Other Combatants, Other Fronts

Other Combatants, Other Fronts: Competing Histories of the First World War

Edited by

James E. Kitchen, Alisa Miller and Laura Rowe

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IN MEMORY OF GAIL BRAYBON (1952-2008),
PIONEERING WOMEN'S HISTORIAN OF THE GREAT WAR
AND A MUCH VALUED SUPPORTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL
SOCIETY FOR FIRST WORLD WAR STUDIES

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The last word of thanks should go to the two founders of the International Society for First World War Studies: Pierre Purseigle and Jenny Macleod. Jenny and Pierre had the vision to set up the Society and have retained the stamina to keep it going. It is thanks to them that this conference and this volume were possible.

—James E. Kitchen, Alisa Miller and Laura Rowe
January 2011

FOREWORD

JOHN HORNE

Five conferences, five volumes: in the less than ten years since it was founded at the inaugural meeting in Lyons, in September 2001, the International Society of First World War Studies has been the living proof of the extraordinary dynamism of scholarship in this field of history. The London conference in 2009, hosted by the Imperial War Museum and supported by a number of institutions, not only resulted in the present volume, the fifth in the series, but also put the final touches to the Society's new review, *First World War Studies*, published in association with Taylor and Francis from March 2010. This is the first journal dedicated to critically showcasing the burgeoning work in the field and to highlighting the debates accompanying it. Together, journal and conference volumes provide a better overview of scholarship on the Great War than any comparable publications. Yet to enunciate the activities of the Society in these perfectly legitimate terms is perhaps to miss the real significance of its achievements. This becomes immediately apparent when we look more closely at the contents of *Other Combatants, Other Fronts*.

Virtually all the chapters (as with the papers at the conference) are the work of postgraduate and postdoctoral scholars. If the health of a field of study is measured by the challenge it poses to a new generation of researchers and by the vigour with which they respond, the Great War displays continued vitality as it attracts new scholars to do history in new ways. The present volume, like its predecessors, testifies to the creativity and intellectual self-confidence of a cohort of budding historians who have appropriated and taken in new directions the work of those who have often been their supervisors in graduate school.

The volume also shows how crossing national boundaries has become central to the best work now being done on the First World War. A number of the authors writing here tackle the history of countries other than their own, and in some cases do so comparatively. More importantly, the themes they choose and the questions they pose build on the past

volumes published by the Society in uncovering new subjects and exploring a fundamental paradox of the conflict.

The paradox is that the nation-state and national efforts were central to the First World War but in order to understand how and why this was so, national frameworks of analysis are insufficient. More perhaps than any other, the Great War was the episode that confirmed the nation as the organising principle of both politics and identity in the contemporary world. In 1914 much of the world was still pre-national in form (the multi-ethnic empires of eastern Europe, the overseas colonies of the western European powers). It was the war that decisively reconfigured these vast zones along national lines as the empires in eastern Europe disintegrated and split into nations while demands for national independence stirred or intensified in the colonial domain. But the processes by which this happened were transnational. This was because warfare occurred between states (and involved mutual learning), because the 'totalisation' of the conflict reshaped the international economy (which in turn redistributed economic power between nations), and because the stresses and strains of the war transformed what the nation and sense of national community entailed. If one doubts the last point, just look at how the ideological conflicts that emerged from the war (between Fascism, Soviet Communism, and democracy) were fought out through the framework of nation-states that had also been transformed by the conflict. Understanding the Great War requires a sense of different national trajectories that only a comparative sensibility can measure just as it calls for a willingness to look in transnational terms at the processes at work.

That is exactly what the chapters in this volume do. While many challenges lie ahead on the path of fully transnational or comparative histories, this intellectual agenda informs the approach of all the authors writing here – whether it be to set one region of a nation in an international context, to see how 'neutrality' was a product of the war that affected various neutral states differently, or to understand the war from the perspectives of colonized people and their colonizers, whose relationships and interactions were fundamentally altered by the conflict. Suddenly a war we thought we knew (that of the nations fighting on the Western Front) splinters like a kaleidoscope and reveals very different kinds of relationships along with glittering shards of new subjects that invite further work. Other fronts, other combats, ranging from Turkey to India to East Africa – or to West African soldiers on leave in the (to them) exotic setting of the French *Midi*. Nor is it just the spatial dimensions of the war that are shaken up by this comparative and transitional approach. The temporal framework of an event as vast and violent as the Great War cannot be

confined to the war years themselves, as historians have recognised for some time. It is true that the immanence of war before 1914, and the gulf between how contemporaries imagined a European conflict and the actual experience of what turned out to be a world war, remains one of the least explored frontiers – and fertile terrain for future research. But the cultural and physical legacy of wartime violence for post-war societies (Canada, Germany) is well represented in the current volume.

