WINNING PEACE

The End of the First World War:
History, Remembrance and Current Challenges

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Edited by Oliver Janz
in cooperation with the
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Foreword

Oliver Janz

The First World War was not succeeded by a stable or lasting peace. One hundred years later, the global order is once again marked by numerous crises, tensions, and a growing sense of insecurity. Indeed, the question of how peace can be secured remains pertinent. What lessons can be learned from World War I and the unstable period that followed it? What historical trends extend from the immediate postwar period to the present day? What current problems and crises can be traced back to those years? Of the designs for peace that were developed around 1918, which ones are still relevant today? What contradictions did they contain and what were their limitations? What mistakes were made in translating them into action? With a view to other pivotal moments in twentieth-century history, such as 1945 or 1989/90, what was learned from these mistakes with regard to ending war and making peace—and can these lessons be applied to present day crises and conflicts?

Centenary events to commemorate the First World War and its consequences varied greatly from nation to nation. Despite diverging narratives, it is important to enable shared learning. How can similarities between, and shared aspects of, cultures of remembrance be strengthened in a way that does not cast aside national experiences?

These were some of the key questions of the conference "Winning Peace – The End of the First World War with its History, Remembrance and Current Challenges," which took place at the Federal Foreign Office on 11–12 October 2018. It involved renowned academics from a wide range of disciplines, as well as intellectuals, journalists and specialists

in conflict resolution from across Europe and the world. This volume brings together a number of the speeches and panel contributions from the conference.

The decision to hold the conference was made at the Franco German Council of Ministers on 13 July 2017. It was organized by Freie Universität Berlin, in cooperation with the Franco German Institute for History and Social Sciences (IFRA) in Frankfurt, the Deutsches Historisches Museum, the Centre Marc Bloch, the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, the Fondation Jean Jaurès and Mr. Markus Meckel. The conference was held under the patronage of the Federal Foreign Office, the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the First World War Centenary Partnership Program.

Welcome speech by Mr. Heiko Maas, German Federal Foreign Minister, at the opening of the conference "Winning Peace – The End of the First World War with its History, Remembrance and Current Challenges" in Berlin, 11-12 October 2018 [1]

Carl Bildt,
Excellencies,
Members of the German Bundestag,
Honoured guests,

"Never was Europe stronger, richer, more beautiful, more fervently convinced of an even brighter future".

Hard to believe but these are the words Stefan Zweig used in his book "The World of Yesterday" to remember the time before World War I.

Brimming with confidence, Zweig, together with his comrades-in-arms, including the French writers Georges Duhamel and Romain Rolland, had fought for a united Europe.

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1   https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/maas-winning-peace-conference/2148444.

When Stefan Zweig penned these lines, he however already knew of the momentous watershed that was 1914, the barbarity of World War I and later also of World War II. His previous confidence in the world had yielded to absolute desperation.

Today, 100 years after the end of World War I, his vision of a united Europe has long become reality. From a Europe of wars, a Europe of peace has been born. This is by no means something we can take for granted.

It is thus my great pleasure to welcome you here today, also on behalf of my French colleague Jean-Yves Le Drian.

We, the French and the Germans, were once called arch-enemies. But today we come together as close friends. This wouldn't have been possible without the readiness of the French to engage in reconciliation.

Today, we can say that we won the peace. Yet the path to get us here was long and in part calamitous.

That is what we will be focusing on for the next two days and asking ourselves: How do you end conflicts in such a way that peace is not just made but above all else is going to stand the test of time? That a situation is created that does not contain the seed of enmity? This is a topic that will stay with us for some time.

I am therefore delighted to be able to welcome so many renowned figures from academia, the media, politics and practice to this conference to discuss these topics with us.

My particular thanks extends to the Freie Universität Berlin who are hosting this event and to all the other members of the steering group who have helped prepare this conference over the last few months and have provided valuable support.

And I would like to thank you, Carl Bildt, for being here today and taking the floor to address us in just a moment. In your many different diplomatic functions, you have played a pivotal role in overcoming difficult international conflicts some of which remain on our agenda to this day.

After all, that is also a lesson from World War I. This was not a "war to end all wars" as the English author and historian Herbert G. Wells wrote as the war broke out. No, it became the Great War, the first globalised mass war waged in industrial terms in the history of humanity.

More than 17 million people lost their lives, many millions more were injured, maimed or displaced. Immeasurable suffering that we will never forget and that we above all else must never forget.

At the end of the fighting, the peace that took hold was ultimately only superficial. It was simply not possible to create a peace in the hearts and minds of the people. And only a few years later, Germany started an even more horrific war that plunged the world into the abyss once more.

Ladies and gentlemen,
There were and remain voices in our country who believe that a line can be drawn under the past.

They believe one can cast off the shackles of the past as one would a tiresome burden. This is a stance we must resolutely oppose.

The future needs remembrance. The past is an indelible part of our identity. It serves as a reminder and teaches us, for today but also for tomorrow.

A century may be a long time but the impact of World War I is to this day palpable all around the world.

New countries emerged as empires collapsed. Former trouble spots were assigned to history as new ones emerged, also in conflict regions which pose a challenge to this day, whether in the Balkans, the Middle East or the Caucasus.

Even today when we analyse the war in Syria or present-day Islamist terrorism, we cannot avoid focusing on the past.

One hundred years ago, it was not just new territorial borders that were being drawn. Processes to modernise society were being launched and for the first time, key elements of today's liberal world order were being drafted.

The lesson that the American President Woodrow Wilson learnt in 1918 remains valid to this day: only a stable multilateral order to which the community of nations subscribes can guarantee peace and reconciliation worldwide.

Yet we are seeing today that old certainties are crumbling. Long-standing principles and foundations of our international relations are once more being called into question: multilateralism, international law and the universal validity of human rights.

We are also currently seeing how history is being instrumentalised. As nationalistic thinking takes hold, the past has become a more important factor when it comes to legitimising political decisions also here in Europe. Such populist thinking is being used again to build fences and incite nationalism.

We cannot allow that to happen! We need to stand up for freedom, for tolerance and for justice.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Remembering is in this way also always a duty. Even though we live in a constantly changing world to which we need to adapt:
The knowledge of our fateful past, the knowledge also of Germany's responsibility for the suffering of millions should guide our political work.

After all, this, too, is a lesson learnt from World War I, a war ultimately rooted in failed diplomacy: The line separating us from a return to the gloomy past has today perhaps become thinner than some would like to believe.

And we must not stand idly by. We must actively uphold what we have built. Put simply, we have to show responsibility and take a stance. That is why we, Germany, want to use our seat on the United Nations Security Council from next year to shoulder the responsibility we have taken on, what is more, for all to see—also, incidentally, coordinating closely with our French friends.

Ladies and gentlemen,
"After this war, there must be no more war! Yes, enough is enough!"

The French writer Henri Barbusse penned these words as early as 1916, shocked by the horror and brutality of World War I.

Today, we know his wish did not come true.

However, for young people and also for my generation, peace in Europe is something we take for granted. But it is also clear that peace is only there because we have learnt together from our shared history.

In times when populist propaganda is again on the rise, a shared European culture of remembrance is more important than ever.

That is why I am delighted that young people from 52 countries will come to Berlin next month to attend the Franco-German Youth for Peace meeting. Here we are linking back to and building on the bilateral youth meetings held at Hartmannswillerkopf in 2014 and in Verdun in 2016.

Next week, several hundred young people from all across Europe and from our neighbouring countries to the south and the east will come together and engage with one another in Berlin as part of the Crossroads of History festival.

They are the future to uphold that of which Stefan Zweig could only dream: a Europe United.

Ladies and gentlemen,
We have come together today to remember the millions who died, were wounded and traumatised by World War I. They serve as a stern reminder.

They are a reminder not to regress to old thought patterns. Not to see pulling up the drawbridge as an answer to the challenges of our time.

Not to remain indifferent when people preach a return to nationalism and protectionism.

The European Union is a unique example in world history for successful conflict resolution.

We can be truly proud of the lessons we have learnt from our shared history, of what we have achieved. And protecting them and moving them forward – fully aware of what has gone before, is an important task for all of us, not just for those of us working in politics. It is in fact, ladies and gentlemen, something which affects our entire society.

With this thought to the fore, I hope we have a meeting full of intensive talks but which also helps ensure that not just the experts but also civil society in both our countries get involved in what we believe we need to do, that is, to remember and draw the right conclusions.

Thank you—and a very warm welcome to you all!

Welcome speech by Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, at the opening of the conference "Winning Peace – The End of the First World War with its History, Remembrance and Current Challenges" in Berlin, 11-12 October 2018 [1]

Mr. Minister,
Dear Heiko Maas,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A century ago, the roar of war finally came to an end.

Today, the peace that reigns once more on our continent makes it a duty for us not to forget either the lessons of those four years of chaos and horror which devastated Europe, or the millions of men and women who perished in the conflict.

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1 Recorded at the French Foreign Ministry on Thursday 4 October 2018 (played in Berlin on 11 October 2018). Only the original speech, as made, may be considered authentic.

Since then, France and Germany, which the war had cast one against another, have knotted a new friendship which nothing, henceforth, can possibly break. Today, it is side by side, and of course with our partners the world over, that we commemorate the end of this tragedy.

This is why, although I could not be among you today in Berlin for the opening of the conference on "Winning Peace," I was determined to send you this message, so as to convey the importance, in my eyes, of this moment of dialogue and reflection.

Together, we paved the way of this conference at the Franco-German Council of Ministers of July 2017. We hoped that it would provide an opportunity for better understanding these terrible moments of our history in order to shed light on our present.

I am pleased that this common initiative has borne fruit and wish to thank in particular, your Ministry, the Freie Universität Berlin, and the Mission du Centenaire for their support.

Over the course of two days, forty renowned specialists will discuss the outcome of the Great War, its short and long term consequences, and the significance for our societies and states of the recovered peace of yesterday, and of the peace we defend today.

Facing the mirror of 1918, the challenges we currently tackle take on their full meaning:

Still today, our Europe is facing populist forces which would like, once more, to divide and oppose us.

As for the world of law, dialogue and cooperation between free states that are judicially equal in their sovereignty, which we have been endeavoring to build for 70 years, it is now attacked in its very foundations, as we know all too well.

It is in this context that our exchanges will be taking place. I am counting on you to assist us in ensuring that that the peace which was so dearly won, lasts for the long term.

"Never again": such was the rallying cry of Europeans in 1918. I would like us to make it our watchword as well. We know that it did not suffice to avoid the nightmare from repeating itself. Yet we still feel its strength. May it inspire numerous initiatives of hope and realism, such as the one which finds you assembled today in Berlin, and the one which will bring together in our capital, one hundred years to the day after the signing of the Armistice, all of the actors of global governance, on the occasion of the first edition of the Paris Peace Forum, where, dear Heiko, we will remind all of the value of renewed and efficient multilateralism, to ensure peace and prosperity.

Let us forget nothing in our history, and compromise none of our ideals: that is the path we must follow to win the peace.

The End of the First World War with its History, Remembrance, and Challenges [1]

Speech by Carl Bildt

It was a hundred years ago a month from now that the guns fell silent on the Western Front. For four long years millions of men and women had fought. Many millions had lost their life. Countries had been devastated. But now, finally, an armistice agreement came into force.

But it wasn't peace.

The armistice did not cover the east of Europe, where fighting continued to rage for years in the wake of the collapse of the Russian Empire and the Bolshevik revolution.

After the turmoil of its civil war, the Bolshevik armies advancing towards the heart of Europe were stopped at the crucial battle outside of Warsaw in August of 1920. Control over Kiev had by then changed hands 16 times since the end of 1918. Peace was reached between Poland and Russia only with the Treaty of Riga in 1921.

In the south-east—from Anatolia up into the Caucasus and down into Mesopotamia—turmoil continued. It was only with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 that a new Turkey could appear. The Mosul issue wasn't sorted out until 1924.

And it might of course be added that the different issues of the post-Ottoman area, from Bihac in the north-west to Basra in the southeast, haven't left our agenda since then.

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1   https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_winning_peace.

The peace treaty that was concluded in Versailles, and the subsequent treaties in St. Germain, Neuilly, Trianon, and Sèvres were, taken together, the most ambitious ever concluded, and undoubtedly had their merits, but in the end did little to achieve long-term peace and stability.

Soon, Europe and the world was engulfed in another war.

The summer of 1914 had been the last summer of the era of Europe. As the guns started to roar in August, they marked not only the beginning of a truly devastating war, but also the beginning of the end of the brief era of Europe dominating the world.

And ever since, the question of why did this happen, how or what was responsible, and could it have been prevented has been hovering over our continent.

I don't think there is any historical subject that so many books have been written about as the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, and I would also guess that the questions about what led Europe to the collective self-suicide that started in the summer of 1914 comes in second on this list.

There is, needless to say, no consensus on either of these subjects.

And the discussions and the disputes on these two issues revolves essentially around the same question: how can an order and a stability that has been achieved be preserved, and what can be done to prevent such a situation from decaying into division and destruction?

We have all heard the history. It all started in Sarajevo. The eternal powder keg of the Balkans. And it's certainly true that there were rivalries, conflicts, and wars in south-east Europe—it was in those days often referred to as the Near East, during the decades leading up to the disaster. The Berlin conference of 1878 was only one of the attempts to keep things under control. And there had just been both the First Balkan War and then the Second Balkan War. The summer before

there had been an acute crisis over control of the city of Scutari—today Skhoder in northern Albania—that had risked escalating into a wider conflict. A diplomatic conference in London averted disaster.

But it wasn't the Balkans that was the powder keg. It was Europe that was—the Balkans and its different disputes was just the fuse that lit the explosion.

There certainly hadn't been an absence of disputes and challenges of different sorts on the European scene since the Congress of Vienna had tried to put Europe back into some sort of shape after the French Revolution and the years of the Napoleonic wars. And there had even been wars. Look at the Brandenburger Tor or the Siegesäule.

But none had escalated into the sort of continent-wide catastrophes that Europe had seen with the Thirty Years War or the Napoleonic wars. The mechanisms put in place, and the principles agreed to in Vienna in 1815, had managed to control and contain the conflicts. Some sort of peace and stability had been preserved.

It was when this all started to deteriorate that war become a possibility again. Not one of these short and glorious ones—but one of these truly devastating ones.

The rise of the economic and military might of Germany, and the recklessness of its diplomacy in the post-Bismarck era, was clearly one factor that made the situation more difficult. The race between European powers in far-away areas in Africa and Asia added additional powder to the keg. And the rapid development of technology also created new conditions difficult to handle within the old frameworks. The discussion about mobilisation plans and railway schedules can serve as an illustration.

The rest, as they say, is history. Europe was the powder keg. The Balkans was just the fuse. The different manoeuvres of the preceding years had set up a viral diplomatic doomsday machine. It was a mad dash for disaster for Europe.

The Versailles treaty, and the League of Nations it set up, has been critiqued ever since. It has been described as a fragile compromise between American utopianism and European paranoia. It sought to set up a true system of global collective security at the same time as it redrew boundaries, set up states, and micromanaged conflicts after the demise of the Ottoman, Habsburg, Russian, and German empires.

But while the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars had been a century of relative stability and remarkable progress, Europe now entered a period of profound social upheaval and sharp ideological conflicts.

Peace failed, and a new and even more devastating war soon erupted.

While that war was still in its infancy the leaders of the United States—still only neutral—and the United Kingdom—having fought off the immediate threat in the battle over its skies—met in August 1941 off the coast of Newfoundland to chart the course for the world they would seek to build after the war that they then couldn't even be certain of winning.

The Atlantic Charter that resulted from this meeting obviously sought to learn from the painful failures of Versailles, and in two crucial respects.

First: The desired world order should be inclusive, bring everyone around the table, notably all the powerful players, and instead of pressing down those defeated one should try to lift them up and have them join in the global endeavour of peace and prosperity.

Second: Economic, monetary, and trade issues should not be neglected, risking a new descent into the disorders of the Great Depression with all its consequences, but rather made part of the envisaged global order.

And there was also, of course, the remaining Wilsonian belief that a world made safe for democracy was a world secured from war. One saw a link between the internal order and the external behaviour of states. Regimes that didn't respect the rights of its own citizens would in the end not respect the rights of its neighbours.

So we got the United Nations, we got the Bretton Woods institutions, and we got the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A new effort to build a global system—taking into account the failures of the previous one.

But it didn't turn into a world of harmony. The ambitions of Stalin soon become clear enough. What his Red armies controlled, his Communist satraps should rule. And his Chinese communist allies also took power in Beijing.

An Iron Curtain descended over Europe. A bamboo curtain descended around China.

The Western response came. The Marshall Plan, the Atlantic Alliance, and the Schumann Plan and all what followed in our part of the world. And a US system of security alliances also in east Asia.

This Western order, if I might call it that, proved eminently successful for half a century. The defeated countries were not only rebuilt, and became vibrant democracies, but Germany and Japan in a couple of decades developed into global economic powerhouses.

The democracies of Europe came together in an historically unique effort of shared sovereignty, bridging the dangerous divides of the past. And with its horrible logic, the doctrine of mutual assured destruction moderated the different confrontations, and prevented a war that certainly could have brought Europe back to the Stone Age.

The strategy of containing the Soviet communist system also worked. As the inhuman system finally crumbled and collapsed, primarily due to its own contradictions and failures, and China started to

open up its economy and seek integration with the global economy, there was suddenly the historic possibility of extending this Western liberal order into a truly global liberal order.

The first world had succeeded. The second world had collapsed. And the third world started to integrate rapidly into the emerging liberal order. It was no longer democracy versus dictatorship—everyone talked democracy. It wasn't rich versus poor – a huge new middle class started to emerge, from Sao Paulo to Shanghai.

In our Europe, ten nations and a hundred million people from the Gulf of Finland in the north down towards the Bosporus Strait in the south were able to join the European Union. The process of European integration had already cemented the peace in the west of our continent, and secured democracy in its south, but this, I believe, was still its finest hour.

And our economies started to develop rapidly. The global economy grew by 4 or so percent a year. Global trade grew by perhaps double that figure. And global financial flows by even higher figures. It was globalisation bringing prosperity. The World Trade Organisation was set up. China, and then Russia, joined.

There were certainly challenges and horrors—a decade of wars of Yugoslav dissolution, meltdowns in the Middle East, 9/11 and new terrorism—but the quarter of a century that followed is still likely to go down in history as the best for mankind in recorded history in terms of economic, social, and political development.

Child mortality was cut in half. The number of absolute poor decreased dramatically. Democracies proliferated. And the number of people killed in conflicts went down radically.

That was then. But for a decade or so it has been obvious that things have changed. You can hear it in the political rhetoric of our Europe. A decade or so ago we could still talk about a Europe that projects—that could project its soft power, its multilateralism, and its stability onto its immediate neighbourhood as well as onto the world.

Now, instead, we hear about trying to build a Europe that protects from the turmoil of the outside world. It's no longer us projecting stability towards the outside world—it is the outside world projecting instability onto us and our societies. The Europe that seeks to project has turned into the Europe that seek to protect. Our world has changed. We now have a revisionist Russia.

We now have an assertive China. We now have a disruptive United States. Perhaps a revisionist Russia was unavoidable. History teaches us that when Russia has the strength, and when opportunities arise, it seeks to expand. Throughout its history the country has invoked the myth of some vast foreign threat which over time has turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy endangering the stability of Europe.

Setting limits on itself has never been a Russian strength—it has only accepted the limits imposed on it by the outside world. Containment did work. There is a lesson also for today in this. And that the phenomenal economic rise of China would over time produce a policy more nationalist and assertive in trying to shape its surrounding environment and gain advantages from other nations isn't perhaps that surprising either. If its increasingly authoritarian regime endures— hard regimes can be brittle—this trend is likely to continue.

But the big change that we are now trying to understand and digest is the change in the policies of the United States. Is this a temporary phenomenon, driven by a commanding and controversial personality, or are we seeing a more fundamental change? And the fact that this happens at the same time as that other nation—the United Kingdom— behind the Atlantic Charter turns its back on the Europe it has been part of shaping for nearly the last half-century is of course particularly disturbing. The United Kingdom is turning its back on European integration, and the United States is turning its back on global governance.

When President Obama left office, he left a note to his successor saying that "It's up to us, through example, to sustain the international order that's expanded steadily since the end of the Cold War, and upon which our own wealth and safety depend."

But, realistically speaking, there had been signs of the United States no longer being prepared to "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship"—to use the famous words of President Kennedy's inaugural address—to uphold the international order in its different aspects.

Indeed, when President Obama took office he declared that now it was time for "nation building at home" rather than the foreign wars and the foreign engagements that seemed to go on forever without either glory or resolution. The United States was beginning to be exhausted. It was time to retrench.

With President Trump this has turned from a reluctant attitude to an assertive ideology. The United States is leaving the one international agreement after the other, and is instead proclaiming a belief in a world of sovereign states fiercely competing with each other to assert their respective national interests.

"America will always choose independence and cooperation over global governance, control, and domination", proclaimed President Trump in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly. "An America that successfully competes is the best way to prevent conflict", says the new National Security Strategy, and adds that "a central continuity in history is the contest for power". Words like these don't sound alien to the ears of Moscow and Beijing—a world guided by power rather than principle gives also them new opportunities—but words like these sound profoundly alarming to the ears of us Europeans. A world of fiercely competing sovereign states, hardly bound by any rules or any common order, is something that Europe has tried before in its history, and always with the same catastrophic result. For us, this does not sound like a recipe for peace. For us, it sounds like a recipe for war.

We live in a time when the tectonic plates of global power are shifting, when numerous global challenges are mounting, and when the urge for a world order should be on the rise instead of, as seems to be the case, in decline. There is a rise in the reality of interdependence between nations and continents—climate change, migration pressures, cyber rules to name just a few of the issues. But simultaneously there is also a rise in the rhetoric of sovereignty, between and to some extent also within our nations.

August 1914 was the catastrophe of Europe. The then UK foreign secretary Sir Edward Grey famously said, as he looked out over Horse Guards Parade in London, that: "the lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime."

Unfortunately he was right, and it wasn't really until early November 1989, when the wall that had divided this city, this nation, and this continent, came down that the lights could be lit up throughout all of our Europe again, and we could enter a period of profound optimism and remarkable progress all over the world.

Now the lights are undoubtedly dimming, and we have entered a period of uncertainty and fluidity in the global system. Europe has to discuss and decide where it wants to go.

We have built an order more on principles than on power in both the hope and then belief that this was the wave of the future for the world as a whole. But we now have to confront the reality that it might be the other way around in the years ahead.

Looking back on our experience during the century that has passed since 1918, and indeed on the century that preceded the catastrophe of 1914, I'm even more convinced of the necessity of that model of shared sovereignty and integration, of common rules and frameworks, that we step by step have developed in our part of the world.

It's a model that is under threat from both the outside and from the inside, and it's a model that's also under strain from the different challenges we face. But for us the answer must not be in abandoning it,

but rather to see to develop it further in partnership with other global actors with similar orientation. But we also have to recognise that this will not be enough. There is a limit to what preaching can be achieved. Power is a factor in global affairs that cannot be neglected. And in order not to sink into irrelevance, we must better pool the powers of the nation states in order to be able to assert the sovereignty of Europe whenever needed.

I believe this is important also in order to preserve a healthy relationship across the Atlantic. To just coerce into submission isn't conducive to a healthy relationship. It's when we are obligated to shape a partnership through dialogue and respect that we can make it stable and strong.

In this world of rising rivalries, of increasing state competition, our number one duty must be to prevent our Europe from becoming a new Balkans torn apart, divided, and thus unavoidably also increasingly dangerous.

In his most recent book on the search for world order, Henry Kissinger, the ultimate European in his approach to international relations, writes: "Our age is insistently, at times almost desperately, in pursuit of a concept of global order. Chaos threatens side by side with unprecedented interdependence. Are we facing a period in which forces beyond the restraints of any order determine the future?"

We need, in this year of remembering 1918, a European search for an answer to this challenge.

