France and later to found several others there and also in Serbia and Russia. Eventually more than a thousand women from all parts of the United Kingdom and its dominions served as doctors, orderlies, nurses, ambulance drivers and other support staff under SWH auspices. These hospitals allowed women to perform medical and surgical work unimaginable in Britain, and the grateful governments of France and Serbia awarded some of these doctors their highest medals (Leneman 1994a).

A far more visible emblem of the war – heavy with symbolic value as well as actual usefulness – was the war nurse (Darrow, 1996). Along with the professional ranks, whose origins in places like Britain were linked with wartime service, other agencies, such as the Red Cross, operating in individual nations also recruited many young and often inexperienced women. Nursing gave women an opportunity to get close to the battlefields and to provide vital aid while still enabling them to be seen as fulfilling a caregiving and therefore feminine role.

Military nursing offered women of every nation the chance to perform obvious and necessary service. From Russia, where it enhanced the visibility of professional women, to Britain, where tensions arose between regular trained nurses and newly-formed Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs), nursing became one widespread way that women were seen as directly contributing to the war effort. Nurses’ own experiences indelibly shaped them as they came into first-hand contact with the full effects of modern war, such as the aftermath of gas attacks.

In Russia, nurses were not supposed to be close to the firing line and were to remain in mobile field hospitals. During the course of the war, they ended up gathering wounded bodies and experiencing notable casualties under direct fire (Meyer, 1991). Keeping nurses away from the battlefields proved futile throughout the war’s geographic scope. While the initial regulations of the French Medical Service excluded women from the battlefield, this not only turned out to be impossible to enforce but also counter to need. By 1918 the rules had changed, and French nurses staffed dressing stations as well as hospitals. As with Russian nurses, they were
killed in the line of duty, which helped them inspire one of the dominant images of women’s wartime heroism (Darrow, 2000; Thébaud, 1986).

As was the case throughout Europe, the early phases of the war surprised all those in authority with their savageness and human costs. Medical services raced to catch up. The French Red Cross, for example, greatly simplified its training to allow more women to learn the fundamentals of basic nursing as quickly as possible. However, because it relied exclusively on volunteers, it eliminated those who could not afford to work without pay. Not until 1916, when facing a nursing shortage that would continue throughout the war, did the army create the position of Temporary Military Nurse and pay women for nursing. Approximately 30,000 such women were hired, along with over 60,000 Red Cross nurses at the height of their activity (Darrow, 2000: 140–1).

Over the course of the war, the German Imperial Commissar and Military Inspector for Voluntary Nursing employed some 92,000 nurses and aides. Many of them came from the Red Cross, others from religious orders. It is likely that many of these women had upper-class and middle-class backgrounds and saw nursing as fulfilling a socially useful and still feminine role (Schulte, 1997: 124–5). As important, it allowed them to answer the call to service and to feel that they participated in a direct way in the war effort. Here too, nurses were meant to staff military hospitals not field outposts, but in reality they did both (Schulte, 1997).

The experience of German nurses also exposed them to two very different sectors of the war, the Western Front and the Eastern one. First-hand accounts emphasise that the East, especially its cold and darkness, made nursing there much worse than in the West. More seriously, nurses working in the East were more likely than those in the West to be exposed to malaria and typhus. More nurses in this area, suffering from overwork and exhaustion, fell ill and died. Those who survived both of these battle zones often felt displaced in postwar society (Schulte, 1997).

British military nursing had powerful antecedents in the myth (and work) of Florence Nightingale, which provided British women with a convenient role model for a nation at war well before 1914 (Summers, 1987). When the war came, trained women enrolled as nurses and the unskilled joined the Voluntary Aid Detachments. In Ireland alone, around 4,500 women became VADs and served either there or abroad (Jeffery, 2000). By November 1918, the Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Military Nursing Service and Territorial Force Nursing Services together employed 12,769 trained nurses and 10,816 partially trained or untrained ones. This does not include the 2,396 British nurses and 1,685 VADs working for the Royal Army Medical Corps in August 1918 or those smaller numbers employed by the British Red Cross Society, St John Ambulance Brigade Hospital, Friends’ Ambulance Unit, and First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Corps.
(Marwick, 1977: 167–8). As first-hand accounts of wartime nursing reveal, tensions often arose between nurses and VADs as there were significant class and other differences between the two. Professional nurses, by and large, saw themselves as doing vital national work as part of a career; the VADs who nursed, many of whom came from a higher socio-economic status than nurses, saw themselves primarily as performing a war service.

Nursing also provided a way for substantial numbers of women who lived miles from the battleground to experience the devastating effects of war. Even before their nation’s official entry into the war, American women served in the Red Cross in locations as far away as Russia. Others joined either the Army or Navy Nurse Corps as adjuncts to the military. The range of tasks performed by these nurses overseas was impressively wide. Some served as anesthetists, others participated in mobile (flying) surgical units or in American mobile hospitals that could be set up in a day (Schneider and Schneider, 1991). The military recognised that nurses were an essential component of its work and gave army nurses a status above enlisted men, but it balked at giving them military rank. As a result, these women could not exercise authority or receive full credit for their work, and the army excluded women from retirement benefits (Zeiger, 1999).

Despite America’s late entry into the war, American army nurses arrived in France when the Allies were experiencing both a nursing shortage and some of the most intense fighting seen since the early days of the war. Many describe nursing through the fighting of July 1918 as especially harrowing, and the experience of being so intimately connected with the costs of the war could have a profound effect. As one nurse put it, ‘You see I am where I am seeing something of the business of war. There is no glamour whatsoever about it’ (Zeiger, 1999: 134).

Women of the British Commonwealth also joined up as nurses. Despite the government’s initial reluctance to send women overseas, approximately 650 New Zealand nurses went abroad. The majority worked directly with the New Zealand forces but others nursed for the French or British Red Cross (Pugsley et al., 1996). Some 2,500 Australians served as nurses overseas, many of whom ended up in France but some spent the war taking care of the sick rather than the wounded in Egypt or Salonika. What motivated them was akin to what motivated others: a sense of duty, a close connection to a loved one (brothers or sweethearts) also serving overseas or simply a desire to have an adventure. What many of them encountered as their first engagement was the aftermath of the disastrous landings at Gallipoli in 1915. Stationed on hospital ships off-shore, they were ill-equipped to handle the massive casualties that resulted. Subsequent nursing, if less traumatic, was no less difficult (Scates and Frances, 1997).

As was true elsewhere, relationships between soldiers and nurses were constrained by a number of factors. Since only single women were supposed
to be sent abroad as nurses, they were assumed to be ‘innocent’ and in need of protection. In an effort to safeguard both the men and the women, Australian nurses were regarded as honorary ‘officers’ and thus forbidden to fraternise with other ranks, which included most of the men for whom they cared. That this regulation was often violated mattered little, it helped create a climate which made the interaction between soldiers and nurses suspect. Nurses could negotiate this tension in a variety of ways, most often by acting as pure-minded, friendly sisters or mothers, and denying the possibility of any sexual overtones in their behaviour (Holmes, 1995).

Like Australians, Canadian nurses had to meet certain requirements. In addition to having graduated from a recognised nursing school, this included being single and between the ages of 21 and 38. Despite these restrictions, there were more applicants than places for military nurses. In addition to serving directly under the military, Canada also established eight university-based hospitals that employed nurses. As with nurses from all of the belligerent nations, many of these women had close family and friends serving in the military, which lent both renewed purpose and an emotional edge to their work (Mann, 2000).

The nursing experience of women during the war left a complex legacy. As we saw in Chapter 2, they were often used in propaganda to represent the most self-sacrificing of women, and heroic nurses became a staple of wartime popular media, whether in real-life examples such as that of Edith Cavell, or in fiction such as in L’Ennemi. On the other hand, because most participant nations ended up actively recruiting women from the educated, middle and upper classes, these women found themselves performing previously unthinkable tasks, including having intimate contact with male bodies. This had the effect of making the societies to which they returned sometimes suspicious of their morals and behaviour. When Vera Brittain returned to university after her war service, she recounts being treated as liable to harm the other women students around her because ‘tales of immorality among VADs … had been consumed with voracious horror by readers at home; who knew in what cesspools of iniquity I had not wallowed? Who could calculate the awful extent to which I might corrupt the morals of my innocent juniors?’ (Brittain, 1978: 476–7). The wartime world required this service from women, but the postwar world was not always sure what to do with the women who had performed it.

ON THE LAND

As has already been shown, the labour of women sustained Europe’s war-torn nations. As the war continued, sustenance itself – the maintenance of an adequate food supply – also became part of their contribution. Women agricultural workers proved even more essential in places like France, as
men from rural areas were swallowed up by the war, and Britain, an island nation where the importation of food became difficult. Yet there was mixed success in the efforts to persuade urban women to work on the land.

In Germany, where the food supply was deeply affected by a blockade, urban women responded to the return of a ‘quasi-subsistence economy’ by growing vegetables in urban allotments and keeping small livestock in their homes (Daniel, 1997: 190–1). With almost 60 per cent of male agricultural workers called up to serve in the army, the government tried to convince urban women to relocate to rural areas to replace this labour force. The War Office appealed directly to women, claiming that agricultural work would both aid their health and the nation (Bessel, 1997: 219). This effort not only proved unsuccessful in mobilising women to leave the cities for the land and convincing farmers to accept their aid, but also led to further food shortages. It eventually collapsed altogether (Jackson, 1996: 570–1).

Whether or not Germany felt desperate, by 1916 it had begun to remove civilians from regions that the German army held under occupation and to require these same civilians to perform forced labour (Jackson, 1996). This further fed into indignation and became yet another piece of evidence in the Allies’ propaganda attacks on Germany: its brutal treatment of foreign women. France widely advertised the German army’s Easter-week deportations of young women from Lille, for instance, as serving a more nefarious purpose than agricultural work. Did such treatment of ‘enemy’ women reassure German women at home that they were not being expected to suffer the pains of the food shortages alone? As will be discussed further in Chapter 4, this was not how the French viewed it (Grayzel, 1999; McPhail, 1999).

In comparison with Germany, Britain more successfully mobilised women both in rural communities and from urban areas to help maintain the food supply. Its Women’s Land Army evolved from earlier volunteer organisations like the Women’s Legion and the Women’s Defence Relief Corps, which aimed to solve the food problem by using women’s labour. From the outset, these groups sought specifically and often explicitly to attract single women of the educated middle classes. Starting with bringing women together to do seasonal land work, it soon tried to gather sufficient women to replace absent men.

The Women’s Land Army, administered under the Board of Agriculture, was always one of several options for women interested in working for overwhelmingly patriotic reasons. Officials recognised that agricultural employment involving difficult physical work and often meagre accommodations lacked the glamour of other forms of war service. Thus, they had to persuade women of its extreme usefulness as well as its desirability. In the uniform of smocks, breeches and puttees, ‘Land Girls’ performed a variety of essential tasks from taking care of livestock to planting crops.
subsection, the Women’s Forestry Corps, supplemented the care of livestock and crops by felling and harvesting wood. If the numbers of women who worked the land were never extensive, they greatly assisted with the last two harvests of the war and even came to serve as symbols of a revitalised English countryside (Grayzel, 1999).

French, Italian, American and Russian women continued to work the land in much the same way as they traditionally had, but the amount of work they needed to do increased. As noted above, Italian authorities bemoaned their difficulties in keeping ‘peasant women’ in the factories when they felt the pull of agricultural labour in the spring (Tomassini, 1996: 580). French women not only took on the work of their absent men, but also of field animals requisitioned by the army (Thébaud, 1986). American women and their families were urged to supplement the food supply by growing ‘victory gardens’. Once again, enormous variation in the use of women in agriculture existed in combatant nations; in every case, this labour was deemed essential for the war.

FEMALE SPIES AND THE QUESTION OF WARTIME TREASON

There was yet another type of warfare waged during the First World War: a war of information and espionage. In the early days of the war, Britain seethed with rumours about spies, and fears of what German women – serving as governesses or domestic servants – might be up to contributed to a climate that led to the eventual internment of many aliens. Germany’s popular magazines early in the war similarly depicted spies as women too ignorant to know the value of national loyalty (Davis, 2000: 40). In France, rumours of a mysterious ‘lady in a hat’ abounded, fuelled by prewar spy literature (Darrow, 2000). There were in fact women in many countries who aided their own war efforts by gathering and passing along information.

This situation was intensified in areas under hostile occupation such as Belgium and northern France. Here networks developed to try to aid and enable Allied soldiers to escape to safety. As was discussed earlier in Chapter 2, in 1915 the Germans executed British nurse Edith Cavell for aiding and abetting the enemy as she had been active in one such network. Other women in Lille and the surrounding countryside, in particular Louise Thuliez, hid soldiers and led them to Cavell’s clinic in Brussels and from there to safety, often through the Netherlands (McPhail, 1999). When the network was discovered, Cavell was arrested and condemned to death along with Thuliez and the Comtesse de Belleville, who with Princess Marie de Croÿ had offered her home as a refuge along the way. Cavell chose not to appeal, and was executed along with Philippe Bauq; Thuliez’s sentence, together with several other supporters, was commuted to life imprisonment with hard labour. While Cavell’s execution roused international indignation,
even British espionage agents found her conviction by the Germans well-founded, although they disagreed about the appropriateness of executing a woman (Wheelwright, 1992). The image circulated in propaganda ignored what Cavell had done and instead stressed her role as nurse to patients of all nations, thus above suspicion and ‘innocent’.

Frenchwoman Louise de Bettignies serves as another example of a woman who manipulated the border between war and free zones. She not only helped Allied soldiers to escape capture but also collected and passed on vital material from informants in occupied France, including troop movements and locations. She worked directly with British intelligence, and was caught, along with her main aide, Marie-Léonie Vanhoutte, in October 1915. Given the outrage provoked by Cavell’s execution, the two women’s lives were spared, but de Bettignies died of illness in a German prison in September 1918. After the war, her body was returned for reburial in France. She received several posthumous honours from the British and French governments, and a statue was erected to her memory in the centre of Lille (Darrow, 2000; McPhail, 1999). Other women served as spies in even more complicated and potentially risky ways. Marthe Richer, also known as Marthe Richard, a French aviator, worked as a double-agent based largely in Spain, and passed along secrets obtained from her liaison with a German officer (Darrow, 2000; Thébaud, 1986; Wheelwright, 1992).

However, from the moment of her execution in France in 1917, Mata Hari (Margaretha Zelle MacLeod) has come to personify the archetypal female spy, not only of the First World War but also of the modern era, one who seduces men into betraying their country’s secrets and then passes them on to the enemy. Mata Hari’s prewar career consisted of performing allegedly sacred dances from what was deemed ‘the Orient’ which involved removing most of her clothing. A Dutchwoman married to a British officer in the colonial army who lived for a time in Indonesia, she reinvented herself as the daughter of a Malay princess and a European father. Her brief fame as an exotic dancer led to a life as a prototypical courtesan, where she lived off various male lovers. At the outbreak of the war, however, her career in both senses was on a downturn; she had ended an engagement in Germany and had gone back to Holland, where she had little to do. So in 1916, already labelled suspect in British intelligence reports, she returned to Paris, where the head of French intelligence, Georges Ladoux, recruited her to spy for France. The original plan was for her to use her powers of seduction on the Crown Prince of Germany and thereby obtain information. She demanded a million francs in order to do this, as she was badly in debt. She then tried to head back to the Netherlands via Spain. Stopped by British authorities who refused to allow her to continue her journey, she returned to Spain. Here she credibly believed herself to be aiding the French by
initiating a relationship with a ranking German official in order to get military ‘secrets’ to pass along, which she dutifully did. However, after receiving no response from Ladoux, who was convinced she was truly spying for Germany, she decided to return to France, hoping to be rewarded for what she had been able to accomplish.

In the context of the Russian Revolution and the waves of strikes and mutinies that beset France in 1917, this was not a wise move. Her arrest in February and subsequent imprisonment in St Lazarre, her trial in July of that year and execution in October appear hardly surprising. Mata Hari was an unlikely double-agent, and there is no evidence that she ever acted solely as a German spy. However, her trial was closed, and the conclusion predetermined. Looking back, the bulk of evidence in the Mata Hari case now reveals her main ‘crimes’ to have been promiscuity and arrogance. Her reputation and previous career as a famed exotic dancer, an emblem of a decadent prewar life, then contributed to the desire to find her guilty of treason (Darrow, 2000; Thébaud, 1986; Wheelwright, 1992).

Examining Mata Hari in light of the treatment of Edith Cavell reveals the convoluted nature of women in First World War espionage (Wheelwright, 1992). On the one hand stands Mata Hari, known by her stage name, emblematic of unbridled sexuality, claiming to have slept with Germans to obtain information for France and expecting to be well compensated for it. On the other hand, the unmarried, ‘asexual’ nurse Edith Cavell actively helped Allied soldiers to escape from occupied Belgium. Her actions took her beyond the realm of caring for the wounded and into the realm of political resistance and defiance of the German army. The purity of Edith Cavell’s selfless motives contrasts vividly with the aura of corruption and decadence surrounding Mata Hari. Questions of actual guilt or innocence aside, women who defied wartime conventions as broadly as did Mata Hari could be subjected to the most extreme punishment. Women thus gained a place in espionage, but unless they were as ‘pure’ as Edith Cavell, it was one that would place them in a precarious position, even within their own nations.

WOMEN’S UNPAID WORK

With the mass mobilisation of 1914 came the interconnected social problem of how to alleviate the hardships experienced by family members left behind and how to make use of the largest group of adults not called up or actively recruited for armed service. One response to both of these problems occurred largely outside governmental initiatives in the form of voluntary services established to provide for those fighting and those suffering behind the lines. This included vast numbers of organisations created, headed and staffed by women; immediate relief of servicemen’s families came from
private charitable institutions in both Germany and Britain. Some of the women’s groups saw themselves as fulfilling a particular feminine responsibility during wartime to care for others. Some (often but not exclusively those with a more feminist slant) devoted themselves to alleviating the condition of women hurt by the mobilisation of male breadwinners and other disruptions to economic and familial life.

As we have already seen in Chapter 2, certain categories of women such as widows received direct state support. However, this left others, including women thrown out of work by immediate wartime economic dislocation, in dire straits. Feminist publications thus urged female consumers to continue to buy clothes in order to keep women in the clothing industry employed, and feminist leaders urged that their organisations’ members relieve women in distress (Holton, 1986; Thébaud, 1986). Ultimately, many of these women workers would find employment doing war work, but at the war’s outset, the charitable work of other women helped them survive.

