

EDITED BY MARIE-EVE CHAGNON AND TOMÁS IRISH

# THE ACADEMIC WORLD IN THE ERA OF THE GREAT WAR



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Marie-Eve Chagnon · Tomás Irish  
Editors

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*Editors*

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# Introduction: The Academic World in the Era of the Great War

*Marie-Eve Chagnon and Tomás Irish*

The First World War was a defining moment in the development of modern scholarship. The conflict saw nations battle one another utilizing the entirety of their national resources, and intellect became an important resource. The process of mobilization for war was one in which academic expertise was appropriated by national governments on a systematic basis, all for the purpose of winning the conflict. The application of scholarly knowledge both cleft the academic world in two and brought questions of academic impartiality into sharp focus. The war provided much impetus for the development of disciplines and institutions but came with significant moral reservations, as scholars struggled to maintain their traditional position ostensibly apart from political concerns.

The relationship between the First World War, on the one hand, and the academic world, on the other, has yet to be systematically studied in a comparative or transnational manner. This is surprising; sub-disciplines

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of historical studies, such as the history of science and the history of universities, have long noted the caesura of the Great War for the international community of scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, national case studies exist which have assessed how individual nations mobilized their educational institutions for war.<sup>2</sup> However, what is still little understood is how all of these elements interacted; the academic world was networked and global by 1914, linking scholars in Europe, North and South America, Asia and Australia. The First World War, too, was a global conflict, and these intellectual networks suffered as collaborators were re-cast as enemies with the outbreak of war. Simultaneously, institutions, individuals and disciplines across the academic world were mobilized for war service.

Neither the breakdown in international scholarly relations nor the mobilization of scholarship took place at the same time. Rather, their occurrences depended upon myriad factors, such as an individual's political outlook, disciplinary expertise, institutional affiliation, nationality and connectedness to (sometimes) numerous international networks. This volume represents a first attempt to capture the essence of the academic world before, during and after the First World War. Its methodological approach acknowledges the agency of individuals, institutions and ideas in the period, and in so doing presents a collective argument wherein mobilizations, ruptures and demobilizations happened in the plural, at different points during and after the war. This approach suggests that, building on recent scholarship, the time frames of the Great War need to be considered in their broadest sense, identifying continuities which extend beyond the traditional 1914–1918 chronology.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it could be argued that the process of mobilization initiated in certain scholarly disciplines during the First World War still shapes contemporary academic disciplines.

This volume adopts an approach that simultaneously privileges the actors, institutions and disciplines of the academic world. Recent scholarship has begun focusing once more on internationalism, moving away from the 1914-centric vision which posited that the many international connections and institutions which existed before the First World War were toothless and ultimately irrelevant in the face of global war. Instead, scholars like Mark Mazower have emphasized the continuities in international cultural relations stretching from the late nineteenth into the mid-twentieth centuries.<sup>4</sup> Simultaneously, there has been a resurgence

of interest in inter-war internationalism through work on the League of Nations and international foundations.<sup>5</sup> The activities of transnational intellectual networks, institutions and individuals were important; they helped shape understandings of peace and war for wider publics, guided politicians and policymakers in their decision-making, and informed how philanthropic foundations distributed their money. For example, scholarship on the League of Nations' technical groups has demonstrated that, while the League itself may be seen as a failure, its technical work made important advances which are of great importance to contemporary society.<sup>6</sup> Internationalism is also central to recent scholarship on post-war veterans' movements, which in turn has been used to make arguments about how different national societies exited war and how they demobilized culturally, establishing links with counterparts in former enemy states.<sup>7</sup>

The academic world is of particular importance because it links many of these phenomena together. In the half-century before 1914 it was perhaps the definitive international movement, a global community both linked together and defined by international exchange and claims to universalism. Scholarly work in many disciplines depended upon free exchange, and yet academic achievement was frequently invoked to exemplify claims to national superiority before 1914. The academic world was both the victim and perpetrator of the breakdown in internationalism which followed the outbreak of war in 1914 and, from 1918, it facilitated the process by which ex-belligerent societies achieved friendly relations again in the aftermath of war, although, crucially, as this volume demonstrates, this was an uneven process. In between, scholarship itself was transformed by the application of academic expertise to warfare and government, an important consequence of the total warfare of 1914–1918, and one which threatened to undermine scholarly claims to impartiality. This volume addresses all of these connected processes; it demonstrates that the composition and structure of the academic world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is fundamental in understanding internationalism before, during and after the war; moreover, it shows that the mobilization of individuals, disciplines and institutions in wartime cannot be separated from wider ruptures in the fabric of international exchange. This volume proposes an integrated approach which acknowledges the existence of numerous experiences of and time frames for mobilization and demobilization.

## THE ACADEMIC WORLD

What was the academic world? Simply put, it was the global community of scholars, ideas and institutions which expanded with great vitality from the mid-nineteenth century. International scholarly exchange was not new before this period; from the foundation of the first universities in the eleventh century, mobility had been an important characteristic of scholarly life.<sup>8</sup> The notion of a “republic of letters,” an intellectual community which transcended space and time, emerged in the early seventeenth century, with many who participated in the project claiming a universal heritage dating to Ancient Greece.<sup>9</sup> In the seventeenth century, the idea of the Grand Tour around Europe became an educational rite of passage for European elites. So what changed in the nineteenth century?

The emergence of the modern academic world in the nineteenth century was built on notions of universalism and mobility inherent in earlier ideas such as the republic of letters, but it differed in significant ways. Revolutions in technology and communications shrank the world from the middle of the century. The invention of the telegraph and later the telephone made long-distance communications easier and introduced simultaneity of experience into the lives of people separated by vast distances. International postal communication also thrived in this period. The emergence of railroads and steamships allowed for long-distance travel at a relatively affordable price for the first time.<sup>10</sup> In sum, it amounted to a contraction of the globe, a wider consciousness among contemporaries of the planet and its inhabitants, of their similarities and differences. Indeed, the word “international” came into common usage in the mid-nineteenth century to describe relations between nations, an increasing preoccupation for lawyers and politicians.<sup>11</sup> The academic world changed from a European to an increasingly global entity.

Education was also transformed in the mid- to late nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> The university began to emerge in its modern form, owing to the rise of science, secularization, the embrace of research, and the emergence of the nation-state as a patron.<sup>13</sup> Inspired by the German model, older universities in Europe, North America and further afield began the process of modernization, increasingly prioritizing research as a central concern, while myriad new universities were established to meet the demands of modern industrialized cities and societies. The German historian Jürgen Osterhammel described the university as a “cultural export from Europe” to the rest of the world in the late nineteenth

century, referring to the establishment of universities based on European institutions in places like China, Japan, Egypt, India and Britain's white dominions.<sup>14</sup> This volume works with this understanding of the university, focusing primarily on the international connections of a variety of European institutions, individuals and practices.

Scholarly disciplines were also codified in the mid-nineteenth century and began to emerge in their modern form, sanctioned by the foundation of discipline-specific scholarly journals and associations that created a corporate identity among practitioners in each field.<sup>15</sup> In this increasingly globalized world, information was transmitted easily and quickly; publications were exchanged internationally, while international associations and meetings were created where scholars in different disciplines could meet on a regular basis, sharing the latest research and building bonds of collaboration and friendship. The European participants who partook in this movement frequently invoked the universalism of knowledge, arguing that educational internationalism of this sort existed above national rivalries and was thus a guarantee of friendly relations between nations and a safeguard against the outbreak of war.

Tamson Pietsch has argued that "universities and the individuals who work in them are both local and global actors," and before the outbreak of war in 1914, the international scholarly community often claimed that it produced knowledge independent of the political, social and religious culture in which it was produced and applied.<sup>16</sup> For example, in 1911 the American political scientist and diplomat Paul Reinsch argued that "there is no German chemistry, no Russian chemistry, no Japanese chemistry; there is only chemistry, whose laws are as valid in one country as they are in another."<sup>17</sup> This idea was frequently invoked and informed the self-understanding of pre-war scholars, and especially those in the natural sciences. In many cases, scholars constituted a community of practices, values and behaviours, with the methods and ethics which informed scholarly research helping to define academic identities. And while members of the scientific communities were often far from one another geographically, they often claimed to have more in common with their scientific colleagues abroad than with their fellow countrymen at home. At the same time, relations between members of the international community of scholars could be fraught with jealousy and born of national rivalry. Thus, despite arguments that scientific truths were equally valid irrespective of where they were produced, or claims that

science had no nation, an uneasy tension underpinned the functioning of the academic world before 1914.<sup>18</sup>

### MOBILIZATIONS

The war undermined this idyllic perception of an international community of scholars, researchers and academics who were above national hostilities, or, as Romain Rolland famously put it, “*Au-dessus de la mêlée*” (“above the battle”).<sup>19</sup> Many scholars mobilized from the outbreak of war, seeking to apply their expertise to national defence.<sup>20</sup> The self-mobilization of academics was simultaneous with the mass mobilization of armies, but was initially spontaneous rather than instigated by national governments. And, in spite of the rhetoric which claimed that scholarship—and especially science—was a universal practice that was not subject to the tensions of international politics, the outbreak of war saw scientists, historians, philosophers, classicists, legal scholars and many other academics engage in hostile actions directed at the enemy, such as the writing of propaganda.<sup>21</sup>

Scholars in most belligerent nations began to elaborate upon the terms on which their respective nations went to war. While scholars, notably the Oxford historians responsible for *Why we are at war: Great Britain's case*, were initially preoccupied with responsibility for the outbreak of the war, a cultural war soon emerged in its own right. On one side, the Germans denounced the individualism of the French and English and put forth the community values of German *Kultur*. On the other side, the French and British built their fight against the Germans on the (sometimes disparate) values of Western civilization, presented as truth standing in opposition to German lies. Many French scholars followed on from the famous words of the philosopher Henri Bergson, who declared at the Académie des sciences morales in Paris that “the fight against Germany is the struggle of civilization against barbarism.”<sup>22</sup> The “militarism” of the German university was denounced, and both the national and international press were inundated with articles and letters from renowned university figures, denouncing the actions of the enemy armies and governments and responding to claims made by erstwhile academic colleagues. For example, in September 1914 theologians in Britain and Germany became involved in a public war of words relating to the outbreak and conduct of the war up to that point.<sup>23</sup> The defining document in the academic war of words was the “Appeal to

the *Civilized World*,” published on 4 October 1914. The text, signed by 93 of the most eminent representatives of the arts and sciences in Germany, sought to disprove a series of claims which had been made about Germany, such as the responsibility for the outbreak of the war, the violation of Belgian neutrality, and atrocities committed while in Belgium.<sup>24</sup> Their initiative shocked the international community, who saw an alignment of the scholarly signatories with German militarism. Consequently, many German professors then saw their names expelled from the lists of corresponding members of various French academies.<sup>25</sup> While the text was intended to convince neutrals of the legitimacy of the German cause, it undermined it, furthering a break in the fabric of scholarly internationalism.

Charlotte A. Lerg’s chapter in this volume explores this phenomenon; she examines the efforts of German professors to rally their colleagues in the United States to the side of the Central Powers by utilizing connections and networks forged before the war, a consequence of the expansion of the academic world in the late nineteenth century and the inter-connectedness of universities in North America and Germany. In so doing, Lerg poses a question which was especially pertinent to scholars in this period: when does political commitment, national identity and social interest become propaganda? This fundamental tension recurred in the public actions of many scholars throughout the war.

The role of scholars expanded as the war progressed, and the war came to encompass most, if not all, academic disciplines, increasingly under the aegis of state direction rather than self-mobilization. Scholars also took on a key role in defining the terms of the war and in re-thinking the very idea of the international community. This was most strikingly demonstrated with the mobilization of sociologists, historians, geographers and legal experts, from both Europe and North America, to prepare national governments to formulate their policy positions in the expectation of a peace conference being called once the conflict had ended.<sup>26</sup> By the end of the conflict, scholars of all kinds had been mobilized—either through their own initiative or by the state—in some kind of service related to the prosecution of the war.

The war also presented many opportunities for scholars. The application of scholarship to war-related problems, either on the battlefield or the home front, gave scholars recognition—and financial support—from national governments which had hitherto been denied them. As Heather Ellis shows with reference to the British Association for the Advancement

of Science (BAAS), this was especially pertinent in the case of the natural sciences, meaning that the war could be seen as an opportunity for physicists and chemists to advance not only the national standing of their disciplines, but the public estimation of their association and scientists more generally. By 1914, the BAAS was in something of a crisis, seen as a shadow of its nineteenth-century vitality, and its members seen as effete and unmanly. The war presented an opportunity to demonstrate not only their utility, but their masculinity. Ellis' chapter also demonstrates the important imperial context for British scholarship in this period.<sup>27</sup>

With the transformations in the function of the university in wartime, the conflict also presented a moment where reforms could be conceptualized and implemented. This was most strikingly achieved in Britain in 1918 with the adoption of the Ph.D. degree at many universities, recognition of the increasing importance of research in university life and function. However, engagement in the war was experienced in an uneven manner throughout the war, and differed from country to country and from discipline to discipline. In his chapter on the Russian university, Alexander Dmitriev shows that the First World War contributed to the end of the old university system and the rise of a movement advocating reform. Dmitriev focuses on the experience of junior faculty, a segment of the academic community who became especially vocal in demanding reform of national education in this period. Allied to the revolution of 1917, the First World War contributed to the end of the old "imperial" university system. This chapter demonstrates the tensions between national, imperial and international understandings of higher education. Cumulatively, the processes by which scholars, institutions and disciplines went to war that are outlined in the first section of this book demonstrate the different time frames and geographies of mobilization at the beginning of the Great War.

## RUPTURES

The ruptures of wartime were many, and they occurred at different points during the conflict. Ruptures occurred in the lives of institutions, international associations, the publication of journals and the personal lives of individual scholars. The time frames for ruptures depended on myriad local, national and institutional conditions. The mobilization of students into national armies emptied university buildings, undermining a traditionally vibrant academic life. This was often experienced

acutely by those who remained, both students and staff, who struggled to continue their work as they had done before 1914. This rupture in university life could also prove permanent, as thousands of students died in the war. Indeed, the death rate among students and those educated at universities tended to be higher than among most other social groups, owing to their generally being mobilized as junior officers.<sup>28</sup> Ruptures could, however, occur at different times; for individuals, the greatest rupture could be the death of a loved one at any point in the war. For institutions, the response was staggered depending on when their respective nation entered the war, or when students and alumni saw combat in large numbers.

The international community of scholars was victim to one of the greatest ruptures of wartime, with scholars on opposing sides being split almost from the outset, with those in neutral countries also feeling the effects of newly hostile academic relations as well as the cessation of much international exchange. This was a consequence of the cultural war, waged since 1914 by scholars on all sides, which meant that scholarly discourses became hostile and personal relationships were frequently embittered. At Oxford University, a series of pamphlets were published by scholars and achieved a mass circulation which popularized many of the belligerent ideas which accompanied the outbreak of war, including the idea that Germany had wantonly declared war before sweeping through defenceless lands, pillaging and looting along the way. This narrative was typical of the rupture of 1914 and 1915 between British scholars—many of whom had been educated at German universities—and their colleagues in Germany.<sup>29</sup> French scientists articulated a violent rhetoric on the nature and method of German science. In this war of minds, they tried to oppose a German science whose destructive modernity could lead to the violation of individual rights, with a French science devoted to morality and justice.<sup>30</sup> The hostile rhetoric of the early war years begged the question of how and when scholars would return to pre-war relations—if it were possible at all. This is explored in the final section of this book.

Ruptures were also intellectual. The First World War led to what the French poet Paul Valéry called “the crisis of the mind,” a breach in the modes of thought which informed how intellectuals understood civilization. Valéry was one of a number of intellectuals who interrogated this theme. This was also a preoccupation for the Swiss polymath Waldemar Deonna, as Christina Theodosiou demonstrates in her chapter. Deonna

was troubled by what he saw as a retreat to primitivism and mysticism brought about by the war and sought to use his scientific expertise to make sense of that which was causing him anxiety. Deonna's quandary was, in one sense, a consequence of the subsuming of intellectual practices and structures by the war. Ruptures were both literal and imagined, with intellectual ruptures often continuing long after the guns had fallen silent.

The discipline of sociology, itself the product of the perception of crisis in industrial European societies, faced new dilemmas with the outbreak of war, as Andrew Johnston shows in his chapter on French and American sociology. By 1914, sociology was an internationally organized and conceptualized discipline, albeit one which drew strongly on German intellectual currents. In France, the sociological school of Émile Durkheim was mostly wiped out in the war, taking with it an abundance of knowledge.<sup>31</sup> The outbreak of war saw sociologists apply their learning to fundamental questions raised by the war about the organization of national and international society. In the United States, neutral until 1917, sociologists drifted more towards the methods utilized by their French counterparts, partly due to a general questioning of German scholarship in wartime. Johnston's chapter highlights the convergence of a multitude of ruptures for a community of scholars: in internationalism, intellectual practices and the fabric of often tight-knit academic communities.

The idea of rupture also presents a multiplicity of time frames for the conceptualization of wartime changes, which were dependent upon institutional and national specificities. In his chapter, Tomás Irish shows how the outbreak of war in 1914 was merely the first in a sequence of ruptures to shake Trinity College Dublin.<sup>32</sup> A university with close ties to the British Empire, the outbreak of war denuded it of the vitality of student life, but it was the Easter Rising of 1916 and the ensuing Irish Revolution which exacerbated the profound sense of change for the institution. By 1922, Trinity was an uncomfortable and unwitting part of the new Irish Free State, the culmination of almost a decade of intense upheaval which was atypical of universities of the period but simultaneously shared much of the experience of institutions in Britain, France, Germany and elsewhere.

This dynamic of rupture was not restricted to belligerent nations. Scholarly institutions in neutral nations, such as the Nobel Institute in Sweden, were exposed to the aftershocks initiated by the war and had

to constantly adapt to the wider split in the international scholarly community. Indeed, perhaps the greatest rupture emanating from the war occurred following its conclusion, when many Allied scientists decided to pursue an official “boycott” of their German colleagues by denying them membership of the International Research Council.<sup>33</sup> This shows that, while 1914 was perhaps the greatest single moment of rupture in the war, the experience of academic communities was varied and contingent on a variety of factors specific to their local experience, national policy and international connectedness.

The cessation of internationalism in wartime overshadowed attempts to establish normality upon the cessation of the conflict in 1918. During the war, some scholars had ceased correspondence with colleagues in hostile nations. The majority of international scholarly associations ceased meeting in wartime, while the international exchange of journals and books became difficult following the Allied blockade of Germany. The resumption of cordial relations between scholars who had formerly been on opposing sides in the war only took place after a long and difficult process of reconciliation.

### DEMOBILIZATIONS

While the end of the war led to a military and an economic demobilization, peace required another form of demobilization in order to allow the reconciliation of former societies at war, namely a “cultural demobilization”—the process through which hostile wartime attitudes were undone.<sup>34</sup> For scholars, the reconstitution of their transnational community following the wartime demonization of the enemy would prove a telling measure of the effectiveness of this process. The conditions necessary to allow for the reconstruction of the international community of scholars as before the war were not always possible in the immediate aftermath of the war. The community was divided and the former enemy was often no longer accepted as a partner in international initiatives.

The heightening of rivalries following the war took on an intensity not seen before the conflict, and reconciliation came about only after great difficulty. Cultural demobilization was complex and did not spontaneously follow the end of the conflict. The resumption of international scholarly relations can be seen in a number of different initiatives at both official and unofficial levels such as correspondence between individual scholars, exchanges of students, professors and books between

universities and institutions, and fully international conferences. Tara Windsor explores these issues in her chapter on the re-establishment of Anglo-German student exchanges and their institutionalization through the creation of the German Academic Exchange Service and the Anglo-German Academic Board. She analyses the interaction between the development of structural organizations and the value given to inter-personal encounters between the German and British representatives. The students who participated in those exchanges were engaged in a dialogue and contributed to re-building personal and institutional relations disturbed by the years of war. Windsor's chapter is important in restoring agency for demobilization to students rather than the traditional focus upon professors.

Wartime mobilization had been beneficial to the advancement and funding of certain disciplines. In science, the war led to structural transformations which affected the practice of science and demonstrated that scientists and laboratories would not be able to remain indifferent to the upheavals of the wider world.<sup>35</sup> In this way, mobilization for their country during the war became a mobilization for science. In Germany, science became a substitute for the deposed political and military authorities after the war, while in Britain, new structures which were instituted by the state to harness and fund scientific research continued their work into peacetime.<sup>36</sup> If wartime advances were due to mobilization for war, demobilization could mean their undoing, threatening the newfound position of national importance which had been achieved by the natural sciences. Despite the new role of science in post-war Germany, the precarious financial situation posed a great threat to the survival of German science and its influence internationally, more so than the boycott from its former international colleagues. Elisabeth Piller explores the international aid programme to German science in the aftermath of the Great War and the motives and impacts on the process of international academic conciliation. While international aid seemed to facilitate academic rapprochement, Piller argues that it also hardened German inflexibility towards former belligerents and contributed to perpetuating the hostility between the two ex-enemy camps.

While the international community of science was divided in a formal sense, with international associations and learned societies continuing to adhere to the ruptures of wartime, reconciliation emerged in other forms. Informal channels of communication were important in this respect, with individuals in both formerly neutral and Allied countries

making contact with their colleagues in Germany and Austria. Although cultural demobilization is often seen as pivoting around the Locarno Treaties of 1925, it is evident that here, too, different time frames were followed by individuals, groups and institutions in the aftermath of war. There was no single path to reconciliation, and the associated issues, particularly in the case of disciplinary politics, were complex. In her chapter, Marie-Eve Chagnon shows how American scientists played a key role in the normalization of international relations in the early 1920s. They acted through formal as well as informal channels to enable conciliation with their German colleagues. While their motives were many, they showed that they were ready to put politics aside for the benefit of science.

Scholarly communities, individual disciplines and international relations were not only changed by the war, but had an impact upon it, both during the conflict and in post-war efforts to understand the cataclysm of 1914–1918. The post-war order which emerged in 1919—which was framed by Allied scholars—excluded the Germans and Austrians and brought back into question the very nature of the international scholarly community which had, up to 1914, made claims to political impartiality and universalism. The experiences of national wartime mobilization, allied to the continued exclusion of the “former” enemy, meant that the academic world which initially emerged from the war was different to that of 1914.

This forms the subject of Mona L. Siegel’s chapter on the efforts of French and German historians to come to an agreement about the most contentious issues in their respective nations’ textbooks dealing with the history of the war. This initiative began in 1935 and only reached an agreement in 1951. The carefully negotiated agreement set the issue aside rather than resolving it. Siegel notes that, rather than leading to the demobilization of hostile mind-sets, the Versailles Treaty of 1919 actually saw a further re-mobilization of history. In other words, the intellectual war which broke out in 1914 would continue for decades. After the war, individual scholars continued to reflect and write about the war and its impact, and conceptualized different ways through which cultural demobilization—or reconciliation with the former enemy—might best be achieved. Some of them proposed writing a joint history, with representatives of both the Allies and the Central Powers agreeing on certain points about the origins of the war. However, they too found that they were confronted by the difficult heritage of the conflict.

The debates about the origins and conduct of the war continued for decades and still inhibited agreement between historians after the conclusion of the Second World War, demonstrating the difficulty and intensity of the demobilization process following the Great War.

## CONCLUSION

In his closing commentary, Roy MacLeod reconsiders a moment in academic life in Germany in 1917, bringing to a close perhaps the worst year of the conflict, soon to be profoundly changed by revolution in Russia, and the entry of the United States. An invited lecture by the sociologist and historian Max Weber—delivered to a small audience of students, women, wounded and old men, and organized by the Freie Studentische group of the Landesverbandes Bayern in the Kunstsaal Steinicke in München—was to form the basis of Weber's famous *Wissenschaft als Beruf*, a testimonial to the way things had been, and now were, and a presentiment of the way things might thereafter become. With this personal manifesto, an unintended counterpoint to the Manifesto of the 93 in 1914, this volume ends not with a conclusion but with a consideration of some of the many tasks awaiting historians in our time and in this field—a rewarding challenge for those across the world who are still wrestling with the legacies of the Great War a century on.

The chapters in this volume demonstrate the importance of understanding the academic world on its own terms, acknowledging the importance of individuals, disciplines, institutions and different geographies in dictating and mediating its wartime experience. Taken together, these conditions intimately informed the process of mobilization in wartime and mediated the process of demobilization in the aftermath of the conflict. The global reach of scholarship in 1914 is particularly important here; much as the military conflict soon became a world war owing to the reach of European empires and the inter-connectedness of international economies, so too did the academic war soon spread through scholarly networks to encompass territories that were not yet aligned in the conflict, with the United States being particularly important in this process. And while the war underlined the vast international reach of academic networks, it also re-affirmed the national (frequently European) rivalries and animosities at the heart of both the conflict and of scholarship in the early twentieth century.

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PART I

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# Mobilizations

# Off Campus: German Propaganda Professors in America, 1914–1917

*Charlotte A. Lerg*

“In this war of ideas,” German professor of philosophy Eugen Kühnemann wrote in 1915, “America, as the greatest of the neutral western nations, is the real battleground.”<sup>1</sup> On this “battleground” numerous professors took a stand, Kühnemann being most visible among them. Academics mobilized and were mobilized in Britain as well as in France, Germany, the Habsburg Empire, Russia and, after 1917, also in the United States. However, the particular situation in America during the neutrality years, this essay will argue, allowed for the emergence of a specific type of politically engaged academic that—certainly as mediated by the press—was particular to the German side: the propaganda professor.

## CRUMBLING TIES

Ever since the turn of the twentieth century the German government had stepped up its efforts to generate appreciation among the American educated class. Its attempts at cultural diplomacy on campus included

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an elaborate gift of plaster casts from the Kaiser directly to Harvard University as the basis for a Germanic museum in 1902/3. It had also brought about the establishment of professorial exchange programs and guest professorships at Harvard University in 1905, at Columbia University in 1906 and at the universities of Chicago and Wisconsin soon after that, to name just the most prominent ones. American universities had welcomed these offerings as another kind of asset in the ever-fiercer domestic competition for students, funds and public favour that was gaining momentum among US institutions of higher education.

Germany was trying to artificially foster and maintain a favourable transatlantic network that had formed naturally during the nineteenth century when many American scholars sought out German universities for advanced studies they could not yet obtain at home.<sup>2</sup> Due to their indelible belief in their own superiority in the academic sphere, German scholars and diplomatic representatives were blind and deaf to the American criticism and self-assertion that began long before the war. Jörg Nagler has shown that an outspoken American criticism of Germany's claim to cultural superiority can be detected in the public discourse long before the rhetoric of war equated *Kultur* with militarism, autocracy and atrocities.<sup>3</sup> In 1904, when Germany staged a bombastic display of its scholarly prowess at the St. Louis World's Fair, an American commentator almost saw it as the swansong of former glory: "[T]his showing was a magnificent attempt on the part of Germany to demonstrate that [...] her universities are still the foremost in the world," he begins, yet he continues: "In view of the marvellous advance of American universities [...], this exhibit assumed a new and interesting aspect, even if it may not be assumed to become historic."<sup>4</sup> The dean of philosophy at Berlin University, economist Adolf Wagner, intended a joke in 1908 when he quipped that, in the future of the republic of letters, it may no longer be "*Germania docet*" but, heaven forbid, "*America docet*." Only his hurried addendum—"let us do everything we can to prevent this"—may suggest a secret awareness of change never to be admitted openly.<sup>5</sup>

The coming of the First World War should have made it abundantly clear that the motives on each side of the Atlantic had been different. While the Germans thought they could now harvest the political seeds they had sown, American universities were at pains to salvage their image and to distance themselves from their German ties, as that was what the new political climate and public opinion demanded. Moreover, as US

institutions had professionalized and transformed, they were keen to take their place in the academic world. But this discrepancy still seemed to have escaped many German scholars, as well as their political superiors in the Ministry of Culture, who tried to actuate old ties for propaganda purposes. In August, Friedrich Schmidt-Ott of the German Ministry of Culture encouraged the former exchange professors to write to their friends and colleagues across the Atlantic to explain the German situation in the conflict and to gain their sympathy.<sup>6</sup> How many German academics followed this request privately is hard to determine. Ranging from the occasional sentence in otherwise mostly scholarly or personal correspondence, to page-long explications preoccupied with current affairs, naturally the war crept into the exchange of letters within the international learned community. Some professors, however, made their efforts poignantly public.

This chapter will examine German professors who took up the cross for the German cause in the United States during the neutrality period between 1914 and 1917. The focus will be on those scholars who started out from Germany. Either they tried to influence American public opinion from afar by publishing in American newspapers, or they embarked on a transatlantic journey with the express purpose to travel the country and deliver speeches in favour of the German cause. This set-up of the analysis hence leaves out the considerable number of German-born professors employed at American universities. Some of them had already taken on American citizenship – like, for example, Franz Boas and Kuno Francke, both in 1891—or they did so during the war. Others may have made a point of remaining German, like Hugo Münsterberg. However, even if convinced of the righteousness of the German position and—like Münsterberg—not shy about saying so, these German professors faced a very different challenge. Their existence after all, depended on their academic and social standing in the United States.<sup>7</sup> They could not and would not dedicate their lives exclusively to propaganda work as, for example, Eugen Kühnemann did from his arrival in New York in September 1914 onwards.

Nevertheless, even for those who suspended their teaching and research for the duration of the war, or relegated it to minor importance, the reference to the authority they deduced from their membership in the academic community was key to their performance as propaganda professors. “Perhaps nothing did more to impress the public mind,” Lord Ponsonby famously wrote, “than the assistance given

in propaganda by intellectuals and literary notables.”<sup>8</sup> An academic kinship not only implied a vague notion of impartiality and expertise, but also afforded a social position of considerable respect in the public discourse—at least in the German experience. An American newspaper article explained at the beginning of the war: “Nowhere else in the world is scholarship so venerated [as in Germany]; nowhere else is there such ready submission to the influence of teachers.”<sup>9</sup>

### FALLEN IDOLS

Evoking their social position, German scholars mobilized quickly after the conflict erupted in the summer of 1914.<sup>10</sup> Even before the famous “Appeal to the Civilized World” was issued in October 1914, the two Jena professors Rudolf Eucken and Ernst Haeckel began publishing public addresses in American newspapers. “These thinkers have readers and admirers all over the world,” the *Chicago Tribune* reminded its readers, “their views are of particular interest.”<sup>11</sup> Eucken had just returned home to Germany after spending a semester at Harvard University as an exchange professor. Haeckel, too, was well known and well connected in US academic circles, especially among eugenicists. Both of them would soon after also sign the Appeal. Their effort in America started off with a “Declaration” in the *New York Times* on 10 September 1914.<sup>12</sup> The text was also picked up later by George Sylvester Viereck’s *Fatherland*, one of the few ardently pro-German serial publications in English.<sup>13</sup> Here the two German philosophers took a very explicit stand against Britain. The article framed accusations of “brutal national egotism” and “hypocritical Pharisaism” with a lament for the forced breakdown of fruitful scientific cooperation for which Britain was clearly to blame: “[Thus is] destroyed the collaboration of the two nations which was so full of promise for the intellectual uplift of humanity. But the other party has willed it so.”<sup>14</sup>

Two days later the *New York Times* published yet another letter from the same two Jena authors addressed “To the Universities of America.”<sup>15</sup> While the Declaration, save for its appeal to the scholarly community, was more generic in its dismissal of Britain, this new text was explicitly written for an American academic audience. Haeckel and Eucken pointed out that they both felt “especially justified” in addressing their American colleagues, “as so many scientific and personal relations connect us both with the universities of America.” The entire opening paragraph is dedicated to establishing and reiterating “the lasting intercourse of scholarly

research” among German and American scholars. The two authors reminded readers of the “[n]umerous American scholars who received their scientific training at our universities,” as well as of the exchange programmes. They did not fail to add a personal note: “the idea of our American friends’ thoughts and sympathies being with us gives us a strong feeling of comfort in this gigantic struggle.” And after having elaborated over four more paragraphs on the crimes of their enemies, they concluded: “[US] universities know what German culture means to the world, so we trust they will stand with Germany.”<sup>16</sup>

It was still early days and many Americans were not yet prepared to accept the “fall of the German mandarins.”<sup>17</sup> Reactions in letters to the editor showed surprise, disbelief and attempts at exculpating excuses for the two German scholars whose work they appreciated and whose authority seemed well established. “I cannot help wishing that one day we may get the inside history of the last pronouncement from those beloved scholars,” wrote “R.W.” to the *New York Times*. The writer seemed convinced that the men could only have acted under duress, inquiring about “how long they resisted pressure” and “whether the delegation that visited them was composed wholly of scholars or perhaps a majority of militarists.”<sup>18</sup> An editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* asked similar questions and added: “One wonders how much of the other side the censors allowed the philosophers to see and ponder.”<sup>19</sup> Frank Jewett Mather, who had studied in Berlin and was now professor of modern languages at Princeton University, also saw his German colleagues “under the spell of militarism.”<sup>20</sup> While he was less willing to find excuses, he was still devastated: “To see these two venerated thinkers, international figures both, indulging a violent unconsidered and malevolent nationalism is a profoundly depressing spectacle,” he wrote to the *New York Times*, and dolefully asked, “Where professors Eucken and Haeckel have fallen, who shall stand?”<sup>21</sup>

What most upset Jewett was the fact that these men were employing a language and a line of argument that did not adhere to academic standards: “[W]riting without composure, judging without consideration of the data, applying [sic] with the cheap phrases borrowed from chauvinistic journalism.”<sup>22</sup> These reactions, intensified once the Appeal was published, show how the American public, both in academia and beyond, judged the German professors based on the image formed in the preceding decade. In the American interpretation, Germany’s scholarly achievements were founded on two principles in particular: going back

to an almost mythical veneration of Wilhelm von Humboldt's ideals, empirical research was to guide all inquiry free from interference of all kinds. Academic pursuits, therefore, had to be politically—and indeed, socially—disinterested and removed from the pull of current affairs.<sup>23</sup> In fact, already before the war some American academics of a younger generation had started to question the unconditional value of this “German” version of science. Progressivism and populist tendencies in the United States were demanding to hold higher education accountable for how it contributed to society and thus stressed the notion of service over an endorsement of mere research for the sake of research, as they dismissively labelled what they saw as the German approach.<sup>24</sup> However, in a way, that very ivory-tower identity of the German mandarins made their (self-) mobilization somewhat more morally despicable than that of their Anglo-American colleagues, who ultimately could argue that they were just doing their duty to society as citizens. While, administratively, German professors were state employees, the keystone of their professional identity, again evoking Humboldt, was independence and political impartiality. For them, therefore, it was pivotal not to be seen as being mobilized by the authorities or as serving the government, but to explicitly act upon their own impulse and for a national cause that was abstract and idealist rather than political and practical.

A heated exchange on the pages of the *New York Evening Post* in May 1915 illustrates the diverging opinions on German academic tradition. A three-column letter extolled the achievements of German science, ending with the vehement plea: “[the author] considers German aggression and conduct in general in the war as hopelessly brutal, without warrant and without a redeeming feature. He is not, however, willing to see the beautiful plains of German endeavour and accomplishment overridden, lava-like by the eruptions of the present.” Another reader, thoroughly appalled by “our obsession over German science,” passionately disagreed: “[This] is a typical example of the tendency prevalent in America to belittle our own science.” True genius, he elaborated, lay with America, as opposed to Germany, where “scientific literature is made up of details, often extremely trivial.”<sup>25</sup> Militarism had turned the once-admired empiricism into soulless drudgery. The older generation of American scholars, many of whom had spent time during their student days in Berlin, Heidelberg, Leipzig or Göttingen, may have been hesitant to readily abandon their admiration for German academia. Their younger colleagues, however, who were striving for acceptance, and a public that

was sceptical of academic elitism anyway, all but jumped at the opportunity to step out of the German shadow. Using their clout as German professors in the United States thus arguably counteracted the propaganda effort of Eucken, Haeckel and many others like them who attempted to turn their transatlantic academic networks into a public platform for the German cause.

### AIMING FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS

The writing of articles was not enough for the philosopher Eugen Kühnemann. “Among German scholars I have always been the one to advocate the importance of energetic speech in public life [...] all my life I had practiced the spoken word as something sacred,” he reminded the readers of his memoirs.<sup>26</sup> Incidentally, for many of the influential German academics of the time, including Eucken and Haeckel, their signing of the Appeal is often mentioned today only as an afterthought to their academic legacy. Kühnemann, on the other hand, who specialized in Kant, Schiller and Nietzsche, is usually remembered, if at all, for his agitation during the war and not for his scholarly accomplishments. This may be attributed to the fact that, even during his lifetime, his reputation stemmed more from his oratorical skills and his ability to rouse his listeners than from any lasting academic achievement. The German papers, for example, knew him as a “well-known orator” who habitually delighted audiences with his “artful speeches.”<sup>27</sup> During a later journey to the United States, the *California Staatszeitung* described his manner of speaking most vividly: “His captivating eloquence is well known. He doesn’t deliver his speeches like a daily routine. His organ sweeps along [the audience] like organ-music and the power of fanfare.”<sup>28</sup> So much praise came his way for his presentations that Kühnemann almost grew irritated. “Ever since the beginning of my career,” he noted, slightly hurt, in 1934, when a colleague had yet again congratulated him on his rhetorical skills, “my opponents have tried to find the reason for my influence in some kind of rhetorical tricks. However, I may be a speaker but I am no rhetorician.”<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, these skills rendered him ideally suited to undertake propaganda work. Moreover, he was fluent in English, which was by no means a given at the time, and all the more relevant as the common language was considered one of Britain’s main advantages in the struggle for US public opinion.

During his three terms as exchange professor (twice at Harvard University and again in 1912 at the University of Wisconsin), Kühnemann had developed a good understanding of American life. Looking back in his memoirs, he remembered his first visit to the United States and mused: “Why should I deny that from this first contact I brought back a deep love for America, why should I hide that this love grew constantly until the World War put it to the ultimate test.”<sup>30</sup> He had from the beginning seen his work abroad as part of a larger mission for German spiritual and ethnic strengthening and he directed considerable effort towards the German-Americans. Firmly rooted in German idealism, for him the “German spirit” was key to a glorious future for the fatherland. Just months before war broke out in 1914 his collection of essays *Vom Weltreich des deutschen Geistes* clearly outlined his ideas.<sup>31</sup> Keenly aware of the ideological dimension of the war, Kühnemann explained in 1915: “We now know that war today consists of three parts of equal importance and that it has to be won on three battlefields: arms, economy [...]—and public opinion.”<sup>32</sup> Consequently, he considered his own role as much a part of warfare as that of the fighting soldier on the front line and he was as enthusiastic about volunteering as were the young men who marched the streets of Berlin (and Paris) in the summer of 1914. “The call of the hour appeared clear,” he remembered. “We were all part of the Fatherland’s great struggle.”<sup>33</sup>

In 1915, as part of his propaganda work, Kühnemann authored a pamphlet called *Germany, America and the War*. It was published in English in the pro-German series *Issues and Events*, edited in New York City. A German version followed soon after, published in Chicago. Priced at only ten cents, both made his ideas available for his audience to re-read after he had impressed them with one of his speeches.<sup>34</sup> We can thus distil some of his ideas from these sources. Interestingly, even if the reports quoted above clearly indicate that his success was largely based on delivery, it is worth scrutinizing the construction of his arguments as well. Here his previous experience and his knowledge of American life and history served him well.

Kühnemann’s main concern was to justify Germany’s actions and to settle the question of who carried the blame for the outbreak of war. He elaborately laid the blame at the feet of Britain and Russia. The issue of German atrocities, especially in Belgium, that dominated British propaganda in America, received only very brief attention. Expressing his astonishment at the “gullibility of the world,” he passes over the topic

almost as something no educated person would take seriously.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the authors of most of the other, rather generic German pamphlets, he did not simply dwell on notions of honour and culture. While both, of course, did feature prominently, he also cunningly aimed to gain American understanding by comparing and relating the events in Europe to US history and politics. “Would America endure from Mexico what Austria too long suffered Serbia to do?” he asked, well aware of the critical situation on the Rio Grande in 1914. And he went even further and characterized “Mexico, somewhat like Serbia, [as] a little bandit nation [...] trying to break up the Union.” In order to make a point about Germany’s desperate encirclement, he again painted a creative picture that played on Americans’ sensitivities: “[I]magine the time when Canada may be a nation of 200 million with a national will of her own, South America a single great Latin republic with a national will of her own; Japan, mistress of the Pacific with a mighty fleet [...] Would not every American then be a soldier [...]?”<sup>36</sup>

He also elaborately tried to counter the strong charges of militarism that had become a dominant trope in the American disparagement of Germany. In Kühnemann’s interpretation, the German army became a great democratizing force, where “the nobleman serves shoulder to shoulder with the peasant.” Incidentally, the idea that military service could propel democratic development was not new in America. None other than Theodore Roosevelt had extensively dwelled on the idea during the Spanish–American War in 1898.<sup>37</sup> Later it also became a key argument in the American war effort after 1917, when general conscription was introduced for the first time on a large scale.

The trope of “the first modern war,” so often employed by contemporaries and historians alike in regard to the First World War, also includes psychological warfare. Analysing the mobilization of academics for a war of ideas, at a time when the very concept of propaganda was only just taking shape, poses the question of how these scholars themselves reflected upon the war work they were doing.<sup>38</sup> After all, “intent” and “deliberation” are key premises in the modern definition of propaganda.<sup>39</sup> Some signatories of the Appeal, for example, in justifying their actions, emphasized the public responsibility that came with their social position. Kühnemann, however, on an abstract level, seems to have been aware of the ambivalent nature of engaging in the kind of work he was doing, but he believed, since this was war, the end justified the means. “The efforts we undertook during the war in America we called

educational work and our opponents called it German propaganda,” he mused with hindsight. For him, however, he concludes that it was neither, but rather a “free service rendered from love.”<sup>40</sup> Moreover, in line with the case he was building against the Allies, he took the moral high ground and pointed the finger at Britain: “The Germans [...] went into war with the conviction that wars are decided by men and weapons on the battlefield. The English [...] have made a real discovery, to wit: that it is quite effective to carry on a war in the souls of men and the public opinion of the world.”<sup>41</sup> The British were waging a war away from the battlefields in the academic world, but also in the press. Like in the war at large, Germany, he argued, was only defending herself.

Among his German and German-American friends Kühnemann readily admitted—even boasted—about his own role in the conflict over public opinion. With no little pride he specified at any given occasion during his later life that he had delivered 296 speeches in 137 different American cities.<sup>42</sup> He considered America’s entry into the war on the side of the Allies almost a personal failure.<sup>43</sup> In an open letter to an American friend—published in Germany in 1917—the returned and disillusioned propaganda professor presented his seething analysis of the unprofessionalism of German intelligence work and propaganda. He criticizes the naïvety, the dilettantism and the lack of funds and organization. Germany had done too little too late in order to win the war of ideas in America. It should have paid more attention to its “largest culture-colony [*Kulturkolonie*],” he later concluded.<sup>44</sup> He complained that the condescending didactic attitude many advocates of the German cause had adopted brought more harm than good. He seemingly failed to see his own efforts as part of this heavy-handed conduct. Many of his contemporaries, though, thought him decidedly overzealous. Moritz Julius Bonn, who spent the neutrality years in America as an exchange professor, remembered his colleague as “a travelling salesman for German culture [who] oozed culture and [...] boomed culture.”<sup>45</sup> Kühnemann can clearly be considered a modern propagandist. He carefully framed his message to be most effective for a specific foreign audience, and he consciously defined his public appearances, his speeches and his publications not only as a patriotic duty or as his contribution to the general war effort, but as part of actually fighting the war itself. This also distinguished him from his academic peers mobilizing at home.

## AIMING FOR THE HEADLINES

Publishing newspaper articles and delivering public addresses may be considered the more traditional way of seeking an audience to influence. Kuno Meyer, another German professor, was to take a yet more modern approach as he carefully placed aside-comments or attempted to invoke the unwieldy power of the press to intimidate his opponent. These actions generated what twentieth-century sociology and media studies have diagnosed to be the power derived from dominating the news circle.<sup>46</sup>

Kuno Meyer boarded the Dutch steamer *Rotterdam* in November 1914 on a mission not unlike Kühnemann's. As a professor of English, he also knew how to express himself capably in the foreign language, having lived in England for more than 30 years. Moreover, he specialized in Celtic Studies, and his scholarly commitment to the study of Irish culture and the translation and analysis of the Irish language had earned him an academic reputation among his colleagues on the British Isles, as well as the appreciation of Irish nationalists like Roger Casement.<sup>47</sup>

Based on this particular skill set and his expertise, Meyer contrived a plan to travel across the Atlantic and particularly target the Irish-Americans, who, in view of their antagonism to England, Germany hoped to draw onto her side. The idea had come to him while taking a cure at Bad Nenndorf just west of Hannover.<sup>48</sup> In conversations with friends and colleagues of the ultra-nationalist and annexationist Pan-German League, the plan took shape. The two historians Wilhelm Wiegand and Theodor Schiemann especially, who repeatedly visited Meyer in the quiet little North German spa during the late summer of 1914, encouraged his transatlantic endeavour.<sup>49</sup>

Before 1914, Kuno Meyer had never been to America. However, his brother, Eduard Meyer, a renowned scholar of ancient history, had spent a semester at Harvard in 1909 and was well connected in the overlapping circles of the social and academic elites along the US East Coast. A personal friend of Columbia University President Nicholas Butler and Harvard President Lawrence Lowell, whose inauguration he had attended, Eduard could provide his brother Kuno with the necessary conspicuous connections to grant him access to American society.<sup>50</sup> The provocative Celticist was well prepared to make the most of it. Upon his arrival in New York, Kuno wrote to Richard Irvine Best, an old friend from his student days, now an influential scholar in Dublin: "Unless they

keep it out of the papers you will soon hear from me.”<sup>51</sup> Indeed, in the weeks that followed, Kuno Meyer repeatedly generated publicity through incidents that the press could not ignore.

A short notice in the *Boston Evening Post* on 18 December 1914 made a brief mention of Meyer that was to develop into a minor scandal. Two-thirds of the article dealt with a rally of the New York Irish Volunteers Committee the night before. A “vitriolic speech” by Irish labour leader James Larkin had almost descended into turmoil. Apparently a fist fight had only been avoided thanks to the two-man band who “direct[ed] the excited emotions of the audience into patriotic manifestations by Irish songs.”<sup>52</sup> The article then, in its final paragraph, rather suddenly turned to Meyer, insinuating his presence at the event but never explicitly placing him there. The paper reported the scholar’s strong reaction after Harvard University supposedly cancelled a lecture engagement on account of a speech he had given at another Irish rally a few weeks earlier in Brooklyn. “I am glad it happened so,” Meyer is quoted as saying, “because I could never breathe an atmosphere so close and dense as that which seems to prevail at Harvard.”<sup>53</sup>

This provocation did not fail to engender a reaction from the university. Having just weathered a storm of indignation by alumni for refusing to dismiss two of his German members of staff when war broke out, President Lawrence Lowell would not stand accused of partiality and censorship. The next day, the *Boston Globe* placed the affair on the front page, even sparing space for a photograph of Kuno and the verbatim reprint of the “laconic statement from Harvard authorities.”<sup>54</sup> The press release had clarified that, while informal talks had been considered an invitation, Kuno Meyer had never officially been asked to come to Harvard.<sup>55</sup> The statement also confirmed that this final decision was taken because of the professor’s “active propaganda among the Irish” that would have compromised the “neutral attitude assumed by the University.”<sup>56</sup>

A week later, when asked about the incident by the *Gaelic American*, Meyer aimed to underscore a narrative that cast President Lowell as the arbitrary censor of academic freedom. He had never attempted to conceal his intentions in coming to America, Meyer insisted, he had even sent a copy of one of his speeches to a colleague at Harvard. This innocent openness, he implied, had caused the regrettable turn of events.<sup>57</sup>

Eduard Meyer—Kuno’s brother back in Berlin—was using the episode for his own propaganda at home. In a passionate article in the

German *Vossische Zeitung*, he voiced a loathing of Harvard and Lowell that, arguably, could only have been spurred by a feeling of personal insult by the former friend. He decried the entire professorial exchange and concluded that, even if in future new networks may grow, “let us hope that no German scholar will ever sink so low as to accept an invitation from that university.”<sup>58</sup>

As long as the Irish-American papers and the Boston press had primarily reported on the affair, it had remained almost local—even if the wide circulation of the *Boston Globe* reached beyond the city and its environs. However, via Berlin and the *Vossische Zeitung*, by early 1915 the *New York Times* and even the London papers had picked up the story.<sup>59</sup> The run-in with Harvard University had drawn international attention to the Meyer brothers’ propaganda work. Ramifications were quick to follow. Liverpool University, where Kuno Meyer had taught for almost 30 years, passed a resolution condemning him as “an agent of sedition,” and he lost the Freedom of the City from both Cork and Dublin.<sup>60</sup> By April 1915 it appeared that Kuno Meyer’s attempt to stir up negative publicity against Lowell and his institution had backfired—no matter how calculated it had actually been.

But the Meyer–Harvard controversy was not over. An anti-German poem had won first prize in an undergraduate competition of the student paper *Harvard Advocate* and had consequently been published in the *New York Times*.<sup>61</sup> Livid, Meyer penned a letter to President Lowell—sending it simultaneously, as he pointed out in a postscript, to all the major American newspapers: “At a time when it behoves all academic institutions [...] to exert all their influence for promoting amenity in international relations, for safeguarding the common interest of science, scholarship and learning [...] the University of Harvard has wantonly and wickedly gone out of its way to carry strife into the hallowed peace of the academic world.”<sup>62</sup>

Again, Lowell would not let such strong words stand unchallenged, and he replied—just as publicly—with a calm yet firm letter: “As you are aware, the freedom of speech of neither the professors nor the students in an American University is limited [...] for we believe it to be the only [policy] which accords with the principle of academic freedom. I hope the time will come when you and your colleagues in Germany will recognize that this course is the only right one; and that it is essential to the course of universal scholarship.”<sup>63</sup>

Papers far and near picked up the story and some publications even editorialized it.<sup>64</sup> University presidents congratulated Lowell on his stand and a flood of letters arrived at the Harvard President's office from newspaper readers all over the country, who simply felt the need to weigh in on the issue. Most writers were in favour of Lowell's decision to allow the poem. Amusingly, about two-thirds of this correspondence included alternative versions of the poem in question, or some other kind of lyrical commentary of varying quality and length. Emotions were running high as, when the hullabaloo about the incident continued into early May, it coincided with the sinking of the *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915, which caused a passionate anti-German reflex among the American public.