Part I
From the Paris
Peace Treaties to
Today's Visions of
a Just World Order

The section analyzes the outcome of the peace negotiations, including a re-examination of the problems that were solved, left unsolved, or newly created. The articles look at the attempts to establish a new international order and the rise of new norms and concepts after 1918. To what extent have these efforts been successful? What are today's visions of a just world order? What should it look like and how can it be sustained?
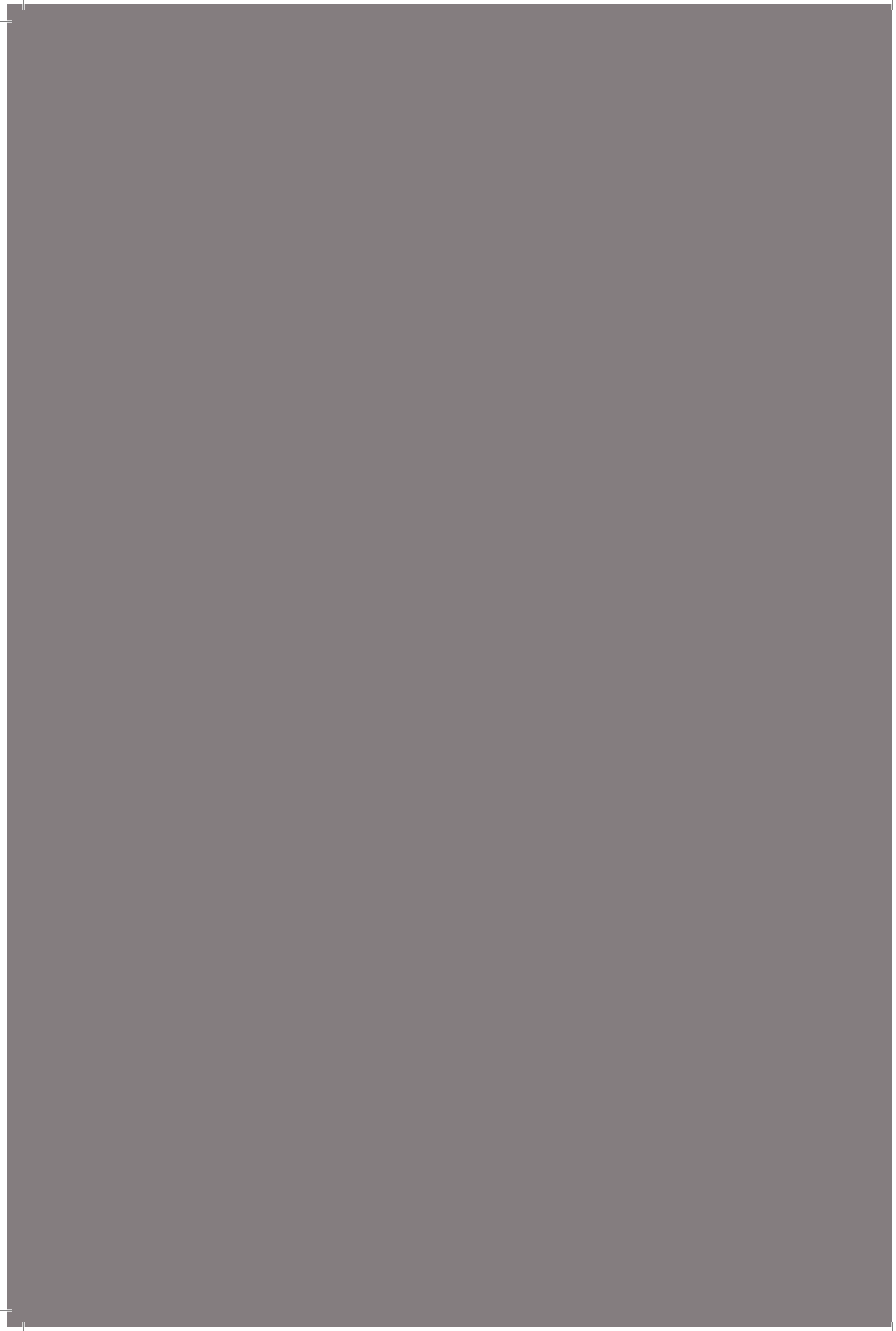
Creating a Just Order: Reflections on the Position of France in 1919

Laurence Badel

"Justice" is the most commonly used term to describe the plans to rebuild the international order in 1919. The term is commonly understood as referring to the defense of the law, the Wilsonian discourse, and the new system of collective security, the so-called "Peace through Law," established in 1919 and lasted until 1939.[1] But the concept of a just order, as it was implemented during the Paris Peace Conference, goes beyond the identification of the law. It is polysemic and must be understood in the light of other concepts and practices attached to it. The term's very ambivalence represents the great hopes that were partly overshadowed by disappointments, frustrations and difficulties in the following years.

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1   Bruno Arcidiacono, *Cinq types de paix: Une histoire des plans de pacification perpétuelle (XVIIè–XXè siècles)* (Paris: PUF, 2011).

The "just order" of 1919 was meant to break with the old order, identified with the European Concert, which had failed in 1914. For both Bolshevik Russia and the United States, the bearers of the two great universalisms that emerged in 1917–1918, it was understood to mark a sharp break with the past. Other states, like France, were also aware that nothing would ever be the same again. The new order was conceived as a world order, and no longer merely a European one as in 1815. It had to take into account the demands for international recognition of oppressed nations and states that had become involved in the conflict and of different social groups. It also had to acknowledge and take seriously public opinion, which added a number of new topics to the agenda. The construction of the new order had to proceed by implementing innovative negotiation practices based on their popularity and potential for consensus building. In view of such ambitions, shared by the negotiators of the peace conference, a precise discussion of France's definition of a "just" international order in 1919 is key to a broader debate on the posterity of these 1919 ambitions, especially in the light of a serious crisis of multilateralism a century later.

France shared with its major Allies, the United Kingdom, and the United States, a number of visions and practical applications of a just order. It was understood to be based on three main principles: the sovereign equality of states, the rule of law, and public diplomacy. Moreover, it was Western, unequal and exclusive. The French approach was specific in that it focused on two aspects of the new international order, which have often been underestimated: its social dimension, and the promotion of a European regional order to strengthen the universal world order.

Indeed, France supported the main tenets of the Wilsonian project. The three principles—the sovereign equality of states, the rule of law, and public diplomacy—were to underpin a democratization of international relations. In contrast to the previous European order where power was controlled by an oligarchy of states, all members were to

be sovereign and equal participants in an enlarged international order. Moreover, this new order was to reflect the internal democratization of the member states. France shared this vision, the objective of which was to strengthen the legality of international actions through the legitimacy obtained by the consent of the populations concerned. The League of Nations was seen as the instrument for implementing this vision. And contrary to common belief, the personal skepticism of the French leader Clemenceau towards the League of Nations did not lead to the rejection of the two principles underlying it: the sovereign equality of its members and the rule of law over force. If the League of Nations was President Wilson's political priority at the Peace Conference—he personally chaired the conference to draw up its founding charter, the Covenant, within the framework of the ad hoc commission established on 25 January 1919, which met from February to April 1919—this was largely the result of pressure exerted by French and British militant associations, and in particular, of the intervention led by Léon Bourgeois within the Commission interministérielle d'études pour la Société des Nations.[2]

Bourgeois, a former minister and président du Conseil of the Third Republic, developed a philosophy of social relations known as solidarism, which he intended to transpose to the international level. This required the recognition of legal equality between states, large and small, which he had already tried to ensure by using diplomatic procedures

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2   Scott G. Blair, "Les origines en France de la SDN. La Commission interministérielle d'études pour la Société des nations, 1917–1919," *Relations internationales*, no. 75 (1993): 277–292; Jean-Michel Guieu, "Pour la paix par la Société des nations: La laborieuse organisation d'un mouvement français de soutien à la SDN (1915–1920)," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 222 (2006): 89–102.

during the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conferences.[3] The promotion of the legal equality of states was not a new phenomenon in 1919 and it would be correct to state that by defending the principle of the theoretical equality of nations, Wilson was continuing a European tradition. In his speech to the Senate on 22 January 1917, setting out the conditions under which the United States would agree to join the Allies to ensure permanent peace, he said:

> *Only a peace between equals can last, only a peace the very principle of which is equality and a common participation in a common benefit …*
>
> *The equality of nations upon which peace must be founded if it is to last must be an equality of rights; the guarantees exchanged must neither recognize nor imply a difference between big nations and small, between those that are powerful and those that are weak … But no one asks or expects anything more than an equality of rights.*

This theme was reiterated in his speeches of 5 March 1917, in his war message to Congress, and in a new address to Congress on 4 December 1917.[4] It is at the heart of the 14th point in his speech given on 8 January 1918:

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3   Stanislas Jeannesson, "Léon Bourgeois aux conférences de La Haye de 1899 et 1907: solidarisme et démocratisation des relations internationals," *Histoire, économie & société*, 33e année, no. 2, (2014): 107–120; Marcus M. Payk, *Frieden durch Recht? Der Aufstieg des modernen Völkerrechts und der Friedensschluss nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2018).

4   See Edwin De Witt Dickinson, *The Equality of States in International Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920).

> *A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.*

But the legal equality of states does not in any way mean the disappearance of de facto inequalities between small and large powers, which Wilson acknowledges just as clearly in his text of 22 January:

> *Equality of territory or of resources there of course cannot be; nor any other sort of equality not gained in the ordinary peaceful and legitimate development of the peoples themselves. But no one asks or expects anything more than an equality of rights. Mankind is looking now for freedom of life, not for equipoises of power.*

Justice does not always entail equality.

As the organizing state of the conference, France also defined its procedures and thus contributed to the identification of the criteria on which the new hierarchies were to be based: the recognition of the price paid in the fight against the Central Powers, and France's contribution to winning the war. This is demonstrated by a review of French plans for the organization of the peace conference.[5] On 21 November 1918, a hierarchy was introduced to demarcate the members of the future Peace Congress according to two main criteria: their position in relation to Germany, and their cooperation with the Allies during the

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5   A note by Henri Fromageot, the French jurisconsult, dated 8 November 1918, on nineteenth-century congresses; a plan dated 15 November; a revised plan dated 21 November; a draft by Stephen Pichon, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on 27 November; a note by André Tardieu, very close advisor to Clemenceau, of 18 December 1918; a second note by André Tardieu of 5 January 1919.

war. This hierarchy distinguished between the "proper" belligerents (the Big Five, Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Portugal, Montenegro) and the "theoretical" belligerents (China, Brazil, and "South American States … who could be represented by the United States, to avoid congestion [sic !], Liberia.")[6]

The plan mentioned the new states in formation (Poland, Bohemia) as well as the Allied states that had seen combat (Romania, Russia), but did not foresee their participation in the work of the Conference. This approach, which excluded the "small powers" from the debates, was an old method of peace settlement. According to André Tardieu, in a note made on 18 December 1918, the partition of states was based on a distinction between "belligerent powers" with "general interests," belligerent powers with "particular interests" and neutral states. It should be noted that in the debates on this point, the British position differed from the French position due to increasing pressure from the dominions. Lloyd George ensured that the small Allied powers had the right to be represented whenever issues of immediate concern to them were being discussed.

It should also be noted that the League's covenant did not affirm the principle of the equality of states: neither in the preamble, nor in Article 4.[7] One of the members of the German delegation in Versailles, the lawyer Walther Schücking, noted this absence.[8] Article 4 also contravened the principle of equality between member states by establishing a restricted council composed of permanent and non-permanent members. The new system was based on the assumed distinction

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6   *Documents diplomatiques français. Armistices et Paix, 1918–1920*, 1 (27 Sept. 1918–17 Jan. 1919) (Brussels: PIE-Peter Lang, 2014), document 227, Note sur le Congrès de la Paix, 21 November 1918, 308.

7   Robert Kolb, ed., *Commentaire sur le Pacte de la Société des Nations* (Brussels: Bruylant, 2014).

8   Walter Schücking and Hans Wehberg, *Die Satzung des Völkerbundes*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Vahlen, 1924), 161. See Gerd Hankel, "Le rêve d'une entente international: Walther Schücking à Versailles," *Clio@Thémis*, 11 (2016).

between two different categories of states that some French lawyers sought to legitimize.[9] In the words of de Geouffre de La Pradelle (1926), "any exaggeration of the principle of the equality of States results in a violation of the principle of the equality of men...It is because society is unequal in fact that it must be organized unequally in law for true equality to be respected. The distribution of power is in fact the result of the game of social forces."[10] The major powers had global interests that justified their permanent involvement in decision-making. The small powers were integrated into the League's council, but not as permanent members. It was still the huge cost paid in blood hat justified the domination of the great powers in the working commissions of the peace conference on major issues: the League of Nations, ports and waterways, work and war responsibilities. They were allowed ten delegates per committee compared to only five for the rest. Belgium triggered the rebellion of the small and medium-sized powers, followed by Brazil, Serbia and Portugal.

It should be noted, however, that within the great powers group, France (like Italy) was willing to recognize the principle of racial equality while the dominions opposed it head-on, supported by President Wilson. And this even though on 11 April 1919, the majority (11 out of 17) voted in favor of Baron Makino's proposal. Originally presented on 13 February 1919, Makino's proposal was met with the broad approval by the representatives of the colonized peoples, including the pan-African representatives Cadet and Du Bois. We know that Clemenceau had agreed to the request of Senegal's MP Blaise Diagne, to organize a Pan-African Congress in Paris, on the sidelines of the Peace Conference, which was to bring together 57 delegates from the

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9   Louis Balmond, "Article 4," in *Commentaire sur le Pacte de la Société des Nations*, ed. Robert Kolb (Brussels: Bruylant, 2014).

10 Louis Balmond, "Article 4," 176.

West Indies, Africa and the United States.[11] The representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, W. E. B. Du Bois, participated, as did Lecba Eliezer Cadet, a Haitian priest who represented the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

France stated at the 11 April session that it was not possible to reject Japan's proposal because it was based on an "indisputable principle of justice." Clemenceau's personal proximity to Saionji Kinmochi, the head of the Japanese delegation, also undoubtedly contributed to this support.[12] The Anglo-American powers nevertheless obtained its rejection. This supports the argument made by Erez Manela and other historians that while the importance of the "Wilsonian moment" resided in the delegitimization of imperial doctrine, the principle of self-determination came up against the norm of "civilization," which was still very prevalent in the 1920s.[13] The "just" order of 1919 remained, strictly speaking, a racist order, based on the recognition of racial inequality.

Secondly, French pacifists (Frédéric Passy, Ligue internationale et permanente de la Paix (1867), Théodore Ruyssen, Paul d'Estournelles de Constant, Association de La Paix par le Droit, 1887) had long

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11 Pap Ndiaye, "Présence africaine avant 'Présence Africaine:' La subjectivation politique noire en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres," *Gradhiva,* 10 (2009): 64–79.

12 In her book *Japan, Race and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), Naoko Shimazu focused on the Anglo-American opposition to the Japanese proposal. See also Matthieu Séguéla, *Clemenceau ou la tentation du Japon* (Paris: CNRS editions), 2014.

13 Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

fostered the development of a dialogue related to realistic (or legal) pacifism based on the increased codification of war practices and the use of international arbitration to prevent conflicts or resolve them.[14]

Finally, French officials, politicians, and diplomats were just as aware as their foreign counterparts of the new influence acquired by public opinion in international debates, and that in previous conferences public opinion had encouraged the adoption of measures constituting transparent diplomacy. At the first Hague Conference in 1899, Léon Bourgeois was able to communicate with journalists, accredit some, and release some documents when appropriate. At the second Conference in 1907, for the first time, the world press had a reserved room and issued a daily report on the status of the discussions, while the general public was allowed to attend all of the meetings. These three principles (equality of states, law, and public diplomacy) were the pillars of a new multilateral diplomatic practice promoted before the conference, and in turn established a tradition in which the Paris Peace Conference followed.[15]

However, by recognizing forty-two founding states of the League of Nations, France and its Allies had only enshrined the pre-existing integration of non-European States, already partly integrated into the international system through the inclusion of administrative unions (which multiplied in the 1860s) and the international conferences of the nineteenth century. The representatives of the few Asian states present at the peace conference belonged to a diplomatic elite trained

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14   Rémi Fabre, "Un exemple de pacifisme juridique. Théodore Ruyssen et le mouvement 'La Paix par le Droit' (1884–1950)," *Vingtième siècle*, no. 39 (1993): 38–54; Jean-Michel Guieu, "Les juristes internationalistes français, l'Europe et la paix à la Belle Époque," *Relations internationales*, no. 149 (201: 27–41; Peter Jackson, *Beyond the balance of power: France and the Politics of National Security in the Era of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

15   Laurence Badel, "Pratiques diplomatiques européennes et mondialisations contemporaines," *Encyclopédie pour une histoire nouvelle de l'Europe*, ISSN 2677-6588, 2016, accessed 28 March 2019, https://ehne.fr/node/74.

in Western schools and active since the second half of the nineteenth century. Colonized states or states to be placed under the regime of mandates (article 22 of the Covenant) would remain excluded from this international society whose real structure was fundamentally unequal.[16] The practice of conference negotiations quickly sanctioned the return to oligarchical structures and secret diplomacy. The "just order" in which France participated was thus a fundamentally unequal order, and one that reflected the vision of the West.

Finally, the new order was designed to exclude Germany from the international society. The ambivalence of a "just" order is made obvious here. Let us begin by recalling that long before the term was placed at the center of the post-war discourse for a return to peace, the concept was invoked by every belligerent to justify entering the war. Indeed, the First World War marked the return of the concept of "just war." If the invocation of the defense of the law was the basis for the commitment of a state like France, it was also the cornerstone of German counterpropaganda.[17] Das Manifest der 93 was located in the field of law by denying the fact that Germany "criminally violated Belgium's neutrality" and by defending the principle of preventive action to anticipate entry into the war by France and Britain. As a mobilizing discourse, the law was the primary indicator that supposedly distinguished civilization from barbarism. The First World War effectively marked a change in the figure of the enemy from the "just enemy" (justus hostis), to the criminal who must be destroyed by any means necessary. The designation of the enemy as "barbarian" was at the heart of how each side represented the conflict. Germany designated the Russian enemy as "barbaric" and the French and British did the

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16 Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin Press, 2012).

17 Éric Thiers, "Droit et culture de guerre 1914–1918. Le Comité d'études et documents sur la guerre," *Mil neuf cent. Revue d'histoire intellectuelle* 1, no. 23 (2006): 23–48.

same in their depictions of the German enemy.[18] This new understanding of the enemy can be seen in the oft-quoted statement of the French philosopher Henri Bergson: "The struggle against Germany is that of civilization against barbarism" (8 August 1914). The criminalization of the vanquished in 1919 meant the refusal to negotiate with the enemy, in contravention of previous diplomatic customs. It made it possible to assign responsibility for the war to Germany and its Emperor William II, who was under consideration for trial by an international court of justice. It justified the *"Diktat de Versailles"* with the accompanying requirement for financial compensation; and it also raised a fundamental question: Can we build a sustainable international order by excluding the defeated?

In the light of these shared conceptions, the French vision of the post-war order had significant singularities, starting with its commitment to the social dimension of the new international order. The "just" international order must be based on social justice. This is certainly linked to the context of the Paris Peace Conference, which was a wartime and revolutionary context. In this sense, the French position can be seen as a reformist response to social unrest. But the debate on the question of international social law had taken off long before that. During the war, the General Confederation of Labor was as active as the American Federation of Labor in ensuring that the working class was associated with peace. At the end of November 1918, MPs Justin Godart and Albert Thomas, members of the Labor Committee of the French Chamber of Deputies, lobbied for France to take the initiative for a labor conference. The fourth plenary session of the Paris Peace Conference was devoted to this issue. Georges Clemenceau surprised the journalists present by announcing the immediate establishment

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18   Nicolas Beaupré, "Barbarie(s) en représentations: le cas français (1914–1918)," *Histoire@Politique*, 2, no. 26 (2016): 17–29.

of a commission on international labor legislation.[19] France appointed Arthur Fontaine, director of the Office du travail, and Léon Jouhaux, Secretary General of the Confédération du Travail. The report was adopted on 28 April 1919 and established the International Labour Organisation on a tripartite basis, thus bringing together government representatives, employers and workers in its executive body. Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles stated that "the purpose of the League of Nations is to establish universal peace, and that such peace can only be founded on the basis of social justice" and established the ILO (article 392). This very important statement formed the basis of the League of Nations' social policy (article 23 of the Covenant). Nine international labor conventions and ten further recommendations on working time, night shifts for women and children, minimum age, etc. were adopted in less than two years.

Finally, France, within the framework of the League of Nations, promoted a regionalist project in which the beginnings of European integration can be seen. The project was based on the postwar exploration of two fundamental options as part of the development of inter-allied economic cooperation between the United States and the United Kingdom. The first was based on the search for a customs union between England, Belgium and Italy as well as the exploration of the project for a "Western European Economic Union." Faced with the risk of a German-dominated Mitteleuropa, Etienne Clémentel, the Minister of Trade and Industry, had launched important negotiations to this end at the June 1916 Allied Economic Conference. The second option revolved around building an "Atlantic Alliance," before the term was even coined in the wake of the Second World War, which would entail mov-

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19 *Rapport du directeur par interim du Bureau international du travail [Edward J. Phelan] à la Conférence de l'Organisation internationale du travail. New-York, octobre 1941*, (Montréal: Bureau international du travail, 1941), 97.

ing closer to the United States in a sustainable way.[20] This project was part of Clemenceau's strategy, alongside the search for an uncertain guarantee of the continuous occupation of the Rhineland, it was necessary to promote the union of the three great Western democracies. For the French leader, this option was the best guarantee of future security. The Atlantic project failed because of the political withdrawal of the United States, but the continental European project had undergone a new development, not from a punitive perspective that Clémentel held in 1915–16, but rather from a perspective that fostered cooperation. Faced with the disappointment concerning the United States' position on the question of war debts and the rejection of the French project to control raw materials, a number of French officials advocated for an alternative policy as early as June 1919. The latter did not exclude a certain rapprochement with Germany.[21] It is necessary to bear in mind the existence of this alternative policy in order to better understand the relative flexibility of the Treaty of Versailles, with its clauses, modifiable deadlines, and very different hypotheses of implementation. Between August and November 1919, the industrialist and former minister of armaments (November 1917–September 1918), Louis Loucheur, and the industrialist Eugène Schneider tried to negotiate with the German delegation to set up a Franco-German-Belgian-Luxembourg steel cartel. In 1920, the new deputy director of Trade Relations of the Quai d'Orsay, Jacques Seydoux, took a pro-active stance on the economic rapprochement of the two states as part of a broader European project.[22] This required the formulation of a French steel project that would unite Alsace, Lorraine, Belgium, Luxembourg, the detached Saarland

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20 Georges-Henri Soutou, *L'or et le sang, Les buts de guerre économique de la Première Guerre mondiale*, (Paris: Fayard, 1989).

21 Georges-Henri Soutou, *La grande illusion: quand la France perdait la paix, 1914–1920* (Paris: Tallandier, 2015): 333–335.

22 See chapter 4 Laurence Badel, *Un milieu libéral et européen: Le grand commerce français 1925–1948* (Vincennes: IGPDE, 1999).

and the Ruhr, which constituted a steel-producing area equivalent to the German basin. The project could have two applications: either the cessation of trade or the interplay of complementarity between the two regions and the revival of the close relations before 1914 and the export flows of iron ore, pig iron and steel to the Reich.

To be sure, France's position in 1919 raised challenges for multilateral diplomacy, given the desired goal at war's end to put into practice a "just" order. How could the (theoretical) principle of the equality of states be reconciled with the choice to exclude some of countries from the debates, starting with Germany (and also Bolshevik Russia)? How could a universal order emerge from an international community that was de facto reduced to a limited number of fully sovereign states? How could the effectiveness of negotiations be balanced against the legitimacy of public diplomacy? To the pursuit of security, France had contributed, certainly not alone, but arguably more than others to the emergence of a broader conception of a "just" order and to the proposal of an intermediate scale of negotiation between the national and global space.

The First World War and the Dawning of the "American Century"

Jennifer D. Keene

The United States revolutionized how it interacted with Europe during the First World War, moving beyond the Western Hemisphere to exert influence on the global stage. Deep-seated ambivalence accompanied this rise to world leadership, and at critical times threatened to undo the Wilsonian-influenced prescription for winning the peace. The United States consistently championed collective security, self-determination, free trade, international law, and humanitarianism as the underpinnings of the international liberal order. Nonetheless, opposing voices that viewed European nations as manipulative and exploitive continued to wield influence over American foreign policy at key moments in the past and present.

Introduction

After 1918, few American leaders seriously doubted that the United States had to remain engaged in global affairs. The dilemma was to create a new role for America in a world where European wars could no longer be tolerated (they were too deadly), where neutrality increasingly seemed immoral (even though it had worked well for the United States in the nineteenth century), the rise of Bolshevism challenged liberal democracy as the wave of the future, and advancements in military technology meant that the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans could no longer be guaranteed to protect the nation. The United States responded to these challenges by helping to establish and maintain the liberal international order that arose from the First World War. Nonetheless, the nation's ambivalent embrace of its new global responsibilities also fostered skepticism about how much America truly benefited from its participation in the new system of international relations.