Cultural history remains the dominant approach in these essays, as it has been in the previous conference volumes. There is nothing surprising in this since cultural history has supplied the intellectual energy for a resurgence of scholarship that has been concerned above all to crack open national narratives constructed from traditional military and political history by rediscovering the experiences of the war (in all their multiplicity), and the ways in which they shaped post-war societies. As the editors suggest, a new dialogue between cultural and military history is beginning to emerge, and it is reflected in one or two of the contributions to the present volume. Such a dialogue entails a conceptual and methodological consideration of how the history of experience and representations might be integrated into a revivified and more complex history of causality, leading to new understandings of how and why the Great War changed the world in the ways that it did. In conjunction with the comparative and transnational approach already evident in this volume, such a synthesis is arguably the next major challenge. If the past is anything to go by, reading the future volumes of the Society's conferences will be as good a guide as any to how new cohorts of young researchers take it up.

—John Horne
January 2011
Trinity College Dublin

INTRODUCTION

JAMES E. KITCHEN, ALISA MILLER AND LAURA ROWE

As any 'juvenile anarchist' knows the First World War, as with all other wars, represents within the course of history a very 'bad thing'. As the satirists W.C. Sellar and R.J. Yeatman succinctly illustrated, it was responsible for the decline of British power and the rise of the United States to global hegemony.[1] More importantly it also led to the end of history, sitting in the inter-war period as a clear, yet bloody, end point to the teleological development of humanity. This jaundiced interpretation of the conflict has dominated much of the popular understanding of the events of 1914-18. Despite its horrors the First World War remains of tremendous interest to people across the globe. In part this is due to its prominence in contributing to the construction of many personal histories of the twentieth century. As a mass conflict involving the mobilisation of society on an unprecedented scale, both in the military and civilian spheres, the war required states to collect vast amounts of information on their citizens. The resulting bureaucratic repositories have proven of considerable value to amateur historians in reconstructing complex family histories.[2]

In addition, the First World War fascinates through the scale of slaughter involved, with the death toll running into the millions. For many European nations this slaughter was far from unique and was to be repeated only 20 years later, often on a grander and more brutal scale. Nevertheless, the fighting of 1914-18 seemed to define the nature of mass

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[1] Walter Carruthers Sellar and Robert Julian Yeatman, *1066 and All That: A Memorable History of England, Comprising All the Parts You Can Remember, Including 103 Good Things, 5 Bad Kings and 2 Genuine Dates* (London: Methuen, 1930), 121-123; Raphael Samuels, *Island Stories: Unravelling Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), 209-213.

[2] Pierre Purseigle and Jenny Macleod, 'Introduction: Perspectives in First World War Studies', in *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies*, eds. Jenny Macleod and Pierre Purseigle (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 5.

death in the twentieth century. As part of this fascination, the battlefields and cemeteries of the war remain popular tourist sites and places of pilgrimage, continuing a trend begun in the immediate aftermath of the war.[3] The focus on death reinforces the central narrative of the conflict in most popular appreciations: the victimisation of Europe's citizenry. This approach is developed and reinforced in popular historical literature, television documentaries, and cinematic representations.[4] One of the most prominent recent expressions of the war as a European tragedy was Christian Carion's 'Joyeux Noël' (2005). As a French, Belgian, German, and British co-production it is unsurprising that this tragic setting was ultimately used to convey ideas relating to the birth of European unity. Against these powerful and widely-distributed interpretations more subtle and scholarly approaches at times struggle to gain ground.

A nuanced approach at a popular level was, though, evident as early as 1930 with the work of the ground-breaking 'post-modernists' Sellar and Yeatman. They suggested a programme for analysing the First World War that stressed its transnational elements, arguing that:

> The War lasted three years or the duration, the Americans being 100% victorious. At the beginning the Russians rendered great assistance to the American cause by lending their memorable steam-roller and by passing silently through England one Sunday morning before breakfast with snow on their boots. The Americans were also assisted by the Australians (AZTECS) and some Canadians, and 51 Highlanders.[5]

This satire on the reductionist elements of English history in the inter-war years is forthright in its assertion that the First World War was anything but a narrow national event. The transnational perspective put forward by Sellar and Yeatman highlights the breadth of scholarship required to deal with the war's totality.