Space allowing, the newspapers usually printed both letters and, of course, the poem, which thus ironically received a circulation far beyond what a second-year student author could ever have expected—and, in fact, what Kuno Meyer could have wanted, had he really only been concerned about the poem. Again, his publicity act appears to have backfired. However, building on the previous incident, Meyer had also grandiosely announced in his letter that, prompted by the poem, he had resigned his position as exchange professor at Harvard that he was to start that autumn. Years earlier, possibly initiated by his brother—Harvard exchange professor of 1909 Eduard Meyer—Kuno's name had been discussed for the temporary position at Harvard. But in the spring of 1915 no such arrangement had been made. Quite the contrary: any possible remaining inclination to extend an invitation had been halted by the éclat over the Irish rally a few months before. After all, none other than Kuno's brother, Eduard Meyer, had raged against the exchange program in his article in the *Vossische Zeitung*.<sup>65</sup> In short, the decision to discontinue the exchange had become apparent soon after hostilities had erupted.<sup>66</sup> Yet only the *Boston Globe* clarified that “Prof Meyer actually declined something that was never offered to him.”<sup>67</sup> All the other papers, including the *New York Times*, reported his claim without question and it smoothly passed into history.<sup>68</sup> Even today it lingers in most biographical sketches.<sup>69</sup> Lacking his personal papers of that time, it is impossible to determine how much of the dynamics of publicity and media logic Meyer could have planned or predicted. Arguably his exchange-professor publicity stunt benefited his personal legacy more than the German cause in the war: professor of Celtic Studies Kuno Meyer, who due to his propaganda work among the Irish had never officially been invited to speak at Harvard University, became famous as the

German professor who sacrificed a prestigious exchange position for his patriotic duty. But even if at home he could gain some personal credit from this coup, he could not win American sympathies for Germany's supposed injury at the hands of an undergraduate poet. The bulk of press coverage rather ridiculed the affair and its engineering agent, the German propaganda professor, who was now losing any remaining credibility. Even the *Chicago Tribune*, which had reported quite favourably on Meyer up to that point, ruefully conceded that "the incident is permitted to embitter the most useful German in the United States [...] we have lost an advocate in the court of German opinion."<sup>70</sup>

Beyond all the spin, Kuno Meyer's public dispute with Harvard University shows how, during the neutrality period, the war of ideas challenged American higher education to define an institutional identity. The Harvard President had pointed towards academic independence to keep out propaganda, yet he had pointed to academic freedom to defend against censorship. It was an attempt to claim a moral prerogative without committing to a political agenda of any one side; the US universities were grappling with their own version of the dilemma of American neutrality.

### UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The German schemes on the American campuses before the First World War, especially the professorial exchange, did indeed influence the German propaganda effort during the neutrality period between 1914 and 1917. The long-term effect, though, was not necessarily what the German government had intended or hoped for. With hindsight, Americans read sinister intentions into the pre-war cultural diplomacy and considered it the kind of manipulation one Michigan alumnus described in 1918: "Many of the exponents and apologists of *Kultur* were craftily 'planted' by Germany in our innocent colleges and universities."<sup>71</sup> German professors, who believed they were using the benefit of their old American connection when they reminded the US public of those pre-war efforts, really only reiterated that conspiratory narrative. French observers had always been careful not to replicate the heavy-handed German approach.<sup>72</sup> Hence, during the war, while other nations like France also sent academics across the sea, it was the German propaganda professor that became a trope in the American public perception—even if, for example, French representatives like Albert Geouffre Lapradelle

had more explicit instructions and reported more directly to their government.<sup>73</sup> Neither Kühnemann nor Meyer had been recruited for their propaganda work, and only with much effort did they secure at least some financial backing through semi-official government sources.<sup>74</sup> In fact, arguably, it was precisely the lack of coordination and the fact that propaganda was undertaken by privately passionate and overzealous individuals that made it appear overbearing and rendered it yet more ineffective. German ambassador Heinrich von Bernstorff reportedly complained to Moritz Julius Bonn about those “professors [...] who were running around the country presenting themselves, with more eloquence than sagacity, [and thereby] tended to increase his difficulties.”<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, a somewhat naïve attempt to manipulate the press could only backfire in a media landscape where the press perceived of itself as the guardian of popular rights and public freedom. Finally, German professors banked on a social standing afforded to them by their academic rank and position that was well established in Germany but nowhere near as powerful in the United States, where the social position of the academic was decidedly less elevated and often even under attack.

While academics mobilized all over the belligerent nations, the particular historical context of German–American relations in the academic world since the turn of the century created a unique breeding ground. Coupled with the particular nature and dynamic of US journalism and public discourse at the time, caught between populist ideals and everyday sensationalism, this environment allowed for the emergence of the propaganda professor as a persona specific to this setting.

## NOTES

1. Eugen Kühnemann, *Germany, America and the War*, vol. 12, Issues and Events (New York: Francis Dorl, 1915), 3.
2. Konrad H. Jarausch, “American Students in Germany, 1815–1914: The Structure of German and U.S. Matriculants at Göttingen University,” in *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, ed. Henry Geitz, Jürgen Heideking and Jürgen Herbst (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
3. Jörg Nagler, “From Culture to Kultur,” in *Transatlantic Images and Perceptions. Germany and America since 1776*, ed. David E. Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997).

4. J.W. Buel: *Louisiana and the Fair*, bd. VIII (St. Louis: World's Progress Publishing Cooperation, 1905), 2823.
5. Bernhard vom Brocke, "Internationale Wissenschaftsbeziehungen und die Anfänge einer deutschen auswärtigen Kulturpolitik. Der Professoren Austausch mit Nordamerika," in *Wissenschaftsgeschichte und Wissenschaftspolitik im Industriezeitalter: Das "System Althoff" in historischer Perspektive*, ed. Jürgen Backhaus and Bernhard vom Brocke (Hildesheim: A. Lax, 1991), 185.
6. Schmidt-Ott Papers 541: Amerika Verschiedenes [Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin]. Thank you to Elisabeth Piller, Trondheim, for drawing my attention to this material. See also Friedrich Schmidt-Ott, *Erlebtes und Erstrebtes: 1860–1950* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1952), 113.
7. It is difficult to assess whether Münsterberg's rather uncompromising stance would have changed after the United States entered the war in 1917, for he died in December 1916. Therefore, he was never forced to prove his loyalty with the same urgency that Boas faced in Columbia, for example, once the policy of 100% Americanism had swung into action.
8. Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime. Containing an Assortment of Lies Calculated Throughout the Nation During the Great War* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929), 25.
9. "How German Scholars Have Wronged the German People," *Philadelphia North American* (Sept. 26, 1914).
10. Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg and Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Aufruf "An die Kulturwelt!": Das Manifest der 93 und die Anfänge der Kriegspropaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1996).
11. "Haeckel and Eucken on War," *The Chicago Tribune* (Sept. 14, 1914): 6.
12. Ernst Haeckel and Rudolf Eucken: "A German Declaration," *The New York Times* (Sept. 10, 1914): 8. [Address dated: August 18, 1914].
13. "Ernst Haeckel and Rudolf Eucken Rally to the Flag. Declaration," *The Fatherland*, 1: 7 (Sept. 23, 1914): 8. [Address dated: 18 August, 1914].
14. *Ibid.*
15. "Germany's Culture. Philosophers Eucken and Haeckel Appeal to American Scholars," *The New York Times* (Sept. 25, 1914): 10. [Address dated: August 31, 1914].
16. *Ibid.*
17. cf. Fritz Ringer's thorough study of the German academic milieu and its seeping politicization. Fritz K. Ringer, *Die Gelehrten: Der Niedergang Der Deutschen Mandarine 1890–1933* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987).

18. R.W. "The Eucken and Haeckel Statement. To the Editors of the New York Times," *The New York Times* (Sept. 27, 1914): 14.
19. "Haeckel and Eucken on War," *The Chicago Tribune* (Sept. 14, 1914): 6.
20. Frank Jewett Mather Jr., "Eucken and Haeckel. Sad to See Them Sink to the Level of Chauvinists," *The New York Times* (Sept. 12, 1914): 8.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Mitchell G. Ash, *Mythos Humboldt* (Wien: Böhlau, 1999); Roy Steven Turner, "Humboldt in North America? Reflections on the Research University and Its Historians," in *Humboldt International. Der Export des deutschen Universitätsmodells im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rainer Christoph Schwinges (Basel: Schwabe & Co. AG, 2001).
24. Richard Hofstadter, "The Revolution in Higher Education," in *Paths of American Thought*, ed. Jr. Schlesinger, Arthur M. and Morton White (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963); Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).
25. Both letters appeared under the title "German Science" and are cited here from a collection of clippings that dates them both to the *New York Evening Post* (1 May, 1915). However, the second letter must be slightly later, as it directly references the first one. Cf. "World War History. Daily Records and Comments as Appeared in American and Foreign Newspapers 1914–1926. Compiled for the New York Historical Society by Otto Sprengel," 400 vols. Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
26. Original in German. Eugen Kühnemann: *Den Freunden den Meinen und mir an meinem siebzigsten Geburtstag* (Heilbronn: Eugen Salzer, 1938), 2. Eugen Kühnemann Papers, Marburg University.
27. Clipping [no date] in Kühnemann Papers Box 2, Marburg University.
28. Original in German. "Erfolgreiches Olympiade-Fest," *California Staatszeitung* 14: 11 (May 20, 1932): 1.
29. Original in German. Draft for a letter to "My dear Colleague". Kühnemann Papers, Box 3, Marburg University.
30. Original in German. Kühnemann: *Den Freunden den Meinen und mir*.
31. Eugen Kühnemann, *Vom Weltreich Des Detuschen Geistes: Reden und Aufsätze* (München: C.H. Beck, 1914). The title translates: "Of The World Dominion of the German Spirit".
32. Ibid.
33. Original in German. Eugen Kühnemann: *Deutschland und Amerika: Briefe an einen deutsch-amerikanischen Freund* (München: Beck, 1917), 2
34. cf. advertising material, Kühnemann Papers, Box 2, Marburg University.
35. Kühnemann, *Germany, America and the War*, 28.

36. *Ibid.*, 38.
37. Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible. Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), 20.
38. While the term “propaganda” first originated with the Vatican to describe their fight against the Protestant Reformation—it only really gained broad use through the First World War. A theoretical analysis would then begin in the decades that followed. Cf. Philip M. Taylor, *Munition of the Mind. The History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002); Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2015), 2 and 111.
39. See, for example, the definition by Jowett and O’Donnell in *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 7 see also Taylor, *Munition of the Mind*, 7.
40. Original in German “Aufklärungsarbeit,” which could be rendered as “educational work” or “information effort”. Kühnemann: *Deutschland und Amerika*, 19 and 22.
41. Kühnemann, *Germany, America and the War*, 4.
42. cf. e.g. Kühnemann: *Den Freunden den Meinen und mir*, 12; *Deutschland und Amerika*, 13; “Mein Erleben der USA im Weltkriege von 1914–1917. Vortragsentwurf für das militärische Vertragswesen” typewritten manuscript (no date—probably late 1930s), Kühnemann Papers, Marburg University.
43. Kühnemann: *Den Freunden den Meinen und mir*, 13.
44. Kühnemann: “Mein Erleben der USA im Weltkriege.”
45. Original in English—Bonn does not use the German term ‘Kultur’. He may indeed refer to Kühnemann’s more general ideology placing the German spirit and its cultural outpourings above all. Cf. Bonn, Moritz Julius, *Wandering Scholar* (New York: The John Day Company, 1948), 175.
46. Jürgen Habermas for example has explained the political power-relations created by managing and manipulating publicity. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1965), 212; Similarly, Daniel Boorstin has commented on the ever-growing impact of being perceived and publicly mediated through the media. Cf. Daniel J. Boorstin, *Das Image oder was wurde aus dem Amerikanischen Traum?* (Frankfurt: Rohwolph Paperback, 1964).
47. Seán Ó Lúing, *Kuno Meyer 1858–1919. A Biography* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1991).
48. Cf. E. Meyer to his wife Rosine Meyer (Sept. 13, 1914) Eduard Meyer Papers, Box 2, Prussian State Library, Berlin. [digitized transcript, Humboldt University Berlin <http://www.kohring-digital.de/rosine-eduard-meyer.html>].

49. Andreas Huether, “‘In Politik verschieden, in Freundschaft wie immer’. The German Celtic Scholar Kuno Meyer and the First Word War,” in *The First Word War as a Clash of Cultures*, ed. Fred Bridgham (Rochester: Camden House, 2006), 232.
50. e.g. arrangements for K. Meyer’s introduction into the New York University Club. See K. Meyer to Butler (22 December, 1914) and the reply (24 December, 1914), Butler Correspondence, MS 0177 (#258 Kuno Meyer), Columbia University Archives, New York.
51. K. Meyer to Best (Nov. 1914) cited in Ö’Lüing, *Kuno Meyer*, 167.
52. “Larkin Talks as Hearers Fight,” *The Boston Post* (18 December, 1914).
53. *Ibid.*
54. “Harvard Barks at Prof Meyer,” *The Boston Globe* (19 December, 1914): 1 and 3.
55. *Ibid.*
56. A representative of the English department had approached Meyer informally about a talk on campus shortly after his arrival in New York, but he never received an official invitation. Cf. F. Robinson to L. Lowell (December 4, 1914) Lowell Papers, UAI 5.160 (67 #330 Kuno Meyer), Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Mass.
57. “The Job on Kuno Meyer,” *The Galic American* (Dec. 26, 1914): 1 and 5.
58. Original in German. Eduard Meyer: “Der Geist von Harvard,” *Vossische Zeitung*, 212 (7 March, 1915): 1 and 2. Cf. also E. Meyer to O. Crusius (April 13, 1915). Crusiana I: Meyer, Eduard, Bavarian State Library, Munich [digitized transcript, Humboldt University Berlin, <http://www.kohring-digital.de/crusius-meyer.html>].
59. “Angry with Harvard,” *The New York Times* (March. 13, 1915): 4.
60. “Answers Kuno Meyer,” *The New York Times* (Mar. 8, 1915): 2; “Irish Resent Meyer’s Words,” *The Los Angeles Times* (Mar. 20, 1915): III.1.
61. “Harvard Prize War Poem,” *The New York Times* (Apr. 10, 1915): 4.
62. K. Meyer to Lowell (Apr. 26, 1915) Lowell Papers, UAI 5.160 (67#330 Kuno Meyer), Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Mass.
63. Lowell to K. Meyer (Apr. 27, 1915) Lowell Papers, UAI 5.160 (67#330 Kuno Meyer), Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Mass.
64. Reports appeared e.g. in *The Boston Globe* (28 April, 1915), *The Boston Post* (29 April, 1915), *Yale Daily News* (29 April, 1915), *The North American*, Philadelphia (29 April, 1915), *Los Angeles Times* (29 April, 1915), *Chicago Tribune* (1 May, 1915) *The Post Intelligencer* Seattle (28 April, 1915), et al.
65. “Angry with Harvard,” *The New York Times* (Mar. 13, 1915): 4; Eduard Meyer: “Der Geist von Harvard,” *Vossische Zeitung* 212 (Mar. 7, 1915): 1–2.

66. On 14 November, 1914 Schmidt-Ott reported to the rector of Berlin University that, “under the present circumstances,” the exchanges with Harvard and Columbia had been discontinued for the time being. Lowell reported in his annual report for 1915 that the exchange had ceased in accordance with a request from Germany. Cf. Schmidt-Ott to Rektorat (14 November, 1914) Phil. Fak 1421. Bl.36, Humboldt University Archives, Berlin; and *Report of the President and Treasurer to Harvard College 1914/15* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1916), 26.
67. “Harvard Didn’t Invite Mayer,” *The Boston Globe* (Apr. 29, 1915): 11.
68. “Barred by Harvard, Meyer Retaliates,” *The New York Times* (Apr. 28, 1915): 3.
69. Besides short texts in encyclopaedic collections, even the thoroughly researched biography by Ö’Lüing relates the incident. Ö’Lüing, *Kuno Meyer*, 169; The most detailed study of the history of the professorial exchange also names K. Meyer as a nominated candidate who actively withdrew. Bernhard vom Brocke, “Der Deutsch-Amerikanische Professorentausch,” 142.
70. “Kuno Meyer and Harvard,” *The Chicago Tribune* (May 1, 1915): 8.
71. Jesse F. Orton to Lawrence Lowell (May 11, 1918) quote from enclosed draft for a letter to the editor of *The Nation* (dated May 4, 1918—not published?), Lowell Papers UAI 5.160 (127#1803 Academic Freedom), Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Mass.
72. Robert J Young, *An American by Degrees. The Extraordinary Lives of French Ambassador Jules Jusserand* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 67.
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75. Moriz Julius Bonn, *Wandering Scholar* (New York: The John Day Company, 1948), 178.

# Men of Science: The British Association, Masculinity and the First World War

*Heather Ellis*

On the eve of the First World War, the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) was facing something of an identity crisis. From its origins back in the early 1830s, it had worked hard to raise the public profile of the scientist, challenging long-standing assumptions about the reclusive, unmanly work undertaken by scientists in cloistered universities or isolated private houses.<sup>1</sup> Over several decades, its members had cultivated a particular brand of masculinity based on a notion of scientific independence and freedom from state interference, embodied, above all, in an ideal of scientific internationalism.<sup>2</sup> In practical terms, this meant a sustained attitude of institutional openness to collaborating with and supporting the research of colleagues from other countries. From its first meeting in 1831, the BAAS committed itself explicitly to promoting not simply the “intercourse of those who cultivate Science in different parts of the British Empire” and “with one another,” but also with “foreign philosophers.”<sup>3</sup> Foreign or corresponding members formed a vital part of the BAAS’s institutional life well into the late nineteenth century, not only providing regular updates on scientific progress

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in their respective countries, but also functioning as key research partners for British scientists in the BAAS.

From the early 1880s, however, this internationalist stance had been challenged, through an increasing tendency to identify the interests of the BAAS not so much directly with those of the state as with those of the British Empire.<sup>4</sup> From 1884, following a particularly difficult few years of public criticism centred on the purpose of the BAAS, the Association held the first of several “overseas” meetings which were, in reality, all held in the British dominions—in Canada in 1884 and 1897, South Africa in 1905 and Australia in 1914. The activities of the BAAS in an age of popular imperialism began to assume a distinctly imperialist tone. When the First World War broke out, therefore, members of the Association found their loyalties split between the old, internationalist ethos and the more recent focus on imperial unity, which sat rather awkwardly alongside the existing emphasis on science as an international brotherhood.

The circumstances in which many BAAS members learned of the outbreak of war captures this paradox quite nicely. Dozens of them were travelling by sea to Australia where the annual meeting for 1914 was to be held. A key aim of the gathering was certainly to foster imperial unity. It had been the brainchild of Sir Charles Lucas, a former under-secretary for the colonies, who hoped to replicate in Australia the success of a previous “imperial” meeting held in South Africa in 1905, which, it was widely thought, had been deliberately organized to help improve relations in the wake of the Boer War. The Victoria Branch of the Imperial Federation League acted as cosponsor for the 1914 meeting, and the Australian Prime Minister proclaimed “the importance of the event” not simply “for the causes of science, and education,” but also for “imperial unity.”<sup>5</sup> However, against this must be set the fact that among the BAAS members en route to Australia were a large number of German delegates. Germans had been one of the most important groups of “foreign members” since the foundation of the BAAS in 1831.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, German members—like the desert geologist Johannes Walther and the geographer Albrecht Penck<sup>7</sup>—were among those officially invited by the meeting’s Australian sponsors in the hope that they would grace the event with the necessary “*éclat*.”<sup>8</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the declaration of war, notwithstanding the decision to start a so-called “Patriotic Fund”<sup>9</sup> to raise money for the war, the BAAS members in Australia retained their traditional attitude

of scientific internationalism. This is shown, for example, in their collective willingness to assist their German colleagues when they found it impossible to retrieve funds from their bank accounts. For example, on 24 August 1914, the BAAS treasurer, John Perry, tried to convince the Commonwealth Bank of Australia to “negotiate for Herr Professor Dr. E. Goldstein of Berlin his draft on the Dresdner Bank, London, for One hundred and seventy pounds.”<sup>10</sup> Eventually, Perry had to have recourse to his own money to assist Professor Goldstein. He had promised to compensate the Commonwealth Bank of Australia if the Dresdner Bank refused to release funds, which is what happened. It is possible to learn something of the sense of loyalty which Perry, and the BAAS more widely, felt towards its German members from Perry’s correspondence with the British Treasury asking to be compensated for his loss:

Great difficulty was experienced by some of the Foreign Members on their arrival in Australia in view of the stoppage of funds [...] I have been compelled to pay under the guarantee I so gave [...] I venture to suggest that the transaction is hardly one that was intended to be vetoed under the ‘Trading with the Enemy’ Act and that it should be recognised that the Ass.[Association] was almost in honour bound to do their best to see that their Foreign Members were not left helpless in an English Colony to which they had proceeded at the invitation of the Association.<sup>11</sup>

In the case of Albrecht Penck, the support offered was of greater significance. While he managed to get back to Britain, he was unable to travel back to Berlin for a number of weeks. The Council of the London Geological Society “invited him to enjoy at Burlington House [the office not simply of the Geological Society but also of the BAAS] all those privileges to which he was entitled for just as long as it might take to resolve his predicament.”<sup>12</sup>

Yet the greatest indication of a continued commitment to Anglo-German friendship was the election of the German-born physicist Arthur Schuster as the BAAS’s next president, and this was after war had been declared. It is difficult to gauge popular reaction in Britain to this choice. However, some of the articles covering the event give an insight into the critical attitude which developed in parts of the British press when the announcement was made. An article from the *English Review* published in October 1914 accused the BAAS openly of disloyalty and even treason. “Hitherto,” it declared, “the British Association has been a British

institution in constitution and conduct. It is strange that it should cease to be so and fall under alien control in this year of all years, the 85th of its existence, when we are at war with Germany.” The Association’s General Committee, it claimed, “thoughtlessly accepted” Schuster as president,<sup>13</sup> and “in justification, we have had the usual talk of science being international.”<sup>14</sup> In effect, the article concluded, “[o]ur scientific men have asked us to turn the other cheek to the enemy.”<sup>15</sup>

This last statement reflects one of the chief problems thrown up by the Association’s long-standing reputation for internationalism against the background of war. The decision to prioritize cooperation over conflict, actively helping German colleagues after war had been declared and choosing a German-born president, was treated by parts of the British press as revealing the disloyalty and even unmanly cowardice of the BAAS at a time of national crisis. The stance of the BAAS appeared even harder to justify for many commentators in the press given the extremely vocal support of many prominent German university professors, scientists and artists for the military actions of the German army in the early stages of the war.<sup>16</sup> This was despite the fact that many of them had until very recently maintained excellent relations with their British scientific colleagues. The article in the *English Review*, discussed earlier, made this point explicitly when it referred to many of those German professors, now denouncing their British counterparts as liars and enemies, as “the petted guest[s] of English homes.”<sup>17</sup>

### THE WAR AS OPPORTUNITY

By the early years of the twentieth century, the BAAS had rather lost its way. Ridiculed by some for being little more than a society that organized lavish and expensive social activities for scientists, its golden years in the early to mid-nineteenth century, when major scientific discoveries were announced at its meetings, were widely felt to be firmly in the past. Despite the long-standing internationalism of the organization, however, many leading figures within the BAAS viewed the First World War as a welcome chance to demonstrate their loyalty and courage to their fellow countrymen.

Traditionally, the BAAS had, from its earliest days, sought to disassociate itself from the controversial spheres of politics and war. This attitude was well captured in a poem composed by William Sotheby on the occasion of the third annual meeting of the Association at Cambridge in 1833:

But thou, celestial peace, thy olive rear  
 That knows no taint of blood, no orphan's tear  
 And wreath thy sons who league to bless mankind  
 To spread the conquests of the enlightened mind

The inert mass of matter to controul,  
 And stamp on all the sovereignty of soul.<sup>18</sup>

The BAAS's preference for operating independent of state influence is also visible in the 1851 presidential speech of the astronomer Sir George Biddell Airy. "In Science, as well as in almost everything else," he declared, "our national genius inclines us to prefer voluntary associations of private persons to organizations of any kind dependent on the State."<sup>19</sup>

Yet by the outbreak of the First World War the BAAS was generally seen as no longer fulfilling the vital role it had played in the nineteenth century as the chief arena for the demonstration and public presentation of cutting-edge science in Britain and the Empire. As the mechanical engineer Henry Selby Hele-Shaw wrote to Arthur Schuster on 19 August 1915, the BAAS "does not form, as once it did, the recognised channel of communicating new discoveries and inventions to the world, and is now generally regarded merely as a Body holding annual meetings in this country and the colonies at which Scientific men can [...] attend, with their families, social gatherings." Hele-Shaw went so far as to suggest that the war could provide the BAAS with "a fresh lease of life," an opportunity to raise the reputation of science with the British public and re-imagine the man of science as a brave and daring hero. Science had the potential, he argued, to become central to national and imperial life, and the BAAS must show how "the resources of science" can be applied "directly to handling many of the great problems of the British Empire."<sup>20</sup>

At a more solidly institutional level, the Organising Committee of the Association's Educational Science section released a memorandum in June 1916 pushing for a sustained campaign for the "Popularisation of Science through Public Lectures." Echoing the concerns of Hele-Shaw, the Education Section of the BAAS (Section L) lamented the dwindling public interest in science in recent years, complaining that it was far "less manifest than a generation ago." Emphasizing one of the original objectives of the BAAS, namely to spread knowledge about science to the wider public, the memorandum urged that "[m]uch more remains to be

done if advantage is to be taken of the opportunity which the War has given of showing that scientific method and thought are essential factors of modern progress." This was true not only for scientific method and thought, but also for the man of science. The public at large had considered the scientist as something of an effete and "esoteric" character, the memorandum reflected; the war now seemed to offer an invaluable opportunity to prove his manliness at a time of national crisis.<sup>21</sup>

Chief among the schemes launched by the BAAS at this time were those seeking to harness the rich natural resources of the Empire to enhance the war effort; such activities provide a classic example of what Gillian Rose has termed "scientific masculinity," or the subordination of (a figuratively female) nature to (masculine) human will.<sup>22</sup> A new "Committee of Problems After the War" was set up in December 1915, with its first task being to ask all sections to consider urgently "the future effects of the war upon national and imperial welfare."<sup>23</sup> The Mathematics and Physics Section (A) called for work to take place across the different sections to collect "geographical" and "meteorological" information to inform Britain's "military operations."<sup>24</sup> Anthropology (Section H) declared its wish to obtain ethnographic surveys of Germany's colonies, "with a view to possible territorial settlements after the War."<sup>25</sup> Geography (Section E), meanwhile, expressed a wish to organize Britain's colonies more efficiently after the cessation of hostilities.<sup>26</sup>

As the significance of science to the war effort became ever more apparent, prominent figures within the BAAS increasingly sought for ways to maintain the momentum which had developed since the beginning of the war. Early in 1916, the BAAS's Engineering Section (G) declared: "One of the most striking facts which has been brought home to the country as the war has proceeded [...] is, that it is very largely a struggle of scientists and engineers and that the success or failure of a country in warfare is dependent to a large extent on the development of scientific research, and the practical application of the results of this research." Almost certainly aimed at retaining hard-won government funding, Section G maintained that the "economic struggle which will follow the War will still likewise depend to a great degree on scientific development, and an application of the scientific method to every department of our national life."<sup>27</sup>

By 1916, the BAAS had far fewer detractors and was rarely described any more as effete or esoteric. While as a body it was widely "recognised

as treating the problems of the day in a scientific manner,” this was “at the same time from a practical point of view.”<sup>28</sup> To the BAAS and to the wider public, science had to a large extent lost its association with abstract knowledge and become connected with practical application. This change represented a sharp contrast with the public image of the BAAS back in 1914. From an organization that had become increasingly seen as a relic of a former age, by the war’s midpoint it was able confidently to claim that the very “national welfare” of Britain would “largely depend on the energetic scientific development” of its resources.<sup>29</sup>

However, while growing increasingly close to the British government and embracing the language of nation and empire, the BAAS by no means wholly abandoned internationalism during the war years. Indeed, there were strenuous attempts by individuals and groups to maintain and facilitate international scientific collaboration (including with Germany) during the war itself. In particular, there were suggestions that the BAAS, through its offices at Burlington House in London, might act as a conduit for correspondence with foreign (including German) scientists. On 22 August 1915, Hugh Richardson, secretary of Section L, and the distinguished chemist Sir Henry E. Roscoe proposed that “all scientific correspondence with foreigners should pass through Burlington House or neutral countries.” This proposal was linked explicitly to “the original objects of our Association,” in particular, the duty “to promote the intercourse of those who cultivate Science in the different parts of the British Empire with one another and *with foreign philosophers* [...] to obtain [...] a removal of any disadvantages of a public kind which impede its progress [original emphasis].” As Richardson pointed out, there were already “some authorised arrangements by which brief personal messages [...] can be transmitted to Germany.” Building on this beginning, the BAAS might, with the help of “some society on the continent” such as the Dutch Academy of Sciences at Leiden, want to make arrangements “for the transmission of purely scientific correspondence.”<sup>30</sup>

### RE-SHAPING MASCULINE CHARACTER THROUGH SCIENCE EDUCATION

During the war itself, however, the priority remained firmly on the need to further embed and augment growing public recognition of the importance of science. Central to this was a widespread campaign to increase

public and government interest in scientific instruction across the British education system from primary school to university. The zoologist E. Ray Lankester set up an independent committee in the spring of 1916 to investigate what it termed the “neglect of science,” not only in Britain’s schools and universities, but across the various branches of government and the civil service. In its first report, the committee claimed that “[t]he continued existence of this country as a Great Power” required not simply men characterized by “courage, devotion and self-sacrifice,” but specifically those who, in addition, had “received a scientific training.”<sup>31</sup> Traditional patriotic manliness was no longer enough to sustain Britain’s great power status and collective masculinity; scientific knowledge, training and character were now seen as vital too. The committee’s report re-affirmed the popular belief that “ignorance” of science among the “highest ministers of state” and “through almost all the public departments of the Civil Service” had been responsible for Britain’s poor showing in the early part of the war. This ignorance, the committee concluded, was the result of a long-standing bias against scientific subjects across the various levels of British education, including the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which continued to display “an indifferent, not to say, contemptuous attitude towards them.”<sup>32</sup>

The work of Lankester’s committee and their supporters within the BAAS achieved considerable impact, with the government appointing a special committee to investigate the position of science in the British education system in the middle of 1916. The remit of this new committee, moreover, was targeted specifically at maximizing the benefits which science and scientific application could bring to Britain’s war effort. Many prominent members of the BAAS and of Lankester’s “Neglect of Science” committee were called to give evidence before it.<sup>33</sup> Scientific instruction based on the so-called “literary model” of the ancient universities and principally designed to train educated gentlemen was rejected. According to a report produced by the BAAS in 1917 on “Science Teaching in Secondary Schools,” teachers ought not “merely to provide information about natural objects and phenomena”<sup>34</sup>; instead, children should be trained “so far as possible in the attitude of discoverer,”<sup>35</sup> and men of science themselves must be their models when experimenting in the classroom. The report recommended a number of ways to bring this about, not least by inspiring schoolboys with the heroic examples of famous scientists from the past.<sup>36</sup>

While, according to the report, science education for girls consisted in the “mere imparting of facts,” boys should be able to enjoy

“a genuine *pursuit* of knowledge” characterized by “the historic activities of scientific minds working at their best.” With the needs of war firmly in the minds of educational reformers, including those within the BAAS, attention focused clearly on the practical application of scientific research. This led to a prioritization of active experimentation as a teaching method, with emphasis on the achievement of practical results rather than findings of merely “academic interest.”<sup>37</sup> To increase the enthusiasm of male pupils for science, the report recommended trying to make science lessons more interesting and appealing to boys. “There should be more of the spirit, and less of the valley of dry bones,” it declared.<sup>38</sup> One way of approaching this, particularly stressed by the report’s authors, was to dedicate a significant amount of lesson time to discussions of the lives, achievements and personalities of the great male scientists of the past.

Through the establishment of school museums and exhibitions depicting the lives of famous men of science, the scientist was to be recast as a peculiarly modern masculine hero. Science education ought “to direct attention and stimulate interest in scientific greatness and its relation to modern life.” Every boy in Britain, no matter which sort of school he attended, “should be given the opportunity of knowing [...] the lives and works of such men as Galileo and Newton, Faraday and Kelvin, Darwin and Mendel.”<sup>39</sup> Citing the efforts of T.H. Huxley and John Tyndall back in the 1860s, to secure the proper inclusion of scientific instruction into the education provided by Britain’s public schools, the report argued that boys from all walks of life should “come into contact again with striking experiments, the history and development of discoveries, the lives of the great, in fact, to the romance of science.”

Lessons should give due attention to the importance of science to shaping character; “[l]ectures or exhibits” should be used “to illustrate the life and works of a great investigator—men like Faraday, Dalton, Darwin, Pasteur.”<sup>40</sup> Better still would be the creation of permanent “museums” in schools up and down the country, containing “a gallery of the world’s leading workers and pioneers, that something may be learnt of their lives and what they looked like.”<sup>41</sup> Passing on to the next generation information about what male scientists “looked like” assumed considerable significance in the reforms to science education proposed by the report. The BAAS was concerned that boys in Britain tended to view scientists as effeminate characters, residing primarily indoors and shunning hard, physical work. The provision of examples of dynamic, physically strong men of science, engaged in work of direct practical benefit to

nation and empire, was considered an important method for challenging such preconceptions.

Nor were the reforms proposed limited in intention to recruiting greater numbers of boys to a career in science; the report's authors made the much more general claim that the type of character supposedly represented in the great scientific heroes of the past was precisely that which was wanted among British men in general, particularly against the background of war.<sup>42</sup> Here, once again, the idea of the war as an unprecedented opportunity for science is seen clearly. "Terrible as the present war is," another BAAS report from 1917 proclaimed, "there is no doubt that it has had, and will have, many good results." "To the members of the British Association," it continued, "it must be more than gratifying to find that at last the value of science is recognised." Above all, though, the report reflected on the likely increase in popular respect for the man of science as a masculine role model and national hero as a result of his raised profile during the war. "The war has done more than give a greater appreciation of science," it claimed, "it has given a chance to men who would not otherwise have made themselves felt in the work of shaping our destiny" and should do much to "remove [...] prejudices" against scientists.<sup>43</sup>

#### ADAPTING TO PEACETIME: SCIENCE AS MANLY CITIZENSHIP

Turning to developments after the war, it is important to ask how successful the BAAS was in raising public interest in science in general and in the scientist as a masculine role model. Certainly, if a letter written by the professor of natural history at Liverpool W.A. Herdman to O.J.R. Howarth, assistant secretary of the BAAS, on 18 December 1918 is any indication, they remained determined to capitalize on the greater prominence they had achieved during the war years. "We should try and make a big beat-up of scientific men," declared Herdman, "and try and have an unusually important meeting for our first after the war."<sup>44</sup> During the 1919 annual meeting at Bournemouth, the BAAS president, engineer Charles Algernon Parsons, praised the many "services rendered by the Sciences during the War."<sup>45</sup> At the same gathering, in a communication directed at the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Association expressed the hope that the British government would "recognise that the successful issue of the War has sprung from the efforts of scientific men" and would be convinced that "the well-being and security

of the nation is dependent on the continuous study of such matters.”<sup>46</sup> In future, the BAAS argued, scientists in civil and military fields should work much more closely together; the British navy itself confessed that, following the experience of the war, it was “keenly alive to the supreme importance of research.”<sup>47</sup> Both the British military and scientific establishments admitted the likelihood of a second war in the not-too-distant future and urged much greater cooperation between university scientists and the armed forces in preparing for a future conflict.<sup>48</sup> To prevail, Britain must “bring the full scientific knowledge of the country to bear.”<sup>49</sup> In this immediate post-war context, men of science were recognized for the first time as being key to the defence and survival of Britain and its empire.

Against this background, the BAAS became directly involved in schemes aimed at measuring and improving the strength of “British manhood.” Building on a long-standing tradition of collecting statistics related to the physical well-being of the British population, in the spring of 1919 the BAAS asked the War Office to give them access to a wide range of statistics relating to the health of those men who had joined the armed forces during the war.<sup>50</sup> Sections E (Geography) and H (Anthropology) pushed particularly hard for access to ethnographic studies and charts collected by the Germans “in their former colonies,”<sup>51</sup> together with images and data collected by Britain and its allies related to the “age, physique, residence and occupation” of individuals who had applied for travel permits during the war. Such information, it was argued, would allow the BAAS to construct a framework within which British “racial” fitness could be more accurately measured and assessed.<sup>52</sup>

In addition, the early inter-war years witnessed a further strengthening of ties between the BAAS and Britain’s overseas colonies. In 1921, for example, the BAAS took on responsibility for coorganizing the British Empire Exhibition, which was hosted in London in 1924 and 1925. As the Exhibition’s organizing council wrote in correspondence with the BAAS’s president and General Committee: “Every endeavour will be made to illustrate the manifold relations between science in all its branches and imperial development.”<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the organizers expressed clearly their ambition to develop further those ties which had been forged between science and the British Empire during the years of war. As the officially produced handbook of the Exhibition declared, the overriding aim of the event was “to create an atmosphere favourable to more rapid and complete trade developments, to show the wealth of our

Imperial assets [...] and to foster the spirit of unity which animated our peoples during the War.” The handbook continued:

The lesson learned in the hard school of experience during the War – that we ought to take advantage far more than we have done of the many different soils, climates, and possibilities which are to be found in our widespread territories – will be enforced by the exhibition, not at all with the idea of furthering any political policy, or of separating ourselves from the comity of nations, but simply as a measure of self-protection and mutual profit.<sup>54</sup>

One important consequence of this growth of interest in harnessing the natural resources of the British Empire more effectively was the BAAS’s development of an educational programme designed primarily to train and retain more scientists for the state. In addition, this programme was designed to cultivate a particular ideal of masculine citizenship among Britain’s schoolboys, which had the man of science as its chief exemplar. The inspiration for this programme may be sought in the 1916 “Neglect of Science” Committee established by E. Ray Lankester, which has already been considered. It argued that achieving greater prominence for science across Britain’s education system would guarantee that “the professional workers in Science would increase in number and gain in public esteem.” “Public opinion,” the Committee declared, would then “compel the inclusion of great scientific discoverers and inventors as a matter of course in the Privy Council, and their occupation in the service of the State.”<sup>55</sup> Similar conclusions about the need for more passionate and exciting teaching in science subjects had been reached by the BAAS’s own report on “Science in Secondary Schools,” published in 1917. Here it had been the active teaching of the history of science as a series of exciting, heroic biographies of famous scientists which was felt to be most wanting in current scientific instruction in schools across the education system. Once the war was over, the BAAS recommended a series of different schemes intended to improve the situation in schools.

One important method developed by the BAAS in the years following the end of the war, and designed to raise the interest of boys, especially those from poorer backgrounds, in science, was the creation of schemes of specially selected images (of famous scientists, scientific discoverers, technologies) for use in school science lessons. In 1920, the BAAS established its “Educational Pictures Committee,” which was tasked with the selection, creation and promotion of this series of images

for use in schools up and down the country. In the Committee's minutes, repeated references are made to the need to select images which convey the desired ideal of the dedicated and industrious patriot-scientist.<sup>56</sup> A portrait of an early-nineteenth-century chemist, "John Dalton Collecting Marsh Fire Gas," created by Ford Madox Brown in 1887, was particularly praised as the type of image desired. It was included in a series labelled "Scientific Worthies" and laid emphasis on the practical nature of Dalton's work as a scientist. In the same way, photographs by Herbert Ponting taken as part of the famous British expedition to Antarctica, which took place between 1910 and 1913, were recommended for use in schools for their representation of scientists leading brave and daring missions in the name of their country.<sup>57</sup> In an effort to encourage British schoolboys to think of scientists as attractive masculine role models alongside more traditional heroic figures, the Educational Pictures Committee promoted the use of a set of portraits styled "Makers of History," which included men of science, like the explorer David Livingstone, together with great military men, like Admiral Nelson.<sup>58</sup> Another scheme, labelled "Pictures of War Work in England," depicted engineers at work constructing different pieces of war machinery and was praised by the Committee as providing "excellent examples of the type [of image] required." Pictures devoid of human beings, and stirring scenes of practical industry, including a series depicting famous bridges and other architectural forms, were dismissed as "coldly magnificent," without the necessary "human element" required to inspire schoolboys to follow in the footsteps of Britain's scientific heroes.<sup>59</sup>

#### ADAPTING TO PEACETIME: REVIVING INTERNATIONALISM

The tension between their newly strengthened relationship with the British nation and their long-standing attitude of internationalism continued to haunt men of science in the years immediately following the end of the war. Despite their closer ties to the British government, the early inter-war period witnessed a vigorous resurgence of scientific internationalism among BAAS members. Indeed, the Association expended considerable energies in positioning itself as the body primarily responsible for revivifying the international exchange in scientific and scholarly relations after the war. Particularly important here was to be the Association's collaboration with the Universities Bureau of the British Empire, a body established back in 1913.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, the BAAS became

closely involved with setting up new schemes of international exchange outside the boundaries of the British Empire. In the spring of 1919, for example, it played a leading role in establishing a new scheme of student exchange between Britain and Sweden.<sup>61</sup>

Yet it was to be its active involvement in projects to help reconstruct the devastated world of science and academia in Germany and Austria which most prominently embodied the BAAS's scientific internationalism in the years following the end of the war. During the 1919 meeting at Bournemouth, the Association stressed the "necessity for organising the intellectual classes [of all countries] to maintain and uphold the freedom of science." Moreover, it made clear their view that Britain should play a leading role in this endeavour.<sup>62</sup> Assuming responsibility for reconstructing the science of Europe, and, in so doing, defending civilization itself, shared important similarities with Britain's perception of itself as an imperial power with a duty of protection to its many colonies and dominions across the globe. Yet, crucially, it did not work alone in this task. Working alongside other members of the Conjoint Board of Scientific Societies, the BAAS expressed its desire in the spring of 1920 to achieve "a mitigation [...] of the appalling conditions which [...] prevail in the scientific world" in Austria and Germany. It was the common view of British science, they declared, that "there is much to be said for our helping them [Germany and Austria] to [...] restore normal conditions of life in scientific circles."<sup>63</sup> They read and referred to extensive summaries of articles from German-language newspapers and journals, relating details of the incredibly difficult circumstances in which Austrian and German men of science were living and attempting to work. Above all, the worsening situation of hyperinflation rendered laboratory equipment, scientific books and journals far too dear to purchase.<sup>64</sup>

These articles appearing in the German-language press deliberately appealed to the long-standing tradition of scientific internationalism in Britain and other countries when asking for assistance from colleagues (including many former enemies) in other countries. Fritz Haber, who was Director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry in Berlin, wrote, for example, that if German scientific institutions were not supported by money and resources from the victors, they would share the fate of "the Venetian palaces, which stand empty, and present to the visitor an interesting picture of past importance." "In former times," he declared, "the culture of Science in Germany was a work of art [...]. But if the continuity of the circle of humanity which devotes itself to the

cause of Science is broken, tens of years will not suffice to make good the destruction thereby brought about.”<sup>65</sup> The true extent of the devastation was revealed by Professor Everett Skillings when he toured some eleven universities and other scientific institutes in Austria and Germany in the spring of 1920. Skillings conducted his visits on behalf of a new movement wishing to set up an “Anglo-American University Library for Central Europe” to mitigate some of the war’s disastrous effects upon German and Austrian scientists. Skillings’ report noted the appalling circumstances in which many scientists and their families were living; severe malnourishment and even starvation affected many individuals he visited. Yet it was the cultural and intellectual “famine” which drew Skillings’ attention most directly. He described “people hungering in mind and soul for contact with the intellectual world outside.”<sup>66</sup> “They seem bewildered by despair,” he reported, “broken in spirit.” “The immediate necessity [was] to inspire hope.” Skillings’ report makes clear the speed with which ideals of scientific heroism and manliness were changing in the immediate post-war context. While a patriotic ideal cherishing martial success may have been appropriate for wartime, the challenges of peacetime required very different responses. What Skillings and others connected with “olive branch” projects like those offered by the Anglo-American Library were alternative visions of heroism inspired by religious ideals of self-sacrifice and charity. As Skillings phrased it, “The question of helping is quite apart from our attitude towards [the Germans and Austrians] during the War. Here is one of the hardest tests which practical Christianity has to face.”<sup>67</sup>

The BAAS was actively involved with a variety of different projects proposed with a view to helping Austrian and German colleagues back on their feet.<sup>68</sup> Chief among these was the Anglo-American Library project. The Library’s main goal was to begin the monumental task of finding replacement copies of key books, journals and other publications which universities and institutes in Austria and Germany had lost during the war. The symbolic value of the project was also hugely significant as it positioned men of science as key players in and architects of the new peacetime world order. As the Library’s Executive Committee made clear, the project had lofty goals. They wished for nothing less than an “uplifting of mankind” through “the encouragement of learning.” In their minds, the Library symbolized “the outstretched Hand of Fellowship” to Austrian and German scientists.<sup>69</sup> Another committee was set up in May 1920 whose task was to “fix the needs of German science in respect of foreign educational literature, and take care of the disposition of books and

exchanges in Germany and Austria.” The Library was supposed to “serve as a central point for endeavours towards a rebuilding of the international spirit of culture [...] to help in reconciling the intellectual world.”<sup>70</sup> Through this and other related projects, the BAAS worked hard to establish the scientist in a new and important position in the post-war peace: as the chief agent of cultural and intellectual rapprochement. In the words of the Library’s Executive Committee: “The reconciliation among the peoples can only come through the cultivation of mind and spirit and it is clear that the great teachers of the world, by the free interchange of ideas, must be the leaders in such an endeavour.”<sup>71</sup>

While these attempts to re-engage with and support the re-establishment of German and Austrian science were genuinely designed to repair the damage of the war, it was also in the national interest of the Allies themselves. As the Anglo-American Library’s Executive Committee made clear, such initiatives had the potential to function as great propaganda coups, presenting the Allies as magnanimous in victory. “By thus taking the initiative in extending the hand of friendship to colleagues in foreign countries,” they declared, “whether former enemy countries or not, where the exchange conditions hinder a resumption of study and research, British and American scholars are seizing a timely opportunity of helping to heal the wounds of the war.”<sup>72</sup> As might be expected, it did not take long for German and Austrian scientists to respond favourably to these overtures. As one group of Austrian scientists expressed it, the Library’s foundation represented “a welcome beginning to the linking up of old associations.” They echoed the Executive Committee’s call for international donations “so that this great work of international reconciliation and public benefit may at once take effect.”<sup>73</sup> As becomes clear from the correspondence and appeals for assistance emanating from German and Austrian scientists in the early inter-war period, it was the old language of scientific internationalism which was drawn upon most frequently. As one appeal on behalf of Austrian colleagues declared:

The brain-workers of Austria appeal to their friends and fellow-workers in all countries [...] There is imminent danger of our being separated from the scientific and technical world, a thing which would imperil the unity of civilisation [...] for culture and civilisation are the property of all nations alike, and must be furthered by all.<sup>74</sup>

Appealing to scientists abroad for assistance, on 2 December 1920, the Zentralanstalt für Meteorologie und Geodynamik in Vienna referred

to itself in very similar terms as being “to a certain extent the common property of all civilised nations on earth [...] in whose survival all are interested.”<sup>75</sup>

Not merely abroad, but also at home, the BAAS worked hard to promote the male scientist as a leading champion of international reconciliation and architect of the new peacetime world order. Science and the activities of men of science had, after all, been traditionally associated with peaceful, international cooperation. In the new context of peacetime, men of science offered themselves as particularly appropriate masculine role models for boys growing up in a post-war world. Linking back to the recommendations made in the 1917 report of the BAAS Committee looking into science in secondary schools and proposals put forward by the Educational Pictures Committee in 1920, the years following the end of the war saw the development of alternative ideals of scientific masculinity, all based on the notion of the scientist as the model male citizen. This is particularly clear in P.B. Showan’s *Citizenship and the School*, published in 1923, which made extensive use of the recently published report of the BAAS’s “Committee on Training in Citizenship.” The report had placed considerable emphasis on the potential significance of science and scientific education in inspiring new models of masculinity and citizenship particularly attuned to the changed circumstances of peacetime. Showan maintained that science’s great contribution to the war effort and raised public profile meant that it should now supplant those subjects like history which had traditionally served as inculcators of citizenship values into Britain’s children. He declared:

[...] school history at present is so largely concerned with [...] kings, rulers, men of war and of action – that there is a danger of over-working the natural sense of hero-worship [...] but if a civic bias is given to the teaching, and lessons of history are chosen to show the debt that nations owe to men of science and to leaders in peace, then this helpful hero-worship can be directed [...]. The war has altered our conception of patriotism, and at last we see that the true criterion of love of country is applied social service – giving the best to the community in time of peace no less than in war.<sup>76</sup>

He argued:

Thus [...] a science master who fails to give his pupils some account of the life and work of the greater scientists [...] is not making the most of his subject or of his opportunities for imparting knowledge which is of definite

value as a preparation for citizenship. Some knowledge of Boyle, Newton, Ohm, Kelvin as men, rather than mere names, must make the subject more interesting, quite apart from any value such knowledge may have in helping a pupil to form a habit of mind which disposes him to judge men's worth in terms of their services to mankind.<sup>77</sup>

By way of illustration, Showan discussed the case of a science teacher at West Square Central School in Southwark, who:

[...] has made cards which are admirably illustrated and designed. Each one shows a picture of a famous scientist, his nationality, birthplace, dates and period, his school and work-place, and the discoveries and work for which he was famous. When the work of any of these men of science is under study [...] then his picture and record are exhibited in the calendar or roll of honour and a short talk is held about him and his work.<sup>78</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The determination of the BAAS to view the outbreak of war as an opportunity for raising the public profile and reputation of science, and their considerable success in doing so, reveals a significant (and largely unacknowledged) achievement. The BAAS had been going through a period of particularly low public esteem in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of war. Once again, scientists were increasingly seen as impractical, unmanly characters, out of touch with the real world and the tangible applications of scientific research. Within the first two years of war, this state of affairs had altered beyond recognition. Determined to view the war as an opportunity to demonstrate the worth of science and scientists to the British nation at a time of crisis, they went a considerable way towards transforming the public reputation of science and the man of science at the same time.

As the war came to an end, the BAAS enjoyed much closer relations with both Britain's government and the country's armed forces. Both admitted publicly for the first time the importance of science and scientific research to the future safety and security of Britain and its empire. It was clear that in all future conflicts, British men of science would play a key role in the decision-making process. Crucially, though, they succeeded in retaining this greater visibility and more prominent public profile long after the end of the war itself. There is no stronger proof of the

ability of the BAAS to adapt itself to changed conditions than its successful re-fashioning as an organization dedicated to the re-establishment of international intellectual and scientific exchange in peacetime. They succeeded in marrying a newfound national and patriotic significance with their traditional attitude of scientific internationalism. The ideal around which this new vision clustered was that of the scientist as a model of modern, masculine citizenship. By means of specially designed educational schemes, both within Britain and abroad, which emphasized the peculiar role of the scientist as the guardian and preserver of modern culture, the BAAS worked hard to secure the long-term future of science, both in war and peace.