Another one of the war’s most visible problems was the wave of refugees, mainly women and children, that it produced. The care of these refugees, be they Belgians in England, inhabitants of the invaded territories in the rest of France, Galicians fleeing to other parts of Austria-Hungary, or the masses on the move in the Russian empire, became primarily the concern of women. While some welfare workers also cared for women, much of the aid given to wartime refugees came from women’s voluntary organisations, and this aid was extensive. The Red Cross in almost every nation, in addition to its work for soldiers, also supplied comfort and supplies to refugees in need.

In Austria – including Vienna, Bohemia and Moravia – Jewish women devoted particular energy to caring for Jewish refugees from Galicia. These refugees began to appear as early as September 1914 and many were unable to return for the war’s duration. As a result, despite some government aid, many refugees, especially Jews (approximately 40 per cent of the more than 385,000 refugees fleeing Galicia and Bukovina in 1915 were Jewish) needed more support in terms of housing, food and clothing. The response of the Austrian Jewish community to the refugees’ plight allowed them to demonstrate both their service to the nation overall and to their community in particular. They provided money, as well as created soup kitchens, schools and clinics. In addition to local support in areas that received refugees, Jewish women’s organisations throughout the country gathered basic necessities for them (Rozenblit, 1995: 200, 205–6).

Given the flood of refugees produced by the war in Russia, many middle-class women took on another role in caring for them. They insisted that their assistance was necessary because so many of the refugees were women with children. As women, they felt they could make a difference in terms of the well-being of the refugees, both physical and moral. Recognising
how vulnerable they were, women welfare workers thus tried to protect the
refugee women from becoming prostitutes or succumbing to other vices.
They also established practical charities to feed and clothe them (Gatrell,
1999).

In Germany, women’s local associations devoted themselves to
volunteer efforts for their communities, particularly for refugees, children
and female war workers. They established soup kitchens and crèches, and
gathered supplies such as clothing and footwear. Primarily, middle-class
women often working with the main German women’s organisation, the
Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine (BDF), pursued charitable works as a means
of national service. Given some of the inadequacies of state support, these
women’s networks proved essential in meeting the basic needs of the
nation’s families (Domansky, 1996; Frevert, 1989; Hong, 1996).

Along with helping other women, many women’s groups across war-
torn Europe also organised themselves so as to best help soldiers. This first
took the form of providing material comforts, including knitted items such
as socks and parcels filled with cigarettes, food, writing paper, treats and
‘morally uplifting’ literature. In Ireland, for instance, 6,000 women
volunteered to manufacture equipment for the Irish War Hospital Supply
Depot, while in Red Cross Workrooms in Dublin, 300 women knitted
20,000 pairs of socks and 10,000 scarves for servicemen (Jeffery, 2000: 33).
Approximately 10,000 women’s patriotic clubs, societies and sewing circles
emerged in Australia, where, in addition to knitting socks, they packed
these along with cakes, tobacco, magazines and an inspiring letter into
‘comfort’ bags to be sent to soldiers in the field (Scates and Frances, 1997:
45–6). In New Zealand, so many patriotic groups emerged to provide
comforts for soldiers, among other things, that they had to be regulated
under the War Funds Act of 1915, establishing a Federation of New
Zealand War Relief Societies (Pugsley et al., 1996). Meantime, in Austria,
Jewish women as well as others organised themselves to help the war effort,
and the former deliberately sought to aid Jewish soldiers by sending gift
packages for Chanukah and Purim and kosher food for Passover
(Rozenblit, 1995: 203).

Soon women’s organisations established outposts at train stations,
canteens for military personnel and even for female munitions workers
themselves. One purpose of the ‘Foyers du Soldat’ (Soldiers’ hearths), as
they were called in France, was to provide an alternative to the café or
public house where men might be led astray by alcohol and prostitution.
The many women who flocked to the aid of soldiers envisioned themselves
as entertaining the troops in an appropriate, patriotic fashion. Organisations
such as the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) and the Salvation
Army provided entertainment huts, where women served ‘doughnuts to
doughboys’ (Gavin, 1997; Marwick, 1977; Thébaud, 1986; Zeiger, 1999).
One effort to create more personal and, presumably, sustaining ties between individual soldiers and civilian women can be seen in the creation of the marraines de guerre in France. Each marraine (godmother) adopted a filleul (godson) in the trenches, and sent him packages and letters. While these ties were designed to elevate the morale of each participant, they also evoked suspicion as popular culture began to sexualise these relationships (Grayzel, 1997a).

Despite America’s late entry to the war, American women quickly organised themselves to help soldiers. As was the case with women war workers, however, race became a complicating factor. Despite the efforts of women such as Addie Hunton and Kathryn Johnson, who were among a handful of women able to go to France to provide support to these troops, efforts to provide recreation and sustenance to African American soldiers fell far short of those provided for white troops (Hunton and Johnson, 1920). The segregated United States army at first had no recreational activities or YMCA clubs, deemed so vital for morale, set up for any African American troops at its training camps or abroad. Facilities for white soldiers were put off limits to non-whites. Despite this, African American women strove to support their soldiers as best they could, as the testimony of those African American women volunteers who made it to France attests (Bristow, 1996; Hunton and Johnson, 1920) [Doc. 8].

The time required of such services meant that the bulk of those performing voluntary, charitable work came from the middle and upper classes, although women of the entire nation could contribute pennies to war loans and send comforts to soldiers. All such work appealed to women as patriots, as vital constituents of their nations at war, but much of this charitable work did not challenge any preconceived ideas about gender roles or actions. There were some notable exceptions, as some of the most difficult tasks associated with the war, such as ambulance driving done by British women, were unpaid. In these instances, women of means – some from as far away as New Zealand – paid their way to France or Britain, provided their own uniforms and received little material support of any kind (Marcus, 1989; Pugsley et al., 1996). The compensation for all members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments was so minimal that almost all VADs came from the middle class, and were motivated by many factors including the desire to be of service and to test their own capacities (Donner, 1997).

Given the abundance of organisations created by women during the war, a collective portrait of women emerges. It reveals that those who participated saw voluntary work as a means of serving the nation. Women who took up the tasks of providing comforts and aid to soldiers saw this as a way, however small, of contributing to the war effort and thus to their own men and nation at risk.
'THE KITCHEN IS THE KEY TO VICTORY': WORK IN THE HOME

No matter what type of organised volunteer activity or paid employment women performed during the war, their wartime nations also assumed that they had a vital second role: managing their homes. This task only became more difficult as the length of the war began to affect the supply of basic necessities and food. Germany, for instance, had not prepared for a lengthy war and its inhabitants were deeply affected by the shortage of foodstuffs. Britain also had to worry about its reliance on imported foods, and both of these nations, as we saw earlier, made serious efforts to encourage women to produce more agricultural goods. In addition to trying to raise food production, these governments and others also began to control consumption. They launched campaigns that focused on women, urging them to avoid wasting food, to substitute other foods for those that were in short supply, and to learn how to navigate a new system of rationing. We have already seen visual evidence of this in the discussion of propaganda in Chapter 2. In many ways, this was easier to do in the countryside than in the urban areas where much of the European population lived.

The management of food resources was especially vital and fraught among the participant nations Austria-Hungary and Germany, although not restricted to them. Belgium may provide the best example of wartime food deprivation as not only was it subject to the Allied blockade as an occupied territory but, in addition, its own resources were raided by Germany. As we will see in Chapter 6, food shortages led to prolonged and often violent street action by women in the capital cities of Germany and Austria-Hungary, and contributed to the revolutionary climate of wartime Russia, especially in the major cities of Petrograd and Moscow.

MUNITIONS VERSUS MOTHERHOOD: ATTITUDES TO WAR AND WORK

It is hardly surprising that the many outward changes in women’s appearances and in their working lives provoked strong reactions. In particular, they initiated debates about the national dangers of women’s work. Factory and industrial work in particular was contrasted with women’s allegedly more natural and equally important task of reproduction – literally ensuring a human supply of citizen soldiers for the nation [Doc. 10].

The British and French governments, for instance, were concerned with regulating the behaviour of the many women who were called into war-related work, especially in factories. However, by focusing on women’s health and their children’s health, they reveal a deeper concern with the nation’s future need for healthy citizens (Grayzel, 1999). One concrete
result already mentioned was the creation of welfare supervisors for female factory workers – a paternalistic safeguard.

Better working conditions, higher wages and fewer hours might have helped all women, including mothers, but this contradicted the wartime need for increased production at reduced costs. Instead, the French government, for example, after lengthy discussion managed to pass one substantive piece of new legislation: a law supporting breast-feeding women in wartime factories by giving them time off to nurse and creating rooms in which they could do so.

Concern with the declining birthrate in France predated the war, and concern about demographic shortcomings would pervade postwar Europe. Some concrete changes recognised women’s new responsibilities, enabling them to be official guardians of their children, for instance. As we will see in Chapter 7, several pieces of legislation at the war’s end and in its aftermath also sought to do more than recognise women. Reform measures that are among the basis of a welfare state emerged to compensate women financially for rearing children (Pedersen, 1993).

Women in combatant nations faced many similar challenges – anxiety about men and children, economic difficulties and social upheavals. However, the opportunities provided for their participation in the war effort, in waged war work, varied from state to state and, within states, by class, ethnicity or region. Urban, middle- and upper-class women enjoyed a wider range of options than poorer and rural women. Despite these divergences, the home and the care as well as production of its inhabitants was thus construed as a vital part of the women’s war effort. New technologies would mean that homes would also literally become a target. In addition to the changes wrought in many women’s lives by wartime work, waged and voluntary, willing and unwilling, specific wartime circumstances brought women into the line of fire. Experiences such as living under occupation or becoming victims of air raids far from the battlefields had dramatic effects on women’s lives and livelihoods.
"THE FABRIC OF EUROPE AND THE WORLD WAS BEING REMADE:"

THE ARMISTICE AND AFTER IN MANCHESTER

This chapter is excerpted from

*The Ordeal of Peace*

by Adam R. Seipp.

© 2017 Taylor & Francis Group. All rights reserved.
Chapter 4
“The Fabric of Europe and the World was Being Remade:”
The Armistice and After in Manchester

The war was over. On November 11, 1918, the city of Manchester celebrated the end of more than four years of bitter and brutal conflict. A day in which hundreds of thousands of Mancunians cheered, reflected, and grieved alone or in small groups merged into a night of joyous and raucous festivities across the city, the country, and swathes of exhausted Europe. Accounts of the day focused on the sounds of the Armistice; a woman shouting joyously on a tram, two men dressed in black crying together, the tugs at Salford Quays riotously sounding their horns, and women workers in Salford’s factories leading the singing of “God Save the King.” After dark, the workers who spontaneously took the afternoon off mixed in the streets with soldiers and sailors eager to celebrate the return of peace.¹

The public outpouring of November 11, and in the days to come, were just a preview of a year in which street demonstrations were common and rarely celebratory. Even as celebrations of the Armistice continued, there was evidence of disquiet over the unseemly haste of the government’s call for postwar elections. The tensions of wartime did not diminish with the end of hostilities. Instead, they took on new life as labor and social unrest stemming from the great changes of the war years resulted in a cluster of strikes and labor actions that involved considerably higher numbers of workers than even the prewar strike waves.² One contemporary publication referred to this period following the end of the war “the year of demonstrations.”³

Contemporaries saw this time as one of momentous change. In a 1946 tribute to C.P. Scott, the legendary editor of the Manchester Guardian who guided the paper from a regional giant to a prominent place in the national press, one former editor remembered 1919 as a time when “the fabric of Europe and of the world was being remade.”⁴ But how would this new world come about? Whose interests

---

¹ Accounts from Manchester Evening News (MEN), November 11, 12, 1918.
would dominate in the society to come? These questions loomed large over discussions of rebuilding British society in the wake of the war. The propaganda of wartime ostensibly promised a postwar society that would not simply replicate prewar conditions but would allow those whose voices had been marginalized to gain influence commensurate with their wartime sacrifice. As the celebrations of November gave way to a more sober reckoning, conflicts that wartime had only imperfectly kept at a simmer threatened to boil again. Circumstances, some of them peculiar to the industrial economy of the Northwest, began to circumscribe the promise of a new and just society and popular resentments carried over into the streets.

How do we understand the gap between the hopeful celebrations of November and the labor unrest of the next year? How did the improvised mobilization of British society affect efforts to demobilize society at the end of the war? How did different groups experience this process of demobilization?

The answers had everything to with the specific legacies of Britain’s mobilization strategy. The obligations owed to those who served, men and women, were clear and very much at the forefront of public discussion of the war. Any effort to assert political legitimacy in the postwar period, including the elections held just months after the Armistice, centered on the claims of political parties that they would and could ensure fair and equitable treatment for those whose efforts contributed to victory. At the same time, conditions on the ground all but precluded a smooth transition from wartime to postwar. The massive task of physical demobilization and a weak domestic economy in the Northwest created structural impediments to transition just as the rhetoric of reward and sacrifice reached their apogee in the wake of November’s victory. The private–public partnership that sustained Britain’s wartime mobilization now faced the task of managing demobilization. When this challenge proved overwhelming, the British state appeared uncaring and vacillating, unwilling to fulfill the obligations it assumed in wartime. This perceived unwillingness lay at the heart of public disquiet in the year after the Armistice. It circumscribed the limits of dissent within a framework of loyal opposition and limited the appeal of radical solutions and their advocates. At the same time, the experience of victory created enormous expectations and sharpened popular disappointment when those expectations went unmet.

The end of the war generated a boom period of about 18 months in Britain, during which wartime production and wages remained high, along with consumer demand. It was, however, a highly artificial situation and the government was keenly aware that it was going to end when the economy settled into a postwar pace. It also did not extend to the Northwest, where the combination of a changed market for cotton goods and the slow resumption of coal production created serious impediments to recovery.

The fact of the postwar boom meant far less to people on the ground in Manchester as did the perceived and real inequalities of the emerging postwar system, the continuance of wartime regulations, and the terrible practical problems of reintegrating a labor force that had endured a series of profound dislocations over
five years. Britain’s government was thinking very hard about creating a stable and viable postwar economic order, but it often did not appear that way in the factories, streets, and demobilization camps. This difference of perception helped to turn 1919 into a year fraught with peril and uncertainty. C.P. Scott wrote to an associate in October that he feared “the biggest industrial war in our history.”

“The Peace,” wrote a local historian in 1940, “brought no real feeling of confidence to the city. There were numerous strikes among the industrial workers … and the industrial disturbances were complicated by the persistence of political unrest.” One observer, writing in 1920, was much more specific in his condemnation of government inaction and barely concealed anxiety about the future.

No statesman had the vision to see or raised his voice to point out that before the final coming of peace there must be delay and uncertainty, but that from the moment of the cessation of fighting reaction must begin…. A state of unpreparedness, lack of leadership, and the example of state extravagance were to lead up to the “land fit for heroes to live in.” The actual result was that, after the first days of holiday, the Parliamentary Election, and a brief period of reaction, Labour began, with added factors, to resume the claims and movements suspended by the war.

The theme of government inaction and apathy was a common one. President Wilson’s friend and plenipotentiary Colonel House wrote to Scott in March 1919 that “I have long since given up hope of having the kind of peace the world desires. It is a question now of getting the best that we can, or stopping the machinery and running the risk of chaos…. The so-called governing classes seem to me to be completely asleep and it is nearly impossible to wake them.”

The memoirs of Mancunian social reformer and Lord Mayor E.D. Simon blamed the attitudes of wartime for the vacuum of postwar leadership:

Those who tried during the Great War of 1914–18, whether in England or America or France or Germany, to discuss a policy for the situation which must follow the war were constantly told that such a discussion would prevent us from concentrating our whole minds on the attainment of victory. In consequence,

---

7 Lord George Askwith, Industrial Problems and Disputes (London: John Murray, 1920), 467.
8 Letter from C.M. House to C.P. Scott. March 10, 1919. C.P. Scott Papers, Manchester Guardian Archive, John Rylands Library, 335/87.
when victory came, the statesmen of Versailles were without thought or plan, and their victory brought mankind nothing but disaster and disillusion.9

The postwar experience for many Britons whose lives had been upended in some way by the war was one of dashed expectations and an increasing feeling of bitterness toward the war they had come through. As the American journalist Arthur Gleason, who took an intense interest in the coal and cotton industries of Lancashire, wrote:

Memories of the Brotherhood of the Trenches fail to content the demoralized Tommy with the England to which he returns. By the guerrilla warfare of sectional strikes and one-day stoppages, by the mass warfare of great strikes, and by the steady wear and wastage of slack work, petty obstructions, and passive resistance, the workers pick and nibble and dynamite the system to pieces.10

The appeal to fairness and a just reward for the sacrifices of wartime played a critical role in the first political contest of the postwar period in Britain. As wartime political restrictions gave way, old debates over the country’s future resumed with a new vitriol expressed through this language of reciprocity. In areas like Manchester, debates over the nation’s future began in the immediate aftermath of November’s uncertain victory.

The Khaki Election in Manchester

With the guns on the Western Front barely silent, the wartime government called a general election for December. Despite well-founded criticism that Lloyd-George was taking advantage of the victory to increase his margin in Parliament, his government, a Coalition dominated by Liberals and Bonar Law’s Conservatives, was determined to test its political fortunes at the ballot box. The government felt confident they could achieve a comfortable victory against Liberals still loyal to Herbert Asquith, whom Lloyd-George forced out of Downing Street in 1916, and against the Labour opposition.11 The presence of so many soldiers in uniform led some to call this a “Khaki Election,” while others termed it the “Coupon Election” after the slips of paper given to candidates supported by the Coalition.

