

## INTRODUCTION

Catriona Pennell, University of Exeter

Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, Maynooth University

As the centenary of the First World War draws to a close, the time has come both to review what has been accomplished over the course of four and a half years of intense public commemoration and academic activity and to look forward to new intellectual challenges. Of these, one stands out: testing the extent to which the advances made latterly in our understanding of the Great War – why and how it was fought; how and with what consequences entire populations were mobilized, physically and culturally, for the struggle; how it ended; and the related price of victory and defeat – are applicable to later conflicts, starting with the Second World War. Historiographical dialogue between the two conflicts has, on the whole, been slow to emerge. The First World War has primarily been integrated into a cross-conflict analytical framework as part of investigations into the Second World War’s origins (not least through the increasingly popular notion of a European Civil War).<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, exceptions – set out below – in the subfields of gender, memory and national identity, predominately within the British context. But, for the most part, historians devote themselves exclusively to either one of the conflicts; and even if the once strict chronological delineations of each of the two wars is now fraying, so that the gap between them is narrowing, the fact remains that there is scope for much more intellectual cross-over between the two sets of historians.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Paul Preston, “The Great Civil War: European Politics, 1914-1945,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern Europe*, ed. T.C.W. Blanning (Oxford, 1996), pp. 148-181; Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back: Europe, 1914-1949* (London, 2015); Enzo Traverso, *Fire and Blood: The European Civil War, 1914-1945* (London, 2017), trans. David Fernbach.

<sup>2</sup> A number of recently edited collections have sought to consider aspects of the two World Wars in comparative fashion. See Lothar Kettenacker and Torsten Rlotte, eds., *The Legacies of Two World Wars: European Societies in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2011); Nicholas Doumanis, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of European History, 1914-1945* (Oxford, 2016); Robert Gerwarth, *Twisted Paths: Europe 1914-1945* (Oxford, 2008); Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela, eds., *Empires at War, 1911-1923* (Oxford, 2014); Eric Storm and Ali Al Tuma, eds., *Colonial Soldiers*

This is not to downplay the significant contribution made by historians of the Second World War (and beyond) to our understanding of the cultural history of modern war, in particular the attributes, representations, and meanings of war in the modern world.<sup>3</sup> The memory boom of the 1990s – in response to a wider permeation of Western culture of questions of remembrance, commemoration, and the uncovering of family history and eyewitness testimony – led historians to pay particular attention to the ways in which ordinary Europeans experienced and found meaning in the trauma of modern conflict.<sup>4</sup> Known as the ‘cultural turn’ – discussed in more detail below – the study of history in this period was transformed by insights from anthropology, psychology, and literature, which, taken together, encouraged the study of representations as cultural constructions rather than objective realities.<sup>5</sup> Significantly, the remembrance of the traumas of the Second World War lay at the heart of this endeavour; exploration of the impact and legacy of the Holocaust was initially crucial to the emergence of the study of memory as a legitimate scholarly project.<sup>6</sup> Although, as Geoff Eley notes, the bookshelves have since become ‘thick with discussion’,<sup>7</sup> there is a weighting

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*in Europe, 1913-1945* (London, 2017); Carlos Reijnen and Marleen Rensen, eds., *European Encounters: Intellectual Exchange and the Rethinking of Europe, 1914-1945* (Leyden, 2014). Nicholas Martin, Tim Haughton and Pierre Purseigle, eds., *Aftermath: Legacies and Memories of the War in Europe, 1918-1945-1989*, (London, 2014) goes even further, adding the end of the Cold War to the list of defining moments in 20<sup>th</sup> century European History.

<sup>3</sup> Three major research centres based in Ireland and the UK have been home to much of the pioneering research on these topics from a variety of 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century conflict perspectives: the TCD Centre for War Studies (<https://www.tcd.ie/warstudies/>); the UCD Centre for War Studies (<https://www.ucd.ie/warstudies/>); and the Centre for the Cultural History of War at the University of Manchester (<https://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/history/research/centres/cultural-history-of-war/>). Accessed 2017 Nov 16.

<sup>4</sup> Jay Winter, “The generation of memory: reflections on the ‘memory boom’ in contemporary historical studies,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute Washington* 27 (2000), 69-92.

