Glenda Abramson, University of Oxford

The Labour Battalions in the Ottoman Army.

In the First World War the Ottoman army used labour battalions (amele taburlari) in which non-Moslem conscripts were employed in heavy labour, mainly transport and road-building. The battalions were formed to replace Turkish soldiers who had been sent to the fronts, especially in Palestine and Central Anatolia. Generally the conditions in these camps were severe, with large numbers of men suffering and dying from various forms of deprivation and disease. This paper examines the experience of two Jewish soldiers from Jerusalem who served in these labour battalions in Palestine and Western Anatolia, as recounted in their diaries.

References

Memorials and historic sites of past wars have become both places for memorial and resourceful tourist destinations. A tension exists between these two roles, and as Foley and Lennon posit (2000: 58) ‘Interpretation of such elemental sites of European history continually has to be managed with care. Its relationship to tourism and its potential appearance as spectacle and entertainment are problematic’, especially when offered to tourists who are more interested in horror, atrocity and suffering than on the commemorative or educational aspects. Although the time-span that separates the actual facts of the WW1 and our modern society could have sanitised the perception of the dark connotations of the sites, the global significance of WW1 in the configuration of our modern world has allowed the interpretations and narratives of the sites to reflect some of the war’s traumatic and tragic consequences. WW1 sites could thus be defined as Dark Tourism attractions where the interpretation and narratives are associated with death, violence, disaster, horror, atrocity and suffering (Lennon & Foley 2000: 3), and where the tragic consequences of past events can still be perceived (Lennon and Foley 2000: 11; Stone & Sharpley 2008: 578).

This paper will explore how the contradictions between the commodification of sites through tourism and their commemorative role pervades the rhetoric of the texts and the language employed in their narratives, especially in advertising where the ultimate purpose of economic benefit is clearly evident. The language of tourism advertising tries to entice the potential customer to a site where a consumerist approach is usually constrained but still present. Thus, the usual rhetoric employed in such advertising (Calvi 2004, 2005; Calvi & Mapelli 2011; Capelli 2007; Lam 2007; Manca 2008; Nigro 2008), charged with euphemistic and overly positive denotations and connotations, is contested but never totally absent.

References


From ‘Inwardness’ to ‘Bloody Rift’: Margarete Susman on the Causes of the First World War

The outbreak of the First World War radically altered the life and career of the German-Jewish writer Margarete Susman (1872-1966): while she had been writing for the Frankfurter Zeitung since 1907, the war marked a political turn in her journalism. She had previously written predominantly feuilleton reviews; she now branched out into a new realm of direct political engagement. While she went on to write hundreds of essays and numerous books, many of them politically oriented, it was in two pieces about the war years in Germany, ‘Kriegsbriefe deutscher Studenten’ (Neue Zürcher Zeitung 1921) and ‘Die Revolution und die Frau’ (Das Flugblatt 1918) that Susman found her voice as a public intellectual.

This presentation engages in close reading of these two essays. While they appear at first to be about two different groups at discrete historical moments (young German men fighting in and reflecting on the war on the one hand, and women contemplating the November Revolution on the other), they are in fact interrelated attempts to understand the legacy of German metaphysics for German politics, and thus for the events of the war years. Susman performs a frank examination of the response to the war on the part of Germany’s women and its intellectual class, respectively, and zeroes in on the problematic nature of each. She diagnoses the grave societal ills that led Germany into war and kept its people from questioning the cause: the apolitical nature of German women (particularly in contrast with their French, Russian and British counterparts) and their resultant lack of freedom in the face of nationalistic ideology; and a dichotomy – with its roots in the philosophy of Luther, Kant and Hegel – between ‘internal’ life (spirit, conscience, morality) and ‘external’ life (politics, economics, profession). Not content with mere diagnosis, Susman’s essays probe why and how this had come to be the German state of affairs, and how it could be rectified in the postwar years – in other words, how the German people, having enabled the war, might atone for their guilt. My analysis of these interrogations brings the following themes into focus:

- the proliferation of war literature like Kriegsbriefe deutscher Studenten (the book that occasioned Susman’s essay), which collected letters written by soldiers at the front.
- the alleged corruption of German Idealism by Prussianism, and by the governing class of the Wilhelmine era, via the mobilization of the concept of duty.
- the impact of the war on the women’s movement in Germany.
- the November Revolution as a response to the war and an attempt to atone for its injustices.
- the relationship between moral and political philosophy, particularly with respect to war and revolution.

References
Many films highlighted the ‘Hun’ devastation of homes and villages in occupied France and Belgium, but none was more explicit than ‘The Heart of Humanity’, made in 1918. Directed by Allen Holubar, it stars Dorothy Phillips as Nanette, an American girl living in a small Canadian village. She is courted by John Patricia, eldest of the 5 Patricia brothers (played by William Stowell), and they happily wed. At the start of the war, John and his 4 brothers all volunteer for duty and are sent to the battlefields of France and Belgium. And one by one they die, until only John is left, taken prisoner by the Germans. But what about Nanette? Having given birth to John’s child, she takes action—she trains as a Red Cross nurse and is sent to a small, devastated Belgian village to care for sick and homeless children. Meanwhile, John escapes from captivity, gets back to Allied lines, finds out that Nanette is in a village about to be attacked (again) by Germans, and rushes to her aid. The Germans get there first and when their leader, Lt. Eberhard (‘the man you love to hate’—Erich von Stroheim) sees Nanette, he decides to have a ‘little fun’. And then occurs the notorious climax of the film: Eberhard begins to rip the clothes off Nanette (including biting off her blouse buttons) intent on raping her; when a crying child in the room disturbs him, he takes time out from the assault to viciously throw the child out of a window. Nanette goes into shock (PTSD); John enters, kills Eberhard; Nanette is sent back to Canada. At the end of the war John returns; he takes Nanette’s hand, and she smiles at him. But does she really recognize him? Do they resume their life together? The audience is left to wonder. Additionally, the film reinforces the negative opinion of German soldiers in general, which carried over in the mindset of many Americans in the post-World-War I era.

Reference

The Heart of Humanity at Silentra.com; The Screen - The Heart of Humanity - Movie review - NY Times-1918-12-22 Retrieved 5-13-201
Peter C. Appelbaum

Jewish Chaplains in the German Army of World War One: Loyalty Betrayed

The First World War witnessed the first official recognition by the Prussian Ministry of War that the c. 10,000 Jewish soldiers who had volunteered early in the war required their own spiritual care. In all c. 100,000 Jews served in the German army. At war’s beginning six chaplains initially served; by 1918 this number had grown to c. 30. At least thirty chaplains served, from all over the Reich. A deep sense of patriotism informed them all. Governmental financial support was slow to appear and never equalled that given to Catholic and Protestant chaplains, although Jewish chaplains were responsible for entire armies. Their primary responsibility lay in arranging services, visiting field hospitals, helping with correspondence, arranging burials, and distributing packages from home. On the Eastern Front, soup kitchens were organized for needy Jewish refugees made homeless by mass expulsions by the Tsarist army at the beginning of the war. Soldiers were cared for irrespective of faith. German military authorities supported holding of services on Jewish High Holidays, other festivals, and the Sabbath (Berger, 2006). Georg Salzberger held Passover services (including catered Seders) and New Year/Yom Kippur services for several hundred soldiers during the battle of Verdun and Martin Salomonski held services during the Battle of the Somme: on New Year he gathered c.1600 Jewish soldiers for services and meals in Brussels. Aron Tänzer held Passover Seders and other services in Pinsk and Brest-Litovsk while Paul Lazarus held large Passover services in 1917 in Skopje, Macedonia. Services were held in barns, churches, ruined houses, caves, synagogues (where available), and in the open; troops came from miles around to attend. Jewish prisoners of war were included in chaplains’ duties where possible. Chaplains of West and East held regular conferences where matters such as troop welfare, religious services, kosher catering, and counteraction of anti-Semitism, Jewish prisoners of war, civilian welfare, and publication of a Feldgebetbuch [military prayer book] were discussed. Christian officers and men often participated in Jewish services and celebratory meals, which always included prayers for the Kaiser. Documents produced by Jewish chaplains include texts of sermons they delivered (Italiener, 1916) diaries (Salzberger, 1916; Salomonski, 1917), articles written for Jewish journals, official reports sent to Army Headquarters, memoirs written after the war, and photographs. Whilst duty, love of Fatherland, and hope for the future permeates their writings, some rabbis were concerned about the future of Germany’s Jews after the war and the effect of the Jewish Census of October 1916 on the increasing anti-Semitism in the German army during 1917 and 1918. All chaplains returned to their communities after the war. A few died before 1941; most fled the Nazis into exile, but four chaplains were murdered in the Holocaust.

References

Peter C. Appelbaum

Infections in the First World War German Army

Infections took a terrible toll on all armies during World War One (Atenstaedt, 2011). In Germany, Robert Koch pioneered routine culture of pathogenic bacteria (Metchnikoff, 1939), and Paul Ehrlich discovered the first antimicrobial – Salvarsan for treatment of syphilis (Ehrlich, 1911). Venereal diseases were rampant: no antibacterials were available to treat gonorrhoea and, other than Salvarsan, ineffective and highly toxic mercury was the only therapy against syphilis. Principles of antisepsis, hygiene, and public health were well known. However, static trench warfare gave rise to infections that could not be prevented. Shrapnel wounds were contaminated with soil, human and animal excreta, a safe water supply was not always present, and lice, fleas and ticks could not be eradicated from trenches. Wounds became routinely infected, tetanus was common because of wound contamination with horse excreta (which normally contain tetanus spores), head wounds became septic and infection spread to the meninges, and simple wounds of the limbs rapidly spread through the bloodstream to become bacteraemic. Once general sepsis set in (from whatever cause), death was universal. The wounded, left for extended periods in no-man’s land in mud, dirt, excreta until brought in for treatment, routinely developed wound infections. Skin infections and boils were common, especially amongst cavalrymen, and could not be prevented. Without antibacterials, infections could only be treated – where possible – by excision and drainage. Bacterial meningitis and tetanus were always fatal. Introduction of prophylactic anti-tetanus serum after the first few months of the war saved many lives, but fatalities occurred from serum anaphylaxis (Wever & van Bergen, 2012). Contamination of the water supply during periods of rain and flooding gave rise to dysentery, typhoid fever and cholera which were also rampant in the civilian population on the Eastern Front and in the Balkans. Post-operative bacterial pneumonia was common, especially in debilitated patients. Epidemic louse-borne typhus was a constant problem and led to the death of many hundreds of thousands of soldiers from all sides on the Eastern Front and in the Balkans. Close proximity, difficulty of changing clothes, and unsatisfactory hygiene made it impossible to remove lice in the trenches. Crude typhoid fever and cholera vaccines were available by the time war began, and troops were routinely vaccinated; tetanus and louse-borne typhus vaccines were unavailable. Strict aseptic surgical techniques could do nothing for wounds already infected. And then, in 1918, epidemic influenza A, killed millions especially amongst the debilitated (Barry, 2005).

References

In this paper I want to compare Australian Labor’s experience of the First World War with that of its counterparts in other countries. Australia’s experience of the war is regularly treated as nationally distinct by both proponents and opponents of the Anzac myth. But some of the truly distinct aspects of that experience are often lost.

First, I want to compare attempts to resist mobilization for war. Labour and socialist movements were everywhere the most important source of potential resistance to the war. On the one hand, Australian Labor’s easy embrace of the war at the outset contrasted markedly with the initial desperate hostility and then anguished acquiescence of many other labour and socialist parties. On the other hand, with respect to the more circumscribed goal of stopping conscription, Australian Labor had striking, indeed, unique, success.

Second I want to compare the effects of the war on labour and the left. In the short term the experience of the war was a serious blow for Australian Labor. By contrast, in many belligerent countries – both victors and vanquished – the left often made basic institutional gains like universal suffrage or responsible government. In the long run the war also served to weaken the Australian left by producing (or reshaping) a militarized notion of social equality and solidarity. But in this respect, Australian experience may have more in common with other historically liberal English-influenced societies than is often recognised.

References

Ian D. Armour, Grant MacEwan University

Nailing ANIMAL: The historiography of war origins and the durability of public stereotypes

Anyone teaching twentieth-century European history, especially at university level, will be familiar with certain public stereotypes: interpretations of complex historical events which have long been exploded by historical scholarship, but whose simplified explanation by politicians, journalists and other media, and – regretfully – by some secondary school teachers remains firmly entrenched in the lay consciousness: the 'inevitability' of the Bolshevik Revolution, for instance, or the tendency to attribute the rise of Hitler, and thus the outbreak of the Second World War, to the Treaty of Versailles. Of these public stereotypes, however, none seems more enduringly anchored in the public mind, despite all the efforts of historians, than the traditional explanation for the origins of the First World War, elements of which go back to 1914 itself. So hackneyed has this stereotype become, that history teachers in the United States, at least, have reduced it to a convenient – because easily teachable – acronym: ANIMAL, the initials of which stand for 'Alliances, Nationalism, Imperialism, Militarism, Anarchy and Leadership'.

Although the voluminous historiography of war origins has in some respects come full circle, with renewed attention being paid to the role of armaments races, nationalism and other 'unspoken assumptions', it would be very hard to find a professional historian today who seriously defends the thesis that the 'alliance system' of itself was a cause of war in 1914; or that imperialism generally triggered hostilities; or that militaristic attitudes, or arms races, had to result in war; and so on. Why, then, does ANIMAL survive? Is this a tribute to the impossibility of reducing a complex topic to readily assimilable proportions? An indictment of the teaching profession? A result of the sheer plethora of sources and secondary literature? My paper will attempt a whistle-stop review of the historiography of the subject, but will concentrate on demonstrating why each of ANIMAL’s components deserves to be laid to rest.
In 1897, the German Empire joined the scramble for China and leased Jiaozhou Bay in the Shandong Province. However, the German colony in China was short-lived. On 16 August 1914, shortly after the outbreak of the First World War, Britain’s ally Japan submitted an ultimatum to the German government demanding the immediate surrender of Qingdao. After a short period of fighting, and the siege of Qingdao, the German colony surrendered on 7 November 1914. After the fall of Qingdao, around 4500-4800 German prisoners of war (POWs) were transported to Japan to spend the rest of the war in around fifteen POW camps.

So far, comparatively little research has been carried out on the PoW camps in Japan during the First World War, but the general consensus in secondary sources, despite some contradictory primary source evidence, seems to favour the idea of a comparatively comfortable life for German prisoners. As Maekawa (2008:179) stated, ‘during World War I, German POWs, who were interned in Japan, were treated well […]’. Mr Drenckhahn, then director of the Tokyo branch of the Siemens-Schuckert Werke, who frequently visited the camps, reported in March 1915 (BArch RM3/6863) that the Japanese were earnestly trying to ‘ease the time of imprisonment and make it as agreeable as possible’. Many contemporary Western observers argued that the main reason for this was Meiji Japan’s desire to be a respected, and equal, Great Power, which resulted in adherence to international PoW conventions in order to gain and maintain international respect as a ‘civilised nation’. Drenckhahn believed that the Japanese ‘want to prove that they did not study in Germany in vain and that they now have real civilisation and culture’.

In the light of this interpretation, this paper analyses how the German PoW viewed their captors, with particular reference to categorisation in terms of ‘culture’, ‘civilisation’ and ‘race’. It is interesting to note that the primary sources indicate a divergence in conditions and treatment between different camps, which seems to have had an influence on how the PoW viewed their imprisonment and their captors. This paper will analyse the different factors that influenced PoW perception.
Bjarne S. Bendtsen, Aarhus University, Denmark

Through war and peace under three flags – the war experiences of a Northern Schleswiger

After Denmark’s traumatic defeat in the 1864 war with Prussia and Austria, and the ensuing cession of Schleswig and Holstein, many Danish speaking Schleswigers immigrated to the USA, not least to avoid Prussian conscription. The majority, however, stayed and endured conscription and the harsh Prussian rule to be able to vote for Schleswig’s return to Denmark, as was mentioned in §5 of the 1866 Peace of Prague – a paragraph that was repealed by Prussia and Austria in 1878, which, however, hardly anybody in Denmark or among the ‘Danes’ in Schleswig acknowledged.

The paper examines, as a case study of these Schleswigers, the ‘Dane’ Boy Jessen, who fought in the German army during the First World War, fled to neutral Denmark in 1916 while his regiment was fighting at Verdun, and eventually immigrated to the USA in 1926. In his memoirs Fra Slesvig til Nebraska (From Schleswig to Nebraska, 1952, later published in English as Living under Three Flags) with the additional title: ‘The Experiences of a Danish Emigrant under Three Flags’, he describes his dramatic journey through life. After the war, Jessen was ‘relocated’ from Germany to Denmark as the northern part of Schleswig was handed back to Denmark after a referendum in 1920, which was part of the Versailles Treaty. Due to the financial turmoil in the 1920s, however, he had to leave the farm he had bought near the new Danish-German border, after which he and his family immigrated to Nebraska. The paper focuses on Jessen’s descriptions of his war experiences, his feeling(s) of national belonging and identity in relation to the war, his escape to Denmark and later his migration to Nebraska, the potential tension with Danish-Americans – or any other Americans – who fought on the other side in the war, and in general how he managed to settle in the new homeland.

References


Judith Beniston, University College London

Remembering Verdun on Stage and Screen: E.W. Moeller’s *Douaumont oder die Heimkehr des Soldaten Odysseus* and Contemporary Film

This paper will offer a critical examination of E.W. Moeller’s *Douaumont oder die Heimkehr des Soldaten Odysseus* (1929; also premiered in English translation, 1930). As its title suggests, the play is an archetypal *Heimkehrerstück* and as such focuses on the traumatic legacy of Verdun, whilst also drawing attention to the returning soldier’s critical, alienated perspective on civilian society. While the Homeric intertexts universalize the domestic upheavals and disruption of traditional gender roles caused by the soldier’s absence, the shell-shocked veteran is horrified to find his experiences travestied in a ‘war film with love interest’. At the end of the silent movie era, just as theatre and film were moving towards hard-hitting, realistic depictions of frontline experience, such as *Journey’s End, Die endlose Straße* or *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Moeller’s play implicitly lambasts earlier box-office hits such as King Vidor’s *The Big Parade* (1925). While the soldier’s harrowing account of his trauma wins over the onstage audience and is intended to be viewed as vastly superior to the romantic film, its main dramatic function is nonetheless to allow the *Heimkehrer* to pick up his life and his marriage, in what is inescapably a ‘war drama with love interest’. Thus Moeller’s play identifies a problem but is unable to offer more than a partial solution to it within the limits of his chosen medium and genre. The final sections of this paper will reflect on how far *Verdun, Vision d’Histoire* (dir. Léon Poirier, 1928) and *Die Hölle im Westen (Douaumont)* (dir. Heinz Paul, 1931) might have met with the protagonist’s approval.

References

The First World War and its Impact on British West Africa

The emergence, survival and decline of empires depend on human, material and financial resources, and some kind of commitment, the management of which require skill, and powerful political and administrative machinery at both central and local levels. The British War Cabinet was created in December 1916 and extended to become the Imperial War Cabinet in 1917 under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister Lloyd George. Without this, colonial authority and relations between the metropolis and the dependent periphery could have been undermined and even challenged. Wars have generally expressed such challenge, and Britain had to wage numerous wars in order to maintain and extend her empire until Germany challenged the prevailing balance of power, desiring to reconstruct it with a view to having better redistribution and appropriation of the world's essential resources and markets. The dominions and some of the British colonies were directly involved and required to remain loyal by contributing human, material and financial resources for the survival and even consolidation of the British Empire. The paper examines both the immediate impact of the War on British West Africa after the loss of the German market, and the immediate post-war economic and political implications. Since the whole question is about the relationship between cause and effect in a colonial framework, where mercantile capitalism prevailed, the dialectical relationship between all activities involving trade and revenues, profits and production, expenditure and management, transport and cost, determined the nature and the degree of the impact that the War could have on those activities and the possible alternatives adopted during the War and immediately afterwards.
Laura Brandon, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa

War, Art, and Landscape: Otto Dix and A. Y. Jackson

This presentation explores the impact and persistence of their First World War soldiering experiences on the subsequent art of two major artists from opposite sides of the conflict, German Otto Dix and Canadian A. Y. Jackson. As the First World War Anniversaries begin, through their art we can reflect on the enduring role of the Great War in forging identity from two perspectives.

Focussing on their landscape paintings, it shows how war engendered strong, often different, yet influential nationalist feelings and attitudes to conflict that they expressed in this particular art form to the end of their lives. Jackson (1882–1974) is the best known member of Canada’s famed Group of Seven in part because of the ubiquity of his charming images of snow-covered Quebec and Ontario villages but also because he was the Group’s chief proselytizer through a stream of articles, books, and through organizations he founded or co-founded. Canada’s First World War successes and tragedies, which he experienced as a soldier until he was wounded, and then as an artist, marked his emergence as a nationalist and provided the foundation for his life’s endeavours as a landscape painter of Canada and a nation builder through art. Not only was he an official First and Second World War artist but he lobbied ceaselessly for the existence of a Second World War program and, once this had been achieved, largely selected the artists appointed. During the second conflict he also founded a scheme to distribute tens of thousands of reproductions of Canadian art in Canada and abroad, his own included, reminding troops of what they were fighting for. Simultaneously, he contributed his talents to wartime poster designs and war art magazine articles. At the end of his life, in 1968, as the symbolic bookend to his famous 1914 painting, The Red Maple, he designed a new Canadian flag featuring the maple leaf.

Germany had defined itself as a nation through its great landscape painters for centuries. In the wake of late-nineteenth-century reunification, its young artists increasingly painted and drew their nation in art utilizing Expressionist and Futurist approaches. One such was Otto Dix (1891–1961). Like Jackson, Dix nurtured his artistic direction and his national identity as a soldier in the mud and trenches of the First World War battlefields. His reputation is largely founded on a searing and controversial series of 50 post-First World War etchings collectively entitled War and three major paintings on the subject, the most celebrated also entitled War. Throughout his life he used a landscape painting style notably reflective of his war experiences to express personal feelings about his German identity. During the Nazi era he used it to subtly communicate what he viewed as a perversion of German nationalism. In 1937, his work featured prominently in the Nazi exhibition, Degenerate Art, and much was subsequently destroyed. He was briefly jailed in 1939 and, in 1945, he was conscripted into the German army but was captured shortly afterwards. In the aftermath of the Second World War, he returned to the theme of war’s destructive impact in his art. A 1960 mural in Singen entitled War and Peace in several respects recapitulates attitudes and artistic approaches to the subject of conflict formed more 40 years earlier.
Edoardo Braschi

Italy: from a fragile alliance to the declaration of war against Austria-Hungary

The paper will examine Italy's involvement in the conflict taking into account its historical background and its national aspirations. Italy's involvement in the First World War was rooted in the Risorgimento and the cause of Irredenta. As a newly-born state, Italy was particularly concerned with consolidating its unification; this included the appropriation territories from Austria-Hungary, which it perceived as rightfully being Italian. In this way the country sought to emerge from its political isolation and enter the world stage. Focussing on diplomatic history and foreign relations the essay seeks to explain the reasons why Italy initially joined the Triple Alliance, but, later, entered the First World War on the side of this alliance’s enemies: the Allies. The essay takes also in account last historical publications on the matter that give a new portrayal of Italy's role on the causes of the conflict.

Although a founding member of the Triple Alliance of 1882, Italy’s relations with the other Central Powers were never entirely harmonious. Growing enmities came to the fore during the first Italo-Ethiopian war in 1896 and, later, with the First Moroccan Crisis in 1905. This was due to a perceived lack of political collaboration and military support among the members of the Triple Alliance. In particular, tensions in the Balkans between Austria-Hungary and Italy helped to undermine their alliance. The war of Libya in 1911 between Italy and the Ottoman Empire play also a role in deteriorating their relations and European powers balances, especially in the Balkan area. Though it was not in the interests of any of the alliance’s members to dissolve the diplomatic pact at that time, this was later to change with the diplomatic developments following the assassination of the Archduke Frank Ferdinand, which saw a deeper worsening of Italian-Austrian relations. With the outbreak of war, Italy immediately declared its neutrality, citing article 7 of the Triple Alliance. Subsequently, it signed the Treaty of London in April 1915 with France and Great Britain. And on May of that year, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary.

The final part of the essay will present reasons as to why Italy joined the First World War, in the way that it did. It will also discuss the outcomes of the Paris Peace Conference, underlining how Italy did not achieve what it aims. Beyond this, it will discuss the sense of diplomatic shame that Italy felt following the disappointments at the Conference of Versailles; it was this perceived slight that would help to shape the fierce sense of nationalism that would later emerge in the movement of Fascism.

References


While several studies of the First World War mention the role of church organizations, chaplains, and other religious leaders, few explore the relationship between faith communities and their heads of state. Moreover, although recent monographs have studied the role of religion in national contexts, contemporary scholarship on the Great War does not discuss the significant role religious perspectives shared across national boundaries played in this pivotal period. The Great War forever changed the international relations, in part because it contributed to the notion of an international community. This paper proposes that religion was instrumental to the way many perceived the Great War and, as a result, the nature and purpose of international community once the war came to an end.

This paper will examine this international community of liberal Protestants that included, most notably, President Wilson, Ambassador Rice, and General Jan Christaan Smuts. The international community of Christians to which Rice, Wilson, Smuts, and others belonged saw the Great War as an opportunity to witness and contribute to their own millennial expectations. To liberal Protestants around the world, this unprecedented conflict was not only a battle between belligerents but, more importantly, a biblical mandate to establish a brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. Using the correspondence between these men as well as their public addresses, this paper will argue that the Great War united an international Christian community that understood the war as an opportunity to re-shape the world according to their vision of Christian millennialism. Rather than keep their religion separate from their political manoeuvres, these men held a world view that wedded their religion and politics.
As historians and scholars, one of our ongoing tasks is to create a more nuanced understanding of the past. Yet, for those of us in the classroom, of equal importance to our research is sharing knowledge with our students and creating a dialogue that allows them to develop a greater appreciation for the complexities of the past. There are many avenues of pedagogical engagement, one of which is in-class role playing.

The First World War, in particular the Paris Peace Conference, has proven to be an excellent topic for the development of an interactive game. The parameters of the game – both the out of class research and the in-class presentations – allow students to acquire detailed knowledge about the war and the conference. The game additionally provides a format through which students can delve into the varying perspectives of the conference participants, in particular Britain, France, Italy, Germany, and the United States. This awareness allows them not only to understand the results of the conference, but why and how those results developed as well. It also lays the groundwork for the study of historic events that came about as a consequence of the peace treaties, events which form the foundation for subsequent classroom lectures and lessons.