By reminding ourselves that the United States in the First World War-era still saw itself primarily as a North American nation, rather than a global superpower, the values and principles that informed U.S. participation in the new international system come into sharper relief. Nonetheless, the war introduced new arguments in favor of taking a more active part in European affairs that went beyond simply expanding Western hemispheric practices to the world. Wartime diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian engagement with Europe established new norms and values that also influenced America's subsequent international role.

The United States as a North American nation

It is a bit misleading to claim that the war generated completely new ways for the United States to engage in the world. The war primarily introduced new modes for interacting with Europe, building upon ideas and practices that had already proved successful in establishing the United States as the dominant power in the Western Hemisphere.

The ideals of self-determination and collective security that President Woodrow Wilson trumpeted in his most famous wartime speeches echoed phrases and principles already established as legitimate ways for the United States to maintain sound and secure international relations within the Western Hemisphere. Wilson often argued that his approach to setting the world right built upon longstanding principles embodied in the Monroe Doctrine, the 1823 pronouncement by President James Monroe that declared the Western Hemisphere off-limits to future colonization by European powers. In principle, as former European colonies became independent nations, the United States pledged to guarantee their sovereignty.

The two presidential administrations preceding Wilson had strengthened the American resolve to keep the Monroe Doctrine relevant in the twentieth century. The decision to build the Panama Canal only reinforced the American determination to dominate Latin America and the Caribbean. In 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt announced that the United States would henceforth serve as an "international police power" to prevent any flagrant "wrong-doing," such as defaulting on loans, that might prompt European military action in the region. President William Taft added the element of "dollar diplomacy" to accelerate the region's economic integration, requiring nations that received private bank loans to accept U.S. oversight of their governments. All three presidents used the military to impose America's will, but Wilson took this practice in a bold new direction by directly intervening in revolutionary-torn Mexico.

Having proclaimed in 1913 "that I am going to teach the South American republics to elect good men," Wilson's regional foreign policy coupled political idealism with military and economic might to prevent political instability, advance democratic ideals, and pro-

tect national security.[1] Wilson even suggested a Pan-American Pact in which the United States, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile worked together to promote democracy, settle disputes, and guarantee borders within the Western Hemisphere. The European war gave Wilson a chance to apply these ideas on a much bigger stage, and he readily incorporated expanded versions of these proposals into the Fourteen Points.

In his 1917 "Peace Without Victory" speech, Wilson suggested that Europe should "adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world."[2] But this constant reminder of the Monroe Doctrine also became a double-edged sword in 1918–19. The actual behavior of the United States in the Western Hemisphere, when coupled with Wilson's idealistic "phrase-mongering" as Roosevelt called it, opened up the United States to charges of hypocrisy.[3] The idea that a League of Nations might challenge the ability of the United States to act unilaterally in the Western Hemisphere also became a strong argument against joining the League. Wilson tried to address these concerns by putting language in the League Covenant protecting the Monroe Doctrine, but fears of the League sitting in judgement of the United States remained. In any new international order, the United States expected to be doing the governing and judging, not be governed or judged.

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1   Wilson quoted by Robert Freeman Smith, "The United States and Latin America, 1913–21," in The Cambridge History of Latin America, 1870–1930, ed. Lesli Bethell (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 107.

2   President Woodrow Wilson, "Address to the Senate of the United States: 'A World League for Peace,' January 22, 1917," The American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=65396.

3   "Roosevelt Flouts League of Nations," Washington Post, August 4, 1918, cited in Emily S. Rosenberg, "World War I, Wilsonianism, and Challenges to U.S. Empire," Diplomatic History, Vol. 38, No. 4 (September 2014), 852.

A new emphasis on international law

Wilson's case for entering the war relied heavily on allegations that Germany had regularly flouted international law by using U-boats to sink merchant and passenger ships to disrupt trade between the United States and the Allies. Wilson emphasized the German government's wrongdoing, and asserted that the Kaiser's autocratic government did not represent the true views of the German people. Maintaining this distinction between the German government and the German people was important domestically given the ethnic heterogeneity of the American populace. Wilson also, however, presented war as an effective way to forge a just world by liberating peoples from autocratic regimes that did not have their best interests at heart. Only America, he asserted, could ensure that the peace process established a postwar international order based on law.

The United States sustained this commitment throughout the 1920s, even after the U.S. Senate failed to ratify the Versailles Peace Treaty. Efforts to construct a law-abiding international community included multi-national and bi-lateral agreements negotiated by subsequent Republican administrations that, among other things, outlawed aggressive war and managed disarmament. American statemen, scholars, lawyers, reformers, and peace activists participated in international conferences organized by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Rockefeller Foundation that addressed issues ranging from the opium trade to trafficking in women and children. Wilsonianism, therefore, persisted.

Nonetheless, Americans remained ambivalent. In the 1920's, Americans fretted about enforcing international law through the Permanent Court of International Justice, or World Court. Would Court rulings constrain American freedom of action in the Western Hemisphere? Would the United States become permanently entangled in Europe's squabbles, required to provide military assistance to enforce

rulings overseas? These two objections had sealed the fate of the Versailles Treaty, and they also prevented the United States from officially joining the World Court.

These decisions were eventually interpreted as errors of judgement that helped pave the path for World War II. The United States subsequently created and led the United Nations, which included a new World Court (The International Court of Justice). But these concerns never went away. The recent controversy over U.S. refusal to join the International Criminal Court (ICC), formed in 2002 as a court of last resort to try war crimes, brought these same debates to the fore once again. The ideal international law scenario for the United States was the Allies judging Nazis at Nuremberg, not U.S. soldiers being convicted of committing war crimes in Afghanistan by the ICC. Joining the ICC, domestic critics charged, would pose a threat to U.S. sovereignty and endanger national security by hampering the war on terror. So far, these objections have won the day.

Paying for war and peace

Economic ties to the Allies gave the United States a significant stake in the First World War, even before the nation declared war on Germany. The British were overwhelmingly dependent on private loans from U.S. banks, loans that amounted to $10 million a day by 1917. Once the United States entered the war, governmental war loans continued this flow of financial aid to the Allies.

The war shifted the nexus of the financial world from London to Wall Street, turning the United States into a major creditor nation. In sharp contrast to Europe, the United States entered the postwar-era with its economy strengthened, rather than weakened, by the war. Nonetheless, the United States demanded that the Allies pay back their loans.

The Allied argument that they had paid for the victory dispro-
portionately in blood barely registered with the American public. To
Americans, it seemed that Europe was trying to make America foot
the bill for the faulty decisions that had catapulted the world into war.
To the Allies, the United States had gained disproportionate econom-
ic benefits from having the war fought elsewhere, and should accept
victory as a sufficient repayment. At its core, the debate over war loans
revealed tensions in the international arena over how the United States
should dispense its wealth on behalf of the liberal international order.

The Allies subsequently relied on German reparation payments to
repay American war loans, and Germany used U.S. loans to pay repara-
tions. Twice, in moments of international crisis when Germany missed
payments, the United States fashioned international agreements low-
ering and restructuring the reparation cycle of payments. Finally, in
1931, at the height of the Great Depression, the United States called for
a one-year moratorium on all international governmental debts that
eventually led to the cancellation of reparation payments and the Al-
lies defaulting on their U.S. government loans (the private loans were
repaid). Determined to disentangle the American economy from the
project of war, Congress passed neutrality legislation in the 1930s that
limited financial dealings with belligerent nations, laws that ultimate-
ly hampered President Franklin D. Roosevelt's ability to respond to
Nazi aggression.

The United States changed course after WWII, investing in Europe
as the first line of defense. The Marshall Plan, a four-year program of
direct aid to help Western Europe rebuild, linked peace with prosperi-
ty. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) reflected the belief
that spending money to defend Europe kept war away from America's
shores. More recently, however, old resentments about the amount
of money that the United States spends to defend Europe have reap-
peared in President Donald Trump's push to have European member
nations contribute a greater proportion of their gross domestic prod-

uct to fund NATO. The current idea that NATO-member nations are exploiting the United States, and that America might be better served going it alone, is not new. The America First impulse has deep roots in the American political psyche. While the Wilsonian vision of collective security, self-determination, free trade, and international law ultimately prevailed in establishing the present international liberal order, the opposing voices that view European nations as manipulative and exploitive have wielded influence over American foreign policy at key moments in the past and present.

Humanitarianism

To an unprecedented extent, Americans engaged in private philanthropic efforts to relieve civilian suffering caused by the First World War. Unlike debates over German violations of international law and Allied war loans, wartime humanitarianism generated little controversy within the United States. Most Americans felt that sending aid overseas bolstered rather than diluted the nation's neutral stance, viewing philanthropy as an apolitical and altruistic undertaking, even though the vast majority of aid flowed to the Allied side. The idea that humanitarian aid might do more harm than good by subsidizing belligerent nations received relatively little attention. Relief work included individuals donating dollars, aid workers volunteering to oversee the distribution of goods in Europe, and Herbert Hoover, as a private citizen, negotiating international agreements that allowed the Commission for Relief in Belgium to bring its own fleet unmolested into the war zone. Once the United States entered the war, the American Red Cross essentially became a quasi-official government agency as relief workers fanned out across Europe to places where American troops never went. Seeing their compatriots working to eradicate disease and starvation in war-torn nations bolstered Americans' view of themselves as a generous and caring people.

In 1919, the Wilson administration set a new precedent by creating the short-lived American Relief Association (ARA). The government momentarily embraced peace-time humanitarian aid as an important diplomatic tool that furthered the goal of maintaining Europeans' faith in democracy and peace. Empathy for civilians in distress and fears that suffering populations might embrace Bolshevism reflected the mixture of compassion and anxiety that fueled postwar international humanitarianism. The ARA was the harbinger of many state foreign aid agencies to come, ones that blended altruism and strategic interest to establish philanthropy as a critical part of the new international order.

Nonetheless, Americans have expressed ambivalence about the growth of state-funded aid projects. Amid calls to put "America first," the ARA only lasted for a few years after the First World War. Today, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) faces the continual challenge of overcoming criticism that foreign aid creates an unhealthy dependency on free money while draining the federal treasury. Most Americans believe that the nation devotes 25 percent of the federal budget to foreign aid when the actual amount is just 1 percent of annual spending.[4] This misperception gives the impression that the United States is disproportionately shouldering the world's problems at the expense of domestic needs.

The growth of state-sponsored relief efforts in the second half of the twentieth century have tended to render private philanthropic activities less visible in the public eye. But private humanitarian endeavors remained an important part of the international order. The ARA, for instance, was reconstituted as a private relief group when governmental funding dried up. Even in the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, private philanthropy remained robust and today actually accounts for a

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4   Molli Ferrarello, "What 'America First' means for foreign aid," July 27, 2017, Brookings Now https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2017/07/27/what-america-first-means-for-us-foreign-aid/.

larger proportion of giving than state-sponsored aid.[5] Americans have proven willing, again and again over the course of the last 100 years, to give massive amounts of private humanitarian aid, despite harboring fears that the world is taking advantage of their economic abundance.

Legacies

How does the American experience in World War I and its legacies help us define what a just world order looks like to Americans today? The war helps us understand how the American Century became Woodrow Wilson's century. Subsequent presidents echoed Wilson's vision of what a just world looked like. Despite the ongoing debates and controversies, the post-WWII international order was built on faith in collective security agreements (mostly multi-lateral defensive alliances rather than the UN), faith in the virtue of democratic ideals and self-determination, and faith in free trade. Faith in American exceptionalism, the lingering legacy of the nation's strong identification as a North American nation, never perished. Wilson embraced it, and this conviction still thrives today.

Whether or not Wilson would have wanted to admit it, by entering the war to establish a new international order, he also set out a path for using war to ensure peace. War became an acceptable option for creating and protecting the liberal international order because subsequent governments repeated Wilson's claims that America goes to war to punish law-breaking governments not peoples, American soldiers are liberators not conquerors, and war is an effective means for spreading democracy and the American way of life.

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5   In 2014, for example, private philanthropy for overseas assistance totaled $43.9 billion, as compared to $33.1 billion in governmental overseas aid, according to the 2016 Almanac of American Philanthropy, https://www.philanthropyroundtable.org/almanac/statistics/u.s.-generosity.

Nonetheless, adjustments were made to the Wilsonian vision. The ideal that a just world needed to be more inclusive, involving rather than excluding colonized and subjugated peoples, evolved as the century wore on. Another big adjustment might be occurring now, although it is certainly too soon to say. President Trump and his administration pose the first major ideological challenge to Wilsonianism by critics who can employ the power of the American presidency to make that alternative vision a reality. In the proposed re-ordering of how the United States interacts with the world, the concept of American exceptionalism is employed blatantly to serve at the altar of nationalism, rather than internationalism. Instead of shouldering primary responsibility for protecting the international system it initiated one-hundred years ago, the United States is inching towards dismantling it.

Overburdened Peace: Continuity and Discontinuity in 1918–1919

Jörn Leonhard

The First World War generated a tension between universalism and particularism, between universal concepts such as the right of self-determination and particular conflicts over the definition of new nation states for instance in Central Europe or the future of European colonies in Asia and Africa. The search for peace meant that such particular conflicts were subordinated to universalist conceptions. Against this background, this article presents a structural analysis of 1918–19 by looking at elements of continuity and discontinuity, of reconstruction and new constructs — all of which contributed to the legacy of the overburdened peace.

In late 1918, the experience of total war and the enormous number of victims after 1914, made any peace settlement based on compromise nearly impossible.[1] If the dead were not to have lost their lives in vain, only a peace based on a maximum of political and territorial gains would be acceptable. The focus on victims fuelled and radicalized the discussion of war aims during the war and explained why it could only end once one side was simply too exhausted in its military, economic and social resources to continue fighting. High expectations thus characterized all the belligerent states and societies in 1918, and influenced both domestic politics and international relations. Furthermore, and in contrast to previous peace negotiations, politicians found themselves not only under enormous pressure from the prospect of democratic elections based on reformed franchises but also from a public which referred to the manifold expectations which the war had brought about.

The period from 1919 to 1923 was fundamentally different from that of the Vienna Congress in 1814/15 in that there could be no redefinition of the international order based on now obsolete principles, such as the balance of power. The expectations provoked and fuelled by the war prevented a return to another version of the pentarchy of five European powers. What contemporaries expected was no less than a new order, transcending the earlier practices of territorial reshuffling, to guarantee state sovereignty and internal stability, as well as to keep the international system free from ideological polarizations. Both the Bolsheviks' and Wilson's promises to create a new world order based

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1   Jörn Leonhard, *Der überforderte Frieden: Versailles und die Welt 1918–1923* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2018); Leonhard "The End of Empires and the Triumph of the Nation State? 1918 and the New International Order," in Ute Planert and James Retallack, eds., *Decades of Reconstruction: Postwar Societies, State-Building, and International Relations from the Seven Years' War to the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 330–346; Leonhard, "1917–1920 and the Global Revolution of Rising Expectations," in Stefan Rinke and Michael Wildt, eds., *Revolutions and Counter-Revolutions: 1917 and its Aftermath from a Global Perspective* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 2017), 31–51.

on the idea of world revolution. Focused on democratic values in the former case, national self-determination in the latter, both reflected Europe's exhaustion by 1917 and the global longing for a model of politics which would combine external security and internal stability in the name of a progressive ideal that would prevent any future war. From this perspective, the post-war era was less one of reconstruction, or restoration—i. e. a return to the pre-1914 ancien régime of politics—than a complex and contradictory combination of construction and reconstruction which led to new entanglements between the public sphere on the one hand and the international system on the other.[2]

The American president based his vision on a suggestive analysis of the factors that, in his view, had caused the world war. 1914 could not be an accident; it had to be interpreted as the consequence of a misguided European system of militarization, the uncontrolled development of state power, secret diplomacy and autocratic empires suppressing the rights and interests of national minorities. Wilson's countermodel seemed all the more promising since it stood against the background of the exhausted variants of European liberalism, and it offered an alternative not only in content, but also in political style. The traditional focus on the balance of power and the sovereignty of states was shifted

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2   Manfred F. Boemeke, Gerald D. Feldman and Elisabeth Glaser eds., *The Treaty of Versailles: A Reassessment after 75 years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Gerd Krumeich, ed., *Versailles 1919: Ziele – Wirkung – Wahrnehmung* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2001); Zara Steiner, "The Treaty of Versailles Revisited," in Michael Dockrill, ed., *The Paris Peace Conference, 1919: Peace without victory?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 13–33; Jean-Jacques Becker, *La traité de Versailles* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002); Jeff Hay, ed., *The Treaty of Versailles* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2002); Eberhard Kolb, *Der Frieden von Versailles* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005); David A. Andelman, *A Shattered Peace: Versailles 1919 and the Price We Pay Today* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2008); Timothy Baycroft and Conan Fischer, eds., *After the Versailles Treaty: Enforcement, Compliance, Contested Identities* (London: Routledge, 2008); Sharp, ed., *The Versailles Settlement: Peacemaking after the First World War, 1919–1923*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

to that of international law, the idea of collective security, the League of Nations as an international forum, and the premise of national self-determination as the basis for drawing new maps.

Wilson called for a quasi-universal democratization of both society and the international order, thereby bridging the gap between domestic politics and the international system. In that way, Wilson's and Lenin's ideas could be applied not just to national minorities within continental European empires, but also to China, Korea, India or South America. Yet the result was not a simplistic Wilsonian moment. Wilson's doctrines and American war propaganda could not be easily applied to liberation movements seeking emancipation from colonial or quasi-colonial oppression. In this way, the war produced its own variant of the tension between universalism and particularism. Particular conflicts and interests could be integrated into global developments and be interpreted as part of a universalistic trend.

At least eight factors can be said to characterize the situation after 1918:

(1) The implementation of the new post-war order depended on the complicated co-operation between Woodrow Wilson, European politicians and diplomatic elites who all came to Paris with their own views on key concepts such as security, sovereignty, and national interest, and with their own particular experience of the war as well as the lessons they derived from it. As a result, many visions of a new world order became compromised and were overshadowed by preoccupations such as the French obsession with security against Germany, or the strong anti-Bolshevik positions of both Wilson himself and the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George.[3] Against this background, the five treaties—Versailles with Germany in June 1919; Saint-Germain with

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3   Caroline Fink, "The Peace Settlement, 1919–1939," in John Horne, ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 543–557.

Austria in September 1919; Neuilly with Bulgaria in November 1919; Trianon with Hungary in June 1920; and Sèvres with the Ottoman Empire in August 1920—overshadowed the complexity of a new reality, which the treaties did not fully reflect.[4]

The post-war settlement that emerged from Paris was based on competing conceptions of a new order and a new narrative of international stability. In fact, fundamental developments during and immediately after the war had already generated their own new realities in a number of conflict zones. The tri-national Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, for example, was already in existence and only sought international recognition. In the Near East, effective boundaries of zones of interest had already been defined by Britain and France during the war on the basis of the Sykes-Picot-Agreement of 1916, even if these were incompatible with other promises such as that of an Arab state in return for an Arab uprising against Ottoman rule or, according to the Balfour Declaration of November 1917, a homeland for Jews in Palestine.

Contrary to the idea of a break from the past, and contradicting the idea of national self-determination, the colonial empires of France and Britain were not reduced but expanded when the former German colonies and mandate zones in the former Ottoman Empire became integrated into existing empires. The end of the war marked a peak moment in the history of European imperialism and a new relation between apparent centers and peripheries. But as responses from colonial societies in Asia and Africa proved, and as William Du Bois would

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4   Ivan T. Berend, *The Crisis Zone of Europe: An Interpretation of East Central European History in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen, eds., *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires* (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 1997); Magda Ádám, *The Versailles System and Central Europe* (Burlington, VA: Aldershot, 2004).

realize at the Pan-African Congress which began in Paris in February 1919, the response to 1918 was not simply a move towards liberation and decolonization. Rather, it exhibited a broad spectrum of hopes and demands: for colonial reform, a renewed focus on assimilation, and the fight for a better status within colonial hierarchies. The alternatives were not just a colonial regime or independence. Very often, as the events in Amritsar in April 1919 as well as conflicts in Egypt demonstrated, local factors played a decisive role in escalating conflicts.

(2) If there was a break with the past after 1918, it was the end of monarchical empires on the European continent. Yet this was not the end of imperialism or the concept of empire as such—both continued in new forms even after the formal end of empires. In sharp contrast to the settlement of 1814–15, which gave rise to a reconfiguration and reformulation of the monarchical principle, ranging from parliamentary, constitutional to autocratic varieties of monarchy, the watershed of 1919–23 separated the idea of empire from that of monarchy. After 1923 there was no major monarchy left on the European continent east of the Rhine and in the whole Eurasian sphere, since in China monarchy had already been abolished in 1911, and in Turkey the sultanate was no more than a symbolic bridge between the imperial past and the Turkish Republic founded in 1923 after the successful revision of the Treaty of Sèvres.[5] In 1814–15, monarchy had been regarded as a prime instrument to achieve and guarantee internal security and external stability. This belief was delegitimized and destroyed by the First World War.

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5   A. L. Macfie, "The Revision of the Treaty of Sèvres: The First Phase (August 1920–September 1922)," in *Balkan Studies* 24 (1983): 57–88; Sevtap Demirci, *Strategies and Struggles: British Rhetoric and Turkish Response: The Lausanne Conference 1922–1923* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2005).

(3) The creation of new states could take the form of an apparent reconstruction as in the case of Poland. But in fact, this had less to do with the peace settlement in Paris, than with a war of liberation of 1920, started by the Poles under Pilsudski in the shadow of the Great War. This corresponded to earlier models of nation building through wars of liberation, amalgamating elements of civil war and state war against a foreign power which was perceived as an imperial oppressor. Here, as in the case of Ireland in 1916, the legacy of nineteenth-century principles of nation building through war was decisive.

What the Paris settlement did establish was a new mixture and fragile balance between rump states from the former centers of empires—Austria and Hungary as well as the Turkish Republic after the successful revision of the Treaty of Sèvres by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923—and new states in the former peripheries of empires, be it nation-states, as in the case of Finland or the Baltic states, or the new creations of bi- and tri-national states such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. For many of these new states and their societies "Paris" did not necessarily serve positive national narratives: neither Polish nor Irish narratives of nation-state building referred to the Paris treaties in order to establish legitimacy. Many politicians from new states in Eastern Europe felt betrayed by the Little Versailles Treaty, which they had to sign on 28 June 1919, and which forced them to accept rules for protecting ethnic minorities. In their eyes, this treaty compromised their newly acquired sovereignty. For others, in particular for Germans, Austrians and Hungarians, "Paris" generated powerful negative narratives that fuelled aggressive revisionisms, or as in the case of China and India, led to a complicated search for alternative ideologies.

(4) The post-war reconstruction contained a number of contradictions that weakened the peacemakers' credibility. Defining and applying the concept of national self-determination depended on political and ideological premises—from the French obsession with national

security to the anti-Bolshevik reflex of many European politicians. National self-determination was accepted and welcomed in order to confirm secessionist nation-building in the periphery of former continental empires. But the German-Austrians were prevented from joining the German nation-state despite their obvious determination to do so.[6]

Further contradictions were revealed when universalist concepts were discussed with a view to practical politics: traditional conceptions of state sovereignty and national interest stood against the new idea of collective security, and bilateralism continued despite the ideal of multilateralism. The most fundamental contradiction developed around the concept of national self-determination itself, because it was coupled with the idea of a particular "maturity" of peoples—and it was not applied to colonial contexts. When introduced by Lenin and Wilson it seemed to denote an ideal of simple and clear solutions, following J. S. Mill's premise that free institutions were unimaginable in a state with multiple nationalities.[7] But when applied in practice, it demonstrated the complex realities of often overlapping or competing identities, especially in borderlands—and large parts of eastern and southeastern Europe after 1919 were now borderlands. Hence a few plebiscites were held in Upper Silesia and Schleswig, but not, for instance, in Teschen (Cieszyn) where the situation was so complicated that even experts could not figure out how to hold a plebiscite. Often a plebiscite presupposed a particular knowledge of national belonging which did not exist in practice. As a result, final decisions were in most

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6   Jörn Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora: Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2014), 953. (English translation: *Pandora's Box. A History of the First World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

7   John Stuart Mill, "Considerations on Representative Government" (1861), in John Gray, ed., *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 291–294.

cases made by commissions, and in consultation with representatives who often had no democratic legitimacy at all. This further weakened the legitimacy of the post-war settlement.[8]

(5) The triumphant ideal of the nation state and the negative narrative of autocratic empires doomed to failure generated its own problems and cost. Adhering to the model of ethnically homogeneous nation states led to the practice of de-mixing multi-ethnic territories. Ethnic violence in the name of this principle had become apparent already well before 1914, in particular during the Balkan Wars. However, the experience of the World War added to this the dimension of the war state, its infrastructures and its means of violence, the vocabulary of "necessity," "mobilization" and "loyalty."[9] The consequences became clear in the Armenian genocide, which continued well after 1918/19, but also in the mass expulsions and ethnic violence between Greeks and Turks after 1919. There was a clear continuity from pre-war to war to post-war with respect to violent social and demographic engineering in the name of the ethnically homogeneous nation-state. In fact, one could argue that from this perspective, the war lasted from 1908 to 1923, at least in the southeastern part of Europe. Here, the boundaries between state war, civil war, and ethnic warfare were permeable.[10]

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8   Anthony Lentin, "Decline and Fall of the Versailles Settlement," in *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 4 (1993): 358–375.