Coming as it did a month after the Armistice, many voters saw the election as a continuation of the war and considered the impact of the results on the

9 Graham Wallas “Introduction” in E.D. Simon. A City Council from Within (London: Longmans, 1926), XIV.
process of demobilization. In endorsing the Coalition, the *Manchester Evening News* reminded readers, with a notable degree of selective memory, that Britain’s workers had stood by the government’s war effort:

They stand by it now, and say to the Government “Complete the task. Make a good job of it.” To turn out the Coalition now will be tantamount to a vote of censure on their work, and a want of confidence in their ability to turn chaos into order.12

This connection between the just-completed war and the upcoming election was mirrored, if negatively, in the appeal of the Labour party. Joseph Hallsworth, then a leader of the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees, ran unsuccessfully on the Labour ticket for a seat in Stretford in the postwar election. In a letter to prospective voters, he laid out an ambitious vision of postwar Britain based on rewarding workers for their war service:

The task of the new Parliament will be concerned not only with the Peace Terms, but with the Reconstruction of our entire Social Order. The Labour Party, in whose name I appeal for your support, desires the work of Reconstruction to be undertaken not from the point of view of profit making, not in the interests of a small class, but for the physical, moral and intellectual well-being and enjoyment of the nation as a whole.13

Hallsworth’s program called for, among other things, Home Rule for Ireland, the devolution of power to Scotland and Wales, and the nationalization of capital industries. It was demobilization that formed the core of the appeal. Trade Union rights “abrogated in the public interest” should be immediately restored. He called for “full provision for the probably large number of civilian workers whom the dislocation of industry following upon the cessation of hostilities will throw out of employment.” Labour appealed directly to soldiers and sailors, arguing that “the experience of past wars shows a shameful treatment of those who have been called to face death and disaster, and if this is not to be repeated, the soldiers and sailors can look with confidence only to the Labour Party – the party of their own class, which has already made their cause its special care.”14

In the electoral struggle between the Coalition and its opposition, the issue of who was best prepared to “reconstruct” British society in the wake of the war was the one most commonly evoked in late 1918. The government’s clumsy call

13 Letter “to the electors in Stretford”. December, 1918. Sir Joseph Hallsworth Papers, Manchester Archives. M547/1/1–4. Hallsworth went on to serve in a variety of labor and government posts, including as a board member of the ILO. He was knighted in 1946.
14 Ibid.
for early elections did not help matters by making it appear (not without some justification) that it was calling early elections because it feared that postwar dislocation would alienate voters. Ultimately, the election appeared to be a referendum on the government’s handling of the war and on the changes in British society over the previous four years. This focus on reconstruction was evident in the campaign song of Wright Robinson, the politician and labor organizer who we last saw as an opponent of conscription during the war. The slight, boyish Robinson campaigned for Labour with a jingle that focused on rebuilding the postwar world and addressing the practical problems of urban life that had been marginalized during the war:

If you want the children’s friend
That’s WRIGHT ROBINSON
If you want the world to mend
That’s WRIGHT ROBINSON
He’ll give us more work, and he’ll give us more pay
He’ll give us houses, and give us more play,
So Sisters and Brothers ask Fathers and Mothers,
To VOTE for WRIGHT ROBINSON.  

One of the most obvious differences between the parliamentary elections of 1918 and any that came before it was the inclusion of women among the voters. Appeals to women as voters, and for women as candidates, tended to reference either (or both) the supposedly ingrained tendency of women to heal the spiritual problems of society or to their special competencies as the witnesses to, and victims of, wartime shortages and consumer problems. While the importance of women voters was evident, it was equally critical that women came to be included in the widening circles of war participants, so they, too, could claim the mantle of wartime sacrifice.

The Co-operative Society, in one of its increasingly radical-sounding appeals, suggested that women could play an essential role in defeating “the grand conspiracy to foist an arbitrary plutocratic government upon the people in the name of unity and reconstruction.”

Although women have not had the vote in the past, they have not been blind to what had been going on. And particularly they have been keen to note the progress of profiteering. While their brothers, husbands and sons have been away fighting, they have had to fend for themselves, and they know better than men how prices have soared, and how hard it has been to make ends meet. And they will want to have a reckoning with somebody. And how else will that somebody be but the Government, which having permitted the profiteering, now comes forward and asks to be returned to power again so that it can reconstruct

15 Campaign pamphlet. Papers of Wright Robinson. Manchester Archives, M/284/1.
The Khaki Election was, unsurprisingly, a resounding victory for the wartime coalition, which won 520 out of 707 seats. The election was also a clear win for the “Man Who Won the War,” as the Asquith Liberals suffered ignominious defeat. The results of the Khaki election concealed as much as they revealed about the future of national politics. Labour faced a number of humiliating defeats in which senior leaders lost their seats. The party, however, did surprisingly well, winning 22 percent of the popular vote and consolidating its role as an opposition party.\textsuperscript{17} For the Coalition Liberals, it was to be the last of their great electoral triumphs. In places like Manchester, the Liberals began to lose their place as one of the dominant parties in British politics.

In Manchester, the election mirrored some of the broader trends in postwar British politics. The precipitous decline of the Liberals cleared the battlefield for a contest between Labour and the Conservatives. Labour’s “steady but unspectacular rise” in Manchester survived the Coalition juggernaut in 1918.\textsuperscript{18} J.R. Clynes was returned unopposed in Miles Platting, while Ben Tillett easily survived a Liberal challenge in the vital North Salford division, and John Hodge won a three-way contest in Gorton with an independent candidate and a Socialist. In the other ten divisions, Coalition candidates won fairly resounding victories.\textsuperscript{19} The Alternative Service Guild, a conscientious objector (CO) group that had been active in the city, proclaimed somewhat wishfully that “in a number of cases, candidates who were entirely CO in their sympathy secured second places in three-cornered contests with war men in third places.”\textsuperscript{20} Still, it was hard to conceal the apparent scale of the coalition’s parliamentary victory.

The 1918 parliamentary elections set the tone for much of what was to come in Mancunian and British politics. While Labour did better than expected, it was by no means clear at the time that they could continue to function as a meaningful opposition party. It was all too easy to believe that the wartime government had enough inertia to carry itself over the considerable fissures that developed between the partners on economic and social issues. Why had Labour come through intact? One convincing explanation for this changing constellation of local and national politics is that state intervention during the war made voters more aware of labor issues and, consequently, more willing to look to the Labour Party for redress of issues and, consequently, more willing to look to the Labour Party for redress of

\textsuperscript{17} Havighurst, 149.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Handbook of the City of Manchester}. 1918, 553–5.
grievances once the war was over. Labour’s message of social equality found literally tens of thousands of listeners as troops began to make their way back to Manchester in the months after the election.

“The Army Takes Some Getting Away From:” The Return of the Troops

The British state and civil society faced an enormous challenge in the physical demobilization of the armed forces. At the end of 1918, Britain had an army of about 3.84 million, a Navy of about 407,000, and a 290,000 man Air Force. Like some of their continental allies (and enemies), these troops were distributed all over the globe. The Manchester Regiment, with whom many, though by no means all, locals served, had battalions in England, France, Italy, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. The Regiment, which swelled to 53 battalions, suffered about 45,000 total casualties, of whom 14,122 had been killed, 1,121 of them in the hard-hit 2nd Battalion.

The homecoming of hundreds of thousands of British troops was a tremendous enterprise, not just for the already overtaxed supply system, but for the towns and cities that benefited (and sometimes suffered) from four years of close proximity to the soldiers, their wages, and the massive infrastructure needed to keep armies in the field. France was also celebrating a victory in those months, and despite the divisions which would later emerge between the two governments over war aims, there seems to have been a great deal of good feeling between French communities and British soldiers at the end of the war. “Big camps have sprung up in our vicinity and the British base has become, so to speak, a part of the Havre community; our streets are enlivered [sic] by your presence, and when you leave we shall miss you as we should old friends,” wrote M. Morand, Le Havre’s mayor, to the commander of the 2nd Battalion of the Manchesters in 1919. Morand stressed the bonds forged over the years of wartime:

Now, after Germany’s military collapse, when she is trying to rise from her knees, we must remain close Allies, standing shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand. Nothing will shake our union and we shall always hold to President Poincare’s address to King George V, summing up on these words: “Together we have

---

suffered, together, we have fought and we have vanquished; we are united forever.”

The system through which troops returned from active service emerged from the compromises between the military and the Ministry of Reconstruction. At least initially, the planning of military demobilization fell to Edwin Montague’s Committee on the Demobilisation of the Army within the Ministry. Montague and his superiors operated under the assumption that the most likely result of overly hasty demobilization would be widespread and catastrophic unemployment. As one of Ministry’s widely-distributed pamphlets described the task, Montague’s mandate was “Demobilisation and Restoration: how to get men back as quickly as possible from their war-stations in the Army or in industry to their old niches in civil life, and how to release employers, workmen, and others from controls and restrictions imposed upon them for the duration of the war.” The Ministry saw its mission as the restoration of “the social situation as it existed at the beginning of the war.” Practically, this act of putting the genie back in the bottle was impossible, and it is surprising that the bureaucrats charged with planning and implementing demobilization on the ground took as long as they did to realize this.

Much like the plans first developed in Berlin, the initial scheme for the physical demobilization of the armed forces called for a tiered draw-down of forces driven by the needs of the transition economy. Briefly, the first to be released were “demobilisers,” who performed tasks in civilian life that would speed the demobilization of others, followed by “pivotal men” who could provide employment for others. After these groups came “slip men,” who could provide proof that civilian employment awaited them. This category, so-called because of the coveted slips of paper that sped their process, caused more resentment than any other aspect of the physical demobilization plan.

Second Lieutenant Frank Broady of the 3rd Battalion of the Manchester Regiment was an example of this second group. Broady was still recovering from wounds received in late October when he got a letter from the Ministry of Labour, indicating that his old employers in the Manchester City Rates Department had offered him his old job back at “prewar situation.” By the end of December, Lt. Broady was well on the way home to the job he would hold until his retirement.

Gunner Herbert Williams was also fortunate enough to be considered indispensable by his former employers, the lead works of Baxendale and Co.


After Baxendale contacted the Employment Exchange in Manchester, Gunner Williams received the necessary forms for an expedited demobilization. He returned to his career as a salesman, retiring in 1947. These two cases illustrated above all the continued ad hoc nature of war and postwar planning. The situation was much the same as it had been in wartime, with multiple bureaucracies working toward the same ends and significant potential for conflict between national and local institutions. For those who had employers at home who were interested in tracking them down, the process worked fairly well. For those who did not, things were considerably more difficult.

For the rest of the troops, demobilization was a frustrating and drawn-out process. The key to speeding demobilization was the ability to secure employment at home, favoring those who had not served long and still had contact with their previous employers. For those who could not, demobilization was often a baffling experience of moving from camp to camp. Priority for demobilization was based on a complicated point system related to length of service. This created a curious situation in which both long-serving soldiers and those who entered service late in the conflict were disadvantaged in different ways. Those who had been in uniform for longer periods felt, not without justification, that they were less likely to have access to their old jobs. Those who entered service late in the war and who were not “slip men” found themselves in a frustrating period of delay while they accumulated priority. As a result, they feared that their jobs would already be filled when they finally made good their exit from the ranks.

One old soldier named Barker, who enlisted in 1916 at the age of 40 and served with the 23rd Manchesters, spent much of 1918 and 1919 trying to avoid going back to France before he was demobilized. Following a hospital stay in Ripon, he was bounced from base to base, spending time in, respectively, Grimsby, Cleethorpes, Waltham (where he did “light jobs, amusing myself in the canteens, joining the “jugs” playing Crown and Anchor, watching and sometimes playing pontoon in tents, with the lads, singing army songs with gusto, and in fact trying my best to be a social animal”) before being sent to Cromer, Woolwich, and finally Aldershot where he was demobilized.

Archibald “Arch” English, a Londoner who spent the last year of the war recovering from wounds at a hospital in Stockport, became more frustrated as the Fall and early Winter wore on. “Every morning we wait for the mail to come, and when it does, the inevitable disappointment,” he wrote to his family in January, “There will be trouble with the fellows if something isn’t done soon.” A few days later, shortly before his ticket arrived, he added “Hoping to have been

---

28 Files related to Herbert Williams. Manchester Archives M444/1/2/1–15.
30 G. Barker, Agony’s Anguish (Manchester: Alf Eva, 1931), Unpaginated.
away and settled long before this – but the Army takes some getting away from, I can tell you!”

Soldiers and sailors on their way home received pamphlets from the Ministry of Reconstruction explaining their options. The news was not good. Promising a time of “considerable difficulty,” the Ministry suggested that the experience of return would likely include some period of unemployment. Soldiers and sailors who chose to remain in the forces could earn bonuses of up to £50. The rest received month-long furloughs and unemployment insurance for up to 12 weeks during the year following their formal demobilization. For men, the base unemployment donation was 24s., while for women it was only 20s. Otherwise, the demobilized were urged to contact their local employment exchanges as quickly as possible and hope for the best. For millions of Britons, return from wartime service meant an uncertain future.

During the first few months of 1919, the demobilized soldier was ubiquitous, not only on the streets and in the railroad stations, but as a popular culture icon. Just as advertisers had taken advantage of wartime shortages and the imagined heroism of the men at the front, they now gladly appropriated images of anxious homecomings and the orderly transition back to civilian life. “Jack’s coming home tonight,” one woman remarked to another on a crowded tram in one advertisement. “Let’s give him a warm welcome with Rowntree’s Elect Cocoa.” Postwar optimism, still riding a tentative wave in February, inspired fond hopes that shortages were coming to an end and that the return of the soldiers meant that the restraints on consumer society would soon be lifted. Less tangibly, the return of the troops seemed to offer some measure of normalcy to a population that had lived through four anxious years of war. The return of the soldier appeared to be a literal manifestation of the anticipated demobilization of society.

Lewis’s Limited Men’s Outfitters, one of the most celebrated old Manchester merchants, promised to facilitate “The Change from Clothes O’War to the Clothes O’Peace.” A demobilized man who “left Heaton Park with his sand-bag at 9.30. Arrived home at 10.30 p.m. A joyous homecoming – some supper – then to bed at midnight” might in fifteen minutes buy a new suit at Lewis’s the next day. “The man afterwards changed completely … called upon his employer the same morning, and reported for duty. He was a pivotal man, urgently needed, and he had finished with khaki.” These “pivotal men,” like Herbert Williams and Frank Broady, were to be the vanguard of postwar society. The fact that they were unabashedly men, returning to a country and city in which women had managed

31 Undated letters in the file of Arch English, IWMA 9/10/1.
33 Ibid., 6.
34 Advertisements in MEN. February 25, 1919, February 12, 1919, and February 7, 1919.
just fine, and sometimes remarkably well, in their absence was just one of the conflicts that emerged from these homecomings.

The act of demobilization and the resulting homecomings inspired intense optimism and even a burgeoning nostalgia for the very recent past. Soldiers were reminded of the debt that society owed them and of the sacrifices that they made during wartime. While it is very easy to view such messages with cynicism in hindsight, there was clearly a palpable sense of communal feeling attached to the post-victory demobilization. Even formal hierarchical relationships like those between officers and enlisted men acquired at least a patina of common sacrifice and struggle as the troops began to come home. Some of this rhetoric even came close to sounding politically radical. As they passed through the depots on their way home, the men of the 6th Manchesters received letters from their commander, Colonel Robertson, wishing them “every prosperity and happiness. You have helped to win a Great War. The fruits of Victory are yours. See to it that no one takes them from you.”

Major General A. Solly-Flood echoed this strikingly communitarian sentiment in a letter to his troops from the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division, to which part of the Manchester Regiment belonged. He encouraged his men to begin a veterans’ group to “keep alive old memories and old friendships, and lend a hand to those amongst us who may be in need, in the same spirit of mutual helpfulness which has inspired us in the past.” By December 1918, the 42nd moved from Hautmont, where they ended the war, to Charleroi, where they spent Christmas. Evidently, some officers and men were discharged early, while the remainder of the division stayed in France until late March. The Manchester battalions finally reached home on March 31. Upon arrival, they paraded to the regimental depot on Burlington Street “amidst a tremendous and enthusiastic concourse of people.”

This feeling of camaraderie and the resulting goodwill among soldiers and the population at large was by no means universal, and when it ceased to soothe over problems, the results could be spectacular. Hints of trouble began in Manchester less than a month after the Armistice. Ellis Smith remembered later that his “return home coincided with the beginning of bitter industrial strife which lasted for many years.” The number of soldiers arriving in the transit camps in England were painfully few, and even fewer were able to secure quick demobilization and a passage home. By early December, the Manchester Evening News suggested that

38 “Reminisces.” Compiled from United Patternworkers’ Association Newsletters. Bound volume, possibly a retirement gift. Manchester Archives.
the machinery of demobilization had “broken down.”\textsuperscript{39} Not only were the soldiers unhappy with the slow pace of demobilization, but employers and loved ones expressed strong misgivings about the pace of events.

If the employers and relatives of soldiers yield to their rising impatience and allow their personal interests to override the national interests, which the army still has to safeguard, they are liable to do their country a grave injury … The patriotism which has buoyed up the “Home Front” for four years must not dissolve in percipient irritation. It must hold out yet awhile and trust a little further to the discretion of the authorities.\textsuperscript{40}

The Soldiers’ Strikes of 1919 are deeply contested ground in British historiography. For some radical historians, they marked a turning point that did not turn toward revolution and a moment in which the lack of an organized Left opposition in Britain prevented any real attempt at change from organizing.\textsuperscript{41} Even more cautious historians have imbued the strikes with significance far exceeding what the weight of evidence will bear. Clearly, there was significant sympathy for the Russian revolutionaries in Britain and Manchester, but the strikes in early 1919 were the product of disquiet over demobilization conditions.\textsuperscript{42} Protesters only turned to the Russian example later, largely after they had returned home.

Protests began in Folkestone, among troops being sent back to France at the end of a leave, on January 4, 1919. They spread quickly in England and in France and briefly looked like they might paralyze the armed forces. Ironically, the protests were spurred in part by conservative newspapers like the \textit{Daily Mail} and \textit{Daily Express}, which competed with each other for distribution among the troops and had every reason to highlight the problems with the demobilization of the forces.\textsuperscript{43}

It was difficult to keep news of unrest among the troops concealed from those on the home front, though the censors helped matters. The news of trouble at the Folkestone camp and in France was greeted with apprehension at home, though lack of details made it difficult for the press to fully explicate the protester’s demands. “Demobilisation is a huge business in which the human element is prominent,”

\textsuperscript{39} “Demoralised Demobilisation,” \textit{MEN}, December 10, 1918.
\textsuperscript{40} “Demobilisation – Appeal to Employers and Relatives,” \textit{MEN}, December 11, 1918.
\textsuperscript{41} See, for instance Chanie Rosenberg, \textit{1919: Britain on the Brink of a Revolution} (London: Bookmarks, 1987)
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 31.
concluded a *Manchester Evening News* editorial on January 9, “and unless it is managed with discretion and with kindliness no end of trouble is in store.”

These troubles reached Manchester just a few days later. As the transit camps at Heaton Park and Altrincham swelled, and facing rumors of unrest, military authorities reacted clumsily, canceling leave for soldiers, some of whom were probably just miles from home. On January 9, 500 soldiers went on strike at Heaton Park, demanding better food and reinstatement of leave. A few days later, 250 soldiers at Altrincham staged a demonstration demanding reduced duty hours and more rapid return to civilian life. Significantly, the Heaton Park demonstrators won a number of concessions. The Altricham strikers, whose demands were beyond the remit of camp authorities, had no such luck, and the demonstration broke up after a few hours in the chilly January air.