<sup>5</sup> Dan Todman, “The First World War in History,” <http://www1.centenary.oucs.ox.ac.uk/?p=2512>. Accessed 2017 Nov 16. See also Stephen Heathorn, “The Mnemonic Turn in the Cultural Historiography of Britain’s Great War,” *Historical Journal* 48:4 (2005), 1103-1124; Jay Winter and E. Sivan, “Introduction” and “Setting the Framework,” in idem (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 1-39; Stefan Goebel, “Intersecting memories: war and remembrance in twentieth-century Europe,” *Historical Journal* 44:3 (2001), 853-58; K.L. Klein, “On the emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse,” *Representations* 69 (Winter 2000), 127-150.

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Finney, “Introduction,” in idem (ed.), *Remembering the Second World War* (Abingdon, 2018), p. 2. See also Joan Tumblety, “Introduction: working with memory as a source and subject,” in idem (ed.), *Memory and History: Understanding Memory as Source and Subject* (Abingdon, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Geoff Eley, “Foreword,” in *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, eds. Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (London, 2014), p. xii.

toward scholarship related to the First World War.<sup>8</sup> Such is the disparity between the scholarship of the two conflicts that, according to Martin Francis, in his seminal article on the relationship between the two World Wars in British historiography, ‘historians of the Second World War cannot but look upon the historiographical sophistication of the literature dedicated to the First World War with a mixture of admiration and envy’.<sup>9</sup>

Those scholars who have approached the subject of the Second World War through the lens of cultural history have made a significant contribution to our understanding of memory, gender, and national identity, particularly in Britain.<sup>10</sup> As Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson argue, few historical events have resonated as much in modern British culture as the Second World War. The rich legacy it has left, in a range of media, has led to significant cultural memory work on the war’s presence in family stories, popular and material culture, and in acts of commemoration in Britain between 1945 and the present.<sup>11</sup> Patrick Finney’s *Remembering the Second World War* challenges nation-centric approaches to the conflict in memory studies, drawing strength from transnational, transcultural, and interdisciplinary scholarship.<sup>12</sup> Work by, amongst others, Martin Francis, Claire Langhamer, and Penny Summerfield, complicates the narratives of the war experience for British men and women, in the process unravelling the multifaceted

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<sup>8</sup> Two useful recent surveys of the ‘regeneration’ in First World War scholarship are provided by Alan Kramer, “Recent Historiography of the First World War,” *Journal of Modern European History* 12 (2014), part 1, 5-27 and part 2 155-174; and Heather Jones, “As the Centenary Approaches: the Regeneration of First World War Historiography,” *Historical Journal* 56 (2013), 857-78.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Francis, “Attending to Ghosts: Some Reflections on the Disavowals of British Great War Historiography,” *Twentieth Century British History* 25:3 (2014), 349.

<sup>10</sup> The predominance of literature on Britain and the Second World War is perhaps down to the fact that, as Daniel Todman observes, ‘Britain can’t shut up about the war’; a mediated (and fictionalised) version of the conflict upholds many of the popular tropes underpinning British national identity, be it class and political unity, victory in (over?) Europe, and imperial prestige, which academic scholarship seeks to revise and critique. See Daniel Todman, “Drunk on Dunkirk spirit, the Brexiters are setting sail for a dangerous future,” *Guardian*, 3 June 2017. See <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jun/03/dunkirk-spirit-brexiters-uk-britain-europe>. Accessed 2017 Nov 16). Todman is currently writing a new history of the conflict: see his *Britain’s War Vols I Into Battle, 1937-1941* and *II A New World, 1942-1945* (Hammondsworth, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Noakes and Pattinson eds., *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*. See also Geoff Hurd, ed., *National Fictions: World War Two in British Films and Television* (London, 1984).

<sup>12</sup> Finney, ed., *Remembering the Second World War*.

impact of the war upon gender hierarchies and identities.<sup>13</sup> Sonya O. Rose explores the contested and often contradictory articulations of Britishness and citizenship that emerged during the years 1939 and 1945.<sup>14</sup> Rather than focusing on the historical memory of the war, as Angus Calder did in his efforts to interrogate the constructions of such narratives as the ‘Blitz spirit’<sup>15</sup>, Rose uses wartime sources to identify and contextualise key aspects of wartime Britons’ attitudes towards class, gender, regional and imperial identities, and race, shining ‘some light onto wartime subjectivities’ and the meaning made by British citizens of their experiences of war.<sup>16</sup>