9   Martin Schulze Wessel, ed., *Loyalitäten in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik 1918–1938: Politische, nationale und kulturelle Zugehörigkeiten* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004).

10 Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Philipp Ther, *Die dunkle Seite der Nationalstaaten: "Ethnische Säuberungen" im modernen Europa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

(6) The legitimacy of the post-war settlement was further weakened by the fact that various actors either withdrew from the political forum of the system, as in the case of the United States despite their economic and monetary presence in Europe, or were excluded from the new system already in 1919, as in the case of Germany and the Soviet Union. Both were forced to find other ways of overcoming their international isolation. The treaty of Rapallo, for example, underlined the continuity of bilateral diplomacy and its importance for collective security, as did the treaty of Locarno.[11] The case of the Soviet Union was unique in another aspect as well: Despite Lenin's rhetoric of national self-determination, the inter-war period was characterized by imperial political policies in a multi-ethnic state where autonomy was the exception, not the rule.[12]

(7) The hitherto unknown number of war victims which had to be justified through the results of the peace, the progressively radicalizing aims at the peace conference, the ideal of a new international order which would make future wars impossible, the new mass market of public opinion and the new relation between "international" and "domestic" politics in an age of mass media and democratic franchise. All these factors contributed to a massive disappointment when the results of the peace settlement became apparent. Turning away from the new

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11   Keith Neilson, *Britain, Soviet Russia and the Collapse of the Versailles Order, 1919–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

12   Miron Rezun, ed., *Nationalism and the Breakup of an Empire: Russia and Its Periphery* (Westport: Praeger, 1992); Chris J. Chulos and Timo Piirainen, *The Fall of an Empire, the Birth of a Nation: National Identities in Russia* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2000); Terry Martin and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Susanne Michele Birgerson, *After the Breakup of a Multi-Ethnic Empire: Russia, Successor States, and Eurasian Security* (Westport: Praeger, 2002); Nick Baron, *Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia 1918–1924* (London: Anthem Press, 2004).

international order, which appeared to have rapidly lost its legitimacy, paved the way for multiple revisionisms. In turn, revisionist demands could be instrumentalized in domestic conflicts. In this way, foreign political revisionism provided the munitions for political conflicts and ideological polarization within post-war societies. That was the case not only in Germany or Hungary, but also in Italy. Hence the "vittoria mutilata" corresponded to the various stab-in-the-back-myths and narratives of conspiracy or treachery which would further weaken the reputation of post-war liberal political regimes.[13] For the defeated Germans, the economic and monetary legacy of the peace settlement —reparations—linked any domestic political conflict to the trauma of Versailles. This poisoned German political culture and prevented the evolution of a positive republican narrative after 1918.

From a global perspective, a similar disappointment was obvious in China, where protests against Western and Japanese imperialism led to the Fourth-of-May Movement and to a national revolution. Disappointment was also visible in India and the Arab world, where promised independence turned into the reality of mandates, in which French and British colonial rule continued. Only Turkey succeeded in breaking this pattern, when it overcame the Treaty of Sèvres by violence. After 1923 and the establishment of the Turkish Republic, it was the only example of a "saturated" power which did not profess revisionist aims.[14]

(8) A last contradiction of the settlement can be seen in the tension between the politics and the economics of the treaty system. This was clear for many critical observers of the Paris Peace Conference, as Keynes' contemporary interpretation in his book on "The Economic

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13 Antonio Gibelli, "Italy," in John Horne, ed., *A Companion to World War I*, 472–475.

14 Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, 963.

Consequences of the Peace," indicated. There he argued that repara-
tions would not only burden the international economic recovery but
would also contribute to social instability in Germany.[15]

In sum, 1918–19 witnessed an amalgam of constructions and de-
constructions after the First World War in which the domestic and in-
ternational sphere of politics became ever more entangled.

The idea of internationalization in the League of Nations proved to
be partly successful: An international public forum now existed, even if
it remained without executive power to effectively implement collec-
tive security, as became clear in the case of Japan's aggression against
Manchuria in 1931-32. But as the examples of the administration of the
free city of Danzig, the Saarland and the mandates proved, the role of
the League could be constructive. And in contrast to the pre-war peri-
od, there now existed a range of institutions (the International Court of
Justice in The Hague, the International Labour Office) that allowed for
a public and international focus on minorities, as well as on problems
of labor and international law.

The post-war period was characterized by elements of continuity
and discontinuity. There had been no simple antagonism between em-
pires and nation-states before 1914, but rather a complex combination
of nationalizing empires and imperializing nation-states. And after
the formal end of the war, there was no simple antagonism between
the end of "bad" empires and the triumph of "good" nation states.
The end of autocratic and monarchical systems and the breaking up
of multi-ethnic continental empires were followed by the creation of
new nation-states, which were often neither democratic nor stable,
and which sought classical alliances instead of relying on promises of
collective security in order to survive in a world of aggressive revision-
isms.[16]

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15   Sharp, *The Versailles Settlement*, 205–206.
16   Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, 967–970.

If there was a triumph of the model of a homogeneous nation-state, it became more and more dissociated from democratic principles in practice, and it came with the enormous costs of mass expulsions and ethnic violence, demonstrating the potential of destructive utopias. This triumph of the nation-state did not replace the idea of empire, rather, it co-existed with continuation of old empires in new forms —as in the Soviet Union and to a certain degree in Turkey as well—with the maximum expansion of the colonial empires of France and Britain, and with new imperial aspirations, as in the case of Japan and the United States. And the tradition of imperializing nation-states certainly resurfaced again during the inter-war years, but now in a radicalized form, with revisionism fuelling new and radical aspirations for empire-building in Germany and Italy.

Part II
The Long Shadow of the First World War

The second section is dedicated to the longue durée
—the long shadow of the First World War—from 1918
until today, looking at different regions of the world,
such as Europe, the Middle East and Asia. To what
extent do current conflicts originate from the decisions
made at the end of or after the First World War?
How can societies embroiled in conflict successfully
transition from war to peace?
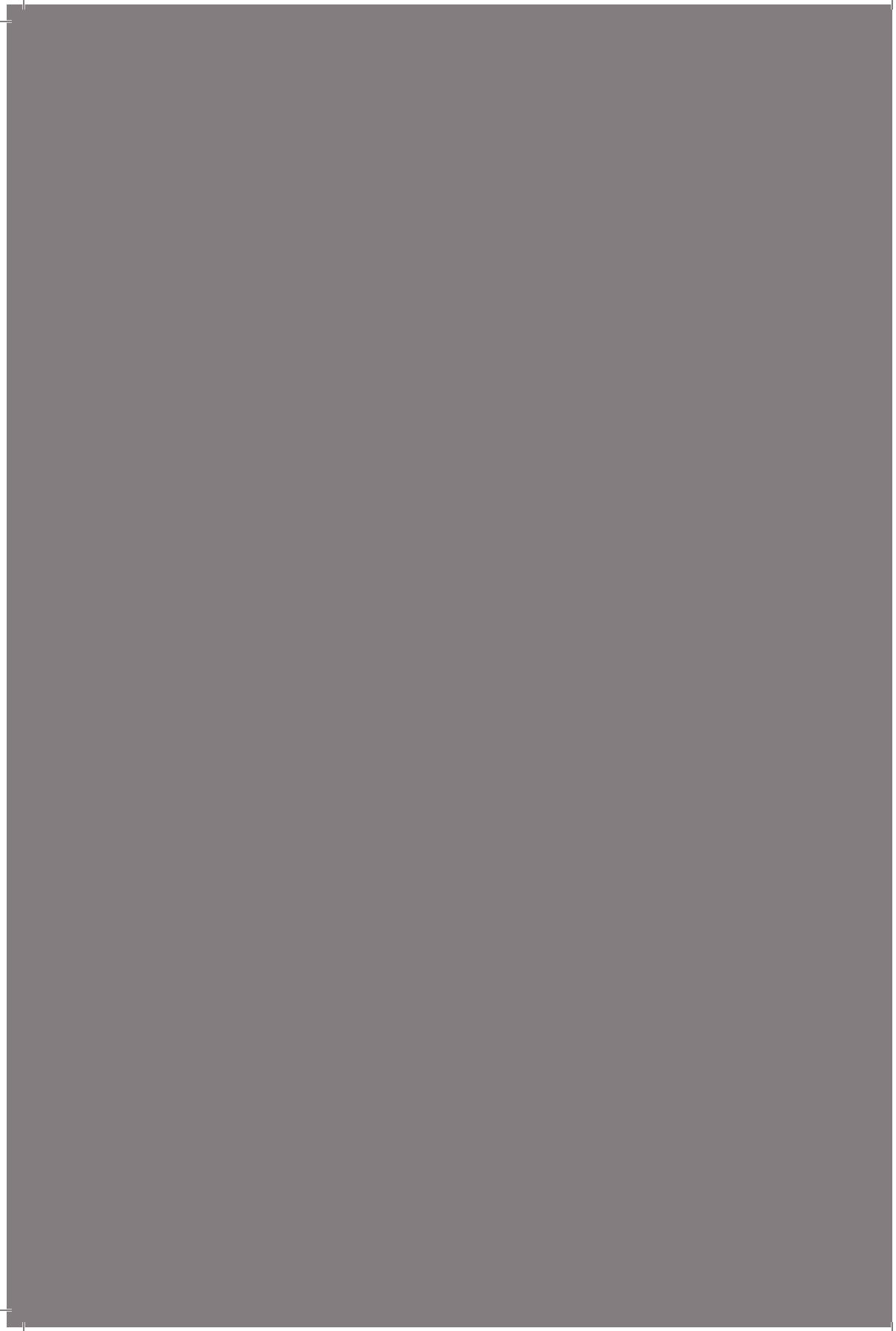
The Shadow of the Great War Looming over Turkey

Edhem Eldem

The memory of World War I, indeed of the entire period between 1911 and 1924, undoubtedly plays a central ideological role in contemporary Turkish politics. Turkey's unique position between victory and defeat has shaped attempts to define national narratives of the period, and oscillate between two important components of nationalism: pride and victimization. To be sure, these "revisionist" understandings of the past have ultimately served to obscure the complexity of the historical events.

To say that World War I cast a long shadow on Turkey, and on those regions surrounding it which were formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, would be an understatement. Anybody familiar with the way Turkey has handled—and still handles— history would know that any event deemed of some importance in the grand narrative of Turkish history is bound to play a significant role in the present, most likely on a political and ideological level. World War I is certainly no exception.

The difficulty, however, arises from the fact that this is a two-way process. The past affects the present, but more often than not, it is the present that ends up shaping the "national" perception and understanding of the past, thus going counter to the most basic rules of historical causality, if such a thing really exists.

With respect to World War I, there is no doubt that much of what happened in the region ranging from the Balkans to the Middle East between 1911 and 1924 is still at the center of political and ideological debates in Turkey. An interesting and very recent example would be the way in which the present government—the Justice and Development Party (AKP), singlehandedly run by its leader, President Erdoğan—has systematically tried to reduce the 1924 Treaty of Lausanne to a defeat—a sellout, as it were—that could have been avoided, and which led to the unnecessary loss of some territories, especially Mosul and the Aegean islands. The question, however, has practically nothing to do with a genuine reconsideration of historical facts and data. The only motive behind this "revisionist" approach is political; it feeds on the present government and its leadership's desire to belittle and deny a diplomatic victory associated with the Kemalist regime, while at the same time bringing a most welcome touch of irredentism.

There is some irony behind this pseudohistorical clash of competing national narratives. The Kemalist balancing act consisted in showing that Mustafa Kemal Pasha had been a successful Ottoman commander, especially at the Dardanelles, but that he eventually had to do away with the decrepit empire to resuscitate the nation through

the republic. On the contrary, the AKP's Turco-Islamic nationalism strives to connect back to the Ottoman past, if possible by bypassing, minimizing, or taming the Kemalist interlude. This can be done by stressing the national hero's Ottoman identity, and by concentrating on the early years of the national struggle, when political and ideological emphasis was still strongly marked by allegiance to Islam and the Caliphate. What both these visions of the past have in common is their essentially ahistorical nature. For the Kemalists, World War I was treated as a rupture to mask embarrassing continuities; for the present government, it is proof of a glorious continuity occulted and interrupted by Kemalist mythology.

It is not surprising that both dominant ideologies in Turkish politics should clash over this particular period. Any historian would agree that the decade or so of violence that swept over the region played a central role in the reconfiguration of its major actors. Among these, Turkey holds a prominent place, due to its rather ambiguous fate compared to others. Much of it had to do with loss and destruction, of course, as suggested by the traumatic event of the Ottoman Empire's collapse in 1918 and the consequent imposition of the Treaty of Sèvres, marking its partitioning and occupation.

It should not be forgotten that this collapse was a long and protracted process, with extremely tragic consequences for all the populations involved. The Ottoman Empire was at war for much longer that just the duration of the Great War. From the Italian aggression against Ottoman Tripolitania in 1911 to the victory of Kemalist forces against the Greek invasion in 1922, twelve years of uninterrupted warfare had drained the empire of its last resources and energy, ending any hope there might have been for its survival or revival. The deportation and annihilation of the Armenian population during the war brought an unprecedented degree of homogenization to the empire, thus prefiguring one of the principles of the republic. The population exchange with

Greece in 1923–1924 carried this process one step further, reducing the non-Muslim population of the country to an infinitesimal proportion, which would continue to drop steadily in the following decades.

Yet, despite—and partly because of—all this suffering and destruction, a new Turkey emerged victorious out of this process, following the nationalist upheaval led by Mustafa Kemal, the victory over Greek occupation forces in 1922 and the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which overturned the harsh conditions of Sèvres. In short, Turkey offers a rare example of a defeated actor who ends up being treated as a victor. Compared to other actors in the region who were liberated only to fall under a form of mandate or protectorate (Syria and Iraq), whose hopes of national independence were rapidly crushed (Armenia and Kurdistan), or whose ambitious bid for power ended in catastrophe (Greece), Turkey most certainly got the best of all deals.

This is what allows Turkey's narratives of the period to navigate so comfortably—and ambiguously—between the two crucial components of nationalism: pride and victimization. Gallipoli can pop up at any moment as a proto-national victory against the Great Powers, but it can also feed the paranoid and xenophobic constructs of Turkish nationalism. Likewise, the treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne can easily be manipulated along the same line to glorify Turkish martyrdom and victory in the face of Western imperialism.

On a somewhat broader level, this ambiguous stand between defeat and victory also explains why the Turkish perception of the region is often tainted with the temptation of irredentist and/or expansionist dreams. Much as illusions of grandeur sometimes reach the point of claiming that "we" lost the war because of the Germans, the argument that the Middle East was redesigned disregarding, and even against, Turkey's interests has led to recent adventures in the region, sometimes with appalling consequences. Such simplistic constructs have relied on a very naïve and biased understanding of the history of Otto-

man presence in the region, whereby the local populations thrived and prospered under the empire's benign and magnanimous rule until the advent of Western imperialism and Zionism, failing to understand to what extent Istanbul had lost its hold over this region during at least the last century of its existence. This vision has left Turkish politicians juggling the still persistent image of the "backstabbing Arab" with that of an entire region whose only wish was to return to a lost pax otto-manica under Turkey's leadership.

It seems that the real impact of this strange mix of defeat and victory—in that particular order, of course—is that Turkey has been able to get away with much more than its fellow "losers" ever could. Despite claims to the contrary, the Unionist cadres of World War I re-mained pretty much intact during the early years of the republic. More importantly, the violence and cleansing exerted during the war against (especially) non-Muslim communities constituted a base and to a cer-tain extent a blueprint for the republic, which continued on the path of national homogenization under the cosmetic mask of secularism. Timid efforts at imposing some form of accountability for war crimes were rapidly swept away by the sudden reversal of the situation and Turkey was granted the privilege of a tabula rasa on which to build its modernist national project.

In light of all these events and tragedies, it seems reasonable to claim that the shadow that World War I still casts on present-day Tur-key cannot be reduced to a tug of war between the two major wings of Turkish politics today. Much of it has to do with unsolved and unspoken issues, with skeletons in the closet, which neither of the two factions is willing and likely to address. Ironically, the present government's claim to continuity with Ottoman times—albeit for all the wrong reasons—is opening up new perspectives regarding the origins of authoritarianism and of oppressive state-society relations in Turkey. That the Young Turks and the Unionists may have been at the origin of the republic's ideological foundations has already been convincingly

argued in the past decades. It may be time to consider the possibility that the authoritarian regime that seems to be resurfacing today harks back not only to the early years of the republic, but as far back as Sultan Abdülhamid's (1876–1909) dismantlement of the timid attempts of Tanzimat statesmen and bureaucrats (1839–1876) at setting up a rule of law.

Yet one cannot help but wonder whether the real problem of World War I's dark shadow over Turkey does not lie in the main difference that sets this particular country apart from the other major actors of the time, namely the fact that it did not undergo the trauma and destruction of World War II. While this is certainly not something that one could wish for, the temptation is strong to see some form of correlation between Turkey's frequent drifts away from democracy and its very different historical development from World War II to the present. Aside from not having been part of the horrors that led to the "never again!" reaction that lies behind the political (re)construction of Europe, Turkey's relatively smooth transition from a single-party authoritarian regime to a democradura under military and judicial tutelage meant that the country was once again given a free pass, with the blessing of the US, during and after the Cold War.

So, does it really make sense to revisit World War I and its immediate aftermath in order to understand the problems and failures of the world today? Given that the main actors of the conflict were unable to maintain the peace settlement and were at each other's throats in an even more destructive war within only two decades, does this not already sufficiently condemn the way in which the Versailles process was handled and the weakness of the institutions that were supposed to maintain the peace?

Of course, the question may be more relevant when viewed from the perspective of the "peripheral" participants in World War I, including Turkey, considering that they were either spared from the direct destructive effects of World War II, or that they were only indirectly

involved in it through colonial processes. The (in)famous Sykes–Picot Agreement is still often cited as the main cause of much of the chaos and evil unleashed throughout the Middle East in the past decade or so. While there is evidently some truth to this line of reasoning, it is doubtful that the problems encountered in the region can truly be reduced to some misinformed choices that were made a century ago, especially when viewed against the abundance of errors and abuses committed in the decades following decolonization.

I have no doubt that revisiting World War I and its immediate consequences is a necessary and even indispensable historiographical exercise, especially in those cases where ideology and politics have ended up obscuring historical events through denial and "creative" historical narratives. Nevertheless, I am afraid that an analysis of current conflicts through this particular lens is likely to divert our attention from a score of subsequent and partly unrelated events with much greater impact on the present situation in the region.

The Long Shadow of the First World War: The Ukrainian Dimension

Yaroslav Hrytsak

Given its rich local natural resources and its geopolitical importance, the "Ukrainian factor" played a strategic role in the First World War. Among other things, it triggered a transformation of Ukraine into both a modern nation and an extremely violent society for the next 30 years. This violence had long-term consequences, including persistence of surviving values among local population—the legacy that the two Ukrainian Maidans tried to overcome.

There is a jarring discrepancy between the role the First World War played in Ukrainian history, and the way it is remembered in Ukraine today. The First World War played a crucial role in making Ukraine a nation—but this role, as well as the war itself, is virtually absent from the historical memory of contemporary Ukrainians. When it comes to the role of the First World War, one may use the metaphor of a passport: if nations could have passports, then Ukraine's should have "1914" under "date of birth." Ukraine as a modern nation was made in and by the First World War.

This is not to say that there was no Ukrainian nation before the First World War. But such as it was, it functioned only in the imagination of several thousand intellectuals who called themselves Ukrainians. The other twenty million potential Ukrainians were mostly (90 percent) peasants. They were called "Little Russians" in the Russian Empire and "Ruthenians" in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They had only a vague sense of belonging to a single entity, much less of the fact that the entity was called "Ukraine."

The First World War turned this "soft" reality into a "hard" one. It revealed and triggered the Ukrainian question, distilling it into several factors. The most important was Ukraine's strategic importance due to the new character of the war. The First World War was the first total war; one waged with weapons of mass destruction. Among other things, it led to a military stalemate on the front, where neither side was capable of large-scale and relatively quick advances. For most of the time, armies were stuck in the trenches. Under such circumstances, the war could only be won by waiting for the opposite side to collapse first under the strain and stress of trench warfare. At the end of the day, victory depended on the scale of human and natural resources at the respective power's disposal.

Ukraine was a land extremely rich in resources, known as the "granary of Europe." Grain turned out to be a strategic weapon, especially by the end of the war. One should not forget that both the Russian

Revolution of 1917 and the German Revolution of 1918 started with hunger strikes in, St. Petersburg and Berlin respectively, and that the 1918 peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk was known as the "Bread peace." Secondly, in addition to grain, Ukraine had large amounts of coal and steel (in the Dnipro and Donbass industrial regions of the Russian Empire), and oil in Habsburg Galicia (now Western Ukraine; not many historians today are aware of the fact that the German fleet was using Galician oil). Thirdly, Ukraine had a huge supply of "cannon fodder." "Little Russians" were the second largest ethnic group in the Russian Empire, and "Ruthenians" were the fifth or sixth largest group in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the words of British historian Dominic Lieven, "as much as anything, the First World War turned on the fate of Ukraine."[1]

The war intensified the national question in general, and the Ukrainian national question in particular, due to the collapse of the ancien régime. It started as a war between empires/monarchies and ended as a war between nations/republics. The two most important declarations that defined the post-war settlements—Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points," and the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia by Lenin and Stalin—established the right of national self-government as a guiding principle of the new geopolitics. Moreover, Ukrainian self-determination played into the hands of the Central Powers. It was an important instrument to undermine and finally defeat the Russian Empire. As German publicist Paul Rohrbach wrote in 1897, "wer Kiev hat, kann Russland zwingen" (he who rules Kiev has the key to Russia").[2]

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1   Dominic Lieven, Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia. (London: Penguin Press, 2015), 15.

2   Paul Rohrbach, Westpolitisches Wanderbuch 1897–1915 (Leipzig, 1916), 52, quoted in Riccardo Bavaj, "Die deutsche Ukraine-Publizistik während des Ersten Weltkriege," Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung 50, no. 1 (2001):11.

The Ukrainian national government emerged in the spring of 1917, in the wake of the Russian Revolution and the collapse of the imperial order. However, it did not proclaim Ukraine's independence until several months later, in January 1918, seeking the protection of the German army from the Bolsheviks —very much like all the other newly independent states between the Baltic Sea and the Caucasus. A bitter irony is that 1918 did not bring peace to this part of the world. On the contrary, the end of World War I sparked a series of local civil wars and international military conflicts in 1919–20. As Winston Churchill famously put it, when the war of the giants was over, the wars of the pygmies had begun.[3] The latter were much bloodier than the former. Ukraine was at the center of these military clashes, and they turned the Ukrainian territory into a large killing field. [4]

To illustrate the specific character of the Ukrainian situation, one need only review the shifts of regime changes between 1914 and 1920. In this period, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Prague and Warsaw underwent only two to three shifts. In sharp contrast, Kiev saw fourteen such changes, and a small railway station in Donbas experienced twenty (!) shifts of power in one half of 1919 alone. More often than not, each shift of power was followed by large-scale violence visited by the new regime upon those segments of the population that were (or were seen as) loyal to a previous regime. It was literally a Hobbesian "war of all against all" with an extremely high number of deaths and casualties.

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[3]   Winston Churchill, "Britain's Foreign Policy," *Weekly Dispatch*, June 22, 1919, 6, quoted in Jochen Böhler, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918–1921: The Reconstruction of Poland* (Oxford, 2018), 188.

[4]   According to estimations by demographers, 1.6 million people perished in 1914–1917 and 2.8 million in 1918–23 within the territory of present-day Ukraine. See Ella Libanova, Natalia Levchuk, Emlian Rudnitskiy, Natalia Ryngach, Svetlana Poniakina, and Pavel Shevchuk, "Smertnost naselenia Ukrainy w trudoaktivnom vozraste" *Demoskop Weekly*, no. 327–328, (March 31–April 13, 2008), http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2008/0327/tema01.php.