The objective of this presentation is to describe the parameters of the Paris Peace Conference role playing game as it was developed for a college-level modern western civilization course (1600-present). It will describe the game topic and provide an overview of how the game progresses throughout the course of several class periods. It will highlight feedback from students based on their experiences, thus gauging the contemporary student perspective of the events of 1919 and their significance to western civilization. Finally, the presentation will offer some suggestions for how this game can be modified for other courses to allow students to gain a stronger appreciation for the First World War, the Paris Peace Conference, and the events which unfolded as a result of the failed peace.

References

http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson%27s_Fourteen_Points

http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/versailles.html
Sally Charnow, Hofstra University

‘A rabbi, a priest, and a minister …’: Edmond Fleg’s *La Maison du Bon Dieu*, a Representation of Ecumenism in 1920’s Paris

During the Great War French religious leaders – Christians and Jews – along with politicians across the political spectrum came together under the single canopy of the Union Sacrée. This ecumenical moment encouraged religious leaders and practitioners alike to reach across their doctrinal difference and seek out their spiritual connections in the name of France. Edmond Fleg’s 1920 play *La Maison du Bon Dieu* focuses on a conversation between a priest, a rabbi, and a minister who are all billeted in the same house in Alsace during the Great War. A secondary narrative thread revolves around the developing love between a robust male schoolteacher with a defiantly secular world view and a young pious Catholic woman. The three clergy tell jokes, reminisce and find the continuities among their various belief systems. The play posits reconciliation between the Christian Churches and European Jewry. Fleg’s play was clearly informed by actual experience during the war in which as Annette Becker has explained, chaplains – Catholic, Protestant, Jewish – were engaged in the same work of consolation and encouragement (Becker 1998). They took pleasure in the company of their ‘colleagues’ whom they mostly disliked before the war. Ecumenism was lived every day among the men, one cleric reflected.

Fleg is known as a novelist, poet, and playwright, and much of his literary oeuvre is steeped in Jewish and Christian biblical legend and reaches for the most universalistic interpretations. Fleg’s idealism, as he showed in his play, was only realizable through hard work and commitment. *La Maison de Bon Dieu* suggests a dynamic relationship between the Jewish renaissance in inter-war Paris and wider French interest in the meaning and value of spirituality.

References


Zacharoula Christopoulou, University College London

Literary Representations of the World at War: ‘A world of reinvigorated myth’

In his landmark work *The Great War and Modern Memory* Paul Fussell points out the remarkable fact that in the midst of the war demonstrating the climax of technology and material progress the troops turned to modes of thought that belonged to past eras. He describes extensively how the soldiers relied on superstition, ritual and religion in order to cope with the extreme experience of the trenches. The world at the front became for a span of four years a ‘world of reinvigorated myth’ (Fussell 1975). That included not only the simple-minded belief in talismans and rituals, but also the belief in fate. Within this frame of thought, man’s life is metaphysically pre-determined and its end could be revealed beforehand by signs and omens. For Fussell this is indicative of a leap back to medieval modes of thinking.

For many of the author-combatants this is a fact casually inserted into the fictionalisation of their experience. Therefore, Sassoon in *Memoirs of an Infantry Soldier* makes his protagonist predict a comrade’s death because for him his countenance of ‘veiled melancholy’ was a sign that he was already forewarned about his annihilation (Sassoon 2000). Manning will also have the death of his main character and his closest companion prophesied by an omen appearing to them at dusk, while they are casually having a walk in a French village (Manning 1999). A similar fateful forewarning is found in *Wooden Crosses*, where the main character witnesses a ‘prophetic cross’ made by the moonlight on his comrade who will be shot dead less than five pages afterwards (Dorgelès 1921). The fact that the metaphysical is incorporated to what aims at being an accurate account of the war is indicative of an ideological change borne out of an experience as extreme and unprecedented as life in the World War I trenches. The soldier-authors chronicle not only the degeneration of the soldiers’ minds, but also of the entire European civilisation, as the use of industrial killing power ruined the bourgeois fantasy of progress and marked a thrust back to the illogical and atavistic.

References


This paper will examine precursors to the Second-World-War experience in France via the study of collaboration and resistance in the occupied Nord during the First World War. I will suggest a redefinition of these loaded terms so that we might better understand and analyse the experience of this occupation. The specificities of this occupation will be outlined, after which I will argue that the notion of ‘mauvaise conduite’ (misconduct or bad behaviour) should replace the term ‘collaboration.’ This reflects the understanding among many of the occupied population of behaviours that breached the limits of respectability and acceptability, such as engaging in friendly, sexual, or economic relations with the Germans; working for the Germans; or denouncing compatriots to the occupiers, for numerous reasons.

I will also highlight the various forms resistance took: ‘respectable resistance’ involving the protests of local notables at German demands, often invoking international law; symbolic resistance, such as the wearing of national colours or the writing and performing of humorous songs and poems mocking the Germans; and active resistance, such as engagement in espionage and escape networks. The way in which suffering became tied to resistance and the role of ‘mauvaise conduite’ and resistance in the development of the occupation narrative (and memory) since 1918 will also be examined. I seek to shed light on the complexity of the occupation, but at the same time to provide some analytical tools for aiding our comprehension of this reality, including beyond the Nord. I will acknowledge the advances made in the field by Philippe Nivet, Annette Becker, and Jean-Yves Le Naour, but call for further analysis and discussion of terms used rather too readily in the historiography, around which debates continue regarding the Second World War.

This paper will be based on occupation diaries, poems, police records, letters between French and German authorities, German posters, and a variety of other primary documents.
Forgotten Places. Political Memory Seen Through First World War Memorials in Portugal, 1919-1933

By analysing memorials to the war dead, my presentation seeks to deconstruct the idea that war and the culture of war ushered in a schism with modernity in liberal societies (Fussell 1975, Prost 1994, Winter 1995). The profound divergences in opinions regarding Portugal’s participation in the European front during the First World War alongside the allies, as well as the results of this participation, determined the specific nature of its memorial process and relegated it to the possible status of a mutilated victor such as Italy (Mosse 1990). Thus, by analysing the agents, places, symbols and words found in First World War memorials this study aims to examine the nature of the official memory of the First World War in Portugal between 1919 and 1933 to understand up to what point the First Republic’s incapacity to plan a consistent memorial policy and to deal with the trauma generated by the war precipitated its downfall and the rise of fascism in Portugal.

References

Kevin Cramer, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis

The New German East: Philanthropy, Volk, and the Christian Mission of the Gustavus Adolphus Association during the First World War

The Gustavus Adolphus Association was founded in Leipzig in 1832 as a lay philanthropic foundation to aid impoverished German Protestant communities living outside of Germany under Catholic rule. Over the next one hundred years the Association grew to become one of the most wealthy and influential religious charities in Germany. But the outbreak of war in 1914, and the subsequent expansion of German military control of Eastern Europe between 1916 and 1918, radically transformed its original religious and charitable mission: the support and preservation of the ‘German Protestant diaspora.’ This paper will examine the evolution of the Association’s increasingly militant nationalist focus on its ‘Kriegsarbeit,’ the consolidation and expansion of ‘Kirche und Volkstum’ in the East, and its collaboration with civil and military authorities to create the foundations for a comprehensive German settlement project in the occupied territories of the ‘New German East’. For the Association, the territorial provisions of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk constituted a major step toward the fulfilment of this aim. From the perspective of the Association’s leadership, Germany’s defeat in 1918, and the territorial exactions of Versailles, was an ‘earth-shaking tragedy’ that wiped out everything they had accomplished since 1832. Further, the loss of the eastern territories and the creation of new national regimes in eastern and central Europe had dramatically worsened the plight of the diaspora. The war and its aftermath also fundamentally altered the Association’s traditional confessional character and mission and, as significantly, its political orientation.

References


Santanu Das, King’s College London

The Singing Sepoys: encounter, ethnology and music in a German POW camp

This paper will examine the relationship between ethnology, colonialism and the history of emotions by focusing on an extraordinary series of encounters between Indian sepoys and German academics in two POW camps outside Berlin. In a rare ethnological venture during the war years, the German authorities segregated a large number of non-white prisoners, including a substantial group of Indian sepoys, for purposes of academic research: they were studied by a group of German linguists, anthropologists, ethnographers and philologists; they were endlessly photographed, their bodies measured and a mosque was built for the Muslim POWs; between 1915 and 1918, the Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission made several thousand sound-recordings of their songs, stories and poems. My aims are two-fold: how were the Indian soldiers understood and represented by the German captors and academics and what was the degree and nature of interactions? Second, how can we recover the cultural and emotional worlds of these Indian sepoys from these photographs and sound-recordings? If the POW experience and songs have received some attention in recent years from linguists and cultural historians (particularly in Roy, Liebau and Ahuja et al ed. ‘When The War Began, We Heard of Different Kings’), I shall play some of these recordings and read (or hear) them as emotional and cultural testimonies and place them alongside both oral narratives circulating in India at the time, as well as freshly recovered diaries, notes and photographs by both German academics (who studied them) and camp commanders that survive in different archives in Berlin. What tools do we need to understand these unique oral/aural documents? Where are any spaces of individual expression in these recordings? What is the relationship between cultural testimony and the lyric form? Two points will guide my analysis: in a context where the documents are so tantalisingly incomplete, we need to go beyond the ‘written’ text and form a closer dialogue between archival, visual and oral records. Second, we need to be alert to but also go beyond discourses based solely on power or ‘Orientalism’ to understand the nature of encounters and emotions generated in these prisoner of war camps.

References

Roy, Liebau and Ahuja ed. (2011). ‘When the war began we heard of several kings’: South Asian Prisoners in World War I Germany. Delhi.
Matthew D’Auria and Jan Vermeiren

Notions and Images of Europe during the Great War

Though the debates on Europe, on its decline, crisis and its future flourished in the interwar period and in the last months of the Second World War, it would be misleading to assume that during the Great War Europe was a concept devoid of all meaning. On the contrary, many intellectuals, historians, philosophers, economists, politicians, and artists assumed that there was some sort of European unity, in the sense of a ‘spiritual’ unity at least, tying together the belligerent nations and to be saved at all cost. They referred to such unity or commonality with complex, protean and multifarious conceptions, images and representations of ‘Europe’. Some claimed that their nation alone embodied and carried out its true values; others speculated on a different economic and political organization of the continent in order to avert future wars; for some, it was the cradle of civilization and the birthplace of a progress that had spread, in the previous centuries, to the entire world; others, on the contrary, believed that ‘progress’ itself had perverted Europe’s soul and that it was necessary to put it back on the right path. In the writings of Péguy or D’Annunzio, the calls for the heroic war for the nation’s greatness often mingled with references to a vague and yet historically meaningful European universalism; moreover, there were also others, men and women of letters, intellectuals and politicians as different as Benedetto Croce, Ernst Troeltsch, Francesco Saverio Nitti, Georg Simmel, Emile Durkheim, Bertrand Russell, Romain Rolland, Karl Kraus, Mikhail Bulgakov and many others that, at the peak of nationalist violence, spoke of Europe as a single entity and even imagined a united continent finally at peace with itself. The purpose of this chapter is to shed new light on the way notions, images and representations of Europe were articulated during the war and in its immediate aftermath.

References

‘The last, the great Crusade’: American First World War poetry and the American hegemonic project

Kees van der Pijl views U.S. intervention into the First World War as part of the ‘Wilson Offensive,’ the first attempt at establishing the U.S. as the hegemonic power in the capitalist world–system. U.S. intervention was advocated and justified by many writers during the war and the years immediately afterward. Prior to American intervention the American journalist Walter Lippmann clearly articulated a case for American intervention based on the ‘profound web of interest which joins together the western world.’ But while clear, such a case lacked the emotional resonance of Woodrow Wilson’s language of ‘the liberation and salvation of the world.’ This more emotionally resonant message was often delivered in the medium of poetry, of which a vast amount concerned with the war was written and published in the U.S. This paper will examine the ways in which the case for American intervention was encoded in American poetry, focusing particularly on American millennialist discourse analyzed by Sacvan Bercovitch as it descends from the New England Puritans. While this body of poetry is virtually unstudied—attention has been directed at the modernist, ‘disillusioned’ response to it—it reveals much about the ideological and rhetorical dimensions of U.S. involvement in the war and helps to explain the nature of the ‘adversary culture,’ in the words of Lionel Trilling, which achieved a kind of dominance in the postwar era.

References

Emmanuel Debruyne, Université de Louvain

Resistance behind the Western Front: an evolving phenomenon in a totalizing war

The occupation of Belgium and a few French départements during the First World War led citizens to organize and fight the German occupier. This resistance ‘avant la lettre’ – for the term was not yet employed as such in 1914-1918 – is partly close to that which characterized 40-45 (Debruyne, 2012). However, its context was that of a less accomplished ‘total war’, during which the use of arms was avoided by the resisters. As the WW1 occupation can be seen as a laboratory for 20th century violence (Becker, 2010), this resistance constituted an aspect of the totalization of the war, and a laboratory for clandestine warfare and its repression. Thousands of citizens were committed to intelligence networks organized by the French, British and Belgian secrets services (van Ypersele & Debruyne, 2004). Other ones created exfiltration lines for allied soldiers, but also local workers and volunteers for the allied armies, the most famous being that of Edith Cavell. The redaction and distribution of underground newspapers was also very active, especially in Belgium, with the famous Libre Belgique, and tens of less known titles (De Schaepdrijver & Debruyne, 2013). But a few thousands of these resisters were arrested by the German secret services and judged before a German military court. Many were deported to Germany, and nearly 300 were shot down.

This early resistance was of smaller scale than during WW2: it was organized into networks, but did not give rise to large movements. However, it also constituted a complex phenomenon, deeply linked to the very nature and evolution of the ongoing war. As such, WW1 resistance cannot be understood as a phenomenon on its own, but must be analyzed in the broader context of the occupation, of the military operations and of the ‘war cultures’, in the variety of their manifestations and evolutions. The early resistance has often been taken into account by WW1 historiography through some of its particular participants such as Cavell and Louise de Bettignies, or important groups, such as the Dame blanche or the Libre Belgique. But these stories have not until now offered a broad picture of the phenomenon.

This will examine the following:
1. The nature of WW1 resistance. Who were the resisters? How were they organized? What were their motivations? What was the purpose of their activities?
2. The evolution of this phenomenon. How did it appear? How did it react to repression? Was it affected by the length of the war and by ‘war-weariness’? And how were the resisters went recognized by post-war society?

References

Epistolary Self-Reflexivity: German & Canadian War Correspondence

Historians have studied soldier correspondence for its collective and individual voicing of the frustration, futility, adventure, and tedium that characterized the Great War. Yet soldiers and families recognized that however vital letters were to maintaining relationships, they were also a poor substitute for proximity and intimacy. This paper examines the ways in which soldiers grappled with the limitations of the letter both as a mode of expression and as the primary link to home. This comparative analysis of soldier correspondence explores how letter-writers addressed the inadequacy of the epistolary genre through self-reflexive expression. Self-reflexivity is ‘the process by which texts…foreground their own production’ (Stam 1992, xiii). This paper focuses on the ways in which letter-writers drew the attention of readers to the constructed nature of the text.

Self-reflexivity emerges in correspondence that suggests the suppression of communication due to factors both pragmatic and personal. German soldier Karl Josenhans observed: ‘A great many letters…give no true picture; the people who write fine-sounding letters are mostly running round miles away from the trenches’ (Wedd 2002, 41). Internal factors also contributed to the self-reflexive voice. William Jordan Currin, member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, claimed to want to abandon the artifice of writing: ‘Certainly this excursion into manual labor provoketh no muse to rise in me. Who shall sing the glory of mud, or tell the valor of men who live therein? And if there should be uncertain star for us, who am I to make recital of its shining for the easy interest of tame folk who stop at home?... In any case, pome me no pomes, and expect no pomes from me’ (Currin, 1915). Currin balks at the notion of the war letter even as he writes one. This paper draws upon specific examples, like those of Josenhans and Currin, in order to delve into the very human ways in which soldiers grappled with the limitations of letter-writing during the Great War.

This paper employs a comparative perspective. Sources include letters from German and Canadian soldiers. The German materials are derived from the archives of Berlin’s Museum für Kommunikation; the Canadian sources are drawn from the Canadian Letters & Images Project (http://www.canadianletters.ca/). The paper explores a sample of letters from these collections in an analysis of the ways in which Canadian and German soldiers contended with the limitation of the letter as a mode of connection to those left behind. While employing a transnational scope, the paper probes very human questions: Did letters bring families closer together, or did they further the chasm of experience imposed by the war? Did German and Canadian soldiers articulate similar concerns? To what extent are national and geographic differences pertinent to the epistolary form?

References

Currin, William J. (1914-1917). William J. Currin Correspondence, Denison University Archives, Granville, Ohio, USA.


Stratos N. Dordanas, University of Western Macedonia, Florina, Greece

German politics and Germanophilia in Greece during the First World War

In contrast to WWII, very little has been written about Greece in the First World War, most of which refers either to the events of that time or shortly after, and is always ideologically charged. The disagreements between Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos and King Constantine I caused the deep-rooted conflict known as the National Schism and determined the country’s international position during the Great War. This left little or no room for an objective or dispassionate assessment of the causes that divided the nation. The only exceptions are a few works based on French and British archival material, written mainly in recent years. But nothing has been done with the German archives. The present paper attempts to highlight the catalytic role that Germany and the Kaiser played in spurring and reinforcing the Greek National Schism with a view to examining the following question: To what extent did the Germanophile lobby in both the king’s court and the army determine foreign policy which conflicted with the Venizelos government? In sharp contrast to Venizelos’ position advocating that Greece join the war on the side of the Entente, Germanophilia initially took the form of political neutrality and was further strengthened through German propaganda. Germany lost its significant foothold, however, when Constantine was forced to leave the country and prominent politicians and military officers, supporters of neutrality, followed the king into exile. Nevertheless, even from abroad, their efforts to return to Greece with German assistance and oust Venizelos did not wane. The present study is based on primary sources from the archives of Germany, Austro-Hungary and Greece, as well as the available literature.

References


The Great War brought unprecedented experiences for civilian life not only in the military zone, but also on the home front. There was hardly a sphere of life not touched by war, especially in Galicia, the most eastern province of the Habsburg Empire and a region of shifting occupations, battles, trench warfare, and civil wars continuing well beyond the signing of the peace treaty.

The war in many ways became a turning point of theatre life in the city of Lemberg, capital of Galicia. The Great War meant not only collapse and deterioration of the urban theatre structure of Lemberg but also changes, transformation and creating new cultural practices. It radically influenced the lives and careers of many theatre professionals. The war blurred social divisions between high art representatives of large theatres and artists engaged in middlebrow and popular entertainment. Concerns on the part of theatrical personnel created new conditions for intermingling between artists of various nationalities – Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish.

Creating a new social reality during the Great war influenced further theatre development in the interwar period. Changes in living conditions and social status of theatre milieus caused not only transformation everyday practices but also provoked a rethinking of the role and a purpose of theatre and of a search for new aesthetics among theatre professionals.

The paper will examine the living strategies of the atre professionals during the first year of war and the Russian occupation of Lemberg. I will take micro level as a lens through which to analyse experiences and responses to the war and occupation. The paper will trace the biographies of several artists who performed in the main city theatres before the war and appeared as actors in the city’s cabarets when the war started. I will look also at cases where artists left the stage and completely changed their work during the war. The research will analyse the challenges of war and the process of artists’ adaptation to the wartime and occupation realities. It is important to examine artists’ opinions both on the role of culture during war-time and the place of artists in it. Furthermore I will present a nuanced view on questions of patriotism, propaganda and attempts to create different variants of patriotic culture.
Gabriele Eckart, Southeast Missouri State University

**Wilhelm Muster’s Humorous Deconstruction of the Colonial Dreams of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during World War I in Death Comes without a Drum**

Humorously, Wilhelm Muster’s novel *Death Comes without a Drum* (1980) with the subtitle ‘Ethnographic Patriotic Novel’ deconstructs the myth of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its desire to acquire colonies during World War I. Reading the story of the quixotic Johann Nepomuk Eibl-Eiblsfeldt, an officer of this empire who is stationed in Bosnia during the war, and his colonial dreams about commanding a colony in Africa one cannot stop laughing and smiling until the end. Every one of the fourteen chapters starts with a quoted passage from the ‘Regimentation for Service in the Imperial and Royal Army’ of Austria. Thereby, the protagonist’s fantastic colonial adventures in which he commands the territory of ‘Royal and Imperial Tibestania’ that is larger than the monarchy itself are put on a quasi-objective basis. Since in reality Austria never had a colony, the novel deconstructs the monarchy’s wishful thinking and gives us a glimpse of how the world would have been newly divided if Germany and Austria had won World War One. This paper will demonstrate how humor pervades and conditions Muster’s novel, and if we neglect it, our understanding of the work is basically flawed. This kind of humor is not a superficial layer but the author’s main strategy in his work of deconstructing the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s colonial desire.

**References**


Using digital technologies to support local and community history: Europeana 1914-1918, RunCoCo and other projects

With the centenary anniversaries of the First World War, projects are engaging the public in education, remembrance and commemorations. In the 21st century digital is a key component to this engagement, and Europeana 1914-1918 harnesses the power of these technologies. Launched in 2011, the project collects memories and artefacts through the innovative Oxford Community Collection Model. This combines online and face-to-face engagement to crowdsource digital collections of items held in homes of the public from across Europe. The initiative has, to date, revealed over 60,000 digital items (ranging from oral histories, paintings, photographs and memorabilia to unpublished memoirs, diaries, maps and letters) previously hidden from researchers and from heritage. All material is released under an open license for reuse worldwide, forming a rich collection of primary source material to drive new avenues of research and education. This paper presents Europeana 1914-1918, the Oxford Community Collection Model, and the RunCoCo advisory service, and the value of community collections in providing rich sites of exchange between academics, the heritage sector and the wider public.

Liisi Esse, University of Tartu; Stanford University Libraries

Fighting as a Minority: Estonian Soldiers inside the Russian Army and their WWI Experience

During WWI, soldiers of Estonian origin, like other minorities in the Russian Empire, formed a part of the Russian Army: about 100,000 Estonian soldiers served in the army during the war. Due to the empire's nationality policy that aimed to use the army as a ‘melting pot’ for non-Russian minorities (Von Hagen, 2004), Estonians were often scattered around in Russian-dominated contingents, receiving a chance to form separate, national contingents only in 1917. During WWI, on the eve of the collapse of the Russian Empire and the emergence of new nation-states, tensions in the army ran high. The government’s nationality policy, along with the Estonians' poor language skills and the Russians' suspicion of the minorities (especially those from the ‘German provinces’ of Estonia and Livonia) resulted in tense relations and conflicts between them and Russian rank-and-files as well as officers. All in all, Estonians' unfavorable position in the army affected their WWI experience as a whole, becoming one of the main subjects broadcasted in soldiers' letters, diaries and memoirs (Eglit, 2012). The aim of this presentation is to use the Estonian example as a case study, showing how national issues could play a significant role in forming the war experience of conscripts in multinational armies, especially of minorities.

This presentation will focus on the following issues. How did Estonian soldiers describe their position in the army? How was the latter related to and affected by the anti-German and patriotic campaigns in the empire (Lohr, 2003)? Did Russian soldiers and officers see Estonians as patriotic contributors or German spies? How did the war affect Estonians’ patriotism and anti-German stance? What was the attitude of Estonians towards Russians? How did the war contribute to the Estonian national movement? In what ways was the Estonians' experience different from that of the Russians?

The presentation will conclude that the Estonian case is a good example of how the war experiences of minorities in multinational armies were affected by their position inside the army and, therefore, may differ greatly from the experiences of dominating nations.

References


Julia Eichenberg, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin


After regaining independence in 1918, the Polish state went through a phase of parallel nation-building and state consolidation. One of the major challenges was whether and how to care for the veterans and invalids of the World War. This discussion dealt with the newly institutionalised nationality – who was part of the nation and who was not. At the same time, it raised questions with regard to the problematic memory of the First World War: how to remember and to acknowledge the Polish fallen, veterans and invalids, when Polish men had fought not for their own state, but for the armies of the partition powers of Russia, Austria and Germany. Confronted with the demands of ex-servicemen and war victims, the Polish state eventually opted for a welfare system with strong state control. This new version of the Polish welfare state was influenced by structural continuities from the partition powers of Germany and Austria, adapted to Polish needs. While the implementation of the welfare system was less successful in the interwar period than legislation might imply, the veterans’ discussion laid the ground for the 20th century Polish understanding of state welfare.

References


The First World War in the Classroom: Exploring the teacher’s perspective

In Britain, the First World War is a subject area taught across various disciplines, most prominently History and English Literature. With its series of centenaries approaching, the conflict is likely to be of increased interest to teachers in secondary as well as tertiary education. However, challenges in teaching the First World War abound: from choosing topics to cover (especially when there is limited classroom time allotted to the subject) and identifying appropriate teaching materials, to the difficult issue of balancing the need to enable students to relate to the subject of the war and its literature and yet encourage them to exercise their critical and analytical skills in a sufficiently detached manner. Problems also arise on a larger institutional level. On the one hand, there appears to be an implicit assumption in the current National Curriculum that secondary school pupils studying the First World War, in History and English Literature lessons, should be taught a fixed canon of topics – mainly the war poets and the Western Front. These tropes and clichés do not, however, reflect the advances made in academic research over the past twenty years. On the other hand, academic researchers are rarely aware of what is actually going on in the secondary-school classroom and can all too easily make false assumptions about what is being taught in schools, thus widening the gulf between secondary and university level education. This is problematic in so far as what is being taught at secondary level not only impacts on teaching the war at university level, but also crucially influences the development of the war in popular memory. Our joint paper will examine how the First World War is currently taught in British secondary-school classrooms from Year 9 upwards and how these teaching practices relate to issues of remembrance and memory. The main aim of our research is to move from a sense of frustration with the shortcomings of the current curriculum to a hopefully more productive, dialogic and interactively-based approach where teachers and academics explore the problem together. The paper will draw on the results of a new, AHRC-funded research project that commences in February 2013 with a teacher-academic exchange workshop hosted by the Institute of Historical Research at Senate House, London. This exchange will be the starting point of research into teaching practices via questionnaires and follow-up interviews with secondary-school teachers. Our project is modelled on the example of the research into Holocaust education carried out by the Institute of Education. We aim to gain insight into frontline teaching practices and enquire into how they are closely interlinked with the way the war continues to be remembered in the twenty-first century.