A desire to tackle the transnational complexities of the history of the First World War has been evident in the historical scholarship associated with the International Society for First World War Studies. The Society,

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[3] David W. Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919-1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998).

[4] Notable examples include Richard van Emden, *Britain's Last Tommies: Final Memories from Soldiers of the 1914-18 War in Their Own Words* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2005); 'Regeneration' (directed by Gillies Mackinnon, 1997); 'The Trench' (directed by Dominic Ozanne, 2002); 'Der rote Baron' (directed by Nicolai Müllerschön, 2008); 'Un long dimanche de fiançailles' (directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2004).

[5] Sellar and Yeatman, *1066 and All That*, 122.

under the direction of Pierre Purseigle and Jenny Macleod, has done a great deal in the first decade of the twenty-first century to wrestle with the plethora of questions posed in the quest to construct a 'total history' of the First World War. This volume grew out of the papers presented at the Society's fifth conference, held at the Imperial War Museum, London, in September 2009. It represents less than half of the diverse range of papers presented at the three-day event, yet gives an indication of the continuing academic fascination with the events of 1914-18 and their impact upon the twentieth century. In many ways this fascination matches and exceeds that of the wider public around the globe. As the centenary of the Great War's outbreak approaches both popular and academic discourses will no doubt become intensified. During discussions at the conference regarding the 2014 commemorations many of the British delegates commented on the prominence of popular historical interpretations which would undoubtedly peddle well-worn concepts, such as on the war's futility and the loss of a generation of young men. It was suspected that in the competition for the public's attention, academic history would lose out. An American delegate noted that he would welcome some of these concepts simply as a sign of interest and popular engagement with the First World War. This competition represents more than a struggle between popular and academic scholarship; it extends to the thematic topics of historical inquiry. Whilst there is much yet to be written about the Western Front, it has dominated our understanding of the war, especially in Britain and France. Other areas, such as the war at sea, have either been largely ignored, or subsumed by economic history. So how can we begin to reconcile these competitions and move towards a 'total history' of the First World War?

I. The extent of the myopia

As historians of British aspects of the war, we are acutely aware of the myopic tendencies to which British history, in both its popular and academic forms, is all too often prone.[6] Part of the problem is that, despite wishing to pursue a transnational and comparative perspective, we are, to paraphrase Adrian Gregory, all too often incapable of pursuing sustained research in any language other than English.[7] Myopia is no small problem to overcome – there is not even a simple way to diagnose its causes, let

[6] This was a criticism expressed with regard to the overall state of British history in the late 1980s; see David Cannadine, 'British History: Past, Present – and Future?', *Past and Present* 116 (1987): 169-191.

[7] Adrian Gregory, 'The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War' (Birmingham War Studies Seminar, 4 May 2010).

alone a ready-made prescription. Nor is it clear whether this is a particularly British problem, or one which affects other European and extra-European historiographies of the conflict. Crucially, it is contextually specific – forged in victory, defeat or neutrality, and tinted by national histories which both pre-dated and followed the war. There is a need for wide-ranging historical surveys comparable to that of Dan Todman on Britain for every nation 'involved' in the conflict – even non-combatants – before this myopia could even begin to be systematically identified and corrected. This volume does not claim to be a panacea, but it does represent a small step along the way to a transnational history of the First World War.

British military history, in particular, often becomes bogged down in cyclical debates that have only narrow applicability for the wider analysis of the conflict.[8] The argument over the British Expeditionary Force's learning curve has assumed an orthodoxy that leaves little room to question the extent to which it illuminates the development of operational concepts within other European armies. A criticism that is only enhanced when it is used as an analytical tool to examine extra-European armies, including those, such as the Indian Army, which drew on British military methodology. In many ways this demonstrates the limited progression of the military historical discourse on the conflict beyond the ideas of the inter-war years. The official histories enshrined this narrow national approach. They served to glorify the military exploits of the side for which it was being written whilst making little effort to expand on the role of opposing forces.[9] Notoriously Charles Bean's editorship of the Australian history of the war created a historical account that contributed primarily to narratives on the birth of the nation as much as its military exploits.[10] For many former officers writing in the inter-war years, the battles and campaigns they had served in existed principally to illuminate the future conduct of war. Colonel Archibald Wavell's *The Palestine Campaigns*

[8] Hew Strachan, 'Back to the Trenches: Why can't British historians be less insular about the First World War?', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 5 November 2008.

[9] Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 61-62; David French, 'Sir James Edmonds and the Official History: France and Belgium', in *The First World War and British Military History*, ed. Brian Bond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 69-86.