## NOTES

1. For the reputation of the scientist (or natural philosopher) as unmanly, see Steven Shapin, "‘A Scholar and a Gentleman’: The Problematic Identity of the Scientific Practitioner in Early Modern England," *History of Science*, 29 (1991): 279–327.
2. For scientific internationalism in the history of the BAAS, see Giuliano Pancaldi, "Scientific Internationalism and the British Association," in *The Parliament of Science: The British Association for the Advancement of Science 1831–1981*, ed. Roy MacLeod and Peter Collins (Northwood, Middlesex: Science Reviews Ltd., 1981), 145–169.
3. *First Report of the Proceedings, Recommendations and Transactions of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (York: Thomas Wilson and Sons, 1832), 42.
4. See Michael Worboys, "The British Association and Empire: Science and Social Imperialism, 1880–1940," in *The Parliament of Science*, ed. Roy MacLeod and Peter Collins (Northwood, Middlesex: Science Reviews Ltd., 1981), 170–187.
5. Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter BL), Dep. BAAS 232, 63.
6. For the significance of German BAAS members, see Heather Ellis, "‘Intercourse with Foreign Philosophers’: Anglo-German Collaboration and the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1870–1914," in *Anglo-German Scholarly Networks in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Heather Ellis and Ulrike Kirchberger (Leiden and Boston: Brill Academic Publishing, 2014), 176–193.
7. BL Dep. BAAS 237, 22.
8. BL Dep. BAAS 232, 167.
9. See BL Dep. BAAS 237, 125.

10. BL Dep. BAAS 237, 111.
11. BL Dep. BAAS 237, 135–136.
12. G.L. Herries-Davies (ed.), *Whatever is Under the Earth: The Geological Society of London, 1807 to 2007* (Wiltshire, UK: The Cromwell Press, 2007), 221.
13. “A Germano-British Association Meeting and Address,” *English Review* (October 1915): 328.
14. *Ibid.*, 329.
15. *Ibid.*, 329.
16. The most famous expression of this support was the so-called “Manifesto of the Ninety Three,” a statement published on 4 October 1914, proclaiming the unequivocal support of ninety three prominent German academics, scientists and artists for the actions of Germany’s armed forces in the war to date.
17. *Ibid.*, 329.
18. William Sotheby, *Lines Suggested by the Third Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held at Cambridge, in June 1833* (London: J. Murray, 1834), 3.
19. *Report of the Twenty-First Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held at Ipswich in July 1851* (London: J. Murray, 1852), li.
20. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 2–4.
21. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 62–63.
22. See Frank Möller and Samu Pehkonen (ed.), *Encountering the North: Cultural Geography, International Relations and Northern Landscapes* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 129.
23. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 2–4; 100; 117.
24. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 94–95.
25. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 114.
26. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 100. For more on Section E’s (Geography) involvement in the war effort, see Charles Withers, *Geography and Science in Britain, 1831–1939: A Study of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).
27. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 110.
28. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 111.
29. *Ibid.*
30. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 13.
31. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 196.
32. *Ibid.*
33. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 199.

34. "Science in Secondary Schools," in *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science 1917* (London: John Murray, 1918), 124.
35. Citing the words of the chemist Henry Edward Armstrong given in earlier BAAS reports of 1889 and 1890. "Science in Secondary Schools," 126.
36. *Ibid.*, 137.
37. *Ibid.*, 137.
38. *Ibid.*, 140.
39. *Ibid.*, 155–156.
40. *Ibid.*, 157.
41. *Ibid.*, 158.
42. *Ibid.*, 173.
43. *Ibid.*, 228.
44. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 172.
45. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 319.
46. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 331.
47. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 342.
48. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 347.
49. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 358.
50. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 215; 229–230.
51. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 274.
52. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 258–259.
53. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 144.
54. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 149.
55. BL Dep. BAAS 96, 196.
56. BL Dep. BAAS 377, 190.
57. BL Dep. BAAS 377, 191.
58. BL Dep. BAAS 377, 192.
59. BL Dep. BAAS 377, 199.
60. BL Dep. BAAS 377, 111.
61. BL Dep. BAAS 377, 110.
62. BL Dep. BAAS 377, 111.
63. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 4.
64. For a selection of extracts from the German-language press which the BAAS read, see BL Dep. BAAS 97, 19–31.
65. Extract from the *Berliner Tagesblatt* (7 March 1920), BL Dep. BAAS 97, 19.
66. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 34.
67. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 42.
68. The most important individuals connecting the Anglo-American Library project and the BAAS were the physicist and former BAAS president (1909) J.J. Thomson, and the physicist Frederick Alexander Lindemann.

69. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 14.
70. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 14.
71. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 43.
72. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 44.
73. Ibid.
74. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 48.
75. BL Dep. BAAS 97, 52. "...bis zu einem gewissem Grade ein Gemeinheit aller kultivierten Nationen der Erde...an dessen Bestand sie alle interessiert sind."
76. P.B. Showan, *Citizenship and the School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 14.
77. Ibid., 25–26.
78. Ibid., 26.

# Junior Faculty, National Education and the (Re)making of the Academic Community in the Russian Empire During and After the Great War

*Alexander Dmitriev*

The First World War was more than a time of great turmoil and challenge for the academic community of the Russian Empire. In a sense, the war brought about the end of the life of the Russian Empire's academic community itself. The focus of this chapter is the re-orientation of the social and structural dynamics of the university system in Russia after 1914 under the claim of national education (Russian *vospitanie*, which is close to the German concept of *Bildung* as a whole becoming of

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a collective or individual subject). This topic has not been studied in the context of the national question and the national revival(s) in the Russian Empire.<sup>1</sup> The Great War merged these two issues—the “university question” and the “national question”—which had, up to that time, developed independently of one other.

State universities formed the core of higher education in the pre-revolutionary Russian Empire. Technical or professional schools in Russia generally followed the standards established within the universities. With the exception of the Imperial Alexander University in Helsingfors in Finland (as it was known in 1828–1919; now it is the University of Helsinki), no other university within the borders of the Russian Empire had any special regional by-laws and locale-specific regulations. Some other minor exceptions existed, such as instances of what might these days be termed “affirmative action,” or compromises for university applicants in the regions of Warsaw and Dorpat/Tartu and a few freedoms that were officially sanctioned by the imperial central government. And yet, these relatively minor freedoms notwithstanding, the official policy of Russification was fully endorsed in these universities at the western outskirts of the Empire most actively during the reign of Alexander III (1881–1894).<sup>2</sup> Consequently, either German (in Dorpat/Yuryev) or Polish culture and language were minimally represented in the curricula of these educational establishments. No universities were established in the Empire’s regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia, despite the local elites’ considerable interest and perceived need for the development of higher learning in these regions.<sup>3</sup> In the absence of the central government’s support of national educational initiatives, the specialists in Oriental Studies from Moscow and St. Petersburg played a great role in the public enlightenment in these regions.<sup>4</sup> Traditionally, according to the state’s official doctrine, the people of White and Little Russia (i.e. Belarus and Ukraine) were considered an integral part of the All-Russian (the triune) nation. In contrast, for the “representatives of the non-Orthodox religious confessions”—that is, Jews, Buddhists (in Siberia) or Muslims—an academic career in a university without conversion was in essence not an option.<sup>5</sup> The Poles constituted a notable part of the professorship, but virtually none of them dealt with the issues of Polish history and culture. And on the contrary, the ethnic Georgians and Armenians were most often affiliated with the research on the Caucasus area at the university departments of Oriental Studies in Moscow or St. Petersburg.

The point here is to stress the difference and even opposition between imperial university development on the one hand and the educational history of the non-Russian peoples as well as of Ukrainians and the Belorussians on the other, especially during the Great War. It is often argued that one of the crucial reasons for the alienation of the highest and lowest educational matters was the official policy of Russification (where only the Russian language was allowed from primary until higher school) and the limitation of enlightened initiatives for non-Russian minorities only to an “amateur” level or under the supervision of traditional confessional (Muslim, Jews, Protestant, etc.) institutions.<sup>6</sup> However, this chapter will argue that another reason was the specific structure and outlook of the professorial corporation in imperial universities in Russia at the turn of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In Russia the idea of an unbiased and universal “pure science” became the zeitgeist by the end of the nineteenth century in academic milieus, but during the Great War this general principle clashed with the Romantic and populist vision of people’s education (mostly in elementary and secondary school) as an embodiment and realization of the national needs and claims.<sup>7</sup>

It was junior faculty who were more sensitive than the well-established senior academics to the “national questions” that included the problems of the national schools and general educational matters—ranging from elementary education to the professional preparation of teachers and researchers.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it needs to be established whether there was any distinctly national (i.e. not *exceptionally* Russian) specificities in the activity of university-affiliated scholars at the turn of the century and thereafter.

Thus, in the first part of this chapter, I briefly survey some significant features of social tensions in the realm of Russian academic professions. In the section “[In Search of ‘Autonomous’ Scholarship](#)” I also analyse the academic dimension of the most acute “national question”—that of Ukraine—and then proceed to examine the nature of private docents’ involvement in the debates about the national revival and education just before and during the Great War, in parallel with attempted structural reforms by Minister Pavel Ignatiev (1915–1916) (Sections “[National School Idea](#)” and “[Revolutionary Moment: Kiev in 1917](#)”). In two final sections, I situate these new engagements of junior faculty in the controversial political context of the revolutionary disintegration of the Russian Empire from the spring of 1917, as well as in early Soviet social and educational politics after the end of the Great War.

## SOCIAL CONDITION OF RUSSIAN ACADEMICS

In her discussion of the standing of Russian professors as a social group starting from the middle of the eighteenth century, Trude Maurer correctly pointed out the contradictions within this far-from-homogeneous social group of university teachers, especially the opposition between the “senior” and the “junior” specialists.<sup>9</sup> According to university regulations (*Ustav*, or statutes) of 1884 that were in effect virtually intact until the collapse of the Empire, full ordinary professors had all key rights and advantages in internal university issues. In contrast, the more numerous stratum of private docents had primarily symbolic benefits at the universities. Nominally, the basic monetary remuneration for ordinary professors did not change from the mid-1880s until 1914: their basic annual income of 3000 roubles gradually increased with work experience. The Ministry’s compensation was also available in instances when the professors’ income from students’ fees did not exceed 1000 roubles.<sup>10</sup> In turn, private docents would be paid salaries based on the fixed fees for a course, and, therefore, their income depended on the number of registered students. Another source of their income was mandatory lectures in the place of full professors, but—in comparison to the latter—their lecturing salaries were reduced by one-third.<sup>11</sup> Many contemporaries judged this system of payment as ill-conceived and unjust, even though it would often provide university councils with fairly generous extra-budgetary resources.<sup>12</sup> Jurist Lev Petrazhitsky remarked in 1909:

In Germany, the sum of the remuneration depends on academic merit, scholarly reputation, and the attractiveness of the instructor’s lectures. In Russia, it depends on the mandatory and—lecturer’s merits and his course notwithstanding—bureaucratic registration of the students for his courses. Empty classroom and a big salary, full classroom and the virtual absence of the income is a quite natural and frequent combination here.<sup>13</sup>

The number of ordinary professors was limited by a special legal act of 1884 (*shtatnoe raspisanie*, authorized simultaneously with the *Ustav*). The number of university students doubled by the beginning of the war in comparison to the end of nineteenth century. Accordingly, the number of employed private docents and non-tenured professors duly increased in order to satisfy the needs of ever-growing university education.

This took place against the background of the professors' alarming complaints about the difficulties of access to academic careers and the insufficiency of funds allotted to their post-graduate students (600 roubles per person annually). The insufficient funding available to post-graduate aspirants at the universities pushed them to look for additional earnings outside academia, which might eventually turn into their main source of income:

Scientific work turned into asceticism for many talented young scholars nowadays, and often so without any hope for a better future. University departments and laboratories have considerably depopulated, and research activities have withered. Many gifted specialists are leaving universities nowadays and find better allowance and life conditions in other, practical fields. Therefore, academic forces in Russia are still small in number in comparison with the countries of the West. We have no required fullness of science instruction—*Universitas litterarum*—even in our best provincial universities. Scientific thought is underdeveloped, scientific literature is still in its infancy. There are major academic units in Russia—there are no scientific schools.<sup>14</sup>

This observation by a contemporary is complemented by the historian Samuel Kassow's statement that tsarist Russia would produce great scholars and researchers, but could not sustain the development of a stable university system and a satisfactory system of academic specialties.<sup>15</sup> After 1905, private initiative would increasingly find its way into the sphere of higher learning in Russia and also in its national peripheries.

Several publications devoted to the issue of junior faculty appeared, particularly after 1907—especially some works of Nikolai Kol'tsov (1872–1940), who would later become a prominent biologist as the founder (1916) and director (1917–1939) of the Institute of Experimental Biology in Moscow. As a result of a conflict with his supervisor, Mikhail Menzbier, Kol'tsov left the university and then successfully taught at the Shaniavskii Moscow City People's University; he also held the chair and laboratory at the Guerrier Higher Courses for Women (subsequently re-organized and renamed Second Moscow State University). During the Great War Kol'tsov would regularly publish in All-Russian popular scientific journal *Privoda* (*Nature*, founded in 1912).<sup>16</sup> The paragon of the high social status of science was, according to Kol'tsov, the United Kingdom, and he discussed the proposal to

systematically organize scientific research and education as a state project of primary importance.<sup>17</sup> After 1914, but especially after 1917, the newly established universities attracted the individuals who felt stifled or uncomfortable within the former “gerontocratic” imperial university system.

### IN SEARCH OF “AUTONOMOUS” SCHOLARSHIP

The academic world of Russian universities during the Great War was small and elitist, even in the context of rapid industrialization and cultural differentiation. In the 1960s, the American historian Fritz Ringer studied a number of typical *fin de siècle* academic reactions to modernization in the context of German academia of the period of 1890–1933 and described it as a “mandarin complex.” I would like to suggest that the main features of German mandarins, as described by Ringer, are also characteristic of Russian imperial mandarins, namely, the idiosyncratic amalgam of state-oriented and cultural attitudes and prejudices against uneducated masses, ignorant crowds and journalists. The status of a mandarin does not necessarily imply that such a person upholds a politically reactionary worldview.<sup>18</sup> Thus, a few individuals of liberal leanings also qualify as academic mandarins, such as some *Kadets* at the universities (i.e. representatives of the Constitutional Democratic Party). Yet, what is important in this respect is that the university corporation (the professors’ community) had an idiosyncratic cultural outlook, social status and self-esteem that was very different from populist biases of national political activists and radicals.<sup>19</sup> The advocates of national education and culture included numerous journalists, dilettante researchers, local administrators and teachers, only a minority of whom graduated from universities. Yet, their moral authorities were those ethnically aware and politically active university professors who constituted the minority among the professorship in their universities. An example of such an individual was the linguist of Polish origin Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, an informal leader of the Congress of Autonomists Union (a short-lived but influential political movement in the first period of the Revolution) in the autumn of 1905 in St. Petersburg and, subsequently, a member of the Constitutional Democratic Party.<sup>20</sup>

During the revolution of 1905, and as a result of the activities of the professional Academic Union, the problems of junior university instructors became particularly acute. These included the issues of rights and

financial support given to junior faculty and assistants, as well as the role of non-tenured professors. These problems also undermined the unity of the teaching corps. The three universities of contemporary Ukraine (in Kiev, Kharkov and Odessa) had no departments of local history or culture. Such schools were not established until during the First World War, after the Russian Revolution of February 1917. An important factor of Ukrainian national scholarship formation was the department of Ukrainian Studies in Lviv University. It was also there, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, that the Taras Shevchenko Scientific Society operated. It was only after 1905 that the publication of scientific works, fiction and popular literature in Ukrainian was allowed. The Ukrainian language—as well as Belorussian—was officially seen as a local dialect of the Russian language, and interest in the Ukrainian past was interpreted as encouraging the threat of separatism or activities in favour of the Austro-Hungarian Empire or the Polish national movement.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of nineteenth century a set of ideas on autonomous national scholarship and diversity within academia was proposed as an intellectual project to rival the imperial model. For radicalized Ukrainian activists (among them the leaders of *Prosvita*, the national grass-root educationalist movement), the main problem was not the state of higher learning, but elementary education, the training of ethnically aware schoolteachers (*svidomyi*) for the Ukrainian countryside. Ukrainian children in villages had considerable difficulties acquiring education and even basic literacy skills in the literary Russian language; therefore, their schooling would be more efficient, provided they were instructed in their native language in elementary schools. However, this idea faced considerable opposition and resistance from the authorities from the 1870s because of the perceived threat of separatism.<sup>22</sup> And yet, after the reforms of the 1850s, even in the case of the oriental “non-Slavs” who populated the Empire, instruction in their native language was considered of importance. Besides, traditional religious education dominated among Jewish, Muslim and German minorities in Russia. From the end of nineteenth century, the multi-national intelligentsia of the Empire widely discussed the importance of modern and secular education.<sup>23</sup>

Different attitudes to the problems of national minorities’ higher learning were shared by the intelligentsia of different ethnicities in Russia. One might wonder what the incentives were for young university researchers and alumni to promote any non-Russian, “national” science and school system before the revolution of 1917. Indeed, limiting

one's career to an isolated "national" variation of academia would be considered a risky strategy in the world of international science and international intellectual circulation of ideas, especially in the context of the relatively narrow and, from the international standpoint, intellectually inaccessible Russian science and Russian-language publishing. Due to the nature of their craft, historians and linguists could possibly afford academic publishing in the languages of minorities, such as Ukrainian. Yet, for the specialists in natural sciences such a strategy would doom their careers in imperial universities, which was even further aggravated by the fact that no consensus on well-established national—e.g. Ukrainian—scientific terminology existed in quite a few scholarly disciplines until the 1920s. Thus, in 1908 in an article published in *Literary-Scientific Herald* in Lviv, Ukrainian historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky declared a special programme of autonomous intellectual development for the Ukrainian academic community based on the Polish model. Yet this declaration did not result in any practical action. The realization of a plan of such magnitude was impossible in that time and in those circumstances. The project of Ukrainian science required the official adoption of what nowadays is termed "affirmative action."<sup>24</sup> Consider a characteristic episode: Hrushevsky graduated with distinction from Kiev University and from the 1890s was a professor of the history of Ukraine in Lviv University (then in the Austro-Hungarian Empire), while at the same time remaining a citizen of the Russian Empire. In 1911 he was defeated in the elections for the position of professor in his *alma mater*, Kiev University. Despite Hrushevsky's solid scientific reputation, he was surpassed by a considerably less authoritative but politically loyal candidate.

The discussion of the program of a national school system became particularly intense after 1905. The local bodies of administration, the *zemstvas*, and the national lobbies in the State Duma (Russian parliament) were the main vehicles of the development of the system of education in the regions.<sup>25</sup> From the end of nineteenth century, professors in universities in Kazan (the capital of modern-day Russia's Tatarstan) and Kharkov (in Ukraine) were the leading figures in local Committees for Literacy that were often established based on the model of the British movement of University Extension. The notable events were the Congress of the Activists of People's Universities (1908), the All-Zemstvas Congress on People's Education (1911) and the First All-Russian Congress on the Issues of People's Education (December 1913–January 1914). The latter attracted over 15,000 participants. Before 1914 the problem of "national

upbringing” in Russian national schools was discussed exclusively within conservative circles opposed to the internationalist and even socialist ideals of the liberal intelligentsia (for example, by Vladimir Purishkevich, one of the leaders of the Rights in the State Duma).<sup>26</sup> However, after the beginning of the war the slogans of national schooling would also find sympathy among the representatives of liberal circles, who attempted to re-frame these ideas in accordance with progressive and even international intellectual trends of the time.<sup>27</sup>

### NATIONAL SCHOOL IDEA

After 1914 another discussion of the problems of Russian national schools was launched by university lecturers in philosophy Pavel Blonsky (1884–1941) and Moisei Rubinstein (1878–1953) and published in the liberal journal *Herald of Education* (*Vestnik vospitaniia*). The discussion dealt mostly with theoretical issues. Yet, in this way, the topic of the national school gradually shifted towards the ideology of liberalism that positioned it as an integrative component of bigger topics such as the democratization of education and its geographic spread:

There is no argument about the fact that Russian children do not receive a national upbringing. In the upper-class families, children are brought up by foreign *gouverners* and *gouvernantkas* (governesses), periodically travel abroad, and impeccable pronunciation in foreign languages has long been considered the indicator of good upbringing [...]. The outcome of such upbringing is obvious. First, this is our ignorance of our own people and their life, and the preservation of the tragic opposition: intelligentsia versus common people as Sphinx. Second, this is the lack of stability in our national self-assessment. Indeed, at times “we are Russians, well-known fools, unlike those living abroad”, at times “our people is the God-loving one, whereas the Westerners [are morally corrupt and] rot”. In other words, we are like ignorant and incapable children, with radical mood changes. [...] The more democracy we have in public spheres and everyday life, the higher degree of unity acquires the life of the nation and its culture and the stronger its national bonding gets, and the more organic its schooling becomes.<sup>28</sup>

In such discussions the focus was also on the civil upbringing based on the model of England and, particularly, France, in contradistinction to the negative examples of German chauvinistic academic patriotism.<sup>29</sup>

In a certain sense, the theoretical basis of these ideas was that of a young philosopher and, later, theoretician of pedagogy, Sergei Hessen (1887–1950),<sup>30</sup> who did his doctoral research in Germany and was a coeditor of a German-Russian-Italian philosophical journal, *Logos*.<sup>31</sup> Yet, all these scholarly merits notwithstanding, an academic career in a university remained problematic, partly due to his Jewish origin.

The role of the “eternal private docent” appeared to have been destined for the already-mentioned Pavel Blonsky and his peer phenomenologist Gustav Shpet (1879–1937). Both Shpet and Blonsky were former students of Kiev philosopher Georgii Chelpanov, who became increasingly interested in psychology and, after 1917, would identify himself as the advocate of the new, Marxist psychology. Both – despite the differences in their post-revolutionary careers – made a notable impact on the history of philosophy and pedagogy in Russia. Thus, both were closely related to the leftist politics in Kiev University in their youth and were even arrested and exiled from the city. Blonsky was a close ally of Lenin’s wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, in the Bolshevik People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment (the *Narkompros*), the author of a detailed biography of Plotinus (1916), and also the author of a radical manifesto on the necessity of the “revolution in science” (1920). He also authored memoirs, in which he critically reminisced about the Russian university milieu, especially that in Moscow connected to the professor of philosophy Lev Lopatin.<sup>32</sup>

After 1914, radical Russian nationalist conservatives continued their critique of the liberal approach to the issues of education and the alleged dominance of the “leftists” in university councils. Gradually, the critique from the right turned against the project of the school reform and the minister of education Ignatiev, who would find active support among the liberal opposition in the Duma.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, virtually no representatives of Russian academia were among those critics of educational reforms. Even conservative professors acknowledged the necessity of reforms. The debates continued only on the goals of the prospective reforms and the concrete steps to be taken.<sup>34</sup>

During the war, Russian scholars became the experts who informed the public about the most important technical developments of wartime, the history of military and political allies and enemies, and the geographical composition of the disputed territories where military action was taking place (in the Caucasus or in East Galicia). Aleksei Dzhivelev (1875–1952) frequently wrote about the “Armenian question” and in

relation to the Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire. Dzhivelegov was a private docent of Moscow University specializing in Renaissance Studies, an editor of the multi-volume *Granat* encyclopaedic dictionary and copublisher of leftist liberal journal *Golos minuvshëgo* (*The Voice of the Past*). In 1914–1915 a few publications were particularly prominent in representing the situation in various national peripheries of the Empire. Among these were newly founded journal of liberal autonomists *Narody i oblasti* (*The Peoples and the Regions*) and, later, the journal *Natsional'nye problemy* (*The Problems of Nationalities*). These eagerly published articles by Dzhivelegov, Baudouin de Courtenay and one of the theoreticians of social liberalism, the supporter of Ukrainian federalism Bohdan Kistiakowsky.<sup>35</sup>

For Russian academia, the three and a half years of the Great War were a time of serious losses, but also a period of important fundamental changes to the organization and content of teaching and relations with society at large. Paradoxically, the war period marked the beginning of many vital reform initiatives. That is why this period is particularly interesting for the analysis of state policy, the conditions for students and academics, as well as the interaction between society, academia and the government. It was under the banner of “national education” that the minister of education Pavel Ignatiev, compelled to resign shortly before the February Revolution, attempted to carry out a number of reforms.<sup>36</sup> His suggestions regarding the secondary school system would later be implemented by the Bolshevik Commissariat for Education. As for post-secondary education, Ignatiev lobbied for weaker ministerial control and for expanding the university network to include the Urals, Siberia and the national peripheries of the empire—parts of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

During the war, the above-mentioned people’s universities of an “advanced type” played one of two roles. They became an important means to bypass the development of state-sponsored (imperial) universities, as, for instance, did the university named after Šanjavsky in Moscow, particularly following the university crisis in 1911. They were also the object of efforts by local intelligentsia to fill the lack of existing university potential, as in Tomsk (where before 1917 there was only one, medical, faculty) or at the Neuropsychiatric Institute in St. Petersburg. “State universities” did not view public universities as competition, in part because an imperial university was the only purveyor of diplomas recognized by the state; a state university held the rights of assessment and was a

priori superior to a public university. For numerous associate professors of imperial universities, public universities became a significant venue for self-realization, where they could apply their scientific resources and abilities, in contrast to “state” universities with their more stagnant atmospheres and overly complex structures. Nevertheless, municipal and philanthropic backing remained indispensable for the educational initiatives by educated society members, as well as those by universities (as in Perm or Nizhnii Novgorod).<sup>37</sup> Universities relocated from Warsaw (1915) or Yuryev/Dorpat (1917–1918) laid the foundations for new universities in Rostov-on-Don and Voronezh respectively.

In social terms, many students and junior faculty were very close to another part of the Russian provincial middle class of the period: the so-called “third element.” This is a general description given to local intellectuals (doctors, statisticians, engineers, technicians, agronomists, teachers, etc.) who came to the surface of political life particularly following the first Russian Revolution. These social activists included people with higher (often university-level) education who were involved in public “engagement.” Shortly before 1914, these “people of knowledge” won back from the nobility and the bourgeoisie increasingly greater power and voting rights in social management at the local level. The role and significance of this group grew particularly on the periphery of the Empire, where its representatives boosted local national, cultural or political movements, or served as an additional liaison between the local communities and imperial institutions, as in Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic States, the Far East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Specifically, this social environment served as a starting point for the spread of universities and academic networks throughout the vast expanse of imperial Russia. This development attained a much larger scale than the highest Petersburg bureaucrats or the *gubernia* administrative authorities had initially intended to allow. After the outbreak of war many national cultural organizations were suspended by the order of the Ministry of Interior, and Mikhail Hrushevsky was arrested in Kiev and exiled to central Russia.<sup>38</sup>

However, Ignatiev’s program and especially Blonsky’s, Rubinshtein’s and Hessen’s ideas regarding the progressive “national” *Bildung* and uniform public schooling remained purely declarative. They failed to overcome the rigidity of existing political institutions and the reality of conflicting group ambitions and interests, which was typical of

the intellectuals' encounters with power in the 1910s.<sup>39</sup> Besides, a utopian proposal to integrate various types of school into a single "Russian national educational standard"<sup>40</sup> could not be carried out in the same manner in Central Asia as in Moscow, and in the Volga region as in the Jewish pale of settlement, with its completely different already-existing or emerging educational projects. As Scott Seregny has demonstrated on the archival materials of the Ufa *gubernia*, local educational initiatives could be successful if given enough autonomy "from below."<sup>41</sup> Binding these autonomous enterprises together at the time of growing state-wide crisis was not easy. Besides, as recent studies by Trude Maurer and her colleagues have shown, Russia's university community also preferred isolation from "society at large," and the patriotic enthusiasm of late 1914 had mostly waned by 1916. A Russian *Volksgemeinschaft*, under the intellectuals' ideological guidance, was not to be. Just as society was divided both ethnically and socially, so, too, was academia not homogeneous either. A utopian dream of a uniform "all-estate" national education turned into a variety of dissimilar—"smaller"—national, local and social-political educational projects in 1917–1920.<sup>42</sup>

As early as in March 1917 an accumulated burden of structural, social and even economic contradictions began to weigh heavily on Russian universities. A well-deserved reinstatement of professors who were fired under the minister Lev Kasso (in the period 1911–1914) or who resigned of their own accord in protest failed to restore peace. Moreover, professors appointed by this "most reactionary" of ministers behind the university councils' backs lost their jobs.<sup>43</sup> In the summer of 1917 the Ministry of Education (under the vice-minister, natural philosopher Vladimir Vernadsky), issued a statutory provision regarding tenured docents. However, attempts in October of the same crucial year to revive a half-century-old principle, according to which dissertations could be defended *venia legendi*—that is, by submitting a text only, without taking complicated examinations—met vigorous resistance from the majority of university councils.<sup>44</sup>

At the western frontier of the disintegrating empire—in Warsaw, Dorpat and Vilnius—new universities were founded, often in collaboration with the German occupant authorities.<sup>45</sup> These institutions aimed to create a new national elite and, after 1918, many Polish professors from Russia moved to Warsaw, among them Boudouin, the classic philologist Zieliński and the aforementioned legal scholar Petrazhitsky/Petrażycki. Ukraine's situation at the end of Great War and during a national

revolution and civil war demonstrated a peculiar overlapping of the two waves, as the old imperial system was re-organized on the new social and ideological principles and the “national school” standard.

### REVOLUTIONARY MOMENT: KIEV IN 1917

By the spring and summer of 1917, the rather moderate and loyal professors of peripheral universities, such as the ones in Kiev or Odessa, found themselves moving to the right of the general public, whose sympathies had suddenly shifted left. Some professors’ journals of this period contain frequent spiteful remarks regarding the blunders or powerlessness of their fellow liberal *Kadets*, who failed to shoulder the burden of long-awaited power.<sup>46</sup> Confusion in the face of quickly unfolding events was not limited to right-wing supporters. While a student congress in the summer of 1917 failed to adopt a resolution,<sup>47</sup> deputies of a new congress of the newly restored academic union followed the 1905–1906 patterns and, having met the demands of junior instructors, denied students a chance to participate in university management as council members.<sup>48</sup>

The processes common for the entire system of higher education in the realm of the former empire seem to have found their best expression in the events at Kiev University after the end of autocracy in February 1917. Among the symptoms were opposition within the university, political and ethnic conflicts, establishment of new forms of scientific organization, democratization in its most unexpected and at times grotesque forms, scandals and conciliations. The notorious case of Evgeny Stashevsky (1884–1938) springs to mind: this historian was publicly accused, right before the February Revolution, of lifting documents about the first tsar of the Romanov dynasty from the Moscow archives (either for his own scholarly career or for political purposes).<sup>49</sup>

In this case, Kiev was not a provisional geographic point. Starting from the mid-nineteenth century, local authorities carried out regular campaigns against students or professors suspected of Ukrainophilia or potential separatism, or secret activities to benefit Austria or Poland.<sup>50</sup> The customs in the provincial university community were quite conservative and more often anti-Semitic than not. The memoirs of former students or journals by progressive instructors offer plenty of detailed descriptions of machinations and contemptible connections between the university’s “big shots” and the city’s shadow politics and commerce.<sup>51</sup>

Some well-known figures of the Russian “Silver Age” and contributors to a volume of collected works, *Vekhi* [*Signposts* (1909)], had connections with Kiev. Among them were Nikolai Berdyaev, Evgeny Trubetskoi and Serguei Bulgakov—professors at the university and the polytechnic institute respectively.<sup>52</sup> At the very end of the nineteenth century, Berdyaev and Bulgakov were Marxists in the spirit of Sombart and Bernstein’s revisionism. Later, they leaned towards defending national values and the liberal-conservative camp. Perhaps it was precisely in Kiev, at the heart of the future imperial-national conflicts, that internal university tensions felt stronger even than in the capitals—in Moscow or St. Petersburg (also during the notorious anti-Semitic Beilis affair, when some professors supported the prosecution).<sup>53</sup>

Even years later, after emigration, it pained Evgeny Spektorsky—a respected historian of seventeenth-century ideas and a law professor in Kiev—to recall the events of 1917 and clashes with radical students:

The first committee’s meeting with the [student] coalition leaders was very dramatic. One student yelled, “We have never respected and will never respect you,” all the while stabbing the air in anger. [Geology professor] Luchitsky was so impressed that he burst out crying and refused to participate in further meetings. I was elected as professors’ chair in his place.

[...]

Some notice insulting professors, signed by the coalition committee, was placed next to the staff entrance. Those entering read it and shuffled on despondently. In outrage, I tore the paper off the wall. Some professors were so scared that they viewed this as an act of incredible courage, even though the students did not take revenge on me, moreover, they seemed to have approved of my action. Our united committee began taxing negotiations with students regarding their grievances. They insisted on including their representatives (at least one) in faculty meetings and argued that this would do no harm, as a student would always be a minority. We had already explained to them that a representative, even a single one, would always speak on behalf of the entire student body. He would find it hard to participate in taking pedagogical measures against his academically failing comrades. He would also have to admit his complete incompetence when discussing scholarly qualities of candidates for vacant teaching positions.<sup>54</sup>

The principal conflict in Kiev took place in connection with the university president, professional jurist Nikolai Martinovich Tsitovich (1861–1919). According to Spektorsky’s memoirs, Tsitovich used to be on perfectly good terms with the young, but then became almost a symbol of “reactionary” politics. In September 1917, matters grew so bad that the students would not allow the president to enter the university. Tsitovich reported on the event in his memo to the Petrograd Ministry of Education:

The next day, September 11th, when classes were supposed to begin, I approached the staff entrance in the company of a vice-rector and the head of law department and saw a substantial student crowd (40–50 people) barring the entrance. One of the students claimed to be the head boys’ chair and inquired whether I wished to enter as a professor or a rector. When I stated my wish to be admitted as both a professor and a rector, the student denied my admission on the grounds that the students wished to participate in electing university office-holders, whereas I had been elected without them and against their will. I then asked whether they intended to use force to prevent me from entering. The response was that no, the head boys’ council would not forcibly prevent my entrance, but were I to enter, they would not be held responsible for whatever happened next.

Having concluded from these words that my appearance at the university might cause excesses on students’ part, I decided to refrain from attending the university on that and several days thereafter [...] The Council resolved to admonish the students [...] and [recommended a] call for student meetings by departments in order to discuss, together with professors, the situation at hand. Students on their part resolved at a meeting, which took place on September 12th, to hold a referendum regarding the beginning of classes.<sup>55</sup>

Due to confusion around the country, the question regarding the start of the academic year in the summer and autumn of 1917 was solved locally.<sup>56</sup> It is worth noting that, in 1917, universities and studentships no longer presented the mighty and united revolutionary front that they had done in 1905. During the second Russian Revolution, academia mostly pursued its own social interests, rather than the general political ones. This “weariness” and self-centeredness clearly resulted from the experience of wartime disillusionment after a short-lived enthusiasm in the autumn of 1914.

In his memoirs, Spektorsky described his autumnal visit to Petrograd, from where the last education minister of the Provisional Government, Serguei Salazkin (a liberal professor and former head of the first medical college for women in Petrograd), was trying, without much success, to settle the conflict in Kiev:

Petersburg looked sinister. During the day, automobiles with armed riders of more or less Lombroso's type rushed around the city. At nightfall, the city plunged into darkness to avoid an air attack [...] The next day, I went to the Ministry, where I met with Kievan colleagues. The minister [medical professor Salazkin] saw us all together. Having heard our complaints, he made a helpless gesture. In consolation, he said that he himself might very well be soon forced out on the street as a sweeper. An attendant brought us all a glass of watery tea with no condiments. The minister hesitated. Then, taking out of his vest pocket a box with tiny bits of sugar, he proffered it to us. Everyone took just one, taking care to choose the smallest one.<sup>57</sup>

The professorial council, which had initially refused to give into students, eventually found a way to compromise as far as the rector elections were concerned (Spektorsky remained rector from the spring of 1918 until the end of the civil war). Apart from problems with the students, as early as the summer of 1917 professors in Kiev began to resist the spontaneous, grass-roots Ukrainization of the "Southern region." In their declarations, professors upheld "pan-Russian" principles. Their colleagues from Odessa, Kharkov and the Nezhin historico-philological institute supported them.<sup>58</sup> The latter institution, located not far from Tchernigov, had been famous writer Nikolai Gogol's *alma mater*. Starting from the 1870s, future teachers of Latin in imperial gymnasia were reared there at the state's expense.

As early as the autumn of 1917, parallel to the political activity of the Ukrainian Central Rada, a national university (with a significantly simplified curriculum) opened next to Saint Vladimir's University in Kiev. A number of subjects in the new university were read in Ukrainian; some instructors of the older Kiev University took part in the work of the newer one. With certain reservations, some university teachers, especially docents and recent professors, joined Ukrainian political forces – for example, Vladimir Peretz's pupil Ivan Ogienko (a future metropolitan of the autocephalous church), philosopher Vasili Zenkovsky and jurist Bohdan

Kistiakowsky.<sup>59</sup> In the next two years, national universities also appeared in regional centres (in Poltava, Tchernigov and Kamenets-Podolskii, and in Nezhin on the basis of the Historico-Philological Institute). However, two higher-education congresses in Kiev in the spring and summer of 1918 produced a lot of evidence for the old professors' hostility to competition—the new People's or National Universities created by the younger or non-privileged scholars with national and progressive values.

One of the leaders of junior instructors, mathematician Otto Schmidt, as well as young philosophy students and future renowned Soviet professors Valentin Asmus and Mikhail Dynnik, participated in discussions with conservative professors in Kiev in 1917. Some students would perish from the oncoming Bolsheviks' bullets under the banner of the Central Rada (the Battle of Kruty in January 1918), while others would eventually pick the side of the Reds. In the summer and autumn of 1918, a former member of the Constitutional Democratic Party and vice-minister of education Vladimir Vernadsky would actively promote the foundation of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, which would survive under the Bolsheviks. A number of Kievan and Kharkov professors loyal to the Ukrainian national project would join the Academy.

Soon after, the recently intimidating professors would start selling their libraries piece by piece and taking manual jobs in order not to die of starvation. Some, like the inveterate Ukrainian scholar and member of the "Black Hundred" Professor Timofey Florinsky, would perish at the hands of the Chekists. Long-term opponent of Florinsky's, Ukrainophile and proponent of national education Vladimir Naumenko, who was a minister of education in hetman Skoropadsky's last cabinet (1918), also died from the Bolshevik persecution. The losses sustained by the academic community during those terrible years were due not only to political persecution and emigration, but also to starvation and disease (among those who died were the above-mentioned Nikolai Tsitovich from Kiev and his better-known liberal colleagues from Petrograd, philologist Alexey Shakhmatov and historian Lappo-Danilevsky).<sup>60</sup> As for emigration, the formerly conservative supporters of the Empire fled to Europe alongside active proponents of national educational projects (not only in Ukraine), whereas numerous teachers who stayed, especially those younger ones, continued operating in the 1920s in the framework of the new, Soviet system of education.

## CONCLUSION: WAR'S AFTERMATH AND THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPIRE OF EARLY SOVIET EDUCATION

The First World War was a greatly important milestone in the development of science and scholarship, especially in the sphere of organization and international cooperation. The war raised the question of strengthening relations and cooperation with allies through academic research in particular and within academia more generally. Paradoxically, although civil war promoted institution building and new university foundations in the academic sphere, it gave no boost at all to the long-term autonomy of higher education.<sup>61</sup>

This was not due specifically to Ukraine's peripheral situation in the Empire. For example, the Institute of Siberian Studies survived in Tomsk during all coup d'états of the civil war (in Tomsk University, Sergey Hessen worked as Professor in Philosophy and Pedagogy). In the Transcaucasian region, there was the example of the national university in Tbilisi, founded by the Georgian historian Ivane Javakhishvili, and the university in Yerevan and then in Baku that was founded by exiled Russian scholars (classical philologist and famous poet Vjacheslav Ivanov was a professor there), with some local support, on the model of the Ukrainian Academy founded by Vernadsky. Sometimes, the regional universities (in Belarus or Central Asia) would use regional fraternities for their basis, or professional Slavic or Orientalists' activities of scholars from Moscow and Petrograd. Javakhishvili was one of the closest disciples of renowned linguist Nikolai Marr.<sup>62</sup> The latter, nevertheless, publicly rejected this type of national university foundation in 1918 and forever broke up with a group of former colleagues and assistants. The former junior teaching staff, such as Moscow-based historian of Western Russia Vladimir Picheta (1878–1947) or Arabic scholar from Petrograd Alexander Schmidt (1871–1939), grew to be specialists, and in the early 1920s became rectors of the new universities in Minsk and Tashkent. An author of pedagogical essays about the “national school” in *Vestnik vospitaniia*, Moisey Rubinshtein kept on working to create a university in Irkutsk in 1918, both under the Whites and under the Reds. His kindred spirit Pavel Blonsky became one of the main theoreticians in the People's Commissariat for Education.

Radical changes in higher education in the territory controlled by the Bolsheviks were related to structural modifications: a revolutionary lifting of restrictions on admissions and an abolition of long-standing forms

of hierarchy within the staff.<sup>63</sup> The July and September 1918 meetings of faculty representatives with the leaders of the People's Commissariat for Education cooled the general reformatory zeal, but the principle of "decasting" the university retained its value for the new powers.<sup>64</sup> This was partly because of the resentment felt by the former junior instructors who used to have to spend years waiting for a position at the department, but now came to the fore of the educational system. Tensions with colleagues were also to blame. Astronomer Pavel Shternberg (1865–1920) and jurist Mikhail Reisner (1868–1928), for example, were active supporters of Lenin and Lunacharsky and worked for the People's Commissariat for Education. The rhetoric of class struggle was extensively used against professors. An exclusive access to knowledge (and to the distribution thereof) had to be taken away from those who viewed their scholarly assets as a life-long privilege. All of these accumulated assets were to be reviewed and re-distributed.<sup>65</sup>

A decree of 1 October 1918 abolished all former degrees and titles and replaced them with the categories of professor and instructor, depending on length of service. Although a competition to fill the vacancies of those who had taught for over 10 years, announced in the autumn of 1918,<sup>66</sup> unexpectedly for the organizers left the majority of instructors exactly where they had been before, right after the end of the civil war the Russian People's Commissariat for Education set a course for the Sovietization of higher education. The historian Mikhail Pokrovsky, Lunacharsky's deputy and one of the radical private docents, promoted it most actively.

The picture of scholarly activity during the civil war (1917–1920) was not black and white. After 1920, the university system of the early Soviet Ukraine was replaced with a two-tiered system of vocational and pedagogical training and an academic system of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences with multiple research departments.<sup>67</sup> Petersburg University Oriental Studies graduate Estonian Jaan Rääpo (1880–1958) designed this system.<sup>68</sup> This reform met with a lot of criticism, but in the Russian Republic (RSFSR) there was some similar artificial splitting of the new, experimentally broad higher-educational system and the future research institutes; the old staff were isolated from the new (Red) student body, also for political reasons. In 1924 Hrushevsky came back from a short-term emigration, and during the Ukrainization period (until 1931), before the Great Break, he actively participated in national

institution-building in Soviet Ukraine as a “progressive scholar” and leading historian – however, one without a Marxist background.

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The Great war was the factor that triggered and affected the structural reforms of the Russian system of education.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, it considerably shaped the course of the ideological transformation of the academic community and its various strata. At the same time, the image of academia and the academic community within the multi-national society of the Russian Empire underwent transformations during the war.

In the first section of this chapter, I described the social position of junior faculty and their mostly progressive outlook. Yet, the universalizing claims of scholarship were important factors that contributed to the traditional view of science and knowledge as an all-encompassing activity of the Russian intelligentsia that opposed any kind of (national) particularism.<sup>70</sup> The second section was devoted to the complicated liaisons and tensions between the scientific and institutional evolution and the belated national renaissance in different imperial regions. We can see a profound shift in the idea of national science: from Russian as single and all-imperial to a differentiated, multi-national picture. The Ukrainian academic movement was the most prominent among diverse national elites. The following sections presented the period of war mobilization and the emergence of the spirit of widely shared Russian civil nationalism in 1914–1916, which was then followed by the process of the national diversification of the previously uniform system of education in 1917–1918, following the political disintegration of the Empire. It was junior faculty who were one of the decisive forces behind this transformation. Thus, academia was increasingly perceived as a democratic social institution aligned with the “people’s needs,” although this alignment was inconsistent and problematic.<sup>71</sup>

An attempt to use an idea of national *Bildung* during wartime to promote social progress was not unique to Russia. On either side of the front line—in Germany as well as in Italy—this idea was fleshed out with “civic” elements and innovative pedagogical approaches.<sup>72</sup> “National education” in the Russian Empire was considered by a progressive part of the academic community (Blonsky, Rubinstein) as a challenge to the established right and as an integrative project for all imperial minorities and their elites. But as this chapter has shown, in a political and social crisis in the Empire, this idea, in fact, could not serve as a

unifying element, as proven by the short-lived activity of the Provisional Government.<sup>73</sup> During 1917, universities' circles and the student movement were not the cornerstone and integrative part of the revolutionary process as it proceeded in 1905–1906, but merely a reflection of wider social and national conflicts.

In the general development of academic knowledge this was a move away from the revolutionary principles of 1848 (Romanticism, national emancipation, attention to the humanities and a “glorious” past) and towards the ideas of 1914 (a state-sponsored, self-sufficient system of disciplines and institutions, based on a community of scientists in a single country).<sup>74</sup> The relevant changes occurred in the period prior to 1914, whether at an all-European and global, imperial or national level.<sup>75</sup>

Soviet reformers, who often hailed from the imperial junior faculty, implemented some liberal ideas of “national education” in 1915–1916 (such as the school's connection with people's lives, or a uniform educational system from elementary school through to university).<sup>76</sup> In exile, Sergey Hessen developed his progressive pedagogic ideas in a neo-Kantian manner, drawing on wartime examples.<sup>77</sup> However, the major distinctive feature of the 1920s consisted in an active integration of principles of national education and affirmative action at every level, including university, in the frames of the so-called *korenizatsiya* (literally “putting down roots”) indigenization policy of the 1920s in the Soviet republics. In certain cases, the final generation of the old empire's students became more professionalized and vocationally oriented in the new Soviet context than their junior faculty predecessors had been in the 1910s.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, so-called “old specialists” (former junior faculty from the pre-revolutionary higher school) made a very important contribution to all educational initiatives of the new communist regime and they regarded the change in this field as one of few positive outcomes of the coercive democratization process which had resulted not only from the Revolution but from the First World War.<sup>79</sup>

## NOTES

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PART II

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# Ruptures

# “Despite Wars, Scholars Remain the Great Workers of the International”: American Sociologists and French Sociology During the First World War

*Andrew M. Johnston*

## INTRODUCTION

University of Chicago philosopher George Herbert Mead observed in 1915 that Europe had never, on the eve of its disastrous war, been so internationalized. “The labor movement was international. Science was international [...] There was not a social issue, an idea dear to the hearts of the European community, that could by any possibility be defined with any one nation or its peculiar institutions.”<sup>1</sup> As Mead knew, American intellectual life had itself been stamped by internationalization, especially by exposure to the German university system. In the 1880s

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Maurice Halbwachs to Yvonne Halbwachs, 14 August 1914, Fonds Halbwachs, L’Institut Mémoires de l’édition contemporaine (IMEC), Abbaye d’Ardenne, France.

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and 1890s, thousands of Americans went to Germany for post-graduate education in the social sciences.<sup>2</sup> These fields were seen as the work of an international project that aimed to produce theories of social process as “objective,” universal and useful as the natural sciences.

The Great War called this into question. However, its precise relationship to the normative status of the social sciences was uneven. The German “Manifesto of the 93” was the most obvious shock to the belief that social and natural sciences were above national bias.<sup>3</sup> But in many ways, the social sciences had always managed to preserve space for the national character of their work: the engine of their research was a better understanding of the problems of the modern nation-state. In sociological terms, “society” was virtually synonymous with nation, and nations, as social scientists knew, were culturally distinct.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the new science of society known as sociology. This essay looks at the relationship between American and French sociology during the Great War. The relationship is instructive because French scholars were pioneers in the field and the United States was perhaps the only other nation to embrace sociology as enthusiastically. Both nations had revolutionary and republican traditions that posed the question of “social solidarity”—sociology’s principal fixation—in parallel ways. Both nations saw sociology as a social-scientific answer to liberal atomism. Yet different theoretical tensions about the relationship of those social sciences to the nation-state existed in the two countries.<sup>4</sup> Three things were at work in the United States. First, sociology carved out its identity as a profession inside an emerging university system funded in part by industrial capital. This produced a political atmosphere that drove sociology away from its roots in Christian social work and towards an “objectivism” or “scientism” that, in turn, pushed normatively radical ideas out of the profession. Second, however, the desire for public utility remained: the social sciences were to address the problems produced by industrialization without losing their support for American values. Third, paradoxically, the search for authority at home led US sociologists to look to France. The scientific credentials of the field there lent some legitimacy to its expansion in the United States.

The First World War, however, undermined the argument that internationalization was a shortcut to epistemological authority, because it cast doubt on the universality of knowledge. On the other hand, it raised important questions about socialization and “the nation” that sociologists in both countries felt specially trained to address. The result was

a number of parallel explorations of nationalism that drew analogies between the nation-state-in-the-world and the individual-in-society, and a conceptualization of the international system not as a static order of sovereign states, but as an evolving field of “inter-sociality.” There was, in short, a sociological turn in international relations theory that went unnoticed at the end of the war while the Americans increasingly rejected “liberation sociology” in favour of overt positivism.

### INTELLECTUAL TRANSATLANTICISM: FRENCH AND AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY BEFORE THE WAR

Sociology traces its roots to Auguste Comte (who coined the word) and Herbert Spencer, who adapted Darwin to society by assuming that it was analogous to an organism in the crosshairs of natural selection. Spencer’s “organicism” was the main tendency of what was called sociology in 1890.<sup>5</sup> But in France and the United States, socialist and Christian ideas respectively pushed sociology on a different trajectory.<sup>6</sup> In France, the idea of “solidarism”—identified with Léon Bourgeois and Charles Gide—argued that it would be possible to use the state, as Jacques Donzelot puts it, “to convert the conflicting demands and fears generated by the proclamation of the [Third] Republic into a common faith in progress.”<sup>7</sup> Organicism dominated for another decade, but the uses of the state to create social unity drew the attention of younger French intellectuals who saw “sociology” as the meta-social science devoted to the study of all human association.