Reference

If we use the term ‘war literature’ today in connection with WWI in the German-speaking world – that is, if we refer to the kind of literature which described, commented on and interpreted the manifold expectations, hopes, fears, experiences, and memories connected to the First World War – the canonised works by authors like Erich Maria Remarque, Ernst Jünger, August Stramm, Ernst Toller and Karl Kraus come to mind. But there is also an almost forgotten Jewish war literature which refers to the war experiences of Jewish civilians and soldiers in the warring states. In this context Eastern European Jews (from Poland, Galicia, Russia etc.) emerged as a new type in German-Jewish literature and journalism as the so-called Ostjude. The paper plans to follow the discourse of this (literary) figure in some Jewish periodicals and literary texts mainly from Austria, and it will try to analyze the process of its changing connotations within the inner-Jewish debates about national, cultural, and religious identity.
Karen Ette, Department of English & Drama, Loughborough University

The Second Christmas Truce: Fact or Fabrication? Examining the documents of a British Soldier and his fraternisation with Ernst Jünger.

The famous Christmas Truce of 1914 was not the only such suspension of hostilities during the First World War. A second followed in 1915 but it remains far less well known, partly because such ‘fratting’, as it was known, was strongly discouraged by the military authorities on both sides. The event only came to wider attention in 1920 with the publication of Ernst Jünger’s In Stahlgewittern or Storm of Steel, a bestseller in Britain and the USA when its modified 1924 edition was translated into English in 1929. A lieutenant in the 73rd Hanoverian Fusiliers entrenched at Berles-au-Bois, Jünger took part in an encounter with soldiers from the 8th Battalion of Leicestershire Regiment which ended in the death of a supposed German soldier. The event has received some attention from military historians, but little use has yet been made of the papers of Captain CAB Elliott, a British officer who participated in the truce and conducted a fascinating correspondence with Jünger in the aftermath of Stahlgewittern’s publication.

Now deposited with the Leicestershire County Records Office, Elliott’s diaries, letters and photographs and his post-war conversations with Jünger throw intriguing light on the events of the truce and the death of the mysterious soldier, a man who might not have been quite what he seemed. This paper will use Elliott’s papers alongside regimental diaries and other accounts of the affair to investigate what may have happened in December 1915, and to examine how Jünger chose to represent the truce in a novel he reworked as late as 1978.

References

Elliott, Captain CAB. Original documents located in the Public Records Office, Wigston, Leics, shelfmark DE8402.

Jünger, Ernst, The Storm of Steel: From the Diary of a German Storm-Troop Officer on the Western Front (New York: Fertig, 1975).

Anon., Truce in the Trenches During the Second Christmas at the Front (Leicester: Leicester Mercury, 1964).
Gerhard Fischer, UNSW

The Governor-General’s Apology: Reflections on Australia’s Participation in WWI

In 1999, the Australian Governor-General, Sir William Deane, offered an apology regarding ‘the tragic, and often shameful, discrimination against Australians of German origin fostered during the World Wars’. To all those who ‘carry the emotional scars of injustice during those times as part of [their] backgrounds or family histories’, the Governor-General expressed his sympathy and regret, saying ‘how profoundly sorry’ he was ‘that such things happened in our country’.

The little known apology provides an opportunity to re-consider the role of Australia’s participation in WWI, in particular with regard to the Anzac story as the quasi-official Australian wartime narrative: the ‘spirit of Anzac’ constitutes, in the words of the same Governor-General, the ‘linchpin’ of Australian national identity. The destruction of the German Australian Community – a result of a government-sponsored populist campaign against so-called ‘enemy aliens’ – has been all but overshadowed by the monolithic Anzac historiography. Yet the campaign against the ‘enemy at home’ offers a sobering counter projection to the story of the heroic Anzacs overseas.

The paper will discuss the importance of the hitherto neglected homefront experience of Australians at war as a key element in the socio-cultural transformation of Australian society. The First World War interrupted a uniquely Australian experiment in pluralistic and multicultural democracy that had begun around the middle of the nineteenth century and that received a strong boost in the 1890s with the formation of an independent Australian national identity in statu nascendi. WWI confirmed Prime Minister William Morris (‘Billy’) Hughes’ aim of creating a White Australian society that was exclusively British in its ethnic, ‘racial’ and cultural make-up. The First World War confirmed the British destiny of the Australian people; it was to be a home for white Australian ‘Britishers’, monocultural and monolingual.

Whereas the Anzac narrative proclaims a breakthrough towards a new period in Australian history, indeed the founding of the nation, the end of the German-Australian community as an independent socio-cultural entity confirms the end of an innovative era: it is a step backward, a return to pre-1890s attitudes and values, resulting in a strengthening of the previously dominant pattern of Anglo-conformity and insistence on immigration from the British Isles. This pattern became the dominant mode of cultural identity in the decades between the world wars; it was reinforced with the internment of enemy aliens during the Second World War.
Richard S. Fogarty, University at Albany, State University of New York

Mosques, Muslims, and Morale in France and Germany, 1914-1918

When they captured North African soldiers serving in the French army on the Western Front, German authorities saw an opportunity to enlist these Muslims in the jihad against the Entente that the Kaiser had induced his Ottoman allies to declare. To that end, these prisoners enjoyed special solicitude from their captors: held in a camp outside Berlin with other Muslim prisoners of war from the Russian and British armies, the men could worship in a specially-built mosque, study the Quran, and avoid the work details to which non-Muslim prisoners were subject. German and Ottoman officials hoped this would raise the morale of these men sufficiently to render them susceptible to propaganda aimed at inducing them to fight in the Ottoman army against their former colonial masters, the French, and their Entente allies. At the same time, aware of these efforts by the Central Powers, French authorities sought to sustain morale among their North African colonial subjects in uniform. Like their German and Ottoman counterparts, French military and political officials focused on North Africans’ religious identity, arguing that France, not Germany or the Ottoman Empire, represented the true interests of Islam and Muslims. Not coincidentally, French efforts to preserve the loyalty of Muslim soldiers also included the building of a mosque near Paris. This paper will explore these efforts to sustain and enhance morale, and North Africans’ reactions to these efforts, relying on documents drawn from both German and French archives.

References

Robert T. Foley, King’s College London

A Hollow Army? Manpower and the German army on the Western Front, March-November 1918

Historians have long known that the German army struggled to maintain the strength of its frontline units over the course of 1918. However, analysis of this problem has largely been based on literature produced without access to the official records. This paper will make use of a range of archival and published primary material to shed new light on the combat power of the German army over the course of the spring, summer and early autumn 1918. It will focus on a number of key questions left unexplored by existing literature: When did casualties occur? Which units suffered and did some suffer disproportionately? How and when were casualties replaced? In addition to the traditional focus on infantry casualties, this paper will also analyze casualty and replacement rates amongst artillery units, an arm which became even more important over the course of 1918, but which has received little attention. The analysis provided in the paper will help us understand better how and why the German army failed in 1918 and will also demonstrate the relative impacts of the various Entente armies on the Westheer during the year.

References

Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, Universitat de Girona (Spain)

Europe as a horizon for regeneration in neutral Spain during the Great War

The aim of this paper is to analyze the ideas on Europe developed by some of the most important Spanish intellectuals during the Great War. As part of this main purpose, it intends to examine the links established between their thoughts about Europe and their national and political regeneration proposals for Spain developed during the conflict.

Within this general objective, the author will study particularly three relevant cases: the works of José Ortega y Gasset—who had affirmed in previous years that ‘Spain was the problem and Europe was its solution’, and held a stance of a ‘neutralism’ that slightly supported the Allies—, Eugenio d’Ors—one of the first Europeans writers who asserted that the Great War was a ‘European civil war’, and according to this statement, kept a hard controversy with Charles Maurras and French writers, approached to Romain Rolland and international pacifism and created a Committee for the Moral Unity of Europe in Barcelona—, and the most important review of Spanish ‘aliadophilia’, España, directed by Ortega y Gasset until 1916, and after that, by Luis Araquistáin.

In summary, the main point of this paper is to recognize the new conceptions of Spanish intellectuals that emerged during their ‘cultural mobilization’ within the framework of the new and old ideas of Europe developed after 1914. It means to analyze them not only as part of an ‘isolated and neutral’ Spain but as part of the whole continental field of conceptions on politics, nationalisms and Europeanisms that had appeared before the war and were developed during it.

References

John Galante, University of Pittsburgh

Mobilizing Diaspora: The Great War in the Italian South Atlantic

In December 1922, Buenos Aires publishers Arturo Arigoni and Santino Barbieri printed a 750-page volume entitled *The Italians in South America and their contribution to the War: 1915-1918*. The book has the size and ornate binding of an illustrated atlas or bible. Its glossy pages contain drawings of patriotic symbols like a mythical Victory shrouded in Italy’s *tricolore* flag, portraits of prominent members of South America’s vast Italian communities, photographs of efforts by those communities to support the Italian side, and letters of appreciation from Italian officials for that support. Following a continent-wide emphasis in the introduction, the chapters first describe the pro-war activities of institutions in Buenos Aires; then promote efforts in Argentina’s provinces; cover events in Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay’s Italian communities; and group the rest of South America in a final section. The order corresponds roughly to the relative prominence of the region’s Italian communities.

This book and other publications from the period reveal a wide array of collective action by Italians in South America to assist Italy’s struggle to validate its status as a Great Power and ‘redeem’ lands within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Leading businessmen formed groups like Buenos Aires’ *Il Comitato Italiano di Guerra*, which organized patriotic rallies, raised money through bond sales, and channeled funds through Italy-based welfare institutions (Arigoni and Barbieri, p. 21). Established associations like Montevideo’s branch of the Italian Red Cross gave food, healthcare and subsidies to Italo-Uruguayans whose family members crossed the Atlantic to enlist (de Navasqués p. 39). Over 50,000 soldiers from South America repatriated to fight (Commissariato Generale dell’Emigrazione, p. 1525). They departed amid patriotic fanfare and speeches down at the docks covered in Italian-language periodicals, like São Paulo’s *Fanfulla*, that stirred patriotic sentiment during the war alongside the manifold efforts of Italian officials to mobilize resources found within immigrant communities.

This paper examines some of the principal impacts of World War I on Italian immigrant communities in South America through the experiences of Italians resident in Buenos Aires, Montevideo and São Paulo, three of the most significant ‘colonies’ of overseas Italians in the Western Hemisphere. It begins with the efforts of Italian state agencies, military branches and cultural institutions to recruit soldiers, foment nationalism and engender other forms of war support in these three cities. It then reports on the actions of institutions of civil society – Italian mutual-aid societies, hospitals, chambers of commerce, banks, periodicals and labor unions, for example – located in Buenos Aires, Montevideo and São Paulo to assist (and at times oppose) the war effort. This study expects to enhance understandings of the activities and influence of the Italian government within immigrant communities in the Americas during early twentieth century and shine additional light on the structure and function of transatlantic networks that existed between Italian immigrants and their homeland.

References


Fake Neutrality: Spain during the First World War

By contrast to what happened in Europe, where the controversy over the Great War took shape around international responsibilities of the conflict, public debate in Spain initially arose over the conservative government’s position towards it. Neutrality appeared to be a subterfuge used by discredited politicians to keep control and stability inside, contending against popular demands for electoral integrity (Tuñón de Lara, 1986). That inner version of the international war has long dominated Spanish historiography, ignoring the complexity of neutral experience in a total war.

But Spain was the largest of the European neutral nations and the most self-sufficient as regards minerals and foodstuffs, as well as the high value for allied communications between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, raising belligerent nations’ concerns beyond the diplomatic sphere. Initially having had a defensive approach in order to preserve their influence over geopolitical and economic areas, France and Britain moved towards a more offensive position concerning Spain. At the same time, the Hague Protocols (1899, 1907) did not provide the necessary guarantees to preserve the rights and duties arising from neutrality. There was a real Spain so distant from the official one (G.H. Meaker, 1988; Romero Salvadó, 1999) not only for the belligerents’ businesses and propaganda activities over that neutral arena, but also because Spanish politicians broke the legal status agreed in August 1914. Neutrality is generally studied on the basis of official declarations, which works as a distorting mirror of Spanish reality.

We thus consider here the political and ideological factors that covered the interference of France and Great Britain in Spain, calling neutrality into question. The different rulers in Madrid, conservatives and liberals, intervened actively for France and Britain to achieve their purposes, not only in Spain but in the western Mediterranean. This revolved around three key issues:

1. Illegal supplies to the allies against the national exportation ordinances/acceptance of British blockade policies over Spanish commerce;
2. Consent of violation of territorial waters during the British naval surveillance operations;
3. Spanish police assistance to allied secret services operating against Germans in Spain; (García Sanz, 2011). So, the implications of a de facto neutrality breach can only be seen within the broad framework of Spain’s international relations, based in the subordination to the English and French since 1907.

References
This paper examines the notion of ‘citizenship through education’ in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg during the First World War. The teaching profession is my case study against this challenging background. It compares official government bulletins regarding teacher professionalization in secondary education, and professional interest group journals for teachers published independently from government regulations. More specifically, this paper analyses how the First World War came to be rendered in these two separate discourses. In the increasingly voluminous cluster of literature on the relationship between war, peace and educational developments in nineteenth and twentieth-century Europe, Luxembourg has often been portrayed as a special case; an unusual example amongst its European counterparts, most notably its influential neighbours, Germany and France. This situation, together with historically dynamic student mobility resulting from the lack of national university before 2003, has influenced Luxembourg’s linguistic Sonderweg. A small West European nation of just over 500,000 inhabitants that incorporates three different languages — Luxembourgish, German and French — into its public image of Mischkultur, its cosmopolitanism certainly appears extraordinary in its own right. Yet, Luxembourgish as a national language was not recognised until 1984, and even thereafter it was intended to be utilised only in tandem with German and French as the official languages of the Grand Duchy. This paper thereby investigates how a single national identity through education was created during WWI for Luxembourg during World War I, despite the remarkable linguistic diversity of the country. It also looks at the complex interplay between education, citizenship and national consciousness in this context. Whereas the Second World War has generally dominated public debates, the aim of this paper is to show that WWI equally influenced the restructuring of the country’s education system. In this sense, the class room became an important microcosm of Luxembourgish society as a whole: teachers were to show a competent example on how to manage national affairs at the time of deepening international crisis. Neutrality, circumspection and sangfroid in education were highlighted as desirable characteristics peculiar to Luxembourg as a nation state. By drawing on a number of prominent educationalists, such as Mathias Adam, Nicolas Pletschette and Mathias Mongenast, this paper argues that education played an active role in the promotion of Luxembourg’s cause in the war. Morale at home was fundamental for national survival: education fostered peace and glorified the nation against foreign intruders. By filling in gaps in literature, the approach provides unconventional ways of thinking about the history of education positioned against international quarrels. In this sense, the educational ideas introduced during 1914-1918 became in many ways anchored, instilled and cemented around the WWI ideological milieu. They were surrounded by battle-like international atmosphere which was also heavily projected on the forthcoming years of evolution for Luxembourg’s school system. It thus follows that the teacher profession formed a vital part of this long continuum during the war and became located in a high sphere of nation making.
South African Great War Poetry rhythmically murmurs the psychological subtext of early 20th century South Africa. The military body is marked by the abject othering of both the corpse and the living-dead – the ‘uncivilised’ black tribal and Dutch settler bodies. These ‘wasted’ bodies are metaphorically represented in 19th century and early 20th century South African literature by the Titan of the Cape, Adamastor. The Adamastorian nightmare refers to the abjection of both body and geographical space. South African war poets used metonyms and metaphors to come to terms with this abjection.

White bodies in the war poetry are apotheosised as the heroic Apollos of the African veld, whose golden sunbathed complexions represent the binary opposite to the ashen fallen corpse and psychologically traumatised soldier. The Dutch settlers or Boers were included in this homoerotic and sacrificial blood-spill by English-speaking poets. The ‘genetically inferior’ Johnny Boer of the Anglo-Boer War was now put on physical par with the culturally ‘superior’ Tommy Atkins for political purposes. They were essentially the Springbok (antelope-gazelle) soldiers, the archetypal colonial knights and sportsman warriors. The black military body was, however, not included in this ‘play-the-game’ ethos. Blacks served in racially segregated labour contingents and they were not allowed to carry arms. Their voices are only heard in war izibongo or oral poetry that encapsulates a reaction to colonial rule. In the izibongo, soldiers metamorphose into ‘bull-calves’ or sacrificial offerings for the ‘Black-skinned race’. This blood-offering is testament to an endeavour to liberate the black body from the physical and psychological oppression of colonial rule.

To the black soldier, the Western Front and the cold English Channel represented an alien space from which bodies seldom returned. For the white soldier poets this uncanny space of unbecoming was reserved for the German South-West and East-Central African environments. The Western Front could be partly reclaimed through sacrificial blood-letting, but the African landscape to the north of the Union of South Africa’s borders still fell squarely within Adamastor’s abject reach. The war poetry is conceived within this ‘heart of darkness’ of a sinister psychological landscape, in which open verse and more uncertain poetic forms - including protest content - were written to cage the raging corpse. A number of these poems rise to the heights of Modernist literary despair. Especially The Springbok Magazine, The Springbok Blue magazine, The Nongqai magazine and Jeff Opland’s studies of the indigenous izibongo have yielded a rich crop of these war poems.

References
The period from 1918-1921 in Hungary was marked by the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, successive revolutions led by Mihály Károlyi and Béla Kun, and finally a counter-revolution that ended with the consolidation of the authoritarian conservative regency of Admiral Miklós Horthy. An important dimension of this political upheaval was the violence, including that committed by Red and White paramilitaries, which accompanied the dramatic swings between the political left and right. While the larger project from which this paper emerges is concerned with the relationship between violence and political legitimacy in this early post-WWI period, the present paper is focused on how the ‘victims’ of politically motivated violence interpreted their experiences, in which institutions they placed legitimacy, and how they understood the role of violence in the newly independent Hungarian state. The primary focus of this analysis will be on the complaints made to four different legal organs between 1919 and 1921: the Social Democratic Party’s Legal Aid Bureau, the Budapest Jewish Community Legal Aid Bureau, the British Labour Party’s Joint Delegation to Hungary, and the Budapest criminal courts. These bodies, all of which heard complaints pertaining to political violence from victims or their families, illustrate well the competition over legitimacy, as it shows that many people did not automatically turn to the courts—which were neither independent nor apolitical—for legal redress. This was particularly true if the plaintiff was Jewish, working class, or if they belonged to or sympathized with leftist parties. The complaints lodged to these various organizations exemplify the role of politics in people’s interpretations of which violence was ‘appropriate’ and which stymied the (re)construction of Hungarian society. The complaints also show that their interpretations of what constituted excessive violence were mediated by class prejudices and expectations regarding the treatment of women. Finally, the nature of the complaints demonstrates the prolonged lack of consensus about the undergirding ideology of the state.
The First World War saw the greatest act of volunteering ever in Britain. Two-and-a-half million men volunteered to fight in a conflict that cost more than 700,000 of them their lives. There was, however, another act of volunteering between 1914 and 1918 on at least the same scale. This was the voluntary effort at home especially to support the men at the front, in health and sickness, but also to aid numerous other causes. Yet it remains a phenomenon about which little has been written. Even in the relatively few publications that cover the home front, it is not given significant space. More scholarly works also give little account of non-uniformed voluntary action, its immediate impact on the war effort or its longer-term effects on social welfare. Even very recent works suggest the impact of philanthropic activities was negligible. The approach of much of the existing literature to non-uniformed voluntary action has, therefore, been superficial at best. Its conclusions are consistent across the literature and can perhaps be summed up as concluding that charitable activity mushroomed on the outbreak of war being primarily directed towards the National Relief Fund, Belgian Refugees and the Red Cross. It was mainly a middle class phenomenon characterised by those ladies who undertook a frenzied spate of sock knitting. Overall, it was an amateurish exercise that had little real impact either on the home front or with the troops. As the war dragged on charitable activity significantly declined and there was little long-term impact either on individuals or upon the transition of social welfare from the private to the state realm.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the middle-class, sock-knitting image of First World War charity is yet another of the myths that has surrounded that traumatic period of British history. There was a massive increase in charitable voluntary action during the First World War. Around 18,000 new charities were created, a 50% increase on the number in existence pre-war. The value of their fund-raising was significantly more than £100 million (probably reaching at least £150 million) equivalent to the income for ‘good causes’ through today’s National Lottery, and their legacy was significant. Charitable activity in the war was, especially in many industrial towns and cities, a manifestation of working class solidarity with many more organisations run by ordinary women and men than by well-to-do matrons. It was easily the most significant charitable cause that had ever been supported in Britain and it had profound effects upon both the war effort and the relationship between voluntary organisations and the state. Philanthropy and voluntary action also provided Britain with a distinct advantage over her main adversary, Germany, in the reservoir of social capital on which it was able to draw.

References

Richard S Grayson, Goldsmiths, University of London:

Is the story of the 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster) divisions fighting ‘side-by-side’ at Messines a myth, and if so does that matter?

This paper will consider the place of myth in the history of the First World War in Ireland. It will argue that whereas long-standing narratives of the war have served to emphasise sectarian divisions in relation to Ireland’s First World War experience, the recent development of the Messines narrative challenges those narratives by offering an alternative approach. However, by examining the composition of the units which fought at Messines in the 16th and 36th divisions, the paper will ask whether that means simply replacing old myths with a new one, and whether or not that matters. With the opening of the Island of Ireland Peace Tower at Messines in 1998 a new phase of memory was initiated. The significance of the site was as the location of a joint operation by the 16th and 36th Divisions in June 1917, one of the most effective allied attacks of the war. It can be (and is) held up as a symbol of a shared Irish story across religious and political divides.

The paper will discuss how the Peace Tower came to be built. The project drew on changes in national historiographies which were already taking place, but has also contributed to their continuing development. The paper will discuss associated initiatives such as the International School for Peace Studies at Messines, and the Fellowship of Messines which aims to reconcile former paramilitaries from republican and loyalist traditions. It will also argue that the new ‘ideal’ of Messines rests on a partial reading (or ‘myth’) of who fought at Messines in the 16th and 36th divisions. Using statistics of fatalities it will show that the two divisions were far from being uniformly ‘Irish’ and drew in soldiers from across the UK. As such, memories of Messines are arguably just as partial as previous histories of the war which focused on the battle of the Somme. However, it might well be argued in a society where misuse of history has often led people to commit acts of violence, that is not a problem, indeed, it is a useful counter-balance to divisive myths. The paper will conclude with a discussion of whether or not this constitutes a legitimate use of history.

References


Keith Grieves, Kingston University

‘Land for the Landless’: open spaces and returning soldiers in the English countryside

A generalising ‘Country worth fighting for’ was a ubiquitous feature of propagandist imagery for military recruitment in 1914-15. But it was also, in C.F.G. Masterman’s words, a ‘landlords’ country’ where territorial magnates paternalistically raised battalions to defend imperilled home districts. In France and Flanders, amid the terrible topographies of war, citizen soldiers and nurses came to know their antidotal home landscapes as much loved corners of England. In the land of poplars they wondered at the absence of hedgerows. Their recollections of ‘Blighty’ became variegated and richly-textured. Further, on the home front visitors to places of natural beauty debated ‘finest views’ and local resistance to remorseless timber extraction marked the rediscovery of nature suggestive of a country ‘worth living for’. Local activists and amenity societies attempted to confront the despoiling warfare state in the name of returning soldiers and their place-related identities.

At the end of the war the land question was redefined in England to reflect the assumption that soldiers would settle in the counties they knew and for which they fought. Fiscal retrenchment forestalled an extensive back to the land movement and few soldiers would dig their own trenches in new agricultural communities. But access to open air social centres, sometimes now devoid of notices to trespassers, to encounter the consoling hand of nature marked one ameliorative social change in the countryside. It bore poor comparison with healthy living in the Black Forest. In a war-worn world the protection of footpaths, common land and open spaces near metropolitan areas became intimately associated with war experience. It took the form of a sensuous love of specifically known hills and vales.

Minds appreciative of nature discussed the utility of land preservation as war memorials in the aftermath of the Great War. Expressions of local and national patriotism intermingled as meadows, village greens, hillsides and panoramic vistas were rededicated in memory of the fallen after 1918. Gradually commemorative parkland, gardens and ‘wild country’ began to make public recreational spaces which were once the private haunts of ancient beauty. Amid those panoramas with their shelters and instructional viewpoints, some sense might be made of years of sacrifice, endurance and discomfort in a war of strange, nightmarish landscapes.

References

Between 1914 and 1918, the British army deployed approximately one million Indian troops, the largest volunteer army in the world, on three different front lines: Germany on the South East African and the Western front and Turkey in Mesopotamia. But the front was not the only location where these troops experienced Africa and Europe. The prisoner of war camp, mostly in Germany and France, was another European wartime setting in which many Indians serving in the British army found themselves during these years. At that time and in the subsequent war, the two biggest international organizations, YMCA and the Red Cross, spearheaded what was probably the largest mass educational effort in history. Designed for prisoners of war throughout the world, the YMCA educational program ranged from lectures, books and pamphlets for literate subjects, to so-called ‘lantern lectures’ and film reels, prepared particularly for illiterate listeners. In this paper, I shall focus on the impact of some individuals’ reflected experiences of cultural programs in European prisoner of war camps on their politics in the subsequent decades. Cases such as that of Surendra Kumar Datta (1878-1942), Indian prisoner of war (POW) in France during the Great War and subsequently national secretary of the YMCA for Burma, India, and Ceylon, as well as a member of the Indian Central Legislative assembly, suggest that the experience of culture through the YMCA’s program was formative in a variety of ways. While some Indian troops in Europe, like Datta, came to associate a newly gained Europhilia with Christianity and a reformed British empire, others were motivated to join Indian independence movements. My preliminary research suggests that the lectures organised by the YMCA and other organizations, which they had encountered during World War I, gave listeners and viewers a basis for thinking about Indian independence comparatively. Mazzini’s and Garibaldi’s ‘Young Europe’ thus came to shape the idea of a ‘Young India’.
This paper will explore and analyse the role of music in Britain’s memory of the First World War. The choice of music to accompany the national war effort during the conflict itself has never been the subject of any detailed analysis. In parallel with the British obsession with a handful of poets, previous work on the music of the First World War has focused on the ‘high’ cultural outpourings of a privileged group of composers, the leading lights of the English Musical Renaissance such as Ralph Vaughan Williams. To focus on the works of this exclusive network of artists, however, gives an unrepresentative view of the role of music in Britain both during and after the war. During the course of the conflict, music in all its forms was utilised in the maintenance of morale on the home and fighting fronts. Organisations such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) led the organisation of providing musical entertainment to soldiers. Indeed, a designated YMCA Music Department was established, and which carried the motto ‘Whatever cheers the warrior helps to win the war’. Once the war was over the nation needed to remember, and music’s role in that remembrance tells us a great deal about British society’s developing attitudes in the aftermath of total war. As a result of post-Second World War representations such as Oh! What a Lovely War (1964), and a host of television documentaries, it is the soldiers’ songs and music hall melodies that are firmly rooted in the average Briton’s memory of the war, together with the haunting trumpet notes of the ‘Last Post’ which are heard at every Armistice Day service in November. As new forms of historical research focus on the human senses, this paper will use several musical examples as case studies to place them in their historical context, analysing how music continues to be a central component of Britain’s memory of its war dead, and will offer some comparison with other combatant countries.