It is the case, however, that most historians have been slow to acknowledge or appreciate the commonalities and cross-referencing between the two World Wars.<sup>17</sup> As noted above, some recent scholarship has drawn attention to affinities between these conflicts. Historians concerned with Germany’s zone of occupation in Eastern Europe during the First World War have considered the ways perceptions and behaviours evident in 1914-1918 returned in even more extreme and violent form between 1939 and 1945. Others, in understanding the development of the Weimar Republic, have argued for an expanded chronology that goes back to the First World War and/or extends until at least the end of the Second World War.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, Susan R. Grayzel, in her *At Home and Under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz*, argues that in order to understand the real impact of the Blitz, it is necessary to go back a quarter of a century to the first aerial assault on Britain; air raids of the

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<sup>13</sup> Martin Francis, *The Flyer: British Culture and the Royal Air Force, 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2008); Claire Langhamer, “‘A public house is for all classes, men and women alike’: Women, Leisure and Drink in Second World War England,” *Women’s History Review* 12:3 (2003), 423-443; Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives: Discourse and subjectivity in oral histories of the Second World War* (Manchester, 1998). See also Margaret Randolph Higonnet et al, eds., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (Yale, 1987); Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender and National Identity, 1939-91* (London, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> Sonya O. Rose, *Which People’s War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain, 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London, 1991).

<sup>16</sup> Rose, *Which People’s War?* p. 26

<sup>17</sup> Francis, “Attending to Ghosts,” p. 357

<sup>18</sup> A point made by Francis in “Attending to Ghosts”. See V.G. Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: National Identity and German Occupation in World War One* (Cambridge, 2000); Paul Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe, 1890 – 1945* (Oxford, 2000). See also Anthony McElligott, *Rethinking the Weimar Republic: Authority and Authoritarianism, 1916 – 1936* (London, 2013).

first war created new forms of understanding of the relationship between modern warfare and civil identity that were reignited during the Second World War.<sup>19</sup> And key contributions by Ana Carden-Coyne and Lucy Noakes in the field of gender and warfare have attempted to draw out critical themes of change and continuity from 1914 to the present day.<sup>20</sup> Combined, they reveal that women's involvement in conflict across the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, is 'a story of paradoxes, at once a narrative of recognition and progress and at the same time a tale of containment and constraints'.<sup>21</sup>

The present volume seeks to build on these pioneering works. It is envisaged as a contribution to the on-going attempts to push the boundaries of academic exploration of warfare in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, deliberately adopting a cross-conflict analytical stance in order to explore where further progress might be made in the future. We may be in the early days of this endeavour, but there are clearly benefits in breaking free not only from geographical boundaries – taking perspectives of the two World Wars beyond Britain – but also from chronological restrictions, a case made convincingly by Gerwarth and Manela in particular.<sup>22</sup> Renouncing chronological and geographical parameters is liberating, providing historians with the necessary scope, breadth, and knowledge to establish more effectively what the First World War did and did not do, how it helped to shape the interwar period, and, of course, what was and was not new about the Second World War. For most of the men and women who found themselves at war from 1939 to 1945, soldiering or working for victory in many other capacities was not a new experience. Rather, it was a repetition of similar efforts, successful or not, made only two decades earlier. The mobilization (from above and from below) of combatants, economic resources, and minds was built on the experience of the Great War in accordance with prevailing (and often profoundly incorrect) readings of what had succeeded, and what had failed, between 1914 and 1918. So too were

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<sup>19</sup> Susan R. Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz* (Cambridge, 2012).

<sup>20</sup> Ana Carden-Coyne, ed., *Gender and Conflict since 1914: Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Basingstoke, 2012); Lucy Noakes, *Women in the British Army: War and the Gentle Sex, 1907 – 1948* (London, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> Noakes, *Women in the British Army*, p. 157.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela, "The Great War as a Global War: Imperial Conflict and the Reconfiguration of World Order, 1911-1923," *Diplomatic History* 38:4 (2014), 786-800.

practices of occupation, economic warfare, and the treatment of suspect minorities and internal dissenters. There is much to gain from tracing the commonalities – of principles, of strategies, even of personnel – in all of these areas across the period 1914-1945.