Ukraine as a nation was born in the war and revolutionary violence of 1914–1920 and is marked by birth trauma. This trauma, however, is not remembered, because it was overshadowed by further and even greater violence of the 1930s and 1940s. This included Stalin's and Hitler's terror, which peaked with the Ukrainian famine (Holodomor) and the Holocaust; the ethnic cleansing of Poles by the Ukrainian nationalists in Volhynia in 1943; the expulsion of Ukrainians from Poland's eastern borderlands by the Polish communist regime in 1947, and the Soviet deportation of Crimean Tatars. Recent demographic studies have revealed that 1932–1933 and 1942–1943 were the periods with the lowest life expectancy in modern Ukrainian history.[5] While the dreadful data for 1942–1943 is not surprising—after all, there was a war going on—1932–1933 is: these were formally peaceful years. The point is that even during the supposedly peaceful interwar period, Ukrainians and other ethnic groups in Ukraine suffered much more than their compatriots during the First World War or, for that matter, many Western Europeans during the Second World War.

During the first half of the twentieth century Ukraine was in the middle of what Timothy Snyder has called "the Bloodlands"—the territory between Berlin and Moscow that was caught in several waves of extreme violence.[6] Snyder starts his story in 1932–1933. The truth, however, is that the violence did not start then—rather, it began much earlier, in 1914–1918. In many respects, it would be preferable not to separate the two world wars and the interwar period, but rather, to view them together as Eastern Europe's "Thirty Years' War" of the twentieth century, 1914–1945. This holds especially true for Ukraine.

The scale and persistence of violence in 1914–1945 had several long-term consequences for Ukraine. The primary targets in every change of power and every wave of terror were the most active parts of

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5   Ibid.
6   Timothy Snyder, Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin (New York, 2010).

society. Systematic destruction of local elites led to a situation where the surest survival strategy was to keep a low profile and to comply with any rule. This fostered passivity and ambivalence. The consequences were visible in the behavior of Ukrainians in the post-war Soviet decades and even after the collapse of the Soviet rule. The change came in the 2000s and 2010s, with the emergence in Ukraine of the first generation of young people who carry no historical trauma, and prefer self-expression to survival. The first, and especially the second, Maidan were largely, though not exclusively, their revolutions.

Another possible consequence of the decades of violence is the high level of corruption. There is a certain correlation between the intensity of trauma and the pervasiveness of corruption (cf. present-day Libya).[7] In general terms, the long shadow of 1914–1945 might be at least partially responsible for Ukraine's slowness to reform after the collapse of communism. The legacy of wartime violence should not, however, serve as an excuse for delaying reform. Quite the contrary—it should lead to stronger motivation and desire to "overcome history."

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7   This point was suggested in a private discussion by Prof. David C. Lingelbach, Merrick School of Business University of Baltimore, who studies corruption in Ukraine.

What was the Legacy of World War I in East Asia?

Rana Mitter

The role of non-European countries is often over-looked in the historiography of the Great War. Indeed, the war had significant consequences for both China and Japan that resonate even today across the region. In contrast to the Second World War, Japan and China sided with the Entente powers between 1914–1918, yet this alliance did not achieve the results both countries had hoped for at the peace conferences.

"Victory! Victory! The Allies have been victorious!…Germany has sur-
rendered!" With these words, the Chinese scholar Li Dazhao reflected
on the end of the Great War in Europe, a victory reflected in the parades
and "triumphal songs" that citizens of the Allied nations held in Beijing
and Shanghai. Yet Li urged caution: "To whom exactly does the pres-
ent victory belong?… And for whom do we celebrate?" When examined
carefully, he argued, China's "non-fighting generals" and "shameless
politicians" should beware of the real lesson of the conflict. For it was
not Allied soldiers who had been victorious over the Germans; rather,
the war showed the "vanquishing of German militarism by German
socialism." In fact, Li argued, the real victor of the war was Lenin.[1] Just
three years later, Li would be one of the founder members of the Chi-
nese Communist Party. A political organization that would eventually
rule a quarter of humanity was helped into existence by the aftermath
of a war whose major battlefields had been thousands of miles away in
Europe and West Asia.

Despite being termed the first "world" war, the conflict is often
discussed in such a way that the non-European aspects of the Great
War end up being sidelined. In particular, the participation of two ma-
jor East Asian states, Japan and China, is far less well understood than
the histories of the western European nations involved. In part, this
is because there is a clearly visible, direct line of historical connection
from the First World War to the Second World War in Europe. The line
of connection is less easily visible in the history of East Asia. None-
theless, it is there. For both China and Japan, the consequences of the
conflict were real, and continue to resonate in the present day.

Unlike in the Second World War, China and Japan were both on
the Allied side during the Great War. Japan participated as a full Al-
lied power between 1914 and 1918. Its contribution was almost entirely

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1   Li Dazhao, "The Victory of Bolshevism" (15 Nov. 1918), translation in Ssu-yu
     Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey,
     1839–1923* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1954), 246.

naval, but by patrolling sea lanes in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, it prevented the German navy from having much impact there, as well as demonstrating its willingness to operate as a reliable partner. However, Japan also used the opportunity to expand its own influence, seizing German islands in Micronesia and pressuring Chinese politicians to allow Japan more influence in their country.

That pressure from Japan was one of the reasons that China also sought influence with the Allies. As early as November 1914, the city of Qingdao in Shandong province, a German colonial possession, was captured by Allied forces (providing the only serious, if limited, wartime confrontation on Chinese soil—lives were lost, but this was not exactly the Somme). From 1915, the militarist government of China offered Chinese workers as labourers on the western front. In 1917, China formally declared war on the Central Powers, although its offer of troops was turned down by the western powers (notably the British).

The historian Erez Manela has written incisively about the "Wilsonian moment," the aftermath of the Great War when a range of non-European peoples worked to exploit Woodrow Wilson's affirmation of the self-determination of peoples. In different ways, China and Japan were prime examples of that challenge being taken up. Both were countries that felt wary, at best, about the impact of the western world on Asia that had begun in the mid-nineteenth century. Beginning with the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 at the end of the first Opium War, China had been forced to concede territory and special trading rights to the British and other foreigners who had attacked that country. Japan was more successful at driving back attempts by the western powers to impose unequal treaties on them, and indeed would become one of the countries which most enthusiastically sought new territories by conquering parts of China. Yet governments in Tokyo remained immensely concerned about the growth of western power in the region.

The Great War proved an important moment for China's sense of identity, involving significant sacrifice by its citizens. Some 140,000 Chinese served on the Western Front as labourers in the Chinese Labour Corps, digging trenches and working behind the lines. The Chinese government had offered their services on the frontline, but imperial concerns about non-white soldiers led the British to reject this offer. Nonetheless, some 2,000 Chinese died from enemy action or disease in Europe, even though they were not direct combatants: their graves are still in France and Belgium to this day.

World War I saw China's first major engagement with international society as a participant rather than a victim, after the traumas of the Opium Wars and Boxer Uprising. China's warlord government made an active decision to participate on the Allied side for several reasons. Above all, they hoped this would give them greater leverage with the west. In that respect, there are some parallels with the way in which China sought to become more active in the 1980s, seeking to embed itself within the existing international structures, on the way to becoming more dominant within them.

Yet China's participation in the war did not produce the result its elite had hoped for. At the Paris Peace Conference, China had hoped to regain territories, such as the city of Qingdao in Shandong province, that had been German colonies. However, dealings behind the scenes involving British, French, and Japanese politicians, along with connivance by some Chinese politicians, meant that the territories were instead handed over to Japan, a result received with approval in the Japanese public sphere. It was not until the Washington Conference of 1920 that the "Shandong question" was resolved. However, by then there had been a strong reaction within China itself.

The news from Paris arrived in China in early May 1919. The fact that China had been denied the territories it hoped to regain caused fury among the politically aware elites, including students at China's universities. On 4 May 1919, young Chinese nationalists marched in

protest in Beijing, gathering in front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace at the front of the Forbidden City. This demonstration would become a source of historical mythic power, still known in its abbreviated form as "May Fourth" in China today. It was part of an emergent "new culture" movement, already in formation, that called for a new concentration on "science and democracy" to save China; in other words, technological change and political reform. In China's cities, there was a wealth of "experiments in happiness," to use a phrase with a scientific flavour to it coined by the writer Zou Taofen, drawing on ideas from feminism to Gandhianism. Among the products of these "experiments" was the Chinese Communist Party, which emerged from the aftermath of China's failure at the Peace Conference. The party was founded formally in 1921, but the Chinese Communist Party of today still regards 4 May 1919 as a point of origin for the Party's foundation.

The Chinese nationalism that emerged from that movement drew on many western ideas, but was also highly sceptical of the west. The slaughter on the Western Front made much of the western discourse about the supposed benefits of their civilization seem hollow. Furthermore, the bitterness engendered by the events in Paris in spring 1919 made China's leaders immensely cynical about the likelihood of the west ever treating China seriously in international relations.

Japan's experience in the war was less directly traumatic, not least as it benefited from China's losses during the Paris negotiations. However, there was one major defeat for Japan at the Paris Conference; it had proposed a clause on racial equality as part of the treaty, an idea which was rejected. While some western powers, such as France, supported the idea (as did China, in one of the few points of agreement between China and Japan during the conference), countries with strong histories of domestic racial discrimination (the U.S., the British Empire and Australia among them) refused to endorse it. This decision led to growing resentment among the Japanese elites who felt that it showed that Japan would never be regarded as a true equal by the western pow-

ers. This sense was heightened during the 1920s and 1930s as the depression intensified the conflicts between the world's major economic blocs. By 1933, Japan had left the League of Nations in the aftermath of the invasion of Manchuria two years earlier, as its separation from the international political order continued.

In comparison with Europe, the legacy of the Great War in Asia is relatively small. Only a small number of Chinese or Japanese participated in the conflict, in contrast with the millions in Europe. Nevertheless, World War II was devastating for both countries, with over three million Japanese deaths and ten million Chinese. In China in particular, the legacy of the Great War has recently re-emerged in historical discussion as part of several important strands of historiographical analysis. First, there is a rising interest in understanding China's history of engagement with the international community in the modern era. By demonstrating the importance of China's contribution to the war, through the Chinese Labour Corps, historians can demonstrate that by the early twentieth century, the country had a significant engagement with a global conflict. There is also a more historiographically specialist issue; the revision of the reputation of China's governments in the early twentieth century. The "warlord" governments of 1920s China have not generally been viewed favourably by historians, representing a period of relative chaos and corruption in China's government. By placing a new emphasis on China's involvement in the Great War, an argument can be made that there were at least some areas where those governments made a significant contribution to global politics.

Perhaps the most intriguing way in which the legacy of the Great War continues to haunt East Asia has been the discussion of the similarities and differences between the Anglo-German rivalry of the 1910s and the Sino-Japanese rivalry a century later, a topic of immense con-

cern in policy circles in China and the west in the early 2010s.[2] At the time of writing, relations between China and Japan are in fact relatively calm. Yet the underlying tensions between status quo powers and existing ones are hardly new. Nor can we assume that the current order in Asia is there to stay permanently, any more than was the case in the aftermath of the First World War.

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2   For an impressive account of the debate, see Todd H. Hall and Ja Ian Chong, "The Lessons of WWI for East Asia Today: Missing the Trees for the Forest," *International Security*, 39(1): 7–43.

Forced Displacement as Peace Project: The End of the Ottoman Empire and the Founding of the Turkish Republic

Michael Thumann

After the First World War, the Ottoman Empire was the only state subject to two peace treaties. The newly established Turkey was, in parallel, the only country to turn defeat into victory. The 1923 peace settlement of Lausanne was based on the mass displacement and disenfranchisement of both Christian and Muslim populations. At the time, these measures were regarded, even by democratically elected politicians in Western Europe, as the guarantors of peace and stability.

In remembering the end of the First World War, the European conti-
nent is divided by experiences of radically different kinds. In Western
Europe, the First World War changed some borders and convulsed
societies. In Eastern and Southeastern Europe, in contrast, the war
destroyed the various states and ended the presence of entire peoples
in areas where they had lived for centuries. A historical watershed in
Western Europe culminated in the East of the continent in an existen-
tial disaster, turning all that its people had known, their lived reality,
on its head. This distinction retains its potency to this day.

In Eastern, Central and Southeastern Europe three major empires
disintegrated in 1918 that had dominated their regions for centuries.
Historical atlases reveal no less than twelve new nation states in 1923, if
we include the newly established Republic of Austria and Soviet Russia.
What we cannot see on the maps, however, are the tremendous popu-
lation shifts across vast areas, particularly in Southeastern Europe—as
the result of forced displacement, population exchanges and genocide.
In this part of Europe, the First World War lasted significantly longer
than in the West. The warfare and ethnic reallocation, in their existen-
tial brutality, were to exercise a formative influence on the twentieth
century. This is also how the Turkish Republic came into being. The
history of its foundation helped shape Europe to a greater degree than
many Europeans are now aware.

Turkey is the only country defeated in the First World War to re-
ceive two peace treaties, and they could scarcely have been more
contradictory. The first was the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920, which dis-
membered the Ottoman Empire, the second the Treaty of Lausanne of
1923, which recognized the reconquered Anatolia as the core of the new
republic. Between the two treaties lay three years of a fateful struggle
for survival in which Ottoman general Mustafa Kemal rose to become
the father figure of the new state. Adding the epithet Atatürk ("Father
of the Turks"), he led a defensive war and drove the numerically supe-
rior foreign armies out of Anatolia. The fall of the Ottoman Empire and

the emergence of the modern Turkish state is a process that extended over at least five years and that fundamentally altered the population structure of Anatolia. One of the factors facilitating the emergence of the Turkish nation state was the expulsion of many citizens of the former Ottoman Empire—if they were of the Christian faith. As a quid pro quo, Muslims were forced to move from Greece and the Balkans to Anatolia. This enormous population exchange began as rampant ethnic cleansing and ended as an agreement between Turkey and its wartime enemies. The Treaty of Lausanne of 24 July 1923 established the boundaries of the new Turkish nation state and provided for the resettlement of around 2 million people. Lausanne finally laid the Ottoman Empire to rest and brought the world war in Southeastern Europe to a close. France and the United Kingdom applauded, declaring the expulsions necessary.

As the wartime enemies of the Ottoman Empire, the Western powers were responsible for both treaties with Turkey. They had waged a brutal war on Europe's southeastern flank. In 1915, on the Gallipoli peninsula, they engaged the Turks in battle, suffering some of the heaviest losses in history, an event commemorated annually by Allied veterans' associations. Following its collapse, the Ottoman Empire now stood under Western occupation. Having defeated the empire, the Allies dictated the Treaty of Sèvres to it on 10 August 1920.

In the Parisian suburb of Sèvres, the representative of Sultan Mehmed VI and the Ottoman government had to sign off on the Ottoman Empire's self-dissolution and destruction. This was a peace harsher than Versailles had been for Germany, St. Germain for Austria or Trianon for Hungary. The Ottoman Empire lost the greater part of its territory.[1] Its southern portion was transferred to the new Arab nation states, including the present-day Iraqi city of Mosul with its substan-

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1   Jörn Leonhard, Der überforderte Frieden: Versailles und die Welt 1918–1923 (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2018), 1106–1109.

tial Turkish-speaking population. The Armenians got an independent state in eastern Anatolia and the Kurds comprehensive autonomy in the southeast, while Italy grabbed most of the Dodecanese including Rhodes. Smyrna was officially still part of the Ottoman Empire but was in reality under Greek control. The British made their annexation of Cyprus official and took over Jerusalem as a mandate, while France gained Syria on the same basis. An international zone was established around the Sea of Marmara and Constantinople. The capital bustled with emissaries from London and Paris. Turkey had lost control of its own fate.

For the Turks, however, the Greek campaign in Anatolia became a question of survival. With the encouragement and support of the Western powers, Greek marines had already conquered Smyrna in 1919. This entailed massacres of the Muslim minority that the Turks were not soon to forget. In Sèvres Greece was awarded the administration of Smyrna and Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos contented himself with this. But he fell from power and his successor pushed for more. Greek troops attacked the rest of Turkey, fighting their way to central Anatolia. The Greek soldiers were often merciless in their treatment of the Muslim population.[2] Turks' recollection of this was later to rebound on the Christian Orthodox population of Anatolia. At the Sakarya River, not far from Ankara, the logistically weak offensive came to a standstill, though the Greek forces were vastly superior in numerical terms. Their opponents' fighting spirit was too strong, the Turks' rage towards the invaders too fervent, the country's new leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, simply too determined. He and his comrades-in-arms created the Turkish Republic out of the occupied ruins of the

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2   Sean McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame: War, Revolution, and the Making of the Modern Middle East, 1908–1923* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 428.

Ottoman Empire. Turkey thus became the only country to force the revision of its Parisian suburban treaty and transform its catastrophic defeat into a triumph. From loser to victor.

This nation state, however, needed more than just the new capital of Ankara, plus a National Assembly, central bank and hilltop presidential complex. It also required a people, that is, a nation. For Anatolia was a multinational land in which Muslims and Christians lived side-by-side, identifying themselves neither unambiguously as "Turks" nor "Greeks." They were subjects of the Sultan and spoke to one another in Ottoman Turkish, in some cases in Greek. The "Turkish people," then, had to be invented,[3] and for the Turkish nationalists the relevant criterion was religion.[4] Being Muslim made you a Turk—it was that simple. As a result Kurds, often against their will, were declared Turks, while Greek and Armenian Orthodox Christians became unwanted foreigners. The consequences were terrible.

Turkish historian Taner Akçam has shown that Greek Christians in the Ottoman Empire had already been systematically terrorized and displaced since 1914. The nationalist government of the Young Turks, he states, made systematic plans for ethnic cleansing. Kuşçubaşı Eşref, a bandit leader put to work by senior government figures, referred to non-Muslims as "internal tumors" that must be "cut out."[5] The government professed to know nothing of any of this and let the criminals do their work. The expulsions began before the worst of all the "cleansings" in Anatolia: the genocide of Armenian Christians be-

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3   Halil Karaveli, Why Turkey is Authoritarian: From Atatürk to Erdogan (London: Pluto Press, 2018), 17.

4   Günter Seufert, Café Istanbul: Alltag, Religion und Politik in der modernen Türkei (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1999), 61–62.

5   Taner Akçam, "Ottoman Documents and Expulsion of Greeks from Asia Minor in 1913–1914," *Νεολαία Π.Ο.Ε*, accessed March 20, 2019, http://neolaia.poe.org.gr/default.aspx?catid=179.

ginning in April 1915. The Turkish nationalists justified their actions in light of the events of the war and the historical fact that the young Balkan states had previously expelled huge numbers of Muslims. The idea of driving people from a territory in order to settle it with other people was hatched long before the end of the Ottoman Empire.

In the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1923, the fate of the city of Smyrna, the multi-ethnic city on the Aegean, was representative of the experience of many towns and villages in western Anatolia. The entry of Turkish troops into Smyrna in September 1922 showed the world that Turkey had turned the corner in its great battle for survival at the end of the First World War. The great fire that consumed much of the city during the Turkish conquest in the late summer of 1922 remains a nightmarish event for Greeks and Armenians. More than half a million people fled the city, full to overflowing with refugees and migrants, if they could. Where the old town once stood, today modern office blocks and hotels tower above the waterfront. Where there were cemeteries, no Greek gravestone can now be found. The city has been stripped of its history but was compensated with a new name: İzmir.

According to eyewitnesses, Turkish militias patrolled the city's streets following the invasion.[6] The bodies of those shot dead lay in the streets. The fires first broke out in the Armenian, then the Greek quarter. Whole families burned to death while others managed to flee, often trying to hide in churches or cemeteries. Uppermost in their minds was the need to protect girls from rape. Turkish militias and gangs, however, soon identified such locations as places of refuge. The Greek Orthodox population fled to the coast, hoping to make it to Greece by ship, with survivors reporting tightly packed, jostling masses at the quay. The old and sick lay on the ground. Some leapt into the water in an attempt to reach the ships. Turkish militias marched through the

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6   "Smyrna Commemorative Series," Hellenic Communication Service, accessed March 20, 2019, http://www.helleniccomserve.com/commemorativeseriesintro. html.

crowds in search of young girls and men of the right age for military service. The girls faced the prospect of rape, while the men were likely to be killed or sent to labor camps.[7]

The fate of Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Chrysostomos Kalafatis, initially tortured by uniformed Turks, came as a particular shock. En route to his execution he was lynched by the baying mob.[8] This made it clear to many Greeks and Armenians that there would be no privileges or mercy for anyone, particularly for men still capable of fighting. A fair number of men thus clothed themselves in the capacious garb of peasant women, wrapping their headscarves tightly around their faces in order to hide their gender. Girls dressed as old women. Those fleeing looked at the burning city and knew that the sea offered their only means of escape. Allied ships took refugees to Greece. On the jetty, Turkish militias inspected those waiting and separated out the men, who had to stay behind. When the ships cast off, the destination was often Lesbos, the Greek island that is to this day the goal of many refugees from all over the world.

For the Turkish troops under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who drove out the Greek invasion forces from western Anatolia in 1921–22, the blend of land seizure and ethnic cleansing was almost normal. Their objective was to reconquer the land but without a significant part of its people. Greek soldiers had set the precedent for this as they advanced through Muslim villages. For Mustafa Kemal's soldiers, a significant portion of the population was simply undesirable: the Christians in Smyrna or Ayvali and in thousands of Anatolian villages. Greek and Armenian men disappeared into labor camps and during death marches, while

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7   Majorie Housepian Dobkin, Smyrna 1922: The Destruction of a City (New York: Newmark Press, 1998), 28–45.
8   Leonhard, Der überforderte Frieden, 1115.

clergy were shot dead[9] and women and children expelled. In Smyrna alone around 30,000 people died as a result of the fire and conquest,[10] while of the 3,000 Christian men from the city of Ayvali, just 23 returned alive from the labor camps.[11]

But it was only through the Treaty of Lausanne, which superseded the Treaty of Sèvres, that this epoch-making crime was given the stamp of legitimacy. On 24 July 1923, the Turkish representative, İsmet İnönü, the Greek Eleftherios Venizelos, plus the foreign ministers of France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Romania and the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes signed the treaty in the Palais de Rumine in Lausanne. With a small number of exceptions, this established the present-day boundaries of Turkey and Greece in international law. Since then the new Turkey has consisted essentially of Anatolia and East Thrace. All the privileges enjoyed by the Western powers in Constantinople were abolished. Turkey had taken back control of itself.

A key part of the treaty related to people. It put the seal of approval and recognition on the consequences of expulsions, mass murder and expropriation during the war as well as the "population exchange" agreed between the Greeks and Turks in January 1923. In accordance with the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations, around 1.5 million individuals of Christian faith had to leave Anatolia, while half a million Muslims had to move to Turkey. The Allies accepted the Turkish nationalist interpretation of "Turks" and "Greeks," which was based on the distinction between Muslims

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9   "Ayvalik and the Ayvalik Islands," Greek Genocide Resource Center, accessed March 20, 2019, http://www.greek-genocide.net/index.php/overview/documentation/128-aivali-and-the-moschonisia.

10 Richard Clogg, A Concise History of Greece, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 94.

11 Bruce Clark, Twice a Stranger: How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece and Turkey (London: Granta Books, 2006), 24–25. The Turkish name for Ayvali is Ayvalık.

and non-Muslims.[12] The Lausanne Treaty did contain a few provisions safeguarding the remaining minorities. These related to the rights of Muslims in Greece and those of Greek Christians in Constantinople and two Aegean islands allocated to Turkey. Muslims still live in northern Greece. Turkey, however, later revoked the rights certified in Lausanne and expelled these Greek Christians too, first those in the islands and, beginning in 1955, from Constantinople as well, now called Istanbul. Almost all of them fled to Greece.

Implicitly, the genocide of the Armenians in 1915 was quietly filed away in Lausanne. The Turks refused to countenance the merest mention of the topic and in the end the Western powers did not consider it worthy of a footnote. Many politicians viewed the Lausanne provisions on ethnic reallocation as the guarantee of international political stability and as a template for future peace settlements. British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon referred clumsily to the positive impact of the "unmixing of peoples."[13]

Expulsion, and in the final analysis genocide, as the unsavory but unavoidable preconditions for the nation state—this is how many people thought at the time. Such attitudes gained traction during the Second World War. Genocide was a major feature of Nazi German warfare, mass expulsion of Germans and other people became the means of choice to create homogenous nation states in Central and Eastern Europe. Only after the Second World War was genocide subject to international proscription, at last.