The Soldiers’ Strikes, not only in Manchester but all over Britain, served to highlight the growing dissatisfaction of troops and probably helped to accelerate the process of physical demobilization, if only by convincing military authorities that any problems that might be engendered by releasing troops too quickly paled in comparison to the potential for trouble if the troops were too long delayed. As they did during the war, authorities proved willing to work with dissenters who stayed within the bounds of reciprocity. While the Soldiers’ Strikes point to the limits of demobilization, they also suggest that the flexible wartime relationship that sustained mobilization survived the end of the war. Under the direction of Winston Churchill, demobilization sped up considerably in the wake of the strikes. In just over two months, nearly 80 percent of enlisted men eligible for demobilization were released and sent home. The strikers achieved many of their immediate goals.

The home front seems to have been generally well informed about the demobilization protests, particularly when they occurred in England. Still, there was considerable anxiety as to the protestors’ goals and ideological orientation. On February 9, the Manchester art historian and teacher John E. Pythian wrote home to his wife from a demobilization camp near Lille, where he was giving lectures on the art of Venice to about 250 (presumably restless) British officers. “It looks now as if I should be home sooner than I suspected. The Fifth Army is being demobilised so quickly that there is not very much to be done now…. I hear plenty of interesting things here, to be talked about when I get home. There are many things, of course, that we do not hear of in England.”

When the soldiers and sailors did reach home again, they faced a new set of challenges. One of the most pressing was securing employment at a decent wage. The mechanisms for providing jobs for the demobilized, like so much of British postwar planning, was an *ad hoc* affair, leaving many veterans embittered.

45 Rothstein uses the figure of 600. Rothstein, 61.
46 deGroot, 257.
47 Letter from J.E. to Ada Pythian. Manchester Archives M270/10.
The same tensions that troubled the waters of the demobilization camps now moved into the growing lines at Manchester’s employment exchanges.

**The Economy: Demobilizing and Building Again**

The principal difficulties in reconstructing the economy were rebalancing consumer needs and avoiding flooding the employment market with demobilized troops and those whose war work was at an end. Many of the institutions established to manage the war economy continued to work for years after the end of hostilities to try to keep this balance. In the Manchester area, where so much of the economy was export-driven and required recovery elsewhere as well, the task seemed positively Sysiphean. Added to this was the general attitude among national authorities that the recovery should be based on the restoration of private enterprise.\(^48\) The result was, almost inevitably, a situation in which those most directly affected by demobilization planning came to believe that their needs were not being looked after with appropriate sensitivity and that their sacrifice would be met with indifference.

This challenge was recognized by none other than Field Marshal Douglas Haig, who came to Manchester in March to accept the freedom of the city. Haig, whose postwar career was dedicated to securing the rights of veterans, reminded the crowd of the debts owed to Britain’s servicemen:

> none of us [can] afford to forget, and I last of all, the obligations that the great war has left in the present and for the future. It must be long years before these obligations are discharged. So long as there remains in our midst a single man blinded, crippled, or disabled in that great struggle for our national freedom, our obligation to help and care for him will remain. As yet we have scarcely shouldered our burden; a burden that to my mind should be regarded as almost, if not absolutely, as a religious duty. (Cheers) … the whole problem of the ex-service officer and man, whether fit or disabled, has not yet been completely solved, and will not be solved so long as a single case of hardship remains.\(^49\)


\(^{49}\) *Proceedings of the Manchester City Council*, 1919, 244.
The local Area Armaments Output Committee, whose work during the war had helped guide industrial efforts in the Northwest, was typical of this conflict of means and expectations. Nearly a year after the end of the war, the Committee met in Birmingham, where they set priorities for what they called “Reconstruction.” Sensibly, they committed to taking steps to ramp up coal production and generally to divert raw materials back into the peacetime economy as expeditiously as possible. Most important, they judged, was the issue of employment. “The first essential in Reconstruction is that the people of the country should be maintained in employment, and no rigid financial question should be allowed to stand in the way of this.”

Despite promises and plans to the contrary, the economic demobilization that followed the end of hostilities proved to be contentious, and the cessation of war revealed some difficult truths for industry in Greater Manchester. Contracts for war work, which terminated at the cessation of hostilities, began to be cut off almost immediately. By January, total value of cancelled contracts in the Manchester area was greater than any other regional center and nearly twice the value of those canceled in the Southeast Midlands, the second hardest hit region.

The cotton industry was particularly hard hit and would continue to decline from its prewar global position of importance as other centers of cotton production emerged. Having been sustained by promises that work would pick up again once exports picked up in the wake of the war, cotton operators found themselves out of work and factories idle just as the first wave of returning soldiers arrived. In Burnley, reports indicated that more than 20 plants had ceased production completely, and a third of ex-soldiers were unable to find work “although when they joined the Army they were promised reinstatement to their former positions.” The problem was that there simply was not enough work to go around. “Burnley’s manufactures mostly go overseas, and until the export trade is set going again Burnley has no hope of an industrial recovery. The war work ended with the Armistice.”

The end of war work affected industries haltingly, unevenly, and in ways that provoked outrage among workers. On December 7, munitions workers thought to have been from the Belsize Motor Works organized a series of small protests in factories across the city against decontrol. The protests never grew to the level that organizers had hoped and there were evidently a number of scuffles with uniformed soldiers at some of the affected plants. While protestors complained that police had failed to protect them from assaults by soldiers, the Ministry of Munitions

---

50 Report of the Special Meeting of the No. 4 Area Executive Committee.” November 4, 1919. Manchester Archives MSf 623.4 M1.
51 Ibid.
took the occasion to announce that, in light of the end of the war, Christmas and New Year would once again be holidays for munitions workers.\textsuperscript{54}

The government realized the full extent of the economic crisis in the region in the first months of 1919. While the local economy was diverse, much of its prewar growth rested on the strength of the textile industry and the need for complementary manufacturing. When war work ended, textiles were not ready to pick up the considerable slack. The Area Armaments Committee reported in March that the local textile manufacturers had about a month of war work remaining and an “enormous stock” of goods in storage for which there were no customers, no shipping capacity, and often, no labor. This affected other area industries, including bleachers, dyers, chemical manufacturers, machinists, and printers.\textsuperscript{55} Heavy industries were equally affected by the end of war work. Machinists, fabricators, and engine makers now petitioned the Committee for any sort of available work to replace lost contracts. A.V. Roe tried to convert from metal working to manufacturing furniture, but had little initial success. Armstrong, Whitworth and Co. in Openshaw, which had done well during the war manufacturing armor plate and gun mountings, now found itself with poor prospects in peacetime, “this plant being in the main too heavy for private orders.”\textsuperscript{56}

With this transition came dramatic and deep job cuts that transformed the local employment landscape. When the war ended, 22,701 men and 17,721 women worked in the National Filling Factories in the Manchester Area. Within a few weeks about 12 percent of the men and 71 percent of the women lost their jobs. The Aintree Number Two Plant went from 11,600 workers to 500 before its conversion into an ordnance depot in March. The National Aircraft Factory shed more than 50 percent of its workers, male and female, by January 10.\textsuperscript{57} Other firms survived by reverting to prewar production or converting their plants entirely. Bamford and Co. of Stockport shifted from producing 18lb. shells to building marine propellers for the Admiralty. The Trafford Park Tractor Assembly had an easier task, modifying its military tractor engines for civilian use. A far more inventive solution came from the tinsmiths of Thomas Fildes in Ancoats. They began coppering and adding three legs to their canister fuses and marketing them as ornaments. “Similar action might be taken with advantage by other firms when possible,” suggested the Munitions Council.\textsuperscript{58}

Decontrol had a variety of interesting legal and administrative consequences. Restriction on the movement of labor posed a challenge, particularly for skilled workers whose labor in the postwar economy was particularly valuable.

\textsuperscript{55} “No. 2 Area Report.” March, 1919. NA NUM 4/6701.
\textsuperscript{56} “Area No. 2 List of Large Firms Requiring Work.” April 16, 1919. NA NUM 4/6701.
Harry Bingham sued the packing plant where he had been an employee for 29 years (beginning at age 13 and working alongside his father) after receiving a better offer from a competitor. In the end, the local Munitions Tribunal found that there was no compelling reason to force Bingham to remain, and he was given his leaving certificate. On the other hand, wartime regulations could actually help workers avoid or mitigate the effects of layoffs. In 1919 and 1920, the bulk of the Munition Tribunal’s work seems to have been hearing cases of workers who claimed job protection under the Munitions Control Act. The ship painter Hiram Mathers sued a Salford firm in January, claiming that he specialized in camouflage painting and therefore should be considered a munitions worker and could not be laid off without notice or payment. While his employers argued that Mathers’ service was actually repair work, the Tribunal found for Mathers and he received £5 in compensation.59

While the cotton industry had an easier time re-tooling for peacetime production, its economic and labor situations were no less perilous. Many of the cotton operatives that were working walked off the job for several days in June of 1919 in what turned out to be one of the largest labor actions of the year. More than 450,000 put down tools for more than a week.60 Some of the reactions to the cotton strike reflected the divisive impact of the war as the lines between the employed, however marginal their employment, and the unemployed became clearer. “It is all very well for those who during the war received big wages and bonuses to now agitate for still more money with shorter hours,” wrote “Stop It” in the Manchester Evening News, “but what about those who have done their bit and come back to no work and no prospects … to help them combat the ever-rising prices, followed now by rents, rates, etc.?”61

By February, the managers of the Gilbert Gilkes and Co. textile mills in Burnley were at their wits’ end. The widely-foreseen resumption of cotton goods exports seemed no closer to fruition, and even if it had their labor situation was getting worse instead of better. The firm’s “pivotal men” had not been released from the army, while hundreds of former employees who had not been so designated were making their way back to Burnley following demobilization. Gilkes had neither demand nor labor, and the result was an idle plant and jobless workers.62 A Munitions Council report on unemployment in April 1918 presented the grimmest possible portrait of the stinging impact of the end of war in the Northwest. The report ranked communities by category. If prospects across the country were not good, they were disastrous in the Northwest. Among those communities receiving

59 Munitions Tribunal Appeals for Manchester District in NA LAB 2/552/MT125/6.
61 Letter in MEN. June 11, 1919.
the worst possible rating were Manchester, Bolton, Burnley, Preston, Rochdale, Stockport, Bury, Ashton-under-Lyme, Stalybridge, and St. Helens.  

Much of the impetus for retraining and placing veterans came from the private sector. The YMCA set up a Discharged Soldiers’ Employment Bureau in early 1918. The YMCA Bureau took a special interest in placing disabled veterans, whose placements and training were obviously fraught with considerable difficulty. In their first three months, they received 839 disabled petitioners, of whom 114 were more than 50 percent disabled. Interestingly, the largest group of those claiming more than a 50 percent disability were “head and nerves” cases, followed by those missing arms and legs. The YMCA was able to place about 65 percent of those who registered with them, but 30 percent of those placed left within a brief period, giving them a fairly modest success rate of 45 percent.  

The Employment Exchanges attempted to help bridge these gaps by encouraging employers to reserve at least 5 percent of employment slots for disabled veterans. Correspondence with the Exchange in Manchester indicates that at least in the early postwar period, these pledges were sometimes but not often met. The Co-operative Society, for instance, employed 9 disabled veterans out of 248 employees (50 of them female) at their distribution center in Ardwick, 18 out of 258 in other distribution centers in the city, and 2 out of 33 at the coal depot, where presumably the physical nature of the work made it difficult to find places for the disabled. The rhetoric of bureaucrats about finding employment for those physically damaged by the war did not square up with the reality, in which local officials could only cajole and plead with employers and lacked any effective oversight or regulatory capacity.  

Once the troops were home, there were a number of potential pitfalls to their successful resumption of their old jobs or training for new ones. It was difficult for men who had spent in some cases years in service, earning positions of command and living in disciplined, hierarchical systems to return to jobs in which they would be expected to be employees in the civilian world. A constable from Manchester alluded to this problem when he wrote to the Chief Constable from France, where he was serving with the Connaught Rangers. “Upon leaving the army with the hon. Rank of Lieutenant, or Captain, and having regard to my qualifications and service, what rank I would receive on rejoining and continuing to serve in that force?”

Returning troops sometimes found the attitudes of civilians supercilious and condescending, as appears to have been the case with a horticultural training

---

63 “State of Unemployment in Connection with the Placing of Contracts.” April 8, 1919. NA MUN 4/3414.
64 Letter from Winifred Giles, Manchester YMCA to A.B. Woodhouse. September 23, 1918. Manchester Archives. M138 / Box 68.
66 Letter from M. Byrne, 5th Battalion, Connaught Rangers, to Chief Constable, December 9, 1918. Watch Committee Minutes, Greater Manchester Police Archive. 78/35.
program in Carrington in which a group of disabled veterans were forbidden to smoke, gamble, or drink, and were required to be in “barracks” at 10:00 p.m. A group of Labour councilors brought this to the attention of the City Council in January, protesting “the perpetuation of Army conditions, and objected to this moral overseeship where grown men who had served their country were concerned.”

For many returning veterans, finding employment of any sort proved difficult. Unemployment in Manchester increased dramatically through the first half of 1919, peaking at more than 59,000 in May. One ex-soldier, under the pen name “1914 Contemptible,” wrote to the *Manchester Evening News* to complain that he had been trying to find a job since returning in March, and asked for “more consideration by employers for the men who saved England.” Attempts by veterans to organize into cohesive groups to protest against unemployment, while clearly beginning, were not particularly well-developed in mid-1919, and much of the impetus for protest seems to have come from informal gatherings of ex-servicemen.

The inherent conservatism of the veteran’s movements sometimes dovetailed with the sometimes crushing weight of bureaucracy to blunt all but the most symbolic and ultimately futile acts of protest. Veterans’ groups believed that they were entitled to rewards for their service. Their actions were mitigated by an expectation that all concerned naturally agreed with their position and that any behavior or rhetoric that smacked of extremism would cost them the credibility that they assumed as veterans. Typical of these tendencies was a disastrous attempt to march on London in the Fall of 1919.

In late August, a group of ex-servicemen, evidently without any formal organization, began to organize a march from Manchester to London to demand higher unemployment compensation. At one point, it appeared that there would be around 6,000 marchers, a number that surely would have clogged up the roads of the north of England and attracted a great deal of attention. While it would certainly have been difficult to actually get all 6,000 together for a march, the Ministry of Labour managed in one fell swoop to eviscerate what enthusiasm did exist by warning prospective marchers that they would almost surely miss their required weekly registration that allowed them to claim unemployment, and, therefore, would forfeit their benefits.

Whether this announcement was calculated or simply informative is unclear, but what is clear is that initial enthusiasm all but expired at this point. On September 15, when the march began in Albert Square, organizers estimated that they would number 500. A total of 28 men showed up, though the crowd of several hundred fellow veterans was on hand to cheer them on. The marcher’s statement, presented

---


69 Letter in *MEN*, May 10, 1919.

to the Lord Mayor, reflected many of the problems and attitudes of the first year of peace:

We, the unemployed Ex-Service Men of Manchester, having patiently waited for the government to move in the matter or providing work for men whose sacrifices have saved the country, and seeing the apathy of the Government have decided to bring our case before the public and the Government.... We need work, not doles, the right to live in the land we have saved.  

The marchers reached London fifteen days later, where they met with officials from the Ministry of Labour. The meetings were inconclusive and, in a final indignity, the marchers, who had little desire to walk back to Manchester, asked the Ministry for financial assistance to get home. The march, and its failure, is symptomatic of the levels of resentment and the restrictions on their effective airing.

Importantly, the rhetoric of war service both implicitly and explicitly excluded women, who just months before had been considered part of the national community of reconstruction. The changing economy, legal restrictions on women like the Pre-War Practices Act of 1919 and the growing stigma attached to working women accused of taking jobs from returning men combined to drive about 750,000 women out of the workplace in 1919. A letter in the Manchester Evening News just after the Armistice mocked “pampered” munitions workers, male and female, who failed to realize that “the golden days would suddenly end, and that there would be a big change for them when they were no longer required.”

The issue of unemployment was a very public and divisive one in the immediate postwar period. The new sense of assertiveness among those who had come through the war emerges clearly even from otherwise formulaic and dry reports of council and committee meetings. Typical was a Manchester Guardian report of a Manchester Council meeting that apparently was all but broken up by an angry delegation of unemployed tacitly backed by the Labour members of the council who “savoured an excess of zeal, but they were perhaps the outcome of unfamiliarity with the ordinary forms of procedure.” The Mayor reported on a meeting with another group of unemployed men in language that was in itself extraordinarily bloodless, but that also conveyed the atmosphere of mutual threats and recriminations:

[the unemployed delegation] had made a statement that they would not be responsible for anything that might happen if they remained hungry. He told them that such threats were foolish (hear, hear) and that they were not likely to assist him as Lord Mayor in getting adequate measures of relief. All his

71 “Work, Not Doles,” The Times, September 15, 1919.
73 DeGroot, 262–3.
74 Letter in MEN, December 6, 1918.
sympathies were with those men in their difficult circumstances, and what he told them was for their own good, because he knew that if they carried out their threats all the injured would be on one side.\textsuperscript{75}

The police department was a site in which some of these conflicts could be most acute. There were strong incentives to seek employment elsewhere. As the Committee on the Police Service (better known as the Desborough Commission) found in a 1919 survey, married urban constables in England earned £3 8s 3d a month, versus average expenses of £3 13s.\textsuperscript{76} One alternative which promised to replicate the experiences of wartime while taking advantage of training and experience as constables was in increasingly dangerous Ireland. One recruiting poster for the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) probably spent some time on a police station wall. Clearly designed to induce men who longed for more excitement than rousting drunks in Piccadilly, the RIC promised “A Man’s Job. Do you want it? An open-air Life in the RIC. ESCORTS and PATROLS. A life not without difficulty and danger, but a FULL-SIZED MAN’S JOB!” Furthermore, as someone noted in pencil, the normal height requirement of 5’ 7” was lowered to 5’ 6” for veterans.\textsuperscript{77}

Manchester’s constabulary was also involved in one of the most spectacular episodes of labor unrest in postwar Britain, the Metropolitan Police Strike of 1918. While the strike, which seemed to threaten the very bedrock of the social order in London, did not spread to Manchester, it arguably started there. Scotland Yard was convinced that union organizers from London were recruiting members in Manchester. After a Mancunian constable provided them with union correspondence supplied by constable Tommy Thiel, the would-be organizer was dismissed from the Metropolitan Police. This action directly precipitated the strike, which brought London to a virtual halt for several days.\textsuperscript{78} The next year, fears of a national police strike nearly came to pass, particularly in Liverpool and the Merseyside area, where more than half the force briefly walked off the job.

The constabulary, not just in Manchester but across Britain, found itself in an awkward position in terms of organizing. Most constables saw themselves as being working class, and in their role as observers of labor activity, they seem to have held deeply ambivalent feelings toward the principle of organization. Their employers seem to have been surprised by the sudden postwar desire of police to organize.