References

J.F.C. Fuller, Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, (1990)  
Glenn Watkins, Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War, (California, 2003)
The article examines the role of Austro-Hungarian press after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in the July Crisis of 1914. The Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs opted for war within a few days and accused Serbia, the state with the greatest territorial expansion in both Balkan Wars, of complicity.

But how did the press react? Did the Austro-Hungarian journalists accuse Serbia of complicity and did they issue war propaganda? Did they push governmental policy in one direction during the critical days? The aim of this research is to analyse the published views regarding the assassination and the conclusions, which should be drawn from it in the major newspapers in the Hapsburg Monarchy. How did the journalists evaluate the impact of the assassination on the Hapsburg position in the Balkans as well as in Europe? Which options for action had been discussed and how did they perceive the role of the other great powers? How good were their contacts with the diplomats? The journalists of several famous newspapers were obviously well informed about the developments in the Foreign Ministry for their articles contain a lot of ‘assumptions’ of what could happen in the next days. Did the Ballhausplatz wish them to report all this or did they provide information which was not supposed to be published? An amazing fact is that the Foreign Minister engaged one of the journalists to conceptualize the aims of the foreign policy of the Dual Monarchy for the staff of the Ballhausplatz. Why a journalist selected and not one of the diplomats or officials as was usual?

My study is based on the extended archival research and many new sources. I will critically scrutinize the predominant opinion that the Double Monarchy acted aggressively in searching for a pretext to begin a war against Serbia and that the press supported this development from the beginning. I have studied the texts of seven most influential newspapers, quality journalism as well as tabloids, during the whole crisis and can present some surprising results.

References


This paper will present a picture of the capital of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul, during the ‘Great’ War and its allied occupation through the eyes of three children in their memoirs. These sources shed light upon the thoughts and feelings generated by the circumstances of the ‘Great’ War in Istanbul and the socio-political changes during following years. Extracts from the three memoirs will be taken to illustrate the state of the city along with the social and economic traumas of the authors’ families. There are drastic changes in the daily life, customs, traditions, and gender roles, as well as, religious and national feelings. Fathers perish in battlefields, families shatter while children, women and elderly fight against the destitution and famine in the capital.

Selma Ekrem, born in 1902, describes the city during the pre- and post-war years. A member of an acclaimed Ottoman/Turkish family, the daughter of a high government official and the granddaughter of the famous poet Namik Kemal, Ekrem provides a detailed picture of the personal, political, and social transformations of those years. The title of her memoirs stems from the strong resentment she felt about the suppression of women that she managed to escape by wearing a hat and pretending to be a Frank, i.e. a non-Muslim. She moved to the United States in the 1920s where she authored a number of books, the first being her autobiography published in 1930.

Irfan Orga, the son of a well-to-do tradesman, was born in 1908. The war brought a series of losses, hardship and calamities for his family. His father was one of the earlier casualties of the war. A fire destroyed their home, everything they possessed was lost and they suffered under great poverty. Orga’s biography describes the state of the city and the endurance of its populace. The author’s five-year old brother almost died of malnutrition. Through his mother’s experiences, Orga witnessed the changes in the old gender roles and the inclusion of women into the working force. He later became an air force pilot, married an English woman and moved to England, where he published his memoirs.

Adnan Ergeneli’s book on the other hand, provides the description of a comparatively sheltered life. The author, born in 1911 as the son of a high administrative official, was fortunate not to lose any immediate family member to the war. Yet the civil losses and the air strikes over the city had a strong effect on him. Later, he observed the ‘loud celebrations’ and festivities carried out by the Greek subjects during the allied occupation of the Ottoman capital. Ergeneli openly describes his feelings of patriotism at a very young age.

References

Recounting Female Identity in Women’s War Diaries from the Western Front

The diaries of women who served with the medical services at the front lines during WWI offer a reappraisal of the private languages of war, providing alternatives to the high discourse of poetry and the prevalent discourse of combat and the discomfort of the trenches. In my contribution to this conference, I will discuss unpublished and published diaries by nurses and aid workers, exploring the confrontation of gender and national identity as it is revealed in discourse.

Recently, in her investigation of the diaries of members of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY), Janet Lee points out the important contribution of women who occupied the masculine sphere of war and were able to mark the space with their own histories through their actions and words. Lee discovered that diaries were often traditionally domestic, even when the nurses were abroad: ‘Evenings were also spent ‘at home’ entertaining colleagues and other military personnel with fundraisers, teas and dances accompanied by music performed by the FANY or from the gramophone.’ Lee’s findings are evident in the unpublished diary of American Red Cross nurse Aurel Baker, whose interest in French food and battalion parties initially seem jarring when positioned against the prevalent wartime discourse of what Santanu Das has called ‘slimescapes.’ As important documents that reveal how war was experienced, war diaries blur the distinctions between public and private because they comment on sites of public importance and events of international significance. ‘Diaries are elastic, inclusive texts,’ Rebecca Hogan writes, which mix chronicle, historical record, reflection, feelings, descriptions of nature, travel, work accomplished, and portraiture of character rather haphazardly together.’ Indeed, transitions between entries are often absent, making the dominant mode of organization paratactic. ‘As a rhetorical strategy, it denies privilege and hierarchy because there is no subordination within the phrases, clauses, sentences or paragraphs,’ explains Jennifer Sinor. However, more than an organizational strategy, parataxis does not privilege attitudes toward events. In her entry for March 9, 1918, Aurel Baker writes: ‘Mar. 9th Paris was raided two nights ago [. . . ] We did a little shopping and went about seeing the sights. A military funeral was in progress at the Cathedral of St Magdalena. We saw Eiffel Tower and the Bridge of Alexander III and went to Hostess House for dinner [. . .]’. Just as space was disrupted and reconstituted by the machines and troop movements of the war, gender relationships were also reconfigured. Battle fostered a new sense of self for both women and men and social relationships developed in the space of the hospital.

References

Das, Santanu (2012). ‘Slimescapes.’ World War I Centenary..
ww1centenary.oucs.ox.ac.uk/body-and-mind/slimescapes/
Lee, Janet (2009). ‘FANY (First Aid Nursing Yeomanry) ‘Other Spaces.’’ Gender, Place and Culture 16.6: 657.
Hogan, Rebecca (1991). ‘Engendered Autobiographies: The Diary as a Feminine Form’
Prose Studies 14: 100.
There is a widely-held belief, underwritten by respected historians (e.g. Herwig 2009, pp. 30-45), that the Schlieffen plan was the basis of German strategy in 1914, which aimed to knock out France in six weeks with a massive attack through Belgium and then send reinforcements to the eastern front in time to defeat the Russian army too.

But Schlieffen never proposed a strategic attack through Belgium in the case of a two-front war. The famous Schlieffen plan memorandum of December 1905 relates to a ‘war against France’ in which there is no eastern front and the entire German army is used for the offensive in the west (Ritter 1958, pp. 133-48). A two-front war was a quite different matter. Schlieffen argued, also in December 1905, that the Germans would be hugely outnumbered in a war against France and Russia and therefore could not mount an attack in either direction. Under these circumstances they must adopt a counter-offensive strategy on both fronts (Zuber 2004, pp. 167-8).

Faced with a two-front war in 1914, the younger Moltke ignored this categorical advice and attacked France through Belgium — with only 34 corps instead of the 48 required in the Schlieffen plan. Moltke’s advance was halted at the Marne because he lacked the overall strength to extend his right wing around the western side of Paris, as envisaged in the Schlieffen plan. Six weeks into the war, when France was supposed to have been defeated, the Germans were digging in on the river Aisne and the long years of trench warfare had begun.

But it was not the Schlieffen plan that set out a six-week timetable for an offensive victory in the west. That expectation was created by Moltke, who told the Austrian chief of staff in May 1914 that he hoped to deal with the French ‘in six weeks from the start of operations’ (Conrad 1922, p. 673). Schlieffen would have thought that six weeks was far too long to wait for the first victory in a two-front war. If Moltke had followed Schlieffen’s counter-offensive rule for the conduct of a two-front war, the first great battle of 1914 would have been fought in Lorraine in the third week of hostilities, under conditions much more favourable for Germany than they were at the battle of the Marne.

References

Ke-chin Hsia, The University of Chicago

A social offensive on the home front: Welfare state and the Great War in Imperial Austria

As battlefront losses continued, home front material shortages rapidly worsened, and the moral order perceived to be collapsing, the Imperial Austrian state was forced to find new strategies to shore up domestic support and the polity’s very legitimacy. Unlike other belligerent countries, however, it was difficult for the multinational Habsburg Empire to appeal to nationalism or a strong common emotional bond to effect a mid-conflict ‘second mobilization.’ With a new emperor, a reconvened parliament, and the ongoing revolution across the Russian borders, the Austrian state turned to social policy and undertook an ambitious welfare state expansion in 1917 and 1918 to fend off the impending crises.

This paper discusses the formulation of the last-ditch social offensive that was embodied by the Social Welfare Ministry’s establishment in 1917-1918. It uses war victim welfare as a concrete case to see how this strategy of using social policy to create a differently based legitimacy was designed and implemented, and why it failed despite some sincere efforts during the last year of the war. The paper argues that the social offensive’s failure was due in part to the internal fracturing of the Imperial Austrian state; even central agencies had ceased to function as a coherent whole and behaved like small fiefdoms concerned single-mindedly with their own individual interests. But from a longer-term perspective, the social offensive on the home front was not entirely in vain. Through the social offensive, the Great War did create certain paths and foundational elements for the post-1918 Austrian state’s social portfolio and, by extension, the slow development of the Austrian welfare state.

References


Unprepared in August 1914 for the manpower demands of a Continental war against the German army, Great Britain sent for a detachment of its imperial reserve, the 3rd and 7th divisions of the Indian Army. Deployed to the trenches outside Ypres in late October 1914, some 20,748 British and 89,335 Indian soldiers – known as sepoys - supplemented by 49,273 Indian laborers, fought for the Indian Corps at the battles of Ypres, Festubert, Givenchy, Neuve Chapelle, Second Ypres, and Loos, suffering 34,252 casualties. The subject of the Indian Corps in France was an industry unto itself in the years during and immediately following the war. A spattering of more recent works guided by the agenda of a ‘new military historiography’ explore the impact of British wartime policy on European (especially British, French, and German) as well as South Asian society and culture. This paper shifts the focus to an otherwise unexplored aspect of the story, to the end of the war when some 500 Indian POWs interned in Germany faced the prospect of repatriation and a long-awaited return to South Asia. British authorities like Secretary of State for India, Austen Chamberlain, recognized that the return of these men presented a host of political challenges, not the least of which was that the soldiers had ‘been exposed to strongly hostile influences’ during their internment and ‘may become the willing tools of extremist and anarchist factions in India.’ Indeed, most of the soldiers spent the bulk of the war at a prison camp outside Berlin known as the Halbmondlager (Crescent Moon Camp) where German authorities carried out a series of aggressive propaganda campaigns aimed at winning over the soldiers to the German-Ottoman cause. Some of the men, known as the ‘converted,’ collaborated with their captors. A few even volunteered in early 1916 to fight for the Turkish Army against the British in Mesopotamia, returning to the Halbmondlager by 1917 to wait out the war after a rather uneventful tour of duty. Fully embedded in an inter-imperial social fabric that included Britain and Germany, this paper demonstrates that Indian POWs, just as they had during the conflict, retained considerable agency at the end of the war. Some took the opportunity to settle scores and willingly fed the names of disloyal sepoys to British authorities. Others, knowing that they risked a lengthy prison sentence if they fell into British hands, chose to remain in Berlin, seeking material assistance from the very men whose job it had been to ‘convert’ them. Drawing on British, Indian and German documents, what ultimately emerges is a story of profound world-historical resonance, one in which the humble sepoy was never a mere pawn on the imperial chessboard.

Reference

India Office Records I/MIL/7/18501, secret memo from Austen Chamberlain to the Governor General of India, 11 August 1916.
Medical and relief personnel from the United States volunteered to serve the sick and wounded soldiers and civilians of the ‘Great War’ within days, if not hours, of the initial battles in August 1914. The U.S. government maintained neutrality for the next two and a half years before entering the conflict, when even more Americans volunteered to serve during the remaining months of combat. American doctors, orderlies, nurses, nurses’ aides, ambulance drivers, and other relief workers were on site from August 1914 to November 1918, as well as months beyond the Armistice.

Most people are unaware of the hundreds of Americans, including women, who served abroad during the war prior to the ‘official’ involvement of this country. The women came mostly from middle- or upper-class families and were raised during the Victorian Era with fairly specific gender role distinctions. Females stayed in the private sphere of home and family and, due to their delicate constitutions, were not exposed to the messy side of life. The question is then: if this was truly ‘the natural state of womanhood,’ why did so many of them choose to leave the safety and comfort of home, travel to distant lands amidst the ugliness of war, and live and work under sometimes primitive and often dangerous conditions?

The writings of these women who volunteered, whether native-born, naturalized citizens or expatriates, express very similar motivations for their service. All wanted to contribute in some way, even with no previous experience in medical or relief efforts. Even those with medical backgrounds were thrust into an alien environment. Each one’s motivation to serve was unique, yet there are similarities in purpose among the various accounts. Many of the women left behind diaries, memoirs, scrapbooks, and letters sharing their perceptions - these from mainly and idealistic young females who had never lived through a war time. Their expressed prewar beliefs give us insight to their rationale for volunteering, but also tell us a great deal about these women themselves.
Heike Karge, University of Regensburg

Social Policy and Psychiatric Discourse: Shell-shocked Veterans after the Great War in Yugoslavia

The paper discusses the relationship between social policy and psychiatric discourse using as an example the shell-shocked veterans of the Great War in the territories that were to form the interwar Yugoslavia. Thereby, major emphasis will be put on the former Habsburg territories of Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in comparison to the territory of proper Serbia, which until the 19th century belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

The war years 1914-1918 and the 1920s manifest a firm embedding of Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian medical, psychiatric and socio-political discourses into European-wide and Austro-Hungarian discourses on the treatment of shell-shocked soldiers and war veterans. This statement does not come as a surprise, since it was the Great War which produced for the first time the military diagnoses of shell-shock and war neurosis on a large scale in all warring countries. However, although historical research has shed already much light on the differing relationship between social policy and shell-shock in the war and after-war years in Western European societies, we know very little about the origins and consequences of the respective discourses in the mentioned regions in Southeastern Europe. Therefore, the paper aims at identifying the historical, socio-political and cultural contexts that marked the evolution of discourses on war neurosis in the (later) Yugoslav territories. It argues, that the restrictive dealing with the diagnoses of shell shock and war neurosis characterized since 1916 not only the psychiatric landscape of many Western European countries, but also those of the mentioned Southeast European region. Social policy in interwar Yugoslavia therefore needs to be explored in a perspective that highlights the transfer of practices and knowledge rather than in a perspective that seeks to identify ‘national’ paths to a socio-political modernity.
From 1915 to 1918, the German authorities occupying Poland engaged in an ambitious state building project, which led to them to support the establishment of institutions like a Polish university, Polish elementary schools, and elected city councils. This makes for a powerful contrast with the German occupation regime that ruled Poland a mere 20 years later, which pursued policies of cultural and physical annihilation. This paper provides a brief overview of some of the institutions established by the occupiers during the Great War in order to give a sense of the occupation as a whole. I will advance three main interpretive arguments. First, I argue that the continuities between the German occupations in the First and Second World Wars have been vastly overstated. Second, I show that much of the writing on the Germans in the east during the Great War has unwittingly replicated German nationalist and colonialist ways of thinking about the east: the Germans were not all-powerful conquerors operating in a political and social vacuum filled only with images generated by their imaginations. Third, I illustrate how Germany’s desire to dominate eastern Europe was driven less by colonialist schemes and more by a need to come to terms with the forces of nationalism (Polish nationalism especially) that threatened to split central Europe apart. In my conclusion, I offer some observations about the very different legacies left by the war and occupation in Poland and Germany and how these differing legacies shaped German and Polish perceptions and behaviour in the Second World War. Finally, I link the German occupation regime to the political and social pressures that destabilized the region from 1914 until the end of the Second World War, suggesting that both the continuities and the ruptures of these decades were part of a single ‘long’ Great War. At the centenary of the war’s outbreak, it is time to reconsider the importance of the conflict in the east not only for our understanding of the war itself, but for our understanding of the brutal vicissitudes of the twentieth century as a whole.

References

André Keil, Northumbria University

States of emergency: emergency government, the State of Exception and the construction of the ‘enemies within’ in First World War Britain and Germany, 1914-1920

During the First World War all belligerent countries enacted forms of emergency government that gave their governments hitherto unknown powers. The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) in Britain or the provisions under the Belagerungszustand (state of siege) in the German Empire dominated the domestic wartime policies in their respective countries. And although many contemporary observers recognised the radical character of these measures and their massive impact on society and political culture, traditional accounts of the Great War tended to neglect these aspects. However, the First World War was the first occasion in which European societies were confronted with an extended period of emergency government. The governments did not only use their new emergency powers to organize and steer wartime economy but also to enforce new systems of surveillance and social control and to suppress anti-war dissent. These practices created experiences that would ultimately profoundly change the political culture in all belligerent countries. In this paper, practices and forms of emergency government in Britain and Germany will be discussed and compared drawing on Giorgio Agamben’s concept of the State of Exception (Agamben 2005) and Clinton L. Rossiter’s concept of Constitutional Dictatorship (Rossiter 1948). It will enquire as to how far the First World War marked the rise of the State of Exception as the ‘dominant paradigm of government’ (Agamben 2005, p.7) and which discourses emerged in reaction to these measures.

References


Kevin Kennedy, Appalachian State University.

German Enemy Aliens in the Land of the Sky - a Documentary on the World War I German Internment Camp in Hot Springs, North Carolina

The significant influences of German diaspora communities upon the social and economic history of North Carolina have been well researched, most notably the Moravian settlements at Bethania, Bethabara and Salem in Northwest North Carolina. However, little is known about the existence of the German prisoner-of-war stockade in the mountain community of Hot Springs, North Carolina during World War I. The collective memory of the residents of Hot Springs regarding the presence of the prison, including oral traditions passed down from those living at the time, has nearly faded from view. This documentary illuminates the events surrounding the history of Hot Springs as a resort community, the selection of Hot Springs as a location for a prisoner-of-war camp, and traces the prisoner’s year-long ordeal behind the stockades of North Carolina’s only World War I enemy-alien prison. The documentary also shows how, despite an unusually harsh winter, a deadly outbreak of Typhoid, and increased security following an escape, these German internees relied upon their own skills and ingenuity, as well as the goodwill of the town’s people, to carve out a sustainable if not oddly pleasant life for themselves.
Michael Keren, University of Calgary, Canada

Jews as Liberators of the Promised Land in First World War Propaganda

The need to call millions of civilians to arms turned the First World War into an intense war of propaganda. In my paper, I discuss an interesting and unknown aspect of the propaganda war: the portrayal of the ‘Jewish Legions’ – three all-Jews battalions formed by the British army in 1917 as part of the allies' Middle East campaign, as liberators of the Promised Land. The various media aimed at recruiting Jews in England, the United States, Canada and Argentina to the legions made effective use of that symbolism. For example, a recruitment poster colored blue and white (the colors of the Zionist flag) was published in London showing the Old Testament image of the Daughter of Zion pointing her finger forward, calling upon Jews in Yiddish to join the British army as the time has come for her to regain her land.

Such religious symbols were common in the First World War and became part of the overall imagery of the war. In the case of the Jews, the symbolism defining them as liberators of the Promised Land was particularly effective as it was deeply domesticated in Jewish culture. Indeed, the notion that they were fighting for the restoration of Jerusalem to its people, and the consistency of that notion with the overall aims of the Allies, had a great effect on the Jewish soldiers' consciousness. Individuals who were often displaced immigrants or the children of such immigrants were now bestowed the image of liberators of the Promised Land and turned that image into a building bloc of a new identity as Jewish soldiers. The development of that identity is my main concern in this paper. I follow personal diaries, memoirs and letters of a handful of Jewish legionnaires in an attempt to learn how they negotiated their identity in light of this new symbolism.
For decades, historians of globalization and empire have chronicled the legacies of the United States’ martial adventures around the world. Unfortunately, scholars have paid far less attention to the ways the United States’ military encounters have shaped domestic attitudes toward global intervention. Focusing on the immediate aftermath of World War I, this paper attempts to correct this imbalance by examining Americans’ attempts to reconcile their international ambitions with the bodily hazards of overseas combat. To be specific, it argues that, beginning with World War I, disabled veterans were literally and figuratively at the centre of two competing visions American global power. The first imagined military force as a crucial tool in the United States’ emergence as a world leader. In this vision, the disabled veteran—and his successful reintegration into post-war society—was an index of the United States’ ability to enter the global arena and return functionally, if not aesthetically, unscathed. The second vision painted a very different picture of America’s global future. To pacifists, isolationists, and critics of American empire, disabled veterans were living symbols of the perils awaiting young Americans upon leaving U.S. shores. Drawing upon research from my forthcoming book, this paper not only offers a fresh perspective on the aftermath of World War I, it also shows how the Great War profoundly shaped the politics of American militarism throughout the twentieth century.
Polish political elites in 1914 and their aspirations at the beginning of WWI

After the end of the 18th century Poland was dismembered into three powers (Prussia, Russia and Austria). The European geopolitical system was stabilized by their coexistence and cooperation for many decades until 1914. The conflict of the partitioning powers opened a perspective of the change in the geopolitical status quo in the Central Europe. In 1914 Polish the political elites were divided into two factions. The first originated on the assumption that the future of Poland would be based on the ‘Austro-Polish’ settlement. The pro-Austrian political camp was formed by Polish conservatives and socialists (Joseph Pilsudski). The other section of Polish political elites formed the pro-Russian camp, seeing a possibility of the broad autonomy for Polish nation within the Russian Empire after the victory of the Entente Powers. The founder of this conception was Roman Dmowski, leader of Polish national democracy. There was no pro-German option in Polish political thought in 1914. The Poles had to decide whether to enter the war on the side of Russia or the Central Powers. My paper will be devoted to the reconstruction of the dilemmas of the Poles in Summer 1914. The perception of international politics by Polish political elites is no less interesting for historian of World War I. Generally, my object is to describe the perspectives of the Polish question in their eyes at the beginning of the great conflict.

In my paper I plan to reconsider the dilemmas of Polish political situation at the beginning of World War I: Why should the Poles join Russia against the Central Powers or join the Central Powers against Russia? Secondly, I will discuss the political calculations and visions of the future Europe and Poland in the perception of Polish political elites. The basis of the study is archival material (private letters, diaries, diplomatic reports) and published documents (political writings, journals). Chronologically, the text will be limited to the first months of the war (August – December 1914).

References:
Kucharzewski, Jan (1915), *Réflexions sur le problème polonaise*, Lausanne.
Recke, Walther (1927), *Die polnische Frage als Problem der europäischen Politik*, Berlin.
Robert C. Kunath, Illinois College

Ways of seeing: Ludwig Dettmann’s lost war art and the modernist myth of the war

During the First World War, the most famous German artist depicting the war was, by far, the fifty-year old director of the Royal Academy of Art in Königsberg, Ludwig Dettmann. When his war art was first exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in Berlin in March 1915, it created a sensation: reviewers hailed Dettmann’s work as some of the finest war art in the history of art, and excited spectators packed the exhibition. That success was repeated at other exhibitions in 1915 and 1916, and Dettmann received a lucrative contract from Ullstein that allowed him to work at the front until early 1918. Though he created a remarkable wartime oeuvre that eventually exceeded 400 works, his war art today is almost unknown. The invisibility of Dettmann’s art is in part a result of the fact that it no longer exists: all of the originals of his war art were destroyed in the bombing of Berlin in 1944. But it is by no means impossible to find reproductions of many examples of Dettmann’s war art. His work is neglected by contemporary scholars not because it cannot be seen, but because it deviates from the accepted way of seeing valid art from the First World War. The few discussions of Dettmann’s war art that exist in the scholarly literature portray it as propaganda, and dismiss it as a manifestation of a right-wing sensibility.

Such a view is not supported by either the biographical information about Dettmann or the published and archival information about the reception of his art. Dettmann was in fact an artist with significant connections to modernism: he had been one of the founders of the famous Berlin Secession, and critics sympathetic to modernism were among the most enthusiastic reviewers of his war art. But, over the course of the 1920s, as Samuel Hynes has argued in his superb book *A War Imagined*, modernism developed in part as a movement that created what Hynes calls ‘the Myth of the War.’ Based on the poetry of Sassoon and Owen, and the writings of Robert Graves and Frederick Manning, the Myth portrayed the war as a prolonged and futile exercise in horror that could only elicit savage satire or unbearable despair. The Myth is the vision of the war that we all now share, but it tells us only a part of the story of how the war was understood and envisioned. By examining Dettmann and the reception of his war art, I will show how the ‘Myth of the War’ both clarifies and obscures the meaning of the war and of the art that portrays it.