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12   Leonhard, *Der überforderte Frieden*, 1127.
13   Michael Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 41.

Politics First, Morality Second: The Ongoing Impact of Historical Interpretive Frameworks on Societies during Wars and Crises

Christian F. Trippe

A society can cope successfully with the consequences of a war only if its citizens accept the national political framework and there is a stable international order. One hundred years on and this lesson from the epochal turning point of 1918–20 has yet to attain the status of common knowledge. The wars in the post-Soviet world in particular demonstrate that, in facing up to revisionism and neo-imperialist ambitions, the first priority must be to respond politically. This is the only way to resolve the conflicts in Ukraine and the Caucasus. Otherwise those living there will have little prospect of reconciliation, their societies little chance of regaining their equilibrium.

In this commemorative year of 2018 many have asked what links the world of one hundred years ago with that of today. The answer may be a provocative one for those who believe the First World War to have been fully historicized: 1918 and 2018 are interrelated to a greater degree than many are aware and, probably, more than many would like. The search for connections extending across one hundred years of European history is no arcane pursuit. The goal must be to achieve an understanding of historical constellations that helps us tackle contemporary political and social challenges.

The First World War is rightly regarded as the first "total war" in history. Societies were comprehensively absorbed into, and made to serve, their states' warmaking. Ever since, in all those countries that have experienced or are experiencing armed conflict, the demobilization of troops, the social (re-)integration of frontline soldiers and the attempt to cope with the economic consequences of war have constituted a crucial triad. The psychosocial consequences of active service were and are a millstone around the neck of society of an incalculable magnitude. Having lived through years of disinhibited violence, the traumas of discharged soldiers may spark political developments—or may have a wholly deadening effect.

Often, soldiers are fully aware of these possible consequences of frontline duty. Suspecting that the day of his demobilization was nearing, after four years of military service one frontline soldier noted that if he and his comrades had been sent home earlier there would have been political consequences: "... out of the suffering and the strength of our experiences we would have unleashed a storm. Now if we go back we will be weary, broken, burnt out, rootless, and without hope. We will not be able to find our way any more."[1] This quotation is from Erich Maria Remarque's novel All Quiet on the Western Front and it represents

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1   Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (New York: Ballantine, 1982), 294 (translation modified).

the interior monologue of first-person narrator Paul Bäumer. Virtually identical thoughts might pass through the mind of a Ukrainian soldier facing the imminent prospect of discharge after years of voluntary service in the Donbass. This sleight of hand with the Remarque quote not only shows how timeless literature can be. The quotation also conveys an impression of something every society faces when its soldiers return home from the front. Kiev, Poltava and Lviv are already home to the burnt out, rootless and hopeless.

In geopolitical terms, Russia—unacknowledged party to conflict in the war in Ukraine—is now playing the same role as in the years after 1918. The Kremlin leadership under Vladimir Putin is pursuing an emphatically revisionist approach, its goal to reverse the Soviet Union's defeat in the Cold War. It was with the same neo-imperialist tendencies that, after 1918, Bolshevist Russia and then the young Soviet Union sought to re-establish the borders of the Tsarist Empire. "What was the Soviet Union? The same Russia – only under a different name."[2] With this sentence, Vladimir Putin neatly captured his genuinely imperialistic understanding of history. One hundred years ago, the promises inherent in Communist ideology served as a means of societal mobilization. Today it is a concept that expresses a cultural identity, namely the "Russian world" (Russkiy Mir), which Russia is using to mark out ever-sharper boundaries with the West. To this end, it often falls back on set pieces of twentieth-century European history.

One of the highest-profile representatives of this school of thought is Moscow-based political scientist Sergey Karaganov. He rejected the initially pro-Western course of the 1990s under President Boris Yeltsin. At the time he was already drawing parallels between the internationally weakened, economically languishing Russia and the perpetually crisis-riven Weimar Republic. In October 1995, on the margins of

2   Alexander Abalov, Vladislav Inozemtsev, and Ekaterina Kuznetsova, "Das letzte Imperium," *Internationale Politik* 1 (January/February 2019): 122.

a discussion event in Cologne organized by Deutsche Welle, Karaganov told the present author that Yeltsin was no Hindenburg. Were Yeltsin one day to cede power, he averred, he would surely not fail to heed the lessons of interwar Europe. I will not go into the question of whether this comparison is coherent or total nonsense (though this would be worth analyzing in its own right). The very fact that Karaganov chose this associative historical reference in order to understand the political present shows one thing very clearly: the recourse to supposed lessons from the years after the First World War is often a construct that fails to take account of historical ruptures, societal dynamics and techno-logical developments.

While the connections between the world of 1918 and 2018 are evident in the case of Russia, a more complex picture emerges when we turn to the United States. By entering the war in 1917, the country decided its military outcome. With his 14-point program, meanwhile, President Woodrow Wilson indicated a political route out of the war that seemed acceptable to the defeated. The "Wilsonian Peace" would have provided the international political framework for a process of reconciliation. Among other things, this would in all probability have facilitated the social rehabilitation of Germany. But Wilson's inability to win over the other victorious powers to his plan threw fuel on the fire of debate over the Versailles peace conditions within Germany. The clamor against the "dictated peace" enveloped virtually every political camp, with right-wing nationalist forces espousing the "stab-in-the-back myth" (*Dolchstoßlegende*).

In spring 1920, after right-wing extremists had attempted to overthrow the German government, Reich President Friedrich Ebert, seeking Sweden's support for revision of the peace settlement, wrote to Swedish Prime Minister Hjalmar Branting warning that, "the Ver-sailles conditions are the greatest enemy of German democracy and

the greatest source of impetus for communism and nationalism."[3] The Treaty of Versailles, with its cession of territory and reparations, proved a heavy burden for the young Weimar Republic. The treaty was a major impediment to the country's new democratic beginning, which was in turn the crucial prerequisite for the renewal of German society.

To this day, the idea of a "just peace" continues to play a role in efforts to find routes out of war. President Wilson's 14-point program is a key document for the modern diplomacy of peace that no one to-day can fail to honor—or to be more accurate, that no one should fail to honor; for there is a thread running from Wilson to Trump, albeit a rather tangled one. In his "Fourteen Points" Wilson set out the essentials of a liberal world order, featuring a newly established League of Nations that was intended to guarantee peace settlements. Wilson was ultimately defeated by his domestic political opponents, resulting in a period of American isolationism.

It took the emergence of a new world order after 1945 to pick up from where Wilson had been forced to stop. Donald Trump, meanwhile, is building on the tradition of post-Wilsonian isolationism. Trump rejects the idea of deploying U.S. power to safeguard international regulatory frameworks and multilateral institutions. It is impossible to forecast what the consequences of U. S. policy under Trump will be for peace-centered diplomacy, the political development of nations mired in conflict and, ultimately, for the potential, after ceasefires and peace agreements, for societies to achieve internal peace – the prerequisite for facing up to the consequences of wars and civil wars.

Whether Albanians and Serbians in Kosovo manage to achieve a sustainable settlement, whether Abkhazians and Georgians in the South Caucasus find routes to reconciliation, whether Armenians and Azerbaijanis in and around Nagorno-Karabakh are able to make peace—all of this is crucially dependent on the degree to which the oft-invoked

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3   Peter Christian Witt, *Friedrich Ebert* (Bonn: Neue Gesellschaft, 1987), 151.

international community is capable of successful mediation. But mediation requires institutions such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. They are the counterweight to the forces pulling the parties to conflict apart. In Donbass, Russians and Ukrainians will only accept the mediation of Germany and France as long as they enjoy the backing of the European Union as a whole—including with respect to the unpopular sanctions against a neo-imperialist Russia.

It is not just in its south and east that Ukraine finds itself confronted with revisionist politics. In the country's far west too conflict smolders. While it is not comparable to the war in the Donbass or the consequences of the annexation of Crimea, the conflict over the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia still has the potential to severely disrupt Ukraine's shift westward. This conflict is a consequence of the First World War.

Around 150,000 Hungarian-speaking Ukrainians live in the Ukrainian Carpathians, in the region around Berehove and Uzhhorod. Until 1918–20, this area belonged to the Hungarian portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As a result of the Treaty of Trianon it was allocated to the newly established Czechoslovakia and then, in the wake of the Second World War, to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Today, deep within Ukrainian territory, about forty kilometers from the border with Hungary, a huge monument at the Verecke Pass commemorates this event. This is an assemblage of stone blocks, seven in number, erected more than ten years ago by the Republic of Hungary. They symbolize the seven Magyar tribes, wrenched apart by the Treaty of Trianon, Hungary's "Versailles."

While there is as yet no politically virulent separatism in the classical sense in this Ukrainian border region, with its strong Hungarian cultural imprint, it is becoming increasingly estranged from the weak central government in Kiev. Meanwhile, the Hungarian influence is so strong that there have already been serious political tensions between

Kiev and Budapest. These culminated in the threats made by the Orban government, incensed by a Ukrainian law on language use in schools, to block all Ukraine's efforts to move closer to the EU and NATO.

One of the main reasons why there has as yet been little real trouble in Transcarpathia itself is undoubtedly because the parties to conflict have dealt with it within functioning multilateral organizations. The Venice Commission established by the Council of Europe arbitrated between the two sides with respect to the education law and issued recommendations. In presenting their arguments for or against this law, both parties to conflict operated within the same legal framework. This is rooted in human rights discourses and codifications of civil rights, both of which can be traced back to the second half of the twentieth century: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined in the UN Charter, and the anchoring of basic rights and freedoms in Western constitutions. The development of institutions with international jurisdiction and organizations dedicated to the political mediation of conflicts would have been inconceivable without them.

This concludes my 360-degree review of the world(s) of 1918 and 2018. Politically credible and enforceable organizational models are the wellspring of all conflict resolution. This political framework must be recognized as universally valid. To the extent that it is lacking, there is very little prospect of reconciliation and only limited potential for the renewal of battered societies. Or, to modify the words of dramatist Bertolt Brecht—in 1918 briefly a soldier in the First World War, as it happens—politics first, morality second.

Part III
Commemorating War and Peace— The Centenary of the First World War

The authors in this section look at different approaches to and cultures of remembrance. How has the centenary been commemorated in different countries? How can similarities between and shared aspects of cultures of remembrance be created and strengthened in a way that does not cast aside national experience in order to facilitate shared learning?

A Memory "Orgy": Australian Commemoration of the Centenary of the Great War

Joan Beaumont

The centenary of World War I generated intense interest in Australia, owing to the continuing dominance in the political culture of the mythic narrative that arose from the war of 1914–18, the Anzac legend. The centenary commemorations took multiple forms, suggesting a high level of engagement at government and community levels. But they were largely parochial rather than transnational, they spawned a crass commodification of the memory of war and arguably failed to engage the diverse ethnic communities that now constitute multicultural Australia. Given that popular interest seems to have ebbed since the centenary of the celebrated Gallipoli landing in April 2015, the future of war commemoration in Australia is difficult to predict.

The centenary of World War I inspired a memory "orgy" in Australia. It is difficult to estimate the total amount spent on commemoration by federal and state governments between 2014 and 2018, but it probably exceeded AUD\$600 million (c. 368 million euros). This expenditure attests to the continuing importance in Australian political culture of the memory of World War I, and of the 1915 Gallipoli campaign in particular. Even though this campaign was a dismal failure strategically, the performance of the Australian soldiers inspired a mythic representation known as the Anzac legend (or myth or tradition). A hundred years later, "Anzac" remains a core signifier of national identity, regularly invoked by politicians and conservative media to define "what it means to be Australian". This discourse, which serves as a foundational narrative of Australian nationalism, ensured that the extravagant commemoration of World War I went largely uncontested.

The Anzac legend
The mythic representation of "Anzac" depicts the Australian soldier as being an exceptionally able and natural fighter. For Charles Bean, the official historian of World War I and one of the original promulgators of the legend, the struggle to settle the Australian continent had invested men with physical strength, independence of mind, resourcefulness, eagerness to learn and the ability to make decisions without direction. Beyond this, Australian society, so Bean claimed, was almost classless, thus producing citizen soldiers who were egalitarian, and unwilling to accept the authority of officers because of their rank alone. Bean concluded that the essence of Australian heroism in battle resided in their "mateship": what in other armies would have been called comradeship or small-group cohesion.

Much of the Anzac legend was historically dubious, but from 1915 on, this narrative of Australian exceptionalism—which in many ways was a cult of the volunteer since Australia did not adopt conscription—became entrenched in the national memory of World War I. Although

the rituals of Anzac were not embraced universally—one of the lega-
cies of the debates over conscription was a bitter Protestant–Catholic
sectarianism—"Anzac" progressively became a hegemonic discourse.
Initially promulgated by certain political and social elites, it came to
be accepted more widely as natural and organic. Indeed, the trope of
"Anzac" continued to be invoked in all conflicts in which Australian
military personnel were involved after 1918.

There is much debate as to why the Anzac legend has continued to
be so dominant in recent decades, effectively marginalizing alternative
narratives of Australia's past, such as its early international leadership
in political democracy and social reform, and the "difficult history"
of the white conquest of the continent. During the controversial Viet-
nam War of the 1960s, it seemed that the rituals of Anzac would wither
and die, but they enjoyed a remarkable resurgence from the 1980s on.
While Australia's "turn to the past" needs to be understood within the
wider global memory "boom," domestic variables significantly shaped
the processes of collective memory formation. The focus of national-
ist celebration had traditionally been Australia Day, the anniversary
of British settlement in 1788. On the bi-centenary in 1988 this event
proved divisive. Indigenous peoples protested against its association
with conquest, their dispossession and systemic disadvantage. Hence,
according to historian Mark McKenna, the Labor governments of Bob
Hawke (1983–91) and Paul Keating (1991–96) turned to Anzac Day as a
more unifying focus for building national identity. The embrace of war
memory also allowed Labor politicians to reclaim the mantle of Aus-
tralian nationalism, which had been appropriated by the right during
World War I and which, until the 1960s at least, was positioned within
a framework of loyalty to Great Britain.

The commemorative agenda initiated by Labor was continued, al-
beit with some differences in emphasis, by subsequent governments.
The Liberal (conservative) Prime Minister John Howard (1996–2007)
embraced memorial diplomacy and a new war memorial movement at

home and overseas. He also exploited the Anzac legend to legitimize Australian participation in the wars in Afghanistan (2001–present) and Iraq (2003–09). The men and women of Australia's defence services, Howard argued, were heirs to the Anzac tradition, and hence beyond critique, regardless of the legitimacy of the war in which they were involved. Similar rhetorical devices were employed by subsequent Prime Ministers on both sides of the political divide.

This positioning of war memory at the heart of contemporary political discourse has been enabled by a reframing of "Anzac." Originally a celebration of white masculinity, the legend has progressively become more inclusive, incorporating women, certain immigrant communities, and Indigenous Australians. In a copycat struggle for recognition, a plethora of sub-national groups have been rewarded with new war memorials in the national space. Concurrently, families empowered by the digitisation of genealogical and military archives have positioned their ancestors' war histories within the wider national narrative. Thus "Anzac" has become a more complex signifier of identity. It has also been demilitarized with an emphasis on essentially civilian qualities: courage, endurance, sacrifice and mateship. In a highly materialistic and individualistic society, "Anzac" can now be invoked by the state and the popular media to validate any sacrificial behaviour by individuals in the interests of the common good. Police officers, civil defence forces and firefighters, who voluntarily expose themselves to risk and subordinate their personal interests to those of the collective good, are thus deemed to be "Anzacs."

This appropriation of Anzac has extended to commercial sport. In 1995 the Australian Football League introduced an Anzac Day match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. This "clash," which rapidly acquired the status of an Anzac Day "tradition," opens with a parade of veterans, the playing of the elegiac Last Post and the national anthem, and the singing of songs that integrate traditional elements of Anzac with a sentimentalized version of the myth. The football match concludes

with the award of a medal to the player considered to best exemplify the Anzac qualities of skill, courage, self-sacrifice, teamwork and fair play.

The centenary commemorations
In this environment where "Anzac" infuses multiple dimensions of national life, it was almost inevitable that the centenary of World War I would trigger a tsunami of commemorative activities. Planning started in 2010 when the federal government announced the creation of a National Commission to consult with the public and identify the themes and scope of a commemorative program to take place from 2014 to 2018. Its recommendations included the development of education programs, mobile exhibitions, the restoration of existing war memorials and avenues of honor, the installation of new memorials to the Boer War and peacekeeping operations, and a restaging of the first major troop convoy to leave Albany, Western Australia, in November 1914. Notably, the Commission also endorsed the concept of "A Century of Service": the commemorations should not be confined to World War I but should also mark significant anniversaries of other twentieth-century conflicts (such as World War II and Vietnam) that fell within the period 2014 to 2018.

To implement this ambitious agenda the federal government appointed a Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac and delegated further planning to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, supported by an Interdepartmental Task Force and an Anzac Centenary Advisory Board. The latter consisted of a board of twenty-one members and six advisory groups which were to consider education and curriculum, military and cultural history, business, youth, engagement with state, territory and local governments and ceremonial and commemorative issues! As this suggests, cross-generational transmission was a key priority, not just for gov-

ernments but also for the media, which would later feature images of primary school children dressed in oversized army jackets and slouch hats, their chests festooned with medals.

It is beyond the scope of this short paper to document the horde of commemorative activities that then eventuated. To name only some of the more important: the Australian War Memorial, which includes a national commemorative space, the national war museum and a major archive for military history, received funding to refurbish its World War I gallery and restore its historic dioramas. Each of the 125 federal electorates was granted AUD$125,000 (c.76,500 euros) for approved community projects. A further AUD$4 million or more (c.2.5 million euros) was allocated to an Anzac Centenary Arts and Culture fund to support projects that conveyed "a multitude of themes, stories, reflections and messages about Australia's experiences of war at home and abroad over the last century."[1] Meanwhile, in a flurry of memorial diplomacy, an Australian Remembrance Trail was developed along the Western Front, forming a kind of Anzac "stations of the cross," stretching from Bellenglise on the former Hindenburg Line in France to Ieper (Ypres) in Belgium. Over AUD$100 million (c. 61 million euros) was also spent on a new museum and interpretative center, named after the commander of the Australian Corps, General John Monash, in the French town of Villers-Bretonneux, the site of a celebrated 1918 battle and an Australian national memorial erected in 1938.

Inevitably, the pièce de resistance of the commemorative program was the centenary of the Gallipoli landing on 25 April 2015. Owing to the confined space, and the fragility of the environment, only 8,000 Australians were able to attend the ceremony at Gallipoli itself. There were also 2,000 seats for New Zealanders—the often-overlooked NZ in "Anzac"—and a much smaller allocation for official guests from

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1   http://www.anzaccentenary.gov.au/get-involved/anzac-centenary-arts-and-culture-fund

other countries. This included Turkey, whose collaboration, as the host country of the site of memory, was essential, and whose status had been transformed over the past century from mistrusted enemy to honored friend. The cap on seats posed some problems for enterprising cruise companies who had already guaranteed their clients tickets as part of their travel package. The government simply ignored the problem and conducted a national lottery. More than 42,000 Australians applied. For those who could not go to Gallipoli, there were multiple Anzac Day ceremonies in Australia. Across the country the numbers probably exceeded a quarter of a million (of a population of nearly 25 million).

Reflections on the centenary

In the aftermath of this memory "orgy," several observations might be made. First, the centenary commemorations in Australia were often notable for their parochialism. The public discourse rarely articulated a transnational understanding of World War I. Rather, the memory of war was framed within the Anzac narrative of Australian exceptionalism. Thus, the calendar of anniversaries across the four years featured only battles in which Australians had featured prominently, not those of objective significance in the history of the war. Second, the narrative surrounding the centenary commemorations was largely shaped by the popular media and amateur historians, often former journalists, rather than academic scholars, who published a considerable body of well-researched accounts of the war. It seemed, then, that in the battle between "history" and "memory," "memory" proved the winner. Australians believed what they wanted to, not what historians told them was the case. Even the Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull (2015–18) when opening the Villers-Bretonneux museum in April 2018, claimed that Monash had won the battle through his meticulous planning. Yet Monash had no role in the battle at all!

Given its populist character, the centenary generated not just bad history but a widespread commercialization of "Anzac." The Australian War Memorial shop offered an array of commodities, including stubby (beer bottle) holders and shot glasses, bearing their centenary slogan, "Their Spirit Our Pride." The Returned and Services League offered for sale, at AUD$2.26 (c.1.4 euros), a pre-recorded Minute of Silence, purchased via phone or text message! Meanwhile, "Camp Gallipoli" offered Australians the chance to sleep out "under the stars" as the original Anzacs did one hundred years ago, only now, not in Turkey but in local showgrounds and racecourses. Many of these initiatives had government approval, and the government proved lax about policing the use of the word "Anzac" (which has long been regulated by the Protection of the Word 'Anzac' 1920 Act). But a furore erupted in early 2015 when Woolworths launched an advertising campaign featuring a soldier's face set against the words "Lest we Forget Anzac 1915–2015" and the slogan "Fresh in our Memories"—a play on the supermarket's marketing brand, "The Fresh Food People." In an attempt at damage control, Woolworths was forced to withdraw the campaign.

Despite all this activity—or perhaps because of it—public interest in the centenary seemed to flag after the apogee of the Gallipoli commemoration of 2015. The numbers at the Anzac Day dawn service in Canberra in 2016 were an estimated 65,000, about half of the previous year. The original idea of the Anzac Commission to commemorate all significant war anniversaries across "a century of service" seems to have been quietly dropped. Though difficult to document, it appears that some degree of commemoration fatigue had set in.

How sustainable, then, will the commemoration of war be beyond 2018? If the very high levels of government investment—in memorial building and refurbishment, in public rituals and above all in the development of war-related educational materials for school children—are reduced, will public engagement with the rituals of Anzac recede? The answer depends, of course, on a judgement as to how much of

recent commemorative activity has been organic and vernacular, as opposed to orchestrated by the state. At the time of writing, there has been no detailed survey of local commemoration over the past four years. The motivations of the individuals and communities who initiated a multitude of local remembrance projects thus remain a matter of speculation. Nor is there any consensus on the nature of the emotional responses that Australians manifested when attending Anzac Day ceremonies or making "pilgrimages" to war cemeteries overseas. Do these experiences meet some need in a post-Christian society for collective rites and aesthetically powerful rituals? Is the memory of World War I part of a broader fascination with mass death by generations that have never experienced—and unlikely ever to experience—mass warfare? Are Australians who engage proactively in war commemoration an example of post-memory to use the term employed by U.S. scholar Marianne Hirsch to describe how memories of traumatic events live on to mark the lives of those who were not there to experience them.

A further question is the degree to which engagement with war memory is mediated through class and ethnicity. How engaged with "Anzac," for example, are the culturally diverse communities that now constitute roughly 30 percent of the Australian population? In 2012, the National Commission on the commemoration of the Anzac centenary dared to suggest that Australia's military history might be something of a double-edged sword; while the centenary might provide opportunities for a great sense of national unity, it might also prove an area of divisiveness. Government authorities denied this, but then hastened to invest in research and public education about World War I soldiers of "ethnic" backgrounds and the military service of Indigenous Australians. Notably, the dawn services on 25 April 2015 opened with the playing of the didgeridoo. However, we have no evidence to show how effective these initiatives were in fostering cultural inclusivity. The Australian War Memorial meanwhile refused to concede to the grow-

ing demand from Indigenous activists that the "war" in its title should incorporate the frontier conflict that occurred between white settlers and Indigenous peoples.

The future of war commemoration in Australia is therefore difficult to predict. On the one hand, the processes of socialization into "Anzac" are intense, and show no signs of abating, making the prospect of dislodging this hegemonic narrative in the immediate future very slim. On the other hand, commemoration fatigue and the changing demographics of Australia have the potential to make the construction of Australian nationalism around "Anzac" increasingly anachronistic. Generational change, and the growing distance from twentieth-century wars, may well encourage this. Perhaps, then, war commemoration might have reached its apogee in April 2015. "Anzac" is, after all, a narrative that directs the attention of Australians to World War I. Nothing that happened in World War II or later wars has a comparable place in national memory to Gallipoli, especially the heroic version of that campaign enshrined in Peter Weir's now classic film. The centenaries of other conflicts of the twentieth century therefore seem unlikely to evoke the interest and passion that the centenary of the Great War has generated.

The Specificities of French War Commemoration: A Few Remarks on the Occasion of the Centenary

Elise Julien

France was particularly active in commemorating the centenary of the First World War. Indeed, the memory of that conflict remains central in France itself, while also constituting a source of debate in the realm of international relations. For in France, the war has become ingrained as a key milestone in the national narrative, and therefore one must deal with its legacy. Nevertheless, the commemorations are also the fruit of contemporary stakes; they thus allow one to identify political and social transformations, and to discern shifts in a society's relationship with its past.