\textsuperscript{75} Clipping from the \textit{Manchester Guardian} “Manchester Council: Labour Presses its Case,” December 4, 1919. Papers of Lord and Lady Simon. Manchester Archives M/14/4/1.


\textsuperscript{77} RIC recruitment poster. General Orders 1921/62. Greater Manchester Police Archive.

\textsuperscript{78} Eric Hewitt, \textit{A History of Policing in Manchester} (Didsbury: E.J. Morton, 1979), 22.
The City Council discussed the issue at the height of the national fear of a police strike. The Council’s reaction was marked by hesitation and decidedly mixed signals. In May, the Council rejected the notion of a police union, sending letters to all precincts indicating that any striking constables would be dismissed without pension, accompanied by copies of the Common’s debates on the subject. Labor agitation among the police force, the report asserted, was “partly due to outside influences and partly due to genuine grievances…. While the police are not a military force they are not an industrial body, and cannot be organised along industrial lines.” While it is unclear how politicized the striking police forces really were, it is obvious that the government recognized at the time that reforms were needed. The Desborough Commission, while late, was a significant step in that direction.

1919 was also the occasion of the anniversary of one of the pivotal moments in the history of the English labor movement. A hundred years before, yeoman cavalry from nearby Cheshire broke up a demonstration at Peter’s Fields, killing at least 11 among the crowd that had assembled to hear reform speakers. The incident earned the sobriquet “Peterloo” and was a reference point for English labor activists.

For the Left, particularly the ILP, the anniversary was a portentous symbol and an opportunity to rally the faithful. There were a number of marches in the city as the August 16 anniversary approached. The largest of these, at Free Trade Hall, featured Philip Snowden, while another crowd marched down Oxford Street from Albert Square to Platt Fields. Mrs. Annot Robinson, who rose to prominence in the food and conscientious objection demonstrations of the previous two years, addressed the crowd at Platt Fields, leading at least one observer to note how much politics had changed in the past few years. “The Centenary of Peterloo,” cried one headline, “And a Woman Now Addresses the Crowd!” Clearly, the violent suppression of the Peter’s Fields demonstration was an important symbol of the progress, or lack of it, in English industrial society.

The symbolic value of Peterloo was particularly potent given the comparability of the postwar situations. The organizers of 1919 stressed that those who demonstrated in 1819 faced a similar set of issues related to the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the postwar disillusionment of an earlier age. “To-day the working classes are again confronted with the same war-impoverished England,” proclaimed the Labour Leader, “All the conditions which followed Waterloo are

81 D. Read, Peterloo: The Massacre and Its Background (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958). In 1819, Peter’s Fields were at the edge of the city. By 1919 they were at the heart Manchester, just a few hundred yards from Town Hall.
82 Paper unknown. Clipping from collection of Mr. and Mrs. B. Caldicott. Manchester Archives, MISC/718/67.
again present – with one striking difference. The people who marched to Peterloo were weaponless in every way. We are not.” While the weapon referred to here was the power of the vote, this language was intentionally menacing and the possibility of violent reaction quite real. The appeal of the Peterloo celebrants was based on this comparison across the century. Organizers made sure to explicitly evoke and hold up for comparison the material circumstances of the postwar England of 1819 and 1919.

For the men of Peterloo, as for us, the tawdry patriotism of the Great War, the gilt and glamour of military pomp had quickly faded. The glory of Waterloo was drowning miserably in 1819, in the watery porridge bowls of a poverty stricken people “the scanty meal of oatmeal and water their only meal in the twenty-four hours.”

The potential for serious labor and social unrest certainly existed in the months following the end of hostilities. The task of managing that potential fell in large part to local authorities, who with sometimes only vague direction from London tried to walk a line between an orderly transition to peacetime and the demands of an assertive and increasingly organized working population. In 1919, local bureaucracies and labor groups tried to find accommodation, and this search helped to shape the course of the city’s postwar history.

It is not surprising that political organizations with a clear message of social and economic justice attracted considerable attention and public interest during this period. Given the rising tide of grievances within this discourse of social justice, one can also see the potential for such appeals to take on progressively more radical overtones. One of the organizations that radicalized in the last years of the war and the early postwar period was the Co-Operative Society. The Society’s critiques of economic mobilization and its subsequent labor troubles won it considerable publicity during the war. It also participated the government’s consultative process on wartime social concerns. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Co-operatives played a role in wartime planning and consulted with the government on issues of housing reform. From its complex of offices, factories, and warehouses near the city center, the Co-Operative Society had quietly become an economic force in the city. In the wake of the war they hoped to turn their economic clout into political power. This transition brought them into conflict with local authorities and, in turn, provided valuable publicity for the movement.

In 1913, there were roughly 15,000 members of the society in Greater Manchester. During the war this number rose to 21,400. In the immediate postwar period, this number seems to have dipped a little before returning to roughly the

83 J.H. Hudson, “Peterloo: The Baptismal Hour of the Labour Movement. What We Owe to the Manchester Martyrs,” Labour Leader, August 14, 1919.

same point in 1920. Nationally, local Co-operative Societies began to seriously examine the possibility of nominating candidates for national and local office and Greater Manchester, where the movement was headquartered, was no exception. In Summer 1919, the local General Board reported a membership of 19,786, a number which they felt made them “a suitable [constituency] in which to nominate a Co-operative candidate.”

The Co-Operative Societies across Britain not only expanded during the war, they also became considerably more politically radical. Co-operators before the war were socially progressive, but the pinch of wartime shortages and the unwillingness of local food committees to work with Co-operators pushed the movement toward the margins of political life. Just before the war ended, the Manchester and Salford Society’s board discussed its political agenda for the postwar world. Their discussions looked very much like those of leftist parties like the ILP. These included widespread nationalization of industry, the capping of interest, “the abolition of slums,” and the establishment of a state bank to prevent profit-making during the rebuilding of British society “so that the works of reconstruction, and other matter for the well being of the people, may be carried out at a minimum of expense … by the use of public assets and credit.”

The high water mark of the Co-operative Movement in Manchester came in July 1919, when bureaucratic bungling handed them a propaganda victory and vastly increased their public presence in the city. At issue was a planned demonstration at Platt Fields, on the southern edge of the city. At issue was a planned demonstration at Platt Fields, on the southern edge of the city. For reasons that were unclear even to the participants, the City Council declined the group permission to hold a march on the Fields, but the Parks Committee had already given them permission to use the site. The Council was faced with the disagreeable task of overruling one of its own committees or incurring the wrath of some of its most powerful constituents.

Local businesses and trade organizations sent letters to the city protesting the planned demonstration. Letter writers opposed the Co-operative protest for several reasons. The first had to do with the supposed radicalism of the movement. Robert Walker, the General Secretary of the National Trader’s Defence League, reminded the Council that a local Co-operative leader had declared, “I make no secret of the fact that we are out to absolutely do away with the private individual in trade and production.” Another local business owner called the demonstration “propaganda work,” but his chief complaint was more commercial in nature. The Co-operative Movement was, after all, a thriving and vertically integrated business as well as

86 Gurney, 19.
87 List of resolutions for quarterly meeting. September 5, 1918. General Board of the Manchester and Salford Equitable Co-operative Society. Manchester Archives M473/1/1/23.
political reform program. “The parks,” complained James Scott, “are intended for the recreation and restful enjoyment of the public, not for the battle-ground of trade interests, and we do not see how similar advantages can reasonably be withheld from other business houses if granted to one section of the community.”88 This uncertainty as to whether the Co-operative Movement was primarily political or commercial had clearly not been satisfactorily resolved since the dual nature of the movement had left it open to criticism of its labor practices during the war.

Photographs of the demonstration itself showed an orderly crowd led by a brass band from the Co-operative Tobacco Warehouse as it moved down Oxford Road. The march and demonstration were a reflection of the growing relationship between the Co-operative Movement and the Labour Party, which ran in coalition during municipal elections in the early 1920s. Speakers appear to have divided between Co-operators, Labour Party representatives, and officials from the Trades and Labour Council. Speakers reiterated the Movement’s commitment to “a new social order founded upon equity and justice.” One Councillor proclaimed, evidently with tongue in cheek, that he was “delighted to take part in [this] manifestation of rebellion” and mocked the Government’s wartime claims that the workers were “the watchdogs of civilization, that they were the backbone of the Empire.”89 The demonstration proved highly embarrassing for the Council, who responded to complaints from local businesses by pledging to prosecute the Co-operative Society for illegal use of the park. Despite this, the Council took no action and compounded its initial folly.90

Within wider calls for a reform of postwar British society along more equitable lines, there was a growing and increasingly impatient radical strain suggested by the attitude of the Co-operative Movement. This was not the story of the development of an English revolutionary consciousness, but it did represent earnest attempts by political radicals to channel discontent over the conditions of demobilization into a coherent political program. For local authorities, any hint of the melding of local labor grievances with a formal revolutionary ideology was a serious threat. Wartime fears of social upheaval could now be twinned with anxieties about revolution from the East, and the result was a continuation of the politicization of social and economic protest that marked the war years.

**Radicals, Bolsheviks, and Workers**

Two months after the Armistice, as the worst of the postwar layoffs were in full swing, the Munitions Council became convinced that the ranks of labor had been infiltrated by Communists. There was “considerable trouble” among the workers at Grossley’s Motors and in the aircraft factories at Gorse Mill and Shaw.

---

90 Gurney, 20.
Despite the fact that the workers at these plants faced the near certainty of deep job cuts, the council saw the hidden hands of Bolshevism behind the disturbances. One Grossley’s worker, “an Italian, said to have resided in Berlin for many years” was arrested, fined, and recommended for deportation as an undesirable alien.91

One of the mainstays of the radical vision of a new Britain was a passionate program of worker education that was intended to channel the discontent of the postwar period into an ideologically coherent concept of revolutionary social change. Members of the multitudes of leftist parties and groups like the ILP and the Plebs League appeared in the streets of working class with the earnest desire to mobilize workers. Typically, this involved formal courses of instruction in History and Political Theory. An umbrella group called the Lancashire and Cheshire League for Independent Working Class Education offered one such program. The League hoped to use “Lancashire’s vast treasury of history” to explain “the struggles and sufferings of the toiling masses” and intended to help the workers “organize and to act as fit helpmates of the Clyde and other advanced areas.” Classes were to last a week each, with lectures in different halls each night on topics like “The Industrial Revolution and Political Reaction,” “The Manchester Man and the Liverpool Gentleman,” and “The Apostasy of the Trade Union Leaders.”92

The appeal of such courses to people who had been working, or not working, all day was limited, but the impetus for political radicalization was certainly present in the neighborhoods that these groups were canvassing. Robert Roberts remembers a sudden profusion of books and newspapers in homes in his Salford neighborhood, a trend he attributed to “the new awareness that men brought back from the war.”93 Notwithstanding any new interest in literacy, Salford was not especially welcoming to working class educators:

I recall a course which opened with fanfare and fifty-four students in a room over a bar at the local trades club, to study (under a man with a large red beard) the ‘first nine chapters of Das Kapital.’ After a month only three of us remained, and one was a girl whose father (standing guard at the bar below) insisted on her attendance.

Roberts concluded that in the end, workers “wanted not even the first nine chapters” of Marxist doctrine…. But the government believed otherwise.”94 As with the Co-operative Movement, people like Roberts do not appear to have been drawn to the radical Left as a programmatic solution to the problems of capitalism. Instead, it

94 Ibid., 178.
was because in the era of wartime restrictions on formal politics and the politically staid coalition period that succeeded it, the radicals were able to at least suggest solutions to the pragmatic grievances of postwar society. The most successful inducement for the radical Left were the reported reforms going on in Russia.

If most of the working-class citizens of Manchester had little interest in the epic sweep of Das Kapital or the formulations of well-meaning ILP organizers, there was nonetheless an intense interest in events in Eastern Europe. Discussions of Russia, and Britain’s role in the Russian Revolution, were an important part of political discourse in Manchester in the year after the war. The extraordinary concerns on the part of authorities about “Bolshevism” dovetailed with this public discourse and helped to radicalize the political conversation by casting those who discussed the revolution in positive terms as dangerous enemies of the state. At the same time, there was widespread support among working-class constituencies for some of the more attractive rhetorical features of revolutionary socialism, and radical discourses on equality and social justice found adherents among those who emerged from the war with hopes for a more just society to follow. As one historian of the relationship between the Labour Party and the Soviet Union wryly observed, “Sympathy gave birth to enthusiasm which acted as an antidote to doubt.”95

Since the collapse of the Czarist regime, which as we have seen was widely hailed in the city, particularly among Russian émigrés, the Revolutionary governments held a certain fascination for working-class organizers. While this affection was not held equally among the workers whom these organizers tried to rally, it is clear that references to events in Russia were a touchstone of political discourse in the wake of the war. In the face of postwar national and local governments that seemed slow and halting in their reactions to demands for economic and political opportunities, post-Czarist governments in Russia seemed to embody the same generalized principles being discussed in public forums in Manchester. Wright Robinson, certainly no dangerous political radical, helped to distribute a pamphlet asserting that Russians now enjoyed:

1. Immediate amnesty for political and religious offenses.
2. Freedom of speech, press, association, and labour organization, with freedom to strike.
3. Abolition of all social, religious, and national distinction.
4. Universal suffrage.96

Not coincidentally, these were the same broad demands of both the mainstream and radical Left in Britain at the time. The sympathy felt for the Russian revolutionary regime had far less to do with the particulars of the government in

96 Pamphlet “Russia’s Charter of Freedom.” Papers of Wright Robinson, Manchester Archives, M/284/7.
St. Petersburg and Moscow than it did with projecting the demands and desires of the postwar population of the industrial north of England onto the template of the new regime in Russia. The revolutionaries in St. Petersburg were safely ensconced far away and could be used as sympathetic figures for concerns much closer to home.

One of the most visible manifestations of this sympathy was the success of the “Hands Off Russia” movement, which later fought a series of industrial battles with the national government over intervention in Russia and support for the anti-Bolshevik White cause. Droylsden native and future Communist Party of Great Britain leader Harry Pollitt was one of the most visible organizers of the movement, and Manchester was one of the centers of its public activities. Pollitt had gone to work as a boilermaker at 12 and had been an ILP member since he was a teenager. A divisive figure in English labor history because of his later unapologetic Stalinism, he remembered later that he:

was not concerned as to whether or not the Russian Revolution had caused bloodshed, been violent and the rest of it. I had lived my life in Lancashire, had read and seen what kind-hearted British bosses had done to the Lancashire working classes. I knew about Peterloo.

Pollitt crossed the country speaking at public meetings like one in London in January that was attended by more than 350 people. Speakers condemned those who believed reports of any “real disorder in Russia.” Pollitt’s later claim that such disorder had not bothered him seems to belie his earlier denials. One speaker inveighed that it was a “red letter day in working class history, marking another step towards the smash up of the vile capitalist system.”

A few days later, Pollitt’s organization sponsored a similar meeting in Manchester’s Free Trade Hall, addressed by, among others, Annott Robinson of the ILP. The language at the Manchester meeting was similarly intemperate, though also mitigated by a curious sense of civility. The rally began, for instance, with a 30-minute organ recital before the crowd settled in to hear resolutions condemning British support for “old reactionary gangs” in Russia.

We are living in revolutionary times. The Russian Revolution holds out great hopes for the workers of all lands. No nation can escape its vibrations; no Government can stem the flowing tide of Socialism. Any moment the call may come to the stalwarts of that cause in this district to “spring to your places, Pioneers.” The Council’s aim is to effect the consolidation of Socialist and Industrialist forces.

---

98 Ibid., 55.
in the Manchester District as shall make for a united effort towards the greater aim – the establishment of a Co-operative Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{100}

Later in the year, just as concern about a possible cotton strike reached its peak, committee speaker Robert Williams told a crowd of cotton workers that “If the workers had the right to strike to help another union to secure better conditions, how much more would they be prepared to assist those who were striking for socialism and the world for the workers? Bolshevism [is] only socialism with the courage of its convictions.”\textsuperscript{101}

Concerns about Bolshevism could dovetail with simple public order concerns, and it was sometimes unclear whether Manchester’s police were more interested in pursuing the former or the latter. One Sergeant King, for instance, came across a Russian immigrant named Michael Cobven along St. Peter’s Street in early March. Cobven was haranguing a crowd “against monied men.” When King asked Cobven to move along, the Russian relocated to the square nearby and started again, drawing another crowd. When King again approached, Cobven called him a “money man servant of the Corporation,” which resulted in his arrest for disturbing the peace. Sergeant King later described Cobven as “a rabid Bolshevik [who] had been living in lodging houses up and down the country, preaching a mixture of Socialism and religion among the working men he came into contact with.” The “rabid Bolshevik,” when questioned, pleaded that he had never heard the term before.\textsuperscript{102}

In all likelihood, the minor incident between Sergeant King and Michael Cobven at St. Peter’s Square was little more than an encounter between the constabulary and an economically marginal and possibly deranged immigrant wanderer. Cobven, who did not have proper papers and faced deportation, was in all likelihood no more a Bolshevik than Sergeant King. In the political atmosphere of the time it was simply easy to class a broad spectrum of divergent views as “Bolshevik.” For authorities as well as dissenters, the image of the Bolshevik became far more important and relevant than any coherent political program or activity that might reasonably be called such.

\textit{The Times} characteristically took an even more truculent attitude toward “dangerous political aliens” operating in Britain, including a “Russian Jew who has recently been particularly active in Manchester.” These agitators, identified as mostly “Jews and Russians … are to be dealt with in their turn.”\textsuperscript{103} This inflammatory language, laced with national and ethnic stereotypes, reinforced prewar and wartime images of political radicalism as inherently foreign in origin.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{100} “Hands Off Russia Demonstration,” Manchester Free Trade Hall. Pamphlet Collection, Working Class Movement Library, F26/12.
\item \textsuperscript{101} “British Intervention in Russia: A Manchester Protest,” \textit{The Times}, June 23, 1919.
\item \textsuperscript{102} “A Rabid Bolshevik,” \textit{MEN}, March 10, 1919.
\item \textsuperscript{103} “Bolshevists in England,” \textit{The Times}, February 15, 1919.
\end{itemize}
and certainly did little to alleviate lingering tensions between immigrant groups in postwar Manchester.

Given this climate, it was remarkable that there was still middle ground for negotiation and possible compromise. In June, the British Empire Producers Association organized a meeting with employees and labor leaders in Manchester, ostensibly to combat Bolshevism in the cotton trade. The brief meeting’s consensus was that the only effective way to combat political radicalism was to “improve[e] workplace tensions” and stop blaming workers for arguing for reform.104 This spirit of dialogue and compromise was drowned out shortly thereafter by the outbreak of the cotton strike.