[10] See John Barrett, 'No Straw Man: C.E.W. Bean and Some Critics', *Australian Historical Studies* 23 (1989): 102-114; Alistair Thomson, '"Steadfast Until Death"? C.E.W. Bean and the Representation of Australian Military Manhood', *Australian Historical Studies* 23 (1989): 462-478; Alistair Thomson, '"The Vilest Libel of the War"? Imperial Politics and the Official Histories of Gallipoli', *Australian Historical Studies* 25 (1993): 628-636.

was designed to set out how modern armies could still utilise mobility on the battlefield. In his mind the cavalry-based operations that had brought rapid victory to the British in 1918 could easily be transposed to another theatre of war, this time with tanks and armoured cars standing in for the horses.[11] Moreover, his description of the campaign gave prominence to British forces, neglecting the fact that by its closing stages it was in many ways an archetypal multinational and imperial conflict, with troops from India, Egypt, the Caribbean, Australia, and New Zealand playing vital roles. National myopia was and remains a prominent danger within overtly didactic military history; the successes and failures of other nations are seen as too obscure or contextually complex to grasp easily.

Military organisations in the twenty-first century offer an opposing viewpoint. As Patrick Porter has elucidated, the United States military has responded to both the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan by developing a remarkable degree of cultural sensitivity during its operations in these theatres.[12] These cultural interpretations of insurgency, and the best methods to counter it, are far from perfect, often relying on crude stereotypes. Nevertheless, they demonstrate a willingness to engage with the multifaceted nature of modern warfare and a realisation of the dangers of assuming mono-national approaches to an enemy. These interpretations are not entirely novel, as armies during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demonstrated an interest in the conduct of war by other nations. The Russo-Japanese conflict in 1904-5 saw large numbers of European observers deployed to the Far East to assess the combat capabilities of both forces.[13] The lessons derived in this instance were not always the most perspicacious. Military observers such as Ian Hamilton focused very much on the élan of Japanese infantry rather than the limitations imposed by modern weaponry and nineteenth-century logistical systems on the modern battlefield. This broad international awareness of military affairs and history appeared, however, to become another of the First World War's victims in the inter-war period.

The picture of current military historiography is not entirely one of gloom and despair when it comes to internationalising the history of the war. A growing awareness of the limitations of one-sided battlefield

[11] Archibald P. Wavell, *The Palestine Campaigns* (London: Constable, 1931), 234-242.
[12] Patrick Porter, 'Good Anthropology, Bad History: The Cultural Turn in Studying War', *Military Affairs* 37 (2007): 45-58; Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War Through Western Eyes* (London: Hurst, 2009).
[13] Patrick Porter, 'Military Orientalism? British Observers of the Japanese Way of War, 1904-1910', *War and Society* 26 (2007): 1-25.

studies has increased attention on the need to place battles within a wider context. If battles are left isolated from the events and ideas that provoked them, occurred simultaneously and shaped their course, and the results that were produced by them, then military history has little to offer the wider historical profession.[14] William Philpott's analysis of the battle of the Somme represents the extent to which the history of battle can illuminate wider historical debates.[15] By emphasising the coalition nature of the Anglo-French war effort in 1916 the history of the battle loses much of its restrictive and narrow British emotional baggage. This allows it to take on a much more prominent position in describing the course of twentieth-century European history.

It is surprising that studies of this nature have not become the norm for the military and the wider history of the First World War. This is particularly the case as wars in themselves are 'inter- and transnational events par excellence'.[16] They are seldom, however, perceived as such, often being portrayed as examples of nation-building or national destruction. The First World War is thus an example of both national unity and disunity, with narratives of recruitment, combat, and industrial mobilisation seen within limited national contexts. The conflict, however, offered an enormous opportunity for soldiers to gain experience of a multiplicity of cultures and nations. Troops of the 10th (Irish) Division had travelled through England, Greece, Egypt, and Palestine by the war's end. Combat losses and domestic political unrest also meant that its initial Irish recruiting base could not be sustained and troops from across the British forces serving in the Mediterranean theatre had to be drafted into its ranks. In both the campaigns at Salonica and north of Jerusalem the division took part in a wider coalition war effort, serving alongside French, Anzac, and Indian troops. Furthermore, its opponents ranged from Bulgarian and Turkish infantry through to German and Austro-Hungarian artillerymen. This one formation's experience of the First World War thus existed within a transnational microcosm. Yet the historiography of Irish soldiers in the war pays little attention to the 10th Division, instead preferring to focus on the supposedly mono-confessional formations that followed it and which took part in the traditional Anglo-German narrative of combat