Émile Durkheim’s research was driven by these aims.<sup>8</sup> He wanted to find the conditions under which a liberal society could have moral regulation without reverting to the repressive irrationalism of the aristocracy or the Church. He proposed in *De la division du travail social* (1893) that the development of the individual, which characterized modern societies, need not be a source of *anomie* (the absence of moral regulation), because it was accompanied by a growing differentiation of function which, by underlining our shared dependency, created conditions for mutual moral regulation.<sup>9</sup> Durkheim’s theoretical significance, as Göran Therborn put it, was to discover the “ideological community”: that societies are held together by shared norms rather than mystical claims of nationalism or, in utilitarianism, that a society is an aggregate of individuals linked by contractual exchanges.<sup>10</sup> Durkheim wanted to study

society empirically, to examine moral phenomena as “natural” systems made and sustained by humans for concrete reasons, not reducible to individual psychology.<sup>11</sup> His *Les règles de la méthode sociologique* (1895) was a manifesto to this purpose. Liberalism assumed an individual had pre-social desires that society could alter but only at the expense of individual freedom; Durkheim wanted to start with the “social fact,” as he famously put it, and show that the state was a “normal” expression of solidarity.<sup>12</sup>

Durkheim’s attack on methodological individualism led him against the other emerging sociological tendency in France in the 1890s: social psychology. To combat organicism, Gabriel Tarde and Gustave Le Bon integrated social forces with psychological ones. Tarde claimed that all social phenomena could be known only through *individual* consciousness.<sup>13</sup> From this he developed the idea of “imitation” as his main sociological contribution. From 1896 to his death in 1904, Tarde battled Durkheim for the soul of French sociology.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, René Worms formed the Paris-based *Institut International de Sociologie* (IIS) in 1893 and its journal the *Revue internationale de sociologie* (RIS). The IIS reflected the extent to which sociology was a transnational affair. It aimed to apply scientific method to all common “social issues” just as medicine was improving the human body. Few scholars declined membership (Durkheim was a conspicuous exception) and it included Tarde and Gide, Ludwig Gumplowicz (Graz), Tomas Masaryk (Prague), Alfred Marshall (Cambridge), Jacques Novicow (Odessa), Albert Schäffle (Stuttgart) and Georg Simmel (Berlin), as well as a host of American sociological pioneers: Lester Ward (Brown), George Vincent (Johns Hopkins), Albion Small (Chicago), Franklin Giddings (Columbia), J. Mark Baldwin (Princeton), Charles Cooley and E.A. Ross.<sup>15</sup> The IIS was also methodologically ecumenical. Although its congresses led to, or reflected, a move away from organicism by the 1900s, the pluralism of sociology was still broad enough to prevent serious divisions in the IIS. This was why Durkheim chose not to join: he *wanted* an institute around the theoretical doctrine of *Les règles* that would orient *all* studies of social life towards it.<sup>16</sup> Ecumenicalism also meant that there was less effort in the IIS to create a cosmopolitan *patrie*. Its mandate was never to “destroy the barriers that history had established” (meaning nation-states), as Worms put it, but to create a “common spiritual home” for all sociologists. This lack of “premature closure” on ideas was fruitful, but the IIS became a place where social

scientists from around the world discovered and often cultivated their differences.<sup>17</sup>

The initial enthusiasm of American sociologists for the IIS was likely a function of the vulnerability of their discipline at home.<sup>18</sup> They travelled to Europe and studied, attended international conferences and served as officers in the IIS.<sup>19</sup> An international body lent credibility to their efforts to convince other social scientists and university administrators that the United States needed to participate in what Ward called in his IIS presidential address of 1903, simply, “the science of welfare.”<sup>20</sup> This was all part of a wider transatlantic intellectual exchange between the 1880s and 1914, especially as young American social scientists sought training in the comparatively cheap and open German university system. For women like Emily Balch, and African Americans like W.E.B. Du Bois and Alain Locke, France and Germany (despite its emperor worship) also provided more freedom from the narrowness and stifling prejudices of American life.<sup>21</sup> In 1906, Yale professor Henry Farnham calculated that about half of North America’s leading sociologists and economists had spent a year or more studying in Germany.<sup>22</sup>

American and French sociology was animated by the desire to find reins of authority in the face of dramatic social change, but the historical contexts of the two nations produced different preferences. Other than William Graham Sumner, the first advocates of what would become academic sociology in the United States were motivated by a blend of Christianity and socialism. They were openly meliorist, and some professors divided their time between teaching and social work.<sup>23</sup> Gradually activism became associated with controversial political causes, and the scientific (and university) credentials of sociology could not be reconciled to such activism. As in France, sociology thus emerged as an *academic* response to the challenge of socialism. In Albion Small’s Hegelian account, “conventionality is the thesis. Socialism is the antithesis, Sociology is the synthesis.”<sup>24</sup> Sociology had to preserve liberal individualism and cloak its reformism in an objective method.<sup>25</sup> But sociology’s ontological target was *laissez-faire* liberalism. Creating a *via media* between individualism and socialism, while retaining the pretence of objectivity was thus never easy.<sup>26</sup> As the first chairs were created in the 1890s (Small’s at Chicago in 1892 and Giddings’ at Columbia in 1894), even Tarde joked that sociology “has succeeded in being baptized before its birth.”<sup>27</sup>

As university patrons rejected socialism of any stripe, US sociology turned away from the solidarism of the French. It displayed, instead, a preference for social psychology because it privileged the individual as the actual source of social reality. Giddings could not countenance a social theory that relegated consciousness to an epiphenomenon of “collective” forces. Most American sociologists were drawn more to Le Bon and Tarde than to Durkheim.<sup>28</sup> Giddings and Baldwin saw themselves as the US interlocutors for Tarde, whose works were quickly translated for American readers.<sup>29</sup> Giddings told Tarde, “I feel assured that Sociology is more deeply indebted to you than to any other of your countrymen—the creators of the science.”<sup>30</sup>

Another American difference that reinforced the preference for social psychology was anxiety about immigration. The founding of the discipline in the middle of the twin streams of imperialism and immigration suggests a “broad international reference” in American sociology from the outset.<sup>31</sup> It produced Giddings’ main contribution to sociology, what he called “consciousness of a kind”: a blend of primitive instinct (a trace of the organic tradition) and Tarde’s imitation (the psychological tradition).<sup>32</sup> At the same time, Edward A. Ross, after spending five months in the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* and another five at the British Museum, produced his idea of “social control.”<sup>33</sup> Ross imagined social control not as Gramscian hegemony (consensual order in the service of the ruling class) but as the realization of the mutual inter-dependence of the self and society; control was not *imposed* by an outside sovereign but by the individual’s own nature realized through inter-dependence. This could be seen as a reversal of “liberal valences,” but it still presupposed a liberal ontology because the focus was on self-actualization as a pre-condition to “social likeness.” Ross hoped that “likeness” would, as Tarde believed, “dissolve modern conflicts into social agreement.”<sup>34</sup> While US sociologists accepted that conflict between groups (whether of class, race or ethnicity) was inescapable, they refused to reify it: there could be industrial *groups* but never an industrial *proletariat*.<sup>35</sup>

On the eve of the Great War, however, things changed in American politics. The initial consensus of left and right reformers, which had allowed sociology to take root, started to generate sharper demands for radical political and economic change. A series of violent strikes in 1911–1913, and the electoral successes of both the American Socialist Party and the Bull Moose Progressive Party in 1912, meant that conservative support began to fall away. The demand for unity that drove Progressive

social theory moved in more reactionary directions. Nationalism was always an important feature of Progressivism, and the European war only sharpened this edge. In 1912, Giddings' presidential address to the American Sociology Association, entitled "The quality of civilization," worried that American society had a surfeit of individual enterprise, but its concept of group affiliation was weak.<sup>36</sup> Giddings also applied his "consciousness of kind" to his work for the Anti-Immigration League and, when the war came, his patriotic service to the eminently respectable League to Enforce Peace.

### INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGY DURING THE WAR

In the United States, academic sociology had never been more secure than it was in 1914.<sup>37</sup> More departments were in place, Small's journal was vigorous, and the field, while divided on some theoretical positions, commanded a measure of public respect. Small bragged in 1913 that never "has it been possible for social scientists to perform more fundamentally constructive public service than present conditions throughout the world demand."<sup>38</sup> Moreover, theoretical divisions were not based on national ones so much as they bore slight national accents: each country had representatives from every school, even if, as I have argued, Americans *tended* to be attracted to social psychology, and Durkheim's method reflected a solidarist purpose in France.

Yet signs of international fragmentation were evident before the war. After its 1912 Rome Congress (devoted to "Progress"), the IIS had to suspend its meetings. The next Congress was scheduled for Vienna in 1915, but the war made travel impossible. Its next gathering was not until October 1927.<sup>39</sup> A series of resignations followed growing tensions, and Worms' "benign eclecticism" was no longer enough to ensure comity.<sup>40</sup> The IIS was less and less the focus of American sociologists, who turned inwards as their numbers grew. Their attention to French sociology diminished correspondingly. Tarde died in 1904, and Durkheim and his followers, having established themselves as *the* French school anchored behind their influential journal *L'Année sociologique*, still enjoyed an uncertain reception in the United States.<sup>41</sup> French research was profiled in US journals during the war, but because *L'Année* was suspended and most French sociologists served in the war, there was little to review during the period of US neutrality.<sup>42</sup>

One thing that Worms and Durkheim shared, however, was a sociological resistance to “internationalism” as a political ideal. Their construction of a worldwide community of sociologists, and their desire to bring objectivity to their method, lived comfortably alongside their defence of France itself. “Solidarity” had been the entire purpose of Durkheim’s method. True, his final work before the war—*Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (1912)—opened itself up to the idea that the “collective consciousness” of primitive groups would expand through growing inter-dependence with others, gradually internationalizing through “indeterminate frontiers.”<sup>43</sup> But the outbreak of the war reinforced his attachment to France as the defender of civilization. All Durkheimians had personal ties to German scholars, and many of them were, if not members of the French Socialist Party (SFIO), at least close to its leader, Jean Jaurès. Yet they rejected the Second International’s official opposition to nationalism. In 1905, Durkheim debated revolutionary syndicalist Hubert Lagardelle on the question of whether class struggle was compatible with patriotism. Durkheim supported the goals of the SFIO but rejected the idea that socialism could only liberate the working class by violently destroying the old order first. Such a position, he thought, was a denial of human sociability. A class is only a “fragment” and as such cannot contain the attributes needed to bring moral authority to society.<sup>44</sup> In a later debate with pacifist philosopher Theodore Ruysen, Durkheim also rejected cosmopolitanism on the grounds that it was simply too abstract for the social loyalties of real people.<sup>45</sup>

The outbreak of the war cut the ties between French sociologists and their German colleagues. Bouglé, for example, had served as the French interlocutor for Georg Simmel’s writings, but both of them ended up writing propaganda for their respective nations.<sup>46</sup> French sociologists, without exception, embraced the *Union sacrée*. Durkheim served as secretary of the *Comité d’étude et documents sur la guerre*, a propaganda agency headed by historian Ernest Lavissee that also employed Charles Andler, Émile Boutroux and Henri Bergson.<sup>47</sup> Durkheim wrote pamphlets on Germany’s war guilt, but died in 1917, less than two years after his son André was killed on the Balkan front. All the younger sociologists were called up in one form or another: Robert Hertz, a promising socio-anthropologist, was killed in April 1915; Mauss served in various roles, including as translator for an Australian unit (both he and Hertz were Anglophiles and fans of British Fabianism, so they had a command of English)<sup>48</sup>; Bouglé worked for the ambulance corps and wrote patriotic

articles under the pseudonym “Jean Breton”<sup>49</sup>; Halbwachs and Simiand served under the socialist Albert Thomas in the Ministry of Munitions.<sup>50</sup>

None of this meant they were not committed in principal to re-building international social science. In practice that proved harder. German sociology in the Weimar Republic was enveloped in an atmosphere of defeat, revolution and crisis. It was polarized between arch conservatism, critical theory and Karl Mannheim’s “historical sociology,” none of which had direct referents to French sociological traditions.<sup>51</sup> There was also a generation shift between the two nations. Simmel, who Bouglé had defended, died in 1918, and Weber in 1920.<sup>52</sup> Fittingly, Halbwachs, who was Alsatian, was given the position of chair of sociology at the new *French* University of Strasbourg, which had been Simmel’s position in its German iteration. Halbwachs’ job was, among other things, to promote French ideas in the Rhineland.<sup>53</sup>

Nonetheless, there were two examples of the way Durkheimian sociologists saw their work in relation to the nation-state *and* internationalism. First, as a small indication, Halbwachs’ letters to his wife, Yvonne, during the war indicate that, while he wanted France to vanquish the German Empire, he refused to relinquish his right “to love science, culture, German socialism, the great and distinguished men of Germany, while going to war against the brutality of Teutonic imperialism.”<sup>54</sup> This distinction between the different *forms* of nation was critical: the autocratic, imperial Prussian state was the antithesis of the solidarity promoted by Durkheimians. France’s resistance to Germany was thus national but primarily ideological. Halbwachs carried the plaintive hope that the traces of scientific camaraderie could be revived after the war: “despite wars,” he told Yvonne, “scholars remain the great workers of the International.”<sup>55</sup> It was not until after Locarno, however, through the Davos University Conferences of 1928–1931, that he, along with Mauss, Davy and Bouglé, participated in direct Franco-German intellectual engagement.<sup>56</sup>

The second example is more substantive and comes from Mauss’ 1919–1920 examination of “the problem of nationality.” In 1913, he had written a series of articles on foreign policy that dismissed the “racial” antipathy between France and Germany as the invention of chauvinistic politicians. What was important was the eventual victory of German democracy and French republicanism over the forces of reaction in *both* countries.<sup>57</sup> The war thus made him ask profound questions about what made nations act in different ways, and Mauss felt at once

that all the sociological research in which his circle had engaged now had a clear purpose.<sup>58</sup> The international system itself required a sociological study of the concrete processes of its interlocking layers of interaction. The entire fabric of international—or, he preferred, “intersocial”—life was a “milieu of milieus.” He concluded: “It is indeed an abstraction to believe that the domestic politics of a nation is not conditioned largely by the outside, and vice versa.”<sup>59</sup> Therefore, modern societies required the full democratization of national communities, which was the pre-condition for the development of all moral, aesthetic and economic ideals. The *nation*, in other words, was only a provisional locus around which individuals acquired their consciousness of mutuality. “Internationalism” does not oppose the nation-state, but only rejects its isolation and seeks to replicate the mutuality citizens have acquired at home. The growing economic inter-dependence of nations was, as the division of labour was for Durkheim, the mechanism by which this enlarged sociability might bring about greater global harmony.<sup>60</sup> The League of Nations, flawed though it was, was a model of the *direction* of global society, a forum in which international norms could be negotiated between multiple layers of social groupings.<sup>61</sup>

## US SOCIOLOGY DURING AND AFTER THE WAR

The response of American sociologists to the war was bisected by their country’s initial neutrality, followed by belligerency that brought with it a burst of patriotic energy. Even under neutrality, academic views of France became progressively positive as those of Germany became more critical. In 1915, a number of US academics conceived of producing a guide to French universities for prospective American students. It was not published until June 1917, just in time to capitalize on the comradeship of the two nations at war against a common enemy. The chapter on sociology was assembled by T.N. Carver, F.S. Deibler, Giddings and Ross, and credited the French with being the founders of and dominant presence in world sociology. They included one image (of Durkheim) and a list of the institutions American students might wish to attend. The entire volume read as a tribute to French intellectual achievements and the debt all Americans owed to French scholarship.<sup>62</sup>

The re-discovery of French intellectuals during the war also appeared obliquely in sociological scholarship. For many Americans, even those sympathetic to the Entente, there was an initial view that the war was

symptomatic of what was wrong with European society. Ironically, it stimulated interest in *American* nationalism. Small used his journal, under the guise of research, to index all the elements of American unity, itself a symptom of his anxiety about American pluralism. His late 1914 survey on the question “what is Americanism?” led him to despair that “American minds are anchorages for a heterogeneity of ideas.” We ought instead, he believed, to actively emphasize “the moral meanings of nationality,” and reject the apparently faddish view in his country that nationalism was bad just because the war had proved it dangerous. To Small, the mistake here paralleled the one found within any nation: the antinomy between the individual and the collective. It was as though sociology had been preparing him for this moment, and had armed him with a ready answer: since we have studied the mutual inter-dependence of the individual in the group, we can now see how the nation-state is neither the end of all life nor the enemy of international peace. It is the provisional consciousness of the national self in a world of other national selves. The international system is a society and is thus open to the same ameliorative social science work. “Nations, like individuals, serve the largest moral purpose, not by smothering their personality, but by magnifying it, till whatever is good in it is recognized on its merits by other individuals or nations as something worthy of emulation.”<sup>63</sup> And so American sociology went full circle from rejecting organicism to the psychology of social control to conceiving the nation as a kind of personality imitating its best examples in a society of like nations.

Clearly, though, not all nations were of equal merit, and a number of American sociologists used the war, as Mauss was doing at the same time, to explain that different kinds of nationalism produced different kinds of international citizen. In November 1914, Charles Ellwood presented a paper in London on “The social problem and the war.” His argument followed the semi-official US view that the war was a symptom of the “decay and disintegration of civilization itself.” This rottenness, however, also brought out the fact that the “social problem” cannot “be defined or understood from any point of view which is merely national. War has suddenly revealed the interdependence of national groups and the common life of humanity.” The *ancien régime* represented national-imperial egotism based on superiority rather than mutuality. Yet the solutions to this problem proposed by socialists, feminists, pacifists or racial groups were always “partial.” The basic problem was simply “the relations of men to one another”: the war was a macrocosm of the problems

of *national* integration. Imperial Germany's brand of cohesion was based on an artificial worship of power; its nationalism denied the *common* life of humanity. In contrast, the organic solidarity uneasily achieved by liberal democracies was founded on a humanitarianism realized in mutuality at home, the only basis for resolving conflicts between "classes, nations, and races."<sup>64</sup>

Ellwood's argument anticipated that of George Herbert Mead at Chicago.<sup>65</sup> Mead was a pluralist, pragmatist and keen internationalist.<sup>66</sup> Before the war, he had begun to develop an account of identity formation based on interaction, in which a greater "consciousness" of our inter-connectedness produces a more harmonious whole.<sup>67</sup> In 1914, Mead saw the war as a test of his theory against the backdrop of the virulent "social emotions" of conflict. His claim was that nationalism (which could descend into xenophobic egotism and use foreign enemies to create an artificial sense of solidarity) was a provisional stage of social consciousness. Like Ellwood and Small, he thought nations were analogous to individuals at least in so far as their self-hood was conditioned by their formation in (international) society. Eventually, international human rights would transcend the domains of nations, just as the egotistic self was replaced by the "social self."

Mead conceded that humans were still "afraid to lose [...] the sense of superiority to people of other nations, and the patriotism [...] which seems to be dependent upon national egotisms." War was a psychological and atavistic expression of this social need. In contrast, inter-dependent *communities* better safeguard the needs of humans than armies or navies. So why do we cling to organized violence against others? "It is the feeling of enlarged personality, of the national *amour propre*, a feeling not so much of what a people have or want as of *what they are*, that militarism supports in national life."<sup>68</sup>

By 1916, Mead had drawn a sociological distinction between the two sides of the war. He admired Germany as a model for the United States after studying in Leipzig and Berlin, and knew German social theorists better than French ones. But Germany's achievements were too dependent on the military to create genuine solidarity.<sup>69</sup> He became more "anti-German" as the war went on but still hoped for a stalemate, and opposed the US "preparedness" movement.<sup>70</sup> His criticisms of war were only muted when, in 1917, the United States joined and his own son went overseas. In February, he clung to the idea that Woodrow Wilson's position reflected a commitment to take the United States into a "world

state” in which war would be replaced by international policing. “But can the [American] people become self conscious enough to take this attitude?”<sup>71</sup> By April such doubts had been shed. He wrote excitedly:

There is no doubt in my mind that the hour has struck at which America from the standpoint of her own history and the philosophy of her own institutions must become a part of the world society in responsibility, and that this involves getting ready to fight as the other nations are fighting, but to end the fighting, not settle the quarrels of the European states out of which this Armageddon arose.<sup>72</sup>

Mead here framed the disinterestedness of American foreign policy in its emerging *national self-consciousness*. This was exceptionalism *par excellence*, but his argument in 1917 rested on a distinction between two types of nationalism. The first was incomplete, artificially cultivated by an authoritarian elite to sustain its rule. The second Mead called “national-mindedness.” This was the consummation of the “social self” within the nation. Its end point was the incorporation of all citizens into a national consciousness based on their mutual interest in each other. Such nations do not seek war to satisfy a psychological need for inner unity because they already have it; national-mindedness is therefore a pre-condition for unselfish participation in an emerging *international* consciousness.<sup>73</sup>

This position was close to that of Mauss’, and paralleled Durkheim’s “collective consciousness.”<sup>74</sup> They had come to this common ground through very different national genealogies. The purpose of sociology was to provide scientific authority for intervention in a liberal society in the absence of other forms of social control. For the French, there was a political threat from the clerical right and from the revolutionary left, and any sociology that privileged individual consciousness risked sliding towards *anomie*. American sociologists had similar goals, but in a republican culture that lacked strong illiberal traditions (except an ascriptive racism) to threaten that ideological consensus. For them, the polarity was between atomism and socialism, and their ontology preferred social psychology to enable individual consciousness as the origin of social reality. Mead came to his theory of national-mindedness through a form of social psychology derived from his encounter with pragmatism. By the end of the war, these divergent origins assembled around new theories of internationalism that envisaged a structural connection between the democratization of nation-states and international peace.

## CONCLUSION

With the exception of this convergence over nationalism–internationalism, the theoretical valences that divided French and American sociological communities persisted after the war. Institutionally, the Durkheimians were scattered without their leader, and French sociology lost its unified presence. The IIS was re-kindled in 1926 but suffered from problems of its own in the 1930s: the remnants of French Durkheimians continued to boycott it, German and British membership dropped, and a power struggle emerged between a handful of Americans and a larger number of Italian sociologists—led by “Mussolini’s statistician” Corrado Gini—with fascist sympathies.<sup>75</sup>

American sociology, in contrast, enjoyed a renaissance behind greater and greater positivism. Robert Park and Ernest Burgess at the University of Chicago wrote the first formal articulation of a distinctively American sociology in their *Introduction to the science of sociology* (1921). It was a robust return to methodological individualism (even reviving Tarde’s theory of imitation) and was thus a rebuttal of Durkheim.<sup>76</sup> The ideological consequence of wartime mobilization in America appeared to drive the profession away from any social theory that could not be defended behind ontological individualism and a scientific model, especially one involving quantification, statistical models and large-scale data collection. Giddings had been moving in that direction before the war, showing his fondness for Karl Pearson’s *Grammar of Science* ([1892] 1911), which believed that social data could be precisely measured through statistics and represented in scatter graphs.<sup>77</sup> The point was to protect the field from radicals who might undermine the institutional status of academic sociologists in the eyes of the American public, radicals who might also lead the social sciences toward statist experiments like Bolshevism or fascism. It all culminated in the election of Giddings’ student W.F. Ogburn as president of the American Sociological Society (ASS) in 1929. For Ogburn, the fact–value distinction was so central to social science that he simply stated that sociology was “not interested in making the world a better place.”<sup>78</sup>

Sociology’s emergence as a discipline was inseparable from the perceived crisis in industrial-imperial societies at the turn of the century. In Europe, its agents were preoccupied with the moral regulation of society as it moved from the *ancien regime* to some unplotted future. French and American social scientists worked in political cultures with different attitudes toward the state, and in ideological fields that posed divergent

options for the preservation of republicanism, but they were closer—and thus more prolific—in their anxieties about the problem of *anomie*. The unprecedented violence of the war then posed questions about the mobilization of solidarity within the nation, providing an opening for the application of social research to global inter-dependence. Only a few of sociologists—those, like Mauss and Mead, already steeped in interactionist and anthropological orientations—ventured onto this ground. Yet they created, in an uncoordinated way, an account of the international system as an inter-social space that builds nations and internationalism simultaneously. If the nation-state emerged largely intact from the Great War, some French and American sociologists, in their own ways, provided some tools for undermining its mystical authority.

## NOTES

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15. The IIS also sponsored a book series, publishing over fifty volumes, including Tarde's *Études de Psychologie Sociale* (1898), the first to use the words "social psychology" on its cover, and translations of major American works (notably Ward's *Dynamic sociology*). Terry Clark, *Prophets and Patrons: the French University and the Emergence of the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 151–152.
16. Durkheim (with P. Fauconnet), "Sociologie et Sciences Sociales," *Revue Philosophique*, 55 (1903): 465–497.
17. Clark, *Prophets and Patrons*, 151–161. See also Clark, "Marginality, Eclecticism, and Innovation: René Worms and the *Revue Internationale de Sociologie* from 1893 to 1914," *RIS*, series II: 3 (December 1967): 12–27; Worms quoted in Ulrike Schuerkens, "Les Congrès de l'Institut International de Sociologie de 1894–1930 et l'Internationalisation de Sociologie," *International Review of Sociology* 6:1 (1996): 7–24.
18. Michael D. Kennedy and Miguel A. Centeno, "Internationalism and Global Transformations in American Sociology," in *Sociology in America: a History*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 666–712.
19. Most US sociologists studied in Germany, but in other disciplines. Emily Green Balch was one of the few who worked in Paris under Émile Levasseur, who was a member of the IIS. Balch returned a few years later

- and followed the well-trod path of a year in Berlin studying with Gustav Schmoller, Adolph Wagner and Georg Simmel. See Andrew M. Johnston, “The Disappearance of Emily G. Balch, Social Scientist,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 13:2 (April 2014): 166–199.
20. Schuerkens, “Les Congrès de l’Institut International de Sociologie.”
  21. On the exclusion of African American intellectuals from US academic sociology, see Pierre Saint-Arnaud, *African American Sociology: A Critical History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) and Aldon Morris, *The Scholar Denied: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Birth of American Sociology* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).
  22. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 86–89; Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science*, 109. Jurgen Herbst, *The German Historical School in American Scholarship: A Study in the Transfer of Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965). American enthusiasm for Germany was crushed by the war, but inter-university exchanges between members of the Entente flourished. See Tomás Irish, “From International to Inter-Allied: Transatlantic University Relations in the Era of the First World War, 1905–1920,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 13: 4 (2015): 311–325.
  23. Stephen Turner, *American Sociology: From Pre-Disciplinary to Post-Normal* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 19–20.
  24. Albion Small and George E. Vincent, *An Introduction to the Study of Society* (New York: American Book Company, 1894), 41; Mark C. Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible: the American Debate over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918–1941* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 76.
  25. Roscoe C. Hinkle, *Founding Theory of American Sociology, 1881–1915* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 23; Albion Small, *General Sociology: an Exposition of the Main Developments in Sociological Theory from Spencer to Ratzenhofer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905), 654.
  26. The attack against Sumner’s marriage of Darwin and *laissez-faire* was launched by Ward, but also by insurgent allies in political economy. See R. T. Ely, “The American Economic Association 1885–1909,” *American Economic Association Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 11: 1 (April 1910): 50–51.
  27. Review of Tarde’s *La Logique Sociale* (1894) in *Mind* (January 1895), Fonds Gabriel Tarde, Centre d’histoire, Science Po, Paris; Franklin H. Giddings, “The Theory of Sociology,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 5, supplement 7 (July 1894): 7–12, 15, 76–80.
  28. Jennifer Platt, “The United States reception of Durkheim’s *The rules of sociological method*,” *Sociological Perspectives*, 38:1 (1995): 77–105; Ken Morrison, “The Disavowal of the Social in the American Reception of Durkheim,” *Journal of Classical Sociology* 1:1 (2001): 95–125.

29. In contrast, Durkheim's works were not translated into English until comparatively late: *Elementary forms of religious life* (1915), *The Division of Labor in Society* (1933) and *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1938). The first translations contained errors that contributed to American misreadings. Steven Lukes, preface to *The Rules of Sociological Method*, ed. Steven Lukes (New York: Free Press, 2013), vii.
30. Letter, Giddings to Tarde, 23 May 1899, Fonds Gabriel Tarde.
31. Kennedy and Centeno, "Internationalism and Global Transformations," 672.
32. Giddings, "Concepts and Methods of Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 10:2 (Sept. 1904): 161–176; James Tufts, "Recent Sociological Tendencies in France," *American Journal of Sociology* 1:2 (January 1896): 446–456.
33. Edward A. Ross, *Social Control: A Survey of the Foundations of Order* (New York: Macmillan, 1901), a serialized version of thirteen articles he had been working on through the late 1890s. Ross, "Social Control," n.d., box 32, Ross Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.
34. Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science*, 239.
35. *Ibid.*, 254.
36. Giddings, "The Quality of Civilization," *American Journal of Sociology* 17:5 (March 1912): 581–589.
37. Membership of the American Sociological Association (ASA) climbed from 115 after its first meeting in 1906 to 256 in 1910 and 1021 in 1920. Lawrence J. Rhoades, *A History of the American Sociological Association, 1905-1980* (Washington, DC: American Sociological Association, 1981), 74–75.
38. Albion Small, "The Present Outlook of Social Science," *American Journal of Sociology* 18:4 (January 1913): 469.
39. Giddings was scheduled to take over the presidency in 1913. In 1912 there were 91 full members (and a slightly longer list of associate members) listed in the report of the Congress. Six were Americans: Baldwin, Giddings, Ross, Small, Veblen and Ward. See *Annales de l'Institut International de Sociologie*, vol. 14, "Le Progrès," Contenant les travaux du huitième Congrès, tenu à Rome en Octobre 1912 (Paris, 1913). On the cancelled meetings, see Marta Losito and Sandro Segre, "Ambiguous Influence: Italian Sociology and the Fascist Regime," in *Sociology Responds to Fascism*, ed. Stephen Turner and Dirk Käsler (London: Routledge, 1992).
40. Clark, *Prophets and Patrons*, 200.
41. Stephen P. Turner, "Ellwood's Europe," in *Transatlantic Voyages and Sociology: The Migration and Development of Ideas*, ed. Cherry Schrecker (New York: Routledge, 2010), 167–173.

42. Le Bon's *The Psychology of the Great War* was reviewed by Luther Lee Bernard, a graduate of Chicago and student of social psychology.
43. Durkheim, *Les Formes Elementaires de la Vie Religieuse* (Paris: Alcan, 1912), 634–635.
44. Durkheim, “Internationalisme et Lutte des Classes,” in *La Science Sociale et l'Action* (1906), 283–936.
45. Durkheim, “Pacifisme et Patriotism,” in *La Science Sociale et l'Action* (1907), 294–301.
46. Christian Gülich, “Célestin Bouglé et Georg Simmel: Une Correspondance Franco-Allemande en Sociologie,” *Mil Neuf Cent 8* (1990): 59–72. According to Gülich, their correspondence after 1908 has been lost.
47. Christoph Prochasson, *Les Intellectuels, le Socialisme et la Guerre* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1993), 20; Michel Winock, *Le Siècle des Intellectuels* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1997), 169; Lukes, *Durkheim*, 549.
48. Alexander Riley, “The Intellectual and Political Project of Robert Hertz: The Making of a Peculiar Durkheimian Intellectual as Seen Through Selected Correspondence with Pierre Roussel,” *Durkheimian Studies 5* (1999): 29–59.
49. “Le Collectivisme du Front,” [1914]; “La Pudeur du Front,” [June 18, 1916] *La Depeche*; “Lecteur Tranquille,” [1917]; “Une Mauvaise Herbe,” boîte F (L'historien, textes sur l'affaire Dreyfus), Fonds Bouglé.
50. On the “réseau Albert Thomas,” see Christophe Prochasson, *Les Intellectuels, le socialisme, et la guerre, 1900–1938* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1993), 122–129.
51. Steinmetz, “The Historical Sociology of Historical Sociology”; Uta Gerhardt, “Introduction,” *German Sociology* (New York: Continuum, 1998), xi–xiii; David Frisby, *The Alienated Mind: The Sociology of Knowledge in Germany, 1918–1933* (London: Routledge, 1992), 1–25.
52. Henri Brunschwig, “Un Dialogue de Sourds: Un Siècle de Rapports Franco-Allemands,” *Politique Étrangère*, 20:5 (1955): 584–586.
53. John E. Craig and Martine Burgos, “Maurice Halbwachs à Strasbourg,” *Revue Française de Sociologie*, 20 (1979): 273–275.
54. Letter, Maurice to Yvonne Halbwachs, 9 August, 1914, *Lettres de Maurice à Yvonne* [1914], HBWS A1-01.7, IMEC.
55. Letter, Maurice to Yvonne Halbwachs, 14 August 1914, *ibid.*; Annette Becker, *Maurice Halbwachs: un intellectuel en guerres mondiales, 1914–1945* (Paris: Agnès Viénot, 2003).
56. Becker, *Maurice Halbwachs*, 189; Lionel Richard, “Aspects des Relations Intellectuelles et Universitaires Entre la France et l'Allemagne dans les Années Vingt,” in *La France et l'Allemagne entre les Deux Guerres Mondiales*, ed. Alfred Guth, Jacques Bariéty and Jean Marie Valentin (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1987), 112–124.

57. The series was published in *La Revue de l'Enseignement Primaire et Primaire Supérieur*. Marcel Fournier, *Marcel Mauss* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 364–372.
58. Jean Terrier and Marcel Fournier's introduction in *Marcel Mauss: La Nation* (Paris: PUF, 2013), 7–8. As Fournier's biography of Mauss shows, this study was from the outset framed as part of a larger project on the relationship between socialism and "nationalization." Fournier, *Marcel Mauss*, 406.
59. Marcel Mauss, "Les Relations Internationales, ou de l'Internationalisme," in Terrier and Fournier, *Mauss: La Nation*, 122–123.
60. Marcel Mauss et al., "Symposium: The Problem of Nationality," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 20 (1919–1920): 237–265; Marcel Mauss, "La Nation," *Extrait de l'Année Sociologique*, Troisième série, (1953–1954): 7–68. Text reprinted in Marcel Mauss, *Oeuvres*. 3. *Cohésion Sociale et Division de la Sociologie* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969), 573–625. In the same volume see his "La Nation et l'Internationalisme," [1920], 626–634. See also Frédéric Ramel, "Marcel Mauss et l'Étude des Relations Internationales: un Héritage Oublié," *Sociologie et sociétés* 36 (2004): 227–245.
61. Terrier and Fournier, *Mauss: La Nation*, 19–21. Some scholars have also shown that Mauss's famous *Essai sur le Don* [*The Gift*], published first in 1925, was written in the context of a series of political essays on Franco-German relations and the reciprocal obligations of post-war debts and reparations. See Grégoire Mallard, "The Gift Revisited: Marcel Mauss on War, Debt, and the Politics of Nations," *Buffett Centre for International and Comparative Studies Working Paper Series*, Working Paper no. 10-004 (November 2010); Sylvain Dzimira, *Marcel Mauss, Savant et Politique* (Paris: La Découverte, 2007); Dario Verderame, "The 'Social' as Reciprocity: Marcel Mauss and the Idea of Nation," in *Classical Sociology Beyond Methodological Nationalism*, ed. Massimo Pendenza (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 117–151.
62. John H. Wigmore, ed., *Science and Learning in France: With a Survey of Opportunities for American Students in French Universities* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley, 1917). The volume included an odd but revealing preface by Harvard ex-president Charles Elliot that tried to assure nervous American students (or their parents) that the French of 1917 were no longer the "inconstant, pleasure-loving, materialistic people" Americans had long assumed them to be. Thanks to the war, they had acquired roughly the qualities of a good family dog: "a heroic people, constant to great political and social ideals, a people intelligent, fervid, dutiful, and devoted to family, home, and country."

63. Albion Small, “What is Americanism?” *American Journal of Sociology* 20: 4 (January 1915): 433–486. In the next issue, Small drew on the omnibus term “social bonds,” and credited Giddings’ “conscious of kind” with helping to clarify the mechanism involved in their formation. Small, “The Bonds of Nationality,” *American Journal of Sociology* 20: 5 (March 1915): 629–683.
64. Charles Ellwood, “The Social Problem and the Present War,” *American Journal of Sociology* 20: 4 (January 1915): 487–503.
65. Much of this section draws on my earlier article, “Mead, Addams, Balch: Feminism, Pragmatism, and the Vicissitudes of Liberal Internationalism,” in *La Grande Guerre et le Combat Féministe*, ed. Claire Delahaye and Serge Ricard (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2009), 93–126.
66. Hans Joas, *G.H. Mead: A Contemporary Re-examination of his Thought* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985, 1997), 15–32; Gary A. Cook, *George Herbert Mead: the Making of a Social Pragmatist* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 105–108.
67. G.H. Mead, “Social Consciousness and the Consciousness of Meaning,” *Psychological Bulletin* 7 (1910): 397–405; G.H. Mead, “The Social Self,” *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Method*, 10 (1913): 377; Jurgen Habermas, “Individuation Through Socialization: on George Herbert Mead’s Theory of Subjectivity,” in *Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays* (trans. William Mark Hohengarten (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1992), 149–204.
68. G.H. Mead to Henry C.A. Mead, March 24, 1918, box 1, folder 9, Mead Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Chicago, IL.
69. Mead to Henry C.A. Mead, April 28, 1916, Mead Papers, box 1, folder 8. See also Mead to Henry C.A. Mead, March 3, 1916, same file.
70. Small, on the other hand, supported preparedness on the grounds that social theories that only attract “minor groups” cannot be the foundation of large-scale advancement. Albion Small, “National Preparedness—American,” *American Journal of Sociology* 21: 5 (March 1916): 601–610; Small, “What May Sociologists do Toward the Problems of the Present War Situation?” *American Journal of Sociology* 23: 1 (July 1917): 1–66.
71. G.H. Mead to Irene Mead, February 18, 1917, Mead Papers, box 1, folder 14.
72. G.H. Mead to Irene Mead, April 8, 1917, Mead Papers, box 1, folder 13.
73. G.H. Mead, “National-Mindedness and International-Mindedness,” *The International Journal of Ethics*, 39, 4 (July 1929): 385–407; G.H. Mead, “On Kant and German Nationalism.” Undated [circa 1917–1918], Mead Papers, addenda, box 2, folder 27.

74. Mead's papers reveal no obvious debts to French sociology, but his war-time writings place France, England and the United States in an ideological grouping of democratically adjusted nation-states. See Mary Jo Deegan, "Germany versus international life," in *Self, War, and Society: George Herbert Mead's Macrosociology*, ed., Mary Jo Deegan (New Brunswick, NJ.: Transaction, 2008), 176–183.
75. Stephen Turner, "A Life in the First Half-Century of Sociology: Charles Ellwood and the Division of Sociology," in *Sociology in America*, ed. Calhoun, 152–153.
76. Morrison, "The Disavowal of the Social," 102–105.
77. John Recchiuti, *Civic Engagement Social Science and Progressive-Era Reform in New York City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 32.
78. Clark, *Prophets and Patrons*, 217, fn. 25; Christopher G.A. Bryant, *Positivism in Social Theory and Research* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 133–145; Robert C. Bannister, *Sociology and Scientism: The American Quest for Objectivity, 1880–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), Chap. 11.

# Trinity College Dublin: An Imperial University in War and Revolution, 1914–1921

*Tomás Irish*

The First World War profoundly changed the academic world; the lives of scholars, the practice of disciplines and the operation of scholarly institutions were all impacted. This phenomenon had local, national and international aspects to it; the deaths of students and scholars in wartime fractured intimate scholarly communities, while the issues of wartime divided scholars on national lines and altered both the practice of certain disciplines and the structures of international scholarship. Sometimes overlooked in this process is the experience of universities themselves. Much is known of the symbolic importance of individual institutions, such as the universities of Louvain or Strasbourg, and of initiatives associated with certain institutions, such as the Oxford Pamphlets, but less is known of their experience of war and its consequences for the standing of universities in the wider academic world.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will explore how a single institution—Trinity College Dublin—was changed by the outbreak and course of the First World War.

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The war and its ensuing issues transformed Trinity College Dublin. In common with universities elsewhere in Britain, France, Germany and other belligerent nations, its lecture halls and seminar rooms were significantly underpopulated during the war years, meaning that its normal life more or less ceased.<sup>2</sup> In common with universities elsewhere, Trinity's professors began war work for the state while, at the same time, the international connectedness of scholars was disrupted by the war.<sup>3</sup> However, unlike the overwhelming majority of European and North American universities in this period, Trinity College Dublin had to deal with fighting on its own doorstep, beginning in 1916 with the outbreak of the nationalist Easter Rising, and culminating with the establishment of an independent Irish state in 1922. While universities, like other institutions, sought to "return to normal" in the years following the war, for Trinity College Dublin, normality—as understood before the war—was unattainable owing to the political convulsions transforming Ireland and the world. This chapter will explore Trinity's experience of the Great War that was marked by war, revolution and the interplay of the two phenomena. For Trinity College Dublin, an imperial university that valued its connectedness to the wider world of learning, these years threatened its institutional identity and fundamentally changed its place in Ireland and the wider academic world.

### TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN AND THE ACADEMIC WORLD

Trinity College Dublin was founded by Queen Elizabeth I in 1592, following the donation of lands from Dublin Corporation, to provide "education, training and instruction of youths and students in the arts and faculties."<sup>4</sup> In the centuries following its foundation, Trinity became an establishment institution that catered to the middle and upper classes and reinforced the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland. By the late nineteenth century (and against the backdrop of rising Irish nationalism), the university had established itself as a unionist institution that retained a strong affinity and connection to Britain while remaining hostile to movements that tended to promote cultural or political nationalism in Ireland. It had, for example, not admitted Catholic students until 1793, and the population of students and staff was mostly Protestant until the late 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

By the early 1900s, Trinity's (and Protestantism's) domination of higher education in Ireland led to the emergence of a Catholic-led

movement to bring about the establishment of an equivalent university for Catholics in Ireland. This resulted in the establishment of the National University of Ireland in 1908. Part of this discourse was the desire of Irish cultural nationalists to revive the Irish language, a movement to which Trinity was mostly resistant. It did have a chair of Irish—established in 1838—but this had been founded to expand the influence of the Church of Ireland in Irish-speaking communities, and the chair was attached to the Divinity School.<sup>6</sup> The university was also traditionally unsympathetic to the political manifestations of Irish nationalism. For example, Trinity's alumni had, since 1832, elected two members of parliament to Westminster, who were generally unionists (i.e. supportive of the union of 1801 which bound Ireland to Great Britain).<sup>7</sup>

Trinity's privileged position within Irish society and its frequently oppositional stance with respect to Irish nationalism meant that it was a divisive institution. William MacNeile Dixon, a Trinity graduate and professor of English Literature at Glasgow University, wrote in 1904 that Trinity was "a loved and hated institution, as only institutions which are held to have a political complexion can be loved and hated." It was loved "as few English colleges are loved" and hated "as none are hated."<sup>8</sup> It was often invoked in parliament, in the press and in other publications as an example of what nationalists and Catholics railed against but aspired towards; as a site of religious, educational, cultural and political ascendancy, it held much symbolic value. Infamously dubbed "the only British institution ever founded in Ireland which turned out a success" by a Trinity academic in 1903, the community of students, staff and alumni who passed through the college saw themselves as Irish, albeit with a strong cultural and political affinity with Britain.<sup>9</sup>

To understand Trinity College Dublin and the period of the Great War, one must examine its international scholarly connections as well as the immediate national context. Trinity saw itself as one of Europe's ancient seats of learning and had established a proud tradition of producing scholars of international repute; it counted literary figures such as Jonathan Swift and Oliver Goldsmith, the political philosopher Edmund Burke, the historian W.E.H. Lecky, and the natural scientists William Rowan Hamilton and George Francis Fitzgerald among its distinguished alumni. Imperial connectedness and cultural cosmopolitanism were also integral to the university's institutional identity. This was evident in the trajectories of alumni, who frequently found employment in the British Empire having graduated from one of Trinity's professional schools. It

was also evident in curricula, with a traditional emphasis on the classics (especially the teaching of Greek and Latin) which, in turn, informed many Victorian understandings of empire.<sup>10</sup>

Connectedness to the wider world of learning was also important to many Trinity scholars of the early twentieth century. They attended international conferences, participated in debates journals published in different countries, and had many personal contacts among the intellectual elites of Europe and North America. For example, the polymath John Pentland Mahaffy attended the 1904 World's Fair at St. Louis, was a visiting scholar at Harvard University in 1908 and had honorary degrees from the universities of Oxford, St. Andrews, Louvain and Athens.<sup>11</sup> While the extent of Mahaffy's connectedness was remarkable, many of his colleagues, such as the scientists John Joly and Henry Dixon, both of whom were fellows of the Royal Society in London, were also internationally networked in the years before the First World War.<sup>12</sup> This intellectual connectedness was not unusual when compared to other British universities of the period, but it manifested itself differently in an Irish context, where cosmopolitanism sat uneasily alongside the rising cultural nationalism of the early twentieth century.

There is much evidence of Trinity's cosmopolitan self-fashioning, but perhaps the best example of it can be found in the tercentenary celebrations of its establishment, held in 1892. These celebrations were typical of the age in which the world had become increasingly inter-connected owing to the revolution in transport and communications that in turn meant that scholars and ideas could traverse the globe with unprecedented frequency. Lavish university jubilee ceremonies were a feature of the period and older universities looked to one another for inspiration when constructing these ceremonials, appropriating elements from one another and in so doing establishing norms for the celebration of university jubilees among institutions who considered themselves to be internationally significant.<sup>13</sup>

For its celebration of 1892 Trinity looked to Edinburgh University, which had in turn marked its tercentenary in 1884. In the course of a week of celebrations, Trinity placed itself at the centre of the international community of scholars. The ceremonies celebrated Trinity's history, its contribution to learning, and its place among the great universities of the world, with scholars attending from across the globe. Trinity's "sister universities" of Oxford and Cambridge provided the majority of attendees, while Irish, Scottish and other English universities

were well represented. Delegates also came from the universities of the British Empire, Germany, France, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Holland, Italy and Russia. North America was also represented, with universities such as Columbia, Harvard, Cornell and Yale sending scholars. Cumulatively, the tercentenary celebrations projected an image of an institution that was an important and active part of a connected academic world.<sup>14</sup> Trinity's self-fashioning was typical of the period in which the academic world was expanding and connections were highly valued, and this continued up until the outbreak of the First World War. Consequently, the outbreak of war in 1914 was a major disruption to the life of institutions like Trinity College Dublin.

### STUDENT MOBILIZATION AND THE RUPTURE OF 1914

The student newspaper (T.C.D.: a College Miscellany) noted in November 1915 that "Trinity College has laid aside the pen for the sword."<sup>15</sup> The outbreak of war led to ruptures in the fabric of university life in two related ways. First, in common with students at universities in Britain and elsewhere in the Empire, Trinity students volunteered for active service in large numbers.<sup>16</sup> Second, Trinity academics also found themselves engaged in a cultural war centring on the behaviour of the German army and the response of German intellectuals to this.

Conscription was never imposed in Ireland during the First World War; consequently, all Trinity students and alumni who enlisted for war did so voluntarily—and in great numbers—from the earliest days of the war. Two hundred and twenty-five men, or seven percent of the total to enlist in wartime, did so in August 1914, while 738 had done so by the end of 1914 (a quarter of the overall wartime total).<sup>17</sup> In total, while it is difficult to establish a precise figure for enlistment, over 3000 Trinity students, staff and alumni enlisted for active service during the First World War.<sup>18</sup> In terms of numbers, the experience of Trinity College Dublin was similar to its British counterparts, from which many junior officers were recruited and subsequently suffered disproportionately in the war. Trinity experienced a death rate of fifteen percent, in keeping with that experienced at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Manchester and Glasgow.<sup>19</sup> In late September 1914, the Vice-Provost, John Pentland Mahaffy, wrote to *The Times* newspaper that "the heads of Oxford and Cambridge have given you facts about the help which their students have offered to their country in the present

crisis [...] it is my duty to tell the public through you what Trinity College, Dublin, has offered and has done.”<sup>20</sup> For Trinity College Dublin, participation in the Great War was justified and contextualized by reference to fellow universities.

This broader context also helps explain why so many students from Trinity enlisted in the armed forces early in the war. Following the Haldane reforms of 1907, Officers’ Training Corps (OTCs) had been set up at universities across Britain.<sup>21</sup> They were created to give students specialized military training which could result in the attainment of qualifications, allowing them to quickly gain commissions in the army as junior officers. Dublin University’s OTC was set up in 1910 and averaged around 400 members annually in the years before the war.<sup>22</sup> OTCs were sociable, fostered a distinct group identity and provided students with a distraction from purely academic matters.<sup>23</sup> When war broke out, men flocked to the OTC, both from inside and outside of Trinity, recognizing that it would provide them with a quick means of gaining a commission for the army.

At the same time, there were reasons specific to both Ireland and Trinity that saw students volunteer for active service. The university’s traditional unionism was best embodied by Sir Edward Carson, MP for the university and the leader of the Ulster Unionist movement. He was steadfastly opposed to Home Rule, or the demand for greater Irish self-government with a parliament in Dublin. Ireland had been in the midst of armed crisis since 1912, as the support of the Liberal-led government of Herbert Asquith for Home Rule was opposed by unionists who began arming themselves, prompting nationalist volunteers to do likewise. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 averted civil war in Ireland, and both unionists and constitutional nationalists supported the war effort as a show of loyalty and goodwill to the British government. While unionism was traditionally the dominant political ideology at Trinity, there was growing support for Home Rule among a significant minority in the years preceding 1914, meaning that for the vast majority of Trinity students there were sound political reasons for supporting the war. Home Rule was placed on the statute books in September 1914, to become law once the war ended.

At the same time, enlistment owed much to Trinity’s imperial ties. The university had a long professional and ideological connection to the British Empire through the Indian Civil Service, the Engineering School and the Medical School, and many in the university saw support for the

war as a continuation of this strong imperial association. Imperial affinity linked political ideologies, professional aspirations and the social identity of students. This was a common theme in universities within the British Empire. At McGill University in Montreal, home of a large medical school and strong imperial connections, similar reasons were cited for war enthusiasm: it was an opportunity to demonstrate the accomplishment of these professional schools which traditionally looked to the Empire to provide employment for many of their graduates.<sup>24</sup>

In 1917, the British government commissioned a small book to highlight the myriad ways in which universities had mobilized for war. The book, intended for elite American audiences, was entitled *British Universities and the War: a Record and its Meaning*, and featured chapters on the experiences of individual universities written by their respective vice-chancellors, principals or provosts. Here, Trinity took its place alongside Oxford, Cambridge, London, Birmingham and other British universities.<sup>25</sup> University grandees felt that Trinity was participating in a mass endeavour that would solidify Trinity's place among the ancient universities of Britain. Reasons for and justifications of mass enlistment were articulated with respect to the activities of other universities to whom Trinity looked.