The concerns of demobilized soldiers had powerful friends in the opposition, who hoped to draw political capital from their appeals to returning troops. The ILP, meeting at Huddersfield in 1919, condemned the terms of the peace as insufficiently revolutionary. Philip Snowden, a former MP from Blackburn who had lost his seat in the Khaki Election, attacked the peace from the Chair. “The governing classes appear to be living in the realm of pre-war conditions and ideas…. The war has hastened the break-up of the capitalist system, and the only solution of the Labour and Social Problem is the establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth.”105

The conference passed, by acclaim, a “Soldiers’ Charter” that addressed many of the grievances then being expressed in the streets. Broadly, the charter addressed perceived unfairness in the pension scheme and the tensions inherent in a system that tried to compensate unemployed veterans while endeavoring to get them back to work. The ILP also proposed to give more power to local Pensions Committees in an effort to move the wheels of bureaucracy faster and to provide “the fullest possible measure of civil and political liberty” to those still in the armed services. This provision, and one that called for an end to the perceived harshness of courts martial, suggests that the ILP was tapping into fears among soldiers and veterans that military authorities would severely punish any repeat of the demobilization strikes.106

Another of the city’s postwar problems, one that would descend into sporadic but significant violence in the coming years, was the Irish issue. Manchester’s sizable Irish community, which was divided politically yet avoided much of the violence that affected the Irish community in Liverpool, experienced a remarkable political transformation in the wake of the war. Manchester had been the site of a number of Free State meetings during and just after the war. The Irish Self-Determination League held its first meeting at Free Trade Hall in mid-1919. Yet, by the early 1920s, Manchester’s Irish community came sharply around to support Sinn Fein and the Republicans.107 Given the politically charged atmosphere at the time, the city surprisingly allowed the annual “Manchester Martyrs” procession,

104 “Fighting Bolshevism,” The Times, June 5, 1919.
106 Ibid., 90.
a parade in November that celebrated the 1865 execution by hanging of three men who might have been involved in the rescue of several Fenian prisoners in Manchester in which a constable was killed. The local chapter of the Loyal Orange Order protested the granting of a permit:

I see by the press reports that the reason you would not prohibit the “Manchester Martyrs” procession is that it is a customary procession and has been held for many years. We are quite aware of this fact and we should have protested against it being held this last five years only for the great crisis that this City has been going through during the progress of this terrible war.  

The variety of radical strains of thought in the city in the year after the war caused no end of concern among authorities, and events in the future only served to worsen those worries. Yet, the violence of revolutionary ideology remained rhetorical. There was still room for compromise and concession, and the future of Manchester’s industrial identity hinged on finding that space while limiting the appeal of violence in the years to come.

The spirit of 1919 was a sharp corrective to the relative optimism of the previous year, when a series of disastrous military setbacks had swiftly been replaced by victory and the chance to impose a victor’s peace. The battle over the peace dividend revolved around the question of reward for the sacrifices of wartime. The Times commented early in the year strike activity threatened to paralyze the postwar industrial order because of “circumstances arising from the necessary interval between war and reconstruction.” Strikers, in their view, did not understand the complexities involved in this transition and were walking away from work because:

They believe that by this means they will secure the better conditions they are demanding, and which represent the limit of their present quarrel with their employers, the Government, and “capitalism.” They have been told by their leaders that they are justifiably entitled to no less.  

Workers in Manchester in 1919 did not need labor leaders to tell them to feel justifiably entitled to tangible reward. This language drew from their wartime experiences and the frustrations of an unevenly paced demobilization and a halting process of reconstruction that was never clearly articulated by local or national authorities. If 1919 was a year of demonstrations in Manchester, it was so in large part because of the unevenness of demobilization. Elements of the physical, economic, and bureaucratic demobilization of the nation and city remained in place in some areas of life, while their disappearance in others created at least

---

109 “Rebel Strike Leaders,” The Times, February 1, 1919. [Italics mine.]
the perception of unfairness, injustice, and lack of forethought. At the same time, attitudes toward those who took to the streets in protest were inconsistent and often served to radicalize an already precarious situation by tarring protestors with the brush of radicalism.

The events of 1919 highlighted the limits of the demobilization process. While the mobilization of British society was largely improvised as a result of the government’s desire to minimally disrupt economic and social life, it is difficult to see how a better organized mobilization might have significantly smoothed the transition in 1919. The effort of demobilization proved vast and dizzyingly complex. The largest problem in the relationship between authorities and civil society was the manifest unfairness of the process, which seemed to reward and punish capriciously. The rhetoric of war service seemed to offer a vision of equality, even if that vision was strained by the problematic inclusion or exclusion of women. Successive demobilization schemes seemed to offer nothing but inequality, followed in some cases by what appeared to be the collapse of any sort of planning whatsoever. Local authorities tried to mediate between a national government seeking the most painless way out and a population that demanded, in the name of their own sacrifices, that they be compensated for their service.

In Manchester, the structural weaknesses in the export economy made this all the more difficult as jobs seemed to be vanishing at precisely the same time that wartime industry employment declined, and tens of thousands of veterans returned. This nightmarish triangle appeared to men and women who had given so much during the war as another example of government indifference and inefficiency. At the same time, large sections of the working class remained committed to expressing their grievances within the system, further muddying the waters. The perceived commonalities of war service did not produce a less divided electorate or civil society.

In the years to come, these divisions became clearer as organizations dedicated to remembering the war and its veterans coalesced, along with formal political groups that tried to give an official voice to the more radical forms of discontent. If 1919 was not the year of disaster that some in Manchester predicted it would be, it was certainly evidence that the benefits of peace were not apparent to all and that the process of demobilization did not end with the return of the troops or the cessation of wartime bureaucracies. The demobilization of Manchester, and of English society, proved far more complex and perilous than anticipated and still had a long course to run.

If demobilization in the English Northwest proved troubled, it at least had the sometimes dubious benefit of political continuity. In Germany, the twinned experiences of defeat and revolution added new imperatives to the quest for social stability. Protesters and dissenters in England largely confined themselves to seeking ways to force the system to respond to their needs and demands. In Germany, the same pressures helped to produce loud, strident, and sometimes violent calls to punish the wartime state for its failures by destroying it altogether.
HOPING FOR VICTORIOUS PEACE

This chapter is excerpted from *War Time* by Louis Halewood, Adam Luptak & Hanna Smyth. © 2019 Taylor & Francis Group. All rights reserved.

Learn more
10 Hoping for victorious peace
Morale and the future on the Western Front, 1914–1918

Alex Mayhew

Wars themselves [...] are conducted with the intention of peace, even when they are conducted by those who are concerned to exercise their martial prowess in command and battle. Hence it is clear that peace is the desired end of war. For every man seeks peace, even in making war; but no one seeks war by making peace.

(Saint Augustine)

Conflict, peace, and the passage of time were interwoven in the minds of soldiers during 1914–1918. Men, whose worlds became dominated by sedentary war, sought to project forward momentum onto the conflict. This chapter stems from a wider research project that focuses on the morale of English infantrymen serving on the Western Front. It will argue that men’s morale was, in part, sustained by their hope for peace and that they constantly imagined, visualised, planned, or fantasied about this future they constructed internally. This counters existing literature, which tends to view thoughts of peace as an indicator of low morale, disaffection, and war weariness. Ultimately, it demonstrates how victorious peace became the focus of men’s desires and positively influenced their morale. They came to perceive and sense agency as a member – no matter how insignificant – of an organisation they saw as the vehicle through which peace would be achieved. It also suggests that soldiers did not see victory in strategic terms, but perceived it as the key to a brighter future. Their frames of reference – the boundaries that constrained and focused their perceptions of the world – meant that the war’s positive progress became the key to their peaceful future.

A well-known satirical advert in The Somme Times poked fun at men’s widespread investment in this seemingly distant future, and apparently mocked their optimistic outlooks. It asked the following questions of its readers:

1 Do you suffer from cheerfulness?
2 Do you wake up in a morning feeling that all is going well for the Allies?
3 Do you sometimes think that the war will end within the next twelve months?
4 Do you believe good news in preference to bad?
5 Do you consider our leaders are competent to conduct the war to a successful issue?

If musing upon this, the reader found that he had answered “yes” to one or more of these questions, the advert consoled him that “we can cure you of this dread disease.” All it took, it seems, was a visit to the front line. Some commentators have used this extract as evidence that the “sojourn of the trenches” had degraded the British soldiers’ positivity to the point where optimism was “a severe affliction” and enthusiasm “a deadly sin.” However, this is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of soldiers’ self-reflection. Optimism was an attitude incumbent on the men fighting in Belgium and France – it was necessary for their emotional survival. Indeed, only five months later the same publication’s editorial played on a similar theme, this time berating pessimism. The pessimist, it claimed, was a “strange elfish creature.” Perhaps in a similar vein, Private Albert Joy kept a signature book, in which family, friends, and comrades would leave messages. One note, from J. Baker, another soldier in the Royal Fusiliers, advised Bert to “despond if you must. But never despair for remember that from our greatest failures arise our most Brilliant success.”

Men were aware of optimism’s irony, particularly in the face of the Great War’s bitter and prolonged struggle, but they remained resolutely forward looking and their perceptions of the future were integral to this and to their morale.

Morale has been the focus of many studies of the First World War. Scholars have sought, in particular, to understand how men endured the horror, the exhaustion, and the boredom of 1914–1918. A number of ‘key terms’ revolve around the topic – for instance, consent, coercion, and, more recently, compliance – but a working definition of morale is highly contested. These range from S.L.A. Marshall’s encapsulation of morale as the entire ‘thinking’ of an army, to scholars who maintain a more functional focus on ‘carrots’ and ‘sticks’. Nevertheless, more recent studies have had greater success in developing a functional definition that also embraces the complexity and multifaceted nature of this phenomenon. Alexander Watson sees morale “as the readiness of a soldier or a group of soldiers to carry out the commands issued by military leadership”, while Jonathan Fennell defines it as “the willingness of an individual or group to prepare for and to engage in an action required by an authority or institution”. These two definitions, though, suggest that soldiers were only reacting to the military’s demands. Morale also relies on a constructive mind-set, in which positive visions of a productive future are integral. Morale, in this instance, is defined as the process by which men, positively or negatively, rationalised their role as soldiers and constructive members of the military.
Peace is approached here from the perspective of the individual soldier – as a subjective (and constructed) future space, in which the war has ended, and their worldly desires have been realised. Visions of such peace proved to be a sustaining factor in morale. However, there were limits to this. In August 1917, III Army Censor, Captain M. Hardie, reported that the soldiers’ letters he had analysed “give little indication of a wish for ‘peace at any price,’ but they do show an immense and widespread longing for any reasonable and honourable settlement that will bring the war to a close”.

He went on to suggest, “there is a feeling of uncertainty as to the progress of our arms to an ultimate victory”. There is much debate as to the state of British morale during this period, some historians arguing that the months leading up to the German offensives of 21 March 1918 were characterised by an ebbing endurance among British soldiers. Peace had been a prevalent theme in previous reports, yet the experience of 1917 had left men desperate for its arrival. In previous years, Hardie had been more confident about the troops' resilience despite their deep-seated desire for the conflict’s cessation. A year earlier he had recorded: “the necessity of passing a third winter in the trenches is cheerfully faced, and there is a general acceptance of the idea that the War will not be over for another year”. Nonetheless, the British Army recovered from this pessimism and the despondency engendered by the experience of Passchendaele did not fatally undermine the army. It was, in fact, rarely seen at other times during the war. Indeed, the term ‘après la guerre’ was used regularly by the men in Belgium and France, where it became “a magical phrase used by soldiers […] longing for survival and for the return of peace”.

The relationship between soldiers’ hope for peace and morale is a relatively unexplored facet of their experiences in the Great War. The importance of peace to them has been underlined by a number of scholars, who mainly focus on how it became a negative ingredient in soldiers’ morale. Paul Fussell, for one, argued that by late 1916 “the likelihood that peace would ever come was often in serious doubt”. Helen McCartney has also demonstrated how the shocking experience of battle could induce a temporary desire for “an almost unconditional peace”. Elsewhere the thirst for peace has been analysed in relation to war weariness. Jean-Jacques Becker discussed how 1917 saw an increase in French citizens’ “desire for peace”. In particular, significant minorities began to support a compromise peace and some even called for peace “at any price”. Peace, then, could be an unreachable goal and was often a product of people’s desire to escape war. Such conclusions were undoubtedly true in the context of, for example, Russian soldiers in 1917. However, John Horne has revealed how French soldiers’ concepts and hopes for peace provided visions of a future and past that allowed men to cope with the reality of their present. What follows will extend such an analysis and argue that historians should focus on the constructive and beneficial dimensions of soldiers’ preoccupation with their peaceful futures.
Men’s “first concern was to survive”23. As such, they hoped and yearned desperately for war’s end. The word ‘hope’ emerges from the letters and diaries of the men who lived and died on the Western Front and is pervasive in secondary accounts.24 Some argue that the “emphasis of morale” enables an individual “to live and work hopefully and effectively”.25 Studies of morale in war tend to reference hope without assessing its impact or adequately defining it. Where the term is used, it is often in passing. For example, Jonathan Boff has discussed German soldiers’ hope for improved rations and an early peace in late 1918 and Alexander Watson underlines soldiers’ hope for survival, nurtured by periods of rest.26 Vanda Wilcox has looked at soldiers’ passivity, citing Agostino Gemelli, an Italian military psychologist, who argued in 1917 that successful soldiers actually benefited from being hopeless as it allowed them to adapt to war.27 Ben Shephard has suggested that British soldiers on 1 July 1916 were “buoyed up with hope and excitement, the men went calmly and uncomplainingly to their deaths”.28 Yet its lack of definition makes it difficult to understand the nuances and functions of hope. Some social psychologists assert that hope is an abstract emotional process at the extreme end of positivity. Barbara Fredrickson, for example, sees hope as an antidote to fear. She claims that:

hope is not your typical form of positivity. Most positive emotions arise when we feel safe and satiated. Hope is the exception. It comes to play when our circumstances are dire […] Hope literally opens us up. It removes the blinders of fear and despair.29

Such an encapsulation of hope might ally itself with Watson’s hypotheses regarding “positive illusions” and “optimistic reasoning” being parts of the soldiers’ psychological coping mechanisms.30 Often inflated and unrealistic appreciations of chances of survival, for example, facilitated endurance. Equally, intense hopefulness for peace perhaps motivated men to suffer war without morale collapsing.

However, many other psychologists argue that ‘hope’ is primarily a cognitive process and not an emotion and is indeed different from optimism and positivity, which can affect people’s hope.31 They contend that hope is goal orientated. Optimism and positivity influence the way in which one rationalises a situation and relate to expectations of the future.32 An optimistic explanatory style facilitates “higher levels of motivation, achievement, and physical well-being and lower levels of depressive symptoms”.33 In such studies “hope is defined as goal-directed thinking in which people perceive that they can produce routes to desired goals (pathways thinking) and the requisite motivation to use those routes (agency thinking)”.34 Barriers can block the path to their attainment:

When encountering barriers that impede goal pursuit, people appraise such circumstances as stressful. According to the postulates of hope
theory, positive emotions result because of the perceptions of successful goal pursuit. Conversely, negative emotions typically reflect the perceived lack of success [...] Thus, their perceptions regarding the success of goal pursuits casually drive subsequent positive and negative emotions... Furthermore, these emotions serve as reinforcing feedback.  

In this instance, positivity and optimism – and their antitheses – operate within the wider boundaries of hope. Thus, with this definition, hope is a cognitive goal-driven process that can be affected by emotional reactions – such as anger, despondency, disappointment, or confidence – to obstacles that arise in the pursuit of these objectives.

This analysis looks to throw light on soldiers’ hopes and visions of peace. It begins by discussing how visions of peace emerged on the Western Front, before discussing exactly what ‘hope’ means in a psychological context. It argues that soldiers’ hope became focused on victorious peace, which formed around visions of a future devoid of war. It will highlight the role of hope in English soldiers’ morale – underlining the ways in which internalised visions of the future were prevalent and contrasted with and combated the men’s present. It will examine men’s desire for peace across the war and consider how this interrelated with morale, before arguing that their frame of reference – the war and the Western Front – constrained their perspective on the world. This ensured that the war’s military progression and peace became intimately related in the minds of men.

Memories, fantasies, and visions of peace

How did these visions of peace emerge and what form did they take? The war very quickly became a route march. Men’s pasts lay at their point of departure, their present was immersed in the war, but their futures – the destination – would see peace return to their lives. This became the ultimate hope of men who fought in France and Belgium in 1914–1918 and seems to have developed remarkably quickly. Herbert Trevor, a subaltern at the onset of war, was left overwhelmed and disenchanted by the retreat from Mons and the Battle of Le Cateau. In a postcard on 22 September 1914 he expressed solidarity with the despondent German prisoners he had met, remarking that “everyone would like peace”. Yet peace was an abstraction and a construct – fed by memories, dreams, and fantasies of home. It formed in the minds of individual men and, as such, it would be impossible to provide any valid ‘average’ vision of peace. Age, regional background, class, and any number of other factors influenced what men saw when they imagined peace. It is, however, possible to trace similarities among the soldier’s visions of the future. The soldiers’ own words show that it is possible to find continuity in attitude across the conflict. It is apparent, from a close reading of men’s interpretation of their situation, that both officers and men were conscious of the horrors and lack of romance
in modern war. Yet they retained a belief that it was something to be borne.\textsuperscript{39}

This general desire for peace helps to explain the apparent solidarity of soldiers in the pursuit of, as some vocalised, a common object. These men believed that this objective stemmed from shared experience.\textsuperscript{40} Given the encapsulation of ‘hope’ as goal orientated it is necessary to understand what this aspiration might have been.