[14] Mark Moyar, 'The Current State of Military History', *The Historical Journal* 50 (2007): 225-240.
[15] William Philpott, *Bloody Victory: The Sacrifice on the Somme and the Making of the Twentieth Century* (London: Little, Brown, 2009).
[16] Ute Frevert, 'Europeanizing German History', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 36 (2005): 12.

on the Western Front in 1914-18.[17] In part transnational history itself shies away from a deeper discussion of events such as the First World War. Much of the literature on transnational interaction is limited to peaceful processes of convergence, such as tourism or religion. As illustrated by Robert Gerwarth and Heniz-Gerhard Haupt there is a growing need to enrich the transnational discourse by dealing with the phenomenon's 'dark side'.[18] Warfare, violence, and mass death were some of the most common elements of a transnational history of the twentieth century. It is within this approach that the historiography of the First World War can fully integrate with the complexities of wider social, political, cultural, economic, and military history.

The historiography of warfare since the end of the Second World War does offer a means to encompass this transnational approach. The focus on the shifting nature of modern warfare, from the United States Civil War through to 1945 has given birth to the concept of 'total war'; seeing this period as unique in the history of conflict. Total war is, however, a heavily contested term of analysis which has yet to be clearly defined. Roger Chickering and Stig Förster made it clear in 2005 that despite five multi-authored volumes over eight years of research into the phenomenon it was still impossible to produce a single clear definition.[19] This highlights the difficulty of using broad analytical phraseology, but also draws out its value. In part the fact that total war cannot be defined allows it to be used as a conceptual tool to assess a variety of historical problems, across a variety of time periods. In many cases it proves inadequate for the task, but it does serve to capture the multidisciplinarity and breadth of a transnational approach to warfare. This inevitably produces multiple competing interpretations, thereby stimulating ongoing debate.

Across the multiple interpretations of total war there are a number of uniting elements that scholars return to. In essence these describe the concept as a Weberian ideal type, making it a comparative analytical

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[17] Tom Johnstone, *Orange, Green and Khaki: The Story of the Irish Regiments in the Great War* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1992); Timothy Bowman, *The Irish Regiments in the Great War: Discipline and Morale* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

[18] Robert Gerwarth and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, 'Internationalising Historical Research on Terrorist Movements in Twentieth-Century Europe', *European Review of History* 14 (2007): 277.

[19] Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, 'Are We There Yet? World War II and the Theory of Total War', in *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction*, eds. Roger Chickering, Stig Förster, and Bernd Greiner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2.

tool.[20] Crucially, it involves the total mobilisation of society behind the war effort, utilising all the resources of the state and economy for the one purpose of waging war. The aims for which the war is waged must also be total. Concepts such as the unconditional surrender of the enemy, and subjugation of the enemy nation or people therefore come to the forefront of war aims rhetoric. The methods used to fight the war reflect these total aims, showing a complete disregard for international law and common moral principles. Within a total war the military means of the state can be used recklessly against an opponent. Finally, total war requires total control of the state and people. Within the context of the war all aspects of public and private life are thus organised and guided centrally. The salient theme within which these elements sit focuses on the removal of the barriers between combatants and non-combatants in the wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The blurring of the military and civilian spheres defines modern total war, providing it with much of its unique brutality and violence. Viewing total war as an ideal type can prove problematic. A crude and reductionist methodology often develops that simply wishes to test various scenarios against the ideals of total war to see if the particular conflict can acquire the sobriquet. This does little to reveal the complexities and nuances that lie behind such an interpretative tool and which give it value.

The confusion over various definitions of total war, which emphasise one or more of the key elements over others, in part stems from the muddled ancestry of the term. It was a concept that was rarely invoked during the First World War, and when used was done so in a manner dissimilar to later historiographical frameworks. During 1917 Georges Clemenceau's government talked about *la guerre intégrale* which indicated an intent to abandon all restraint in the mobilisation of French society for the war effort.[21] The following year Léon Daudet, the editor of a right-wing journal, published a summons to national mobilisation entitled *La Guerre Totale*. It defined total war as the extension of the conflict from the battlefield into the realms of politics, the economy, industry, law, finance, and intellectual life; viewing total war as an all-encompassing social phenomenon. Daudet's aim was similar to the Clemenceau government in trying to spur national mobilisation by

[20] Stig Förster and Myriam Gessler, 'The Ultimate Horror: Reflections on Total War and Genocide', in *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction*, eds. Roger Chickering, Stig Förster, and Bernd Greiner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 56.