In many ways it is easy to understand why cross-conflict dialogue has been slow to emerge, given the differences between the two World Wars. The First, with its confused and disputed origins, broadly similar regimes in differing stages of liberalization (the most liberal, France and Britain, being allied to the least, Russia), and ensuing military stalemate on all fronts, lent itself naturally to attempts to answer questions related to the endurance of soldiers and civilians alike: how and why did they withstand what was happening all around them? How could such a bloodletting be endured and tolerated by those who, guns in hand, could apparently have put a stop to it? And how did the experience of combat in the trenches, common to millions of veterans drawn from all over the world, as well as the scale of human losses, affect the course of history in the years that followed? For decades the historiography of the First World War was dominated by diplomatic and military historians, concerned with the war's origins and its course on the battlefield. However, their combined efforts failed to account for the transformation of attitudes, beliefs and outlooks that the war had quite clearly brought about. The world of 1919 was different to that of 1914, but this change was yet to be understood and explained. Social and economic historians then took the lead, establishing how the various countries responded to the challenges of mass industrialized warfare – how the production of all that was needed at the front was optimized, how each state took on new economic roles, how the resources of colonial empires and neutral nations were tapped to keep the armies on the field of battle.<sup>23</sup> But this better understanding of how the war was fought, in the material sense, could not provide a satisfactory answer to why the fighting

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<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Gerald Feldman, *Army, Industry and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Providence RI and Oxford, 1992, 1<sup>st</sup> published 1966); Gerd Hardach, *The First World War, 1914-1918* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1977, 1<sup>st</sup> published 1973); J.M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986); Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford, 1991); Patrick Fridenson, ed., *The French Home Front 1914-1918* (Oxford, 1992); Angela Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend: Munition Workers in the Great War* (Berkeley CA, 1994); Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I* (London, 1998);

continued, or how beliefs were transformed by conflict. A cultural answer was required; questions such as what soldiers and civilians believed about the war, why they believed it, and for how long, had to be understood.<sup>24</sup> The turn to cultural history made all the difference in this respect, and it has enriched our understanding of the First World War enormously.<sup>25</sup> This was indeed a great war of ideas and beliefs, fought out in each country, across Europe, and throughout the world. Drawing on each country's histories and traditions, as well as on international movements and trends, political, social, intellectual, and religious arguments were advanced in an attempt to confer meaning to the war, shape war aims, and dictate peace terms. This wartime cultural mobilization, which explained societies at war would be reconfigured in the aftermath of the longed-for victory, helped to keep soldiers in the trenches, not through fear and intimidation but rather out of a sense of duty: to their comrades-in-arms, their families, and their class, religion, and country.<sup>26</sup> Those armies that could not do this – that did not accept that citizen-soldiers had to be convinced, not coerced – faced ever greater difficulties as the war dragged on.<sup>27</sup> Mass literate armies had to understand, and believe in, what they were doing, and what would arise from the victory they sought – and the defeat they feared. The same was true of the Home Fronts that backed them up.<sup>28</sup> Given the broadly similar experiences of the

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<sup>24</sup> A pioneering work which hinted at the change to come is Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People* (Leamington Spa/Heidelberg/Dover, NH, 1985). 1<sup>st</sup> published 1983. See also, in this respect, P.J. Flood, *France 1914-1918: Public Opinion and the War Effort* (Basingstoke, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> See Jones, "As the Centenary Approaches" (2013) and Kramer, "Recent Historiography of the First World War" (2014). See also Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> On soldiers' commitment to the war effort, see, for example, Leonard V. Smith, *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War I* (Princeton NJ, 1994); Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Basingstoke, 2000); Alexander Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies* (Cambridge, 2008); Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester, 2009); Edward Madigan, *Faith Under Fire: Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War* (London, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> One example of such an army was Portugal's which fought both on the Western Front and in Africa. See Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, *Portugal 1914-1926: From the First World War to Military Dictatorship* (Bristol, 2004). A more recent English-language cultural exploration of Portugal's war can be found in the *E-Journal of Portuguese History* Vol. 11, N. 2 (Winter 2013), edited by Sílvia Correia and Helena Pinto Janeiro.