Introduction

In 2019, France is poised to conclude some five commemorative years tied to the centenary of the war. The centenary was actively prepared and was experienced intensely—a sign that the war represents a major issue on the national stage, for the governing class and for the population at large, at least as much as it constitutes an important question at the European and global level.

The weight of hundred-year-old legacies

In France, the end of the war in 1918 not only brought relief, it also confirmed the reasons invoked for justifying the conflict since 1914. The "Great War" as it was known since 1916, kept that designation, which testifies to its central place in the national historical narrative. The victory had other consequences as well: it facilitated expressions of grief (the dead had not fallen in vain), while also enabling pacifist re-readings (the war left the country bled dry but the victory did away with attempts at revenge). From the outset, the memory of the conflict proved more consensual in France than in many other countries, most notably among the vanquished. The war became a would-be federating reference: politicians did not hesitate to refer to a just war, to moments of sacred union, to the force of patriotism, and what all of them combined were capable of bringing about— victory. Over the long term, these characteristics remained all the more valid given that the Second World War elicited a type of civil conflict that profoundly divided French society. As a result, the First World remained far more "commemorable" than the Second; without being glorified, per se, it continued to offer more resources to the present.

In the framework of the postwar victory, specific memorial forces took shape. Among them, the republican state— rather strengthened by the war— enacted a cult of the dead, so as to take into account the suffering of the mourning, while at the same time redirecting the nation towards a collective consensus. In the process, the state success-

fully designated unifying symbols such as the tomb of the Unknown Soldier (1920) as sites of national memory, while also supporting the edification of war monuments (in villages, schools, associations, professional settings) as decentralized sites of memory across France. The state nevertheless had to deal with, and share the stage with veterans' organizations, which counted more than three million members by the end of the 1920s, and whose strength involved their ability to federate on a national scale. Veterans played an important role in running support and aid organizations. They took charge of postwar commemorations (most notably by seizing the initiative of erecting monuments, and demanding that 11 November become a national holiday, which is to say a day off, and organizing said holiday on a local scale). They aimed to deliver a moral message by tapping into the legitimacy they acquired in combat and through their ability to speak for the dead they claimed to represent. Beyond their diverse political orientations, their message was profoundly pacifist. Over the long term, veterans passed away gradually but their message endured; public authorities on the other hand, remained in control.

From this standpoint, government officials were able to lean on established commemorative practices, and on a rich heritage tied to the conflict. The continuity of the republican regime after the war reinforced an ancient and centralized commemorative tradition. In 1922, the combined actions of the state and of veterans' organizations produced a day of commemoration on 11 November. It was conceived as the second national holiday in the country, designed to complement 14 July, Bastille Day. The November ceremonies centred on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, but also around local sites of memory, in particular around village war monuments. One should also note that the largest part of the Western Front was located on French soil, and that ten departments were partially or fully occupied for nearly four years. As a result, France carried a large portion of the scars of war: destroyed areas, towns and cities in ruins,

fields marred by shell craters, trench remains, vestiges of concrete or stone, munition residues, etc. Battle sites provided the setting for specific commemorations, while necropolises disseminated along the former front line rapidly emerged as pilgrimage sites for French and foreign families alike. This situation has fuelled an interest for the local past which has stood the test of time.

Diversity of commemoration expressed across a French centenary

Despite the slight retreat of the Great War from the public stage in the wake of the Second World War, the collective legacies of World War I constituted an important basis for the massive return of the conflict to French consciences in the 1980s. Firstly, tributes continued on 11 November (even though in 2012 the day was redefined to commemorate all of those who "died for France"). Vast commemorations still take place at the Arc de Triomphe at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, along with important commemorations on the battlefields of Verdun, Notre-Dame de Lorette, or on the Marne, for instance. On a more local scale, commemorations in front of monuments have endured. The public has changed, with the passing of veterans and witnesses of the dawn of the twentieth century, yet forms of commemoration have largely been maintained: corteges formed by elected officials and ordinary people, the mobilization of schoolchildren, speeches at monuments, the appel des morts melody to mark those lost, the laying of floral wreaths. The overall objective remains unchanged: for the country to pay a civic tribute to those who defended it and died at war. Secondly, professional historians hold no monopoly over the Great War. To be convinced on this, one has only to consider the dynamism of local associations dedicated to preserving artifacts and sites, on the former front lines or further afield; or attendance at museums, large and small alike, dedicated to the Great War; or the boom in genealogical research dedicated to following the traces of a forefather who took part in the conflict; or the success that the Great War continues to attract in book-

stores, as much on the history shelves as in the cartoon and fiction sections, and more largely in cultural production around the subject (artwork, theatre, documentaries, film). These trends are readily apparent since the 1990s, and have in fact accelerated since then.

A few hypotheses can be put forward to explain this presence in the public sphere. Generally speaking, while tall collective narratives have tended to recede, people have nevertheless tended to look increasingly to the past. One registers this trend in references to memorial duties, in widespread interest for cultural heritage objects and places, and in the success of programs dedicated to history. More specifically, given that there were more than eight million French combatants, the First World War can be seen as affecting everyone in France. Everyone can appropriate it through family memory, or across militant accounts (around pacifist monuments, the mutinies, or the role of colonial troops), or through associations and instructors who can use it to teach the local past. Finally, among historical events, the First World War occupies a very specific place in France, and it remains relevant to the present. The *"poilu"* (the prototypical French World War I soldier, meaning literally the "hairy one") enjoys an eminently positive reputation—as was shown by the considerable attention afforded to the last poilus still living at the dawn of the twenty-first century. The image of the poilu has also proven quite malleable: for some he represents a brave hero, while for others he embodies cannon fodder or the victim of hierarchy; to others he is a forerunner to the interwar pacifist, and to international reconciliation.

Faced with this groundswell, at the beginning of 2012 the French government put in place an inter-ministerial "mission" dedicated to preparing the official commemorative programme of the Centenary of the First World War, to coordinating various initiatives, and to informing the public of them. It is no doubt significant that this mission was modeled on the one created to mark the bicentennial of the French Revolution in 1989, which demonstrates once more the rank given

to the First World War in national history and the role of the state in overseeing that memory. Still, most commemorative and memorial initiatives turn out to have emanated "from below": from local councils to be sure, but also from cultural institutions including museums, archives and playhouses, schools, associations, individuals and families. From the start of the centenary, the Mission delivered a stamp of approval or label, so as help distinguish the most innovative and defining projects, which have ranged from international conferences to large exhibits and pedagogical initiatives. To this day, it has selected and certified some 6000 projects. To give a sense of scale, only a small number of the many events organized in France were even submitted to its consideration over these four years. Among them, school projects proved to be particularly abundant. With a pacifist reading of the conflict aimed mainly at younger generations, these events have often reflected pedagogical aims having to do with the legacy of veterans. The centenary also elicited several operations known as the "Great collection." These have involved inviting the population at large to bring in family collections relating to the war to different archives, in order for them to be analyzed, digitized and made available to the greatest number of people. Hundreds of thousands of people undertook these steps. The success of these initiatives speaks to the strong emotional link that continues to tie the French with their forbears, be they soldiers or civilians, from the era of the Great War.

The official programme of the commemorations consequently articulated centralized national commemorations, while also seeking to root the memory of the war into local sites, without neglecting internationalism, be it bilateral (as in the Franco-German ceremony at Verdun, the Franco-British one on the Somme or the Franco-American one to mark the entrance of the USA into the war), or multilateral (as occurred on 14 July 2014 and on 11 November 2018 in Paris).

Efforts at internationalization and memorial perspectives

In the past century, the commemoration of the Great War in France was of course never divorced from the international context. Yet it was on the occasion of the centenary that this internationalization occurred most systematically, opening to both yesterday's allies and enemies, as well as bringing into the fold distant belligerents and former colonies. The geographical and historical reality of France lent themselves to this opening: people from countless nationalities toiled and fought in France over the course of the war. The political and diplomatic context demanded it all the more.

Within this international overture, a special place was afforded to Germany. Indeed, the past enmity between the two countries was now intended to underscore the quality of their rapprochement, and in so doing, some of the positive long-term legacies of the conflict. This idea was not new. Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer's joint 8 July 1962 visit to Reims Cathedral, or the famous holding of hands between François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl in September 1984 at the Douaumont ossuary remained powerful symbols of reconciliation, then friendship. This same spirit was maintained on 11 November 2009, when Angela Merkel joined Nicolas Sarkozy in the ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe. Yet in these French initiatives, the symbolism has remained eminently French: Reims cathedral embodies German destruction; Verdun constitutes a symbol of national defense that long cast the Germans in the role of aggressors; as for 11 November, in France it has come to commemorate the victorious end of the war.

To inaugurate the centenary commemorations, President François Hollande chose to invite his German counterpart Joachim Gauck on 3 August 2014, to mark the start of the war at Hartmannswillerkopf in Alsace. The choice of venue had to do with a planned "Franco-German historical centre" on location. Presidents Emmanuel Macron and Frank-Walter Steinmeier met there once more on 10 November 2017 on the same site for the inauguration of said historical centre, which

had been completed in the interim. Between those two dates, the com-
memoration at Verdun had brought together President Hollande and
Chancellor Merkel in a commemoration laden with references, which
renewed President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl's gesture from
some thirty years prior. In the end, this meeting appeared as much as
a remembrance of the battle as a commemoration of commemoration
(most notably of the 1984 moment). Verdun had thus emerged as both a
symbol of war as well as of reconciliation and peace. Finally, President
Macron's November 2018 conception of a "memorial roaming" along
the former front line, opened at Strasbourg in company of President
Steinmeier and closed at Rethondes in company of Chancellor Merkel.
The following week, Macron was invited to the Bundestag where he
pronounced the keynote speech of the Volkstrauertag ceremony, the
German national day of mourning, which that year had been focused
on marking the end of the First World War.

Beyond this return-invite initiative, the desire to add a Fran-
co-German flavour to the centenary emanated largely from France. In
the buildup to 2014, the Mission devoted considerable efforts to making
the federal government aware of French expectations and of the bene-
fits of a common commemoration; these efforts were accompanied by
a necessary awareness of the more modest place occupied by the con-
flict in German society. This has to do with original divisions tied to the
defeat and to the absence of a unitary commemorative tradition, with a
focus on national history, on Nazism and the Second World War, with
a distance taken from soldiers of the past, and finally with diplomatic
approaches to a conflict perceived as the seminal catastrophe of the
twentieth century, from which it seemed impossible to draw positive
aspects. On many occasions, the asymmetry between the ways in which
the two countries grappled with the war was made plain.

Moreover, the centenary also revealed some French contradictions.
Thus, the authorities often found themselves torn between national
and international agendas, each featuring differing priorities. On the

national level, the Great War gave rise to discourses centred on the *poilu*, on patriotism, on national cohesion, and ultimately on victory. These discourses could sometimes verge on hero-making: through soldiers' valorous resistance on the Marne and at Verdun, but also through those in command, be they military or civilian. War marshals were celebrated every year by the army. As for 2018, it was placed under the banner of Georges Clemenceau, prime minister from 1917 onward, nicknamed the "tiger" for his full engagement in the conflict, or the "father of victory." On an international level, such French domestic references lose much of their resonance, and have even proven counterproductive on occasion. As a result, rhetoric in this sphere has privileged other, more transnational themes. Consensus here hinges on common suffering from a war whose conditions were dreadful for combatants on all sides. This vision accompanies a diplomatic reading of the war as a calamity whose consequences have weighed on the rest of the century and whose lesson—reconciliation—must be learned.

Balancing between these two spheres, the commemoration of 11 November 2014 in France involved a morning devoted to national union under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, with wreaths laid before the statue of Clemenceau, and a more international afternoon, around the ring of memory at Notre-Dame de Lorette, a monument that lists 580,000 soldiers' names of multiple nationalities, presented as all victims. As for the "memorial roaming" of November 2018, even though it counted bilateral stops, it still featured a dual French national objective: firstly, commemorating the memory and honouring the heroism of the *poilus*, as a manner of celebrating their capacity of moving forward; secondly shedding light on areas, once devastated by war, which are now prey to economic difficulties, as a manner of encouraging their ability to bounce back. The end of the week of roaming concluded on 11 November with an international commemoration under the Arc de Triomphe and the opening of a "peace forum" designed to favour multilateralism in the current international context. Despite the tensions that can be

expressed by multiple messaging in this type of commemoration, one is left above all with the symbolic dimension of a common presence on the international stage.

In the wake of the centennial, one observes that frameworks of analysis have endured. In France, the Great War remains a contemporary national myth. In other countries, the war led to a nationalist recrudescence which one witnesses both among the victorious nations such as Britain, as defeated powers, such as Hungary. Is this to say that out of what was first and foremost a conflict between nations, the memory of said conflict has also broken along national fault-lines? The answer is complex, for one also observes the reverse phenomenon, which is to say a form of denationalization of the conflict and its memory. Indeed, international commemorations have been marked by the image of a massive and senseless bloodbath. Mass death was connected to the nation that needed defending, and that nation subsequently lost its meaning and purpose to some. In this sense, the horror inspired by mass death justifies identification with other supranational political entities, of which the European Union occupies a key place. This conception has less to do with a rapprochement between nations than a union which could abolish national differences, and in which all soldiers were victims of a same martial madness. Thus, flashpoints of the war have become eminent symbols of reconciliation. Although one cannot truly speak of a common memorial culture, one can still identify an increasingly better shared memory of the war. It remains to be hoped that the centenary celebrations will have caused the public to gain awareness of the pacification of the European continent, in order to find ways of consolidating that peace.

Shaping an Entire Century: European Retrospectives on the End of the First World War

Markus Meckel

Commemoration of the centenary of the First World War varied greatly across Europe, from a limited discussion in Germany, to Russia's remembrance of it as a great tragedy, to the celebration of this anniversary by states that were re-established or that gained nationhood at the end of the war. However, these responses were all at the national level. The events of the war are linked to contemporary political challenges in Europe and the world. Therefore, we must develop collective forms of remembrance that reach beyond national boundaries.

Until 2014, the memory of the Second World War within the German collective memory had almost entirely obscured the First World War. In the decades after 1945, in both East and West Germany, the attempt to come to terms with the latter conflict, as a war of aggression and annihilation replete with terrible crimes, had monopolized popular attention and energy. It took decades before German society faced up to questions of guilt and responsibility, and it was not until the 1960s that it truly began to process the past. It was to be forty years before it became widely accepted in West Germany that 1945 also represented a liberation from National Socialism. In the GDR, it was not until the free elections to the Volkskammer (parliament) that East Germany was inserted into this "history of responsibility," acknowledging its guilt in a declaration of 12 April 1990. To this day, the culture of remembrance in Germany is heavily skewed towards the Second World War, not least in comparison with its European neighbors.

The debates on the First World War conducted in Germany in 2014 were highly constricted in nature. First, they concentrated on the start of the war. Much was made of the failure of diplomacy and German war guilt, spurred on by Christopher Clark's book. Second, the focus was on the static warfare on the Western Front. The war in the East, which claimed just as many victims, remained oddly under-illuminated. There were of course reasons for this. After all, for Germany's Western neighbors, in France and Belgium as well as the United Kingdom, remembrance of the "Great War" remains heavily present within state and society, receiving a great deal of public attention. Germany's dialogue with these countries thus shaped the events of 2014.

When it comes to the memory of this war the situation in Eastern Europe is quite different, with the forms of remembrance differing greatly from one country to another. The Soviet Union regarded the First World War as an imperialist conflict. From its perspective, the war was both disaster and negative foil, the background to the victorious October Revolution, an event central to the founding myth of the Soviet

Union. Present-day Russia views this period of turmoil as a great trag-edy and, in an attempt to unite the country, honors the victims on all sides. The Orthodox Church, which of course suffered greatly, particu-larly in the first few years after the October Revolution, with many of its members and clergy losing their lives, is on board with this project. War and violence ended only years later in Russia. In the Civil War and in the various wars with neighboring countries, more Russians lost their lives than in the entire world war. Poland, meanwhile, was not itself an actor in this war. It was the powers that had divided up the country that were the belligerents, forcing Poles within their domain to the front: Tsarist Russia, the Habsburg Empire and the Prussian-dominated German Empire. Poles fought and died on all sides. It was only at the end of the war that Poland regained its independence. For Poland, then, this war was the dreadful prologue to a desirable, long-awaited outcome.

Romania's view of the outcome of the First World War is similarly positive. "Greater Romania" emerged almost surprisingly from the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, through the unification of the Ro-manian principalities. Hungarians look back on this history from a very different perspective. As a result of the Treaty of Trianon of 1920, Hungary lost around two-thirds of its territory, a trauma from which it continues to suffer. There has been no shared dialogue with its neigh-bors in order to come to terms with this topic. They, of course, narrate a very different history. The Hungarian government under Prime Min-ister Viktor Orban has granted members of the Hungarian minorities citizenship and the right to vote in Hungarian elections. Conflicts with neighboring countries over their Hungarian minorities are a frequent occurrence.

After 2014, the practice of commemoration in Germany returned to its well-worn paths. The remembrance of the First World War seemed to have been a mere episode. So it is all the more pleasing that this year, one hundred years after the end of the First World War, this conference and many other, often local initiatives have enabled us to dedicate our-

selves to this 100-year history and to consider the significance of 1918 and 1919 to the entire century. One thing has long been clear. Those states that were re-established or that obtained nationhood at the end of the First World War would of course celebrate this centennial in 2018. My personal concern over the last two years, however, was that there would be nothing beyond the national perspectives of the various states, that Europe would lack the will to articulate an overarching perspective on this anniversary. One year earlier, in 2017, a small initiative made up chiefly of historians went public with their "Manifesto 1918–2018," their explicit goal to give supranational themes a central place within public remembrance in Europe (www.1918-2018.org). Examination of the end of the war in 1918 and the decisions made in the post-war period opens up valuable perspectives on developments and themes that have exercised a formative influence on the entire century and that remain important today.

Here I mention just a few aspects of significance in this regard.

– The entry of the United States into the war in 1917, and the justification for this step as set out in President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points in early 1918, put the challenges of democracy and self-determination on Europe's agenda. The so-called "October Revolution" of 1917, meanwhile, turned the Communist doctrine of salvation into political practice, through violence and rivers of blood. For some this became a model they were keen to emulate, for the majority a horror from which they must defend themselves. This antagonism between democracy and totalitarian dictatorship thus shaped the entire twentieth century. Even after 1989, some of the associated questions are by no means a thing of the past.

– The end of the First World War and the collapse of the monarchical empires (the Tsarist, Ottoman, German and Habsburg empires) triggered the (re-)emergence of a plethora of European states, most of them as democracies. In Germany, not least due to the decisive action taken by the Social Democratic Party, this entailed the appearance of the first German democracy, the Weimar Republic. Fifteen years later, only Finland and Czechoslovakia were still democracies, while the others now had authoritarian regimes. Today, almost three decades have passed since the last great democratic advance in the twentieth century, beginning in 1989. It is notably in those countries that played such a central role in the democratic upheavals of that time that we are now seeing a trend towards authoritarian governance and a questioning of the division of powers. Are there reasons for the fall of the democracies in the interwar period that remain significant today? Can we discern similarities and connections between these two developments?

– Immediately after the end of the monarchy in Germany and the ceasefire, the Council of People's Deputies (Rat der Volksbeauftragten, the government of the day) introduced general and equal suffrage for women on 12 November 1918. As the first woman to sit in a German parliament, on 19 February 1919 in the Weimar National Assembly, Marie Juchacz declared: "I would like to make the point … that we German women do not owe this government our gratitude in the conventional sense. What this government has done is to take a self-evident step: it has given women that which had been unjustly withheld from them."[1] While this right had previously existed only in a very few places in Europe (Finland, Nor-

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1   Dokumente. Erste Rede einer Frau im Reichstag am 19. Februar 1919 https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2014/49494782_kw07_kalenderblatt_juchacz-215672 (accessed January 11, 2019).

way and Denmark), it now began its triumphant march across the continent. Nonetheless, one hundred years later and we can hardly claim to have achieved full equality for women.

– Following the devastating experiences of the First World War for all participating nations, the League of Nations was founded on the initiative of President Wilson. As an international organization it was intended to strengthen and help implement international law. Ultimately, however, not even the United States became a member and it failed. To this day, the new beginning marked by the emergence of the United Nations in 1945 remains an international challenge in terms of managing international relations within a legal framework and securing peace. The UN's adaptation to new global realities is overdue—yet far from easy given the current leadership of both the United States and Russia.

– The states founded in East-Central Europe in 1918–19 were established as nation states but were in fact ethnically diverse. The victorious powers meeting in Paris recognized this as a problem and pushed for minorities to enjoy the same rights of citizenship as members of the titular nation. They thus established the concept of minorities' rights and sought to gain acceptance for them in the relevant states. Article 7 of the so-called Little Treaty of Versailles, concluded with Poland in June 1919 to protect its minorities, stated: "All Polish nationals shall be equal before the law and shall enjoy the same civil and political rights without distinction as to race, language or religion. … No restriction shall be imposed on the free use by any Polish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, in religion, in the press or in publications of

any kind, or at public meetings."[2] The willingness to make a reality of these rights, however, was negligible, both in the relevant states and on the part of the international community. To this day, the protection of minority rights is one of the most crucial imperatives in international politics and demands a tremendous effort from governments around the world.

– While it would be quite wrong to regard the United States as sole-ly responsible for the emergence of the European democracies in 1918, there is no question that it exercised a substantial influence in this regard. President Wilson dedicated himself to this issue with a great deal of engagement. Isolationism, however, prevailed over his thinking in the United States and the country retreated from Europe. This did not happen after the Second World War, and in the second half of the twentieth century the United States became the guarantor of democracy in post-war Western Europe. It also supported the formation of the European Communities, that is, the integration of the (initially Western) European countries. Since the end of the First World War, then, transatlantic relations have been a key theme over an entire century, one whose contemporary rele-vance is plain for all to see after two years of President Trump.

– What Germans refer to as the "Paris suburban treaties" at the end of the First World War reordered Europe in a manner that continues to have serious consequences—even if many people are unaware of this. Whether, in the absence of the specific provisions of the Ver-sailles Treaty, Hitler would have succeeded in obtaining such wide-spread support in Germany is anybody's guess. Germany itself had in fact blazed a trail in this regard when it dictated peace conditions

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2   John Grenville and Bernard Wasserstein, eds., *The Major International Treaties of the Twentieth Century. A History and Guide with Texts*, (Routledge: London and New York, 2001), 113.

with no prospect of enduring to what was by then Bolshevist Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. These experiences alone raise the fundamental question of how we might achieve a truly sustainable peace. Examination of the subsequent treaties of Trianon (1920) and Lausanne (1923) throw the problems into even sharper relief. The first reduced the territory of Hungary so dramatically that the resulting trauma is still making a political impact in the country today. The second legitimized the forced deportation of Greeks and Turks—in the name of future stability. "Ethnic cleansing" then became one of the century's defining themes and no one today would even begin to think of it as a means of fostering peace. There was no place for the losers at the negotiating table when the Paris suburban treaties were being formulated. This too is a practice that throws up a number of different questions when it comes to the contemporary question of how to broker and lay the ground for peace. I will add a few remarks on the Middle East. Here the British and French, coordinating their moves as they sought to pursue their colonial interests after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, drew borders that paid no heed to ethnic and regional realities, provoking conflicts and problems that are still with us.

– The Versailles Treaty established an international "right of permanent repose" for war graves, providing the practice of constructing war cemeteries with a framework in international law. Over the course of the twentieth century, this resulted in the creation, throughout Europe, of war cemeteries in all the belligerent nations. The question arises as to how this commemoration of the war dead—both soldiers and civilians – might be organized in future in a Europe that is growing ever closer together. France has given us an example of what might be done in the shape of the "Ring of Remembrance" at Notre Dame de Lorette. This memorial commemorates the 580,000 dead of all nations who lost their lives

in this region in the First World War, including 174,000 Germans. Their names, however, are not divided up by nation but are listed in alphabetical order. This is an encouraging example. What we need going forward is to think deeply and engage in dialogue about how we might develop such collective forms of remembrance in future, across national boundaries.

I now bring this listing of perspectives to a close, my goal having been to show how the remembrance of the end of the First World War is linked with the challenges of contemporary international politics.