[21] Hew Strachan, 'On Total War and Modern War', *The International History Review* 22 (2000): 348.

attacking its internal opponents. Despite the French having developed the initial terminology of total war it was Germany that would become most associated with its underlying concepts during the inter-war years. Ernst Jünger coined the term 'total mobilisation' in 1930, capturing the sense in which the First World War had been unprecedented in harnessing the energies of entire national societies to the conduct of war.[22] It was, though, to Germany's former Quartermaster General, Erich Ludendorff, that much of the credit has gone for developing the concept. His *Der totale Kreig*, published in 1935, introduced the term into popular German discourse. The work was in essence a brooding meditation on Germany's failure in the First World War. As with his war memoirs, published in 1919, he identified the need for Germany to be governed by a military dictatorship in order to be successful in war. Much of the blame for failure in 1914-18 was placed at the door of Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, who Ludendorff portrayed as an ineffectual leader, incapable of meeting the challenges posed by modern warfare. As Quartermaster General he had experienced the power struggle within the German state between the chancellor, Kaiser, Reichstag, and supreme command. *Der totale Krieg* reinforced these conclusions and was in essence simply a re-fighting of the First World War, this time done properly. As Roger Chickering suggests, Lunderdorff's historical legacy for the concept of total war is easily exaggerated.[23] By the late 1930s many of the ideas he postulated were common currency and he did little to develop the debate. In many instances the concept of *totale Krieg* was reinterpreted as 'totalitarian war', highlighting Lunderdorff's central theme of establishing a military dictatorship. The English language edition, entitled *The Nation at War* (1936), did exactly this relating the argument to the structure of the state that conducted war rather than the means of fighting a total war.[24] Similarly, the prominent military theorist J.F.C. Fuller, also a member of the British Union of Fascists and military advisor to Oswald Moseley, used the term 'totalitarian war' to describe the Italian invasion of

[22] John Horne, 'Introduction: Mobilizing for "Total War", 1914-1918', in *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe During the First World War*, ed. John Horne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4.
[23] Hans Speier, 'Ludendorff: The German Concept of Total War', in *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*, ed. Edward Mead Earle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 306-321; Roger Chickering, 'Sore Loser: Ludendorff's Total War', in *Shadows of Total War: Europe, East Asia, and the United States, 1919-1939*, eds. Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 176-177.
[24] Strachan, 'On Total War', 349-350.

Abyssinia. He focused, however, on the methods used in the conflict to define its totalitarian nature, such as mechanisation and aerial bombing. As Hew Strachan has outlined the confusion embodied by Fuller's approach helped to reinforce the ambiguity that surrounded total war. By the end of the Second World War it had become simply a way of highlighting the massive destruction of the conflict, rather than denoting any subtleties in the methodology of modern war.

Nevertheless, the interpretation of Lundendorff and the initial French pronouncements clearly locate total war as a product of the First World War. Ludendorff's narrative of total war was used to explain German defeat, blaming civilian leadership in an effort to exculpate his own war record. The 1914-18 conflict was less an archetype of how to fight a total war but rather a warning. It was both a warning of the potential for war to escalate to extreme levels, beyond the control of states and societies, and of the dangers of failing to engage with the ideas of total war. The essence of the First World War, as John Horne has argued, thus lay less in its status as the first total war but in its 'totalising logic'.[25] It was this element that appeared profoundly novel and which exercised its contemporaries. This approach locates the First World War within a wider process of totalisation of warfare, drawing its origins back to the French Revolution and pushing its legacy beyond 1945 into the nuclear standoff of the Cold War era.

The discourse on total war often places the First World War in competition with the Second World War; both conflicts vying to be the archetypal total war. The methodology of the ideal type is thus used to set out those elements of both wars that conform and those which do not. Within this debate the First World War is cast as both a precedent and a definition of total war, adding to the interpretative confusion. This is an argument that revolves principally around the technologies of modern warfare and their relationship to the totalising logic of conflict. In his discussion of the birth of modern warfare on the Western Front in 1916-18, Jonathan Bailey defines modernity on the battlefield as the product of one particular weapon system: artillery.[26] The harnessing of massive amounts of artillery to operational concepts was the key to producing the fluid and firepower-intensive battlefield that has dominated warfare since the close of the First World War. This was an approach that was only refined in 1939-45 through the use of air power and mechanisation. Bailey