<sup>28</sup> On home fronts and cultural mobilization in wartime, see, for example, Annette Becker, *War and Faith: The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930* (Oxford, 1998); Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge, 2000); Adrian

main combatant nations the First World War invited first a comparative, and then a genuinely transnational, historiographical approach, one which established why and how phenomena and debates evolved irrespective of national borders in Europe, and indeed the world, as a whole<sup>29</sup>. The cultural turn, marked by a greater acceptance of interdisciplinarity, also allowed a new set of questions to be asked by historians – questions pertaining to the role of gender, race, and violence (against civilians and in combat) during the war.<sup>30</sup> It has also blurred the chronology of the Great War, thanks to a renewed interest in the conflicts that immediately preceded and followed it, and the difficulties involved in demobilizing minds in the wake of the conflict.<sup>31</sup>

The Second World War was, at first glance, very different. Both conflicts were, in their own way, total wars: conflicts in which national governments, individually or in broad coalitions, went as far as they could to mobilize all available resources in the pursuit of victory. In many ways, it is this common

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Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge, 2008); Manon Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patrie: Génération Grande Guerre* (Paris, 2012); Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2012); Tomás Irish, *The University at War 1914-25: Britain, France and the United States* (Basingstoke, 2015); Michael S. Neiberg, *The Path to War: How the First World War Created Modern America* (Oxford, 2016). On the blurring of the differences between the home and battle fronts, see Nicholas Beaupré, *Écrire en guerre, écrire la guerre: France, Allemagne, 1914-1920* (Paris, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> Some important early works in the cultural history of the war include Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *La Guerre des Enfants 1914-1918: essai d'histoire culturelle* (Paris, 1993); Jean-Jacques Becker, Jay M. Winter, Gerd Krumeich, Annette Becker, and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, eds., *Guerres et Cultures 1914-1918* (Paris, 1994); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge: 1995); John Horne, ed., *State Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge, 1997).

<sup>30</sup> On race and the associated issue of empire, see Richard S. Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (Baltimore MD, 2008); Jonathan Krause, ed., *The Greater War: Other Combatants and Other Fronts* (London, 2014); Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela, eds, *Empires at War, 1911-1923* (Oxford, 2014). On the link between war and violence, see, for example, John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven CT and London, 2001); Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca NY, 2005); Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford, 2007); Heather Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany, 1914-1920* (Cambridge, 2013); Alex Dowdall, "Civilians in the Combat Zone: Allied and German Evacuation Policies at the Western Front, 1914-1918," *First World War Studies* 6:3 (2015), 239-255.

<sup>31</sup> On post-war developments and the application of a 'culture of defeat' to Germany, see, for example, Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, eds., *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford, 2012); John Paul Newman, *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War: Veterans and the Limits of State-Building, 1903-1945* (Cambridge, 2015); Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917-1923* (London, 2017).



nature that makes their joint investigation both possible and profitable. However, the ideological distances between the regimes which fought the Second World War were enormous, and these were more easily grouped and categorized than in the First. Democratic powers, eventually in an uneasy coalition with the Soviet Union, fought fascism in its various guises. The Second World War was also a more dynamic conflict, which allowed its participants little or no time to correct their shortcomings on the battlefield before a terrifying defeat was suffered (with the exception of Great Britain, protected by the English Channel and the RAF, whose strength was carefully husbanded even as France fell). The war also resulted in the total ruin of Europe, whose recovery and rehabilitation had to be taken in hand by the two superpowers the war had created – there was no political space for individual countries to recover in isolation, while reflecting on, and commemorating, their individual war experience, as occurred after 1918. And, of course, at the very heart of the Second World War, stood the Holocaust, which required the development of a whole set of analytical tools to approach, and which has rightly spanned an enormous literature of its own. The Second World War is still seen today as a war of absolutes, in which the motivation of the participants does not require great subtlety to understand, so obvious was it; soldiers faced either triumph and survival or total annihilation. The ephemeral nature of many of the regimes that participated in the war (some of them having been spawned during the conflict itself, under Axis occupation) also militated against transnational approaches: the functioning of each regime – Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Vichy France, the Soviet Union etc – had first to be understood, in all of its aspects (not least because of the scale of the crimes committed in its name) before any comparison could be engaged in.

However, historiographical advances carried out in tandem by the specialists in each conflict have blurred the once apparently sharp differences between the two World Wars. Once the cultural dimension of the First World War is kept firmly in mind, the demonization of the enemy first and foremost, then this conflict's acts of violence against civilians – atrocities in 1914, aerial bombardment, U-Boat attacks, the treatment of suspect minorities, requisition of food and labour – lose their exceptional character and become an integral part of

the war.<sup>32</sup> Might not the difference between the two World Wars lie in each side's ability, by 1939, to strike the other's civilians directly (culminating in the atomic attacks of 1945), along with the possibility of complete military success, as witnessed on the Western Front in 1940, and the Eastern Front in 1941? Meanwhile, our understanding of the Second World War's soldiers has also evolved. Whether they served democracies or totalitarian regimes, they remained individuals; their experience of military service and combat must be understood in terms of what they believed themselves to be achieving; theirs too was a war of cultures, not just politics or national defence.<sup>33</sup> They were not so different from the soldiers of the Great War, and were subjected to similar pressures. Might there be other areas of commonality?