### CULTURAL MOBILIZATION AND THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS

The mobilization of large numbers of the student body was simultaneous with the rupture in the wider academic world that took place in September and October 1914. Culpability for the outbreak of the war and allegations of atrocities committed by the German army in Belgium and France were central to this process and the infamous "Appeal to the Civilized World"—signed by 93 German intellectuals—was a key point of reference in the debate. In response, academics wrote pamphlets and public letters and signed collective manifestoes to put forward their national case and denigrate that of the enemy, leading to a rupture in the world of academic exchange. A typical example of a pre-war scholarly exchange was the Albert Kahn around-the-world travelling fellowship, funded by a French banker and philanthropist and awarded to international scholars to enable them to undertake extensive global travels and familiarize themselves with the world beyond their home nation.<sup>26</sup> The last scholar to be elected to a Kahn travelling scholarship before the outbreak of war was Joseph Johnston, a fellow of Trinity College Dublin,

who noted that the onset of the conflict necessitated the “unravelling of a prodigious amount of red tape in Foreign Office formalities.”<sup>27</sup>

For the scholars of Trinity College Dublin, engagement with the war of manifestoes differed little from that of their counterparts elsewhere in Europe or North America. They were primarily outraged by the conduct of the German army in Belgium, the apparent waging of war on sites of culture, and its defence by German intellectuals. In Dublin, a group of intellectuals, all but one of whom were connected to Trinity, issued a manifesto which criticized the events in Belgium. It stated that the events at Louvain were “an injury to learning, science, and education, to history and art, to religion and citizenship, which is totally without precedent, and which no military exigencies or expediencies can extenuate, much less justify.”<sup>28</sup> This manifesto, published in the *Irish Times*, was most likely the work of J.P. Mahaffy, who was a corresponding member of the Berlin Academy and, as was noted earlier, held an honorary degree from the University of Louvain.<sup>29</sup>

The connectedness of Trinity academics to the wider academic world meant that they became part of the wider international debate about the crimes of Germany. In this they simultaneously expressed shock at the course of events and re-affirmed a sense of kinship with the transnational community of scholars. Mahaffy wrote to *The Times* in early September to condemn the events at Louvain. He criticized the German universities and what he saw as their overemphasis on intellect which, he felt, came to the detriment of religious and moral qualities.<sup>30</sup> In a public lecture at Trinity in November, the German-raised historian Walter Alison Phillips fretted over commenting on contemporary events and argued that, as a consequence of their “unblushing partisanship,” Germans had brought “the respectable title of professor into contempt.”<sup>31</sup> As a well-connected scientist with an international reputation, John Joly’s name could strengthen the impact of manifestoes. In October 1914 he was asked by Wellington House, the centre of Britain’s propaganda effort, to add his name to a petition condemning a recent German manifesto, as it was felt that it would “have weight abroad.”<sup>32</sup> Joly did so, and the manifesto, entitled “Reply to German Professors: Reasoned Statement by British Scholars,” appeared in *The Times* on 21 October. The statement was also signed by Trinity’s Professor of Irish, J.E.H. Murphy.<sup>33</sup>

The strong place of the classics in the curriculum at Trinity meant that many of its scholars clung to the idea of an imagined republic of letters that traversed Europe and was underpinned by knowledge of

ancient Greek and Latin. This imagined community was split in two by the outbreak of war and this rupture was troubling to the cosmopolitans of Trinity College Dublin. In December 1914 the College Board wrote a letter of solidarity on behalf of Trinity to their counterparts at the Sorbonne in Paris. The letter bemoaned the demise of the republic of letters following the outbreak of the war, highlighting the importance of this to Trinity scholars. It also expressed a qualified disappointment with German scholars, “once well-known and respected among us” and blamed the Kaiser—“a mad tyrant”—for corrupting German scholarship. The consequences of all of this were that “the German professors hardly belong to the republic of letters.” However, the letter struck a moderate tone, suggesting that German scholars were the victims of the ruling Prussian elites and expressing the hope that the Allied victory would liberate “our poor colleagues from the shameful chore of lies which they are forced to set themselves to for the upkeep of Prussian militarism.”<sup>34</sup> As such, the letter was a plea for moderation among French scholars, written in the context of a fracturing academic world. This was especially pressing as French learned academies were beginning the process of deleting the names of the German signatories of the Manifesto of the 93 from their ranks.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the mere act of sending this letter was symbolic as it saw one ancient university writing to another. Trinity scholars were performing cosmopolitanism as if to overcome the growing breach in the republic of letters.

This was evident again in March 1916 when John Pentland Mahaffy, now the provost, wrote a letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* to criticize the German historian Eduard Meyer. Meyer was an eminent figure in international scholarship and was especially well connected to the academic elites of North America.<sup>36</sup> His brother Kuno was a well-known Celtic scholar who also became infamous in Britain following the outbreak of war for addressing a speech to an Irish republican organization called Clan na Gael in New York which *The Times* claimed had the intention of “stirring up sedition in Ireland.”<sup>37</sup> Eduard Meyer had signed the “Appeal to the Civilized World” in 1914, and in 1915 authored a book that placed much of the blame for the outbreak of the war on England. This book was translated into English in 1916 as *England, its Political Organization and Development and the War against Germany*, and it was this which prompted Mahaffy’s letter of March 1916.<sup>38</sup>

While condemnatory of the book, Mahaffy’s criticism of German scholars was measured, and he claimed that the state control of higher

education in Germany meant that German professors had little control over what they could write. To back up his point, he claimed that an unnamed signatory of the “Appeal to the Civilized World” had informed him that German scholars had not signed that document freely. “This kind of moral degradation is but a passing epidemic,” Mahaffy argued, noting that “the day will soon come when these people will be ashamed of their conduct, and will seek to come again and sit among us, ‘fully clothed and in their right mind.’”<sup>39</sup> This being the case, Mahaffy cautioned learned academies not to exclude German scholars from corresponding membership. This was another plea for the republic of letters.

### THE EASTER RISING

The outbreak of the Great War in 1914 disrupted the life of Trinity College Dublin in fundamental ways, as it did for many universities. While universities went to war militarily and intellectually, few institutions saw the war come to them, as Trinity College Dublin did in April 1916. When a nationalist insurrection broke out in Dublin on 24 April 1916, Trinity found itself at the heart of an urban warzone for a week. Remarkably, given its location in the centre of Dublin, Trinity remained largely untouched by the fighting, although it was transformed into a hub for the forces of the British Army. However, the consequences of the rebellion meant that there would be no return to pre-1914 “normality”; the rising set in motion a chain of events which would ultimately lead to an Irish war of independence and the establishment of an independent Irish state. In this way, the 1916 rising led to a further rupture in the academic world to which Trinity felt it belonged before 1914.

Trinity was, like the rest of the city of Dublin, caught unawares by the events of the morning of 24 April 1916. On hearing news of the rising, members of the university community descended upon Trinity, almost unthinkingly. Gerald Fitzgibbon, a forty-nine-year-old barrister and Trinity graduate, wrote that he “knew everyone would be wanted there,” and within minutes he was summoned to Trinity by E.H. Alton, a fellow of the college and a captain of the OTC. Those present in the College began to organize themselves by handing out OTC weapons and ammunition.<sup>40</sup> The porters quickly locked the front gate of the university and its “defence” began in earnest, with 44 staff, alumni, OTC members and soldiers on leave forming an improvised garrison on the night of 24 April. But what was being defended, and why?

There was, initially, a great deal of confusion about this. Accounts of the period, written at the time and subsequently, referred to the “defence” of Trinity College Dublin. In 1923 Walter Alison Phillips claimed that “a feeble attack on Trinity College was beaten off by a few soldiers and cadets of the Officers Training Corps.”<sup>41</sup> While the university may have felt that it was subject to a metaphorical attack, it was never physically assaulted. While the improvised garrison present on 24 April 1916 made preparations for an attack on their university, none ever came. One of those present, Gerald Fitzgibbon, wrote of his reaction to events. “We were lucky to have held it [the university], I doubt if we could have stuck out for twenty four hours with the means at our disposal if we had been seriously attacked.”<sup>42</sup>

So what was being defended? On the night of 24 April John Joly wrote of his fears, claiming that it could be the “the last night of our ancient university.” His description of Trinity as an “ancient” university again placed it alongside many of its esteemed British and European institutions who had been present for the tercentenary celebrations of 1892. Furthermore, Joly speculated that the violence that had been inaugurated in Dublin’s city centre could engulf Trinity, and “so might perish Ireland’s most priceless treasure—the university of Berkeley, Goldsmith, Burke, Hamilton, and Lecky.”<sup>43</sup> For Joly, the defence of Trinity College was a defence of learning and scholarship that had been forged over three centuries of existence and placed the university—it was implied—in a wider network of long-established institutions.

There was some reason to believe that the nationalist rebels might attack Trinity. It was widely regarded as a symbol of British misrule of Ireland, embodying Protestant ascendancy, cultural domination and professional advantage. In short, it stood for much that advanced nationalists—such as those who had launched the rising—claimed to stand against.<sup>44</sup> It also occupied an important strategic position in the heart of Dublin. Fears about Trinity’s safety during the rising may also have been derived from the early days of the First World War and the events at Louvain in August 1914. This incident demonstrated unambiguously and shockingly that the war was cultural as well as military and that sites of cultural importance were targets of modern warfare. However, Trinity College was not the only strategic or symbolic site in Dublin to go untouched during the Easter Rising.<sup>45</sup>

The Easter Rising continued the sense of rupture in the ordinary life of the university which had begun in August 1914. The improvised

garrison continued to defend Trinity until Wednesday, 26 April, at which point they were relieved by troops from the Leinster Regiment who arrived with two machine guns and artillery. From that point on, the university was utilized for its strategic importance; it would be the hub from which the rising would be suppressed by the British army and it was transformed into an improvised barracks for weeks to come. The arrival of 4000 troops completely overthrew the normal life of the university and rendered Trinity a passive bystander to events.<sup>46</sup> The arrival of large numbers of troops in Trinity seems to have been an improvised measure which was understood as being necessary. However, many did not welcome the disruption to their academic idyll. Ernest Alton later recalled with some dissatisfaction afterwards that “soldiers invaded the sacred glass plots, horses and mules kicked up the time honoured cobbles, and impetuous Tommies brushed aside impatiently the most august of our academic figures.”<sup>47</sup> This passivity, with military imperative superseding academic or traditional concerns, continued until the surrender of the rebels on 29 April, by which point much of central Dublin was reduced to rubble.

In the immediate aftermath of the Easter Rising, there was little deep reflection upon the political consequences of the rising for Trinity and its place in the broader academic world. Students and scholars were—understandably—preoccupied with the human and material cost of the week’s fighting. Alton wrote that “the scenes unroll themselves in memory like the mad unrealities of a nightmare.”<sup>48</sup> In its first post-rising edition, the student newspaper wrote evocatively that “to be called upon to defend our university against the attack of Irishmen, to be forced in self-defence to shoot down our countrymen—these are things which even the knowledge of duty well fulfilled cannot render anything but sad and distasteful.”<sup>49</sup> Little more could be said.

#### AFTERMATH

The experience of Trinity College Dublin differed from British universities in one fundamental respect. While Oxford and Cambridge worried about being targeted by German air raids, invasion and bombardment fears remained simply that for the duration of the war. In France, things were slightly different: following the spring offensive of 1918, the German army was within forty miles of Paris and its long-range field guns began taking aim at the French capital. This led the Sorbonne to

issue instructions to its staff and students to guide them in the event of an aerial bombardment.<sup>50</sup>

While French stoicism in the face of long-range guns could be explained and encouraged under the rubric of national self-defence, Trinity College Dublin faced a quandary in the aftermath of the Easter Rising. The rising led to a rapid growth in support for the ideals of the rebels of 1916. In other words, it saw a growth in popular secessionist nationalism that aimed at the establishment of an Irish republic independent of Britain. This was the antithesis of Trinity's traditional worldview that cherished connectedness to the intellectual centres of Britain, its empire and Europe. In other words, it presented a second, and potentially graver, impediment to Trinity's idealized place in the academic world.

The years 1916–1918 saw a radicalization in Irish politics, with the British government eager to bring about a Home Rule settlement to appease all parties and ward off the rise of republican nationalism. However, such an agreement would prove impossible, with the sticking point being the exclusion of traditionally unionist counties in Ulster.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, support for secessionist nationalism grew. In this context, Trinity continued to participate in plans for a re-shaped post-war academic world in which it viewed itself as an integral part.

Among universities in allied nations, plans for a re-configured post-war academic world emerged with clarity from 1916 and for a number of reasons. First, the war was increasingly being fought as an allied conflict, with cooperation between allies underpinning the military, political, economic and cultural conduct of the war. This led to more cooperation between both universities and university academics in allied nations and they began to pool information, work together and learn from one another on many war-related issues. Second, many nations and institutions saw the war as an opportunity to attain a more influential position within the academic world.<sup>52</sup> Before 1914, German universities boasted an unparalleled international reputation for research and achievement. Consequently, they traditionally attracted large numbers of research students from Britain and North America.<sup>53</sup> By 1916, with many official links to Germany broken on account of the war, Allied universities saw an opportunity to re-configure the academic world so as to usurp Germany's traditional position of pre-eminence. The entry of the United States into the war in 1917 saw the intensification of initiatives to strengthen academic links between the three major Allies.

By 1917, Trinity College Dublin was involved in a number of these initiatives which were being advocated by bodies in Britain and France. In Britain, the Bureau of Universities of the British Empire was actively exploring means through which students from foreign universities might be encouraged to study at the universities of the Empire.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, the Office national des universités et écoles françaises was pursuing a similar scheme to encourage the movement of students and professors between universities in Britain and France.<sup>55</sup> These initiatives resulted in two main structural developments. First, higher degrees in Britain and France would need to be reformed to enable international graduate students to undertake study there rather than in Germany. The PhD degree was seen as a major attraction of that system. Consequently, in common with virtually all British universities, Trinity adopted the PhD degree in 1919.<sup>56</sup>

To facilitate greater cooperation between universities, academic delegations were sent to visit the institutions of fellow allies and a group of French scholars toured British universities in May 1916.<sup>57</sup> In February 1918 the American Council of National Defence formally invited academics from Britain, France and Italy to tour American universities as a means of aiding “both the winning of the war and the development of the world in ensuing years.”<sup>58</sup> John Joly was chosen as part of the British delegation that reached America in October 1918. The delegation was received by President Wilson at the White House and was also received by “presidents, deans and professors of the great universities.”<sup>59</sup> At a speech at Columbia University in New York in October 1918, Joly described Trinity to his audience much as he had in 1916: it was an ancient university which had “given to the world not only Goldsmith and Burke but Hamilton and Lecky and a host of others.”<sup>60</sup> One consequence of Joly’s activities in the United States was that fifty demobilized American soldiers were received at Trinity for a course of study in 1919.<sup>61</sup>

Aside from the implementation of the Ph.D. degree, the only long-lasting outcome of this international activity came in October 1919 when Trinity signed an agreement with the *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris that allowed for the reciprocal exchange of lecturers between the two institutions.<sup>62</sup> This exchange would prove remarkably influential as it was the mechanism that facilitated Samuel Beckett’s travel to France to commence his intellectual career which would later culminate in a Nobel Prize for Literature.

For Trinity College Dublin, however, these plans for an internationally connected future were severely undermined by the situation in Ireland. While British universities sought to re-capture their pre-war vitality in the post-war period, this would not be possible in Dublin. In January 1919, a guerrilla conflict began between nationalist republican insurgents and the Crown forces.<sup>63</sup> This conflict concluded in the summer of 1921 and resulted in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of later that year. This in turn resulted in the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, which saw the emergence of an independent (but partitioned) Irish state, covering the 26 southern counties and including Trinity College Dublin. It was a “defiantly Catholic” state in which Protestants were a minority and consequently there was a sharp cultural difference between the new regime and the ancient university.<sup>64</sup>

The establishment of the Free State was problematic for Trinity as the institution had been a strong supporter and ally of British rule in Ireland. Trinity now found itself no longer able to depend on the financial support of the British state, and this was especially troublesome following the financial losses of the war years. Moreover, the Irish Free State was led by many figures who had been educated at the National University of Ireland and who felt that the time had come for Trinity’s traditional dominance to be challenged and for the needs of the newer—and nationalist—institution to be addressed.<sup>65</sup>

From 1922 on, Trinity College Dublin led a relatively impoverished existence. Between 1926 and 1947 Trinity received no financial assistance from the Irish state and consequently the university’s buildings and facilities fell into disrepair. Moreover, it was politically, culturally and emotionally distant from the new state. Many members of its community still looked to the old regime rather than the new one, and the symbols of Britain—the Union Flag and the singing of “God Save the King”—were still prominent, especially on Armistice Day when the university stopped to remember its 471 war dead. This was another way in which the university became distanced from the new state, as for the latter the First World War was not part of the narrative of Irish independence.<sup>66</sup>

Following Irish independence, Trinity staged no great public ceremonies on the scale or in the spirit of the 1892 tercentenary. Trinity ceased to be a self-confident member of the international community of scholars as it had been in the late nineteenth century, and public expressions of this cultural cosmopolitanism disappeared. However, the university sought subtle ways of accommodating itself into the new state while

simultaneously retaining its connection to the wider world of scholarship. Honorary degrees were one measure of this.

The list of individuals given honorary degrees in the 1920s showed a subtle but limited re-positioning of the university and expressed, as the tercentenary had, where Trinity saw itself in the world. Following the Treaty, Trinity began to make overtures to the new state and its political and cultural representatives. The nationalist poet W.B. Yeats, the Celtic philologist R.I. Best and the Celtic scholar Eoin MacNeill were all given honorary degrees. The encomium for MacNeill described him as “one of the brightest lights of our sister university in Dublin” and “an illustrious man who has served his country so well.”<sup>67</sup> It was notable that the oration claimed that the National University was now one of Trinity’s sister universities, whereas traditionally these were seen to have been Oxford and Cambridge. In 1926 the leader of the Irish Free State, W.T. Cosgrave, a veteran of the 1916 rising, was given an honorary degree, a public act of accommodation between the university and the new state.<sup>68</sup>

At the same time, the university used honorary degree ceremonies to continue to articulate a sense of connectedness to a wider world of scholarship. Trinity’s scientific heritage was important and international figures in the world of science, such as the French mathematician Emile Borel, the American Nobel Prize-winning physicist Robert Millikan, the British astrophysicist Arthur Eddington, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist W.H. Bragg and the British Nobel Prize-winning biochemist Frederick Gowland Hopkins were all honoured in this period.<sup>69</sup> The performance of connectedness to the wider academic world was important precisely because Trinity’s place in it was threatened by the new regime, and its institutional identity depended upon it.

## CONCLUSION

Trinity College Dublin’s set of connections to the academic world were not unique in the period in question, but its simultaneous experience of war and revolution was. Both the outbreak and conduct of the Great War and the consequences of revolution at home threatened to fundamentally undermine its institutional identity, an identity which was the consequence of the university’s real and imagined embeddedness in scholarly networks. It took the events of 1914–1918 to bring these out into the open. For many scholars, institutions and even academic disciplines, the Great War was a single overwhelming rupture in

their lives, which brought academic work, collaborations and relationships to a halt for four years, and sometimes longer. While the process of demobilization proved challenging to many academics in the 1920s, the issues involved were—with some exceptions—relatively clear. And while death—the ultimate rupture—could not be undone, individuals developed practices for mourning those whom they had lost in the war, with war memorials becoming part of the topography of university campuses across Europe and North America. Ultimately, the quest to return to “normal,” a vision of the pre-1914 world, was complex but possible for many universities, at least in the short term, before another global conflict emerged. For Trinity College Dublin, the issues were much less clear; it had to deal with ruptures in the academic world, in the fabric of its own community of students and staff, and in the immediate political and cultural context of British and Irish society. There would be no return to pre-1914 normality.

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# A World in Collapse: How the Great War Shaped Waldemar Deonna's Theory on Europe's Decline

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Since the publication of Oswald Spengler's world-famous work *The Decline of the West*, the post-1918 world became recurrently synonymous with downfall.<sup>1</sup> It goes without saying that the discourse of decline, alongside the lack of faith in the omnipotence of progress, existed long before the war, but it was the shattering experience of the Great War that accelerated the previous tendency, giving the image of decay a new impetus.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the aftermath of the war, a range of academics, intellectuals and authors from different backgrounds and areas had diagnosed the unbalance of post-war Europe, or foreseen the full regression of European institutions and Western civilization. The conviction in the collapse of Europe was particularly reinforced in the 1930s, following the economic crisis.<sup>3</sup> For the French geographer Albert Demangeon, European decline was demonstrated by the loss of European predominance to the United States and Japan on an economical, industrial and demographic level.<sup>4</sup> Spengler, as others after him, associated on the

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contrary the image of decline with that of a fading occidental culture. Civilizations were now considered mortals, living organisms with a beginning and an end.<sup>5</sup> The criteria inter-war authors used to explain the collapse of post-war Europe thus varied, from the economic and political to the cultural—yet they shared the common consciousness of living in a downward phase of history. In some cases, the idea of decline was even linked to a moral charge and therefore to the ideas of decadence and decay.<sup>6</sup> In this vein, it was closely linked to the perception of historical time. The French historian Pierre Chaunu has noted the major semantic shift that occurred by the end of the eighteenth century in France and England, when the notion of decadence was no longer specific to individuals, but also referred to collective social destiny and culture. By the middle of the nineteenth century, progress, decadence and civilization formed an indivisible whole, implying tensions, ideological controversies, collective and individual fears—real or imagined—and even at times scientific debate mixed up with mythical representations.<sup>7</sup>

This chapter discusses the myth of Europe's decline, through the analysis of Europe's downfall and the Great War, proposed by the Swiss archaeologist Waldemar Deonna, an influential member of post-war European academia. It questions the impact of the Great War on the elaboration of Deonna's theories on historical recurrence, art and European civilization. The principal aim of this paper is to question the creation of a savant myth that is a scientific construction based on mythical representations.<sup>8</sup> In this perspective, I will explore the affinities between academic writing and subjective judgement. The aim is also to question the relations between unbiased analysis and personal apprehension in a context of crisis. To do this, I will also take into account the wider social and intellectual context Waldemar Deonna evolved in during and after the Great War.

As Paul Demiéville, the president of the French Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, said in his eulogy in Deonna's memory, in 1959, Professor Waldemar Deonna (1880–1959) was “a curious man with various interests.” Although born in Cannes, Deonna came from an old Geneva family with Danish origins. It was in this very city that he mainly built his long career, which earned him an important place in the city's academic and intellectual life.<sup>9</sup> After studying at the University of Geneva, he joined, in the early 1900s, the French School at Athens, one of the oldest foreign archaeological institutions operating in the Greek capital. In the 1920s, he was appointed Professor of Archaeology at the

University of Geneva, as well as director of the city's Art and History Museum and also of the Archaeological Museum. Later, in 1936, he took up the direction of the Ariana Museum and in 1950 the direction of the new Library of Art and Archeology. In 1932 he founded the Swiss periodical *Genava*. An internationally reputed expert, he was, among other functions, correspondent member of the Institut de France, member of honour of the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts of Belgium and of the National Society of Antiquaries of France.<sup>10</sup> Deonna was also a prolific writer. He published more than 800 books and articles, covering a wide range of scientific fields from archaeology, of course, and history of art to folklore and comparative history of religions and collective beliefs.<sup>11</sup> The chronological framework of his work is also remarkably broad, stretching out from the Greek and Roman antiquities to modern Geneva and the European twentieth century. Finally it is to be noted that Waldemar Deonna wrote both for scholars and the larger public. Alongside an imposing number of academic books, essays and academic articles, his writings include an abundant number of articles which were published in popular journals or the press.<sup>12</sup>

#### THE GREAT WAR AS THE PARADIGM'S STARTING POINT

Deonna's central thesis can be found in his three-volume work *Du Miracle Grec au Miracle Chrétien*, published between 1945 and 1948, where he argued that European art and civilization are characterized by the continuous tension between primitivism and classicism, a tension which dates back more than thousand years to Classical Greece. After having triumphed over archaism in the fifth century BC, classicism went through different phases of rise and fall, and it was constantly challenged by different forms of primitivism, like orientalism, rococo and, later, abstract art. Furthermore, while classicism was considered a higher expression of the human spirit, relying on rationality, reflection and measure, he argued that primitivism, on the contrary, gave free rein to instincts, the subconscious and the irrational, and, thus, encouraged the representation of the word not as it is in reality, but as the imagination sees it. In fact, Deonna's thesis went beyond the limits of archaeology and history of art; he endeavoured to provide the reader with a historical synthesis of the fall and rise of civilizations, and, at the same time, an insight into the actual state of Europe since the Great War. In that vein, classicism and primitivism were not just two artistic or aesthetic

categories. They were essentially philosophical notions that helped to understand human mentality and action.<sup>13</sup> His two main arguments were, firstly, that despite the continuous achievements of human spirit and science, and the secularization of modern societies, archaic beliefs and primitive mentalities were deeply rooted in European societies, and all set to rise up under favourable circumstances and conditions; secondly, that in the twentieth century, primitivism, instead of regressing, moved on to a new level of aggressiveness in its relationship with classicism.<sup>14</sup>

The Great War and the troubled years that followed played a determining role in the elaboration of his theory. In a series of articles which appeared in Belgium, Switzerland and France between 1916 and 1924, Deonna explored the impact of the recent war on collective psychological behaviour, and the relationship between the past and the present. This research fundamentally aimed at explaining the regression of rationality and the resurgence of mysticism, superstitions and affective impulses—in other words, the resurgence of a primitive mentality, resulting from extraordinary historical events. It included an extended comparative study on the analogies between the Great War and the Peloponnesian War, a critique of contemporary art, a press article concerning the origins of modern superstitions, three case studies on superstitious practices relating to the Great War, a study on the cult of the Unknown Soldier, and finally an overview of the mystical aspects of political, social, cultural and finally intellectual life during and after the Great War. It is to be noted that Deonna's interest in primitivism and the subconscious, as well as the expression of emotions through art, arose prior to the war.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the Great War seems to have given to his initial hypothesis both the necessary social and historical backgrounds to transform it into a more general theory of total decline encompassing a synthetic vision of the world.<sup>16</sup>

Deonna's criticism thus fits within a more general social and intellectual context, the origins of which go back to the pre-war period. As Christophe Charle has noted, after the reign of progressive positivism in the mid-nineteenth century, anti-modern readings of history continued to grow in popularity in European intellectual circles. The new prophets of degeneration justified their pessimist diagnostic of present times by adopting a scientific approach rather relying on tradition or religion as had previously been the case. In fact, this new generation of anti-moderns challenged modernity by turning against it its own progress.<sup>17</sup> The

success of Gustave Le Bon's and Max Nordau's essays, respectively on parliamentary democracies and degenerate art, perfectly illustrate this new anti-modern ideological ambience which pervaded Europe before the First World War.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, a new emerging generation of moderns, no longer in phase with the established modernity, called into question the notion of time and the sense of history. This also explains the growing interest in theories questioning archaic continuities in modern societies, or ethnological and anthropological works confronting primitive and civilized societies. Nevertheless, the most important change which occurred after the Great War was that pessimism about the present and the future was no longer restricted to some selected political, artistic or literary circles, but gained in advance large parts of contemporary European societies.<sup>19</sup>

Deonna's theories on modern societies' emotiveness should also be examined in the light of Switzerland's internal politics and social evolutions, which the Great War accelerated. In fact, Switzerland's neutral status during the First World War did not mean it was not affected by the conflict. For instance, alongside the effects of war on the economy and industry, Switzerland also had to face certain pressures exerted by the belligerents, and even needed to mobilize its forces for security reasons.<sup>20</sup> All the same, neutrality in wartime did not necessarily imply impartiality, at least not for public opinion. The declaration of the Great War undermined Swiss society in various ways. For a start, war violently brought to the surface and widened the existing gap between the French-speaking and German-speaking communities. The violation of Belgian neutrality by the German army constituted the first episode of a series of quarrels between the two communities. French-speaking Swiss generally took sides with France and the Entente Powers, while a large part of the German-speaking population supported Germany and the central states. Therefore, public life was filled with rumours, suspicions, heated debates, verbal violence and scandals. Despite some periods of relative quietness, tensions never really faded away, with both sides accusing each other of collusion with the belligerents. The social-emotional turmoil reached a paroxysm during the so-called "Colonels' Affair" in 1916.

Faced with this situation, several scholars and intellectuals repeatedly called for moderation after the autumn of 1914, while others claimed Swiss intellectual independence. Nevertheless, general irritation rose, leading to academic and intellectual circles participating in a "war of

petitions” in the spring of 1915 which involved a number of important professors of Swiss universities. Controversy was furthermore fuelled by the press and cultural journals, but also by foreign propaganda. On the other hand, pacifist ideas gained ground after 1917, notably in certain circles of younger intellectuals and students. Another matter of preoccupation after the outbreak of the First World War was the full powers given to the Federal Council in August 1914. Tensions also crystallized over the credibility of military authorities, suspected by French-speaking populations of maintaining close ties with the German side. Finally, during the war, the country was marked by an intense social crisis resulting from inflation and the rise of prices.<sup>21</sup>

Deonna did not seem to have publicly taken part in the controversy which divided both Swiss public opinion and scholars. At the time, he worked as private docent at the University of Geneva, as well as being secretary of Geneva’s municipal service of public instruction from 1917 to 1920, while he pursued his editorial and research work. Indeed, between 1914 and 1918, he published seventy-seven works.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, his wartime writings, at least those we have consulted in the framework of this research, do not particularly reveal his personal positions with regards to the belligerents. Yet he clearly showed a Francophile attitude, after the war, in his comparative study on the Great War and the Peloponnesian War, where he shared views on German belligerence and responsibility for the war. Concerning his work on the Great War, Deonna did not make a field survey, nor was he a soldier of the Great War—like Guillaume Apollinaire, for instance, who bore witness to the endurance of mystic beliefs and practices in the trenches.<sup>23</sup> The examples and anecdotes which Deonna mentioned were usually taken from the Swiss and international press, or from Giuseppe Bellucci’s and Albert Dauzat’s folklore studies on war superstitions and legends in Italy and France.<sup>24</sup> It is also to be noted that Deonna was generally attentive to placing his work in the scholarly and intellectual context of the time. For instance, Gustave Le Bon provided him with arguments against the emotiveness of the masses, and against the mystic aspects of collective life and especially of war.<sup>25</sup> He often referred to Maurice Dide’s psychiatric study on soldiers’ emotiveness in the trenches,<sup>26</sup> or Ernest Seillière’s historical analysis concerning the intrusion of mysticism into various forms of social activity.<sup>27</sup> Yet one cannot overlook the variety of his lectures and his impressive erudition.

## THE ETERNAL RETURN OF THE PAST: HISTORIC RECURRENCE AND PAST-PRESENT ANALOGIES

A common thread throughout Deonna's work was the premise of the eternal present of the past. As Carlo Ossola has noted in the introduction of a recent French publication gathering together a number of Deonna's papers, this methodological hypothesis stresses that we are all in essence, in our conscious and unconscious, "inhabited" by the past, which determines with its sacred lasting authority all our gestures.<sup>28</sup> By 1916, Deonna started using this hypothesis to explain contemporary social phenomena related to the Great War.

One of the principal aspects of his work during the war and the post-war years consisted in defining the origins and the meaning of the war's superstitious practices. In 1916 and 1917, Deonna published two studies respectively referring to the belief in the four-leaf clover throughout Europe and to the ritual of *Nagelmänner*, or wooden statues in which iron nails were hammered, in the central empires.<sup>29</sup> Here, Deonna analysed the evolution of these traditions over time and came to the conclusion that the wartime superstitions concerning the supernatural or symbolic power of objects are in fact the survivors of old pagan traditions. Such beliefs fade away in ordinary life, and only have credit among the populations in some retried areas and campaigns of Europe. However, the cataclysm of August 1914 aroused feelings and passions everywhere; confronted with strong emotions, men in all belligerent countries sought solace and comfort in the irrational.<sup>30</sup> In this context of collective emotional exaltation, Deonna argued that it was not surprising to see almost everywhere in Europe the return of protective amulets believed to bring good luck to the bearer.

In all troubled periods like the one we are going through, a revival, an exaltation of all human beliefs, either noble or simply superstitious, is taking place. Thus an intense emotional life comes to light which reason can no longer satisfy and which seeks for solace and aid in the irrational. The religious sentiment now submerges and, if it inspires some noble thoughts, some great magnificent heroisms, it also allows for all sorts of superstitions to emerge.<sup>31</sup>

If the fear of death largely explains the use of the four-leaf clover during the war all over Europe, the *Nagelmänner* practice should be attributed

to the mystic belief in victory, and the exaltation of patriotic feelings. Iron-nail figures appeared in Germany and Austria in 1915 and soon became an important element of popular war culture.<sup>32</sup> Wooden figures were shaped in different sizes and forms, but the most recurrent was the cross. Human figures were also, both at national and local levels, particularly popular, especially those relating medieval imaginary or military traditions. Hindenburg's statue in Berlin was certainly the most well-known nail memorial of the First World War.<sup>33</sup>

Deonna argued in his article that societies at war, following the pagan tradition which consists in nailing a vow onto a piece of wood, expressed their patriotic devotion and confidence in the eminent victory of their armies by fixing metal objects to wooden effigies of their national heroes or other legendary figures. In general terms, the use of *Nagelmänner* was both an act of citizenship and mystic communion. When nailing the statue of Field Marshal Hindenburg or the *Wehrmann in Eisen*, German and Austrian people asked their respective heroes for victory and protection. They might also have commemorated an important event, like for instance the fall of Fort Douaumont at Verdun, and in doing so have manifested their gratitude for military success. Finally, *Nagelmänner* offered them the occasion to feel united and in communion with fellow citizens who had accomplished the same patriotic act, in the same ways that fellow companions, in the olden days, used to strengthen their ties by nailing the *Stock im Eisen*.<sup>34</sup> Such practices, Deonna claimed, manifested above all the continued presence of the past in the contemporary world. Thus, the past illuminated the present and helped us conceive the contemporary world. He also affirmed his thesis on the old origins of recent superstitions and legends some years later, in a press article published in the *Journal de Genève*. This article was a response to those who assumed that prophesies associated with magical stones, which surfaced in Geneva after the war, were new, evolving aspects of popular folklore.<sup>35</sup>

After the war, Deonna focused on historical recurrence. He wanted not only to demonstrate, through a diachronic approach, the old origins of contemporary mystic practices, but also to define, through comparison, the analogies between troubled historical periods.<sup>36</sup> Following Le Bon's conception of collective psychology, Deonna aimed to demonstrate that the substance of human spirit stays fundamentally the same and for that reason, in similar circumstances, will produce similar consequences. "We live in a troubled period, we have lived some terrible years and we are still coping with major changes. How can we not search

for analogies in the past and, if at all possible, explanations for the present?"<sup>37</sup> he noted in 1922, in one of the most important post-war writings, published in the eminent French journal *Revue des études grecques*. Here, Deonna explored the historical analogy between the Great War and the Peloponnesian War, with respect to its causes, content and consequences.

Deonna's prior intention in this article was to propose a comparative method of understanding history deriving directly from Thucydides' model. Like the ancient Greek historian, he saw historical work as *κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί*, an eternal possession whose goal is to edify societies to avoid the errors of the past. There were thus two distinct methods of dealing with the past: one which rejected historical recurrence by focusing on diversity and dissimilarities between societies; the other, on the contrary, which sought to understand the living world by establishing analogies between the past and the present. While the first prevented history from becoming a science, the second enabled historians to define historical laws. Deonna hence stated that those who search for continuities and analogies, even in apparently dissimilar periods of history or societies, understand in fact that history contains "laws, restarts, eternal returns, cycles, rhythms" and can therefore be a science, as long as it is based on the permanent and the general.<sup>38</sup>

Among the comparative criteria selected, the origins, the military character and the ideological bases of the Great War and the Peloponnesian War occupied a central place. Thus, alongside the intensity of the battles, or the military strategies, common grounds between the two wars could be found furthermore in the language and war representations. All opponents, Deonna observed, defied each other in the name of justice; both wars were seen as a combat between two radically opposed regimes, as the struggle of liberator forces against tyranny.<sup>39</sup> All the same, Deonna discussed at length the belligerents' state of mind before and during the war, and in particular the exaltation of human passions with all opponents seeking the annihilation of the other side. Concerning his comparative method, we can, however, note his use of anachronisms, such as in the terms "national war" and "sacred union," to describe the Greek Classical world.<sup>40</sup> For instance, he noted that the general danger which threaded Greece ended dissents and created that "sacred union", the 'unique front' of which we have talked at much length these last years."<sup>41</sup> The term "national war" was rather employed by Deonna to denote the total mobilization of the belligerents:

For each state applied to the battle, it was a national war. It consecrated all its forces, material and spiritual, financial and human [...] It ended the battle wrecked, its treasure empty, its population decimated, its spirit vanquished and demoralized for a long time [...] The war of 1914–1918 had also put to contribution the entire nation, both in France and Germany.<sup>42</sup>

Deonna concluded that both wars were the starting point of extended political, social and cultural vibrations which, respectively, destabilized and finally pulled down the Greek Classical world and contemporary Europe. Basing his analysis upon a multitude of examples from both wars, Deonna measured the political and economic impact of both conflicts, with both having left the belligerents in a state of economic chaos, social disorder and moral disarmament. For Deonna, the actual re-emergence of primitivism and popular mysticism seemed to announce the decline of modern Europe in the same way that the spread of mystic beliefs and superstitious fears during and after the Peloponnesian War profoundly marked the culture and spirit of the fourth century. The great upheaval of the Peloponnesian War broke the varnish of civilization and brought the true primitive essence of humanity to the surface.

The World War was an analogous cataclysm. It also was a regression for humanity; it also led to material, spiritual and moral ruin. It transformed mentalities. And it leaves us confused about the future [...] Thucydides studied with interest this transformation and understood its importance and pathological character. It is up to contemporary historians to question current events and understand what they presage. At the threshold of 1923, the future is dark.<sup>43</sup>

With this article, Deonna's thesis on the continuous decline of the European civilization, and Europe in general, after the Great War can be seen for the first time. A year later, an overview of this article was to be published in the *Revue de l'Institut de sociologie*, a Belgian academic journal.<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, whether he discussed, in his papers, the Italian aviators' choice to make Saint Mary of Loreto their patron saint,<sup>45</sup> the cult of the Unknown Soldier,<sup>46</sup> or avant-garde contemporary art,<sup>47</sup> Deonna basically followed the same path. He provided a long list of different anecdotes or episodes of social, political and cultural life attesting, to his sense, the generalized state of confusion and emotional exaltation of

European societies, to finally state the similarity between the actual post-war world and the Greek Classical world or even Rome at the time of its downfall.<sup>48</sup> For instance:

Thanks to his superior personality, his qualities of courage, his virtue, [the Unknown Soldier] is ready to become one of these heroes whom the ancients used to venerate, one of these “unknown gods” whom they adored alongside with their plainly personified divinities, “the unknown god”, the “agnostos theos”, whose altar was seeing set up by saint Paul in Athens [...] The unknown hero is ready for to be divinized. I would not be surprised, in a more or less near future, while time will have somewhat obscured the genesis of this symbol and the choice of his body, that he should become the object of popular veneration; of a cult more or less confessed and that he should do miracles, like so many other supernatural beings. He will take place among the numerous army of gods and saints that human faith and mysticism have made in all times and all countries.<sup>49</sup>

All the anecdotes and episodes he elaborately gathered and noted down over the years were classified in the final paper of this series on modern mysticism, published in 1924, under the title “An aspect of contemporary mentality.”<sup>50</sup>

### A COLLAPSING WORLD: ASPECTS OF PRIMITIVISM IN THE MODERN WORLD

Deonna seemed to question his living world both with fascination and apprehension. “How interesting are the times we are living in, as cruel and saddening as it is!” he wrote in 1924 in conclusion to his article on aspects of contemporary primitivism.<sup>51</sup> This phrase encapsulated all the ambiguity of his work. At the basis, Deonna’s approach was purely scientific. It contained the intellectual ambition to question complex social and cultural phenomena, still ongoing, and to integrate them in a long historical perspective. The question for him was, thus, to understand both the range and the intensity of modern irrationality through objective unbiased observation relying on his erudition, his intellectual background and the academic status quo. In this vein, Deonna sought to be reassuring, for instance when he reminded those deploring the decadence of the present world that human societies have already sunk in ignorance and vulgarity, and that, even at the lower levels of its

curve, evolution continued to follow a rhythm of rise and descent.<sup>52</sup> Yet Deonna's rare erudition was not enough to give him the necessary distance from the realities and phenomena he was questioning, nor to prevent him from expressing his personal beliefs or making moral judgments on his times. Hence, as theories of historical cycles generally are, Deonna's vision of history and in particular of humankind was essentially fatalist. All the same, his thesis was submerged with the elitism one can find in all theories of decline and decadence, elitism which, in his case, was particularly manifest when dealing with the social and political transformations following the war, and collective responses to mass death.

Deonna's theories of decline echoed, in fact, his profound distrust of mass societies and crowds. Le Bon's influence was apparent here. Deonna's analysis of war legends and folklore was thus far from impartial; it relied instead on his profound conviction about a crowd's inner inability for rational thinking.<sup>53</sup> Deonna took on Le Bon's theories on the emotive reactions of the masses and the predominance of religion in social life before and during the Great War. Furthermore, he gave extended place to Le Bon's initial hypothesis on the place of mystic forces in the conduct of the First World War.<sup>54</sup> In Deonna, mystery and fantasy are both aspects of the recent war and evidence of the post-war world's decline. A common thread running through his work was that war intensified folk mentality's attraction for the mysterious and the unknown. Between 1914 and 1918, it gave rise to a whole range of superstitions, like protective amulets and talismans, good-fortune rituals, prophesies and oracles about the war's end and victory, or marvelous stories concerning the apparition of ghosts, angels and the protection of patron saints.<sup>55</sup> After the war, and under the burden of mass mourning, popular fantasy and fascination with mystery were expressed in the cult of the dead. This explained the popularity of new rituals like the one minute of silence, but above all the part of sacredness given to the war dead and their symbol, the Unknown Soldier.<sup>56</sup>

Popular mysticism and primitivism were not only evident in the origins of war symbolism and rituals. They were also to blame for recent social troubles and political changes. For Deonna, contested political movements and ideas promising a golden age of human fraternity found fertile ground in popular ignorance and emotiveness. They offered the crowds the mystic ideal that religion once offered popular hearts.<sup>57</sup> After the conflict, these new religions threatened to pull down the rest of Europe into a chaos similar to that of Russia, where, after removing the

old elites, “the uncultivated population has fallen down again to the lowest curve of human evolution.”<sup>58</sup> Deonna published these lines in 1922. There is no doubt that, even if he was not focusing here on a particular case, he certainly had in mind, when phrasing this negative assessment, Switzerland’s inner political and social situation subsequent to the conflict. Without going into detail that would go beyond the scope of this chapter, it should nonetheless be mentioned at this point that the wartime social struggle in Switzerland took a violent turn in the aftermath of the armistice with the authorities’ call for army intervention to end the November 1918 general strike. Hence, the radicalization of the working-class struggle after the war reinforced within large parts of the bourgeois society and intelligentsia—those aforementioned “old elites”—the fear of communism and revolution.<sup>59</sup> It is clear that one can better consider his theories of the modern world by taking into consideration the fact that Deonna was part of this old world, of the established bourgeois elites whose values and institutions had by then largely been challenged around Europe by the rising left-wing radical forces. Another element to consider is that, in the early 1920s, anti-bourgeois criticisms were at the core of European avant-garde art movements, some of which shared political affinities with the radical left.

Drawing the boundaries between the researcher’s position and personal vision of the world becomes, thus, equally blurred when he deals with the intellectual life and standards of his times. A recurrent argument in his work is that, after 1914, mysticism submerged almost every social class and intellectual group, the elites as well as the masses, or what he generally called “the lower classes of the population.” “Times have changed,” he wrote in 1922, “now [...] we no longer have the desire to laugh when a cultivated and well-documented man comes to talk to us about the survival of the spirit.”<sup>60</sup> Yet modern mysticism could take on different forms according to different social and intellectual environments. If, among the masses, the revival of mysticism was more apparent with the success of legends, superstitions and all sorts of mystic practices and archaic beliefs related to the protection of human life, or the cult of the dead among the upper and educated strata of the population, war had mainly, or sometimes even accessorially, caused a crisis of the mind, or what he regularly calls the diminution of intellectual life, that is the predominance of the grotesque, subjectivity and intuition over clear and reflective thought. This explained in turn, for him, the growing place which theories of emotions and the subconscious took in post-war

intellectual life, literature and art. In art, especially, the vogue of mysticism was apparent in the late blooming of various artistic movements challenging academic patterns and proclaiming the return to primitive forms of expression. For Deonna, this tendency for art to return to its roots revealed in essence signs of its tiredness, signs which the generalized intellectual regression of the times and the desire to find new artistic ways of expression had mutually exacerbated. Concerning intellectual and literary life, the crisis of the mind manifested, on the one hand, in the success of psychology, and on the other hand, in the profusion of mystical writings and the growing interest of authors and writers in spiritualism, theosophy or other analogous esoteric and occult theories and practices.<sup>61</sup>

Primitives of all kinds, he stated, needed images and symbols to communicate and externalize their emotions. Following Deonna, modernist painters aspired to give art its naïve primitiveness back, authors and poets like Arthur Conan Doyle<sup>62</sup> and Victor Hugo<sup>63</sup> were tempted by the subconscious or the spiritual, and even mourners gathering around the tomb of the Unknown Soldier were in fact dreamers who shared an extreme emotionality. Hence, they figured out the world with abstract images and symbols, and voluntarily rejected rational thinking. If thus, for instance, the Unknown Soldier became a symbol of national heroism for ex-belligerent nations, that is essentially because he was the externalization, visual and tangible, of ideas and emotions, and not the outcome of conscious reflection. Superstitions, customs and symbols hence reminded us that the “ordinary man is a primitive living in a more advanced civilization, and he perpetuates the childhood of individuals in the same way as of humanity.”<sup>64</sup> In this same spirit, the symbolist movement in art and literature reflected the exuberant fantasy of primitive imagination.<sup>65</sup> Through these diverse and dissimilar examples, Deonna sounded the alarm against the universality of emotiveness and irrationality.

## CONCLUSION

Waldemar Deonna’s pessimistic view of post-war societies and culture is quite revealing of the great upheavals that the First World War provoked in some parts of Europe’s intelligentsia and established elites, overtaken by the events and the often-radical changes that followed them. Accordingly, Deonna endeavoured through his work to decrypt a changing world, to conceive of the present by looking back to the past.

Nevertheless, he was not just an attentive observer of that shifting world; he took an energetic position in it. In this way, his words are not only those of the erudite scholar, but also those of “an anguished man, a man who applied to his anxiety a scientific method.”<sup>66</sup>

## NOTES

1. Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, trans. C. F. Atkinson. 2 vols. (n.p.: Allen and Unwin, 1926–1928). On Spengler’s work and influence, see: James Joll, “Two Prophets of the Twentieth Century: Spengler and Toynbee,” *Review of International Studies* 11: 2 (April 1985): 91–104.
2. On this question, see: Pierre Milza, “L’idée de la décadence en Europe entre les deux guerres: synthèse,” in *La décadence dans la culture et la pensée politiques: Espagne, France et Italie, XVIIIème-XXème siècle*, ed. Jean-Yves Frégné and François Jankowiak (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2008), 241–253.
3. For a complete presentation of this question, see: Christophe Charle, *Discordance des temps: une brève histoire du 19<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011), 337–357; Gisèle Sapiro, “L’internationalisation des champs intellectuels dans l’entre-deux-guerres: facteurs professionnels et politiques,” in *L’espace culturel transnational*, ed. Anna Boschetti (Paris: Nouveau monde éditions, 2009), 111–146. On French intellectuals’ debate on the defence of Western civilization: Jean-François Sirinelli, *Intellectuels et passions françaises: manifestes et pétitions au XXe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1990).
4. Albert Demangeon, *Le déclin de l’Europe* (Paris: Payot, 1920).
5. See, for instance, Paul Valéry’s post-war writings on Western civilization: Paul Valéry, “La crise de l’esprit,” in *Œuvres*, ed. Jean Hytier, vol.1 (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1957), 988–1014 (Valéry’s famous text on post-war intellectual crisis was first published in 1919); Valéry, *Reflections on the World Today*, trans. Francis Scarfe. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1951). Originally published as *Regards sur le monde actuel* (Paris: Stock, 1931). For an overview of theories of the decline of Western culture after World War I, see: Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, “L’art en prophète ou la hantise des origines (1918–1939),” in *La décadence dans la culture et la pensée politiques: Espagne, France et Italie, XVIIIème-XXème siècle*, ed. Jean-Yves Frégné and François Jankowiak (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2008), 255–280.
6. For an historical overview of the notion and the criteria used over time by authors, intellectuals or political thinkers to define decadence, see: Jacques Le Goff, “Decadenzia,” in *Enciclopedia Einaudi*, ed. Ruggiero Romano, vol. 4, Costituzione-Divinazione (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1978), 389–420.

7. Pierre Chaunu, *Histoire et décadence* (Paris: Perrin, 1981), 27–85.
8. On savant myth, see: Pierre Bourdieu, “Le Nord et le Midi: contribution à une analyse de l’effet Montesquieu,” *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 35: 35 (1980): 21–25.
9. Paul Demiéville, “Eloge funèbre de M. Deonna Waldemar, correspondant étranger de l’Académie,” *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 2 (1959): 159–162.
10. For his full biography, see: Paul-E Martin, “Waldemar Deonna (1880–1959),” *Genava*, 8 (1960): 5–13.
11. In 1957, the Belgian journal *Latomus* dedicated a volume to him, in which 57 authors collaborated. This special tribute includes an analytical bibliography of W. Deonna, comprising 806 titles published between 1904 and 1956: *Hommages à Waldemar Deonna* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1957). Most recently the Art and History Museum of Geneva published a book in his memory, which gathers Deonna’s photography of Greek archaeological sites: Jacques Chamay, Chantal Courtois and Serge Rebetez, *Waldemar Deonna: un archéologue derrière l’objectif de 1903 à 1933* (Genève: Musée d’art et d’histoire, 2000).
12. In general terms, his books deal with art history, archaeology and questions of theory. Some of them were edited in more than one volume (see, for instance, *L’archéologie, sa valeur, ses méthodes* for which he was awarded the Prix Bordin of the French Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres). Alongside his studies on Greek antiquity, he also published a wide array of works on local Genevan antiquities which one could find in the city’s local museums that he directed (see, for instance, *Au musée d’art et d’histoire*, a seventeen-volume work published between 1933 and 1952). Finally, he was particularly interested in superstitions as well as in the role of the subconscious in the ancient and the modern world. These questions are mainly treated in his book *De la planète Mars en Terre Sainte: art et subconscient; Un médium peintre: Hélène Smith* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1932).
13. See also: Martin, “Waldemar Deonna (1880–1959)”: 9–13.
14. Waldemar Deonna, *Du miracle grec au miracle chrétien: classiques et primitives dans l’art*, 3 vols. (Bâle: Editions Birkhäuser, 1945–1948).
15. See, for instance, Waldemar Deonna, “Comment les procédés d’expression inconscients se sont transformés en procédés conscients dans l’art grec. Peut-on comparer l’art de la Grèce à l’art du Moyen Âge?,” *Bulletin de l’institut national genevois* 40 (1909): 67–152; Deonna, “Futuristes d’autrefois et d’aujourd’hui,” *Revue d’ethnographie et de sociologie* 3 (1912): 297–301; Deonna, “Quelques conventions primitives de l’art grec,” *Revue des études grecques* 26 (1913): 1–19; Deonna, *L’expression des sentiments dans l’art grec* (Paris: Laurens, 1914).