References


Gerald Lamprecht, Center for Jewish Studies of the University of Graz

Remembering the War and the construction of an Austrian-Jewish Identity by Austrian Jewish War Veterans

With the beginning of the war in 1914, the time seemed to have come for many Jews living in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to show their gratitude and loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty and monarchy. They did so by signaling their willingness to fight in the army, by buying state bonds, or by selflessly caring for the wounded as well as for hundreds of thousands of war refugees in the hinterland. (Rozenblit 2001) Doing military service was supposed to effectively strengthen an understanding of Austrian-Jewish identity on a social and public level as it had already been formulated by Rabbi Joseph Samuel Bloch in the 1880s. He declared Jews as the Hapsburg ‘Staatsvolk’ *sans phrase*, thus positioning them above any nationalistic movement. (Bloch 1886; Wistrich 1999)

It was exactly this narrative that plunged into a crisis when the war was lost and the multiethnic Habsburg monarchy disintegrated, especially with the successor states defining themselves primarily in national terms. For the Austrian Jewish Population, the years between 1918 and 1938 were shaped by economic and political crises as well as by the increasing threat emanating in the 1930s from anti-Semites in general and the National Socialists in particular. (Freidenreich 1991) All these issues – the changing state, the economic and political crises as well as the extreme danger and possibility of violence – resulted in a profound destabilization of identity and the experience of identity crises. For all the different social, political, and religious Jewish groups, their memories of and their engagement with World War I and the Habsburg Monarchy played a role when trying to overcome these crises, especially from the 1930s onwards. (Lamprecht 2012)

This paper will deal with precisely those references to the war and the monarchy that were made when renegotiating an Austrian-Jewish identity adapted to the new times. It will focus especially on the efforts made by the Austrian-Jewish War Veterans (*Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*) and the consequent reactions by Jewish and non-Jewish groups. Also, it will analyze why in Austria recollections of World War I only started at the beginning of the 1930s, comparing them to Germany’s and looking for parallels and deviations in the respective discursive threads. (Berger 2010, Caplan 2008, Grady 2011)

References


Gaetano La Nave, University of Naples

The role of Sea-power in the international relations. The Regia Marina and its influence on the Italian entry into the WWI (1913-1915)

In within a few years the Kingdom of Italy passed from a twenty-year alliance with Central Empires (German and Austria-Hungary) to the entry into the war, following the signing of the Treaty of London, joining in this way to the Triple Entente. To that reversal in the system of international alliances, this paper aims to utilize a new analytical angle, given to the naval and maritime observations and evaluations elaborated by Regia Marina in order to get favourable advantages for the Kingdom of Italy, those appraisals was to be closely correlated and valued to the geopolitical role of the Italian peninsula inside the Euro-Mediterranean framework and in the system of international relations. This proposal will focus its attention on a short chronological period, a three-year from Triple Alliance Naval Convention to that of Paris (1913-1915), the latter ratified the collaboration between the fleets French, British and Italia, handing over to the Savoy navy the active role to cope with K.U.K. Kriegsmarine Austro-Hungarian Navy, in the narrow Adriatic theatre during the Great War. Starting from the reflections realized by some scholars [C. Manfroni, P.G. Halpern, etc.] this paper will aim to analyse thoroughly the strategic evolutions of Regia Marina respect to the different political options, to develop that research, it will use specialized publications of the time and primary sources from different Italian archives: Historical Archive of Italian Military Navy; Central Archive of the State; Diplomatic-Historical Archive of Foreign Office and private papers. In particular, the proposal will concentrate its attention on the studies and the evaluations produced by Regia Marina, and other competent structures, relating to the indispensable inter-connexion between the Mediterranean sea and naval lines of communications and the geopolitical position of Italian peninsula. In addition to the relationship between Italian maritime space and the wider Mediterranean, the research will focus its attention on the Italian internal limits and its weakness, valuating those shortcomings, which expressed themselves concretely in the deficit terms of the Italian infrastructural system, specifically in its ports and in its logistics, especially in the case of a naval confrontation with one of the parties, nevertheless the Regia Marina tried to solve those problems, and the research will aim to grasp what measures were taken. Furthermore, the paper will also describe the reflections by the specialists of that time on the military gap between the Savoy Navy and those of other powers, and how the Regia Marina attempted to overcome that gap, understanding their limits and debating on the different consequences which would have occurred by choosing one of the options alliances. Starting therefore from various technical issues formulated by Regia Marina, the paper aims to verify, accordingly the use of an interdisciplinary methodology of research, whether, and how, the internal and external geostrategic evaluations produced by Regia Marina and other structures exercised themselves their influences on the political decisions of international importance by Italian ruling class, which led to a change of alliance and its subsequent entry into the war.
Sydney Doctors and Medical Students in the Great War

Among more than 2,000 graduates, academic and general staff, and students from the University of Sydney who served in the Great War, about one-third (~660) were from Sydney Medical School. These doctors and students served at Gallipoli, Palestine and Egypt, on the Western Front in France and Belgium, and in New Guinea and the Pacific. About one in five doctors served with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in France and Belgium rather than with the Australian Imperial Force. The BEF records of war service are often incomplete as the doctors held temporary commissions. When war was declared in August 1914, many doctors volunteered rapidly for service. Just five weeks later, the first Australian officer, a recent Sydney medical graduate, was killed in action in New Guinea.

The medical course was accelerated and more than half of the Sydney medical graduates between 1910 and 1918 served in the Great War. One in twelve of all Sydney doctors and medical students were killed or died from war-related wounds and illnesses.

Digitised records in the National Archives and the Australian War Memorial, supplemented by individual diaries, correspondence, and journal articles, are excellent but sometimes incomplete sources of war service. Other sources such as obituaries and biographies, digitised newspapers and medical directories provide details of family origins, religion, school education and professional careers, enabling more comprehensive biographical sketches of these medical graduates. They reveal that, after their war service, many achieved prominence in clinical and academic positions, while some were also active in the Second World War. Were these subsequent leadership roles nurtured by war service?

References
Book of Remembrance of the University of Sydney in the Great War 1914-1918. National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
Butler, A G (1930, 1940 and 1943). The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918, Volumes I-III.
Australian Dictionary of Biography.
At the beginning of World War I Viennese Jewish papers and journals called on Jewish men to volunteer for army service, fulfil their duty and show their loyalty to the Kaiser. Kaiser Franz-Josef and the Habsburg dynasty were the centre and the glue of the multiethnic monarchy, which in the face of hostile onslaught proved to be more stable than the enemies had predicted. Of the approximately 300,000 Jewish soldiers there were 25,000 officers, which shows that the Austrian army was less anti-Semitic than the German army. However, anti-Semitism was rampant in the Hinterland. An important aim of anti-Semitic attacks were the Jewish war refugees who fled to Vienna from Galicia and Bukovina. The Jewish press tried to portray them as victims of their loyalty to the Habsburg Empire. Nevertheless they were seen as shirkers and parasites who caused hunger and lack of living space in Vienna.

The War ended not only with Austria’s defeat but also with the fall of the monarchy. The soldiers came home to new fatherlands. Austrian Jews returned to a republic that called itself German-Austria (Deutsch-Österreich), which says a lot about its political and cultural orientation. More than 90% of Austrian Jews lived in Vienna, which was economically ruined and starving. War refugees from Galicia and Bukovina, could or would not return to their new homelands, where wars and pogroms raged and the new government made it clear that they did not want them. In Austria, on the other hand, they were also regarded as foreigners and had to struggle to obtain residence permits.

On one hand the Jewish press tried to fight post-war anti-Semitism with the old arguments it had used during the war, such as pointing to the valour of Jewish soldiers and stressing the loyalty of the refugees. Articles written during the war presenting these arguments were re-issued in the new context of the Republic. On the other hand many of the Jewish journals from the time of the monarchy closed down. The new journals faced the old problem of anti-Semitism in a new social, political and cultural context.

My paper will examine some of the post-war reprints dealing with the Jewish war experience and war effort. I will also examine how the topic of war is dealt with in the major post-war Austrian Jewish papers such as the Wiener Morgenzeitung (1919-1927), the only Jewish daily, and later the weekly Neue Welt (1927-1938), the ultra-orthodox Jüdische Presse (1920-1938) and the paper with the greatest longevity, Die Wahrheit (1885-1938), which represented and catered to the Jewish mainstream in Vienna. I will analyze how the apologetic arguments of Jewish valour and suffering during the war changed and how they were adapted to the new conditions of the First Republic. Since there were periods when the memory of the war practically disappeared from the press, I will also present the political, social or cultural events in Austria and within the Jewish community that triggered reflections on the Jewish war experience. Another focus of the paper will be how the inner-Jewish positions (liberal, orthodox or Zionist) influenced the memory of the war.
At the beginning of 1910s, viniculture in the Languedoc was slowly emerging from five decades of crisis. Following the phylloxera crisis of 1860-1890, which profoundly disrupted markets, there was a slump in the 1900s, which threatened the economy from Languedoc in general and wine production in particular. But thanks to the legislative intervention of the State and a stricter supervision of the market, the situation improved at the turn of the 1910s and the years of crisis were followed by years of prosperity. It is then in this particularly positive commercial context that World War I took place. Yet a conflict, in this case a conflict affecting the entire world, is often perceived by the actors of a commercial network as something profoundly disruptive to the proper functioning of commerce.

The wine businesses of the Languedoc were especially worried by the announcement of hostilities in August 1914. The traders were the main cogs of the wine sector and it is they who dispatched the millions of hectoliters of wine produced by the four major producing départements: Aude, Gard, Hérault, Pyrénées-Orientales. Their concerns were manifold: the general mobilization emptied the wine warehouses of the workers, and deliveries to the north of the country and to northern Europe were disrupted. The State also quickly set up a policy of requisitioning transport equipment which increased the problems with deliveries. This anxiety is reflected in the reports of the union meetings where the traders considered the future of their profession and looked to the Holy alliance to protect their interests. At the same time, the State introduced legislation to enable the supply the Front with wine. The conflict which initially appeared disastrous thus became an opportunity for some businesses to profit from the war.

References

Serving in World War I, German artist George Grosz saw first at hand the brutality and senselessness of war. This experience shaped his profoundly pessimistic worldview and developed into an utter disgust for the political and social system of Imperial Germany, the Weimar Republic, and the Nazi regime. Beginning in the First World War, through the decadence and decay of the post-war period, and culminating in the Second World War years of exile in the United States, Grosz’s art and thought became increasingly politicized and reflected a scathing indictment of modern Germany.

Recently, Jay Winter pointed to an “affective turn” in war studies, with scholars from many disciplines demonstrating emotion’s centrality to the language and representation of war, and our understanding of the memory of war. Resulting from this scholarly shift is the notion that war’s violence, ugliness, and trauma transcend time and place; those who serve in war, like Grosz, bring it home with them and war’s effects on them and society at large endure long past its end. Thus, the periodization of World War I has become complicated, leading to ideas of a “Greater” or “Long War,” which is often seen as lasting through World War II.

This paper focuses on Grosz’s experience of the Long War, by examining his own words in correspondence and other writings, as well as his paintings and political caricatures. Grosz’s works from the World War I period reveal his disillusionment with war and Germany’s institutions, specifically, his growing condemnation of the military-industrial complex; works from the Weimar Republic years display his direct engagement with the desperate situation in postwar Germany, including harsh, political statements about the deplorable social conditions resulting from war; and works from the Nazi era demonstrate his bitter hatred for that regime and what he viewed as its betrayal and destruction of the German nation. These views and the persecution they provoked led the artist to flee to the U.S., just days before Hitler came to power, where he remained in exile until returning to Berlin in 1959, only to die a few months later. His early military experiences were essential for all of the subsequent work and it is quite clear that, for him, the war did not end in 1918. Grosz’s excoriating view of modern German society is frequently reflected through a gendered lens. Thus, issues such as the distorted projections of masculinity and femininity and the lurid preoccupation with mutilated bodies, often transferred from the wounded soldier to the female body, will also be explored.

References

The Battle of Belleau Wood, June 1918, presented specific problems in the maintenance of battlefield morale. Within a few days of the initial assault by Marines of the U.S. 2nd Division, morale on both sides had deteriorated to the point that divisional commanders were asking for their units to be relieved — to no avail. For the Marines, poor training, high casualty rates and the unexpected nature of the fighting adversely affected morale; while German troops suffered from exhaustion brought on by months of uninterrupted fighting, and the sudden, debilitating spread of influenza. Drawing on extensive research in official American and German records, including field reports, held by the U.S. Army Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pa., this paper presents a comparative analysis of how U.S. and German officers worked to maintain morale in the field during the battle.

References


Jack S. Levy, Rutgers University

Preventive and preemptive logic in German decision-making in July 1914

Although scholars often use the concepts of preventive war and preemptive strike interchangeably, they differ in important ways. Strategies of preventive war are driven by expectations of an adverse shift in the distribution of power and the fear of its consequence. Strategies of preemption are driven by expectations of an imminent attack and by the aim of security first-mover advantages. The paths to war involve different causal variables and different causal logics, and the two concepts are generally associated with different theoretical models. Although most ‘preventive wars’ do not involve a preemptive component, and although most preemptive strikes do not involve preventive logic, in some wars a single state is driven by both. Germany in the First World War is such as case. My aim in this paper is to try to disentangle the preventive and preemptive sources of German preferences, calculations, and decision-making in the July crisis, for the purposes of better specifying the causal processes leading to the war. Preventive logic led German leaders to use the occasion of the assassination to push for war – ideally a localized Austro-Serbian War, or a continental war with Russia and France if necessary, just not a world war involving British intervention. The final push to war, however, involved some complex interactions between preventive and preemptive logics, and cannot be explained by preventive pressures alone.

References

The centenary of the First World War has inspired the creation of a spate of new digital resources and services by cultural heritage institutions as well as educational and governmental organizations. These resources present new opportunities for not only scholarly inquiry but also engaging the broader public in events that had profound political, social, cultural, and economic impact on Europe and the world. They allow us to re-evaluate, reinterpret, and remix our collective memory of the war. This paper will survey the landscape of First World War digital resources focusing particularly on primary sources and aids to identifying them, as well as reference sources that contextualize and support research and teaching. The presenters will highlight technological trends and innovations in online content creation that improve the findability and usability of digital objects, such as crowdsourcing and Linked Open Data. In addition to Europeana 1914-1918 and CENDARI, which will be discussed by our co-panelists, major projects that facilitate access to digital resources on the First World War include the Digital Public Library of America, 1914-1918 Online, and WW1 Discovery, among others.

References

Industrialisation Abandoned? An Indian Perspective on the Great War

The demands of the British Empire on Indian resources during the War encouraged the Government of India to accept the need for comprehensive state-driven industrialisation of the Indian economy. Pre-war ideas of laissez-faire with regard to the encouragement of Indian industries were abandoned. By the end of the War, a clear consensus had emerged between the Government of India, Indian industrialists and the British government for state aid and guidance in the project of Indian industrialisation. It did not, however, turn out that way. The bold, war-driven plans for state-led industrialisation of the Indian economy faded away in the War’s aftermath – first in London and then, more slowly, in Delhi. This paper seeks to explain why that was the case. Various explanations have been suggested. The end of the War (and therefore of the urgency of defence), the post-war financial situation and political reform have all been suggested as likely culprits. Yet each of these factors appears to be a symptom rather than a cause. Why did state-directed industrialisation cease to be a priority? For it was this that allowed its military importance to be downgraded, its cost to be regarded as too great and for it to be sacrificed in the process of political decentralisation.

The paper suggests two reasons – both integrally connected with the War – for the abandonment of Indian industrialisation. The first resulted from the ‘Mesopotamia affair’. This was a military campaign in 1914-16 against the Ottoman empire in the Persian Gulf, responsibility for which was given to the Government of India. The campaign proved to be such a disaster that the British government concluded that the entire system of government in India had failed. Political reform – closely linked to questions of strategic efficiency – became the British watchword. It shouldered aside industrialisation – and, through the administrative decentralisation which marked the reform, drove it out to the provinces, where it withered and died. The second reason was the effects of the War on Britain itself.

Strategically, Britain needed an imperial defence policy and the integration of India into that policy. At the same time, Britain’s economic interests necessitated a reintegration of the empire as an economic unit. Neither strategically nor economically was it envisaged that all parts of the empire would develop to the same level. India’s military responsibility was now to supply the troops needed to defend the expanded post-War empire – not to create a self-sufficient war economy through state-driven industrialisation. Economically, the imperial division of labour would remain, with Britain and the Dominions doing most of the industrial heavy lifting and India and the Colonies providing the raw materials. An industrialised India did not fit into this picture. The Great War then raised the hopes of Indian industry only to dash them in the aftermath. The paper will conclude with some considerations on what this meant for the Government of India, Indian industrialists and the Indian national movement.

References


World War I dramatically changed India. Indian politics was propelled from being a gentleman’s debating club at which Muslims (Mohammad Ali Jinnah) and Parsis (Dinshaw Edulji Petit), as well as British (Annie Besant), all played a role, to one that was increasingly Hindu-dominated after the return of Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948) to India in January 1915. By war’s end India was on the verge of mass mobilisation in revivalist Hindu garb under Gandhi’s direction, a process he initiated at Champaran, Bihar, in 1916. For the Muslims of South Asia, the war-related threat to the Ottoman Sultan, the Caliph of Islam, led to the 1915 Silk Letter Conspiracy of Mahmud al-Hasan (1851-1920) aimed at defending the Khilafah. This led to the widespread mobilization of Islamic sentiment in India and fuelled the second phase of the Muslim revival in South Asia—preceding the final one leading to the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947. The Khilafat Movement of the immediate postwar period was the direct result. The year 1916 saw the Lucknow Pact in December, a political agreement between the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League, to pressure the British into granting more liberal constitutional reforms. What followed was the historic Montagu Declaration of August of 1917 in the House of Commons when the government acknowledged the need for the British to respond to Indian demands; minority safeguards (the genesis of Partition) would be incorporated into the future constitution. Too mild for some—a ‘sunless dawn’—this ‘Magna Carta of India’ would be the basis of the Government of India Act of 1919 and of 1935, and ultimately of the constitutions of independent India and Pakistan. World War I precipitated the need to appease Indian opinion in order to marshal its financial and manpower resources. Mass political mobilisation was one result, the dramatic expansion of Indian industry (especially the Birla conglomerate) and its intimate linkage with the Indian National Congress was another, and the introduction of democratic politics into the body politic of India was a third. India would never be the same again.

References

After a hundred years, the First World War continues to hold its place in the Canadian collective imagination, representing a major crisis and, at the same time, an important step on the country’s way to nationhood. In the literature of Canada, the First World War has been remembered in poetry and drama, and in numerous novels. In my paper, I shall discuss how Canadian novels about the Great War have transported and/or undermined two potent and conflicting myths about the war, a nation-building myth which emphasizes the identitary significance and the homogenizing effect of Canada’s participation in a just war, and a myth which is based on societal divisions engendered by the war, separating those who had first-hand experience of the trenches from those who had not. In particular, I shall comment on renderings of these myths, and on the remembrance of the Great War, in novels by Jane Urquhart (*The Stone Carvers*, 2001), Jack Hodgins (*Broken Ground*, 1998), Joseph Boyden (*Three Day Road*, 2005), Alan Cumyn (*The Sojourn*, 2003) and Frances Itani (*Deafening*, 2003) and others. As I want to show, these novels are based on an iconography of the war which has been conveyed by ‘classics’ of cultural history such as Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975) and which, in turn, they help to anchor in the Canadian collective consciousness. The authors’ renderings of their themes reflect a conflict between two ‘master narratives’, as it were, in the country’s collective memory of the First World War, that of the war as a milestone on the road to nationhood, and that of an apocalypse whose horrors defeat description.
Martyn Lyons, School of Humanities, University of New South Wales, Sydney

Fighting on the 'wrong side' in World War 1: ordinary writings from the Trentino and the question of National Identity from Below.

In this paper I use soldiers’ writings to examine perceptions of the nation ‘from below’. I investigate some of the complexities of national identity through a case study of writings by soldiers and civilians from the contested Trentino region. This border territory was, along with Trieste, known to nationalists as Italia irredenta – unredeemed Italy – and annexing them was one of Italy’s priority objectives in the war.

The Trentino is a special case. As a border region within the Austro-Hungarian Empire it defies easy generalisations about national identity at the grassroots. 55,000 Trentini fought ‘on the wrong side’, in other words for Austria-Hungary, while about 700 volunteered to fight for Italy. About 25,000 Italian soldiers ended up in Russian prison camps, of whom we may presume about a half were Trentini. About 840 Trentini were induced to enlist in the Italian expeditionary force fighting for the Whites against the Bolsheviks, eventually returning in 1920. An unknown number enlisted with Red Army. Others simply disappeared into the Russian countryside. Most of the Trentini fought ‘on the wrong side’, and until recently, their saga has been obliterated from Italy’s historical memory (Antonelli 2008).

Soldiers’ correspondence shows that the enemy was only vaguely identified and, similarly, Italy itself had only the haziest existence for them (Lyons 2013). The war experience itself initiated for Italy’s peasant infantry a process of acculturation to national priorities and values. The patriotism of the Trentini was always conditional (Mazzini 2010). It depended on a range of immediate and material interests, such as the likelihood of getting home and of escaping from the war, the safety of their families, or how well they would be treated generally if they accepted Italian nationality. Italy was rejected when it forced families out of their homes in the valleys; but it could be accepted when it promised speedier repatriation from Russia.

A small minority espoused irredentist ideals, although they had been conscripted by the imperial forces, and another small minority remained loyal to Austria-Hungary. Most were driven by irreducible village and regional allegiances. Peasants remained loyal above all to family and neighbours, and they had a weak and uncertain grasp of the nation as a concept.


The son of Jewish immigrant parents from Lithuania, Isaac Rosenberg was born in a ghetto in Bristol and brought up in poverty in the East End of London. His Jewishness is a vital aspect of his achievements as a First World War poet, the only wholly Jewish poet to be included among the greatest of them. While the half-Jewish Sassoon (on his father’s side) and the majority of his fellow war-poets drew largely on the Christian and Classical mythology they had absorbed through their mainly public school educations, Rosenberg’s familiarity with Hebrew culture, including the oral Chassidic tradition, as well as his knowledge of English culture, especially its poets, gives his work, as Sassoon recognised, ‘a racial quality – biblical and prophetic . . . Scriptural and sculptural . . .’ William Plomer argued that the ‘Jewish strain’ in Rosenberg’s poetry showed itself especially in his ‘choice of themes and colours, his sensuousness and eroticism’; F.R. Leavis believed that his late start in English and lack of systematic education gave him an original approach to language, which a more conventional upbringing might have stifled. The content of Rosenberg’s poetry, too, differed, partly because (as he admitted) he did ‘not join the [British] Army for patriotic reasons’ but for economic ones; partly as a reaction to the anti-Semitism he sensed there; and partly (despite his lack of conventional religiousness) because of his preoccupation with the Jewish God and the Female God, who had featured prominently in his pre-war as well as his war poems, thus providing more continuity between his war and pre-war poems than was the case with such poets as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. Rosenberg’s application to join the Jewish Battalion in Palestine in the last year of the War also had a significant effect on his final war-poems.
Jane Mattison, Kristianstad University, School of Environment and Learning, Sweden

‘Non-Combatant’ or ‘No-Courage’? Conscientious objectors in modern British novels

The 16,000 conscientious objectors at the beginning of World War One were largely ignored because they were numerically insignificant and because the hostilities were expected to be over by Christmas. By 1915, the growing resentment towards conscientious objectors due to heavy battle losses and the realization that the war would be longer than expected made pacifism increasingly problematical and controversial. With the introduction of conscription in 1916 and the enlistment of many conscientious objectors in the Non-Combatant Corps – where they served as stretcher bearers, ambulance drivers, canteen workers and road makers – pacifism became increasingly identified with cowardice, as exemplified in the nickname ‘No-Courage Corps’.

My paper explores the different attitudes of pacifists to war and how these were perceived by both fighting soldiers and civilians. I argue that novels have a special ability to demonstrate the different views, their origins and effect on the individual concerned. The wide range of attitudes is clearly illustrated in Pat Barker’s Regeneration (1991), Sebastian Faulks’s Birdsong (1994), Mackenzie Ford’s Gifts of War (2008), Janet Macleod Trotter’s A Crimson Dawn (2006), Anne Perry’s At Some Disputed Barricade (2006), and Chris Ryan’s One Good Turn (2008). My focus is on A Crimson Dawn and the characters of Rab MacCrae, who is arrested as a conscientious objector and pays the ultimate price, and Emmie Kelso, who is married to a soldier who volunteers in 1914 and is deeply opposed to pacifism.

What can novels tell us about conscientious objectors that history books cannot? Why do so many modern British novels feature conscientious objectors? Why do we continue to be fascinated by their stories? These questions form the basis of my paper.

References

In the decades preceding the First World War, military physicians in Europe, the United States, and Japan succeeded to a remarkable extent in improving the health of soldiers and sailors. Moreover, they promoted improved public health throughout their societies by inculcating military recruits with improved sanitary practices that were transferred to families and subsequent generations. Eventually, these improvements resulted in larger numbers of healthier soldiers, which in turn contributed to the gridlock that produced trench warfare in World War I. This presentation outlines how highly-publicized German successes during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) led to increasing communication among, and heightened competition between, military-medical officers of the Great Powers. This emerging professional class of experts restructured hospitals, created mobile surgical aid stations, designed specialized railroad evacuation cars, introduced standardized first-aid packets issued to every soldier, organized large numbers of volunteers to treat the sick and wounded behind the lines, and persuaded commanding officers to change the way they clothed, marched, fed, and bivouacked troops. They even conducted the world’s first large-scale experiments with performance-enhancing drugs and pioneered psychological treatment of trauma cases. These physician-soldiers created a specialized literature, the military-medical journal, enabling rapid dissemination of new ideas, discoveries, and techniques, and they created one of the world’s first international professional associations to measure their success against their compatriot-rivals. This remarkable story highlights the accomplishments of these little-known heroes, while also weighing price of their success.

References

Mobilizing the Forgotten Recruits: the Veteranization of British War Equines, 1898-1945

This paper proposes that the First World War deeply affected British society, leading to the reconceptualization of British war animals as veterans during the interwar period. The process of converting British war equines from brute resources into veterans began on the battlefields with the war-altered thoughts and actions toward combat animals of both the British military and the British animal welfare organizations. The changing perceptions of war animals (especially equines) were quickly disseminated to the civilian population by the continuing work of the welfare groups and the returning veterans; however, the animal combatants’ veteran status was not fully conferred until after the Great War with the establishments of commemorations and memorials. In the beginning, veteran status was only given to a select few former combatants; however, through the interwar-period efforts of the animal welfare groups and veterans, veteranization became a common occurrence by the end of the Second World War. The total mechanization of warfare and the removal of animals as frontline-laborers aided this process during the Interwar Era. The most notable impact of this process was the mainstreaming of the British animal welfare movement, which set the stage for the rise of animal rights in the 1960s. This analysis begins with the direct causes of the status transformation including the changing perceptions of soldiers, the wartime activities of the animal welfare organizations, and the inclusion of animals in the postwar commemorations and then discusses the more indirect causes, specifically the removal of war equines from the front before ending with the significant socio-cultural impacts of the conferred status on British society between the two world wars.