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<sup>32</sup> For works that place the First World War firmly as a precursor of the Second, notably when it comes to issues of occupation and territorial expansion, see, for example, Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge, 2001); Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaigns Against Enemy Aliens During World War One* (Cambridge MA and London, 2003); Jay Winter, ed., *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915* (Cambridge, 2003); Sophie de Schaepdrijver, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre Mondiale* (Berlin & New York, 2004); Alexander Victor Prusin, *Nationalizing a Borderland: War, Ethnicity and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914-1920* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2005); Jonathan Gunz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 2009); Mark von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914-1918* (Seattle, WA, 2009); Annette Becker, *Les cicatrices rouges, 14-18: France et Belgique occupées* (Paris, 2010); Philippe Nivet, *La France occupée, 1914-1918* (Paris, 2011); Benjamin Liberman, *The Holocaust and Genocides in Europe* (London, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> On the Eastern Front, see: Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941-1945, German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (Houndmills, 1985) and *Hitler's Army. Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York, 1991); John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy. Race and Power in the Pacific War* (London, 1986); Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: The Red Army 1939-45* (London, 2005); Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer, *Soldaten: On Fighting, Killing and Dying. The Secret World War II Tapes of German Forces* (London, 2012, 1<sup>st</sup> published in German in 2011); Roger R. Reese, *Why Stalin's Soldiers Fought: The Red Army's Military Effectiveness in World War II* (Lawrence KS, 2011); Robert Dale, *Demobilized Veterans in Late Stalinist Leningrad: Soldiers to Civilians* (London, 2015). On the British experience see: Jonathan Fennell, *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to El Alamein* (Cambridge, 2014); Alan Allport, *Browned Off and Bloody-Minded: The British Soldier Goes to War, 1939-1945* (London, 2015); Paul Addison and Angus Calder, eds., *Time to Kill: The Soldier's Experience of War in the West, 1939-1945* (London, 1997); Jeremy A. Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-1945* (Manchester, 2000); David French, *Raising Churchill's Army: The British Army and the War Against Germany, 1919-1945* (Oxford, 2000); Emma Newlands, *Civilians into Soldiers: War, the Body and British Army Recruits, 1939-45* (Manchester, 2014).

The Royal Irish Academy, in association with a number of Irish and British academic institutions, hosted in June 2015 a workshop entitled 'International Experience and Legacy of the Two World Wars'. The organizing committee was formed by Robert Gerwarth, Tomás Irish, Heather Jones, Alan Kramer, Edward Madigan, and the authors of this Introduction. It was the committee's collective intention to stimulate dialogue between the historians of both conflicts, especially in the light of the 'cultural turn' in war studies. It was from the themes and ideas discussed during that event that the basis for this edited volume evolved. The workshop marked the retirement from Trinity College Dublin of Professor John Horne, who first joined Trinity as a lecturer in 1977 and who, teaching and writing alongside, and sometimes with, Alan Kramer, established enduring and stimulating intellectual connections all over the world. In addition, by supervising and supporting the endeavours of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, John Horne and Alan Kramer put Trinity College very much at the heart of global First World War studies. One of the leading practitioners of the cultural approach to war studies, John Horne, whose first monograph was devoted to the British and French labour movements during the Great War, played a fundamental role in developing ideas such as cultural mobilization and demobilization as discussed by many of the contributors to this volume.