[25] Horne, 'Mobilizing', 3.
[26] Jonathan A. Bailey, 'The First World War and the Birth of Modern Warfare', in *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050*, eds. MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 132-153.

highlights the mobilisation and utilisation of technological and scientific thought to the development of effective artillery fire. Sound-ranging, flash-spotting, radio communications, aerial photography, map making, and the mathematics involved in 'shooting off the map' all demonstrated the extent to which modern technology now defined modern war. The prominence of technology went beyond the battlefield in 1914-18. Mass artillery could not function without extensive logistical support in order to keep the guns repaired and armed. In addition, the technology of nineteenth-century industrialisation was deployed in order to provide the massive number of artillery pieces required by modern war and the even larger quantities of shells. Technology, however, was not just important for its destructive capacities. Without the communications revolution that began in the late nineteenth century the armies of 1914-18 would have been left without their vital telegraph, telephone, and radio communications. These were the modern technologies that facilitated the mass slaughter of total war. Crucially, artillery, as a modern weapon system, played a key role in shaping the popular image of total warfare. The landscape of battles such as the Somme, Passchendaele, and Verdun carved by high explosives fulfilled many of the pre-war predictions of technology swallowing humanity. As Dennis Showalter illustrates, this imagery of a machine-driven world had a powerful post-war cultural legacy, influencing cinematic depictions such as Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis' (1927) and Charlie Chaplin's 'Modern Times' (1936).[27]

The limitations imposed by technology served also to constrain the totalising logic of the First World War. The logistical imperatives of the Entente and German armies on the Western Front by the winter of 1914-15 led to a stabilisation of the front line and the adoption of siege warfare. This battlefield context allowed, by 1916-18, the vast quantities of artillery necessary for Bailey's modern war to be deployed at the front. The static nature of the front made it relatively easy for civilians to avoid combat and to escape the direct ravages of war. In contrast, it was the mobile operations of the war's opening months that saw French and Belgian civilians most exposed to reprisals by German troops. The mobility of armies facilitated and forced the interaction of the military and civilian spheres as soldiers searched for food, fodder, and billets. By comparison, the defining total war elements of the Second World War, the Holocaust and the dropping of the atomic bombs, represented technology and

[27] Dennis E. Showalter, 'Mass Warfare and the Impact of Technology', in *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, eds. Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 73-93.

industrial processes being deployed to maximise slaughter and further blur the lines between combatants and non-combatants. In 1939-45 technology did not appear to limit warfare but to expand it.

Modernity and total warfare are not coterminous. Between 1939 and 1945 it was often those theatres that experienced a de-modernisation of warfare that most closely fitted the ideals of total war. For example, the Germany Army had 3,648 armoured fighting vehicles in June 1941, but only 1,803 by January 1942, yet its ability to wage an increasingly brutal war on the Eastern Front did not diminish.[28] Terrain could play a key role in helping to define both the nature of warfare and the use of technology within it. The jungles and mountains of many of the theatres in which the Japanese Army was encountered, such as Burma and New Guinea, prevented the use of modern weapon systems. Most engagements involved small units of infantry stumbling into each other and taking part in short-range firefights and hand-to-hand combat.[29] Such combat conditions left little scope for prisoner taking, regardless of military and racial ideologies, and casualty rates were correspondingly high. The relationship of de-modernisation to the brutality of total war was paralleled, not contrasted, in the First World War. The Armenian Genocide in 1915 carried out by the Ottoman state and various conglomerations of local militias and gendarmes did not represent the technological zenith of the conflict.[30] It was conducted on the fringes of the war, both geographically and in terms of modernity. Nevertheless, it produced the clearest example in 1914-18 of civilians being deliberately targeted as part of the escalation of warfare. The Ottoman Empire's ability to conduct a modern, technological war was severely limited by its logistical reliance on Austria-Hungary and Germany. Its military campaigns against invading European powers required the vast bulk of the state's technological capacity to prevent defeat. The violent 'pacification' of perceived Armenian resistance and

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[28] Hew Strachan, 'Total War: The Conduct of War 1939-1945', in *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction*, eds. Roger Chickering, Stig Förster, and Bernd Greiner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 46.

[29] Eric Bergerud, *Touched with Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 55-118; Paul Ham, *Kokoda* (Sydney: Harper Collins, 2004); Daniel P. Marston, *Phoenix from the Ashes: The Indian Army in the Burma Campaign* (London: Praeger, 2003), 125-167.