16. Elements of Deonna's criticism of the modern world and theories can already be found in the works of others. For instance, Carlo Ossola, professor at the Collège de France, has noted Théodore Flournoy's influence on Deonna's work: Carlo Ossola, Introduction to *EΥΩΔΙΑ Croyances antiques et modernes: l'odeur suave des dieux et des élus*, by Waldemar Deonna (Torino: N. Aragno, 2003), xi–xiii: Furthermore, Deonna's theories on the Ancient Greek world's dualism seem to bear elements from Nietzsche's famous study on Apollonian and Dionysian elements of classical drama: Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and other Writings*, ed. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). On the persistence of paganism, also see: Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, trans. David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999).
17. Charle, *Discordance des temps*, 309–312.
18. Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896); Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, trans. from the 2nd edition of the German work (London: William Heinemann, 1895).
19. Charle, *Discordance des temps*, 313–357.
20. Samuël Kruizinga, "Neutrality," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, ed. Jay Winter, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 542–575.
21. Pierre Du Bois, "Mythe et réalité du fossé pendant la Première Guerre mondiale," in *Union et division des Suisses: les relations entre Alémaniques, Romands et Tessinois aux XIXe et XXe siècle*, ed. Pierre Du Bois (Lausanne: Editions de l'aire, 1983), 65–91; Ingrid Brühwiler, "The Swiss *Willensnation* at Risk: Teachers in the Cultural Gap during the First World War," *History of Education* 44: 2 (2015):171–186. On Swiss intellectuals and scholars during the Great War, see: Alain Clavien, "Les intellectuels Suisses et la Grande Guerre," in *14/18 La Suisse et la Grande Guerre*, ed. Roman Rossfeld, Thomas Buomberger and Patrick Kury (Baden: Hier und Jetzt, 2014), 102–123. For a more comparative approach on the role played by intellectuals and scholars in mobilizing public opinion during the war, see: Christophe Prochasson and Anne Rasmussen, *Au nom de la patrie: les intellectuels et la Première Guerre mondiale, 1910–1919* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996); Christophe Prochasson, "Intellectuals and Writers," in *A Companion to World War I*, ed. John Horne (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 323–337.
22. This work was written and published in several stages: 26 writings were published in 1914, 11 in 1915, 17 in 1916, 12 in 1917 and finally 11 in 1918. Source: *Hommages à Waldemar Deonna*, 6–11.

23. Guillaume Apollinaire, "Contribution à l'étude des superstitions et du folklore du front," *Mercur de France* (16 November 1917): 650–657.
24. Giuseppe Bellucci, *Folklore di guerra. Pregiudizii, superstizioni...*, vol. 6 of *Tradizioni popolari italiane* (Perugia: Unione tipografica cooperativa, 1920); Bellucci, *I vivi e i morti d'Italia nell'ultima guerra. Studio folklorico*, vol. 7 of *Tradizioni popolari italiane* (Perugia: Unione tipografica cooperativa, 1920); Albert Dauzat, *Légendes, prophéties et superstitions de la guerre* (Paris: la Renaissance du livre, n.d.).
25. Gustave Le Bon, *Enseignements psychologiques de la guerre européenne* (Paris: Flammarion, 1915). On Le Bon's influence and work, see: Serge Moscovici, *L'âge des foules: un traité historique de psychologie des masses* (Paris: Fayard, 1981); Catherine Rouvier, *Les idées politiques de Gustave Le Bon* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986).
26. Maurice Dide, *Les émotions et la guerre: réactions des individus et des collectivités dans le conflit modern* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1918).
27. Ernest Seillière, *Le péril mystique dans l'inspiration des démocraties contemporaines: Rousseau visionnaire et révélateur* (Paris: la Renaissance du livre, 1918).
28. Ossola, introduction, vii–xl.
29. Waldemar Deonna, "La recrudescence des superstitions en temps de guerre et les statues à clous," *L'anthropologie (Paris)* 27 (1916): 243–268; Deonna, "La croyance au trèfle à quatre feuilles," Pts. 1 and 2. *Pages d'Art, Revue mensuelle Suisse illustrée, Beaux-Arts—Littérature—Musique* 4 (April 1917): 187–194; 5 (May 1917): 231–241.
30. Deonna, "La recrudescence des superstitions," 243; Deonna, "La croyance au trèfle à quatre feuilles," pt.1, 4 (1917): 191.
31. Deonna, "La croyance au trèfle à quatre feuilles," pt. 1, 4 (1917): 190.
32. On war culture, see: Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14–18 Understanding the Great War* (London: Profile, 2002).
33. Hindenburg's famous wooden statue was erected in 1915 in Berlin, close to the Victory Column. The imposing statue was 12 metres tall. On nail memorials, see: Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 82–85; Suzanne Brandt, "Nagelfiguren: Nailing Patriotism in Germany, 1914–1918," in *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory and the First World War*, ed. Nicholas J. Saunders (London: Routledge, 2004), 62–71.
34. Deonna, "La recrudescence des superstitions," 253–254, 263–268.
35. Waldemar Deonna, "Légendes et prophéties," *Journal de Genève* (April 24 1921).
36. Past-present analogies and attempts to explain the past by using the paradigm of the actual world are apparent in his other post-war writings. See, for instance: Waldemar Deonna, "Talismans de guerre, de chasse et de tir," Pts. 1 and 2. *Indicateur d'antiquités suisses* 23: 2–3 (1921): 142–154; 23: 4 (1921): 194–202.

37. Waldemar Deonna, "L'éternel présent: Guerre de Péloponnèse (431–404) et guerre mondiale (1914–1918)," Pts. 1 and 2. *Revue des études grecques* 35: 160 (1922): 1–62; 35: 161 (1922): 113–179.
38. Deonna, "L'éternel présent," pt.1, 160 (1922): 2–7.
39. Ibid., 28–46. It is worth mentioning that, contrary to most of his contemporaries, Deonna compares Germany not to Sparta but to Athens, which was blamed for being at the origins of the Peloponnesian War (see in particular p. 40).
40. On historical uses of analogy, see: Lucian Canfora, "Analogie et histoire," *History and Theory* 22: 1 (February 1983): 22–42.
41. Deonna, "L'éternel présent," pt.2, 161 (1922): 119–120.
42. Deonna, "L'éternel présent," pt.1, 160 (1922): 46–47.
43. Deonna, "L'éternel présent," pt.2, 161 (1922): 174.
44. Waldemar Deonna, "Un parallèle historique. Guerre du Péloponnèse et guerre mondiale," *Revue de l'Institut de sociologie* 2: 3 (May 1923): 353–387.
45. Waldemar Deonna, "La céleste patronne des aviateurs," *Revue d'ethnographie et des traditions populaires*, 11 (1922): 245–252.
46. Waldemar Deonna, "Au héros inconnu," *Mercur de France* (15 February 1921): 85–106; Deonna, "Passé et présent, II. Au héros inconnu," *Vers l'Unité. Revue de Libre Recherche Spiritualiste*, 5 (January 1922): 96–100.
47. Waldemar Deonna, "La nuit vient... Un nouveau Moyen Âge?" Pts 1, 2 and 3. *Bibliothèque Universelle* 103, 307 (1921): 31–46; 103, 308 (1921): 198–213; 103, 309 (1921): 347–362.
48. Once again Deonna's analysis fits the post-war intellectual context which saw in the ruin of the ancient world a warning for contemporary societies. For a diachronic analysis of theories on the end of the ancient world, see: Santo Mazzarino, *The End of the Ancient World*, trans. Georges Holmes (London: Faber and Faber, 1966).
49. Deonna, "Au héros inconnu," 94–95.
50. Waldemar Deonna, "Un aspect de la mentalité contemporaine: croyances et superstitions actuelles," pts. 1 and 2. *Revue d'ethnographie* 17 (1924): 37–61; 18 (1924): 113–135.
51. Deonna, "Un aspect de la mentalité contemporaine," pt.2, 18 (1924): 135.
52. Deonna, "La nuit vient," pt.1, 307 (1921): 31–32.
53. Deonna, "Au héros inconnu": 92–93.
54. See his comments on the mystic forces of the Great War. Cf. Le Bon, *Enseignements psychologiques*, 22–24.
55. On apocalyptic images in war and post-war popular imaginary, see: Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 54–77.
56. Deonna, "Au héros inconnu": 92–99; Deonna, "La céleste patronne des aviateurs," 245–252; Deonna, "Un aspect de la mentalité contemporaine," pt.1, 17 (1924): 52–61.

57. Deonna, “La nuit vient,” pt.2, 308 (1921): 198–201.
58. Deonna, “L’éternel présent,” pt. 2, 161 (1922): 174–176.
59. Thomas Buomberger, “Rhétorique de combat, peur de la révolution et gardes civiques: la grève générale de novembre 1918,” in *14/18 La Suisse et la Grande Guerre*, ed. Roman Rossfeld, Thomas Buomberger and Patrick Kury (Baden: Hier und Jetzt, 2014), 336–365.
60. Deonna, “L’éternel présent”: 173.
61. Deonna, “La nuit vient,” pt.2, 308 (1921): 198–213; pt.3, 309 (1921): 347–362.
62. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The History of Spiritualism*, 2 vols. (London: Cassell and Company, 1926).
63. Deonna published a special article on Victor Hugo’s primitivism in 1930. Waldemar Deonna, “Pensée primitive et poésie moderne. V. Hugo: ‘Ce qui dit la Bouche d’Ombre’,” pts 1 and 2, *Revue internationale de sociologie* 38, 7–8 (July/August 1930): 379–409; 38, 9–10 (September/October 1930): 459–502. On Victor Hugo’s spiritualism, see: Victor Hugo, *Le livre des tables: les séances spirites de Jersey*, ed. Patrice Boivin (Paris: Gallimard/collection Folio, 2014). On French spiritualism, see: Guillaume Cuchet, *Les voix d’outre-tombe: tables tournantes, spiritisme et société au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2012).
64. Deonna, “Au héros inconnu”: 91.
65. Deonna seems to share the general position of the French-speaking Swiss academia and intelligentsia on modern art. In fact, Yves Bridel’s studies on the reception of surrealism and the Dada movement in Switzerland by French-speaking art journals during and after the Great War have shown that the artistic avant-garde was either ignored or contested both for aesthetic and political reasons, but also because it was considered irrational. Cf. Yves Bridel, *Miroirs du surréalisme: essai sur la réception du surréalisme en France et en Suisse française, 1916–1939* (Lausanne: l’Age d’homme, 1988), 117–151.
66. A thought-provoking profile of Deonna as man and intellectual was addressed by Gonzague de Reynold. This text was reproduced in Martin, “Waldemar Deonna”: 11–13. Originally published in *Le Journal de Genève* (July 22–23): 1950.

PART III

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## Demobilizations

# “The Domain of the Young as the Generation of the Future”: Student Agency and Anglo-German Exchange After the Great War

*Tara Windsor*

Academic exchange was an important feature of the complex Anglo-German relationship in the era of the Great War. Before 1914, Germany’s academic prowess, scholarly freedoms and the combination of traditional and cutting-edge institutions attracted thousands of British research students, while German scholars went to Britain to refine their scientific skills and knowledge, and to experience the cultivated lifestyle associated with a British education.<sup>1</sup> Initiatives like the German Rhodes scholarships and the lesser-known King Edward VII British-German Foundation demonstrated that student mobility not only served the advancement of individual, national and international scholarship, but was also viewed as a kind of “academic diplomacy” that could foster friendly competition and mutual understanding between these two great powers.<sup>2</sup> When war broke out in 1914, some informal Anglo-German contacts were

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initially maintained.<sup>3</sup> However, student and professorial travel was halted and soon replaced by a bitter “battle of manifestoes,” while many students who had previously studied abroad in Britain or Germany joined up and fought against their former host country on the battlefields.<sup>4</sup> Entire scholarly communities mobilized and re-aligned in the service of the political and military alliances of the war, resulting in seemingly insurmountable barriers between academics and students on both sides.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter is concerned with the re-emergence of Anglo-German student exchanges in the post-war years. Although the scale of these exchanges did not reach pre-war levels, they were one important way in which cooperation between Britain and Germany was re-established relatively soon, and relatively successfully, after the end of the war.<sup>6</sup> In particular, this chapter deals with the role played by students themselves in establishing, enacting and experiencing exchanges between these former enemy nations. By focusing on student agency, the chapter highlights bottom-up perspectives and processes which have often been obscured or neglected by the top-down approaches of much previous research on post-war academic and diplomatic relations.<sup>7</sup>

The place of university students in Anglo-German relations after the Great War is of particular interest in light of the central role that was frequently ascribed to young people in the rhetoric and practice of inter-war politics.<sup>8</sup> Speaking at the London office of the German Akademischer Austauschdienst (Academic Exchange Service) in November 1930, the former Prussian Minister for Culture and influential university reformer Carl Heinrich Becker attached great importance to youth exchange as a means of bringing about “a new spirit of good will, understanding and cooperation” in the German–British relationship:

Grand politics must be conducted by the responsible authorities; but the transformation of the zeitgeist must be born from the depth of the nation [*Volk*]; it eludes official influence. This is the domain of the young as the generation of the future.<sup>9</sup>

Idealistic rhetoric notwithstanding, the experienced statesman Becker was not alone in recognizing the real value of international interchange among young academic elites, as well as the challenges it entailed.<sup>10</sup> In an era which saw a proliferation of student organizations and activism at national and international levels, leading representatives of the post-war student generations in Britain and Germany also held high expectations

with regard to their own role and that of their peers in Anglo-German relations, and played an active role in shaping exchange from the early 1920s. Beginning with an exploration of student-led initiatives rooted in the seemingly neutral sphere of relief work, religion and welfare, the chapter then compares the foreign policies of English and German organizations in the rather more cantankerous realm of representative student politics, before exploring the character and effects of their exchange efforts. To varying degrees, the students in question cooperated with, were supported by and were undoubtedly also influenced by older generations of established academics, civil servants and ministerial representatives. But it should not be assumed that they were passive objects of internationalism or cultural diplomacy imposed from above. The student interactions under discussion were formative, ambivalent and multi-faceted undertakings which, in turn, contributed to the broader development of post-war Anglo-German exchange in a variety of ways.

### RELIEF, RELIGION AND WELFARE

The early post-war years were characterized by “boycotts” and “counter-boycotts” between German and Allied academic organizations, which reflected sentiments of both the moralizing of the victors’ justice and the indignation of the defeated.<sup>11</sup> Yet, as this chapter and others in the volume demonstrate, the cycle of cultural blockade was already being gradually transcended at both professorial and student levels by a cautious but willing minority, before the diplomatic milestones of the Dawes Plan, Locarno agreements and Germany’s admission to the League of Nations between 1924 and 1926. Representatives of the former neutrals and the United States played a key role in undermining the institutionalized stand-off in the academic world.<sup>12</sup> Of the Western European Allies, however, British representatives initially proved the most receptive to—and, from a German point of view, the most acceptable partners for—the re-kindling of contact between the victorious and the vanquished.

The earliest contact between the British and German academics after the Great War came in the form of humanitarian and academic relief efforts.<sup>13</sup> These often came about at the initiative of students, particularly those involved in religious organizations such as the British Quaker Society of Friends and the Student Christian Movement of Britain and Ireland (SCM), who had considerable success in mobilizing not only

their peers, but also the support of senior academics. In 1920, for example, the Universities' Committee of the Imperial War Relief Fund was set up at the instigation of the British secretary of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), Ruth Rouse. While the Committee was chaired reluctantly, according to Georgina Brewis, by Sir William Beveridge, the director of the London School of Economics, much of its practical and administrative work was led by Rouse's secretary, Eleanora Iredale.<sup>14</sup>

Rouse and Iredale were also instrumental in establishing and securing widespread support for the WSCF's European Student Relief (ESR), which Brewis notes was "feeding 20,000 students daily in Germany" by March 1921. Although the question of raising funds for ex-enemy countries was a controversial one, Iredale later suggested that it was also seen by some student war veterans as a means of honouring those who had been killed during the war.<sup>15</sup> At the German end, academic and student self-help cooperatives, notably the *Wirtschaftshilfe der Deutschen Studentenschaft* (Student Self-Help Cooperative), appealed for and coordinated the distribution of international aid. While there was a real concern with addressing the impact of inflation and post-war deprivation on Germany's academic youth, the benevolence of British relief campaigners—and their neutral and American counterparts—was interpreted as a sign that the international community could not afford to see German scholarship go to ruin, and enabled German organizations to sustain a selective approach to reconciliation.<sup>16</sup>

Student mobility was integral to these relief efforts which sought to lessen not only the material but also the psychological burdens of the post-war era. Most immediately, Rouse and Iredale had been moved to launch their appeal to aid Central European students after witnessing their situation first-hand while travelling on the continent.<sup>17</sup> From 1922, exchange was also facilitated through the ESR annual conference, while British students made summer visits to German universities in 1922 and 1923.<sup>18</sup> According to one of the 1923 participants, his trip during the German currency crisis had given him his "first impression of the suffering of fellow students" and his involvement in the ESR had awoken an "international consciousness" for him and "hundreds of others in Britain."<sup>19</sup> Participation in overseas relief work and exchange visits also had a noticeable impact on fundraising campaigns.<sup>20</sup>

Even at the height of the Ruhr crisis and amid spiralling German inflation, though, the traffic was not just one-way. For instance, in July 1923

eight German students were invited to take part in the SCM summer conferences held at Swanwick in Derbyshire, where they encountered students from across Britain and around the world.<sup>21</sup> The account of one of the German participants at the SCM conferences in 1923, Hermann Mitgau—founder of the *Studentenhilfe* at Heidelberg University<sup>22</sup>—illustrates that the agendas and experiences at play in such exchanges extended beyond theological study and religious solidarity. At the beginning of his four-week trip to England, Mitgau—who had volunteered for military service in 1914 and delayed his university education until after the war—stayed in a hostel in London run by the international Christian veterans’ movement Toc H. The manager of the hostel had been a colonel during the war, stationed not far from Mitgau in Flanders in 1914: “The gracious sincerity he showed me, as if I were an old war comrade, overcame my reservation and shyness. It was wholly fitting that we should talk about our war experiences.”<sup>23</sup> This kind of sentiment also arose outside such religious networks: during a private research trip to England in 1923, Mitgau’s Heidelberg colleague and fellow veteran Henry Goverts also discovered in an encounter with a young British man that “the world war and the communal experience within the troop was the fundamental life experience” for both, and conjured “a strange connection” between them.<sup>24</sup> Student veterans like Mitgau, Goverts and their English hosts were able to summon and build on a sense of “professional comradeship” that had transcended enemy lines on the battlefield during the war.<sup>25</sup> In many respects this distinguished their cultural exchange from the kind engaged in by the older professorial generation, who had been combatants in a more figurative sense on the home front, and from the younger generation of students, who came of age during or immediately after the war.

The SCM conferences gave rise to a form of independent student diplomacy. They had fostered a strong community spirit, and the German visitors had received a special welcome.<sup>26</sup> Mitgau interpreted this not only as a sign of English tact but also as a youthful protest against the “denigration” which the cultured German nation had allegedly been subjected to by the older generation of politicians. Repeated expressions of sympathy for Germany’s domestic and foreign political difficulties, and the opportunity for conversation without “constraint” or “affectation,” led him to believe that these personal interactions with English peers were demonstrative of a desire “to make amends, at least on a one-to-one basis.”<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the conferences inevitably

reinforced cultural and political differences. Even in religious matters, the SCM was greatly influenced by the British position as the “administrative headquarters and intellectual and social epicentre of a global empire.”<sup>28</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly for an emerging leader in the realm of student welfare, the apparent light-heartedness and imperial worldliness of the English students amplified Mitgau’s perception of the depth of German students’ ongoing struggle, both materially and spiritually, particularly at a time when the continuing plummeting of the German currency threatened a complete collapse of order in Germany.<sup>29</sup>

Cooperation in the realm of relief work continued after the immediate hardships of the post-war years had been overcome. In 1924, the ESR annual conference was held in Bavaria, a sign of German students’ integration and leading role in the network.<sup>30</sup> At this conference, plans were initiated to re-brand the ESR as the International Student Service (ISS) and to turn its attention more towards student exchange, although aid and relief work remained important aspects.<sup>31</sup> The longer term, two-way impact of exchange in the relief domain could be seen clearly in the fact that the Central European model of *Wirtschaftshilfe* and self-help developed immediately after the war had gained traction in British student culture, particularly in Wales, in the late 1920s and early 1930s; “by 1926 students in Germany and Austria were in a position to share their experiences with other nations [...] and set up an office in Dresden to provide information and advice,” where British delegates attended self-help conferences in 1927 and 1929 to learn key methods of student cooperative enterprises.<sup>32</sup> Thus, while relief work was not restricted to the Anglo-German context, it often emerged from and provided further vital channels for student cooperation in Britain and Germany.

### STUDENT FOREIGN POLICY

The relative success of post-war cooperation in student relief and welfare seemed to contrast starkly with ongoing disputes between the Deutsche Studentenschaft (DSt, German student body) and the Confédération Internationale des Étudiants (CIE, International Confederation of Students) in the arena of international student representation.<sup>33</sup> Whereas the ESR and ISS had been the initiative of British, American and neutral students sympathetic to the humanitarian plight of Central European students, the CIE was founded in France in 1919 as a federation of national student unions—a “Student League of Nations” with a

central office in Brussels—from which German students were explicitly excluded.<sup>34</sup> The issue of German membership was just one example of the impact of nationalism on the CIE’s business, but the particular failure to fully integrate the DSt into the CIE, even after Germany joined the League of Nations proper, made these organizations by-words for cultural blockade and irreconcilability.

Yet even in this delicate field, Anglo-German exchange began remarkably early, pre-dating and, in turn, contributing to the foundation and consolidation of the National Union of Students of England and Wales (NUS) and the DSt’s Auslandsamt (international office). These representative organs were dedicated specifically to negotiating student interests on the international stage—led by “professional or semi-official ‘student officials’”<sup>35</sup>—and were still closer to the front line of post-war politics than their counterparts in the domain of relief and welfare.

English students attended the first General Congress of the CIE in Prague in Easter 1921—at this stage represented by the Inter-Varsity Association and the International Students Bureau—alongside official delegates from the Scottish Student National Council.<sup>36</sup> Together with representatives of the neutral countries, these British participants insisted that membership of the League of Nations should not be a pre-requisite for admission to the CIE, thereby leaving the door at least partially open to students from “ex-enemy countries.”<sup>37</sup> Neutral and British representatives had, moreover, taken part in a looser assembly of international student bureaus which had also convened in the Czechoslovak capital shortly before the CIE Congress and was attended by German students.<sup>38</sup> On returning from Prague, moves were made to found the NUS, not least, it seems, so that English students could be officially admitted to the CIE in order to help ensure it did not become a “political weapon” of the French and “Francophile group of countries,” and to “lead the efforts” to “broaden its character from within.”<sup>39</sup>

From its very inception, then, the NUS was open to German contact. This was part of its broader internationalist ethos, underpinned more specifically by a sense of generational solidarity and duty in the aftermath of war. Endorsement from cultural elders like H.G. Wells lent weight to the NUS’s proposed mission: “The world belongs to the young, and not to the old out-worn things—flags, policies, claims and wrongs—and this organisation urges each student to realise his heritage and responsibilities.”<sup>40</sup> Honorary executive roles were also assumed by prominent academic and public figures from across the political spectrum, for instance

the historian Professor Sir Bernhard Pares as honorary treasurer, and later Robert Cecil as honorary president and Arthur Balfour, Richard Haldane, Edward Grey and Gilbert Murray as honorary vice-presidents.

But the NUS's ideals and practices were the product of its student leaders' commitment and activism. The first NUS president, Ivison Macadam—who, despite his young age, had reached the rank of major during the war—explained that the NUS was shaped by the war experience and permeated with a “spirit of service”: “Those of us who fought in the war, and the younger students who are now coming up into the Universities, have alike had a much closer view of war than the generations which have preceded us. War has lost its glamour; we know it for what it is.” Similarly, NUS work rested on a belief in the power of “Knowledge” as the greatest “of all Internationals” that created a “common bond” among “students the world over”:

Every gain in the field of Knowledge is a profit to Humanity. Success is not achieved at the expense of our neighbour, but to his advantage. [...] If the students are cooperating to-day, surely there is hope for to-morrow!<sup>41</sup>

At the same time, this internationalism was inseparable from English students' imperial loyalties—“their first duty is to their own kith and kind”<sup>42</sup>—and an assumption that they had a “unique responsibility” to avert the danger of European students splitting into three camps “consisting of France and associated countries, the Neutrals, and Germany and her late allies.”<sup>43</sup> In short, Macadam claimed for the NUS the role of peace broker on the European continent.

To these ends, the NUS's young founders developed their organization as a “federation” of student unions from each university in England and Wales, which represented these members nationally and internationally.<sup>44</sup> Funding came primarily from membership fees from the various affiliated university unions and by student fundraising drives, though outside donations were also received from “a number of individuals” who recognized “the great possibilities of the Union.”<sup>45</sup> By and large, the NUS facilitated productive discussion and cooperation among students of diverse political hues. It also collaborated, and in some cases overlapped, with the Universities' Committee of the Imperial War Relief Fund, the SCM and other emerging groups such as the British Universities League of Nations Society, which brought about “a certain common thinking” on national and international student cooperation.<sup>46</sup>

One of the most important and rapidly expanding aspects of what Macadam called the NUS’s practical “Bureau” activities was the coordination of affordable educational travel, overseen by dedicated secretarial assistants who formed a travel department within the NUS.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, its entanglement with the CIE became ever closer and more elaborate; NUS letter paper stated that it was officially “federated” to the CIE, while the latter established a Commission for International Relations and Travel in London in 1924, which was chaired by Ivison Macadam.<sup>48</sup>

In the German context, the DSt also formalized and centralized its international activities after the aforementioned Prague meeting of Easter 1921. At the German Student Congress in July that year, the Auslandsamt der Deutschen Studentenschaft was instituted as the international department of the wider federation or “student state,” which had been established in 1919 and officially recognized by German authorities in 1920.<sup>49</sup> The Auslandsamt amalgamated and adapted the programmes of a previously existing DSt committee (Ausländerausschuss) and the so-called Deutsches Korrespondenzbüro für ausländische Universitäts- und Studentenangelegenheiten (German News Agency for Foreign University and Student Affairs), another student initiative which had been established in 1920 at Leipzig University. The DSt Ausländerausschuss had originally been set up to deal with the controversial issue of hosting foreign students amid overcrowding and financial hardship at German universities. Despite considerable hostility from many German students, the Ausländerausschuss resolved in 1920 that it was in the national interest to keep German universities open to students from abroad—including the Western enemy nations—provided they could demonstrate a German-friendly stance.<sup>50</sup> The Leipzig Korrespondenzbüro had been founded by pacifist war veteran Julius Lips to cultivate practical cooperation with other national student organizations, in order to promote German culture and counteract German exclusion from the CIE. In doing this, it also hoped to convince xenophobic students of the benefits of exchange.<sup>51</sup> This agenda had been praised by academics including Albert Einstein and, according to Lips, had the support of state authorities.<sup>52</sup> However, although its charter had been approved at the DSt Congress in July 1920 and provided important “new impulses” for the DSt’s external relations, Lips’ internationalism—however patriotic in motivation—jarred with the national-conservative outlooks of the so-called “decisive circles” in the student body.<sup>53</sup>

The new Auslandsamt was charged with coordinating a “positive, practical” foreign policy on behalf of the DSt by maintaining relations with the international student community and coordinating student travel to and from Germany.<sup>54</sup> Its first director, from 1921 to 1925, was doctoral student Walter Zimmermann, a decorated war veteran and member of Gustav Stresemann’s centre-right Deutsche Volkspartei. Zimmermann has been described as a “typical representative” of the “front generation” whose pragmatic nationalism shaped the institutions of the early post-war student administration.<sup>55</sup> He argued that “barriers” between nations in general, and between national student bodies in particular, were both inevitable and necessary given the “uniqueness” of each country and the “national sensibility” of each individual. Nevertheless, students of all nations shared a common role as “the limbs of the university, disciples of science, struggling for the issues concerning their community and their people, searching for truth.”<sup>56</sup> While such an appeal to science and truth chimed to some extent with Ivison Macadam’s appeal to the internationalism of knowledge, Zimmermann and the Auslandsamt cast international student comradeship in a more competitive and nationalistic light.

Crucially, the Auslandsamt represented not only Reich citizens but also German-speaking students in Danzig, the Sudetenland and Austria, which was deemed to be an expression of the “young generation’s longing to embody Greater Germany” and represented the DSt’s unashamed rebuttal of the territorial borders determined by the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>57</sup> The Auslandsamt maintained close contact with and received financial support from the cultural department of the German foreign ministry (Auswärtiges Amt).<sup>58</sup> For the Franco-German context, Dieter Tiemann has suggested that the Auswärtiges Amt and its French counterpart saw student controversies as a “proxy war” and “equipped” each side accordingly. In particular, Tiemann posits the likelihood that the Auswärtiges Amt tried to steer the DSt Auslandsamt behind the scenes, while taking inspiration from the latter’s dispatches.<sup>59</sup> Yet the Auslandsamt was not a passive instrument of the state; the relationship was based on reciprocal consultation and mutual expediency. Zimmermann and his committee conceived and conducted the DSt’s foreign policy shrewdly, embedding themselves as key actors in the broader scheme of post-war cultural diplomacy and revisionism, their aim nothing short of assisting a “torn German nation” to re-emerge as a confident and power-seeking state.<sup>60</sup>

The complex internal politics of its own increasingly polarized peer group were arguably just as defining as any state influence on the Auslandsamt. As a distinct entity within an elaborate federal organization, it was subject to scrutiny by the DSt’s executive and wider membership. Zimmermann had to convince students whose nationalism was more aggressive than his own that there was no question of the Auslandsamt pandering to the international community, but that foreign exchange provided decisive educational and propagandistic means to an overriding national end: “Germany’s renewal.”<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, despite their increasing marginalization, left-liberal students claimed to show restraint in publicly criticizing the Auslandsamt as far as possible, in order to project a degree of outward unity at a time when Germany’s political and cultural standing was weak. However they spoke out when they strongly objected to the Auslandsamt’s tactics.<sup>62</sup> Whereas the NUS and British Universities League of Nations Society coordinated their student internationalism, the German Zentralstelle für studentische Völkerbundsarbeit (Student Office for League of Nations Activities), which was founded in 1923 by students affiliated with the so-called Weimar Coalition parties, distanced itself from the national-conservative DSt until Germany joined the League.<sup>63</sup> The Zentralstelle quickly became a leading player in the International University Federation for the League of Nations established in 1924, but, for the time being, the Auslandsamt was able to utilize the DSt’s status as the state-recognized national student union to guard its claim to “sole representation” of the German student body on the international stage.<sup>64</sup>

### THE POLITICS OF EXCHANGE

Despite their differing institutional outlooks and dynamics, the NUS and DSt Auslandsamt gradually built a cautious working relationship, both bilaterally and in the wider international framework. This was not necessarily based on unequivocal mutual sympathy, but a shared belief in the importance of student travel and exchange, and their respective desires to shape the post-war order. The NUS’s first official international engagement after its formal foundation was on German soil, at a meeting of international student bureaus in Leipzig in April 1922. The new DSt Auslandsamt assumed responsibility for organizing the Leipzig gathering, which had originally been taken on by Julius Lips’ now sidelined Korrespondenzbüro. Attended by over one hundred delegates

from nineteen countries, the conference addressed and went some way to advancing practical arrangements for international student travel.<sup>65</sup> In the spirit of practical cooperation championed at Leipzig, eighteen English students visited Germany that September. Macadam hailed this as one of the NUS's most significant activities to date, aided by the "energetic organization" of the Auslandsamt. Such trips provided not only "joyful holidays" at a low cost, but contributed to students' education as cosmopolitan citizens, through which they could learn to value and understand national ideals and principles which differed from their own.<sup>66</sup>

The diplomatic significance of the Leipzig conference was underscored by the attendance of numerous state representatives, including Otto Soehring, one of the Auslandsamt's key contacts at the Auswärtiges Amt, and the German interior minister, Social Democrat Adolf Köster. Welcoming the congregated students on behalf of Reich President Friedrich Ebert, Köster appealed to a notion of "true academic spirit," requesting not pity for the young pariah republic but that the foreign participants simply view Germany "as it is."<sup>67</sup> He also contrasted the "conflicting interests of crabbed age" gathering almost simultaneously at the Genoa conference for European reconstruction with the "untrammelled youth" currently "gathered for international cooperation" in Leipzig.<sup>68</sup> This juxtaposition was extended afterwards by NUS honorary treasurer Professor Sir Bernard Pares: "Having followed Foreign Politics for a good many years, I have seldom heard of anything which gave me so much pleasure as the action of our National Union at the International Conference of Students at Leipzig. It was as much a satisfaction as the Conference of Genoa was a disillusion."<sup>69</sup>

The German hosts celebrated Leipzig's practical achievements as a pinnacle in the development of the international student movement, a thinly veiled criticism of the CIE, which the DSt Auslandsamt had claimed was an instrument of French cultural imperialism that was not truly international, and therefore unviable, without German participation.<sup>70</sup> For its part, the NUS emphasized its own role, together with the neutrals, in preventing the formation of a second international student organization independent of the CIE.<sup>71</sup> On account of their unbreakable bond of "common sacrifice," it was argued, British students could not allow their French comrades, who had not been present in Leipzig, "to drift into a position of isolation."<sup>72</sup> However, Ivison Macadam claimed that the British view of Germany's difficulties was "sufficiently detached" to enable them to "grasp the futilities of attempting to boycott and thus

embitter her against Western Europe.” Meanwhile, he was convinced that the neutrals “quite naturally look to us to introduce the proper atmosphere of fair play into international student relations [...] and will follow us, so long as we lead on to a better understanding between the nations.” In the hope of bringing these different groupings together, first “in practical cooperation” and later uniting them “in a joint federation,” the NUS undertook to host the next conference of international students’ offices in September 1923 in London and the meeting of the CIE Council “at approximately the same time.” Macadam suggested that “if financial and other conditions make it possible to bring these two groups together in the sane and commonsense atmosphere of this country, the practical results for a wider fellowship and cooperation may be immense.”

The conditions of 1923 proved less than conducive to fulfilling Macadam’s hopes of practical rapprochement while German and French students stood at loggerheads over the more fundamental issues of German war atrocities, the Versailles Treaty and the Ruhr occupation.<sup>73</sup> Although he expressed some sympathy for the difficulties facing the English and neutral student representatives, Walter Zimmermann openly condemned their unwillingness to isolate their French colleagues amid what he described as insulting discussions over German CIE membership.<sup>74</sup> To be sure, the NUS had to proceed cautiously in its self-proclaimed role as mediator. The Danish union issued invitations to the London conference of international student bureaus, rather than the English hosts—though this may have been partly due to the leading role the Danes had played in these meetings from the beginning. Zimmermann attended, but French and Belgian students declined, arguing that the meeting overlapped unnecessarily with the competencies of the CIE and that it would be inappropriate to meet officially with German students.<sup>75</sup>

Parallel to these international disputes, however, private negotiations were underway over informal, bilateral Anglo-German exchanges. In early 1923, students at Oxford raised funds to invite a group of twelve Germans to England. This was an independent local initiative, but the then NUS president, Gordon Bagnall, was also incoming president of the Oxford Union and played a key advisory role as plans developed. In a separate proposal, the Auslandsamt was invited to an informal student gathering at Cambridge, which was to include French representatives. In both cases, detailed discussions ensued over arrangements that would be

politic—particularly from the German point of view—to the resumption of good student relations, under circumstances that seemed to allow little room for manoeuvre. At the news that Oxford students had voted to rejuvenate exchange with the former Central Powers by a margin of 248 to 74, Zimmermann suggested that visit should be postponed since there was, in his eyes, still too much opposition in Oxford to guarantee it would pass without damaging incident.<sup>76</sup> This evidently struck a chord with Bagnall, who was anxious that the Oxford hosts should not be charged with the “double responsibility” if even the slightest problem arose during the German visit.<sup>77</sup> Meanwhile, Zimmermann deemed the Cambridge invitation, in its proposed form, “wholly impossible”—even one Oxford representative called it “absurd”<sup>78</sup>—due to the “unprecedented brutality” of Franco-Belgian policy towards an “unarmed” Germany and the direct impact of the Rhine-Ruhr occupation on academic and student life.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, it was hoped that the Franco-German antagonism would not block Anglo-German interchanges entirely and that German students would soon have the opportunity to represent their views in Cambridge.<sup>80</sup>

The wider context therefore inhibited and provided further incentive for these student protagonists. As a result of Zimmermann’s manoeuvrings, six Germans rather than twelve embarked on the trip to Oxford from May to June 1923, with additional shorter visits to Birmingham and London. Together with Zimmermann, all German participants were close to the Auslandsamt. The compromise found general consensus, despite English reservations that it would not give a representative image of the German student body and that those participating would need little convincing of the benefits of exchange.<sup>81</sup> But the limitation was undoubtedly deliberate on the part of the Auslandsamt, which sought to exercise as much influence over the endeavour as possible; even its carefully selected participants were required to sign declarations pledging to follow the strict guidance issued by the Auslandsamt before and during their visit, and to refrain from partaking in any activity that could damage the DSt’s reputation.<sup>82</sup>

Given the sensitive timing, the trip was not widely publicized in Germany, although a short notice did appear in the liberal *8-Uhr-Abendblatt*. On the ground, however, Zimmermann sought to capitalize immediately on the visit. From Oxford, he travelled to Cambridge to continue discussions over future exchanges and sent detailed instructions to his Auslandsamt colleague in Berlin, Heinz Hendrick, to

make productive use of the insights gained. For instance, Zimmermann requested pamphlets and books to present to the Oxford Union in response to “propaganda materials” left by Hungarian and Czech visitors in Oxford, particularly as an “antidote” to the Czech brochures’ alleged hostility to Czechoslovakia’s German minority. He also bade Hendriock to send the Auswärtiges Amt a direct request to grant visas to all English students in possession of a letter of recommendation from the DSt Auslandsamt, having heard that an Oxford student had been told by a travel agent that there were currently no visas available for Germany.<sup>83</sup> Meanwhile, Hendriock called together a committee to issue an invitation for the return visit of the Oxford hosts to Germany.<sup>84</sup> In the course of that crisis-ridden summer of 1923, the Auslandsamt also oversaw study trips by English philologists, medics and engineers to Germany.<sup>85</sup> Where possible, such visits were used to provide insights into the occupied and border regions which dominated the German revisionist psyche, and to impart an “accurate” picture of German intellectual and economic distress.<sup>86</sup>

If the various meetings of English and German students up to and including 1923 were vital, albeit incremental steps towards Anglo-German rapprochement, they also served—and perpetuated tensions between—the respective national and international goals of the groups in question. Having failed to bring the hostile parties together thus far, English and Danish delegates pressed for a solution to the “German question” at a CIE Council meeting hosted in Oxford in September 1923. A committee of neutrals was established to negotiate mutually agreeable terms for German accession to the organization in advance of the next CIE Congress. One of the main points of contention was the DSt’s pan-German formation. While the CIE constitution stipulated that national unions must only represent citizens of the nation-state—as determined by Europe’s post-Versailles borders and defended above all by French, Belgian and Polish students—the DSt refused to rescind its ethnocultural understanding of nationhood.<sup>87</sup> Rejecting a proposition that German speakers’ overall voting power would be increased if Reich, Austrian and Danzig German students joined the CIE separately, Zimmermann wrote to one Swedish representative: “[T]his is about something other than votes, it is about a principle.”<sup>88</sup> German polemic was fuelled by the language of “national self-determination” and the fact that the CIE had compromised on the nation-state principle in other cases, not least over the acceptance of separate English and Scottish groups. In turn, English support was seen as a decisive factor for German

membership.<sup>89</sup> Private conversations seemed to confirm that the NUS was doing “everything possible” to make the CIE “complete” and that the DSt Auslandsamt need only “remain firm” in its demands.<sup>90</sup>

In September 1924, a week before the CIE Congress was due to take place in Warsaw, the conference of international students’ bureaus met for a fourth time in Budapest—again without French participants. This seemed to do little more than provide the DSt with convenient confirmation that international cooperation worked best when there was no attempt to “shoehorn” national groups into organizations with restrictive rules and statutes.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, Zimmermann was persuaded to come to Warsaw at the last minute to clarify the German position on CIE membership.<sup>92</sup> Here the NUS also argued that, since the CIE had compromised for national groups before, the DSt might be admitted in its Greater German form but with voting rights for the Reich and Austria and not Danzig and the Czech Germans. This amounted to a kind of student *Anschluss* which was also backed by many liberal students in Germany, but which still went too far for the French. Instead, after several hours of heated debate, English and neutral representatives helped broker an unexpected agreement to establish a working association between the DSt and the CIE—despite French objections—in order to cooperate on practical issues such as student travel.<sup>93</sup> This partial integration of the DSt into the CIE ambit meant that the separate meetings of international student bureaus were no longer necessary, while simultaneously allowing the DSt to preserve its cultural unity.<sup>94</sup> As such, the agreement did little to reconcile the fundamental ideological and geopolitical disputes that underpinned post-war student politics, but appeared to confirm the success of the ostensibly unpolitical business of practical cooperation that underpinned the policies of exchange pursued by both the NUS and the DSt Auslandsamt.

From 1925, the previously established pattern of student-led bilateral exchange became more frequent, more structured and followed a wider variety of specific academic, technical and vocational interests.<sup>95</sup> The consolidation of this kind of work was evident when NUS and Auslandsamt representatives met in London in August 1926 to make further plans for the coming year.<sup>96</sup> Simultaneously, however, the DSt-CIE association that had been established began to falter almost immediately over outstanding issues that had not been resolved in Warsaw in 1924, not least the DSt’s insistence that German be formally adopted as an official language of CIE proceedings, which it considered an issue of

national honour. At a meeting hosted by the DSt in Stuttgart in 1926, members of the CIE executive, particularly Ivison Macadam, tried to bring about a compromise, to no avail. According to a French report, Macadam blamed this failure on the stubbornness of the DSt delegation, which had turned out in force with nineteen representatives from the whole organization, not just the Auslandsamt.<sup>97</sup>

Despite such frustrations, both idealism and pragmatism meant English student leaders continued to involve the Auslandsamt in their international affairs. As one of the NUS's recently appointed “foreign secretaries,” Gordon Bagnall built a personal rapport with the new Auslandsamt director, Georg Vogel, and both expressed their eagerness to discuss student matters openly and in person, based on mutual appreciation and trust.<sup>98</sup> When the English-run CIE Commission for International Relations and Travel invited the Auslandsamt to a meeting in Brussels in January 1927, the groups were not officially “in active cooperation,” but, it was argued, “you have at your disposal so much experience that your absence from the conference would be a serious handicap to its effectiveness.”<sup>99</sup> Although this invitation was graciously declined, Vogel and a member of the DSt executive, Ulrich Kersten, attended an NUS congress in Bristol in March 1927, arguing that DSt participation was warranted in this case because the Auslandsamt maintained the “strongest, most practical cooperation” with the NUS and since it would provide a semi-formal opportunity to discuss German-CIE relations. In addition to dialogue with English students, the DSt delegates debated sensitive political issues with CIE functionaries—including the Polish president and Czechoslovak vice-president—and were gratified at English sympathy for German CIE membership after an address delivered by Bagnall.<sup>100</sup>

However, after Bagnall visited Czechoslovakia on the CIE's behalf to assess the representation of Sudeten Germans, the DSt executive once again blocked progress by failing to respond to his subsequent report. Glossing over the DSt's role in this breakdown of communication, Vogel's successor, Hermann Proebst, contended that the English had “overestimated their own abilities” in trying to bring about German accession to the CIE.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, British students—together with the neutrals and Americans, who had joined the CIE in 1926—continued to support German admission until at least 1929.<sup>102</sup> By then, internal German developments had made this an even more distant prospect. In late 1927, the Prussian state withdrew its recognition of the DSt as the official national union after its increasingly radicalized right-wing

members refused to accept a non-*völkisch* constitution. Consequently, the DSt Auslandsamt lost the support of the Auswärtiges Amt and its exclusive claim to represent German students on the international stage.<sup>103</sup> This was duly challenged by a new, more conciliatory republican union, the Deutscher Studentenverband (German Student Association), which sought a working association with the CIE in early 1928, adding yet another dimension to the ongoing controversy over the nature of German involvement.<sup>104</sup>

### CONCLUSIONS AND LEGACIES

When Carl Heinrich Becker gave his speech on the role of young people in Anglo-German relations in London in November 1930, student-led exchange had been underway in various forms for nearly a decade. Thus, while Becker continued to place hope in coming generations for political understanding in the future, this chapter has shown that bottom-up approaches had already been contributing to Anglo-German cooperation for quite some time. What is more, student relations were taken up remarkably early after the war and pursued with impressive determination during moments of national and international crisis. Although the students involved did not elude state influence entirely, they maintained a considerable degree of independence and made state support an integral part of their own agency.

The interchanges organized and engaged in by British and German students from the early 1920s were complex and multi-layered, intended to deal with manifold challenges engendered by the Great War and its aftermath. Since the student constituencies embodied the very youthfulness of the post-war order and its ideological contests, they placed their exchanges in the service of multiple—often competing—national, international and imperial interests and identities. In many cases, their initiatives attempted to challenge institutional policies and/or the status quo of wider academic and diplomatic relations. The extent of their success is of less concern than the intensity and meticulousness with which they pursued their agendas, as well as the ambiguous and sometimes paradoxical effects of their efforts.

In addition to their direct contributions to post-war contact between former enemy nations, the bottom-up processes discussed throughout this chapter had further-reaching implications. For example, the decision to establish the London office of the Akademischer

Austauschdienst—which had also grown out of a student initiative at Heidelberg University—can be linked to the precedent set by NUS-DSt cooperation, which contributed to an assessment made by a German professor, Hans Hecht, following a state-sponsored trip to England in 1926, that the time was ripe for the institutional extension of Anglo-German academic relations.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, from the mid-1920s, senior academics and state authorities—particularly but not only on the German side—increasingly sought to channel efforts and build on experiences gained in the student-led activities of the early post-war years.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, the later careers of leading protagonists of post-war exchange also point to broader legacies of their experiences at student level: Walter Zimmermann, for example, moved from the DSt Auslandsamt in 1925 to direct the student scholarship programme of the new Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung on behalf of the Auswärtiges Amt, before entering the diplomatic service proper in 1928, while Ivison Macadam became head of the Royal Institute of Foreign Affairs in 1929 after eight years’ service in NUS and CIE travel schemes.<sup>107</sup> Thus, student agency was not merely a rhetorical device but also an active and central component of post-war cultural exchange which had both immediate and longer-term repercussions for international relations in the inter-war period.

## NOTES

1. See Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860–1914* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980), 103–123 and 386–409; Notker Hammerstein, “Epilogue: Universities and War in the Twentieth Century,” in *A History of the University in Europe, III: Universities in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (1800–1945)*, ed. Walter Rüegg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 637–672 (here: 640–641); Thomas Weber, *Our Friend “The Enemy”: Elite Education in Britain and Germany Before World War I* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2008), 48–98.
2. See *ibid.*, 71–73 and Richard Sheppard, “The German Rhodes Scholarships,” in *The History of the Rhodes Trust 1902–1999*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 357–408. See also Thomas Adam and Charlotte A. Lerg, “Diplomacy on Campus: The Political Dimensions of Academic Exchange in the North Atlantic,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 13:4 (2015): 299–310 and Heather Ellis and Ulrike Kirchberger, ed., *Anglo-German Scholarly Relations in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

3. See Heather Ellis, “Men of Science: the British Association, Masculinity and the First World War,” in this volume.
4. John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 279; Sheppard, “The German Rhodes Scholarships,” 370–371 and Thomas Weber, “Studenten,” in *Enzyklopädie Erster Weltkrieg*, ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld et al. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004), 910–912.
5. See Tomás Irish, “From International to Inter-Allied: Transatlantic University Relations in the Era of the First World War, 1905–1920,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 13:4 (2015): 311–325 and idem, *The University at War: Britain, France and the United States* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Stuart Wallace, *War and the Image of Germany: British Academics 1914–1918* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1988).
6. *Ibid.*, 198.
7. For example, Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus, “Challenge to Transnational Loyalties: International Scientific Organizations after the First World War,” *Science Studies* 3 (1973): 93–118; Volkhard Laitenberger, *Akademischer Austausch und auswärtige Kulturpolitik. Der Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD) 1923–1945* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1976); Bernhard von Brocke and Rudolf Vierhaus, ed., *Forschung im Spannungsfeld von Politik und Gesellschaft. Geschichte und Struktur der Kaiser-Wilhelm-/Max Planck-Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart: Deutscher Verlag, 1990); Gabriele Metzler, *Internationale Wissenschaft und nationale Kultur. Deutsche Physiker in der internationalen Community 1900–1960* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000). For an exception in the transatlantic context, see Whitney Walton, *Internationalism, Nationalism, and Study Abroad: France and the United States, 1890–1970* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2010); on Britain, see Georgina Brewis, *A Social History of Student Volunteering: Britain and Beyond, 1880–1980* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and for an overview of Franco-German student exchange, see Dieter Tiemann, *Deutsch-Französische Jugendbeziehungen der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1989), 41–48.
8. Daniel Laqua, “Activism in the ‘Students’ League of Nations’: International Student Politics and the Confédération Internationale des Étudiants, 1919–1939,” *English Historical Review* [forthcoming]. I thank the author for sharing a pre-publication version of this article.
9. C. H. Becker, “Die Rolle der Jugend in den britisch-deutschen Beziehungen” (Nach einem Vortrag auf dem ‘Deutschen Abend’ der Deutsch-Englischen Akademischen Vermittlungsstelle im University College of London am 26. November 1930), *Hochschule und Ausland*

- 9:3 (March 1931): 12–16 (here: 15). All translations are my own unless stated otherwise.
10. See Tara Windsor, “Re-kindling Contact: Anglo-German Academic Exchange after the First World War,” in *Anglo-German Scholarly Relations in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Heather Ellis and Ulrike Kirchberger (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 212–231.
  11. See Schroeder-Gudehus, “Challenge to Transnational Loyalties.”
  12. See Marie-Eve Chagnon, “American Scientists and the Process of Reconciliation in the International Scientific Community, 1917–1925,” in this volume.
  13. See Ellis, “Men of Science” and Elisabeth Piller, ““Can the science of the world allow this?”: German Academic Distress, Foreign Aid and the Cultural Demobilization of the Academic World, 1919–1925,” in this volume.
  14. See Brewis, *Student Volunteering*, 51–53.
  15. *Ibid.*, 56.
  16. Piller, ““Can the science of the world allow this?.””
  17. Brewis, *Student Volunteering*, 51.
  18. *Ibid.*, 58–59.
  19. Robert Mackie quoted in Brewis, *Student Volunteering*, 59.
  20. Brewis, *Student Volunteering*, 58–60 and 64.
  21. J.H. Mitgau, “Als deutscher Student in England,” [diary entries written in the summer of 1923] in *Der Student im Ausland. Heidelberger Berichte zum Universitätsleben der Gegenwart*, ed. Henry Goverts and Elfriede Höber (Heidelberg: J. Hörning, 1930), 47–58 (here: 47). On the SCM conferences see Brewis, *Student Volunteering*, 62–63.
  22. See Norbert Giovannini, *Zwischen Republik und Faschismus. Heidelberger Studentinnen und Studenten 1918–1945* (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien-Verlag, 1990), 23–25 and 45–48.
  23. Mitgau, “Als deutscher Student in England,” 49.
  24. Henry Goverts, “Das Auslandserlebnis des deutschen Studenten,” in *Der Student im Ausland. Heidelberger Berichte zum Universitätsleben der Gegenwart*, ed. Henry Goverts and Elfriede Höber (Heidelberg: J. Hörning, 1930), 9–14 (here: 9).
  25. See Colin Storer, *Britain and the Weimar Republic: The History of a Cultural Relationship* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 36–37.
  26. Mitgau, “Als deutscher Student in England,” 52–53.
  27. *Ibid.*, 55–56.
  28. *Ibid.*, 57.
  29. *Ibid.*, 58.
  30. Brewis, *Student Volunteering*, 59.