Following the original structure of the 2015 workshop, the volume is divided into four sections which reflect some of the principal concerns of cultural historians of the First World War: mobilization and demobilization; the nature and representation of combat; the experience of civilians under fire; and the different meanings of victory and defeat. As will be suggested below, these are not watertight categories; indeed, there is considerable overlap between them. Our starting point as editors was to invite some of the most significant cultural historians of the Great War, those who, working closely with John Horne, have done most to shape the field and influence subsequent debates, to cast their gaze over both World Wars, considering ways in which their individual approach to war studies can shed new light on the 1939-1945 period (as well as other 20<sup>th</sup> century conflicts). This volume seeks thus to build on a quarter of a century's work on the First World War and its immediate aftermath by engaging in an innovative

exploration of the continuities and breaks between the two World Wars. Jay Winter, Alan Kramer, Annette Becker, and Robert Gerwarth were asked to open each section with an exploratory essay that forces them, by design, to break new ground, in terms both of their earlier writings and of general approaches to the Second World War. These ‘provocation’ essays are then supported by more focussed pieces which, set side by side, provide complementary case studies for the study of each World War from the point of view of the section’s theme. The aim, then, is to help establish where continuity exists (or not) and where comparisons can be profitably pursued by scholars of either conflict, or indeed, of war in general.

The cultural history of modern war is built around the notion of mobilization and demobilization of minds, as explored by Tomás Irish and Anthony McElligott. This was a task which governments, in the early years of the Great War, were happy to leave to other actors. From academics, artists, and journalists to religious figures, from women’s organizations and trade unionists to employer’s groups, from the military heroes of previous campaigns to the returning heroes of the present war, many were the voices that struggled to define, for the benefit of their respective audiences, what this war was about. As the sacrifices needed for victory mounted, and enthusiasm waned, governments began to take this task more seriously, attempting to coordinate efforts and streamline messages. In the more developed countries, all elements of belligerent societies were mobilized for war; as one moved from the Western Front both the intensity and the coordination of the mobilization campaigns decreased. When the war had ended, demobilization was the order of the day, at least among the victorious powers; commemoration, reconciliation and reconstruction soon emerged as priorities. A number of issues are of immediate interest when extending this kind of analysis from the First to the Second World War. First and foremost, of course, is the extent which mobilization from 1914 to 1918 and then demobilization – to a great extent built on the hope war itself would become a thing of the past – influenced the process of gearing up for war once more in 1939. Was the process doubly difficult after two decades of peace (less in the East)? Had the public in general – and soldiers in particular – become more cynical? Then there is the extent to which would-be totalitarian regimes were more or less effective than

parliamentary democracies at the task of cultural mobilization – a question closely linked to the relationship between victory and defeat in the Great War and the posture adopted after 1939.

The experience of combat remains a mystery to those who have not lived through it, but is nevertheless the subject of constant academic fascination. Does it unlock a state of primal fury among those who engage in it, not matter what their respective circumstances and the nature of the war being fought, or, alternatively, can soldiers be made to respect certain codes – of care for the wounded, prisoners, civilians and cultural treasures, say? Do commanding officers and, beyond them, national leaderships set the tone for the kind of war being waged, all soldiers acting accordingly? If so, how can the right balance be found between aggression – the lifting of the cultural restrictions on killing – and the preservation of order, discipline and respect for non-combatants? If the first explanation holds true, then there is no difference between the World Wars and any other conflict, or between the soldiers of different armies in different centuries. If it is not, then again there is room for an instructive comparison between the conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, within them, the armies of parliamentary democracies, fascist states and the Soviet Union as demonstrated by Robert Dale. It is also the case that representations of combat, and the battlefield performance of individual armies', or units within these armies, can be used as part of the mobilization process as explored by Heather Jones and Edward Madigan. Does a direct appeal to manly, or racial, warlike 'virtues' affect the kind of war being waged? And what happens when a setback is suffered?

Wartime cultural mobilization is carried out not just in favour of a set of values, a dazzling vision of a better post-war world, or the deliverance of ethnic kinsmen imprisoned in another political entity; it is also directed against the enemy: its armies, its values, and its culture. This is particularly acute in situations of military occupation during both World Wars, as revealed by Alex Dowdall and Michael S. Neiberg. With shocking ease, the very first weeks of the Great War saw considerable violence against the civilian population, notably in Belgium and northern France. Under the pressure imposed by the Schlieffen Plan's strict timetable, German units attributed the unexpected difficulties they