These ideas and visions of peace were internalised and allowed men to escape their present. Many soldiers’ journals provide the historian with insights into how and when these images would appear. Importantly these tended to focus on the home or close community and not only provided sustenance but were also a reminder of whom these men were fighting for. These ‘dreams of home’ emerged from sleep and daydreams and in any quiet moment the men might have had for reflection. Many contemporary postcards aimed at soldiers played on these themes. A great number depicted men (either in cartoon or staged photograph) sitting, sleeping, or writing in recreated trench scenes – a smaller image would depict their vision of home. Wives, sweethearts, and mothers were among the more popular objects of longing.\textsuperscript{41} The age demographics of the army, which saw many of the men in the New Armies being under the average age of marriage, means that Michael Roper is probably correct in his assertion that the maternal link was often the strongest.\textsuperscript{42} Yet, it was by no means the only bond with the United Kingdom. The rank and file tended to focus on their family or friends. L/Cpl. Cecil White recorded in his diary how he had “the pleasure” of receiving “a letter from Tom” and noted that his “thoughts are continually with them [his family] and all my desires for peace so that we may all return to our homes”. White logged how he and his comrades continued to “spend our days with those we love”.\textsuperscript{43} R.E.P. Stevens’ visions took him from the dining-room fireside, via the “parish of Godly [and] every street” to the “interiors of houses I was want to visit all at once”.\textsuperscript{44} Officers’ social networks, which were often broader than those of the ranks, seemed to have produced a more diverse image of peace. The 	extit{Cambridgeshire Territorial Gazette} described how a soldier slumped “mud-caked, hungry and tired” into an “inviting armchair” behind the lines. Removing his boots and tunic, he “gazed into the glowing fire and was on the point of conjuring up visions of ‘leave’ and London”.\textsuperscript{45} Authors in 	extit{The B.E.F. Times} explored similar themes. One poem, entitled “Brazier Pictures”, began “In my brazier as I gaze / Pictures come and pictures go, / Dimly seen across the haze – / Christmases we used to know”. The soldier in question’s imagination was “burning clear”, allowing “visions of better days” and eradicating “discomforts that are near” and as “pictures come and pictures go” he was fortified.\textsuperscript{46} Other contributors described how dawn’s light brought visions of their “dearest” in her “silver shrouded dress” or how “the evening mists” became a “portrait”.\textsuperscript{47} Officers were also occupied by images of “green fields,” “peace,” and drinking in their clubs.\textsuperscript{48}

These images emerged in the form of inner visions of domestic peace and they provided an escape. They all focused on peaceful scenes, in which the
war had been removed. The static and disempowering nature of warfare of the Western Front meant that men were – in a quasi-meditative way – dwelling on the past, and fantasising about the future, so that they could ignore their presents. Men were not exclusively obsessed with their pasts or their presents, but imagined both as they sought to combat the stresses of their day-to-day lives at war. Many of these visions of past and future were intentionally domestic and focused on facets of the peaceful world that had been removed from the Western Front. Women, an unscarred countryside, or a bustling townscape were individualised but played a similar role from soldier to soldier. Cecil White highlighted the collective benefits of these visions: “for a time the gloom and squalor of the filthy trench disappeared”. It was in such moments that time became fused: memories of the past fed visions of the future, which – even for a moment – allowed men to escape the conflict’s horrors. Importantly, even when men focused on memories rather than fantasy, this was used to construct a perfect post-war world. This was integral to morale.

**Hope, peace and morale**

For this idealised future to ever materialise, it was necessary for soldiers to successfully endure and traverse their presents. As Alexander Watson has argued, “human faith, hope and optimism, no less than cultural traits, discipline, primary groups and patriotism, explain why and how men were willing and able to fight in the horrendous conditions of the Western Front”. The importance of hopes for future peace in reference to morale rested on its ability to mitigate the trauma of war. Its primary function in this respect is its capacity to expand men’s mental horizons. Hope is imbued with a sense of forward momentum. A man, sitting in a muddy, water-filled hole in the ground, with shells exploding in the near vicinity and the recent vision of a friend maimed or killed imprinted on his memory, needed to invest himself in thoughts of a brighter future. For some men, these visions provided some warmth, as they pondered England, “home” and “beauty”. Any inability to conceive of the future, in moments of extreme tension, played negatively upon the minds of some soldiers. These visions also benefitted those living through the mundane routines of life behind the line. Peace provided an alternative world. Hope and hopes of peace allowed men to visualise themselves outside of their present situations, at least until they were forced to “wake up”. The soldiers’ imaginings of their lives after war and encapsulations of a better time to come are important in understanding how and why men were able to endure the horrors of 1914–1918.

Peace simultaneously provided a universal and unifying goal for the men, and a set of aspirations that could become highly personal. Reverend E.N. Mellish told his old parish that the men he encountered “longed for home”. More explicitly, L/Cpl. C. White wrote in his diary that “peace is the only event that is worth carrying on for”. Peace plans offered men the
opportunity to develop personal life goals. These usually involved the desire to be reunited with loved ones – children, spouses, parents, and friends. Or they might involve education, their occupation, embracing an England not devastated by war, simply sitting at home, sleep, good meals, pastimes, their ‘land fit for heroes’ or grandiose ideas regarding the betterment of society. Peace was a concept and construct that meant different things to different people; as such it meant that they were likely to have been devoted to their imagined future. Importantly, the ability to rationalise peace on such personal levels may very well have instilled a depth of meaning that was sustaining. As Captain Hardman related to his parents, his vision of the ‘dawn of peace’ contrasted with the horror, despondency, and suffering. It reminded him that “I have something to live for beyond this world of carnage [and] bloodshed”. As far as research can demonstrate, humans are the only meaning-seeking species. Thus, it makes sense for men to have personalised war and allied themselves with a hope for life after it. Lieutenant Brettell and his sweetheart looked to peace as an opportunity to profit from his war experiences. They discussed selling his paintings, which depicted the difficulties of life in the army, and making “pots of money”. The process of having a goal in which meaning is constructed allows people to “construe their lives as meaningful or worthwhile”. Simply, a hope for, and thoughts of, peace could imbue men’s war experience in general with a sense of purpose that went some way to diminishing its horrors and facilitating allegiance to the military and victory.

Peace offered the opportunity for men to plan the consolidation of all that was good in their lives and encouraged them to live with a vision of this possibly idealised future. Importantly, the use of the future tense diminished their present and, by envisaging their role in these scenarios, assumed their survival. The end of the war offered the opportunity for happiness. 2nd Lieutenant Henrick Jones, 1/7 Royal Warwickshire Regiment, exemplified the benefits of romantic relationships. He was engaged in December 1916 and the belief in his and his fiancée’s promised future together had not diminished by March 1918. He exclaimed, “when all this is over we are going to have the most wonderful time”. A certainty permeated his statement. This might have represented an attempt to allay his fiancée’s fears. Yet, the fact that he was forced to talk of their future in such a tone cannot have failed to have had an impact on him. This was not limited to men’s love lives. The collection of correspondence kept by A & C Black Publishers provides another example of the ways in which men focused on peace. Their employees wrote with surprising regularity, discussing their jobs, thanking their employers for their provisions to the families left at home, enquiring about the business and discussing their employment upon their return to civilian life. Future plans might have been as simple or mundane as rebuilding or designing one’s house or, most pervasively, even just being at ‘home’. In S.B. Smith’s correspondence with his wife he spent much of his time consoling her that, while he was physically absent, his thoughts and feelings were very much focussed on
“home”. He was insistent that he was pining for a return to this place of security and happiness.66

The hope for peace allowed men to envisage their future selves outside and beyond the confines of their dangerous military service. There was a self-confidence that, while perhaps unjustified, played an important psychological tool. The ability to imagine future episodes is an important facet of human cognition.67 Psychologists Cristina Atance and Daniela O’Neill describe this process as “episodic future thinking” and have pointed towards its potential in positively affecting human experience and behaviour.68 Importantly, research reveals that writing about these goals can lead to significant improvements in subjective well-being. Writing about “one’s best possible self” has similar constructive benefits to writing about trauma and can increase general wellness. The benefits of these processes are more powerfully felt when these future goals are used in contrast to shocking events.69 This may have also provided men with a coping strategy that, through fantasy and imagining the future, allowed the soldiers to deflect fatalism and have become a ritual through which they avoided considering their own fragile mortality. The very process of hoping, thinking, and placing themselves in a future situation, and the vocalisation of these visions, provided men with a psychological tool by which they were able to go some way in protecting themselves from the horror – and indeed boredom – that stalked much of their present.

However, for most of the war any peace was still very distant – and false hope might have engendered disillusionment.70 Every year saw men pondering the proximity of peace. In 1914, while some historians of the home front have argued that ideas of the war ending before Christmas quickly disappeared, soldiers in France and Belgium certainly retained these thoughts.71 The sentiment of L.F. Ashburner in October 1914, is something that recurred across the period and the different British armies. He asked the question, “I wonder if we shall be home by Xmas?”72 Similarly, in late October 1916, Private William Anderson told his wife in a letter that “I haven’t lost the idea that this business may well be over by Christmas. Maybe my faith or hope is on the strong side.”73 Again, at the beginning of 1918 many were certain that the war’s intensity and destruction could not last for more than another year. Christmas and New Year provided focal points for soldiers’ aspirations for peace. This might be a product, in the case of Christmas, of religiosity. Interestingly, however, there is an absence of references to Easter in this regard, perhaps because the festive holidays were more focused on family and friends. December became a marker for the coming of peace. This suggests that men wished to create a sense of certainty that the war would end and reflects a general desire to avoid winter in the trenches.74 More fundamentally, it is evidence that many men viewed peace as the product of military campaigning. Their hope was that a victory would have been gained by Christmas, a festival that comes in the month after campaigning usually ended. G.H. Greenwell, for one, typified this. He argued that “everything sooner or later
has an end” and hoped that a successful campaign would see them out of the trenches by Christmas. In an earlier letter he attempted to reason that a German collapse would be engineered by that year’s campaign. He pointed (prematurely) to the entry of “Roumania [sic]” as a decisive blow to the Central Powers, the result was that he “shouldn’t be surprised at a sudden German collapse”. R.D. Sheffield also reported that, in November 1914, the men around him “all seem to say that they think this will be the last battle and if we win that the war will end before Christmas”. In a world dominated by conflict, men were hopeful that the current campaign would be their last. Christmas and New Year became the symbolic waypoint for this success. However, such hopes, once dashed, risked leading to disenchantment and undermining the benefits of being invested in peace.

Yet, what of hopes that were more easily undermined and discredited? Commentators have discussed the negative consequences of false illusions, inappropriate goals, and poor strategies for the attainment of these goals. Could it be the case that being hopeful might have worked to the detriment of motivation and therefore morale? Research suggests that even false hope can still be of psychological benefit. If hope is “a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of success (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” this might make sense. “Hope […] is influenced by a dispositional sense of abilities to produce pathways and agency across situations.” Thus, motivation might be influenced to a greater extent by the perceived success (or failure) in the spheres of agency and pathway, rather than attainment. It is not necessarily the goal that sustains motivation but the feeling of being on a legitimate course to the said goal. Indeed, it would seem that high-hopers have a slight, but not counter-productive, tendency to view their reality with a “positive self-referential bias”. Some of the more insightful notes that refer to victory are revealing in their description of men who were “under the impression that they are winning”. Men were willing to ally themselves with feelings of success. It is also possible that the nature of a close knit unit that intentionally fosters esprit de corps might have facilitated these high levels of hope, research suggesting that interpersonal relationships are of huge benefit to the processes of resilient hoping. These relationships certainly existed; Charles Carrington, for one, saw the friendships that he had developed – with both officers and men – as one of the key aspects of his war experience. He even feared the severance of the bonds that he felt the war had created. It is likely that resilience was a by-product of such solidarity. Importantly, it was the hopes for things such as better weather – over which men, clearly, had no control – that left them most despondent. During the winter it was the weather, not the war, that became most unbearable and, in fact, men looked to battle as an opportunity to end the war before the onset of winter weather. The war was controllable; the patterns of nature were not. Therefore, so long as men were told or felt that the war was progressing positively, it would be through this that they measured success.
Their hopes for peace relied on a sense of agency – and morale benefited from this. The pursuit of a goal and the cognitive function of hoping for peace provided many men with at least the perception of forward momentum. It would seem that as soldiers they considered it their duty to follow orders and that in doing so felt that they were playing some small part in ensuring that a victorious peace might emerge that bit faster. As one man recalled, he and his comrades were motivated by a belief that “so long as we are soldiers and orders are orders and must be obeyed”. Another man made such an assertion earlier in 1915: “an Army Order is an Order, and has to be obeyed”. The sense that a good soldier should be obedient is explicit here, but implicit is a belief that this was also their best course of action. However, it might be, as John Brophy and Eric Partridge recalled, that soldiers quickly “grew used” to army rules and “obeyed without thinking”. Indeed, ‘O’Grady’, a game similar to ‘Simon Says’, was popular among soldiers at rest precisely because it played on the fact they were “conditioned to an instantaneous and mindless response to drill orders bawled out with authority, to stop and think first was not so easy”. There were, however, orders that were considered unnecessary and were ignored – particularly when it came to unnecessarily disturb the peace on a quiet front in midwinter, or when personal comfort was at stake. Interestingly, Alexander Watson has found that, after the German Offensives in 1918, British soldiers told their German captors they were more confident in their own ability than the generals’. It might have been that by fulfilling their role as a soldier to the best of their ability men were, in part, developing both agency and self-confidence. For the most part, obedience was considered a necessary duty – by conforming to orders soldiers were, somewhat perversely, taking an active role in the successful orchestration of the war.

There were more overt examples of men seeking and celebrating agency. Ghassan Hage, an anthropologist studying migration, has said: “it is when people feel that they are existentially ‘going too slowly’ or ‘going nowhere’, that is, that they are somehow ‘stuck’ on the ‘highway of life’, that they begin contemplating the necessity of physically ‘going somewhere’”. By assuming the role of the soldier and contributing to the smooth running of the military machine, soldiers were playing a small part in the war’s successful orchestration. In believing that they were treading a route towards their ultimate goal of peace – however slow that path might have been – soldiers allied themselves to constructive activity. This is evident in men’s descriptions and celebration of visible or reported German prisoners. It was hard to find agency or evidence of progress in the midst of static warfare. This made casualties and prisoners part of an attritional tit-for-tat. W.J. Lidsey proudly reported on 3 November 1916 that the battalion his unit was relieving had captured 700 enemy combatants but had only suffered “very slight” casualties. Similarly Sergeant William Summers related, in a triumphant tone, that he and his “chaps” had captured an old German machine gun as a “war trophy”. It is likely that this explains one of Haig’s “lessons” of the Somme Campaign; the
“morale effect” of aerial superiority had been “out of all proportion” to its material impact. Men were receptive to and regularly emphasised any signs of success. After 21 March 1918 open warfare was celebrated – even in retreat – as a sign that the war offered new opportunities. This supports psychologists’ arguments that, in many instances, “the process of doing […] is itself the goal”. Soldiers desperately wanted evidence, any evidence, of the war progressing positively. So long as there was some way to paint the war encouragingly it seems that men were willing to do so. It is here where the importance of human endurance, underlined by Alexander Watson, is so important. Watson has highlighted this as an integral component of the story of morale in the First World War. The nature of the human psyche meant that men were able to continue fighting and believing in its ultimate efficacy despite setbacks. In the atmosphere of static war, it is certainly true that feeling that you were ‘going somewhere’ was often highly beneficial. Yet, how, in the context of sedentary war, were men able to relate peace to the military reality?

**Military victory as the ‘pathway’ to peace**

It is necessary to investigate what seems to have contributed to soldiers’ continuing vision of victory as the route to peace. Good morale – in the functional sense – relied on men’s motivation to fight and to follow orders. In a world in which their frames of reference was constrained by context – that of Belgium, France, and the BEF – men were offered little opportunity to view their situation objectively. Ultimately, many men sensed that military victory could provide the instrument for peace and that the armed forces were the vehicle through which this goal could be achieved.

A number of factors influenced men’s perception of potential avenues to peace. The relationship between hope and religion should not be underestimated. Believing that forces outside one’s comprehension control the world might have led men to toe the line. Religion and hope are intimately connected and recent historiography has looked to overturn previous arguments regarding the increasing secularism of Britain in the years before 1914. British society at this time, if not overtly religious, maintained a high level of internal religiosity. Even during periods of the most intense warfare, where possible Sunday church service remained a notable part of a battalion’s weekly schedule. Furthermore, research suggests that the presence of clergy in the front lines and aid stations was widespread. This fed a heavy use of religious imagery, closely related to ideas of heaven, in soldiers’ poetry and writings. Reverend E.N. Mellish’s visions of peace saw a time when “the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, [and] the time of singing birds is come”. Peace was Eden. In contrast the Western Front came to represent a man-made “hell on earth”. The physical manifestation of this can be seen in pieces of trench art. There are examples of soldiers’ craft that use metal, sometimes bullets, shell casings, or even the remnants of zeppelins to fashion crosses or objects imbued with religious symbolism.
Christian symbolism usurped the destructiveness of these objects. Entrusting events to God influenced men’s vision of the world and of their war experience – if only in that it facilitated an appreciation of a brighter future, entrusted to a higher power. For example, A.J. Lord, in a letter to his parents, mused about waiting for “the Dove of Peace”.\textsuperscript{107} Similarly, William Anderson looked to the same Christian symbol, asking for it to “descend and make the World a brighter and happier place”.\textsuperscript{108} Their faith seems to have engendered thoughts of peace and they entrusted its deliverance to God.\textsuperscript{109} Scholars have pointed towards the potent relationship between Christian ‘utopia’ and ‘hope’ – “hope driving the utopian impulse, utopianism inspiring hope”.\textsuperscript{110} Postcards, too, were produced with religious motifs that were meant to assuage fears for the future. E. Grantham kept a postcard entitled ‘faith’ in his wallet for the duration of the war. This card exhorted its reader to have faith that a “brighter” future would come.\textsuperscript{111} It might also be that prayer, as an act, nurtured some agency as men beseeched God to interfere with the progression of the war on their behalf.\textsuperscript{112} All of this contributed to a willingness to place trust in God, fuelling some men’s belief that the military path, while horrific, was to be endured as a part of something greater than themselves. There was a certainty that this would ultimately draw them closer to a utopian ‘tomorrow’.

There is also the sense in which the soldiers’ perception of the Germans undermined any belief in peace being attainable by a path other than victory. While hate and desire for revenge fuelled reactions to the death of comrades, this generally occurred momentarily during the aftermath of battles or bombardments. English soldiers’ perception of German expansionism, injustice, and exploitation of the civil populace did much more to encourage ideas of a fought-for peace.\textsuperscript{113} It could remind men of the vulnerability of the home they were fighting for.\textsuperscript{114} In 1914 the soldiers were conscious of Belgium’s plight and had recent memories of both civilian casualties and of the retreat from Mons.\textsuperscript{115} By 1916, whilst on the offensive, they were aware of the German operations at Verdun.\textsuperscript{116} Finally, in 1918, men seemed to begin fearfully anticipating a German onslaught as early as February. 21 March confirmed their fears for home as they again witnessed a German advance, its dangers and the resultant dislocation of the local populace.\textsuperscript{117} Importantly, the men could picture the Germans as “the invader”.\textsuperscript{118} The significance of this characterisation cannot be understated; it meant that war did not seem futile. German strategy reminded men that they were fighting a destructive enemy who was seemingly incapable of compromise. Many, like S.A. Newman, collected and retained sets of postcards, widely available in France (in both English and French), which showed the destruction wrought upon towns such as Arras. In these images the “Hun’s passion for destruction” was emphasised and the “devastation by the vampires” powerfully portrayed.\textsuperscript{119} The men regurgitated this characterisation of their enemy in their own writing: Sgt. S. Gill noted, in scrawled handwriting, “damn those Prussians. Sodom and Jeremiah to the […] demonical ghoulish vampires.”\textsuperscript{120} It was possible to see the
Germans as the “authors” of the evil wrought on the world and this, in many cases, engendered an “intense determination to exact full retribution.”