References

Christoph Mick, University of Warwick

'Not our state'. Ukrainian war victims in the Second Polish Republic

The Great War, the Russian civil war, the Polish-Ukrainian war and the Soviet-Polish war devastated Ukraine and left more than one million Ukrainians dead on the battlefields. Millions were wounded, hundreds of thousands became invalids. The territory of today's Ukraine was divided between the Soviet Union, Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. My paper focuses on the situation of Ukrainian war victims, soldiers and civilians, in the eastern borderlands of the Second Polish Republic. Tens of thousands of Ukrainians had spent part of the war in Austrian internment camps where they had suffered malnourishment and mistreatment. In addition, more than 50,000 Ukrainians had spent some time in Polish prisoner-of-war or internment camps. While Ukrainian invalids of the Great War received state pensions the Polish government refused to recognise former soldiers of the Ukrainian Galician Army who had fought against Polish troops as war veterans. The invalids of this army were excluded from receiving any state benefits. I will be analysing the Polish policies towards the different categories of Ukrainian war victims and looking at the reactions and self-help programmes of the Ukrainian population.

References

There is much irony in the fact that the Sarajevo assassination is recognized as the immediate (as opposed to long- and medium-term) cause for the outbreak of World War I, yet the July 1914 investigation into the assassination was indeterminate, and to this day what Sir Edward Grey described as ‘the perfect political murder’ remains unsolved in terms of the exact nature of the assistance the young Bosnians received in Serbia. Nevertheless, writings on the question of responsibility for the assassination proliferated in the interwar years and even after, typically as a way to address the larger ‘war guilt’ question itself and despite the fact that nothing could be changed in terms of what Austria-Hungary actually knew about the assassination when its leaders decided to attack Serbia. Thus while on one hand solving the Sarajevo crime has no more relevance than that of a ‘detective story,’ as Laurence Langer long ago pointed out, the ongoing fascination with it says much with regard to how both scholars and ordinary people have sought to understand the origins of World War I itself.

This paper thus proposes to examine both serious and non-empirical perspectives on the Sarajevo plot, from the period immediately after the assassination to the present day. The main question is not ‘who was behind the assassination,’ but rather what can we understand about the war origins debate from the ongoing and multifaceted efforts to revisit this issue. By examining scholarly perspectives on the responsibility question alongside some of the more outlandish theories and fictional accounts about such things as the role of Freemasonry, secret Russian agents or, even, that Austro-Hungarian leaders staged the assassination in order to legitimate the war they so badly wanted with Serbia, my paper addresses the larger issue of how people have tried to make sense of the Great War in terms of its rather peculiar, highly disproportionate and, according to some scholars, wholly unnecessary origins in the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand.
Overconfidence and Paranoia in Equal Measure: Decisions for war in Europe’s capital cities during the July Crisis

As the centenary of the war approaches, historians have questioned the predominant focus on Germany and Austria-Hungary in bringing about the First World War, and have looked in detail at the roles played by Russia, France and Britain. This paper will examine some of the evidence we have to suggest that there was a desire for war, among certain decision-makers, in all of these countries. After a hundred years of controversy, it is no longer possible simply to blame one country, Germany, for the outbreak of war, as had been the case in 1919, and to some extent again during the 1960s with the advent of the Fischer controversy. This paper will argue that the July Crisis is best understood as a crisis of two halves. Before the ultimatum, it was essentially of Austrian and German making. After the ultimatum was delivered, the reactions of France and Russia, in particular, deserve our attention.

Two main conclusions will be drawn: First, decision-makers throughout Europe feared and over-estimated the abilities of their potential enemies and thus sought to make use of what seemed to them a golden opportunity for war while they felt confident of their own military power. They were overly-confident and paranoid at the same time. And second, military pressures for war were equally as strong in St Petersburg, France, London, Berlin and Vienna. But it was in Berlin that military leaders were able to determine political decision, and it was here that the disastrous Schlieffen Plan was implemented. Where others toyed with the invasion of neutral countries, Germany implemented a plan that would make a European war inevitable. Thus, after 100 years of debate, we can conclude that the desire for war in July 1914 was not exclusively Germany’s or Austria’s. But the decision to unleash that war was taken by the Dual Alliance, not the Entente.
Ann Murray, University College Cork

The Memorialization of World War I in Germany: the case of the Dresden School during the late Weimar Republic

This paper treats how the visual memorialization of World War I in Germany was influenced by the ideological conflicts that persisted among artists, artists’ organizations and government bodies in Germany during the years leading up to the Nazi takeover in 1933.

During the Weimar Republic, the War remained a frequent subject for artists on the gallery circuit, in the illustrated press and in special commemorative volumes published by the government; however, the treatment of the subject was heavily polarized between excessive idealism and attempts to depict the harsh realities of modern warfare. This reflected the fact that the subject was highly politicized: official publications tended towards heroic, sanitized depictions of soldierhood while the treatment of the subject in illustrated presses very much depended on the political ethos of the publisher. In addition, numerous artists’ societies were founded with membership often subject to political association.

Taking the Saxon capital of Dresden as a case study, the paper will focus on the relationship between the prominent right-wing, völkisch Deutsche Kunstgesellschaft Dresden [German Art Society Dresden], ex-soldier artists and the popular press. It will show how, during a time when support for extreme right-wing politics was growing, the manner in which World War I was memorialized became a weapon in attempts to sway public support. This was reflected in the efforts of the German Art Society for example, who used the press and influential connections to sabotage the career of any artist who sought to portray the war experience in a negative light. The inter-relationship between Society members (such as painters Richard Müller and Willy Waldapfel), soldier-artists (Otto Dix and Otto Griebel) and the popular press will be given particular focus.

References

Nachlaß Otto Dix, German Artists Archive, Nuremberg.
Otto Dix-Archiv, Chauvigny.
Nachlaß Richard Müller, German Artists Archive, Nuremberg.
Andreas Musolff, University of East Anglia

‘Beat Back the Hun!’ How an act of ‘self’-construction turned into an exemplary case of ‘othering’.

On 27 July 1900 Emperor Wilhelm II sent off a German troop contingent from Bremerhaven with a rousing speech in which he urged them to help quell the so-called ‘Boxer rebellion’ in China by emulating ‘Hunnish’ ferociousness in treating their enemies. What was apparently intended as a ‘motivating’ reference to military prowess became an example of boastful self-aggrandisement and turned into a powerful anti-German stereotype in World War I (to be taken up again in WW II and surviving, albeit in facetious usage, until 2010 when the Daily Star used it to refer to the Football World Cup Finals that took place in Germany).

Combining the methods of Frame theory and Discourse Analysis, this paper analyses a) the semantics of the historical reference to the ‘Huns under their king Etzel’ and b) its pragmatic-political exploitation in German and Anglo-American war discourses, which, respectively, implied diametrically opposed evaluations (e.g., ‘bravery’ vs. ‘barbarianism’). In addition, we consider its significance for symbolic national ‘face-work’ and in particular for cross-cultural differences in self- and other-construction in conflicts.

References


Reinhard Nachtigal, History Dept., University of Freiburg/Germany

Warfare against Humanity? Submarine Warfare and the Sinking of Hospital Ships. A Matter of Different Perspectives and Perceptions

During WWI hospital ships of the belligerent powers became a preferred target of warfare and propaganda. They were either seized by the enemy, or torpedoed and sunk, mostly by German submarines. Some of them hit mines. Interestingly, many of the seizures and sinking happened before the German declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917. Early in the war the Germans came to conceive of submarines as a strategic reply to the British commercial blockade, installed in September 1914. The first hospital ships were attacked in 1916. The British Admiralty raised ever more protests, while itself not sticking to the rules of naval warfare, which had been codified only in 1912, though in an informal, non-binding manner. Though Britain never signed the convention it was assumed that naval law was in existence as long as most of the belligerents (the ‘majority’) obeyed its rules.

Submarine warfare was new in WWI and it became an instrument of assault and breaking through the blockade. Hospital ships were seen as a special object. The Germans perceived them as troopships or vessels transporting materiel. At the same time when submarine warfare increased in 1916, propaganda against inhuman warfare by submarines was increased, and after the German declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare the perception of naval war became quickly connected with unbridled brutality and war crime. Britain saw herself ever more confronted with such attacks on hospital ships. The German justified such attacks as they had strong doubts about the function and status of Allied hospital ships.

The experiences of hospital ships in WWI’s extreme warfare became paramount in post-war negotiations on naval warfare. Eventually, general accordances were achieved for the treatment of hospital ships as regards the rights and obligations for their use. Directed by national perspectives as they were, war-time agreements (e.g., in August 1917) and conventions with exact obligations for the employment of hospital ships after the war were accorded directly before the beginning of WW II. Thus, whereas the treatment of hospital ships in WWI played an eminent role in the discourse of humanity and war crimes, during WWII it was no longer an issue.

References

In the First World War, Britain excelled not only at patriotic and religious propaganda, but at the invention of atrocity stories, the most (in-)famous being the story of the German ‘Corpse factory’, launched worldwide in mid-April 1917—in ‘Britain’s darkest hour’ — by the Northcliffe press and the Reuters news agency. From all anti-German propaganda stories, the ‘Corpse factory’ stands out for its sheer magnitude, impact, and durability. It was the most effective and certainly the farthest reaching, with ramifications lingering until today. In its core, it said that the Germans had established huge ‘Corpse exploitation factories’, in short ‘Corpse factories’, in the rear of the front, where they were boiling down the corpses of their own soldiers killed in action for the manufacture of lubricants, glycerin, soap, fertilizer, and pig-food.

The morality of a people that was utilizing the bodies of its own fallen heroes as raw material for its chemical industry obviously had hit rock bottom. The Germans had excluded themselves from the human race. Fighting the ‘Hun body-boilers’ until total victory had become a moral duty for everybody, and ‘neutrality’ in the conflict was no longer possible — such was the core message of the ‘Corpse factory’ propaganda campaign. It was, therefore, directed first and foremost to the U.S., China, and the British colonies and dominions (Canada, India, Australia) to mobilize their human potential for the war.

The ‘standard’ narrative, based on revelations made in 1925 by General Charteris, wartime head of the British Army Intelligence Office, located the origin of the story in two captured German photographs, tampered with by Charteris himself. Recent research by R. Marlin saw it rather in the Northcliffe press than in a British propaganda institution. My research, based mainly on an analysis of over 1,000 newspaper articles from the time in seven languages and from seventeen countries, gives a more nuanced picture. In the final version of the story, three major strands are discernible: a German strand about carcass utilization, a Belgian strand about German corpse disposal, and a British strand about glycerin. To these, two minor strands must be added: a British-French about an American consul’s tale, and a German-British about margarine from corpse fat. All of them originated at different places and at different times. The author of the final version ingeniously drew them together in a way that they seemingly corroborated and complemented one another—a technique called by R. Marlin ‘the faking of credentials’. Since then, no deceptive propaganda campaign has done without applying this technique.
Rita Nunes, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Promoting Peace through Sport: the Military “Olympics” of 1919 and the End of the First World War

After the End of the First World War the most popular thought among millions of soldiers was to go back home as soon as possible. Nevertheless this demobilization took several years, in some cases soldiers took four years to return. It was with these men in mind that the Inter-Allied Games, often named as “Military Olympiads” or as “Pershing Olympiads”, the largest international sport event organized after the Olympic Games of Stockholm (1912), were organized. The idea come from the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) and the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), both organizations believed that troops should be gainfully occupied during demobilization.

Under the command of the General John J. Pershing, the Games start to be implemented by Colonel Wait C. Johnson. In January 1919, twenty nine nations were invited to take part. From these, sixteen responded favorably. Coming from the five continents, almost 1,500 athletes competed in twenty four sports from June 22nd to 6th July 1919. To avoid problems with international organizations and the International Olympic Committee, and to preserve these Games under US control, it was decided that only members of the military forces of the allied armies that fought in the 52 months of the Great War could participate.

The Games were held in Pershing Stadium, Joinville, in the suburbs of Paris. This stadium was built especially for the event. When the Inter-Allied Games ended, the stadium was offered to the people of France by the United States of America. The USA as organizing country and France as host, were the most successful nations in the Games. These successes can easily be explained by the size of their respective teams, representing almost one third of the total participants. From the military point of view this Inter-Allied Games were very well organized. From a cultural, sportive and symbolic perspective they contributed to relaunch the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games of Antwerp 1920 after the Great War. For the political point of view they were a mirror of that moment after War, with the Americans wanting to impose their supremacy as world power.

References

The Inter-Allied Games Official Report, Committee Games, 1919.
Nunes, Rita, Jogos Interaliados in Dicionário de História da I Guerra Mundial, (Coord.) Maria Fernanda Rollo, Aniceto Afonso, Ana Paula Pires e Luís Alves de Fraga, Temas e Debates (in preparation).
This paper seeks to examine and contrast two very different approaches to propaganda in the First World War. The Bryce Report (1915) is widely acknowledged in studies of the Belgian atrocities, confirming, as it does, the worst allegations against the German troops. Arthur Ponsonby’s Falsehood in Wartime (1928), on the other hand, aims to ‘expose the lies’ of the First World War, deconstructing and deriding the major propaganda stories and rumours of the war. When we investigate the authors and their motivations, we find that the situation is not quite as clear-cut as it seems. Bryce and his committee of legal experts and academics do not fit the typical profile of the unscrupulous propagandist, and they prove to be uncertain of the validity of their material, though determined to support their country and do their bit for the war effort. Ponsonby, an MP and a member of the Union of Democratic Control has clear motivations for denouncing war propaganda, seeing in it an unprincipled vehicle for governmental manipulation, but his attacks on propaganda verge on propaganda themselves. Furthermore, the original popularity of both sources can be seen as a reflection of the changing opinion of the war from 1914-1928 û at first a noble cause for which to give one’s life, transformed into a futile waste of young lives. In this paper, the two sources will be compared to highlight these different but influential attitudes to the war, and to explore the nature of propaganda in its varying guises.
The role of German decision-making in the outbreak of the First World War has been quite thoroughly studied throughout the course of the twentieth century. It has been a subject that has gone through a plethora of varying interpretations, ranging from the war-guilt clause of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, to the less anti-German view of American and British historians during the interwar period, to the analysis of Fritz Fischer and his disciples.

A key factor throughout the debate about German war guilt has been the specific focus in the more modern historiography on the question of British neutrality for German statesmen in 1914. According to a prominent interpretation, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, the imperial chancellor in 1914, took a ‘calculated risk’, believing that although there was a great risk of a war in German support of Austria during the July Crisis, there was also a good possibility that the crisis could be kept localized, and, if the unwanted war came, that England would stay neutral. Yet the reason that Bethmann and his advisors believed in the possibility of British neutrality has received much less attention.

This paper examines the British press in the summer of 1914 in an attempt to explain why German statesmen felt that England would stay neutral in any war that resulted from the crisis. That belief built on a general Anglo-German détente during and after the Balkan Wars and subsequently helped to negate the official dispatches of Karl Lichnowsky, the German ambassador in London, who repeatedly warned his government that England would not stay neutral in a European war.

An opposite view was prominent in British newspapers for the majority of the July Crisis. Most London dailies missed the significance of the spiraling diplomatic situation during the entire month of July 1914. They portrayed Germany and Austria-Hungary very positively for the majority of the month. It was only after the violation of Belgian neutrality on 4 August 1914 that the whole of the British national press turned against the Central Powers in support of its own government’s decision for war.

Throughout the crisis German decision-makers watched the press and believed that the opinions that British newspapers voiced provided evidence to counteract Lichnowsky’s policy dispatches. The British cabinet would be forced by public opinion, German statesmen believed, to remain neutral in the event of a continental war. The reports of British newspapers in the crisis thus encouraged the belief in the possibility of British neutrality and must count as an important factor in explaining German decision-making in the summer of 1914.
Missionary conscription and service in colonial Africa is an overlooked facet of the Great War. Scholars like Albert Marrin, Arlie Hoover, Edward Madigan and Annette Becker have already documented how clergy in the metropole responded to the war, including condemnation of the violence, service as military chaplains, providing medical relief, helping to organize the home front, and participation in propaganda campaigns via the pulpit. For missionaries in colonial Africa, however, the war often required them to take on wider and more complicated roles. The dearth of white personnel and the difficulties of obtaining reinforcements from home meant that many missionaries and lay brethren were immediately conscripted into the local military as both combatants and chaplains. Others answered their nation’s call to arms by encouraging African parishioners to enlist and provide materials for the war effort. As allied forces took control of Germany’s African holdings missionaries were also called upon to open schools and offer language courses to win the hearts and minds of indigenous peoples, facilitate local administration by occupying forces, and help cement British, French and Belgian territorial ambitions in post-war settlements. Analysis and comparison of these activities to those of clergy serving in the metropole thus sheds new light on the African theater of the war, but also helps to better situate the contributions of the various empires to the overall narrative of the Great War.

References

Pat Barker’s *Regeneration* (1991) provides an example of how vital the novelist’s role can be in making the complexities and human costs of war clear to later generations. Because she fully humanizes both Dr. William Rivers, pioneer in the treatment of ‘shell shock’, and his soldier patients, Barker manages to infuse the war with a significance and relevance impossible if she had stayed on the battlefield. To today’s audience -- all too familiar with ‘shell shock’ and PTSD -- the human story of the doctor and his patients matters. And, particularly through the principled and conflicted Dr. Rivers, Barker can raise complicated questions about the conduct and morality of the war itself.

Barker references and acknowledges the popular version of the war on the Western front—the horror of the trenches, unimaginable losses, camaraderie of soldiers, etc. – but she goes far beyond those accepted (and clichéd) tropes. By focusing on the place where broken officers were sent to be fixed’ so they could return to the slaughter, she raises troubling (and questions: What exactly was the role of military psychiatry during the war? How was ‘shell shock’ diagnosed and treated, and why? Is it ever ethical to support a war one deems immoral?

Barker opens her novel with a real event: Siegfried Sassoon’s July 1917 public protest against the continuation of the war. A noted poet and decorated war hero, Sassoon is officially classified as ‘mentally unsound’ and sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital instead of being publically court marshaled, in hopes that he can be silenced and, perhaps, ‘rehabilitated’ by Dr. William Rivers, psychiatrist and RAMC Captain. It is through the character of Rivers – humane, principled, and ultimately conflicted about his own role and responsibilities – that Barker poses questions about the war’s morality. The War Hospital becomes a battlefield as dangerous as the Somme, as Rivers interacts with a variety of patients (some real people, others composites of those described in Rivers’ writings, others fictitious). By imagining these maneuvers – rather than those at the front – Barker reveals that this war, like all wars, is fought on many fronts, with many casualties direct and ancillary, and many unanswered questions.
Based out of their San Francisco consulate, British intelligence led a network of agents, informants, double-agents and private detectives to infiltrate, subvert and expose several Indo-German-Irish conspiracies in North America and Southeast Asia that were financed by German intelligence and foreign ministry. San Francisco was the headquarters of the revolutionary Gadar Hindustani Party that drew assistance from the Irish Republican Brotherhood even before the war. Both organizations supervised agents traveling back and forth from their home countries with money and arms. With the war came assistance from the German consulate that was already organizing shipments of coal to German warships in the Pacific. This Indo-German-Irish network united to smuggle larger amounts of arms from the United States to India for a revolt against the Raj. In 1915-1916, some shipments were successful through routes that involved the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, Siam and Burma. Yet, the largest shipment aboard the schooner Annie Larsen failed to rendezvous with the steamer Maverick for transport to Calcutta and became the focus of the largest San Francisco neutrality trial during the war. These violations of US neutrality became the legal weapon by which British intelligence shut down the Indo-German-Irish network on the West Coast as well as in Chicago and New York by working inside the US Attorney’s Office and the Bureau of Intelligence (predecessor to the FBI). This episode was no trivial matter as it involved the birth and rapid evolution of British and American intelligence services, modern Indian and Irish nationalism, the Anglo-American alliance, the longest and most expensive trial in American history at the time, and two defendants shot dead in the courtroom. This paper explores several facets of the Great War in the Pacific among diverse national identities and growing global intelligence. With Imperial Germany as the financial catalyst, the Indo-Irish nationalist circle locked into a global conflict with Anglo-American hegemony. After the war, this same nationalist circle became financed as a socialist movement by the Soviet Union with continued counter-intelligence from MI6 and the FBI.

References
Masculinity, Nationalism and Occupied Territory: American Men in World War I Belgium

From 1914 to 1917, a neutral United States furnished food to civilians in German-occupied Belgium through an organization entitled the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB). Founded by Herbert Hoover in fall 1914 and staffed by young American men, the CRB worked in conjunction with U.S. diplomats to supervise the work of thousands of Belgians in distributing the food while ‘guaranteeing’ to the belligerent nations that the resources were not misused. This conference paper examines the men of the CRB and the US diplomatic corps in Belgium, with particular attention to the ways in which the experience shaped an American nationalism in World War I Europe long before American troops set foot there. CRB delegates and the American Mission in Brussels understood their role in profoundly gendered ways – these men saw themselves as saviors of a feminized and occupied Belgium from an aggressively male Germany. This ideological stance was supported by their actual work, which included overseeing soup kitchens staffed largely by women and non-combatant men. It was further supported by their roles as witnesses and sometimes intercessors in the politics of occupied Belgium, as in the case of Edith Cavell and in the deportation of male civilians to Germany. The sources for this project include the papers of the American participants, German occupying documents, and the diaries, published works, and letters of Belgian civilians (in both Flemish and French). One unusual set of documents includes scores of expressions of gratitude from Belgian children and adults with commentary by the Americans.

References
Medical cultures in the German Army 1914-1918

This paper examines the medical routine treatment of bodily and mental diseases of German front-line soldiers between 1914 and 1918. Our investigation is part of a larger project, entitled ‘War and Medical Culture. Patient Stories and Medical Action in the World War Age 1914–1945’ and it was sponsored by the German Research Association (DFG). It is the first major analysis of the World War One patient records of German soldiers, kept by the Federal Republic’s Military Archive in Freiburg. Based on a sample of approximately 6000 patient records, we concentrated on two main research questions: First we focused on treatment procedures and their dependence on current medical theories, second we investigated the influence of political/ideological patterns on treatment and decision making re. soldier patients. Concentrating on bodily exhaustion (internal medicine) as well as psychiatric diseases (psychiatry) we could perform a comparative analysis based on qualitative and quantitative methodology. Still during the war, specialists in the fields of psychiatry as well as in internal medicine tried to maximize therapeutic success and thereby rationalize medicine when applying racial hygienist concepts to support their theories and interests. Remarkably these medical home-front university experts in Germany nevertheless got no control over every day front-line treatment, because troop physicians did not share the specialist’s theoretical pan-German notions on disease management. According to the realities of their own war experiences, front-line physicians practiced their own precepts of therapy. Only very few shell shocked soldiers were sent to special hospitals for the application of treatment methods in accordance to academic formulations of war psychiatry. In contrast to the recommendations of the non-combat-based specialists of internal medicine, heart ailments were not categorically ignored by troop physicians. The analysis of the patient records thus changes our views on the activities of World War One medicine as such. Individual front-line treatment could be preserved and it was only between 1939 and 1945 that psychiatrists and internal medics could urge front line physicians to treat their patients ‘more effectively’.

References

Hofer, Hans-Georg; Cay-Rüdiger Prüll (2011). ‘War, Trauma, and Medicine in Germany and Central Europe (1914-1939).’ In: Hans-Georg Hofer; Cay-Rüdiger Prüll, Wolfgang U. Eckart (Eds.), War, Trauma, and Medicine in Germany and Central Europe (1914-1939), Freiburg: Centaurus, 7-29.


Felicity Rash, Queen Mary, University of London

Heia Safari! A wartime memoir as an example of German post-war colonialist propaganda

Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck was a military commander in German East Africa during the First World War. In 1920 he published a war ‘memoir’ aimed at the youth of Germany, Heia Safari, in which he gives an account of German heroism in an unbalanced theatre of war. The purpose of this paper is to analyse this account, not for its historical accuracy but as a piece of nationalist-colonialist propaganda. The memoir, which reads very much like a boys’ adventure story, carries a message of past undeserved loss and of hoped-for justifiable rectification of that loss in the future. In this paper, Lettow-Vorbeck’s discursive strategies for perpetuating the German colonialist dream through memoir will be analysed using modern methods of discourse analysis such as Ruth Wodak et al.’s Discourse Historical Approach (Wodak et al. 2009) and the Cognitive Metaphor Theory used by Andreas Musolff (Musolff 2010). These strategies include: justification, perpetuation, transformation and the construction of ‘Feindbilder’. A particular theme is of that of the loyalty of the Askari, the native African soldiers, who Lettow-Vorbeck portrays as fighting a German war for no apparent reason other than a desire to support the spread of German power and culture.

References

The literature written for girls and young women in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States during the First World War mirrors the complex and contradictory effects that the war had on women’s lives. From the mid-nineteenth century on, books and magazines directed at a young, middle-class female audience were intended both to entertain and to prepare readers for their future roles as wives and mothers. During the war years, this literature assumed an added function, serving as war propaganda to demonize the enemy and incite girls to patriotic service for their country. German authors of wartime girls’ books include Marga Rayle and Sophie Kloerss; among the British authors are Bessie Marchant and Angela Brazil. The American books usually appeared as series, such as the Red Cross Girls (Vandercook 1916-1920). Taken as a whole, World War I girls’ literature offers a glimpse into the unprecedented challenges and possibilities faced by girls in all three countries during the war years. The wartime transformation of girls’ roles and responsibilities is reflected in books featuring female characters who move from the private to the public sphere, and even to the war theater itself. However, acts of ‘unfeminine’ behavior are often neutralized through a focus on a character’s ‘feminine’ appearance or the limitations that being a woman poses in her new role. And when a middle-class heroine does redefine gender roles by donning a uniform or stepping into a factory, in most cases she ends up marrying and returning to the home—a clear message that a woman’s adventure in a man’s world is a temporary state of affairs.