faced to civilian resistance and reacted accordingly. Did mass citizen armies pitted against each other find it naturally difficult to distinguish between combatant and defenceless populations? Was the line between the two blurred as Europe embraced the idea of total war? Was there no way to prevent such violence? How could national and religious minorities fare under such circumstances, if they were not trusted to participate wholeheartedly in their country's war effort? How did the different belligerent governments weather the social pressures generated by mass civilian mobility and immobility? And to what extent is enmity and hatred demobilized in the aftermath of such intense experiences such as military occupation? The experience of 1914-18 suggests that while the life and property of enemy civilians (and of suspect internal groups) could be spared, the temptation to not do so was often too great; military and political expediency, allied to the political aims of some in or close to power, unrealizable in peacetime, made such violence acceptable. All that was missing were the means to obliterate the distance between the battle and the home fronts, although even here strides were made in the development of long-distance bombing planes, zeppelins having shown themselves to be too vulnerable to the task. Meanwhile, the rival economic blockades became attempts to starve the enemy into surrender, carried out at great cost to the civilian population of the Central Empires. Significantly, the most important episode involving violence against a defenceless population was the Armenian genocide, carried out by the Ottoman authorities against a minority suspected of collusion with foreign enemies. The parallels at all levels with the Second World War are clear in this category: violence against national minorities and enemy civilians, indiscriminate bombing of cities under often spurious pretexts, genocidal policies put into action on a hitherto unknown scale, culminating in the attempt to destroy Europe's Jewish population. There was only one step not taken – the return to the use of poison gas, be it on the battlefield, as was feared during the interwar period, against enemy cities. Yet despite the heightening of wartime hatred, former enemies of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have learned to live with one another; in some ways memories of the civilian experience of military occupation have contributed to the dismantling of enmity in the post-1945 era.

The greater inclusivity of First World War studies in recent years – the wider consideration of events, away from the Western Front – combined with the ‘cultural turn’ in war studies has led us to understand victory and defeat in new ways, as discussed by John Paul Newman and Daniel Todman. The war did not end in November 1918 in the minds of many who had been mobilized for it. For those who saw the events of 1914-1918 as the ‘war to end all wars’, victory was by definition a conditional state; all the sacrifices only made sense if peace was preserved. For other countries, the rewards gained in victory did not seem to match the cost and effort invested in the war, with consequences for the governments and even the regimes responsible for intervention. And in the newly established states of Central and Eastern Europe the situation was less clear still: their existence was, to a great extent, the result of military defeat, with all the attendant costs when it came to making sense of what had happened. Countries like Poland and the future Yugoslavia were assembled from populations which had fought on different sides of the conflict; in these cases, the notion of victory was especially difficult to celebrate. Conversely, defeat too was a problematic notion. Post-revolutionary Russia refused to accept that it had been beaten; the same might be said of Romania. Greece emerged as a victor, after much turmoil, but squandered that victory with a war against Turkey which turned the latter, improbably given the events of 1914-1918, into a victor. Furthermore, victory and defeat were not confined to the closing stages of conflict and contributed to vital mood shifts during the wars themselves. Perceptions of coming victory and defeat affected the behaviour of all involved and those in charge of mobilization had to adapt accordingly. A culture of victory, in some ways, infiltrated Germany in early 1918 after Russia had been knocked out of the war. This ‘in war’ experience of victory and defeat was perhaps clearer in the Second World War when the fall of France was widely assumed to mean the end of the war, which the British failed to absorb fully. The legacy of great defeats reverberated – even within victorious nations of the First World War – and had implications for the way military disasters were understood as the second unfolded.

The twelve chapters that make up this volume present readers with a chance to consider, in greater depth, the potential richness of cross-conflict

cultural analysis of the two World Wars. While by no means exhaustive, the volume highlights the possibilities and challenges that arise from this type of scholarly endeavour. Emerging and established historians alike reflect on four core themes relating to wartime experience in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Fundamentally, it was our wish as editors to encourage future dialogue, not to have the final say. There is still much more work to be done in this realm. As a result, the conclusion cannot provide neat closure; instead it reflects on the ideas contained within the twelve pieces and gives a sense of direction to future research endeavours in this area. Appropriately, this task has been undertaken by John Horne, a key instigator and inspiration of many of the discussions inherent within this volume.

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Like the 2015 workshop at the Royal Irish Academy, this book is intended as a tribute to John Horne, lecturer, mentor, colleague, and friend to all those who have contributed to it. John has framed the way a generation of historians approaches the First World War; he has contributed to how the war is remembered and commemorated in its centenary, from Ireland to Australia, but above all in France; he has established solid collaborations with scholars from all over the world on the basis of mutual respect, intellectual curiosity, and tolerance. As his former students we can only hope that the work invested in this volume goes some way towards expressing our gratitude for the help given and the support shown by John, from our very first meeting as supervisor and postgraduate student until today.

CP & FRdeM