[30] Donald Bloxham, 'The Armenian Genocide of 1915-1916: Cumulative Radicalization and the Development of a Destruction Policy', *Past and Present* 181 (2003): 141-191; Peter Gatrell, 'Displacing and Re-placing Population in the Two World Wars: Armenia and Poland Compared', *Contemporary European History* 16 (2007): 511-527.

mass deportation schemes required little in the way of sophisticated weaponry. As with much of the Ottoman Empire's war effort in 1914-18 it was incompetence and maladministration that produced mass death. Furthermore, the Armenian Genocide provides a challenge to crude analytical configurations which link the concepts of genocide, total war, and imperialism together as representing the basis of an explanation of the twentieth century's ultimate horror, the Holocaust.[31] Unrestrained violence against civilians in the Armenian case took place not as part of the expansion of imperial rule but as a result of the collapse of Ottoman authority on the edge of its empire. The chaos of imperial decline coupled with an inchoate Turkish nationalist movement fuelled historic local grievances against the Armenian community. Alongside perceived, and at times real, Armenian links to the Entente, in particular Russia, a dynamic was created that quickly escalated into mass slaughter.

It is in these imperial dimensions of the First World War that the totalising logic of the conflict is best expressed. The powers that went to war in 1914 were predominantly imperial states with reach and influence around the globe. The experience of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century imperial warfare influenced the approaches to warfare in 1914-18. The overarching element within definitions of total war focuses on the breakdown of the barrier between civilians and the military; the broadening of the constraints upon war. Civilians are seen as a key part of the enemy's war machine and therefore a legitimate target for the application of military power. The blurring of the lines between the military and civilian spheres was evident in numerous imperial wars. In the confrontation with the Zulus in 1879 the British forces under Lord Chelmsford deliberately targeted the economic foundations of the Zulu nation: kraals were burnt and cattle stocks pillaged.[32] The treatment of captured and wounded Zulu warriors was at times so brutal as to elicit complaints from groups such as the Aborigines Protection Society. Numerous wars of imperial expansion and control ran into indigenous opponents who recognised their military inferiority to the imperial power.

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[31] A. Dirk Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the "Racial Century": Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust', in *Colonialism and Genocide*, eds. A. Dirk Moses and Dan Stone (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 148-180; A. Dirk Moses, 'Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History', in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), 3-54.

[32] Michael Lieven, '"Butchering the Brutes All Over the Place": Total War and Massacre in Zululand, 1879', *History* 84 (1999): 614-632.

As a result they resorted to guerrilla warfare to exploit their local knowledge and relative logistical freedom. In such circumstances colonial armies often found that the best solution to protracted counter-insurgency campaigns was the separation of the local population from the rebel fighters. On the American frontier reservations and forts, alongside military expeditions, were used with great effect to emasculate Native American military power.[33] In both South Africa and the Philippines at the turn of the twentieth century the British and Americans refined the concentration camp system, pioneered by the Spanish in Cuba, to prevent the civilian population providing sustenance, shelter, and intelligence to insurgencies.[34] In both cases unsanitary conditions and malnutrition led to heightened death rates among concentrated civilians. Casual violence towards non-combatants, often unrelated to the conduct of military operations, could also characterise these small wars. The destruction of the Boxer rebellion and the subsequent pacification of the area around Beijing in 1900-1 saw widespread looting, the rounding up of Chinese civilians for labour gangs, and numerous instances of rape.[35] The European soldiers involved, in part motivated through highly racist rhetoric, had dehumanised their opponents and the local population, thus allowing the boundaries of civilised warfare to be transgressed. From the perspective of the groups being subjected to colonial violence these wars were frequently total. The survival of the nation or people was often perceived to be at stake, with the prospect of long-term subjugation on the horizon. In the case of the Zulus, the nation in arms took to the battlefield with all men of fighting age, a total of 30,000 of whom around a third were killed, mobilised to resist invasion.[36] By virtue of fighting wars of limited duration in a manner that relied little on industrial capacity, these indigenous groups were able to mobilise totally for war.

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[33] Robert M. Utley, 'Total War on the American Indian Frontier', in *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914*, eds. Manfred F. Boemeke, Roger Chickering, and Stig Förster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 399-414.

[34] Glenn Anthony May, 'Was the Philippine-American War a "Total War"?', in *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914*, eds. Manfred F. Boemeke, Roger Chickering, and Stig Förster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 437-457.

[35] Sabine Dabringhaus, 'An Army on Vacation? The German War in China, 1900-1901', in *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914*, eds. Manfred F. Boemeke, Roger Chickering, and Stig Förster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 459-476.

[36] Lieven, 'Zululand', 630.