References

For Private Viewing: ‘Khaki Portraits’, Group Pictures and Off-Duty Snaps of British Women War Workers

Most photographic history of the First World War has focused on official images taken by professional photographers for propaganda and commemorative purposes. Commissioned by government agencies, these photos were used initially to mobilise people for the war effort and later to create a formal record of the conflict. As a result, official photographs reproduced dominant constructions of the war experience for public viewing, emphasizing the collective patriotic effort of war participants. Their formal, carefully composed and frequently staged images denied the diversity of participants’ individual experience. Growing realization of this discrepancy has generated a new interest in private photos of the conflict, indicated by brisk bidding wars on eBay and ‘Lives of the First World War’, a digital memorial project launched by the Imperial War Museum. Utilising such collections, this paper explores the personal photographs of British women war workers, including nurses, munitions workers and auxiliaries. It focuses on three main genres: the individual studio or ‘khaki portrait’, group photos of female units and off-duty snaps of the women and their male companions. The discussion highlights two main areas of research where the use of private photos is particularly rewarding. These include the construction of individual and collective gender identities by women war workers through portrayals of their uniformed selves and women’s experience of off-duty activities, ranging from recreation, friendships and romantic relations. The paper contrasts official and private photographs depicting these themes and argues that while both types of images constructed women’s wartime work and identities, the latter are infinitely more useful as historical records, since they reflect individual perspectives and personal ambitions about wartime femininities, gender roles and relations.
The First World War represents a watershed in the history of war photography. It was the first conflict to be photographed in detail by all the participants and the first in which photography was actively exploited and controlled in support of the war effort. When war broke out in 1914, many of the skills and technical resources required to photograph it were already in place. But suitable infrastructures capable of managing photography as a mass medium in wartime were lacking. The gradual evolution of such infrastructures shaped the nature and impact of photography during the First World War.
This paper will reassess the work of Dutch cartoonist Louis Raemaekers and challenge his negative post-war reputation, in which historians condemned his work as virulent anti-German propaganda (Messinger 1992; Sanders et al. 1982). It will argue instead that his vivid works of atrocity propaganda had their genesis in developing ideas about the humane conduct of war, which were made explicit in the Hague Conventions of 1907. Raemaekers was a Dutch cartoonist who visited Belgium during the first few months of the German invasion, and produced a series of powerful cartoons that influenced the visual language of atrocity propaganda throughout the Allied world. His work added depth to Britain’s argument that it prosecuted a war against a country that did not respect the rights of small nations, nor the right of civilians to be exempt from violence at the hands of the military (Ellis 1998). This paper will suggest that the increasing value placed upon human life coupled with the liberal ideals present in the British parliament meant the government had to present the conflict as a Just War, as the radical conscience within the Liberal party could not support a war that was fought solely to protect the balance of power in Europe (Steiner et al. 2003).

Humanitarianism therefore dictated much of the rhetoric used by the British government when they declared war; it is through this prism that Raemaekers’ atrocity propaganda should be viewed.

References


Michael Robinson – Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool.


This conference paper will analyse the experiences of Irish shell-shocked Great War participants. This will be achieved through an examination of their treatment and recovery during the war and in the turbulent post-war years of Northern Ireland and in the newly founded Irish Free State.Whilst research into Ireland’s involvement in the Great War was once described as being in a state of ‘collective amnesia’ (Townsend 1999), this description became increasingly inaccurate over the past decade. This dramatic surge in interest led Keith Jeffery to assert: ‘We probably know more about Irish units in the Great War than most of their English, Scottish or Welsh counterparts’ (Jeffery 1998). However, the current historiography contains comparatively little on the experiences of psychologically traumatised Irish servicemen. Similarly, research into Britain’s treatment of shell-shocked soldiers has omitted any mention of the Irishmen who enlisted in the British Army. For example, Peter Barham, in his impressive study of English Great War participants who succumbed to insanity, avoids critical engagement with Ireland declaring that ‘It would have required a much longer, and different, book, to have done justice to Scotland, Wales, Ireland and the dominions’ (Barham 2007).

From a range of primary sources including war diaries, asylum casebooks, newspaper reports, Parliament and Dáil debates, Ministry of Pension reports, this paper will critically engage with the Irish experience at the front and on their return home. In particular, their post-war treatment and recovery is key in this regard. These men, of course, also returned to a turbulent post-war socio-political context after the cessation of hostilities. Whether these unique conditions had any effect on the men’s treatment, and recovery from war neurosis, will also be considered by critically engaging with contemporary research into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which argues that the homecoming conditions that men return to is key to the servicemen’s recovery from psychological injuries. Ultimately, the paper sheds new light on the forgotten lives of Irish soldiers who suffered from shell-shock, and will engage the Irish case study with broader context of the other major combatant nation’s treatment of shell-shock.

References

Helen Roche, University of Cambridge

‘The Cadets are revolting’: Reactionary violence, the Freikorps, and the legacy of the ‘Great’ war for the Royal Prussian Cadet-Corps

The fall of the German monarchy and the rise of a socialist government in 1918-19 made a mockery of everything that pupils of the Royal Prussian Cadet-Corps had been trained for. Brought up from the age of ten in regimented military boarding-schools, the cadets had been taught to abhor the evils of Social Democracy, and that they must live and die only for ‘King, Kaiser and Fatherland’. The ignominy of German defeat radicalised reactionary sentiment among the cadets, so that many ran away to join the Freikorps whilst still in their teens, desperate to solve the nation’s problems by ‘smoking out the red swine’ once and for all (Salomon 1930, 8-9). Such tendencies were only exacerbated when, in 1920, the Ebert government insisted upon the dissolution of the cadet-schools and their transformation into non-military boarding-schools, the Staatliche Bildungsanstalten. This move was resented by current and former pupils alike, and many former Freikorps cadets who were forced back into the schools to complete their education engaged in a prolonged hate-campaign against the new school authorities at the former Central Cadet-School in Berlin-Lichterfelde, aimed especially at the new Jewish Director, Friedrich Karsen. Matters came to a head in 1921 with the so-called ‘Cadet-Revolts’, in which a new house matron was subjected to extreme verbal abuse by her charges because she had denounced one of her more monarchist colleagues for encouraging the cadets’ patriotism. The matter was discussed in the press and discussed in parliament, and Education Minister Boelitz was called upon to decide the culprits’ punishment. The cadets were branded as ‘Hurrabengel’ and ‘Arbeitertöter’, and the schools deemed ‘hotbeds of militarism’, of supreme danger to the survival of the Weimar Republic (e.g. Sitzungsberichte, 126-127). That these accusations were not altogether unfounded is suggested by the eagerness with which many members of the cadet-school old boys’ network embraced National Socialism, even before the Nazis had seized power. Indeed, many former cadets went on to gain exalted positions in the Wehrmacht, such as Erich von Manstein and Heinz Guderian. Yet this can be also seen as a reflection of ex-cadets’ deeply-ingrained desire for a return to strong government and an autocratic style of leadership, fuelled by the promise of a reversal of German defeat and the shearing of the shackles of Versailles. The Nazi regime even seemed to promise a resurrection of the cadet-corps in the guise of the Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (Napolas), military-style boarding-schools which took over many former cadet-school buildings, and followed a similar regime. This paper would aim, using previously unexplored archival material as well as a selection of memoirs and contemporary works, to explore the manifold ways – political, social, and criminal – in which former Prussian cadets responded to the divisive legacy of German defeat.

References

Nickol, Hanns (1935). Der letzte Kadett. Stuttgart: DVA.
Sitzungsberichte des preußischen Landtages 1922.
As during the First World War, the issues relating to the African continent are still central within world politics. This has been shown in the recent EU/Africa summit which was held during the Portuguese presidency of the European Union.

The interrelationship between the Africa continent and Europe during the 20th century as well as internal dynamics led to changes within Africa, particularly following the outbreak of the First World War.

Portuguese Africa stands out as an agent in the globalization process, both as an element of direct action, particularly through the exploitation of natural resources, and as a result of its unique political system. It also acted as a crossroads for the world as far as material and immaterial goods were concerned.

This paper will explore the main policies and measures (or rather the lack thereof) put in place by the Portuguese government as well as measures to boost the recovery of African colonial markets and limit dependency upon external markets. We will focus upon economic issues in order to highlight the importance of the small but strategically-placed Portuguese Empire to the global war effort.
Jeff Roquen, Lehigh University, Pennsylvania

Woodrow Wilson and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights 1914-1917

By the end of the twentieth century, the presidency of Woodrow Wilson had been relegated to a one-liner among public intellectuals, talk-show hosts and journalists. In making Wilson’s famous line ‘The world must be made safe for Democracy’ (‘War Message,’ 2 April 1917) synonymous with his justification for entrance into WWI, pundits and scholars alike have offered a misleading and reductionist interpretation of his consequential choice for war. Less than two months earlier, for example, Wilson couched his military ‘Request for Authority’ to Congress in the following lines, ‘It is not of material interests merely that we are thinking. It is, rather, of fundamental human rights, chief of all the right of life itself… I am thinking of those rights of humanity without which there is no civilization.’ (italics added) Two weeks after his watershed 2 April ‘War Message’, Wilson began his ‘Address to the Nation’ with the following words, ‘My fellow countrymen: The entrance of our beloved country into the grim and terrible war for democracy and human rights’ (italics added). Although ‘The world must be made safe for democracy’ has unquestionably become the quotable mantra from Wilson’s 2 April 1917 ‘War Message’, his larger rationale for sending Americans into battle on the Continent is actually contained elsewhere in the speech – one that is almost wholly ignored:

We are at the beginning of an age in which it will be insisted that the same standards of conduct and of responsibility for wrong done shall be observed among nations and their governments that are observed among individual citizens of civilized states.

In a word, Wilson not only conceived of Europe as a single entity but also much (if not all) of the world as one sociopolitical entity within the prism of human rights. My paper will thus argue that this view has been dramatically understated and underappreciated within the context of remembering and historicizing WWI. Beginning with the Spanish-American War, I will attempt to uncover and link the emerging paradigm of statecraft based on the concept of universal human rights – the largest ‘imagined community’ conceivable – from the presidency of William McKinley to the White House years of Woodrow Wilson in an attempt to recast and recapture the intellectual and idealistic underpinnings of America’s rise to world power status.

References

McKinley, William, A Compilation of The Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897, Vol. X, ed. James D. Richardson
Padover, Saul K., Wilson’s Ideals (Washington, DC: The American Council in Public Affairs, 1942)
World War I brought about fundamental changes in the global order, social relations and cultural perceptions. This has been a story of power, technology and science. The labour movement internationally supported the First World War but a minority across a range of viewpoints from Keir Hardie to Lenin refused to go along with their Governments’ warmongering. Lenin firmly believed in irreconcilable class opposition to the imperialists and their war. It is only by means of this principled standpoint of class opposition that the cadres of Bolshevism were formed and clearly delimited from all other parties, groups, and tendencies, which to one degree or another, tend toward conciliation or collaboration with their national ruling class in the war. Lenin did not visualize the victory of the proletarian revolution as the immediate outcome of the First World War but contemplated turning imperialist war into a civil war. World War I was an unprecedented disaster for Russia. Russian casualties were greater than those sustained by any nation in any previous war. The economy was hopelessly crippled by the costly war effort, and in March 1917, riots and strikes broke out in Petrograd over the scarcity of food. His slogan was, ‘Peace, land, bread!’ and ‘All power to the Soviets’.

On March 15, 1917, Nicholas II was forced to abdicate, ending centuries of czarist rule. The new government considers that to continue this war simply to decide how to divide the weak nationalities among the powerful and rich nations which had seized them would be the greatest crime against humanity, and it solemnly announces its readiness to sign at once the terms of peace which will end this war on the indicated conditions, equally just for all nationalities without exception. ‘Wars cannot be ended by a refusal [to fight]; they cannot be ended by one side alone. We are proposing an armistice for three months -though we are not rejecting a shorter period —so that this will give the suffering army at least a breathing spell and will make possible the calling of popular meetings in all civilised countries to discuss the conditions of peace’ (Delivered at Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, 26 October 1917 and published by Izvestia, 27 October 1917). His Foreign Policy Statement called for a just and democratic peace for which the great majority of wearied, tormented and war-exhausted toilers and labouring classes of all belligerent countries are thirsting, a peace which the Russian workers and peasants have so loudly and insistently demanded since the overthrow of the Tsar's monarchy, such a peace the government considers to be an immediate peace without annexations (i.e., without the seizure of foreign territory and the forcible annexation of foreign nationalities) and without indemnities. Lenin's view of the war can be summed up in a letter he wrote to the Romanian poet Valeriu Marcu in 1917: ‘One slave owner, Germany is fighting another slave owner, England, for a fairer distribution of the slaves’. The Paper dwells on Lenin’s contribution to peace-making efforts at the fag-end of the war which is historically significant in understanding the dynamics of change in post-conflict scene of reconciliation and reconstruction.
Erin Eckhold Sassin, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont

Housing, heavy industry and feminism in the First World War

The expansion of the *Ledigenheim* building type in Germany during the First World War illuminates the intersection of reform housing, heavy industry and feminism. First developed in the middle of the nineteenth century, the *Ledigenheim* was a vernacular building type constructed to house single lower-middle class and working class individuals while combating the ‘lodger problem’ endemic to working class life. It featured prominently in contemporary debates on improved housing as a solution to societal unrest, for while the *Ledigenheim* could not entirely protect single workers from economic downturns, the fixed prices and the resources commonly held within these buildings-- people’s kitchens, libraries and employment agencies-- aided individuals in dire financial straits (Schlafstellenwesen und Ledigenheime). However, although *Ledigenheime* for men came to occupy an important position amongst the numerous social reform efforts undertaken by myriad groups from the close of the nineteenth century, they were sex-segregated and rarely constructed for single women until the outbreak of the First World War.

However, the growth of heavy industry in Germany during the war intensified the need for the creation of *Ledigenheime* to house this formerly underserved group, particularly as single women began work outside of the home in ever-increasing numbers, largely to replace their male counterparts fighting on the Eastern and Western Fronts. However, not only did the expansion of this building type to include working women coincide with the needs of industrialists to stabilize and cultivate a previously untapped workforce through the provision of housing, but the feminist implications of the undertaking also loomed large. Feminists saw these buildings as the basis of a more public life, one centered upon women’s emancipation from the traditional household, and the drudgery associated with it (Braun, 1901). The demands of the war economy had simply provided a timely rationale for housing women outside of the traditional household in spaces that minimized the time they had to engage in domestic tasks and maximized their access to a more public life (Trost, 1918).

References


It is a common place to argue that German Jews widely perceived the beginning of the Great War in 1914 as a possibility to finally prove that they are Germans first of all who would not hesitate to fight for Germany on the battlefield. However, there were exceptions. Gustav Landauer (1870-1919) remained one of the few intellectuals who criticized the war from the beginning because he considered himself to be a German, a Jew, and a European. For his long-time friend Fritz Mauthner (1849-1923) on the other hand the outbreak of the war was not so much a way to prove that Jews can be Germans. Mauthner, who believed he had made the decision to be a German, had already left the Jewish Community in 1891. He was a skeptic about Judaism and filled with anti-Semitic sentiments. Nevertheless, the debate with Landauer about the war made him aware of his Jewish identity again. This can be analyzed in particular from the discussion between the two men about Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe to Germany and their consideration of how Germany could survive following the defeat in 1918.

My paper will involve a close examination of the correspondence between the two men as part of the broader debate on Jewish identity in Germany of this era.

Reference

Fritz Mauthner Collection, 1765-1968. AR 3392, Archives of the Leo Baeck Institute at the Center for Jewish History.  
Stephanie Seul, University of Bremen

Jewish perspectives on the Great War: Discourses of the German-Jewish press on the war, the rise of anti-Semitism, and German-Jewish identity

For German Jewry the outbreak of the Great War marked a historic opportunity to demonstrate its unconditional loyalty towards the Reich. The Emperor’s proclamation of the Burgfrieden – a political truce for the duration of the war– raised hopes that anti-Semitism and discrimination were overcome. Yet, these hopes proved short-lived. Völkisch and anti-Semitic groups rejected the inclusion of Jews in the national war alliance. Shortly after the outbreak of war they began to publicly accuse the Jews of unpatriotic behaviour such as shirking military service or economic profiteering. As the war continued and hopes for a German victory perished, the anti-Semitic propaganda spread by right-wing extremist groups grew in strength. Ultimately, the Great War led to a radicalisation of anti-Jewish stereotypes and reinforced ideologies that called for the removal of the Jews from the German nation. The initial hope of the German Jews that the war would lead to equality and social acceptance thus soon gave way to a feeling of deep disappointment.

The outbreak of the Great War set in motion a lively debate in the German-Jewish press on the current and future position of the Jews within the German nation. This paper analyses the Jewish perceptions of the Great War and of its impact on Jewish life in Germany. The medium of the German-Jewish press is particularly appropriate for the study of the vital concerns of Jewish life as the newspapers and periodicals commented on all important issues in the fields of politics, social life, and culture relevant to German Jewry. The main Jewish denominations published their own newspapers and journals. These mirror the initial euphoria and bright outlook on the Jewish future. Thus, in August 1914 all Jewish newspapers and periodicals, irrespective of their Liberal, Orthodox, or Zionist outlook, patriotically avowed themselves to the support of the war. However, the initial euphoria soon gave way to more critical and sobered voices deploring the fragility of the Burgfrieden and the rapid rise of anti-Semitism. As this paper furthermore illustrates, the perceptions of the various Jewish periodicals of the war and its impact on Jewish life, which had been very similar on the outbreak of the Great War, were increasingly drifting apart as the hostilities continued.

References


Michel Schultheiss and Julia Thyroff, University of Lausanne and University of Basle:

Between the 'island of peace' and the 'challenged union' - History Schoolbooks representing Switzerland during World War I

The presentation is structured along the following questions: (1) What kind of notion of Switzerland during World War I is outlined in contemporary history schoolbooks and (2) to what extent do these schoolbooks use narratives that are also known from historiography? In the historiography about the situation of Switzerland during World War I there are strong narratives which have been constant over decades and still exist up until today (Kuhn/Ziegler, 2011). For example there is one narrative that characterizes World War I as a period of social and cultural tensions and even as a crucial challenge of the national union (Kuhn/Ziegler, 2011, 123). To what extent are these narratives also part of actual Swiss history schoolbooks? In order to answer this question, we conducted a theory-driven hermeneutic content analysis of contemporary Swiss schoolbooks written in German. Therefore, we included texts and further material like photographs and cartoons from the schoolbooks. The presentation outlines the results of the analysis, focusing on three topics: representations of (a) the social situation of Switzerland during World War I, (b) the role of Swiss neutrality and (c) tensions between the German-speaking and French-speaking parts of Switzerland. The presentation concludes that the schoolbooks do contain elements of traditional narratives as for example the interpretation of the period of World War I as a challenge for national entity.

References


Christopher Schultz, The University of Western Ontario, Canada

At Home Away from Home? Re-assessing ‘Separation’ as a Mode of Understanding Experiences on the Western Front

The general assumption in much scholarship of the First World War is that people are recruited into active service, are more or less trained for military service, and undergo both a geographical and psychological separation from their former lives. This ‘separation thesis’, which is a modified from the more commonly used ‘alienation thesis’ (McCartney, 2005) is an interpretive imposition of historians, however. The mere fact of warfare has proven enough to generally subsume, or else subordinate to the war effort as ‘coping’ (Cook 2008, Watson 2008, et al.), a wealth of well-established and sustained civilian practices these men and women brought with them to the Western Front. Separation, as a concept, requires the restoration of proximity; this paper instead proposes that proximity to home and its attendant practices was more readily available and producible than is often assumed. Separation is also invoked as a function of geographic distance (Keshen 1996), but space is more precisely understood as a relative, socio-linguistic product (Ricoeur 1984 and de Certeau 1984). Using one Canadian soldier’s collected letters as a case study, this paper demonstrates the ways in which a civil identity was sustained through the duration of the Great War by inverting the interpretive vector. Instead of seeing all actions and experiences in relation to war and warfaring, historians might instead seek the home experience in the war zone, and thus place the war within a greater temporal and spatial context.

References

Kathleen E.R. Smith, Northwestern State University

‘If he can Fight like he can Love, Goodnight, Germany’: American Popular Music, the Committee on Public Information, and Propaganda in World War I

Americans were singers, and this was especially true during World War I when group or community singing was considered as much a part of the nation's war effort as rolling bandages, serving out coffee and cigarettes at canteens and knitting socks for soldiers. During World War I the music industry caught fire: the number of songs about war approximate those about love. When the United States declared war in April 1917, Americans rallied behind the government and the war, and Tin Pan Alley helped lead the way with hundreds of songs. Between April 1917 and November 1918, when the war ended, Tin Pan Alley produced more songs than during any other comparable period in history. No American war, with the possible exception of the Civil War, yielded as many martial tunes as did the Great War, nor has any war added such numbers of sentimental songs to the permanent repertory of American popular song. Immediately, popular music reflected and capitalized on the new national mood. Tin Pan Alley had developed into an efficient machine. If the country demanded a particular type of song, the Alley could produce it. And the demand for war songs was phenomenal.

Tin Pan Alley also responded to the government’s encouragement. The official propaganda agency, the Committee on Public Information (CPI), headed by George Creel, believed that singing was vital to the war effort, and agitated for composition of martial tunes. Creel did not go so far as to outline song topics or suggest how Tin Pan Alley writers should go about their business, but he made his presence and desires for war songs known. The Committee on Public Information also printed songbooks and dispatched song leaders to theaters around the country to lead people in-group singing of war songs. The military distributed songbooks in camps and commissioned special officers to lead singing. Another indication of how important the government thought music was to the war effort was that despite paper rationing, music publishers continued to receive their full quota of paper for printing sheet music, although the traditional large format gave way to the standard page size used today with some smaller and miniature sizes also produced as conservation efforts. Sheet music sales soared. Sales of one and two million copies of a song were not uncommon. One explanation for this sales boom is that there was a shortage of entertainment outside the home. Many theaters closed for want of fuel, power, and entertainers (many of whom were drafted). Americans were compelled to entertain themselves, often around a family piano. People sang at community gatherings, in theaters, and at war bond rallies.

References:


National Archives and Records Administration: Records of the Committee on Public Information Record Group 63, 1917-1921, College Park, MD.

Natalia Starostina, Emory, History Department, Young Harris College, USA

The memory of the Great War in French railway narratives

My paper will analyse ways in which the construction of the memory of the Great War in France involved different textual and visual narratives of French trains and French railways in the aftermath of the Great War. A contemporary, Lieutenant Colonel Brevete Fischer, argued that railways were ‘the major culprits of the war:’ trains brought provision to troops and, it seemed, the war could last an indefinite amount of time. French poets and writers (Jules Romains and Georges Duhamel) compared trains with monstrous creatures that devoured young healthy men and spitted dreadfully disfigured human bodies, i.e., a live cargo of sanitary trains, back to French train stations after every major offensive. Romains defined trains as ‘the accomplices in the slaughter of the war.’ Of especial value, military historians and war veterans presented their critique of the performance of railways during the war and mobilization. In the immediate aftermath of the Great War, the managements of the French railway companies put remarkable efforts to praise the efforts of the French railway companies during the Great War and to include the heroic narratives of French railways in the public memory of the conflict. The Northern and Eastern railway networks played an especially important role in organizing commemorative tours to the battlefields.

Most notably, there was an apparent paradox in the fact that if in 1919 and 1920 the French and British bourgeoisie expressed its deep interest in taking such tours: during the Great War, the European elite often showed little or no desire to learn about the tragic reality of the Great War. My presentation, therefore, invites the reader to consider whether commemorative tours to the battlefields could, indeed, provide somewhat authentic impressions of the Great War or, to the contrary, they became a kind of entertainment stimulating wartime experience: thrilling, captivating, but ultimately safe. The memoirs, written by war veterans, portray the tragic presence of dead bodies during the war. On the contrary, the tours, organized by the Nord and the Est, accentuated material losses. Such tours could only simulate the experience of being at the war: the war became a thrilling adventure, a horrifying, but ultimately safe voyage that shook the imagination but would never claim the lives.

References


____ (2010). ‘Money was of no consideration’: French Railway Companies and the Army during the Great War.’ In: Business and Economic History On-Line, volume 8.
For the Czechoslovak nation the First World War was a nation-building war. The newly founded state consisted of the Bohemian Lands, former Austrian territory, and Slovakia, a former Hungarian territory. According to general conscription, Czech and Slovak soldiers had been fighting in the troops of the Habsburg-Hungarian Empire during the war. Only a few volunteers, former POW and deserters built the so-called Czechoslovak legion, fighting until the Russian Revolution on the side of the tsarist troops and thereafter partially on the side of the Allies. That was how the legionnaires became accepted as the army of the Czechoslovak state shortly before its formal foundation. And the legionnaire and war victim policy in the young republic anticipated exactly that setting. Built on the basis of the former legislation, social policy became a part of the legitimisation strategy of the democratic state builders, but also implemented new hierarchies, justified by war experiences and national interpretations of the war. Focusing on that development, the paper will also analyse the negotiation process between war veterans and war victims, social institutions and the legislature.

References

Elizabeth Stice, Assistant Professor at Palm Beach Atlantic University

The Imperial Eagle? Germany through the Lens of Empire in British and French Trench Newspapers of the Great War

In 1916, the ‘Song of the Hun-Eagle’ appeared in the Fifth Glo’ster Gazette, a British trench newspaper. In the song the Hun-Eagle basks in Kultur’s light and seeks to control all of the earth, singing: ‘How righteously I strafe the foes!/ --It should be told in rhyme—/ And how my pent up hate o’erflows./ Imperial, sublime!’ (Fifth Glo’ster Gazette, September 1916, Cambridge University Library) This paper specifically explores the ways in which descriptions of Germany in British and French trench newspapers were filtered through the lens of empire. British and French trench newspapers were informal papers by and for soldiers which were circulated at the front. The poems, stories, articles and illustrations within trench newspapers communicate the perspectives of British and French soldiers during the war. Those soldiers fought alongside colonial and Dominion troops, with supplies from the colonies, and under generals first proven in colonial settings. Like the battle in the trenches, the columns of grievances against Germany in trench newspapers were framed by empire. In particular, the language and rhetoric of empire was used in reference to Germany. Soldiers typically described themselves as fighting for ‘king and country,’ or the patrie, and frequently against German ‘empire’ or ‘imperial ambition.’ Certain illustrations of German wartime behavior and occupation clearly drew on the imagery of the scandal in ‘Leopold’s Congo.’ Simultaneously, negative descriptions of Germans sometimes seemed to borrow the racial rhetoric employed in Britain and France to justify imperial expansion, with Germans portrayed as lesser humans in need of a ‘civilized’ guiding hand. How did pre-war imperial promotion and scandals provide scripts for soldiers to narrate their own war experiences? More importantly, what do accusations of Germany suggest about British and French soldiers’ understandings of their own respective empires and the ‘civilization’ they supposedly shared? Exploring empire as an interpretive lens for viewing German behavior in trench newspapers can tell us more about the ways empire was understood and experienced by British and French soldiers during the Great War and the ways in which empire shaped soldiers’ experiences of the war.