I conclude by quoting from the "Manifesto 1918–2018" that I touched on earlier:

> There is even more at stake than remembering the victims of a terrible war and its consequences. The crucial imperative is to acknowledge the importance of peace for Europe and the world, as well as the ideas of universal international law and constitutional democracy. The first attempt to put these values into practice across the world after 1918 ended in failure. A second attempt was initiated after 1945 with the establishment of the United Nations and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, though in Europe it was initially only its Western half that benefitted from this. After the end of the Cold War these fundamental values finally seemed to prevail. Today, however, they undeniably face new threats almost everywhere. The centennial of the end of the First World War and of the efforts to establish a comprehensive framework of peace after 1918 [and, I would add, the impending European elections of 2019] is an apt moment to take a clear stand,

*across borders, for human rights and freedom of speech,
the rule of law and respect for international law. This is our
appeal.[3]*

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3   1918–2018: A Manifesto, http://1918-2018.org/a-manifesto/ (accessed February
    13, 2019).

The Centenary 2014-2018:
The History and Memory of the First World War in Germany and in the German-French Context

Arndt Weinrich

The centenary of 1914–1918 spawned a massive interest in the history of the First World War in Germany. The article delves into the idiosyncrasies and particularities of the way the German public engaged with the war in the last four years and sheds some light on shifts in German memory culture that go far beyond the rediscovery of the First Word War as a pivotal period in German modern history.

The First World War, as is widely recognized, plays a rather subordinate role in the Federal Republic of Germany's memory culture. In the United Kingdom and France a form of grassroots memory activism sustained by civil society combines and intersects with state-led politics of memory to give the Great War and, in particular, the soldiers who lost their lives in it, an established and prominent place within the national symbolic economy. In Germany, by way of contrast, there is no appreciable social or political practice of commemoration centred on the First World War.

To be sure, this subordinate position of the First World War is bound up with the profound transformation of Germany's political culture after 1945. Nazi crimes became the cornerstone of West Germany's culture of history, with the civilian victims of the Second World War taking centre-stage in the political commemoration of the dead, demilitarizing political culture and memory culture alike. This left no room for the fallen of the First World War in the German collective memory. In any event, identity-forging references to the contemporaries of 1914−1918 of the kind that pervade French and British First World War memories, would be impossible in the German context.

Against this background it is all the more remarkable that even in Germany the centenary was far from being a non-event. It was in fact observed with an intensity few would have anticipated: a wave of book publications so prodigious that it is hard to keep track of (including a number of genuine bestsellers),[1] TV documentaries, public talks and debates and, above all, exhibitions. Particularly in 2014, these gave expression to what was surely an unprecedented interest in the history of the First World War in the Federal Republic of Germany.

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1   Christopher Clark, *Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Lane, 2012); Herfried Münkler, *Der Große Krieg: Die Welt von 1914 bis 1918* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2013); Jörn Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora: Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2014).

How might we explain this interest? What follows is an outline to this question. My key contention is that the way in which the years 1914–1918 have been discussed within the German public sphere tells us something about shifts in the German memory culture, whose significance goes far beyond the First World War. In a second step, taking German-French joint commemorative ceremonies of the First World War as an example, I seek to cast a degree of light onto the international dimension of the centenary.

The German centenary: an anniversary framed by the question of guilt?
Even a cursory glance at the themes that dominated German discourse on the First World War in 2014 reveals a fundamental idiosyncrasy of the German relationship with that conflict: virtually the only question to receive more or less continuous attention in the media and public sphere was the so-called war guilt question or, to put it in more neutral terms, the question of what caused the war. By way of contrast, the war years, the suffering of soldiers on the battlefield and of the civilian population on the home front, in short, the war as such, was given far less attention. The trigger for the public debate that began in 2013 was the German publication of Christopher Clark's book Sleepwalkers. Masterfully condensing revisionist tendencies in international research on the causes of the war, and not without some hyperbole for effect, Sleepwalkers provided its German readers a narrative of the July Crisis that centred on the idea that the imperial government by no means bore a greater degree of responsibility for the outbreak of war than other European governments.

I am not, however, going to delve further into the scholarly discussion that took off in the context of what you might call the "Clark controversy," except to note that Clark's hypotheses have not gone

uncontested in the scholarly community.[2] To put it in a nutshell, even more than one hundred years after the outbreak of the First World War, there is no generally accepted consensus regarding the causal significance of the decisions made in the various European capitals, even if, overall, relativistic perspectives are enjoying unmistakable momentum at present.[3] Instead my focus here is to consider the "Clark controversy" chiefly in light of its implications for German memory culture. Making its way, with extraordinary rapidity, into hundreds of thousands of German living rooms and bookshelves, earning its author a degree of attention, not least within the media, of a virtually unprecedented degree for a historian,[4] *Sleepwalkers* has to be considered a memory phenomenon in its own right.

Consequently, it would be misleading to view what might be termed a veritable German plebiscite in favour of *Sleepwalkers* merely as the expression of a renewed interest in one of the key questions of twentieth-century historiography. No question, this is undoubtedly part of the picture. But what explains the Clark phenomenon on a more fundamental level is that, on the largest stage possible, *Sleepwalkers* placed a question mark over the guilt-focused perspective on Germany's modern history that had long dominated (West) Germany's historical culture and historiography, thus suggesting a more positive view of German national history. In a way, this was a replay of the Fischer controversy, though of course in reverse. In the early 1960s, the debate on

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2   For the German context, see esp. Gerhard Krumeich, *Juli 1914: Eine Bilanz* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2014) and Annika Mombauer, *Die Julikrise: Europas Weg in den Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich, C.H. Beck, 2014).

3   An excellent overview of the state of the debate prior to the Clark controversy is provided by William Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

4   By the end of 2014 the book had already been through eighteen (!) print runs. At time of writing (January 2019), the twentieth printing of the hardcover book is available in stores. The paperback edition, which appeared in 2015, is currently on its tenth print run.

the claims of Fritz Fischer made an extraordinary impact on German society as a whole. Ultimately, this was chiefly because, by underlining historical continuities between the German Empire and Nazi Germany, the Third Reich no longer seemed like an "accident" but more like a point of convergence within German history, with all the consequences that flowed from this for the interpretation of German national history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Fischer controversy was a key event in the history of West German political culture not just for its resounding implosion of the relativistic consensus among German historians with respect to the causes of the First World War. It was also a crucial event because it ushered in a paradigm shift in both histori-ography and memory culture, entrenching an essentially negative view of German national history before 1945 over the medium to long term.[5]

By the same token, the present-day success of *Sleepwalkers* indi-cates that this consensus has begun to crumble. It suggests that there is a demand within German society for a more positive historical perspective or at least one that is not exclusively, or is less strongly, pervaded by the memory of National Socialist crimes. That the German public broadly concurs with Clark's assertions is not just the subjective feeling of a fair number of those contributors to the debate who do not share his ideas. It is also borne out, for example, by the findings of a representative Forsa survey conducted in 2014, in which more than 60 percent of respondents stated that all the major European powers were equally responsible for the outbreak of war.[6]

5　See Konrad Jarausch, "Der nationale Tabubruch. Wissenschaft, Öffentlichkeit und Politik in der Fischer-Kontroverse," in Martin Sabrow, Ralph Jessen and Klaus Große Kracht, eds., *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte: Große Kontroversen seit 1945* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2003) 20–40.

6　On the Forsa survey of 8–9 January 2014, see for example https://www. sueddeutsche.de/politik/umfrage-junge-deutsche-wollen-mehr-ueber-ersten-weltkrieg-wissen-1.1863716.

It seems reasonable to assume that this shift of perspective, both evinced and catalysed by Clark's book, was the prerequisite for the large-scale rediscovery—in a second step, as it were—of the First World War as such, beyond the problem of war guilt, over the last four years. There can be no doubt about the reality of this rediscovery given the "media barrage"[7] that accompanied, in particular, the year 2014. The historical interest in the First World War was huge and it would surely be uncontroversial to assert that on a intellectual level the First World War is now regarded as a key event in German history to a far greater extent than even ten years ago. This in itself is testimony to a certain convergence on the European level.

When it comes to the issue of a European memory culture, however, we have to move beyond this particular point, scrutinizing the extent to which, on an affective level, we are witnessing the reappropriation of the First World War. And here we can discern quite clearly the limits to the renaissance of the First World War in German memory. This is especially apparent when it comes to the politics of commemoration in the narrower sense. To be sure, on balance there have been more commemorative events than one would have predicted in this area as well (albeit ones barely noticed by most members of the public).[8] Yet these always maintained an unmistakable distance from the wartime events and, in particular, from WWI German soldiers. The affective dimension, that is, a commemorative script reflecting and, at the same time, generating identification with the contemporaries of the war was

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7   Christoph Cornelißen, "Der Erste Weltkrieg – eine Spurenlese in Film und Fernsehen aus dem Jubiläumsjahr 2014,"' in Thomas Schleper, ed., *Erinnerung an die Zerstörung Europas:* Rückblick auf den Großen Krieg in Ausstellungen und anderen Medien (Essen: Klartext, 2016), 88–94, 88.

8   In the Bundestag, in addition to the *Volkstrauertag*, the people's day of mourning, which made greater reference to the First World War than usual during the 2014–2018 period, there were two significant commemorative ceremonies, one marking the anniversary of the outbreak of the war and another on 9 November 2018.

largely absent. In very much the same way there was no discursive construction of positive meaning, which constitutes the non-negotiable core of the public discourse of commemoration in both the British and French contexts. Consonant with this, high-ranking government representatives appeared chiefly at the opening of exhibitions, scholarly conferences and discussion forums,[9] settings that undoubtedly have a commemorative aspect but that chiefly reflect a historical interest. Probably the only exception in this respect was the remarkable commemorative event on 9 November 2018 in the Bundestag, which centred on the proclamation of the Weimar Republic on 9 November 1918. German President Steinmeier praised the birth of Weimar as a "milestone in the history of German democracy," which deserves "pride of place in our country's culture of remembrance." At the same time he declared the founding fathers and mothers of the Weimar Republic paragons of an "enlightened patriotism." This form of patriotism never loses sight of the civilizational rupture represented by Nazism but nonetheless self-confidently, and not without a certain pride, highlights or makes reference to alternative strands of historical development.[10] While this kind of discourse does in fact represent another fascinating example of the rediscovery—with undoubted impetus for the forging of identity – of German history before 1933, and is thus further evidence of

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9   Examples being Foreign Minister Westerwelle at the opening of the exhibition at the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany on 7 November 2013; Chancellor Merkel at the opening of the exhibition at the German Historical Museum on 28 May 2014; Foreign Minister Steinmeier, who participated in a variety of discussion events in Paris and Berlin in spring 2014; and President Gauck, who appeared in the context of a discussion forum on the European remembrance of the First World War in June 2014. The German-French conference that gave birth to the present volume is another case in point. It was opened by Foreign Minister Maas and his French counterpart.

10   http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/ Reden/2018/11/181109-Gedenkstunde-Bundestag-Englisch-2.pdf?___ blob=publicationFile.

the trends addressed above, we can only regard this in a very qualified sense as a rediscovery of the First World War: the war appears in this context more or less exclusively as the background to revolution and the foundation of the Weimar Republic and is not commemorated as such.

Hence, rather than in the state's politics of memory, it is on the level of local and regional history or local commemoration—and probably also on the level of family memories – where we can find signs of a tentative but palpable affective rapprochement with the First World War. As a consequence, it is not so much the major exhibitions put on by the "usual suspects" such as the German Historical Museum (Deutsches Historisches Museum or DHM), the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany (Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland) in Bonn or the major museums of military history in Dresden and Ingolstadt that provide maybe the most interesting aspect of the German centenary, but the numerous local First World War exhibitions, whose scope was often local or regional.[11] This is significant in that a local or regional historical approach, more than other exhibition formats, engenders an intuitive proximity that may entail identificatory elements, that is, they have the potential to generate a sense of closeness to historical actors.

Even more clearly than in exhibition projects, this enhanced sense of proximity has come to the fore through regional commemorative initiatives over the last few years. A notable example was the multiform commemoration of the November Revolution in northern Germany,

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11   A non-exhaustive list of locations featuring exhibitions with a local or regional historical focus includes: Bochum, Bonn, Cologne, Detmold, Essen, Freiburg, Gütersloh, Hamburg, Karlsruhe, Kiel, Kommern, Leipzig, Lörrach, Munich, Münster, Neuss, Neustadt, Nördlingen, Osnabrück, Speyer. Probably the most ambitious joint project in this context was that pursued by the Rhineland Municipal Association (Landschaftsverband Rheinland): "1914 – Mitten in Europa. Das Rheinland und der Erste Weltkrieg" (1914 – in the Heart of Europe. The Rhineland and the First World War).

particularly in Kiel, in 2018. In certain cases, on a functional level (lessons for present and future), the mise en scène of rebellious sailors as paragons of civil courage and standard-bearers of democracy came astonishingly close to the French or British commemorative discourse centred on the soldiers of the Great War. Closer, in any event, than could arguably have been the case even ten years ago. Finally, we must reach similar conclusions about the numerous initiatives to renovate local First World War memorials. Here, the restoration of weather-worn inscriptions and lists of the fallen in many communities, particularly in eastern Germany, highlights the tendency to give those soldiers who sacrificed their lives greater visibility. It may be tempting to detect in the slew of restoration projects of this kind, particularly in the former GDR, the increased cultural influence of the new German nationalism. Yet we should be wary of jumping to conclusions. As a rule, the public discourse surrounding these restorations was a pacifist one, the memorials being seen as a cautionary reminder for peace. However, the reintegration into the economy of local remembrance of soldiers who lost their lives in the First and in some cases the Second World War[12] is at least partially compatible with right-wing calls to give the German war dead a more central place in the politics of commemoration in general.

   To be perfectly clear, this partial reappropriation of the war does not mean that the First World War has suddenly emerged as a central element of German collective memory. Also, there can be no doubt that on an international scale the French or the British centenary dwarf the German centenary, in terms of sheer amplitude. Yet, the shifts in collective memory that have become apparent in the context of the German centenary are real and indicate a tectonic change that might,

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12 A number of eastern German municipalities with no Second World War memorial took the opportunity provided by the restoration of the local First World War cenotaph to add a commemorative plaque listing the names of locals who lost their lives between 1939 and 1945.

in the years and decades to come, evolve into a new memory regime. Whether the memory of the First World War will be an important part of this regime (or at least more important than it is now), or whether it will recede into the background once again after the centenary commemorations, is a question ultimately only time will tell.

Shared memories and joint commemorations.
The German-French centenary

The above-mentioned shifts in German memory culture, however, do not in themselves adequately explain the intensity of the German centenary, indeed, far from it. If not for the tremendous commemorative momentum emanating above all from Western Europe, that is, from France, Belgium and the United Kingdom, the German centenary would presumably have turned out to be more modest overall. The plausibility of this assumption is especially evident in the case of the political centenary in the broadest sense: without the invitations and requests from other European countries that rained down on Berlin, the engagement of the German government or its members, the Federal President's Office and the Bundestag would no doubt have been markedly less intense. What I have in mind here is not just participation in memorial events abroad, which will be discussed later, but also the events that took place in Germany, some of which I have already touched on. It is no coincidence that by far the most engaged ministry was the Federal Foreign Office, in other words the institution that was bound to be most aware of the momentum building in other countries.

In this context, one key actor was unquestionably France, whose Mission du Centenaire championed the internationalization of commemoration with unprecedented vigour; from the outset—since the publication of an initial draft programme in 2011—one of its core objectives was the development of a "robust and confident Franco-German commemorative and cultural fundament" ("*socle mémoriel et culturel*

franco-allemand solide et confidant").[13] To a large extent, this ambition was achieved—through the major German-French commemorative events at Hartmannsweilerkopf (Federal President Gauck and President Hollande, 3 August 2014 and Federal President Steinmeier and President Macron, 10 November 2017), in Verdun (Chancellor Merkel and President Hollande, 29 May 2016) and in Compiègne (Chancellor Merkel and President Macron, 10 November 2018).

In any case, there can be no doubt that the German-French element was the most consistent but also by far the most important bilateral element of the centenary. The month of November 2018 brought these events to their apogee in a number of ways. Beyond the above-mentioned ceremony at the Clairière de l'Armistice near Compiègne—probably the most problematic German-French site of remembrance, largely because of the ceasefire of June 1940—the French side went to great lengths to stage and orchestrate German-French relations. Hence, President Macron's multi-day tour across the former battlefields of the Western Front began with a memorial concert in Strasbourg attended by Federal President Steinmeier as guest of honour. At the end of this sequence, one week later, it was Chancellor Merkel, who inaugurated the Forum de la Paix initiated by Macron, a major event lasting several days whose objective was to tackle current issues of war and peace. Macron then concluded this series of German-French events marking the one hundredth anniversary of the end of the First World War with a speech in the Bundestag on 18 November.

It is no exaggeration to state that there has never been such a large number of German-French memorial events as occasioned by the centenary. This is far from insignificant—given that the development of a German-French commemorative script, particularly (though by no means only) with respect to the First World War has been one of the

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13   Joseph Zimet, *Commémorer la Grande Guerre (2014–2020): Propositions pour un Centenaire international. Rapport au Président de la République*, September 2011, 24.

basic constants of German-French relations for decades (one that has accelerated noticeably since the turn of the millennium). In this regard, Adenauer and de Gaulle (Reims, 1962), Kohl and Mitterrand (Verdun, 1984), Chirac and Schröder (Caen, 2004), Merkel and Sarkozy (Paris, 2009) and Gauck and Hollande (Oradour-sur-Glane, 2013) all speak an unequivocal language.

Beyond the mise en scène—against the backdrop of the EU crisis, Brexit and US isolationism—of the healthy state of German-French relations, which is, of course, the political core of the German-French centenary, the bilateral commemorative events of the last four years allow us to investigate into the matter of a European culture of memory. Ultimately, that which applies on the macro level (the European context) is borne out on the bilateral (German-French) level, namely that anyone who expects joint commemorations to lead to a shared somewhat homogenous memory culture will be greatly disappointed. National narratives and traditions of remembrance prove too stable for this. In the case of German-French commemorations, there is undoubtedly a broad consensus that the war was a European disaster replete with lessons of relevance to both the present and the future on the most general of levels, namely with respect to European integration, German-French amity and international cooperation. On the other hand, the joint commemorations have also laid bare the fact that, beyond this fundamental consensus, the two countries by no means look at the war in the same way.

To take just one example, while Federal President Gauck, looking down from the Monument national du Hartmannswillerkopf at the white crosses in the French military cemetery on 3 August 2014, could only shake his head at the "fanaticism of annihilation" and the "moral and intellectual delusion" of nationalism both of which facilitated industrial killing at Hartmannsweilerkopf and on every front of the World War, his French counterpart emphasized noticeably different aspects. Certainly, Hollande too sought to acknowledge the soldiers' suffering

and underline the horrors of the war, but at the same time he brought out the patriotic dimension that is for him the positive import of the memory of the First World War: "to commemorate is to renew one's patriotism" (*"commémorer, c'est renouveler le patriotism"*) is how he expressed this central theme as early as November 2013. Now standing next to Joachim Gauck, he put it as follows: "In celebrating the courage of the soldiers, we insist on what is universal, and I mean universal, in the love of one's country, that is, the ability of every single one of us to look beyond ourselves, beyond our particular interests" (*"En célébrant le courage des soldats, nous insistons sur ce qu'il y a d'universel, je dis bien d'universel, de l'amour de son pays, c'est-à-dire la capacité pour chacun et chacune d'entre nous de regarder au-delà de lui-même, au-delà de son intérêt particulier"*).[14] He thus sounded the celebratory note that is always present within French state discourse on the First World War, which views the poilu, that is, the French soldier of the 1914–18 period, as a role model for the French citizens of today.

It goes without saying that my aim here is not to pass judgement of any kind on either of these emphases. We can explain both in light of specific national cultures of memory and they must therefore be regarded as givens, at least from the historian's standpoint. Generally speaking, we should not view the coexistence of differing interpretive models within German-French remembrance as something negative, such as evidence of the impossibility of any kind of rapprochement with respect to memory. Evidently, we could only reach such a conclusion if we have an excessively homogenizing conception of what we might realistically designate "European remembrance." The First World War will never be for Germany what it is for France and "the" Western Europe perspective will always, or at least in the foreseeable future, be markedly different from "the" Eastern European one. Meanwhile, what international commemorative initiatives can do is

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14 http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/147001804.html.

sharpen our awareness of the commonalities but also the disparities and asymmetries that distinguish the various national cultures of remembrance. This demarcates a transnational discursive frame that is the necessary precondition for a productive discourse on memory and its implications. This, it seems to me, is what makes the unprecedented internationalization of remembrance of the First World War over the last four years so tremendously valuable. Despite trends towards renationalization, particularly in Eastern Europe, it is this that has made the centenary, by and large, a festival of peace.

Notes on Contributors

Laurence Badel is Professor of International History at the University Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne (Paris-I) and the director of the Center of the History of Contemporary International Relations. Her work focuses on economic diplomacy, European diplomatic practices, globalization, regionalization, and interregionalism between the European Union and Asia.

Joan Beaumont is Professor Emerita at the Strategic and Defence Studies Center at the Australian National University. She is internationally recognized for her work on Australia in the two world wars, Australian defense and foreign policy, the history of prisoners of war and the memory and heritage of war. Her most recent monograph, *Broken Nation: Australians and the Great War* (2013) was critically acclaimed and awarded various prizes.

Carl Bildt was Sweden's Foreign Minister from 2006 to 2014 and Prime Minister from 1991 to 1994. He is the chair of the Global Commission on Internet Governance, co-chair on the European Council on Foreign Relations and a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Europe.

Edhem Eldem is Professor of History at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, and holds the chair of Turkish and Ottoman history at the Collège de France, Paris. He specializes in late Ottoman political, social, economic, and cultural history, with a focus on the dynamics of westernization.

Yaroslav Hrytsak is Director of the Institute for Historical Research at the Lviv National University. His research interests include the modern history of Eastern Europe, modern intellectual history, nationalism studies, cultural history, and historical memory.

Oliver Janz is Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at Freie Universität Berlin. He is the editor-in-chief of *1914–1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War.* His most recent publications include *Transnationale Geschichte* (2006); *Das symbolische Kapital der Trauer. Nation, Religion und Familie im italienischen Gefallenenkult des Ersten Weltkriegs* (2009); and *14. Der große Krieg* (2013).

Elise Julien teaches Modern History at Sciences Po Lille and works for the research center IRHiS (CNRS/Université de Lille). She specializes in the history of World War I, its consequences, memory and historiography. Her doctoral thesis, *Paris, Berlin. La mémoire de la guerre, 1914–1933* (2010) explored the way inhabitants of the German and French capital cities recalled the First World War.

Jennifer D. Keene is Professor of History and Dean of Wilkinson College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at Chapman University, California. She specializes on the American military experience during World War I and is currently President of the Society of Military History. Her most recent book, *World War I: The American Soldier Experience* (2011) received international praise.

Jean-Yves Le Drian is the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs. He served as Minister for Defense from 2012 to 2017. A member of the Socialist Party from 1974 to 2018, he is now without party affiliation.

Jörn Leonhard is Professor of Modern European History at Albert–Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg. His main areas of expertise are the history of liberalism and nationalism, research on multi-ethnic empires, and the history of war and peace. His monograph, *Pandora's Box: History of the First World War* (2014/2018) was critically acclaimed by academics.

Heiko Maas is the German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and member of the German Bundestag. He was Federal Minister for Justice and Consumer Protection from 2013 to 2018 and is a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany.

Markus Meckel is a former Member of Parliament (SPD) and former Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic (April–August 1990). He is a Senior Associate Fellow for the German Council on Foreign Relations and a member of numerous foundations and societies.

Rana Mitter is Professor of the History and Politics of Modern China at the University of Oxford and the director of the University of Oxford China Center. He studies the emergence of nationalism in modern China, both in the early twentieth century and in the contemporary era. His most recent publication, *China's War with Japan, 1937–45: The Struggle for Survival* (2013) gained international attention.

Michael Thumann is foreign affairs correspondent with the German newspaper DIE ZEIT, based in Berlin. Prior to that, he was the newspaper's foreign editor and later on chief correspondent for the Middle East. From 1996 to 2002, and in 2014 and 2015, he was head of the Moscow office of DIE ZEIT

Christian F. Trippe is the head of the department for security and social policy at Deutsche Welle (DW), Germany's public international broadcaster. Previously, he was head of the DW studios in Kiev, Brussels and Moscow. Trippe's work focuses on foreign and security policy.

Arndt Weinrich is currently a DAAD Lecturer at the Sorbonne University in Paris. His most recent publication, *La Longue mémoire de la Grande Guerre. France, Allemagne 1918–2014*, published in 2017, is an inquiry into different cultures and politics of the memory of World War I in France and Germany respectively.

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