What is more, it made any peace without Germany’s defeat seem futile. Of course, by the Hundred Days Campaign a confidence in the likelihood of retribution was, in itself, sustaining.

The men’s characterisation of the German state and military hierarchy compounded this. Outside the chaos of battle there is very little to suggest that the majority of men maintained an obvious hatred for the enemy soldiers as individuals. However, there is evidence that, in the eyes of the soldiers, Germany’s leaders were villains. They were seen as an evil presence towards both the civilised world and their own soldiers and citizens. This was vividly portrayed in Bairnsfather’s illustration “The Tactless Teuton”. In this drawing a stick-thin German private of the “Orphans’ Battalion” was being overseen by an overweight and moustachioed man of his own Army’s “Gravediggers’ Corps” – a caricature typical of many others. Bairnsfather presented a state-run slaughter orchestrated by a devilish “Hun”.

This “powerful ideological” motivation, which had characterised the German state as an evil aggressor, was repeated by soldiers in their depictions of the enemy. A.J. Lord described to his parents how “with that wonderful thoughtfulness for which he is noted, the Hun saved up his offensive for my first morning in the Line on returning from leave!” The use of ‘Hun’ or ‘Teuton’ in the letters and diaries of front-line soldiers both dehumanised the enemy and suggested a timeless, negative, and expansionist militarism. If the ordinary German soldiers could not normally incite hatred, this abstract idea certainly could. This is reflected in a man’s short letter to his employer in England: “[I] heard all about the raid, it’s a bad business and shows what a callous lot the Huns are […] They are only creating rage in the hearts of the chaps out here.”

More explicitly, Lt. Reginald Neville explained to his sister that:

We want to exterminate, not so much the Germans as individuals for they are harmless enough, but their methods and principles; and worst of it is that there is only one way to do this and that is to kill the individuals. If only we could get hold of these abstract principles, turn them into concrete and then blow them off the face of the earth, our end would be attained.

Germany became a historicised warmonger and it made sense that this enemy should be met with military might. You cannot parley with a remorseless and bellicose entity. Furthermore, it is easier to kill a monster than a man. The nature of the German state in the minds of British soldiers facilitated a belief that peace could only be the product of victory.

Close analysis of the soldiers’ letters reveals the ways in which their frames of reference influenced their perception of the route to peace. Both their present, and their physical and social environments, constrained their ability to rationalise the world. They were members of the military and this identity
was driven to the fore, and while they imagined a future outside of the military, the army was the only way in which they could make sense of this future. Hew Strachan sees this negation of the self as a key ingredient in training’s influence upon morale.\(^{128}\) There is a sense – within letters in particular – that a number of ‘voices’ operated in two distinct contexts. Men, who were immersed in war, wrote to their loved ones, who were sitting at home. There is an illustration of the men’s present and future here. Men were transported, mentally, in their moments of both reading and writing letters, to the locality of their writer and recipient. This might have entailed as simple a process as imagining the weather at home.\(^{129}\) In many ways it was this connection that facilitated their ability to envisage and become so attached to peace. Yet, they simultaneously asserted their soldierly identity. Foucault’s discussion of authorship is useful in understanding this; he argued that “the author function operates so as to effect the dispersion of these […] simultaneous selves”.\(^{130}\) These men, while pining for peace and embracing their future identity in a peaceful world, revealed their militarisation in their use of language – they immersed their syntax in indirect and often unintentional indications that they were at war, which represented the ‘present’ tense for them. Their conversations with home justified fighting; they asserted that they are doing their “duty as a soldier”.\(^{131}\) Less vocal but equally revealing examples are provided by the regularly used slang. Words such as ‘strafling’, ‘wind-up’, ‘A1’, ‘grousing’, and ‘napoo’ quickly entered the vocabulary of every soldier. Importantly these were used to describe most situations.\(^{132}\) This seems to have influenced the way that their loved ones interacted with them. Military language permeated letters sent to soldiers from the home front, where the language – even of wives and sweethearts – adopted a militaristic tone. Lieutenant Brettell’s love interest, Peggy, said that she would like to “strafl” a number of people in England.\(^{133}\) The war and the military embedded itself in the psyche of some men and their loved ones and would have certainly played a part in their conceptualisation of peace.

Soldiers became immersed in their environment and this influenced or even dominated their perception of the world. A non-military route to peace was fundamentally inconceivable. Mark Hewitson has observed that “although soldiers often felt themselves to be an increasingly important part of a national ‘history’, they were also increasingly alienated from […] external and official history, turning in on themselves”.\(^{134}\) This is reflected in Charles Quinnell’s revelation that he and his comrades came to see themselves as a “race apart from the civilians”.\(^{135}\) This was most evident to Quinell when he was home on leave, in the moments where he had been removed from the military environment. There is a sense in the recollections and writing of Quinnell and others that the army had become, if only temporarily, a key aspect of their existence. Correspondingly Neitzel and Welzer have argued that conceptions of duty and war among men of the Wehrmacht between 1939 and 1945 were “firmly anchored in [a] soldiers’ frame of reference”.\(^{136}\) The language of a number of the English soldiers between 1914 and 1918
suggests that many men were unable to seriously contemplate peace other
than through battle and victory. As soldiers the army was the vehicle for
action, however small their role in that process. As a result some envisaged,
 somewhat apocalyptically, peace as the product of a ‘great battle’, and the
vast majority saw peace as the essential result of military triumph – defeat
was not mentioned as a possible route to this ideal.\textsuperscript{137} For many, victorious
peace was the only possible, or conceivable, outcome. Whether this reflects the
success of the state and army’s attempts to link peace and victory in the
minds of its soldiers, or more simply stemmed from a basic psychological
defence mechanism (or, indeed, was a combination of the two), requires fur-
ther consideration and research.

Conclusion

Visions of peace existed throughout the war, a conflict that saw men invest
themselves in an ideal future. Their desire for peace was an understandable
reaction to the novelty of death on such a scale – a basic comprehension of
war resulting in death could not have prepared them for the overwhelming
and pervasive nature of what Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker have termed “total
battle”\textsuperscript{138} An example of this is C.S. Baines’ narrative of 31 October 1914,
the opening day of the First Battle of Ypres. He describes a conversation with
an officer of the battalion to his left, who related that his unit had been
“overwhelmed”\textsuperscript{139} The use of this word is interesting; Baines’ Battalion War
Diary reports that there had been withdrawals but makes no reference to any
unit being overcome by the enemy. It is possible, then, to view “overwhelmed”
as indicative of the officer’s and his men’s emotional reaction to battle. Indeed, he told Baines that if his men had not been wounded by the shellfire,
then they had been “shattered” psychologically\textsuperscript{140} Four years later, in the
days before the Armistice, men still found it necessary to comment on the
terrible extremities of war, one diary describing it simply as “massed slaughter
and destruction”\textsuperscript{141} The psychological impact was felt after combat and
influenced the focus of men’s goal orientation. However, hopes and visions of
a peaceful future provided a mechanism to divert or diminish the negative
impact of war’s trauma by expanding their mental horizons and imbuing
events with some redeeming qualities. Humans craft narratives to makes sense
of the world, and peace (in particular) allowed men to visualise a personalised
brighter future. This, in some way, justified their sacrifices and the images
these thoughts conjured contrasted with the war and assured their survival.
The very process of hoping and investing oneself in the future was of psy-
chological benefit and undoubtedly benefited morale in this regard.

Yet, myriad issues influenced soldiers’ views of the route – or pathway – to
this ultimate goal. To understand the durability of men’s belief in military
victory’s ability to bring peace, it is necessary to look at the realities of war
and the language of the men. This insists that while peace was their supreme
wish, the nature of life at the front engendered a general inability, once
immerged in the military, to see beyond the warpath. While war was frequently horrendous and hard to bear, their soldierly outlook dominated many men’s impressions of the world and their conception of Germany’s despotism meant that peace seemed unlikely – or less desirable – without the defeat of Kaiser Wilhelm’s regime. Men wanted peace and home, but were in a world immersed with the imagery and reality of war. As such, their appreciation of their existence and the route to peace was often constrained by their military boundaries. This is likely to have facilitated a willingness to follow orders – adherence to military authority was often the only conceivable or certain ingredient for peace.\textsuperscript{142} It pushed their combatant identity to the fore. This and soldiers’ very negative perceptions of the German state as a militant aggressor were potent ingredients in dictating how men interpreted the war and their role in it. This lies at the heart of how and why men retained a belief in military victory, which came to represent their most likely route to the peaceful future they desperately hoped for.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Dr Heather Jones, Professor David Stevenson, Professor Sönke Neitzel, Dr Joanna Lewis, and the anonymous reviewers for their comments on previous drafts of this chapter.
2 Brown, Nardin, and Rengger (eds), \textit{International Relations in Political Thought}, 126.
10 Ferguson, \textit{The Pity of War}.
13 Imperial War Museum (IWM) 84/46/1 Private Papers of M. Hardie, Report on III Army Morale 1917.
14 IWM 84/46/1 Private Papers of M. Hardie, Report on III Army Morale 1917.
16 IWM 84/46/1 M. Hardie, “3rd Section Report on Complaints, Moral, Etc. (1916)”.
17 IWM 84/46/1 M. Hardie, “Report on III Army Morale January 1917”.

\textsuperscript{142}
23 Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies*, 63.
24 IWM P 229 Private Papers of Brig Gen. H.E. Trevor, Postcard to Evelyn Parker 22 September 1914; IWM 96/24/1 Private Papers of Pte. W.M. Anderson, Letters to Wife 9, 17, 18, and October 1916; IWM 98/28/1 Private Papers of Pte. F.G. Senyard, Letters to Wife 5, 17, 26 December 1916, 18 September, 28 June and 10 July 1918; Royal Fusiliers Museum Archive (RFM) RFM.ARC.3032 L/Cpl. C. White, Diary 7, 10 January, 8, 27 February, 5, 7, and 8 March 1917.
30 Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 146.
32 Carver and Scheier, “Optimism”, 75.
36 IWM 84/46/1 M. Hardie, “3rd Section Report on Complaints, Moral, Etc. (1916)”.
37 IWM P 229 Brig General H.E. Trevor, Postcard 22 September 1914.
39 IWM 06/5/2 Brig. General G.A. Stevens, Letters October through December 1916.
40 IWM 99/13/1 Private Papers of Major S.O.B. Richardson, Letter [No. 4] Late 1916.
43 RFM.ARC.3032 L/Cpl. C. White, Diary 12 February 1917.
44 IWM 02/43/1 R.E.P Stevens, Diary 6 December 1916.
W.M. Anderson, Letters to Wife 1 and 6 December 1916; IWM 77/33/1 Lt. J.H. Johnson, Diary 23 December 1917 and 6 January 1918.

87 IWM 90/17/1 Private Papers of A.G. Osborn, Diary 6 January 1915.
90 IWM Con Shelf A.P. Burke, Letter to Reg 29 December 1916.
91 Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 182.
92 Hage, “A Not So Multi-Sited Ethnography of a Not So Imagined Community”, 471.
93 IWM 08/94/1 Private Papers of W. J. Lidsey, Diary 3 November 1916.
95 The National Archives WO 256/14 Diary of Field Marshal Haig, 1 December 1916.
96 IWM PP/MCR/269 Rev. E.N. Mellish, Letter in St Paul’s, Deptford, Parish Church Magazine (March 1917) [Discussing Winter 1916].
97 Snyder, Rand, King, Feldman, and Woodward, “‘False’ Hope”, 1016.
101 This was particularly evident during 1916 in The National Archives WO 95/2085/3–4: War Diary 10th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
103 IWM PP/MCR/269 Rev. E.N. Mellish, Letter in St Paul’s, Deptford, Parish Church Magazine (March 1917) [Discussing Winter 1916].
105 See IWM EPH 10150 “Ring” or IWM EPH 1915 “Bullet Crucifix”. The latter was produced on the Italian Front but it is very likely that similar things were crafted in France and Belgium.
112 IWM 03/30/1 Private Papers of W. Vernon, Letter 22 July 1918.
116 IWM 13/09/1 Private Papers of H. Milner, Memoir, 32.
117 IWM 76/27/3 Col. Hardman, Letter to Parents 4 April 1918.
118 IWM 77/83/1 Private Papers of S.A. Newman, Postcards of Arras.
119 RFM.ARC.2495 Sgt. S. Gill, Diary 20 December 1916.
Alex Mayhew

122 Liddle/WW1/GS/0313 Papers of Pte. C. Clarke, Memoir, 14; IWM 66/96/1 Private Papers of Reverend M.A. Bere, Letter to wife 17 September 1917.
123 Bairnsfather, Best of Fragments from France, 10.
124 Gibson, Behind the Front: British Soldiers and French Civilians, 1914–1918, 12.
130 Foucault, “What is an Author?”, 216.
131 IWM Con Shelf A.P. Burke, Letters to Reg 13 June and 12–15 October 1916.
133 IWM PP/MCR/169 F.A. Brettell, Letters from Peggy.
135 IWM Interview 554 C.R. Quinell, Reel 15.
137 IWM 76/27/3 Col. Hardman, Letter 3 April 1918; IWM 77/33/1 Lt. J.H. Johnson, Diary 28 December 1917; IWM Misc 108 Item 1710 Pocket Diary, 7 September 1914.
141 IWM 77/33/1 Lt. J.H. Johnson, Diary 6 November 1918.
142 SOFO Box 23 Item 99 Papers of Capt. James Harold Early, Diary 4 May 1915; IWM 77/33/1 Lt. J.H. Johnson, Diary 28 December 1916; IWM 06/5/2 Brig. General G.A. Stevens, Letter to Mother 11 November 1916; IWM 77/33/1 Lt. J. H. Johnson, Diary 28 December 1917.

Bibliography

Archival material

British Library
The B.E.F. Times, No. 3, Vol. 1 (1917)
The B.E.F. Times, No. 5, Vol. 2. (1918)
Cambridgeshire Territorial Gazette, No. 4(1916)

Great War Archive (GWA), Oxford University [Online Database]
GWA (http://ww1lit.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/items/show/5896, accessed 6 October 2016):
   Postcard Kept Throughout the War by Sapper E. Grantham

Imperial War Museum, London
IWM 01/21/1: Private Papers of H.T. Madders
IWM 02/43/1: Private Papers of R.E.P. Stevens
IWM 03/30/1: Private Papers of W. Vernon
Hoping for victorious peace 215

IWM 05/8/1: Private Papers of W. Summers
IWM 06/5/2: Private Papers of Brig. General G.A. Stevens
IWM 07/02/1: Private Papers of S.B. Smith
IWM 07/56/1: Private Papers of A.W. Andrews
IWM 08/66/1: Private Papers of 2nd Lt. D. Henrick Jones
IWM 08/94/1: Private Papers of 2nd Lt. W.J. Lidsey
IWM 09/34/1: Private Papers of Capt. A.J. Lord
IWM 12/36/1: Private Papers of F. Hubard
IWM 13/09/1: Private Papers of H. Milner
IWM 66/96/1: Private Papers of Reverend M.A. Bere
IWM 66/117/1: Private Papers of Capt. G.H. Greenwell
IWM 75/78/1: Private Papers of L/Cpl. K.M. Gaunt
IWM 76/27/3: Private Papers of Col. Hardman
IWM 77/33/1: Private Papers of Lt. J.H. Johnson
IWM 77/83/1: Private Papers of S.A. Newman
IWM 80/19/1: Private Papers of R.G. Plint
IWM 84/46/1: Private Papers of Capt. M. Hardie
IWM 90/17/1: Private Papers of A.G. Osborn
IWM 96/24/1: Private Papers of Pte. W.M. Anderson
IWM 98/28/1: Private Papers of Pte. F.G. Senyard
IWM 99/13/1: Private Papers of Major S.O.B. Richardson
IWM Con Shelf: Private Papers of A.P. Burke
IWM Con Shelf: Private Papers of Lt. R.D. Sheffield
IWM Misc 108 Item 1710: Pocket Diary
IWM P 146: Private Papers ofLt. Col. C.S. Baines
IWM P 430: Private Papers of Canon H.R. Bate
IWM PP/MCR/33: Private Papers of Maj. J.S. Knyvett
IWM PP/MCR/144: Private Papers of S. Judd
IWM PP/MCR/169: Private Papers Lt. F.A. Brettell
IWM PP/MCR/269: Private Papers of Reverend E.N. Mellish
IWM EPH 1915: “Bullet Crucifix” (artefact)
IWM EPH 10150: “Ring” (artefact)
IWM Interview 554: C.R. Quinnell

Liddle Collection, University of Leeds
Liddle/WW1/GS/0144: Papers of A & C Black and Company
Liddle/WW1/GS/0266: Papers of Pte. E.A. Cannon
Liddle/WW1/GS/0273: Papers of Capt. C. Carrington
Liddle/WW1/GS/0313: Papers of Pte. C. Clarke
Liddle/WW1/GS/0583: Papers of S. Frankenburg
Liddle/WW1/GS/0746: Papers of H.O. Hendry

Manchester Regiment (MR) Archive, Ashton-Under-Lyne
MR 2/17/65: Papers of John Douglas Powell
MR 3/17/126: Papers of Pte. John Peat
MR 3/17/139: Papers of H. Bridge
The National Archives, Kew
WO 95/2085/3–4: War Diary 10th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment
WO 256/14: Diary of Field Marshal Haig
National Army Museum (NAM), London
NAM 1959-03-34(4): The Somme Times: with which are incorporated The Wipers Times,
The “New Church” Times & The Kemmel Times, No. 1 Vol. 1 (Monday 31 July 1916)
NAM 1992-09-139-6: Papers of A. Joy
NAM 2005–2–6: Papers of Capt. Maurice Asprey
NAM 7403-29-486-144: Papers of Sgt. Harry Hopwood

Royal Fusiliers (RFM) Archive, London
RFM.ARC. 2012.146.1: Albert Victor Arthur
RFM.ARC. 2012.958: Ernest T. Marler
RFM.ARC. 2495: Sgt. S. Gill
RFM.ARC 2013.8.2: Pte. P.N. Wright
RFM.ARC. 3032: L/Cpl. C. White

Soldiers of Oxfordshire (SOFO) Museum Archive, Woodstock
Box 16 3/4/N/2: Lt. ReginaldN. Neville
Box 16 Item 61: Collection of 15 Patriotic Cards 1914–1918 Vintage
Box 23 Item 99: Capt. James Harold Early

Published material