31. Laqua, "Activism in the 'Students' League of Nations'."
32. Brewis, *Student Volunteering*, 67 and 79–83.
33. See Piller, "'Can the science of the world allow this?'"
34. Laqua, "Activism in the 'Students' League of Nations'."
35. *Ibid.*
36. Brewis, *Student Volunteering*, 61.
37. See Ivison Macadam, *Youth in the Universities: A Paper on National and International Students' Organisations* (London: Ploughshare, 1922), 8. Laqua, 'Activism in the "Students' League of Nations."'
38. Macadam, *Youth in the Universities*, 14 and Julius Ernst Lips, *Die internationale Studentenbewegung nach dem Kriege* (*La Confédération Internationale des Étudiants*), (Leipzig: Vivos Voco, 1921), 99–102. The following groups and countries were represented at this conference of international student bureaus: Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Germany, England, Holland, Norway, Scotland, Switzerland and the Sudeten-German student office.
39. Macadam, *Youth in the Universities*, 8.
40. H.G. Wells, "Preface," in Macadam, *Youth in the Universities*, 3.
41. Macadam, *Youth in the Universities*, 18–19.
42. *Ibid.*, 17.
43. *Ibid.*, 16.
44. *Ibid.*, 9–10.
45. *Ibid.*, 10 and 20–22.
46. *Ibid.*, 10–14 and Brewis, *Student Volunteering*, 64.
47. *Ibid.*, 61.
48. See correspondence in Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter: BArch) R129/335 and Laqua, "Activism in the 'Students' League of Nations'."
49. Konrad Jarausch, *Deutsche Studenten 1800–1970* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1984), 120–21.
50. Daniela Siebe, "*Germania docet*". *Ausländische Studierende, auswärtige Kulturpolitik und deutsche Universitäten 1870 bis 1933* (Husum: Matthiesen, 2009), 398–404.
51. Lips, *Die internationale Studentenbewegung*, 93–104.
52. *Ibid.*, 95 and Albert Einstein to German News Agency for Foreign University and Student Affairs, 27 July 1920, in *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*, Vol. 10, *The Berlin Years: Correspondence, May–December 1920 and Supplementary Correspondence, 1909–1920*, ed. Diana Kormos Buchwald et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 350–351.
53. *Die Deutsche Studentenschaft in ihrem Werden, Wollen u. Wirken*, ed. Vorstand der Deutschen Studentenschaft (Teschen: Selbstverlag der Deutschen Studentenschaft, 1927), 110. For the political development of the DSt see Jarausch, *Deutsche Studenten*, 122–127.

54. Siebe, “*Germania docet*”, 404–405.
55. Christian Jansen, *Exzellenz Weltweit. Die Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung zwischen Wissenschaftsförderung und auswärtiger Kulturpolitik (1953–2003)*, (Cologne: Dumont, 2004), 23–24.
56. Walter Zimmermann, “Zum Geleit!” *Hochschule und Ausland*, 1:1 (August 1922): 1–2 (here: 1).
57. Walter Zimmermann, *Ziele und Wege studentischer Auslandsarbeit* (Berlin: Verlag Hochschule und Ausland, 1924), 4.
58. Siebe, “*Germania docet*”, 404; Holger Impekoven, *Die Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung und das Ausländerstudium in Deutschland 1925–1945. Von der “geräuschlosen Propaganda” zur Ausbildung der “geistigen Wehr” des “Neuen Europa”* (Bonn: V&R unipress, 2013), 60–61.
59. Tiemann, *Deutsch-Französische Jugendbeziehungen*, 43–44.
60. Zimmermann, *Ziele und Wege*, 6.
61. *Ibid.*, 3.
62. Declaration of Deutscher Studentenbund, 17 September 1924, and Hans Hellmuth Preuß to Auslandsamt der deutschen Studentenschaft, 20.9.1924, BArch R129/347.
63. Joachim Wintzer, *Deutschland und der Völkerbund 1918–1926* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006), 57–58.
64. Auslandsamt der deutschen Studentenschaft to Presseabteilung der Reichsregierung (government press office), 24 March 1924, BArch R129/292.
65. Macadam, *Youth in the Universities*, 14–15; H.Z., “Die Leipziger internationale Studentenkonferenz, 8–10 April 1922,” *Hochschule und Ausland*, 1 (August 1922): 2–10.
66. Ivison S. Macadam, “Die englische Studentenschaft,” *Hochschule und Ausland*, 1:2 (September 1922): 41–42.
67. H.Z., “Die Leipziger internationale Studentenkonferenz”, 3.
68. Adolf Köster quoted in Macadam, *Youth in the Universities*, 15.
69. Bernard Pares quoted in Macadam, *Youth in the Universities*, 15.
70. H.Z., “Die Leipziger internationale Studentenkonferenz,” 10; Tiemann, *Deutsch-Französische Jugendbeziehungen*, 43.
71. Macadam, *Youth in the Universities*, 15.
72. *Ibid.*, 16 (and following quotations).
73. Walter Zimmermann, “Kritik,” *Hochschule und Ausland*, 1:7–8 (February–March 1923): 255–263; Tiemann, *Deutsch-Französische Jugendbeziehungen*, 43.
74. Zimmermann, “Kritik.”
75. “Die dritte internationale Konferenz studentischer Auslandsämter in London,” *Hochschule und Ausland*, 2:1–3 (August–October 1923): 1–9.

76. Walter Zimmermann to A.G. Bagnall, 9 March 1923, BArch R129/362.
77. Gordon Bagnall cited in W.N. Hughes to Walter Zimmermann, 6 April 1923, BArch R129/362.
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79. Walter Zimmermann to W.A.B. Young, 30 March 1923, BArch R129/362.
80. Ibid. and W.A.B. Young to Walter Zimmermann, 10 April 1923, BArch R129/362.
81. W.N. Hughes to Walter Zimmermann, 6 April 1923, BArch R129/362.
82. See signed declarations of 10 May 1923, BArch R129/362.
83. Walter Zimmermann to Heinz Hendriock, 28 May 1923, BArch R129/362.
84. Heinz Hendriock to Walter Zimmermann, 31 May 1923, BArch R129/362.
85. "Kleine Mitteilungen: Studienreisen ausländischer Studierender durch Deutschland," *Hochschule und Ausland*, 2:1–3 (August–October 1923): 43–44.
86. Auslandsamt der deutschen Studentenschaft to Presseabteilung der Reichsregierung, 24 March 1924, BArch R129/292.
87. Walter Zimmermann, "Betrachtungen zur gegenwärtigen Lage in der Confédération Internationale des Etudiants," *Hochschule und Ausland* 2:10 (July 1924): 179–184.
88. Walter Zimmermann to Gustaf Stern, 9 August 1924, BArch R129/347.
89. Gustaf Stern to Walter Zimmermann, 13 August 1924, BArch R129/347.
90. B.F. von Bülow to Auslandsamt der deutschen Studentenschaft, 28 August 1924, BArch R129/347 (with notes on meeting with English representatives Macadam, Bagnall, Judd and Wilson).
91. "Die 4. Konferenz studentischer Auslandsämter in Budapest," *Hochschule und Ausland*, 2:12 (September 1924): 209–213 (here: 213).
92. See telegrams 15–17 September 1924, BArch R129/347.
93. "Der II. Kongreß der Confédération Internationale des Étudiants in Warschau," *Hochschule und Ausland*, 2:13 (October 1924): 225–229.
94. Auslandsamt der deutschen Studentenschaft to Auswärtiges Amt (cultural department), 17 and 22 October 1924, BArch R129/347.
95. See correspondence 1925 to 1926 in BArch R129/362.
96. "Niederschrift über eine Besprechung zwischen Fräulein Hermes (National Union of Students, London) und Herr Haase (Auslandsamt der DSt) am 20. August 1926 in London," sent to Auswärtiges Amt 23 September 1926, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes Berlin (hereafter: PAAA) R65556; see also BArch R129/335.

97. “Niederschrift über die gemeinsame Sitzung des Exekutiv-Komitee der C.I.E und des Hauptausschusses der DSt vom 11. bis 15. April 1926 in Stuttgart,” BArch R129/294; Tiemann, *Deutsch-Französische Jugendbeziehungen*, 45–46.
98. Gordon Bagnall to Georg Vogel, 9 December 1926 and Vogel to Bagnall, 22 December 1926, BArch R129/335.
99. CIE Commission III International Relations and Travel (Dalrymple) to Georg Vogel, 16 December 1926, and Vogel to Dalrymple, 22 December 1926, BArch R129/335.
100. Georg Vogel to Auswärtiges Amt (cultural department), 12 February 1927, BArch R129/335.
101. “Bericht über den englischen Studenten-Kongress” [24–30 March 1927], sent to AA 2 May 1927, PAAA R64047; Hermann Proebst, “Die Entwicklung des Verhältnisses der Deutschen Studentenschaft zur Confédération Internationale des Étudiants seit dem Rom-Kongreß 1927,” *Hochschule und Ausland*, 8:8–10 (August–October 1928): 157–165.
102. Laqua, “Activism in the ‘Students’ League of Nations’.”
103. Jaraus, *Deutsche Studenten*, 147–149; Siebe, “*Germania docet*”, 407–408.
104. Johannes Höber, “C.I.E. und Deutscher Studentenverband,” *Hochschule und Ausland*, 6:8–10 (August–October 1928): 166–168; Tiemann, *Deutsche-französische Jugendbeziehungen*, 47 and 234–235; Laqua, “Activism in the ‘Students’ League of Nations’.”
105. Hans Hecht, “Bericht über eine Studienreise nach England während der Monate August bis Oktober 1926,” 15 December 1926, PAAA R64047; Laitenberger, *Akademischer Austausch*, 16–19.
106. On the DAAD and its British sister institution, the Anglo-German Academic Board, see Windsor, “Re-kindling Contact.”
107. On Zimmermann, see Impekoven, *Die Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung*, 81 and on Macadam, see Laqua, “Activism in the ‘Students’ League of Nations’.”

# “Can the Science of the World Allow This?”: German Academic Distress, Foreign Aid and the Cultural Demobilization of the Academic World, 1919–1925

*Elisabeth Piller*

When in 1925 Ruth Rouse, a British leader of the international Student Christian Movement, looked back on international relief work since the Great War, she was greatly satisfied. Already shortly after the war students and professors around the world had begun aiding their German peers, whose work and livelihood was greatly affected by post-war inflation. By the mid-1920s, even the former Allies had contributed generously to the more than one million dollars in foreign aid raised for German academics. This international aid, Rouse believed, would not only alleviate German academic distress but help heal the deep rifts in the academic world which the war had created. “Propagandists,” she noted, “made great play with the Manifestoes of University professors on both sides of the Great War. The hatred and misunderstanding

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of those documents are surely cancelled by the love and fellowship revealed in these olive-crowned Manifestoes of Relief.”<sup>1</sup> After a decade of bitter antagonism, academic relief to Germany held out the promise of renewed international understanding.

Rouse’s assertion prompts us to look critically at German academic distress and the international efforts to ameliorate it. This chapter explores international academic relations in the aftermath of the Great War through the lens of foreign aid to German universities. It examines the nature and meaning of German academic distress, traces German self-help measures and looks at how German professors and students sought to bring the crisis of German universities to the attention of the world. Moreover, it assesses the motives behind international relief efforts for Germany and their effect on the cultural demobilization of the academic world. At a time when the international academic community found itself divided by the experience of the Great War, foreign aid to Germany certainly proved a remarkable, if largely forgotten encounter between former enemies. But did it really, as Rouse and other contemporaries claimed, help overcome the rift between them?

On first sight, there is little in historiography to confirm Rouse’s assertion. If anything, scholars still go to considerable lengths to show the remarkably long-term impact that the wartime manifestoes had on the academic world. Hardly a book on wartime academia, indeed on the Great War, fails to mention the (in) famous “Manifesto of the 93,” in which German professors aligned themselves with the nation’s war aims, or the various proclamations their French and British colleagues contributed to the so-called “Great War of Words.”<sup>2</sup> Historians generally agree that the upsurge of patriotism during the war shattered the international scientific community and re-aligned academic relations away from Germany. After the war, the academic world was re-organized in a way that cemented rather than bridged wartime rifts. Longer-standing international associations were disbanded and the newly founded International Research Council, the International Union of Academies and the International Confederation of Students all aimed to re-arrange the academic world along the lines of inter-Allied commonalities and cooperation.<sup>3</sup> The erstwhile Central Powers were at first excluded from membership and a number of provisions were introduced to secure Allied predominance. Throughout the early 1920s, Germany was not invited to conferences organized under their auspices and was effectively barred from most collaborative projects. German academia,

it was argued, had violated the very principles of civilized conduct and could not be re-admitted into the academic community until it had retracted earlier statements, admitted German war guilt and professed an appropriate degree of repentance.<sup>4</sup> This “boycott” of German science, as Germans termed it, was in reality only part of a wider cultural blockade on Germany that mirrored its general post-war isolation.

German academics responded to this boycott with an equally self-righteous “counter-boycott.”<sup>5</sup> In light of their humiliating defeat, they interpreted the charges of war guilt and moral deficiency as a deliberate insult and closed ranks against this outside assault. Consilience towards the “boycott organizations” was henceforth understood as a dishonourable betrayal of national interests and dignity. Individual German scholars were often asked to decline invitations to international conferences as long as Germany as a whole remained excluded.<sup>6</sup> Once Germany was asked to join the international organizations in the mid-1920s, German scholars refused. Instead, they advanced their own catalogue of conditions, including an official apology for the unwarranted accusations levelled against them, which would have to be met before they could consent to join. In the end, they never did. The academic world thus remained split into “two hostile camps” long after peace had been re-established.<sup>7</sup> Historians have even characterized the 1920s as a “cold war in international scientific relations.”<sup>8</sup> In terms of cultural demobilization, international academia lagged clearly behind international commerce, even politics.

The cultural blockade of Germany, to be sure, was far from airtight. Not even during the war had all international communication ceased, and where it had, it was thereafter tacitly taken up again. In their private correspondence, many scholars took a more conciliatory, pragmatic position towards colleagues from former enemy nations, even as extreme positions tended to dominate public discussions.<sup>9</sup> Many neutral scholars, moreover, did not share the moralist premises of the Allied boycott. While they joined the new organizations, they assured their German peers that they would try to undermine the boycott from within and often played a key role in maintaining and cultivating lines of communication between the “hostile camps.”<sup>10</sup> If the boycott was thus never truly impermeable, surprisingly little is known about the nature of contacts between the two camps, especially those contacts lying beyond scientific interchanges. This is particularly regrettable, because the antagonism within the academic world was never of a predominantly scientific, but

of an emotional nature. The issue was never reading an erstwhile enemy's research findings or even exchanging notes on a common problem, but, as John Horne has noted, "the personal encounter, the finding of gestures, words and practices of reconciliation."<sup>11</sup> The process of cultural demobilization was essentially about overcoming psychological hurdles; and this was precisely why it proved so difficult.

In exploring this difficult path to cultural demobilization, historians have so far completely eschewed one of the most perplexing and perhaps—given its personal nature—most meaningful encounters between the two hostile camps: the international relief for German academia in the early 1920s. Neither German academic distress nor international responses thereto and their impact on academic relations have received any considerable attention.<sup>12</sup> Already half a century ago, Brigitte Schroeder-Gudenus commented on historians' strange neglect of this topic, and since then not much has changed.<sup>13</sup> The following chapter thus excavates a nearly forgotten chapter in the history of the academic world. Based primarily on archival sources, it explores both German academic distress and international responses thereto and locates them in the larger context of the boycott and counter-boycott of the post-war years. The chapter argues that the precarious financial situation in Germany, not the international boycott, was perceived as the gravest threat to the survival and international influence of German universities and science at the time. Reacting to this financial crisis, Germans organized a number of effective self-help organizations which aimed, too, to re-build international sympathy and support for Germany by alerting the world to the gravity of academic distress. The international aid German professors and students received in response revealed the tenuous and permeable character of Germany's post-war isolation, though its effect on the cultural demobilization of the academic world remained highly ambiguous. While there is some evidence that it eased a selective academic rapprochement between Germany and "friendly" donor countries, the global outpouring of aid also hardened German intransigence, upheld their binary worldview and might in the end have perpetuated the culture of war through the 1920s. By focusing on the development and meaning of international assistance to Germany, the paper complicates the overly neat categories of boycott and counter-boycott and, not least, illustrates how an apparently apolitical field like relief work was saturated with the cultural and political divisions of the day.

## GERMAN ACADEMIC DISTRESS

If historians of the post-war period have focused overwhelmingly on the “boycott of German science,” German professors at the time were initially much more preoccupied with what they perceived to be the gravest threat to the worldwide influence of German science: inflation. Its impact was indeed severe. The increasing devaluation of the mark, which culminated in the hyperinflation of 1923, struck forcefully at the vitality of academic life on both a personal and institutional level. The price of paper, chemicals, laboratory equipment and publications rose astronomically while state allocations to libraries, universities and museums failed to keep pace with inflation.<sup>14</sup> Access to international publications, which had to be purchased in hard currency, became ever more limited, posing a grave problem to German scholarship. The international subscriptions of the Prussian State Library, easily the best-endowed library in all of Germany, dropped from 2300 before the war to only 140 by 1920.<sup>15</sup> This said, the consequences of inflation were most seriously felt among younger scholars and students, where academic distress amounted to an actual humanitarian crisis. Unable to subsist on their own or their parents’ devalued income, the post-war years witnessed the pauperization of a significant part of the German student body.<sup>16</sup> The host of public lectures, newspaper articles and brochures devoted to the topic of academic distress testifies clearly to the feeling of crisis that pervaded German professors and students for years after the war.<sup>17</sup>

Importantly, the academic crisis appeared especially troubling with regard to its international ramifications. What frightened German scholars most of all was that inflation seemed to spell their *actual* international isolation. Even as international communications had broken down during the war, and even as they had been excluded from scientific organizations thereafter, this had never posed a serious threat to scholarly inquiry. After all, they could still study foreign publications, publish their own findings or re-open correspondence with international colleagues if they pleased. As long as these basic processes of scholarly exchange were still readily available, the vitality and international standing of German scholarship could be maintained. But it was precisely these key processes that were jeopardized by ever-advancing inflation. Unable to purchase research materials, afford foreign publications, travel abroad or publish their latest research, it was inflation that truly threatened to isolate German scholars, and isolation, all agreed, spelled the “death of all science.”<sup>18</sup>

Germany's financial debacle, warned professors and science organizers, would result in a "revaluation of the scientific world standing [*wissenschaftliche Weltgeltung*] of Germany."<sup>19</sup> That this crisis came at a time when science was widely perceived as a very last means of German influence in the world gave only additional weight to these trepidations.<sup>20</sup> In short, inflation, not the international boycott, seemed the gravest threat to Germany's international scientific standing after the Great War.

### GERMAN SELF-HELP MEASURES AND INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

Given these pervasive fears, German academics, politicians and cultural policy organizers quickly introduced measures to systematically offset this isolating impact of inflation. In late 1920, all German academies, universities, technical schools and scientific institutes came together to found the *Notgemeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft* (Emergency Association of German Science). Headed by eminent professors such as Fritz Haber, Adolf von Harnack and Max Planck, and presided over by former Prussian Minister of Culture Friedrich Schmidt-Ott, the *Notgemeinschaft's* major purpose was to maintain Germany's scientific production amid economic turmoil. In the early 1920s, it pooled scarce financial resources to procure laboratory equipment and foreign literature, to provide print subsidies and short-term stipends and to fund research trips and excavations abroad.<sup>21</sup> Supported by German industry and federal funds, the *Notgemeinschaft* stepped in wherever university or library coffers no longer sufficed to keep German research afloat. On the student level, the *Wirtschaftshilfe der Deutschen Studentenschaft* (Student Self-Help Cooperative) assumed a similar role. Founded in early 1921 by the German student body, it secured and administered resources to cheapen the overall living expenses of German students, inaugurating a wide catalogue of social services—including student cafeterias, employment bureaus and a student loan service—unprecedented in the history of German universities.<sup>22</sup> Just like the *Notgemeinschaft*, the *Wirtschaftshilfe* aimed ultimately to uphold the high level of German research by allowing the generation's best and brightest to continue their studies amid adverse financial conditions.

The primarily domestic activities of these two organizations should not obscure their strongly international agenda. German self-help measures were not the least animated by a desire to upset the Allied intention to neutralize

German science as a factor in world politics. They maintained the productivity of German science not only as an end in and of itself but as the fatherland's one remaining weapon in the competition for international prestige and influence, indeed, as a substitute for its dramatic loss of economic, political and military power after Versailles.<sup>23</sup> Not surprisingly, then, these self-help organizations far outlived the post-war emergency and were after 1924 transformed into major carriers of German science and cultural policy, which they—as the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Deutsches Studentenwerk—remain to this very day. Moreover, the two organizations soon began actively to forge and cultivate international ties to foundations, humanitarian groups and academics interested in ameliorating German academic distress. Within a year of its founding, the Wirtschaftshilfe had entered into close cooperation with foreign student relief organizations, and the Notgemeinschaft administered donations, primarily publications, received from a range of international academic groups.<sup>24</sup> Increasingly, especially once the onset of hyperinflation in mid-1922 crippled German self-help, they also used these foreign liaisons to commence a wide-ranging publicity campaign abroad, which drew the attention of the world to the impending collapse of German universities.<sup>25</sup> Though the Notgemeinschaft, in particular, always denied actively soliciting international assistance, there is ample evidence to the contrary.<sup>26</sup> At a time when institutional contacts were otherwise bound by the logic of boycott and counter-boycott, German academic distress afforded a major occasion to reach out to international audiences.

It is important to acknowledge that such international outreach aimed beyond mere fundraising. Rather, German distress often served as an argumentative strategy to remind the academic world of the value and importance of German universities.<sup>27</sup> Invoking the ideal of scientific universalism, German scholars presented the material deprivation of German universities as an irreplaceable cultural loss to the entire world.<sup>28</sup> As one German historian underlined in an international appeal on behalf of German students, “it is not only material things that are here in danger, but intellectual treasures, which belong not to the German nation alone but to mankind at large. So much of intellectual progress of humanity has for hundreds of years been bound up with the German universities that their decay and downfall would be a loss for the whole world such as could not easily be made good again.”<sup>29</sup> Nobel laureate and professor of philosophy Rudolf Eucken echoed these observations. With inflation laying waste to a future generation of German academics and “the

magnificent building of academic life threaten[ed] to fall to ruins,” Eucken wondered whether “the science of the world [can] allow this?”<sup>30</sup> Such appeals to scientific universalism went hand in hand with more emotional representations. One of the *Wirtschaftshilfe*’s publicity booklets, intended for an American academic setting, not only portrayed the distress and self-help of German students in rich detail, but featured a wide range of beautiful photographs of quaint German university towns in a thinly veiled attempt to tap into buried affinities among the thousands of German-trained Americans.<sup>31</sup> In appeal after appeal, depictions of German distress thus invoked Germany’s previous and future scholarly contributions to pierce—as was privately admitted—the cultural blockade around it.<sup>32</sup> A mid-1923 board meeting of the *Notgemeinschaft*, deciding on more systematic publicity of German academic distress, acknowledged that such publicity would not only help ameliorate existing conditions, but re-establish “various cultural connections to other countries, which imply a recapturing of just that moral influence, which is irremissible for our standing abroad.”<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, there is no denying that publicity of German distress aligned with discrete foreign policy objectives. In the context of the bitter Franco-German battle over reparations and efforts to influence world opinions, the Foreign Ministry supported these appeals as a kind of poverty propaganda to demonstrate Germany’s inability to pay reparations, indict France’s intransigent post-war policy and underline that German recovery required international concessions.<sup>34</sup> Not infrequently, dire depictions of German distress were released just in time for yet another reparations conference and German professors unfailingly emphasized that only a revision of the Versailles Treaty would really ease the predicament of German universities.<sup>35</sup> This is not to suggest that German professors and student representatives generally “invented” the extent of the distress or acted on official instructions, but their actions did express a pervasive revisionist consensus among German elites, greatly amplified by a considerable degree of self-pity and feelings of relative deprivation.<sup>36</sup> In all, there is little doubt that German appeals aimed to draw out sympathy for German academia, portray Germany as the innocent victim of a cruel peace and suggest the necessity to revise the Treaty of Versailles to the intellectual elite of the world. Put bluntly, the worldwide publicity of German academic distress was, in an entirely different way, no less calculated for international impact than wartime professorial appeals. It was, however, decidedly more successful.

## FOREIGN AID

Despite the recent war, German academic distress drew responses from around the world. International relief measures for German students began as early as 1920 in the context of Europe-wide student relief programs, first organized by the British Quakers and, from 1921 onwards, by the newly organized European Student Relief, a social service arm of the World Student Christian Movement.<sup>37</sup> Their predominantly humanitarian work was soon complemented by a number of more scientifically oriented relief programs. In 1920, the Japanese industrialist Hajime Hoshi endowed a foundation to aid German chemical research, and the German-American anthropologist Franz Boas established an American Emergency Society for Austrian and German Science in New York, which sent tens of thousands of American journals and books to German university libraries.<sup>38</sup> Additional, smaller-scale committees were initiated by British, Swedish, Dutch and Swiss university circles. Just as the official boycott excluded German scholars from international conferences and collaborative endeavours, aid programs renewed and deepened international connections.

Still, the financial extent and popular support of these early initiatives must not be overstated. For the first few years after the war, they were only a minor part of larger reconstruction efforts, benefiting many European countries to a much greater degree than Germany. German relief remained the preserve of ethnic or special-interest groups, like German-Americans or peace churches, which embraced them as an opportunity to either express their cultural attachment or “cure” Germans of their excessive militarism by spreading love and goodwill. American student-relief fundraisers, for example, dared not mention German students as recipients for fear of losing subscribers.<sup>39</sup> As a consequence, German relief was at first limited to a relatively small number of people and received only scant public attention. This changed with the onset of hyperinflation in the autumn of 1922. As German conditions rapidly deteriorated, the emergency appeals by German self-help organizations found a favourable echo in ever-larger parts of the academic world. Special relief campaigns for German academia, especially German students, unfolded in Britain, in the United States, in Switzerland, Holland and Sweden, and in early 1923 the executive committee of the European Student Relief decided to quintuple Germany’s original quota for 1923 to an impressive quarter of a million dollars.<sup>40</sup> Large

non-governmental organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, which had previously abstained from assisting German science, now initiated emergency measures.<sup>41</sup>

Given its recent enmity, the developments in Great Britain were perhaps most remarkable. In February of 1923, a group of English dignitaries, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Manchester, Lord Robert Cecil and representatives of British universities, initiated a “German Distress Relief Fund” through the left-liberal *Manchester Guardian*.<sup>42</sup> The Universities’ Committee of the Imperial War Relief Fund also re-focused its work on German students in the spring of 1923, which seemed, as its secretary noted after a trip to Germany, “in the worst plight of all” of Europe.<sup>43</sup> Public appeals raised the remarkably high sum of 400,000 gold marks, (about 20,000 lb), of which 40,000 gold marks were collected among Cambridge faculty and students alone.<sup>44</sup>

It was at this point, too, that relief work became more widely wedded to an agenda of reconciliation. Steeped in cultural internationalist thinking, the European Student Relief considered its work not only a social service, but a reform and peace-building effort. Student relief was conceptualized as a “bridge-builder” between nations, providing not only bare necessities but offering international student fellowship to Germany.<sup>45</sup> After the French occupation of the Ruhr in January 1923, aid to Germany also acquired stronger political undertones, offering a way to indict the French course of action. British liberal elites, for instance, systematically used their relief work to criticize the government’s tacit stance towards the reparations problem and the French occupation of the Ruhr.<sup>46</sup> At this point, international donors, it seems fair to say, aimed to draw Germany back into the academic world—and the family of nations more generally.<sup>47</sup>

In all, foreign initiatives of one sort or another raised about one million dollars for German academia in the early 1920s and there is no doubt that this aid was essential in keeping German academic life afloat during the period of hyperinflation.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, such relief work illustrates considerable sympathetic contacts between and beyond the two hostile camps. At a time when Germany was still largely isolated, its emergency organizations maintained manifold international contacts, even with former belligerents. With the onset of hyperinflation, the international circles interested in aiding German academia clearly broadened and the very scope of their assistance calls into question the actual

extent and depth of the boycott below its formal, institutional level. By 1923, it betrayed significant cracks, and few more visible than academic aid to Germany.

### DIFFICULT PATHS TO CULTURAL DEMOBILIZATION

Still, the most important question remains unanswered. How did this relief work affect international academic relations? Was it a harbinger of renewed academic intercourse? How, if at all, did it overcome the resentments created by the war or contribute to a rapprochement between the two hostile camps? To answer these questions, it seems important to distinguish between the formal, institutional boycott as practiced by the newly established international organizations, and the larger culture of war, the psychological climate, in which the boycott had first developed.

With regard to the formal and institutional nature of the boycott, relief work effected no discernible, immediate change. Certainly it never weakened the resolve of those most in favour of upholding it, and it would take the settlement of the reparations question, Locarno and the German admission to the League of Nations before German scholars were finally invited to join the boycott organizations. French and Belgian scholars, who were most in favour of maintaining the boycott, proved almost entirely unreceptive to German appeals. If some of their British or American colleagues slowly came around to support German universities, they held mostly steadfast to their interpretation that there was either no significant distress in Germany at all or that she was in no way morally deserving of international aid or sympathy.<sup>49</sup> Nor did academic distress necessarily engender sympathy for Germany. Certainly, German relief was never a majority occupation. Many of the collections went back to the initiatives of a small group of scholars, students and humanitarians, and most academics remained oblivious to German academic distress. Even in countries where the atmosphere was less hostile than in France or Belgium, German appeals could meet with determined criticism rather than warm support and could evoke distrust and hostility rather than sympathetic concern.<sup>50</sup> Asked to contribute to a collection for German physicians in 1923, one American doctor replied that he saw no reason to contribute “funds to aid German scientists [...] in their distress resulting from a war which they so cruelly waged and lost.”<sup>51</sup> This, rather than sympathy and recognition, might have been the prevailing majority opinion.

At the same time, relief work clearly expressed, perhaps furthered, the cultural demobilization of a broadening segment of the academic world. It is important to remember that international assistance usually meant more than the impersonal transfer of funds from one account into another. Relief work was built on personal contacts, emotional stories and transnational imaginations. For donations to be elicited, a humanitarian narrative had to be crafted and re-told; an ability had to be developed—perhaps for the first time since 1914—to understand and empathize with the German situation. International aid meant personal correspondence, visits and facing difficult questions, such as the overall value of German universities or the role they might once have played in one's life.<sup>52</sup> German distress, it seems, could activate buried sympathies and afforded former belligerents an opportunity to reach out to German colleagues. Even scholars who had been highly critical of Germany's war-time conduct took the chance to express an inkling of cultural affinity and intellectual respect for the universities they had once attended or the colleagues they had once admired.<sup>53</sup> Relief work afforded them a politically unassailable, humanitarian opportunity to take a first step towards Germany—and once it had been taken, other steps usually followed.

In this way relief work was substantial in renewing contacts between and beyond the two hostile camps. The Rockefeller Foundation, for example, began its post-war engagement in Germany in December of 1922, when it adopted an emergency relief program for German medical science. With the stabilization of the mark, these emergency aid programs developed into permanent research collaboration between German and American scientists.<sup>54</sup> With regard to student relief, too, the effects on the international academic community were both concrete and long term. Here, international aid was in fact seminal in re-establishing cultural exchanges between different student bodies that would often last through the inter-war period (and beyond). While such personal, bilateral ties did not directly challenge the official boycott organizations, they established alternative networks that effectively re-integrated Germany in emerging fields of academic and scientific cooperation.<sup>55</sup> In many instances, relief work was but the crucial first step towards a normalization of academic relations.

Above all, the notions associated with responses to German distress challenged the very premise of the international boycott on a broad front. At a time when parts of the academic world were trying to denigrate the accomplishments of German scholarship, when academic

relations were re-aligned away from Germany, most of these relief initiatives strongly testified to the indispensable nature of German universities and postulated a return to scientific universalism. In an entirely representative fashion, the European Student Relief asserted that “Germany, Austria and Hungary represent two great and ancient cultures, whose loss would be the world’s disaster.”<sup>56</sup> Many others framed their donations in terms of intellectual gratitude. Swedish theologian Nathan Söderblom, for example, spoke out strongly for aiding German students in October of 1922. “What moves me strongly,” he wrote, “is the distress of German academic youth. Germany has given the world and has given civilization, the most important intellects and leaders, the greatest researchers and scholars. But what will the future look like, if the youth of this nation of thinkers, researchers, inventors and poets, withers away? [...] a frightful question.”<sup>57</sup> Even supporters in former enemy countries like Great Britain or the United States echoed these observations. The Archbishop of Canterbury reminded his audience that “whatever opinion may be entertained about things said and done during the war [...] we are so far as I can see bound now to try to sustain and resuscitate the intellectual life of Europe, and it would be disastrous were the contributions made to that intellectual life by the German-speaking universities to be thwarted or crippled.”<sup>58</sup> If the post-war boycott policy seemed to imply that German exclusion from international endeavours came at little detriment to scientific progress, relief efforts on behalf of German science spoke an entirely different language. They, in contrast, in one pronouncement after another, emphasized that the progress of the world depended, too, on the survival of German academia and science. The adoption of these arguments by politicians, churchmen and academics was, it can be argued, a distinct step towards delegitimizing the rhetoric of exclusion. Even if pronounced sympathies for Germany remained rare, many scholars—confronted with the collapse of German universities—determined that the science of the world could *not* allow it. By assisting the German pariah they re-asserted the principles of scientific internationalism.

So what about Germany? Here, international aid had a profoundly ambiguous effect on cultural demobilization. True, Germans cherished aid and treated it as a foreign “recognition of the world importance of German science.”<sup>59</sup> At a time when German scholars began to doubt their own cultural capital, foreign aid came as a comforting reassurance of their own and their nation’s prestige in the world. There is

also evidence that relief work ameliorated the sentiments towards those nations not considered key enemies. In particular, international aid fulfilled an extremely important psychological function. At a time when German academia (and the nation at large) believed that dignity forbade to “seek out foreigners first,” foreign aid could be cited to justify the re-establishment of international contacts against the vocal group of German scholars pressing for intransigence towards the academic world.<sup>60</sup> Interpreted as a token of foreign sympathy and appreciation, international aid allowed German scholars to re-open channels of communication with former belligerent countries in a way they felt psychologically acceptable.<sup>61</sup> As a profession of goodwill and solidarity it enabled them to forgive, if not to forget, some of the disappointments and insults they felt they had suffered in the previous decade.

If for Germans, too, international aid was thus a first step towards psychological detente, it is well to acknowledge that the German willingness to reconcile was highly selective. One would go wrong to believe that foreign aid automatically healed the rifts between academic communities, that Germans would understand it as an outstretched hand and eagerly rise to take it with a spirit of “humble gratitude.” Quite the opposite is true. As more and more countries, including former belligerents, began to donate, German scholars took the liberty to accept or reject donations depending on the donor’s wartime conduct or present political persuasion. When in early 1924 a prominent American committee to aid German intellectuals formed, including some critics of Germany’s wartime positions, German professors intimated to the German Foreign Ministry that they might publicly reject assistance from such formerly hostile sources.<sup>62</sup> As a consequence, the German embassy in Washington took pains to stop the American aid committee in its tracks. An inquiry into the distress of German science, which the *Notgemeinschaft* received from the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC) of the League of Nations in 1923, also went deliberately unanswered. Considering the ICIC part of the boycott front against Germany, the *Notgemeinschaft*—which had spent the last months busily advertising German academic distress around the world—now deemed this inquiry “outside our reference.”<sup>63</sup> As a consequence, the ICIC’s 1924 appeal for funds on behalf of international science made no mention of Germany.<sup>64</sup>

These reactions, most of which never became public, tell us more about German psychology than the tame, published expressions of gratitude. To understand German behaviour one has to keep in mind that

there always remained something deeply humiliating about international aid. Though Germans tried hard to pass them off as tokens of appreciation and intellectual gratitude, international donations, especially from former belligerents, easily awoke pronounced bitterness and resentment in a country which attributed its malaise not to its own mistakes but to Allied injustices. Indeed, at a time when Germans believed that inflation derived primarily from the unyielding Allied position on the reparations question, international charity easily appeared a mockery and degradation. If Germans were willing to accept international aid as a token of international respect from well-meaning “friends” abroad, they were not prepared to accept “alms” from those whose attitude towards Germany they deemed questionable. When coming from the wrong quarters, foreign aid appeared, as Marburg students noted, “incompatible with the honour of a nation which was defeated but not dishonoured.”<sup>65</sup> The rejection of such foreign donations once more spotlights the pronounced psychological hurdles to renewed international understanding.

Indeed, the effect of foreign aid on the cultural demobilization of German academia is highly ambiguous. While there is some evidence that foreign aid eased a selective academic rapprochement with “friendly” donor communities (particularly the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States), it may have actually hardened German intransigence, upheld their binary worldview and perpetuated the culture of war with regard to others. It was precisely because relief work was interpreted as a token of respect for German scholarship and precisely because it emphasized its indispensable character that Germans could decide to approach the re-emerging scientific relations on their very own terms.<sup>66</sup> This nexus between relief work and the German counter-boycott is clear from a meeting of the Notgemeinschaft in early 1926, a time when German scholars began to re-formulate their position towards the boycott organizations. Discussing the state of international scientific relations, the president of the Notgemeinschaft emphasized the numerous ties abroad, which had in the preceding years been re-established through relief work and which had since turned into collaborative efforts. On this basis, he noted, Germany could afford to respond with reserve to the ever more noticeable international attempts to reach out to German science. Rather than rushing back into the international fold, Germany would have to maintain its dignity and cultivate its independence from the international scientific community. While one could surely re-enter international cooperation, foreign countries would be expected to take the initial step

and to meet the pre-conditions, namely full equality, that German science demanded.<sup>67</sup> In short, international aid re-affirmed a German belief that they needed the academic world no more than the academic world needed them.

Moreover, the alternative academic networks that emerged from relief work considerably decreased the necessity for Germany to ever join the boycott organizations. German students, for example, had been excluded from the International Confederation of Students founded in 1919, but soon took a leading role in the International Student Service, a rival organization that grew out of the European Student Relief.<sup>68</sup> Relying on this alternative infrastructure, German students participated throughout the 1920s in international student conferences and established wide-ranging student travel and exchange programs with many European countries and the United States.<sup>69</sup> As a consequence they never felt the sort of isolation that might have moved them to join the French-dominated International Confederation of Students. By the time the boycott front was beginning to crumble and German students and scientists were asked to join, international relief work, among others, had built such elaborate alternative networks that they were able to forego these invitations. In an ironic twist, foreign aid both emboldened and enabled German academia to seek reconciliation only on its very own terms.

In conclusion, foreign aid to Germany points us to a large grey zone between boycott on the one side and counter-boycott on the other. It also makes clear that this in-between area was no neutral ground. Even an ostensibly apolitical field like relief work was saturated with the political demands and cultural divisions of the day. Germans for their part used it to elicit international sympathies to escape their isolation and to indict the consequences of the peace treaty. For international circles, in turn, it often meant a first step towards reconciliation with Germany and a re-assertion of the principles of scientific universalism after the nationalist turmoil of the war. Still, the international assistance neither overcame the boycott in its official, formal shape, nor did it reconcile the more extreme exponents of the two hostile camps. But it did spell the beginning of the end of Allied efforts to exclude Germany. If we return to Ruth Rouse's initial assessment, it is possible to assert that the "olive-crowned manifestoes of relief" never cancelled any of the hurtful things said during the war, but they did allow the academic world to begin its process of cultural demobilization—a process that would be painfully slow and highly selective.

## NOTES

1. Ruth Rouse. *Rebuilding Europe: The Student Chapter in Post-War Reconstruction* (London: SCM Press, 1925), 187.
2. On professorial manifestoes and declarations, see Ungern-Sternberg, Wolfgang von and Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg. *Der Aufruf “An die Kulturwelt!”: das Manifest der 93 und die Anfänge der Kriegspropaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg*. (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996).
3. Tomás Irish, “From International to Inter-Allied: Transatlantic University Relations in the Era of the First World War, 1905–1920,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 13: 4 (2015): 311–325.
4. See Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus, *Deutsche Wissenschaft und internationale Zusammenarbeit 1914–1928: Ein Beitrag zum Studium kultureller Beziehungen in politischen Krisenzeiten*. [German Science and International Cooperation, 1914–1928. A contribution to the study of cultural relations in times of political crisis] (Geneva: Dumaret & Golay, 1966); for a contemporary example, see “An Ill-judged appeal,” *The Times* (Oct 18, 1920): 13; for the German perception, see Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts [German Foreign Ministry Archives, hereafter: PA] R 64980 and R 64981.
5. On the counter-boycott and German professors more generally, see Schroeder-Gudehus, *Deutsche Wissenschaft*, 181–211.
6. See Declaration of German Professors in *Mitteilungen des Verbandes der Deutschen Hochschulen* 5/1 (Jan. 1925): 50.
7. Daniel Kevles, “Into Hostile Political Camps’: the Reorganization of International Science in World War I,” *Isis* 62: 1 (1971): 47–60.
8. Paul Forman, “Scientific Internationalism and the Weimar Physicists: The Ideology and its Manipulation in Germany after World War I,” *Isis*, 64: 2 (1973): 150–180, 152.
9. For one such moderate voice, see Max Planck in Gabriele Metzler, “‘Welch ein deutscher Sieg!’ Die Nobelpreise von 1919 im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft,” *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 44:2 (1996): 173–200.
10. This neutral role has recently been more fully explored in the collection of essays in Lettevall, Somsen and Widmalm, ed., *Neutrality in Twentieth Century Europe, Intersections of Science, Culture, and Politics after the First World War* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
11. John Horne, “Kulturelle Demobilmachung 1919–1939. Ein sinnvoller historischer Begriff?,” in *Politische Kulturgeschichte der Zwischenkriegszeit 1918–1939*, ed. Wolfgang Hardtwig, 129–150. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2005), 142.

12. There is, of course, special literature on the seminal role of the Notgemeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft or research organizations such as the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft, but their focus tends to be almost exclusively on scientific rather than more broadly academic problems; see especially, Rudolf Vierhaus and Bernhard vom Brocke, ed. *Forschung im Spannungsfeld von Politik und Gesellschaft. Geschichte und Struktur der Kaiser-Wilhelm-/Max-Planck-Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1990); Hammerstein, Notker, *Die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft in der Weimarer Republik und im Dritten Reich. Wissenschaftspolitik in Republik und Diktatur* (Munich: Beck, 1999). The more immediate crisis of students has received very little attention, though contemporaries understood it as a most worrying aspect of academic distress. A recent exception: Georgina Brewis, *A Social History of Student Volunteering: Britain and Beyond 1880–1980* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 51–65.
13. See Schroeder-Gudehus, *Deutsche Wissenschaft*, 237. This is all the more astonishing given the pervasive interest in humanitarian aid and large-scale philanthropic initiatives by American foundations. One exception is Susan Gross Solomon, “‘The Power of Dichotomies’: The Rockefeller Foundation’s Division of Medical Education, Medical Literature and Russia, 1921–1925,” in *American Foundations in Europe. Grant-Giving Policies, Cultural Diplomacy and Trans-Atlantic Relations, 1920–1980*, ed. Giuliana Gemelli and Roy MacLeod, 31–51 (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2003).
14. Georg Schreiber, *Die Not der deutschen Wissenschaft und der geistigen Arbeiter. Geschehnisse und Gedanken zur Kulturpolitik des Reiches* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1923), 20.
15. Eduard Wildhagen, “Die Not der deutschen Wissenschaft,” *Internationale Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft. Kunst und Technik* 15: 1 (October 1920): 1–33, 31.
16. The contemporary literature on this topic is as large as historical studies are sparse. One of the exceptions: Michael Kater, “The Work Student: A Socio-Economic Phenomenon of Early Weimar Germany,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 10: 1 (1975): 71–94; by mid-1922 a majority of German students was believed to live below the poverty line; see PA R 64220 Wirtschaftshilfe der Deutschen Studentenschaft to German Foreign Ministry (hereafter: AA), Nr. 12390, Nov 6, 1922.
17. This acrimony over academic distress was aggravated by their own “status anxiety.” Many professors interpreted their loss of socio-economic status as a harbinger of their future marginalization in an increasingly materialist world. See Bernd Widdig, “Cultural Capital in Decline: Inflation and the Distress of Intellectuals,” in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects. Rethinking the*

- Political Cultural of Germany in the 1920s*, ed. Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Brandt and Kristin McGuire (New York: Berghahn, 2013), 302–317.
18. The decline of German universities was often likened to that of German culture at large. Schreiber, *Die Not*, 20; Haenisch, Konrad. *Die Not der geistigen Arbeiter. Ein Alarmruf*. (Leipzig: Julius Klinkhardt, 1920): 34.
  19. Schreiber, *Die Not*, 6; on the trope of the “Weltgeltung deutscher Wissenschaft,” see Paletschek, Sylvia, “Was heißt ‘Weltgeltung deutscher Wissenschaft?’ Modernisierungsleistungen und -defizite der Universitäten im Kaiserreich,” in *Gebrochene Wissenschaftskulturen. Universität und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Michael Grüttner et al., 29–54, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2010).
  20. As Prussian Minister of Culture, Konrad Haenisch summed up contemporary hopes: “We are not entirely lost just yet; we still have as our most precious, unlosable property still retained our German culture! Through her, through German intellect, through the German spirit, through German art and science will eventually come the recovery of our poor people...” Haenisch, *Die Not*, 38; also Forman, “Scientific Internationalism,” 161.
  21. On the early years of the Notgemeinschaft, see Marsch, Ulrich, *Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft. Gründung und frühe Geschichte 1920–1925* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1994).
  22. On these measures, see Mitgau, Hermann, “Die Nachkriegsjahre in der Studentenschafts-Arbeit, 1919–1924,” in *Ordnung als Ziel. Beiträe zur Zeitgeschichte*, ed. Robert Tillmanns, 21–49, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1954); Volkmann, Hellmut, *Die Deutsche Studentenschaft in ihrer Entwicklung seit 1919* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1925), 48–63.
  23. See Planck in Forman, “Scientific Internationalism,” 163; Haenisch, *Die Not*, 38; also Harnack in Christian Nottmeier, *Adolf von Harnack und die deutsche Politik, 1890–1930* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 479.
  24. The Hoshi Endowment, Rockefeller Foundation, Emergency Society in New York, the British Quakers, the European Student Relief and a range of local committees in formerly neutral countries.
  25. The campaign featured open letters by famous scholars, the circulation of publications, the organization of lecture tours abroad; see, for example, Adolf von Harnack, “The Crisis in German Science,” *Nation and the Athenaeum* (December 2, 1922); an American reprint in *The Living Age*, “The Crisis in Science” (Jan 13, 1923): 94–97.
  26. In November 1922 the Notgemeinschaft and the Wirtschaftshilfe issued a joint appeal to foreign audiences to be circulated by the Foreign Ministry, PA R 65519 Reichminister des Innern [Reich Minister of the Interior] to AA, Nr. III 4359 May 25, 1923, the Notgemeinschaft submitted 150 copies of its second annual report to the Foreign Office to be forwarded abroad.