References

The March of the 38th battalion (‘Jewish Legion’) Royal Fusiliers through the East End, 1918 – ‘When the Spirit of Judah Macabee hovered over Whitechapel’

The Jewish Legion was formed in 1917 of 5 full battalions (about 4000 men) of the Royal Fusiliers, from East London (38th), North America (39th) and Israel (40th) with two training battalions in Plymouth. The march was an iconic moment when the Jews of the East London Ghetto could watch 500 of their own soldiers, fully trained, arrive from Plymouth, to be billeted at the Tower of London, and then march through ‘their’ home area and the City, and be feted by the local community in Whitechapel/Stepney, before embarking to serve in Turkish Occupied Palestine (Israel) to liberate their Land. A truly astonishing moment in Zionist, East London and British Military history, the author describes in fine detail the route and events in places along the march placing it in the context of modern Middle Eastern politics.

The Zion Mule Corps at Gallipoli 1915-16

Even before the Jewish Legion battalions, came the 800 men of the Zion Mule Corps, raised from Jews who were refugees in Egypt from the Turkish Occupation of Israel, and who joined the British Forces to fight at Gallipoli, led by the fiery Irish Protestant Zionist, Col. John Patterson, DSO. Their formation caused a sensation in Britain among the Jewish and also philo-Semitic non Jewish Community of Britain, as it would be the very first time since the Destruction of The Jewish Temple and State of Israel in Jerusalem in 70AD, by the Romans, that a fighting Jewish unit with its own flag and symbols would be engaged in the Redemption of Israel for the Jewish people, albeit via Gallipoli. Many of the wounded ended up in England and also 120 survivors came to East London after the ZMC was disbanded, and joined the Jewish Legion to fight in Israel/Palestine two years later.
Aleksanteri Suvioja, University of Helsinki

Constructing a Glorious Maritime Past: German and Italian Naval Historiography on the First World War compared

In the naval arms race before the First World War, often called ‘navalism’, historical arguments were widely used to gain public support for the fleet plans in various countries, a practice epitomized in Mahan’s *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* in 1890. Especially the German case of constructing the historical past needed for this argumentation has been the subject of various scholars (e.g. Epkenhans 2005).

The naval warfare of the First World War differed from the expectations created by the pro-navy historical literature, but in order to insure the future of the navies, the reality was interpreted in a manner which defended the decisions made during navalism. Historical arguments were widely used. In the research this use of history has been interpreted as a German peculiarity. What is lacking, however, is a comparative study.

The present paper is a proposal for a presentation in which the German case is compared with the Italian example. The Italian Navy launched a similar campaign after the war as in Germany to defend its Navy and to make the achievements of the Navy popular. In both cases special offices were founded in the navies to collect material and study naval history. Both of these, the Italian *Ufficio Storico* and the German *Kriegswissenschaftliche Abteilung* (sometimes named *Marinearchiv*) also started to publish official histories of the naval war. This work continued well into the 30s in the Italian Navy (*The official La Marina Italiana nella guerra* was preceded from 1918 onwards by a series of booklets called *Cronistoria*) and was left incomplete in the German case (*Der Krieg zur See 1914/1918*). The similarities are not restricted to external factors: e.g. the escape to the detail in order to avoid strategic analysis of the war potentially undermining the navalistic arguments and the use of sacral vocabulary are common factors.

In the presentation I’ll compare the German and Italian naval historiography in the years 1918—1945 based on the German and Italian archives (Bundesarchiv Abteilung Militärarchiv and Archivio Storico, Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare) and publications. The presentation is based on my ongoing dissertation at the University of Helsinki.

References


America's withdrawal from Siberia and Japan-US relations: A New Perspective on the Wilson Administration's Decision Making

Japan-US relations were strained during World War I. Their common war effort against Germany barely restrained the confrontations between Japan and the U.S. that had increased after the Russo-Japanese War. After World War I, however, the Wilson Administration began to shift its policy toward Japan from 'status-quo' to a more positive one, designed to curb Japanese expansion in Asia without isolating it through cooperation in the establishment of the Second Chinese Consortium, a joint expedition to Siberia, and founding the League of Nations. Following Wilson's failure to secure American participation in the League of Nations, his cooperative policy lost out to a domestic mood of isolationism and unilateralism. A typical example of this was the U.S. decision to withdraw the American Expeditionary Forces from Siberia. This paper examines more fully the primary factors in America's unilateral decision, and follows with an analysis of the influence of this decision upon Japan-US relations.

America's decision to withdraw from Siberia came about because of the international environment, domestic pressure, and rapid military developments in Siberia. The international environment, to begin with, had completely changed. The Czech Legion's repatriation movement came to a climax and the more cooperative attitude of Japan toward the U.S. became apparent, both of which were original goals of the U.S. Moreover, domestic pressure was intense. Congress and public opinion demanded justification for stationing troops in Siberia and appealed for their immediate evacuation. Finally, rapid developments in Siberia determined the U.S. attitude. The swift approach of Bolshevik forces accounted for U.S. evacuation.

America's sudden withdrawal from Siberia exerted considerable influences on Japan-US relations. These influences are comprised of three dimensions. First of all, Japanese policy toward Siberia was compelled to undergo reexamination. Although Japanese public opinion affirmed the immediate withdrawal of Japanese forces from Siberia, America's sudden decision forced the Japanese government single-handedly to undertake the defense of the region by sending reinforcements there. Secondly, the withdrawal gave the impression to the Japanese General Staff that the U.S. recognized a Japanese freehand in Eastern Siberia. Because the U.S. did not inform Japan prior to its decision, the Wilson Administration was not able to criticize Japan for sending its reinforcements which helped in the defense of the American sector and allowed for their gradual evacuation. Thirdly, the withdrawal damaged the pro-American Hara Cabinet's policy toward Siberia. Lack of American deterrence induced the Japanese General Staff to establish a buffer zone in the Russian Far East against the Bolsheviks. It was not until the U.S. protested the Japanese occupation of Northern Sakhalin that the Hara Cabinet completely recovered the initiative in foreign policy decision-making from the Army. In conclusion, it can be argued that, as in the case of American withdrawal from Siberia, American unilateral policy often perplexes a party concerned. Wilson decided to withdraw the AEF for a number of reasons, including domestic pressure, which still holds an important place in U.S. foreign policy decision-making.
Mid-way into the First World War, the combined forces of the British and the French sandwiched and defeated the German forces in the battle of Mora, not too far away from Lake Chad. Allied victory in the territory in 1916 had far reaching consequences for the allied forces as well as for the different peoples of the territory. The take over of all German properties in the territory and the partitioning of the territory among themselves by Britain and France in 1918, later sanctioned in 1922 by the League of Nations was historic. Over nine decades since the defeat of the Germans and the consequent partition, the Kamerun territory has witnessed significant developments. The League of Nations and later the United Nations supervised the British and the French as they administered the portions kept under their charge, leading to the two portions gaining independence separately. French Cameroon gained independence in 1960 while the British Cameroons got theirs in 1961. Attempts to re-unify British Cameroons with French Cameroon in 1961 were not completely successful as the northern part of British Cameroons elected to join independent Nigeria, leaving British Southern Cameroons to rush into re-unification with French Cameroon. This paper seeks to survey European colonial exploits in the Kamerun/Cameroon territory before, during and after the First World War. Specifically, the paper attempts to examine the link between current agitations for a re-visitation of the United Nations 1961 decolonisation process in the territory by British Southern Cameroons political activists to how the First War was concluded in the German Kamerun territory.
Lisa M. Todd, University of New Brunswick

Disease, Depravity and Moral Decay: Sexual Promiscuity in World War I Germany

This paper examines sexual relationships between soldiers and civilians in World War I Germany. By visiting the major sites of illicit contact between men and women—brothels, bars, cafes, and prisoner-of-war camps—the paper demonstrates how deeply the German state ultimately intruded into private lives under the guise of military necessity. For instance, in the first three months of 1917, twenty-five Leipzig women were arrested for ‘unauthorized’ contact with foreign prisoners-of-war and charged with treason. Such stories of immoral German war wives became public knowledge when newspapers printed thousands of sensational accounts of local women cavorting with enemy men. The legal crackdown on this so-called crisis of female infidelity was only one example of civil-military interventionist powers demanding further regulation of wartime private lives. From the ‘tail parade’ medical inspections of soldiers to the enforced concentration of ‘enemy’ women into brothels, this paper argues that fear was the prime motivator for the heightened control of wartime sexual activity: fear of venereal diseases that threatened the reproductive capabilities of the nation; fear of the disintegration of marriages at a time when the family was being exalted as the bedrock of postwar renewal; fear of falling birth rates when the human cost of war made them most crucial; and fear of war wives cavorting with precisely those foreign male warriors who were killing male Germans in unprecedented numbers. Increasingly, as a stable home front was deemed a military necessity in this first ‘total war’ and sexual disorder signaled social disorder, private concerns of the bedchamber became public issues of health and security.

References

Hirschfeld, Magnus (1929). *Sittengeschichte des Ersten Weltkriege*. Hanau am Main: Verlag Karl Schstek.


The wartime years provided the occasion for Europe to encounter Romanian society in a controversial manner. Political interest stimulated the dismantling of old perceptions and the articulation of new ones. After several years of association with the Triple Alliance's sphere of interest, Romania decided to pursue a belligerent policy, on the side of the Entente. The attitudes (positive until then) of the German-speaking world towards Romanians changed. Negative stereotypes arose. The only remaining way for Romanians to access European values, through the traditional friendship with France, remained as strong as in the past, and grew stronger during the war. In response to the German rhetoric expressing decadence and frivolity in Romanian society, the French propagated a rhetoric of audacity and dignity. Descriptions became increasingly more numerous during the German military occupation, a time of reflection as well as of administration.

Bulgaria had attracted the attention of the civilised world during the Balkan Wars. In the same way, Romania, which had been summoned to join the great conflagration, revealed itself to the foreign occupier as weakened yet attempting, in times of hardship, to rediscover itself. For the first time, Romanian society was the object of ample descriptions, generated by the experience of a coalition war. Feelings and thoughts varied according to the nationality of those experiencing them (Bucharest was occupied at the time by Germans, Austrians, Turks and Bulgarians): to their historical experience, their level of education and their current frustrations. The memoirs of German officers preserve the most numerous and most valuable portrayals. What makes them unique lies in the attempt to observe the development of society and mores by measuring it against the influence of the French model.

References


Bucur, Maria (2009), *Heroes and victims. Remembering the war in twentieth-century Romania*. Bloomington, Ind. Indiana University Press


This paper explores how constructs of masculinity and nationhood informed responses to First World War literature in Britain during the inter-war years. It focuses on the war books boom – roughly from 1928 to 1933 – when many of the now-canonical texts by writers such as Graves, Hemingway and Remarque were published. Collectively, these works have played an important role in shaping a modern myth of the First World War characterised by disillusionment, horror and futility. During the war books boom, however, this was not necessarily the prevailing perception, and the literature which promoted this interpretation caused considerable controversy. At the heart of these debates were not simply disagreements over what the war had been like, or what it had meant, but also conflicting notions of masculinity and nationhood. These two ideals were frequently intertwined by conservative critics, who lauded public school values of muscular Christianity and patriotic duty. Books which decried the horror of war and questioned its value were deemed an unmanly, and un-British, response to a meaningful experience. Those works which revealed the debauched behaviour of British soldiers were considered a slanderous attack on these values, whilst books of foreign origin were often dismissed with recourse to national stereotypes and prejudices. But other readers reformulated these traditional constructions and provided new templates for manliness and national identity which allowed them to champion anti-war texts. This paper will address a variety of responses, from critics, veterans and the wider public, in order to reveal how notions of masculinity and nationhood conditioned reactions, both positive and negative, to First World War literature. In doing so, it will shed light on the way certain myths of the conflict were resisted and reinforced during the inter-war years.
Within American culture, the years 1921 through 1923—the tail section of Jay Winter's 'long war'—saw a specific battle of the books, a battle, that is, of novels about the Great War. John Dos Passos's *Three Soldiers*, E.E. Cummings's *The Enormous Room*, Willa Cather's *One of Ours*, Thomas Boyd’s *Through the Wheat*, and Edith Wharton’s *A Son at the Front* all came out during this period, and each of these controversial—indeed, polarizing—works helped, in one way or another, to set the terms for a debate, which would rage throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, over how the Great War would be remembered in serious works of American fiction, modernist and otherwise. Indeed, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner all watched the critical reception of these works carefully. Drawing upon recent studies that have recast the American experience of World War I as a far more traumatic and robustly commemorated event than scholars have traditionally recognized, this paper will consider why the American literary response to the conflict was so immediate and intense. In other nations, such as Great Britain and Germany, the most notable works of war fiction appeared from 1928 through 1930, a period that saw an international boom in narratives about the Great War. In America, on the other hand, the literary response came much sooner, and not unlike the Red Scare and the racial strife of the Red Summer it seemed to feed off the cultural energy that the war had violently released.

**References**


Andrekos Varnava, Flinders University

Cypriot Mules and Muleteers in the British Army in Macedonia, Constantinople and Chanak, 1916-1920

The British formed the Macedonian Mule Corps in the summer of 1916 and it served in Salonika until the end of the war, and then some members served in Constantinople and others at Chanak. Although given the title of ‘Macedonian’ Mule Corps, over 9,300 of the just over 10,000 corps was composed of Cypriots from every religious group in Cyprus. This paper explores why the British chose Cypriots and muleteers to resolve the shortage of pack animals and transportation in Macedonia, and whether this policy proved a success. It also investigates the British perceptions of the muleteers and their treatment of their mules, and despite the shortage of evidence, the muleeteer-mule relationship. In order to achieve these aims, it will be necessary to explore themes such as traditional breeding practices in the island and British views on the Cypriot mule; how the British applied the theory of ‘martial races’ to the islanders; whether British methods of recruiting muleteers were successful, and if so why; and finally, the behaviour of the muleteers, especially in relation to their mules. This paper argues that the Cypriot Macedonian Mule Corps was an overwhelming success despite British perceptions of Cypriot mistreatment of the mules, and a small percentage of Cypriot desertion and misconduct.

References

Cyprus Reports on Horse, Mule and Donkey Breeding, 1901 and 1917, HMSO, London, 1917.

Cyprus State Archives: The Archive of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Cyprus (SA1).

National Archives of the United Kingdom (Kew Gardens).

Bashbanlik Ottoman Archive (BOA) of the Grand Viziers, Istanbul.


John A. Vasquez, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Moving Beyond the State Centric Realist Understanding of the First World War: A New Analysis of the Role of Contagion.

This paper uses recent developments in IR theory (particularly critiques of realism and alternative perspectives—like transnational relations) and quantitative research on conflict to re-interpret how the war came about and how it could have been prevented. It opens the black box to challenge notions of a unitary rational actor and in doing so shows how various decision makers make the process of determining the goals and policies of states much more complicated than they are frequently portrayed. In addition, it moves beyond two level games to show how the linkages between domestic and external relations are multi-layered in a 6-7 actor game. Lastly, counterfactual reasoning is used to see what would have been necessary for each to do in order to avoid the war. These new perspectives challenge the political science emphasis on Germany as the prime actor bringing about the war and introduce several nuances and complexities absent from most political science explanations.

References


Kara Dixon Vuic, High Point University

The Right Kind of Women: Entertaining American Doughboys on the Western Front

In May 1918 a young woman with the Young Men’s Christian Association explained to American soldiers in France that as she watched young men from her hometown ship off to war, ‘I wished that I too had been a man to have a small part in this great conflict.’ When the YMCA accepted her into its canteen program, she embraced the chance to serve. Throughout World War I, the YMCA sent three thousand women to serve coffee and donuts, organize musical events, and make small talk with soldiers. U.S. military and civilian leaders justified such recreation programs by asserting that women played a crucial role in bringing a sense of domesticity, morality, and wholesome fun to a war zone filled with temptations that threatened soldiers’ physical health and military efficiency. The YMCA’s World War I canteen program revealed Progressive era reformers’ belief that white, middle- and upper-class women possessed an innate religiosity and morality that would remind young men of their mothers and sisters at home and that would inspire them to remain sexually pure during their time abroad. Although military and civilian leaders always carefully couched the women’s work in a language of respectability, sexuality remained the basis of the program. This paper traces the ways the canteen program utilized gender and sexuality to maintain troop morale and argues that the program is an important tool for measuring the relationship between women and the state at a time of expanding notions of women’s citizenship and public roles.

References

Displaying the ‘War to End All Wars’ – The Imperial War Museum and the First World War, 1964 - 2014

Born during the First World War, the Imperial War Museum (IWM) remains one of the most tangible outcomes of the conflict still with us today. Britain’s national War Museum owed its existence to a propaganda initiative in late 1917, with its remit soon thereafter expanding to include the efforts of the Empire and Commonwealth (Kavanagh, 1990, 1994; Condell, 1985). An unprecedented policy of delegated contemporary collecting saw the acquisition of objects from all levels of society designed to capture the human experience of war (Cornish, 2004). Initially, the institution aspired to keep the vents of the ‘War to end all wars’, as it was known then, fresh in public memory. Indeed, it would defy the prediction of the War Cabinet that it would struggle to retain public interest for more than a ‘few years’ (Kavanagh, 1994).

Ninety-five years on, the Museum has documented numerous conflicts – but the First World War and the Museum’s origins have never been far from its curatorial minds. The conflict itself has been displayed through a wide array of permanent and temporary exhibitions; this paper will be addressing some of these, over a fifty year timeframe, in two parts. Firstly, through the textual analysis of archival material and interviews with former Museum staff, I will explore landmark exhibitions from the 1960s, the present First World War galleries built in 1990 and various temporary exhibitions between 1998 and 2009. I will illuminate the behind-the-scenes processes that reveal how these exhibitions were conceived and developed and expand upon the politics of display embedded within. The second part will share my ethnographic work documenting the creation of the new permanent First World War galleries, due to open in the summer of 2014.

I will be assessing the extent to which differing exhibition approaches were dictated by the War’s cultural and lived memory. The influence of these on the British public has fluctuated widely in meaning and popularity over the last century (Todman, 2005) and I will be considering the effect of generational shifts on the relationship between institution and its public. In tracing this recent history of public engagement with the conflict and changes to memory and commemorative practices within this national institution, I will bridge interdisciplinary debates from historical geography, museum studies, memory studies and history. On the eve of its own centenary, now is an apt time to share the history of an institution that has had a particularly unique relationship with the First World War.

References

As historians, we know that we have a responsibility for keeping the past alive in our students’ lives. Yet, as time passes and the past becomes more distant, younger people have a greater disconnect from history, a history that nonetheless continues to shape their present and their future. I find this particularly true for the Great War, especially for US students, for whom this period receives little attention in high school history classes due to the late and brief involvement of the United States. As a university professor, I search for ways to connect students with the past, so that they not only understand its significance on its own terms, but also its importance for their world.

One way I build a bridge for students between the past and present in my interdisciplinary course ‘The Great War and Modern Memory’ is to personalize the experience and to focus on the concept of remembering (both in the past and the present). For one particular assignment, each student researches a soldier who died in the war. The goal of the assignment is fourfold:

1. to teach them research skills beyond using a library;
2. to give them an opportunity to learn about the past, including how these soldiers were remembered by their contemporaries;
3. to connect to the past through the life of a single individual;
4. to learn about their own pre-conceived notions of the past as they engage with this historical event.

For my presentation, I will share how students conduct their research, what they learn about the Great War and remembrance, and what they discover about themselves as products of the present going into the past to learn about it. When presenting, each student discusses how s/he carried out her/his research. Most bring the soldiers’ obituaries so that together we could examine how the individual was remembered. Some students even visit the grave sites and return with pictures or a relief of the gravestone. Many students are surprised by what they discover about those who were remembered. This always leads to a conversation about public remembrance, including what we remember, how we remember, and whom we remember. This discussion then provides the foundation for the next assignment, which requires students to design a war monument and present it to the class.
John Warren (ex Oxford Brookes University)

From the battle-front to the home front. Coming home: the ‘Heimkehrerstück’ a variety of possibilities!

Mention the word ‘Heimkehrerstück’ to a Germanist and the immediate reaction will be to a genre of dramatic literature established as it seems after the Second World War and epitomised by Borchert’s drama *Draussen vor der Tür* (1947). However examining the forty-five or so interwar dramas which can be classified as ‘war dramas’, and were performed on the stages of Berlin and Vienna between the wars, we discover that twenty-five of these can be termed ‘Heimkehrerstücke’. That is, at its widest definition, drama in which the soldier returns from the front to his home. This paper will show that this ‘sub-genre’ of the war play was ‘alive and well’ in the interwar years. Why we may ask was this type of war drama so popular? Four reasons come to mind: it provides the possibility of a human story or conflict (something which was missing in most ‘Frontstücke’), an opportunity to castigate the generals and politicians who took the soldier away from home—in other words to create a pacifist play-, it gives the dramatist the opportunity to engage with the home-front, and finally it avoids, what was often a difficulty for the producer, recreating battle conditions on stage. Each of the plays to be discussed presents a different perspective of a genre which included such popular dramas as Ernst Toller’s *Die Wandlung*, and Hinkemann, Bert Brecht’s *Trommeln in der Nacht*, Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s *Der Schwierige*, several plays by Fritz von Unruh, Leonhard Frank’s *Karl und Anna*, and W.E.Mölle’s *Douaumont*, and on into the National Socialist period with plays such as Hans Johst’s *Schlageter* and Heinrich Zerkaulen’s *Jugend von Langemark*. This paper will look at four variants on the theme: from France, Paul Raynal’s *le Tombeau sous l’Arc de Triomphe* (translated into German under the title *Das Grabmal des unbekannten Soldaten*, 1926) where a young officer returns home to see his fiancée before going on a suicide mission. From England, Somerset Maugham’s *For Services Rendered* (translated into German as *Für geleistete Dienste* 1933) looks at the disastrous effect the war had on a middle-class family. The German play selected, Sigmund Graff’s *Die Heimkehr von Mathias Bruck* (1933) is closest to the traditional *Enoch Arden* (Tennyson) theme, here of the husband who returns home after many years a prisoner in Siberia, to find his wife remarried. From Austria, Hans Schlumberg’s *Wunder um Verdun* (1931) finds the dead of Verdun rising from their graves and returning to their villages and families, a situation which creates not only local difficulties but international ones. Where appropriate cross-reference will be made to the film of the period and the reception of the plays will be assessed from the major theatre critics of Berlin and Vienna.

References

Rühle, Günther, (1967). *Theater für die Republik 1917-1933* Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer.
This study explores the use of literacy in assisting soldiers of the British Expeditionary Forces cope with the ravages of war while serving in the trenches of the Western Front. Ultimately, this endeavor will serve three purposes: first, to examine the source of high literacy rates among the BEF and distinguish these rates by military rank; second, to identify various forms of literacy found in the trenches and discuss its impact on morale; and three, to discuss the contribution of family and friends toward sustained literacy on the Western Front. Ultimately, this analysis underscores the ability of the human spirit to endure the mental and physical hardships by using one of the most important vestiges of civilized culture – literacy in all its forms.

To accomplish this goal, I will utilize an array of resources related to the study of trench life during the First World War. While the majority of this paper will reference primary sources such as letters, journals, and memoirs of returning First World War veterans, secondary resources will also be consulted. These will include: Edmund Blunden, Undertones of War (2007); Tim Cross, The Lost Voices of World I: An International Anthology of Writers, Poets, and Playwrights (1988); John Ellis, Eye - Deep in Hell: Trench Warfare in World War I (1991); Paul Fussell, The Great War and Modern Memory (2000); Martin Gilbert, The First World War: A Complete History, (1994); Robert Graves, Good-Bye to All That (2000); Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler, The Trench, Fighting on the Western Front (1978); Christopher Moore, Trench Fever (1999); Svetlana Palmer, Intimate Voices from the First World War (2003); Richard Van Emden, Veterans: The Last Survivors of the Great War (1998) and The Quick and the Dead (2011); and Margret Willes, Reading Matters: Five Centuries of Discovering Books (2008).
‘A disgrace to the Empire’ – the impact of the Great War on the political thought of some leading Indian Muslims

The impact of the First World War on the political thought of colonized peoples has not gone unstudied – some have drawn attention, for example, to the way the War facilitated an attack on the civilizing ideology of European empires (Adas, 2004), or the way the ‘Wilsonian moment’ following the War, fleeting though it might have been, saw intense contestation of the old world order by nations such as Egypt and India (Manela, 2007). This paper will resist the suggestion of a general and inexorable pull of international events and will discuss instead the very particular ways events in the Muslim world in the lead up to 1914, as well as the outbreak of the First World War itself, came to play an important role for a coterie of Indian Muslims. Emphasis will be in particular placed on two journalists/scholars/religious figures, Maulana Mahomed Ali and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who were by no means radicals or renegades, though they differed one from the other in many ways. In years preceding 1914 they were neither of them strangers to censorship of their flagship papers, the Comrade and Al Hilal respectively (which were in their own ways pioneering organs); during the War itself their writings were deemed dangerous enough that the writers were forcibly interned in an attempt to excise them entirely from public life. These moves by the colonial state are indicative of the threat their somewhat intangible politics were believed to represent in the hyper-aware colonial state, but a somewhat more interesting story is the role of war and ‘the human’ in Muslim thought at this tumultuous juncture in world history.

It will be suggested that the period immediately preceding the War witnessed a fevered adoption of a humanitarian idiom that posited Islam as a counter-balance to the rapaciousness and hypocrisy deemed to characterize much of Europe’s dealings with the rest of the world. This was an ethical critique, given materiality on the one hand through photographs, satirical cartoons, and sustained writing on the subject in their newspapers and speeches, and on the other hand given practical manifestation with the collection of funds and the deployment of medical missions to the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars, for example. Though we might frame this moment in terms of an articulation of jihad as Jalal (2007) has done for Azad, it suggests to me something of the ‘relational bind’ between people that Butler (2006) has discussed in work on the power of mourning and violence. This paper will see the decision to grieve publically for the populations of Macedonia, Tripoli, and elsewhere as an attempt to constitute the Muslim community in India in extra-territorial terms. With the outbreak of WWI, we see further examples of the language of a Muslim body politic bleeding in war in distant lands, and, countering somewhat the familiar fact that M.K. Gandhi helped to recruit soldiers on behalf of the Raj during the War, we begin to see particular remonstration over the fact that Indian Muslim soldiers were dying on behalf of the British Empire, and helping to kill fellow Muslims. This would be an explosive issue in post-War period.

References