27. On the distress of German science as an “argumentative strategy” in a domestic context, see John Jürgen, “‘Not deutscher Wissenschaft’? Hochschulwandel, Universitätsidee und akademischer Krisendiskurs in der Weimarer Republik,” in *Gebrochene Wissenschaftskulturen*, 108–140.
28. E.g. Schreiber, *Die Not*, 102.
29. Hermann Oncken, “The Historic Foundations of the German Universities,” in *The German Work-Student*, ed. Paul Rohrbach and Wirtschaftshilfe der deutschen Studentenschaft, 83–87 (New York: Atlantic Book and Art Corporation, 1924), 87.
30. Rudolf Eucken, “The Troubles of Intellectual Life in Germany,” in *The German Work Student*, 5–8, 7
31. See Rohrbach, ed., *The German Work-Student*.
32. Protokoll über die Hauptausschuss Sitzung der Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft am Mittwoch, den 21. März 1923 [Protocol of the Meeting of the Main Committee, Mar 21, 1923]. Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter: BArch), R73 Files of the Notgemeinschaft/86.
33. PA, R 65519 Notgemeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft to AA, Tgb-Nr. 1423, June 6, 1923.
34. This is clear from the correspondence between Schreiber and the propaganda division of the Foreign Ministry in 1923; see PA, R 65302; corresponding with the German Foreign Ministry, the Wirtschaftshilfe, too, emphasized the “foreign policy value” of its international publicity work, which could correct erroneous foreign impressions of Germany’s relative prosperity, see PA R 64220 AA to Missions Abroad, Dec 30, 1922.
35. Both illustrated by Harnack, “The Crisis in German Science.”
36. On German self-pity, see, for example, Report by Frederick W. J. Heuser, Dec 28, 1922; Columbia University, Special Collections, Carnegie Endowment Papers, Box 102/5.
37. On the details of the relief work, see Rouse, *Rebuilding Europe*.
38. On Hoshi, see PA R 64985 Hoshi-Stiftung; *Germanistic Society Report for the year 1928*, 4; see also American Philosophical Society (APS), Franz Boas Papers, Box 24 Emergency Society in Aid of European Science and Art, and Boas’ correspondence with Heuser, Harnack and Schmidt-Ott.
39. The Student Friendship Fund, for example, always collected for “Central and Eastern Europe” and usually mentioned Austria, not Germany. As late as January 1923 Professor Stephen Duggan advised Franz Boas to call his organization “‘Emergency Society for Austrian and German Science and Art’ rather than the reverse and to [...] differentiate between the two countries so that any persona still ill-disposed towards Germany could send his money to Austria.” APS, Boas Papers, Box 23, Stephen P. Duggan, Duggan to Boas, Jan 11, 1923.

40. BArch, R 149/233; Circular No. 61 “Hilfswerk der Europäischen Studentenhilfe des Christlichen Studentenweltbundes,” [Aid by the European Student Relief of the World Student Christian Movement] Mar 10, 1923.
41. The Rockefeller Foundation had begun to supply German libraries with international medical literature in 1921, but from Dec. 1922 it granted 194 “residential fellowships” to German medical students. Their number rose to 262 in 1924. The Foundation also provided 100,000 dollars to German medical science, which it administered through the Notgemeinschaft; see Rockefeller Foundation, *Annual Report*, 1924, 368.
42. See “The Starving Students of Germany,” *Manchester Guardian* (Feb 1, 1923): 4; “German Universities. Appeal for British Assistance,” *The Observer* (Feb 11, 1923):16; The German Distress Relief Fund, included Bertrand Russell, Arthur Ponsonby and J.A. Hobson; see D.G. Williamson, “Great Britain and the Ruhr Crisis, 1923–1924,” *British Journal of International Studies*, 3: 1 (Apr 1977): 70–91, 79.
43. Eleanora Iredale, “Student Relief,” *Manchester Guardian* (Jun 12, 1923) reprinted in Rorbach, ed., *The German Work-Student*, 66–67.
44. Reinhold Schairer, *Die Studenten im Internationalen Kulturleben. Beiträge zur Frage des Studiums in einem Fremden Lande* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1927), 102.
45. See New York Public Library, Raymond T. Rich Papers, Box I Rich to Parents, Aug 21, 1922; also John R. Mott, “Foreword,” in Ruth Rouse, *Rebuilding Europe*, ix; “World League of Students is Working for a New Renaissance,” *New York Times* (Nov 12, 1922); on this aspect, see also Brewis, *A Social History*, 58–60.
46. Williamson, “Great Britain,” 78.
47. See, for example, the account of Blacker, C.P. (Carlos Paton) *Central European Universities after the War*. Gloucester: Crypt House Press, 1922 and BArch, R149/153 “Miss Iredale’s report of her Tour of Central Europe on behalf of the Committee” (Sep 24, 1923).
48. In 1924, for example, the entire library budget of the Notgemeinschaft amounted to one million Reichsmarks with an additional 350,000 Reichsmarks coming from American benefactors. The Wirtschaftshilfe could not have maintained full services throughout 1923 had it not been for the substantial (half a million dollar) international aid it received. Most significantly, its international contacts allowed the Wirtschaftshilfe to do what was otherwise illegal: to “park” the earnings of German students in foreign currency with the European Student Relief and thus to save them from further devaluation. BArch, R149/183 “The Story of European Student Relief of the World’s Student Christian Federation in financial terms September 1, 1920–July 1, 1924.”

49. PA, R 65510 German Consulate, Geneva to AA, Oct 9, 1922; on the competitive victimhood between France and Germany, especially vis-à-vis American funds and sympathy, see Elisabeth Piller, "German Child Distress, American Humanitarian Aid and Revisionist Politics, 1918–1924," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51: 3 (July 2016): 453–486.
50. To Adolf von Harnack's (Dec 1922) appeal for German science, the *Times* responded: "the war taught us that the Germans are without honour, the peace is teaching us that they are without honesty, and Professor von Harnack has shown us that they are without self-respect." "German Chemical Industry," *The Times* (Dec 18, 1922): 8.
51. Cited in Don Heinrich Tolzmann, "The Survival of an Ethnic Community. The Cincinnati Germans 1918 through 1932," (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1983), 147.
52. See the response to an appeal for aid by retired Harvard theologian Francis Peabody, Haverford College, Coll. 1130 Rufus M Jones Papers; Box 18 Peabody to Jones, Mar 19, 1920.
53. This was the case, for example, with Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University and director of the Division of Intercourse and Education of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. A determined critic of Germany during the war, it was the intellectual distress of 1923/24 that first elicited his renewed interest and engagement with German academia; see PA R 65520 German Embassy Washington to AA, K. Nr. 256, Mar 12, 1924 "Professor Ludwig Stein" and Columbia University Archives, Butler Papers, Box 394/Stein, Ludwig.
54. On Rockefeller aid, Gross Solomon, "The Power of Dichotomies."
55. One particular example is the "America-Work-Student Service," a work student exchange between the United States and Germany that evolved out of relief contacts; the author is currently preparing an article on this topic.
56. Rouse, *Rebuilding Europe*, 4.
57. Cited in *Der Auslandsdeutsche*, 5: 20 (Oct 1922): 599.
58. "Austrian and German Students' Fund," *Manchester Guardian* (May 24, 1923): 6.
59. Barch R 8088/649 Dritter Bericht der Notgemeinschaft [Third Report of the Notgemeinschaft], 1922, 57–60.
60. At a meeting between professors and the Foreign Ministry in February 1925, they agreed to pursue closer relations with the United States, in part because American scholars had been particularly generous and accommodating, see PA, R 64981 Protokoll der Sitzung im Auswärtigen Amt vom 6. Februar 1925 betr. Verhalten der deutschen Gelehrtenwelt gegenüber dem Auslande [Protocol of a meeting at the Foreign Ministry

- on Feb 6, 1925 regarding the relation of German scholars towards international science].
61. As late as 1929, the director of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft characterized its newly opened international guest house as a way to “express the gratitude for the hospitality, which German scholars have enjoyed abroad during the period of inflation.” See vom Brocke, “Die Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft in der Weimarer Republik,” in *Forschung im Spannungsfeld*, 321.
  62. On the episode of the American committee: PA, Botschaft Washington, 1534 Ludwig Stein.
  63. BArch R73/86 Protokoll über die Hauptausschusssitzung der Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft am Mittwoch, den 21. März 1923 [Protocol of the Meeting of the Main Committee, Mar 21, 1923]; other academic associations even concluded that “there can be no doubt, that, the questionnaire is solely or certainly at least primarily a document of espionage.” BArch R8088/146 Prof. O. Franke to Prof. Schenck, Sep 28, 1923.
  64. Schroeder-Gudehus, *Deutsche Wissenschaft*, 175; once the entire episode became a source of international discomfort, German professors blamed the German omission on the alleged bias of the ICIC: see the developments in PA, R 65511 and Schroeder-Gudehus, *Deutsche Wissenschaft*, 175–177.
  65. American Friends Service Committee Archives, Philadelphia. Box: General files 1923 Foreign Service (Country: Germany to Country: Russia); Folder: Foreign Service Country—Germany Letters from (Jan–June) 1923; Herein: Unpublished Paper “the Response of the German people to the Quaker feeding in 1920,” (after 1940), 4.
  66. This was more generally the case with regard to tokens of international appreciation. The very brilliance of German science, represented by Nobel Prizes and the like, seemed at least for a time to substitute the actual re-internationalization of German science; see Metzler, “Welch ein deutscher Sieg!,” 185.
  67. PA, R 65522 Protokoll über die am Freitag, den 12.III.1926 in München im Senatsaal der Universität 11 Uhr vormittags abgehaltene Mitgliederversammlung der Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft [Protocol of Meeting of the Members of the Notgemeinschaft, Mar 12, 1926].
  68. See PA, R 64220 Wirtschaftshilfe der Deutschen Studentenschaft to AA, 12716/24, Aug 3, 1924.
  69. The Wirtschaftshilfe’s “America-Work-Student Service” is one example; see footnote 55.

# American Scientists and the Process of Reconciliation in the International Scientific Community, 1917–1925

*Marie-Eve Chagnon*

The beginning of the First World War committed the great majority of the scientists in belligerent countries to a conflict that shook the foundation of the international scientific community. At the end of the war, the representatives of the national scientific academies of the Allied Powers created a new international organization from which the Central Powers would be excluded. This chapter looks at the rifts and tensions between the members of this nascent organization, the International Research Council (IRC). These cracks reveal a particularly instructive aspect of the dynamics of international scientific relations: the origins and effects of cultural demobilization.<sup>1</sup> The concept of cultural demobilization allows us to question this passage from war to peace. It can be described by the way the belligerent countries re-defined the collective representation of the enemy during this period.

This chapter will show that scientists played a major role in the mobilization for the war and that the process of reconciliation of the scientific

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community appeared at different moments, a process that was not linear and did not necessarily follow the classic chronology tracing the normalization of their relations to the aftermath of the Locarno agreements of 1925.<sup>2</sup> The normalization of relations appeared earlier through unofficial channels and depended on a variety of motives, mainly motivated by their disciplines; scientists needed to collaborate for the advancement of their research and the progress of science. This chapter will also show that cultural demobilization did not arise in the same manner for all the belligerents. For example, German scientists were not criticized with the same fervour in American scientific circles, even in the wake of the publication of the manifesto commonly known as the “Appeal to the Civilized World.” The signs of detente that appeared in countries formerly at war with Germany in the early twenties show that the inter-Allied countries were not unified behind the boycott of the German scientists. The criticism of the decision taken by the IRC against German science emerged not only in neutral countries; it was also an Allied phenomenon that appeared in Great Britain, and especially in the United States.

To illustrate this process, this chapter will focus on an aspect of the IRC’s history that captures the complexity of this resumption of pre-war international scientific cooperation: the National Academy of Science (NAS) in Washington, the National Research Council (NRC), and their interaction with European scientists of the IRC over this question between 1917 and 1925.<sup>3</sup> After providing an overview of the war, the situation in 1919 and a short description of the functioning of the IRC through the First World War, the chapter will examine the discussions between American scientists and the executive members of the IRC. It will then concentrate on their informal attempts—i.e. those outside the official activities of the Council and its affiliated bodies—between 1919 and 1924 to resume scientific relations with German scientists. If European scientists wished to resume relations with their former colleagues in Germany, they needed to act discreetly in order not to risk being ostracized at home. The chapter will argue that the American scientists enjoyed more latitude in their attempts to resume their relations.

Without underestimating the role of the scientific community as a whole, this chapter will concentrate its analysis on the scientists who, by their international involvement, scientific work, mobilization during the war and well-established position in the inter-war period, were the most representative of their national academies and research centres. It will analyse the demobilization process through the principal American

members of the NAS involved in organizing international scientific collaboration at this time—scientists like the astrophysicist George Ellery Hale, the physicist Robert Millikan and the chemist William Noyes.

### AMERICAN SCIENTISTS AND TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

At the end of the nineteenth century, American scientists had initiated a process of scientific collaboration with their European counterparts. This partnership brought many German scientists to America through an exchange programme for professors that began in 1905.<sup>4</sup> The German chemist Wilhelm Ostwald was one of the professors who participated in the first year of the program in 1905–1906.<sup>5</sup> These transatlantic exchanges were part of wider international collaborations that had developed since the 1880s with a multiplication of contacts and a growth of international congresses. International activities became of national importance, responding to the need to collaborate in research, and contributing not only to the progress of science, but also to scientific and national prestige.<sup>6</sup> This rapprochement with the Americans was part of a cultural diplomacy aiming to reinforce German influence in a country whose science was in deep expansion.<sup>7</sup> German scientists like the physicist Max Planck and the physiologist Paul Ehrlich were invited during that period by American universities to deliver conferences, while many young Americans were travelling to Germany to work in German laboratories and to learn from German science.<sup>8</sup>

The exchange program did not survive the arrival of the European war in 1914. While most American scientists disapproved of the decisions of the German government, some, like the astrophysicist George Ellery Hale, did not immediately associate their German colleagues with the actions of the German military and believed that political considerations should not inform the progress of international science.<sup>9</sup> The entry of the United States into the conflict in 1917 as an associated power in support of the Allies changed this fragile entente as American scientists aligned themselves with the politics of their government. It also strengthened American partnerships with their colleagues in Allied countries with whom they developed a close collaboration.<sup>10</sup> American scientists mobilized en masse to defend the nation, and their expertise was particularly called upon by the National Research Council (NRC). The NRC led the majority of the scientific operation and was responsible for the organization of scientific research for the war throughout

the conflict. The NRC put in place a number of research laboratories across the country that collaborated closely with Allied research institutions.<sup>11</sup> When the United States joined the alliance in 1917, American scientists wished to maintain the standards of exchange and collaboration in the international scientific community that had existed before the war, but also to serve their nation and contribute to its national defence. The Americans practiced more than simple scientific cooperation with their European allies; they actively participated in the re-organization of the international scientific community.

Starting in 1917, Allied scientists and their associated American colleagues met twice to discuss the future of the international scientific organization established before the war. From the first meeting, the mathematician Émile Picard, perpetual secretary of the Académie des sciences in Paris, as the representative of the majority of the members of this academy, called for the dissolution of the old international scientific organizations and a boycott of German scientists from the new ones.<sup>12</sup> The French scientists chose a policy of *tabula rasa* towards the pre-war associations and saw in the proposed post-war exclusion of Germany from successor institutions a way to liberate themselves from German scientific influence, a science whose richness they had envied in the past.<sup>13</sup> The mobilization of scientists for morale and to promote the ideal of just cause in war, motivated by the disinterested research of the truth in science, was a feature in each belligerent nation. In Germany, the physicist and president of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft, Max Planck, praised this “ideal of pure science without politics” and criticized the IRC for not serving the disinterested cause of science.<sup>14</sup> In the case of the exclusion of German science and scientists from the international organizations, the publication of the “Appeal to the Civilized World” served as a pretext to the boycott after the war. In October 1914, 93 German professors, artists and writers published a manifesto to respond to the accusation against Germany after the invasion of Belgium. Many of the leading chemists and physicians of the beginning of the century like Fritz Haber, Emil Fisher, Wilhelm Ostwald, Richard Willstätter and Max Planck lent their names to the manifesto. By signing the document, these scientists did not wish to disrupt the international community; they were desperately trying to convince them of their good faith. While the manifesto did not trigger the mobilization of intellect in France and Great Britain, it galvanized the most rational minds and undermined scientific internationalism. In intellectual circles in Europe, reference was

no longer made to the two Germanys, one associated with the culture of Kant, Leibniz and Beethoven, the other associated with Prussian militarism.<sup>15</sup> For French scientists especially there was only one Germany, where a barbaric culture was associated with a brutal militarism. In the United States, while many scientists condemned the manifesto, they still believed in the world's debt to German science and original research.<sup>16</sup> By 1917, many scientists, like George Ellery Hale, tended to be more in favour of French scientists and their vision of the future in international relations without the German scientists.<sup>17</sup>

### THE WAR AND THE RUPTURE OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

At the opening of the Brussels Conference on 18 July 1919, the International Association of Academies that had been born in 1899 was officially dissolved and replaced by two associations. One was the International Research Council (IRC). The participation of scientific societies from the Central Powers in the IRC would be prohibited for the next twelve years. Amending these statutes required the approval of three-quarters of the membership. The new institution had for its first president, from 1919 to 1931, the French mathematician Emile Picard; from 1919 to 1928, its secretary general was the English physicist Arthur Schuster, secretary of the Royal Society.<sup>18</sup> The executive committee counted among its members George Ellery Hale, secretary of the National Academy of Science in Washington and president of the National Research Council. The IRC was an umbrella organization consisting of eight international unions, each representing a scientific discipline. The union of each discipline also adopted the IRC restrictions on the participation of scientists from the Central Powers.<sup>19</sup> Whereas their exclusion was uncontroversial, the question of inviting the members from neutral states remained contested. Here the positions of English and American scientists were nuanced.<sup>20</sup> Despite their dissent regarding the boycott of German scientists, they accepted the Franco-Belgian position that wished to maintain the exclusion of the Germans, rather than risk antagonizing them. However, they were not going to acquiesce to efforts to restrict the admission of neutral states.<sup>21</sup> Hale, unable to go to Brussels, pleaded with Schuster to accept inviting the neutral states to be part of the IRC's constituent assembly. In the event of a contrary decision, the IRC would lose the support of American scientists, not to mention their government. Science always searches for its legitimacy outside

national boundaries, and without the neutral states the American scientists believed that they would not have the necessary legitimacy to continue, especially if the scientists in the neutral states decided to associate with the Germans and revived the old organization.

In the end the neutral states were invited to join the Council and many responded positively, even though Picard was afraid they would destabilize the foundations of this young scientific enterprise. In fact, Picard was critical of the neutrals who maintained post-war contact with the Germans.<sup>22</sup> The results of those negotiations reflect the will of French scientists to obtain a favourable position inside this emerging international organization in order to come out of the war as leaders in their field. In this contest they were not alone; the British and American scientists were also preparing the ground in that sense by maintaining the scientific collaboration cultivated during the war between the Allied countries.

In Germany, scientists were surprised by the boycott and profoundly disappointed to see neutral nations joining the IRC. They were witnessing the end of any chance of reviving the International Association of Academies.<sup>23</sup> So it was not surprising that the majority joined a counter-boycott that was instituted in reaction to the IRC boycott.<sup>24</sup> However, a small minority worked in concert with the neutrals for a reprise of international scientific relations as they had known them since before the war. The neutrals tried to re-build bridges between these different groups, and considered their adhesion to the IRC as the best means towards an eventual re-integration of Germany.

### THE AMERICAN RESPONSE TO THE BOYCOTT

At the beginning of the 1920s the vast majority of the international congresses excluded German scientists from participating. The German language, which had dominated certain disciplines before the war, was no longer part of the international scientific communication system.<sup>25</sup> In the United States, the members of the NAS were divided on the issue of exclusion. Despite this divergence of opinions, the leading representatives of the American scientific community, like Hale and his colleague Robert Millikan, were not ready to push the French and the Belgians to reconsider their decision. The American scientists were also benefiting from the German boycott; they enjoyed a new visibility and a leading

role in the re-organization of international science. Millikan declared in front of the foreign division of the NRC in 1921:

We should make no effort at all to hold international scientific meetings to which Germans are invited until you get a condition of mind where the thing will come about naturally. If the Americans prefer to invite the Germans they may do so at the expense of the French, Belgians, Serbians and probably all those whose countries were invaded and a good many in England and other countries.<sup>26</sup>

Many of Millikan's colleagues were becoming impatient, especially part of the American division of the International Union of Mathematicians. They threatened to boycott the International Union's Congress in Strasbourg in 1920 if the Germans were to be excluded.<sup>27</sup> The sentiment was shared by the English mathematician G.H. Hardy, who confided his uneasiness about the boycott to numerous American and neutral colleagues in 1919. "I regard the organization of an International Union on political lines as a disastrous blunder; and I will have no connection with it of any kind."<sup>28</sup> The British biologist William Bateson had been a delegate at the founding meeting of the IRC. He too was opposed to the exclusion of Germany. To him, the resumption of relations with German colleagues was impossible as long as Germany was excluded from joining the IRC.<sup>29</sup>

In preparation for the IRC congress in Brussels in July 1922, Hale shared with Schuster the pressing demand coming from many American and neutral scientists to integrate the Germans: "I do not think we can yield to this, especially as it would undoubtedly cause the French and the Belgians, and probably others, to withdraw."<sup>30</sup> Some scientists were ready to go ahead and recommend the admission of the Germans, but Millikan told Schuster that the majority "do not wish to recommend this until France and Belgium are ready to consider it."<sup>31</sup> At the second general assembly of the IRC in Brussels in July 1922, Hale could not stop a Swedish delegate, backed by a Swiss delegate, from proposing the repeal of the exclusion articles. However, the proposition was so harshly received that they renounced submitting it to a vote. The French members, led by Emile Picard, represented the hard line and blocked the way for an eventual return to the pre-war status quo.

In an effort to re-unite the parties, Picard tried to eliminate all doubts regarding the legitimacy of the young international organization. To

him, the IRC needed more experience before making major amendments to their clause. He suggested to his colleagues to be careful not to put the organization in jeopardy.<sup>32</sup> Despite the scepticism of some members, Picard was confident in the bonds that tied the members of the Council together. He was convinced of the legitimacy of the German exclusion. Back from Brussels, he mentioned again the premature Swedish proposal to modify the statutes of the IRC in his report to the Académie des sciences in Paris.<sup>33</sup> In private, he was very critical of any effort to reconcile European science, particularly the activities surrounding the International Committee of Intellectual Co-operation that was established by the League of Nations in 1922.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, in the United States scientists were increasingly exasperated by this question. While Hale and Millikan did not want to encourage the official renewal of international relations with Germany inside the IRC, they tried to get around the boycott as much as their physical distance from Europe allowed. In fact, Millikan believed it was necessary to act unofficially on this issue. In 1923, he declared in front of the Foreign Relations Division of the NRC:

My individual judgment is that the resumption of international relations is not going to be brought about at first by any official actions. It must be brought about rather by the actual resumption of relations by individuals and by unofficial groups that are well-minded. [...] For the sake of getting the thing started in that way I feel perfectly certain that is the only way in which those who are interested in progress of that sort can do effective work.<sup>35</sup>

He also confided his view to William Noyes in January 1923. “Like yourselves, I do not think the situation is at all hopeless. It is my opinion that at the present much more can be accomplished by unofficial than by official action, for the establishment of friendly personal relations must obviously precede formal action.”<sup>36</sup>

### THE UNOFFICIAL CHANNELS

As early as 1920, under the formal channels of the IRC, there were efforts made by American scientists to develop personal contacts with their German colleagues.<sup>37</sup> American researchers travelled to Germany to buy scientific publications and instruments for chemical and physics

laboratories or simply to pave the way for future relations.<sup>38</sup> At the California Institute of Technology, Millikan was happy to receive, from a week to a whole semester, some of the most renowned scientists in Germany. Between 1922 and 1923, the German physicist Arnold Sommerfeld was an invited professor at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and was the first Karl Schurz Professor after the war.<sup>39</sup> At the beginning of the war, Sommerfeld did not actively participate in military activities, but after 1917 his professional routine was mixed more and more with military research. He contributed as an expert member of the physicist committee of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft with Fritz Haber and Walther Nernst to theoretical investigations in the field of radiotelegraphy.<sup>40</sup> While Sommerfeld at first hesitated to accept the offer, he understood the importance for Germany to enhance its name abroad. The disastrous economic situation in Germany and its impact on science in the post-war period also played a major role in his decision in favour of this trip to America.<sup>41</sup> Sommerfeld was warmly welcomed and after his return to Germany stayed in contact with scientists he had met there.<sup>42</sup> In August 1922, the American magazine *Science* reported that “the appointment of Professor Sommerfeld marks the resumption of the professorship after the interruption of the war years.”<sup>43</sup> During his sojourn, he spent two weeks in Pasadena with Millikan. Albert Einstein would also be repeatedly invited by Millikan to come and visit. Likewise, other German colleagues like the physicists Max Born, James Frank and Werner Heisenberg were often invited to spend some time in different American research institutes in the 1920s.<sup>44</sup>

Some ignored the Hale and Millikan strategy of avoiding antagonizing their French and Belgian colleagues, and openly participated at events where German scientists were present. This was the case for eminent chemist William Noyes, who was invited to and attended a chemistry conference in Utrecht in 1922.<sup>45</sup> The French refused the invitation, not without first recognizing “the utility, when the circumstances will allow it, to resume to normal the scientific international relations.”<sup>46</sup> This letter was signed by some of the most renowned French chemists in France, such as Marie Curie, Paul Langevin and Charles Moureu. Noyes felt that scientists should lead the way to reconciliation and peace.<sup>47</sup>

William Noyes was a professor of chemistry and director of the chemical laboratory of the University of Illinois. While he believed that the conduct of Germany in her submarine campaign was ample reason for the entry of his country into the war, and while his son served in France

during the conflict, Noyes was against the German boycott.<sup>48</sup> He was critical of policies adopted by the IRC, especially the one preventing the Chemical Union from collaborating with a country which was not a member of the IRC. He wrote to Millikan in 1923 that “it seems to me very unfortunate that a Union of such importance as the Chemical Union should have its hands tied in this manner by another body which has scarcely been as important in its functions as the Chemical Union thus far.”<sup>49</sup> For Millikan, the political situation was too tense to accomplish anything at this stage. He noted that:

I think that our scientific relations can easily be re-established as soon as the reparations question has been finally settled and financial and political order brought out of the present chaos. [...] I do not see that you nor I can do anything except to keep in an objective frame of mind ourselves and to cultivate individual friendly relations with our French and German colleagues.<sup>50</sup>

Millikan was right in pointing to the tense nature of the relations between France and Germany, especially since the occupation of the Ruhr by French troops in January 1923. Noyes, with the will to reconcile the two protagonists, tried to clarify the position of the two countries. To his German colleague, the chemist Carl Duisberg, he wrote in August 1923, “I fully agree with you that there can be no permanent solution of Germany’s problems until the reparations are placed at a reasonable sum which it is possible to pay. But the present situation is urgent and, for the moment, at least, Germany must find help within herself. Ultimately, France will be compelled to do the same.”<sup>51</sup> Noyes believed that it was essential to establish trust between the two opponents in spite of the diplomatic tensions linked to the issue of reparations. The impact of the war years and the dissent were too important to allow them to find any compromises at this point. However, Noyes believed that the refusal to collaborate could not be done without detriment to science. As he wrote in 1925:

My own opinion is that erroneous views with regard to politics, religion, or science are strongly favoured by isolation or separation and that truth is best found by free discussion and intimate acquaintance between men holding divergent views. Surely scientific men, of all men in the world, should be willing to show tolerance for men who differ from them.<sup>52</sup>

## THE DELICATE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION

The issue concerning the admission of Germans to the IRC was increasingly contested among its members. From 1924, many unions showed interest in the participation of German professors. At the international Congress of Mathematics in Toronto in August 1924, the members adopted a resolution to officially invite the Germans to join the Mathematical Union and they informed the executive committee of the IRC in Brussels of their decision.<sup>53</sup> G.H. Hardy publicly announced that this Congress of Mathematics was the last one that would boycott Germany.<sup>54</sup> To him, maintaining the boycott any longer would mean the end of the IRC and its unions.

Earlier, in May 1924, during the fiftieth anniversary of the Société mathématique de France, Picard had shown some openness towards international cooperation in the science of mathematics. “Scientists from all around the world participate in the work of mathematics in a noble appeal. May they take from here the impression that French science wishes ardently to be able to continue her work calmly and peacefully.”<sup>55</sup> By this, Picard did not necessarily mean a resumption of relations with the former German enemy, but he was aware of the lassitude of many of his colleagues regarding the resolutions of the IRC on the boycott, especially the United States.

William Noyes addressed this issue in a letter to his colleague, the professor Edward Cohen: “If France does not accept the results reached by the committee of experts, it will lead to her complete isolation, I think, and Frenchmen will think twice before they go further on that road.”<sup>56</sup> By then, even Hale thought it best to leave greater autonomy to the unions both in scientific procedure and in memberships in order to save the IRC. In 1924, he wrote to Arthur Schuster:

We cannot afford to let Picard’s iron hand wreck the whole organization, which we have set up with such difficulty [...] Here the chief point seems to be the question of the admission of Germany and my own opinion on this point, which Millikan also holds much more strongly than I do, is that we should arrange for the admission of Germany as early as possible.<sup>57</sup>

In April 1925, the American Section of the International Astronomical Union reported that two committees of the Union (dealing with variable stars, asteroids and comets) were “seriously handicapped in their work by

the fact that they are unable to have full co-operation with the German astronomers.”<sup>58</sup> They criticized the fact that they did not have access to work that was still going on at the Rechen Institute in Berlin because of their inability to cooperate with the Germans in an international way. Many American astronomers were in favour of the Germans joining the Union and already cooperated to some extent with German scientists in a personal way. They believed that, “unless the restriction to memberships is removed at Brussels in July, it will be very doubtful if several of these Unions can be maintained.”<sup>59</sup>

In 1926, the American society of chemists invited Wilhelm Ostwald and Walther Nernst to join. Nernst thought that they needed to respond positively after the goodwill shown by the American scientists in the post-war period towards Germany.<sup>60</sup> Ostwald and Nernst only accepted the offer of the American society after having submitted the offer to the executive of the Academy of Science.<sup>61</sup> Their colleague, the chemist Fritz Haber, had also quickly become active in the international scientific scene after the war, in spite of a reputation relatively tainted by his work on chemical warfare. He worked in collaboration with the Rockefeller Foundation as part of the activities of the German Research Foundation, or *Notgemeinschaft für die Deutsche Wissenschaft*. In 1924, he also travelled to the United States after being invited to the centenary of the Benjamin Franklin Institute in Philadelphia as a delegate of the Academy of Sciences in Berlin and of the University of Berlin.<sup>62</sup>

With the end of the Ruhr occupation and the approval of the Dawes Plan, the boycott of Germany became difficult for the IRC to maintain. It was eventually lifted in 1926 following a growing number of protests, particularly since Germany was going to join the League of Nations after the Locarno Treaties, allowing a normalization of relations with Germany.<sup>63</sup> Despite this improving climate, German academies made considerable demands which the IRC's executive did not want to satisfy, so the negotiations were drawn out into the 1930s. The normalization of international scientific relations through the IRC remained an extremely delicate issue for German universities and academia until the late 1930s.

## CONCLUSION

In sum, this chapter shows all the complexity of cultural demobilization and the importance of correcting the often-held view of it being a linear narrative. The end of the conflict and its settlement did not mark the end

of the tensions and rivalries between the scientists from the belligerent countries; far more for many scientists who mobilized their expertise during the conflict, the war continued. In the words of the French chemist Charles Moureu, the war in the scientific world was “even bitterer than it has ever been.”<sup>64</sup> Resuming the pre-war routine might have been simple for scientists from states that came to the conflict late or for neutral countries that never experienced the invasion of their territory, but for scientists of the belligerent nations demobilization turned out to be much more difficult. The American example is particularly telling of the complexity of their scientific demobilization. The motives that determined the decisions of the American scientists were multiple and governed mostly by factors linked to national issues more than internationalist impulse.

American scientists played an increasing role on the international scientific scene from 1917 with the entry of the United States into the war, while their transatlantic exchange had already started and progressed in the pre-war years. Adding to its scientific collaboration with its allies, the NRC, represented in particular by Hale, committed itself with conviction to the re-organization of international science. For Americans, the motives for mobilization were self-evident and are clearly indicated in Millikan’s memoir. He committed himself to the war: “to assist as well as I could in what I regarded as America’s responsibility in the war, and to help as well as I could in laying the foundations for the best possible development of American science.”<sup>65</sup> After the country’s entry into war, the majority of American scientists mobilized themselves and worked not only for the defence of their country in the war, but for the future and the advancement of American science. They wished to establish the prestige of their science at home and in that sense favoured internationalism after the war. With the foundation of the IRC and the boycott, which completed the international isolation of German science, the Americans thrived in the absence of German competitors and their own increased visibility. With the inducement of their inter-Allied colleagues, they did not hesitate to boycott German science and political motives prevailed over scientific ones.

However, the members of neutral countries and scientists at home, like Noyes, were soon weary of this conflict and called the boycott into question.<sup>66</sup> They believed that international science and national science could not progress without collaboration. Hale and Millikan saw their view being contested, but they at first stuck to their decision in order not to provoke the French and Belgians and put at risk the newly founded IRC. The Americans did not have the same experience of the

war as the French. Because of their distance, they did not live through it in the same way. Hale was well aware of this and respected the French and Belgian sensibility towards Germany. However, he could hardly control the exhaustion of some of his colleagues. By 1924, the dissent came from many American unions who were critical of the boycott and the IRC exclusion statute. By that point, Hale and Millikan also believed that the boycott was not necessary anymore. Counter to their French colleagues who lacked resources and were dependent on their allies, American scientists did not wish to fight after 1919, and with great research centres like the one led by Millikan at the California Institute of Technology they had the means to quickly do that.

The distant nature of European affairs made it easier for American scientists to work around the boycott (without publicly challenging it). Others tried to renew, unofficially, their relations with colleagues of the old belligerent countries years before the normalization of the relation in the context of the Locarno agreements of 1925. The rapid expansion of American science brought a considerable desire to benefit from the finest scientists of the world, many of whom were Germans. Research centres benefited from the visits of foreign scientists. Millikan believed that the IRC had a useful role to play, but thought that Hale's major contribution was not in his efforts in the international organization of science, but in his involvement in its national development.<sup>67</sup> While the boycott was efficient in the first years of its existence, it created scissions that the American representative of the IRC found difficult to control. Some scientists in America, like Noyes, showed that they were ready to put politics aside, normalize relations and re-establish scientific exchanges. Those attempts seemed to be motivated by several factors. They were linked to the development of national science, career advancement, the need to collaborate with Germans in a variety of disciplines, especially in pure and applied science, and purely individual calculations and initiatives. This deviation of the American scientists from the boycott showed that scientific research could not be confined by political impositions. Despite political "isolationism," American science was hugely reinforced in the aftermath of the First World War.

## NOTES

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  32. Session of the International Research Council, Brussels, July 1922, Académie des Sciences, Paris, 248.
  33. Comité secret du 3 juillet 1922, Académie des sciences, Paris, Comité secret 1919–1928, 203.
  34. Picard to Lacroix, 17 April 1922, Académie des sciences, Paris, dossier biographique Émile Picard, correspondance administrative avec Alfred Lacroix. In April 1922 he writes to his colleague Alfred Lacroix: “Did Lecointre write to you that Italy was represented in Strasburg by a Swiss friend of the *boche* Hecker? [...] I hope that our meetings in Strasburg, Rome and Brussels won’t follow a chaotic path like in Genoa.”
  35. Mr. Millikan as chairman, 25 April 1923, The George Ellery Hale Papers, National Research Council, Division of Foreign Relations.
  36. The Robert Millikan Papers, Caltech, Pasadena, L.A., Box 11, 6.
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39. At the University of Wisconsin at Madison, a guest professorship for German scientists had been established in 1922 by German-Americans honouring the 1848 revolutionary and later American statesman Karl Schurz (1829–1906). Michael Eckert, *Arnold Sommerfeld, Science, Life and Turbulent Times, 1868–1951* (New York: Springer, 2013), 261.
40. Eckert, *Arnold Sommerfeld*, 219.
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42. Millikan to Sommerfeld, 1931; Millikan to Sommerfeld 1948, The Robert Millikan Papers, Caltech, Pasadena, L.A., Box 42, 17; Box 17, 8. "The two winters which you spent with us here at the California Institute will long be memorable in this institution for your contribution to the development of this as a research centre in physics of some significance. I wish you could be here again and meet in our discussions as you did in those memorable years. Your picture still hangs on the wall in that discussion room in the Bridge laboratory, in which we all got so much out of your leadership. [...] Some of my finest moments were those spent with you and your good wife in Munich in 1931."
43. Eckert, *Arnold Sommerfeld*, 262.
44. Einstein to Millikan, 3 November 1924, The Robert Millikan Papers, Caltech, Pasadena, L.A., Box 25.9.
45. Noyes to Hale 1922, The George Ellery Hale Papers, Caltech, Pasadena, L.A., Box 52. Noyes was part of an American delegation of four scientists.
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48. Noyes to Haber, 30 April 1923, The William A. Noyes Papers, 1870–1942, Series number 15/5/21, University of Illinois Archives, Urbana, Box 5.
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50. Millikan to Noyes, 31 May 1923, *Ibid.*
51. Noyes to Duisberg, London, 28 August 1923, The William A. Noyes Papers, 1870–1942, Series number 15/5/21, University of Illinois Archives, Urbana, Box 5, 4–5. "If Germany will put herself into a condition such that she can pay a reasonable amount and can convince the world that she is not preparing for another war, France can not continue her present implacable attitude in the face of the public opinion of the world."

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53. Schröder-Gudehus, *Les scientifiques et la paix*, 151.
54. G. H. Hardy, *Scientific Worker*, (26 December 1924). His exchange is also related in Karl Kerkhof, “Die deutsche Wissenschaft und das Ausland,” *Denkschrift der Reichzentrale für naturwissenschaftliche Berichterstattung* (29 January 1925), 7.
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56. Noyes to Cohen, 3 February 1924, The William A. Noyes Papers, 1870–1942, Series number 15/5/21, University of Illinois Archives, Urbana, Box 5.
57. Hale to Schuster, 2 May 1924, The George Ellery Hale Papers, Caltech, Pasadena, L.A., Box 47, 23–25, 6–7.
58. Report by E.W. Brown, 26 April 1925, The George Ellery Hale Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, Appendix H.
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# Negotiated Truth: The Franco–German Historians Agreement of 1951 and the Long History of Cultural Demobilization After the First World War

*Mona L. Siegel*

From the earliest days of the First World War, the French and German governments alike began marshalling history for political ends. Propagandists invoked historical events to justify military actions, and academic historians legitimated their claims.<sup>1</sup> With the signing of the Versailles Treaty in 1919, and the mutual enmity the Treaty provoked, history was mobilized anew, either to defend or decry the terms of the post-war peace. Throughout the inter-war decades, the “War Guilt Question” (*Kriegsschuldfrage*) commanded widespread attention, as first the Foreign Ministry of the Weimar Republic and then the Quai d’Orsay in Paris sought to shape public opinion regarding responsibility for the war’s outbreak and, subsequently, the legitimacy of the peace imposed at Versailles.<sup>2</sup> Historical debates in turn fed emotional and divergent national memories of war in France and Germany, not least because they

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percolated into school curricula and threatened to influence the historical and moral understanding of the war for generations born after the armistice.

Granted, even in the inter-war decades, antagonistic historical claims did not go unchallenged. In France the majority of the nation's school-teachers eventually rebelled against "bellicose" scholastic history narratives of the Great War.<sup>3</sup> In demanding new history textbooks that emphasized the horrors of war for all concerned, French teachers participated in a broader process of what historian John Horne and others have termed "cultural demobilization": the dismantling of wartime mentalities to facilitate reconciliation and peace.<sup>4</sup> Socialist teachers in the early Weimar Republic also pushed for textbook reform, although in smaller numbers and to limited effect. More surprising given the timing, in late 1935, a small group of French and German historians and teachers met in Paris with the goal of seeking consensus on the most controversial topics dividing French and German history textbooks, most prominently, the causes of the Great War. Despite their best efforts, the two delegations found little common ground, and the project was abandoned as the Nazi government re-mobilized Germany culturally and militarily for another conflict. Historical "truth" remained a cultural weapon, from one world war to the next.

After 1945, however, the cultural and political environment in Europe was entirely different. The Second World War, with its distinct legacies of collaboration and atrocity, left the populations of France and Germany morally depleted and eager to put the past behind them. Mounting Cold War pressures also militated in favour of fortifying Western European unity as a counter to perceived communist ambitions. Such political imperatives helped point Western Europe down a path of cooperation, but alone they were not enough to erase decades of enmity between French and German people. For reconciliation to succeed, lessons of the past needed to stop re-igniting old quarrels; history needed to cease to be a battlefield. In 1951, a group of prominent French and German historians met this challenge, hammering out a cultural compromise that became known as the Franco-German Historians Agreement, a document intended to neutralize once and for all the toxic debate over the causes of the First World War, beginning in the schools.

In recent years, scholars have shown considerable interest in this Franco-German historians' initiative, although their assessments vary widely. Historians of international relations point to the 1951 Agreement

as an early and successful example of “cultural internationalism,” or the work of cultural elites to foster cross-national understanding as a keystone of global security.<sup>5</sup> Diplomatic historians, in contrast, have tended to condemn the “comfortable consensus” at the heart of the 1951 Agreement and to criticize its two principal authors—Sorbonne historian Pierre Renouvin and his counterpart at Freiburg University, Gerhard Ritter—whose collaboration they view as being at best disingenuous and at worst a form of self-censorship that has stymied subsequent research on the causes of the First World War.<sup>6</sup> This essay revisits the 1951 Historians Agreement, focusing on Renouvin and Ritter’s four-month-long exchange of letters through which they hammered out the final resolutions. It critiques diplomatic historians’ assessments of the Agreement and argues for recognizing the 1951 Agreement for what it was intended to be: a carefully worded negotiated truth designed *both* to accommodate scholarly disagreement over the war’s causes *and* to decommission historical truth as a moral and cultural weapon. As such, the Franco-German Historians Agreement of 1951 did not so much settle as *set aside* the poisonous *Kriegsschuldfrage* of earlier decades, thus serving as a critical and perhaps final step in the long process of cultural demobilization following the First World War.

### THE FRANCO-GERMAN HISTORIANS AGREEMENT OF 1951

Both relatively unknown secondary schoolteachers and high-ranking government officials helped to make the revision of history textbooks a major cultural preoccupation for French and Germans at the end of the Second World War. The initial impetus came from the grass roots, among left-leaning teachers eager to re-build not only schools but also frayed Franco-German cultural relations after the ruinous years of war. Representatives of the major teachers’ unions in France and Germany began meeting periodically from 1948 onward and issued early and strident calls for bilateral textbook reform that would facilitate democratization and reconciliation in Europe.<sup>7</sup> Similar left-leaning political inclinations and a common “humanist” conception of history facilitated the teachers’ collaboration. Emile Hombourger, secretary of the international relations committee of the French teachers’ union, explained in 1952 that he trusted his German counterparts to share the strong “love of democracy and peace” needed to resolve the most contested points of Franco-German textbook reform.<sup>8</sup> In this effort, however, teachers

needed government sanction as well as the collaboration of academic historians whose knowledge and credentials could lend the project legitimacy in the public eye.

Teachers found a willing sponsor in Raymond Schmittlein, the director of public education in the French sector of occupied Germany. The French government charged Schmittlein with overseeing the de-Nazification of German culture, particularly through education. Schmittlein channelled scarce resources into textbook reform, insisting: "It is uniquely by updating the study of history that German nationalism can be surmounted."<sup>9</sup> Within two years the French military government issued ten million schoolbooks, a far higher number per student than in any other occupation zone.<sup>10</sup> Attentive to Cold War politics and the related pressures for European integration, Schmittlein established a new Institute of European History in Mainz, which was explicitly designed "to pave the way for Franco-German rapprochement" and "promote the study of the History of Europe and its unity."<sup>11</sup> With similar goals in mind, and upon teachers' urging, Schmittlein also agreed to convene a commission of "the most qualified specialists of contemporary history" to seek interpretive consensus on controversial historical issues regarding the two nations' shared past.<sup>12</sup> The goal for the commission was to draft a document that could shape history textbook narratives on both sides of the Rhine.

It was not the most recent past—Hitler's rise to power, the events of the Second World War or the German occupation of France—that commanded historians' attention in the late 1940s, for understandable reasons. In contrast to 1918, after 1945 no controversy surrounded the question of war responsibility or the nature of Germany's defeat. Reports from liberated concentration camps and the shocking testimony at Nuremberg forced the German people to face the crimes against humanity committed in their name, even if not all accepted the principle of widespread culpability.<sup>13</sup> Revelations of mass atrocity precluded the possibility of the German people or state taking the moral high ground, as they had sought to do after World War I. The French, in turn, struggled to account for their own government's collaboration with the Nazis, embodied in the Vichy government and its henchmen, the *milice*.<sup>14</sup> After 1945, neither country had much reason to dwell on the recent past. Thus, for the historians who would convene in the early 1950s, as had been the case two decades earlier, the historical issues identified as

the biggest obstacle to Franco-German reconciliation overwhelmingly related to the causes of the First World War.

The resulting historians meeting—scheduled to take place in Paris in May 1951—proved tougher to organize than anticipated. Despite the expressed desire to recruit only “the most qualified specialists,” so much of the German academy was compromised by its Nazi associations that few willing and qualified candidates remained. In total, eight Germans participated in the May meeting, including Georg Eckert, a history teacher who had begun to make a name for himself as a prominent education reformer in the post-World War II period.<sup>15</sup> The French delegation carried considerably more academic weight, due in no small part to the participation of historian Pierre Renouvin. In the 1950s, Renouvin was already a lofty figure in French academia. His status as a disabled veteran of the First World War, his scholarship and seminars at the Sorbonne on the war’s origins, and his selection as chief editor of French diplomatic documents up to 1914 had all solidified Renouvin’s reputation as France’s “official voice” on the question of the origins of the First World War.<sup>16</sup> Renouvin had also participated in the original 1935 Franco-German historians’ meeting, making him the only scholar to return to the table in 1951. There he was joined by his student and future successor at the Sorbonne, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, as well as by Jacques Droz, France’s emerging authority on contemporary German history.<sup>17</sup>

The May meetings in Paris proved fruitful but also disconcerting to West German officials troubled by the disproportionate authority and experience of the French delegation. Participants started with the disputed resolutions that had been published at the end of the 1935 meeting, dropping, amending and adding to them as they saw fit. After three days of discussion, the delegates had made enough progress that they agreed to reconvene in Mainz later that year to continue their work. In the meantime, the local German minister of culture contacted Georg Eckert, urging him to recruit a more prominent German historian to participate in the upcoming discussion. It did not escape Eckert’s attention that the minister in question was on particularly friendly terms with Freiburg historian Gerhard Ritter.<sup>18</sup>

This unofficial nomination of Gerhard Ritter to the German delegation could not have pleased French authorities. The French had only grudgingly authorized Ritter’s reinstatement to the faculty at Freiburg in 1947. After serving in the infantry on the Eastern Front during World

War I, Ritter launched his academic career publishing varied books that reflected his vision of an ideal German state rooted in authoritarian government and traditional social values. During World War II, Ritter had openly disparaged French military weakness, which he attributed to France's democratic revolutionary tradition.<sup>19</sup> Despite his conservatism, however, Ritter had little patience for the Nazis' lawlessness and their open disdain for aristocratic tradition. After *Kristallnacht* in 1938, Ritter began participating in clandestine discussion groups critical of Hitler at the University of Freiburg. In 1944, Nazi security officers arrested him after the 20 July plot on Hitler's life, a plot Ritter had condoned but not joined. As a result, Ritter spent several months from 1944 to 1945 in a Berlin prison. Ritter's anti-Nazi credentials were unassailable.<sup>20</sup> Thus, although the French remained convinced that Ritter was lacking in true "European or democratic spirit," they also could not justify excluding him from the discussions.<sup>21</sup> Ritter, for his part, had avoided involvement in earlier efforts at education reform, but in 1951, undoubtedly seeing Germany's own national interests at stake, he agreed to Eckert's request.<sup>22</sup>

The second post-war historians' meeting in October 1951 was thus dominated by the authoritative personalities of Ritter and Renouvin, two scholars with little in common, politically or intellectually. Renouvin's republicanism stood in stark contrast to Ritter's conservative elitism, and whereas Renouvin found value in the new social and economic history coming into vogue, Ritter had little patience for such analysis. He characterized Renouvin's approach to the past as "naive blabbering" and condemned it as "banal and wrong."<sup>23</sup> Politically and academically at odds, Ritter and Renouvin were also veterans of rival armies of 1914–1918. Could these two men overcome their own personal memories of two world wars and their nations' opposing mythologies of the recent past to arrive at a mutually acceptable account of Franco-German history?<sup>24</sup>

Meeting face to face in Mainz in October 1951, Renouvin and Ritter argued passionately for divergent historical positions on the long- and short-term causes of the First World War. French delegate Jacques Droz recalled that on the question of the nature of pre-1914 German society the views of Ritter and Renouvin diverged so seriously that the participants doubted common ground could be found.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, a member of the German delegation later reflected: "No participant in the German-French historians' conference [...] will be able to forget the dramatic

discussion through day and night, during which Pierre Renouvin and Gerhard Ritter as protagonists gave life to the first ‘German-French Agreement on Contested Questions of European History’.<sup>26</sup> In fact, even after four days of non-stop debate, Ritter and Renouvin failed to bridge many differences. Instead, the two men agreed to carry on their discussion through correspondence, leaving a rich trail of documentation that can help us to understand how and why the two men reached consensus.

To broach the controversial and emotional questions at the heart of the 1951 Agreement, Ritter and Renouvin first had to learn to trust one another’s motives. The initial letters they exchanged after returning home demonstrate just how successfully the Mainz meeting accomplished this task. “Please permit me”, wrote Ritter to Renouvin, “to express again how much I enjoyed having been allowed to meet you in person and to collaborate with you in such a fruitful way.”<sup>27</sup> The fact that both men were veterans of the conflict in question undoubtedly provided an important starting point. Neither could claim a moral high ground based on war service or experience, and in coming together face to face, the two former enemies were able to meet as equals.

More important than their war service was the respect they developed for one another’s scholarly integrity. Both men referred repeatedly to the scientific spirit of their discussion, spelling out in private what their delegations emphasized in public: the idea that Franco-German textbook reform was rooted in “a desire to come as close as possible to the historical truth.”<sup>28</sup> As Ritter wrote to Renouvin in late November 1951: “I note with much satisfaction—and not without surprise—just how great the commonalities of historical research are when it strives for truly objective insights without national prejudices.”<sup>29</sup> Adherence to a similar vision of history as a rigorous science provided the two men with a common vocabulary and shared boundaries for argumentation. As conscientious historians, Renouvin and Ritter defended their positions by referring back to their sources. When these were thin, both men proved willing to give ground. Renouvin, for example, initially insisted that the joint agreement state that Bismarck had set his sight on conquering French Alsace by the late 1860s. When Ritter challenged him on this point, Renouvin admitted his primary source evidence was limited to the account of one French politician who reported Bismarck’s ambitions as a matter of hearsay. “The value of this witness,” Renouvin admitted, “is clearly debatable. As such, I *renounce* the formula I suggested, because

(even though I remain convinced at heart that Bismarck dreamt of taking Alsace), I admit the proof is not sufficient.”<sup>30</sup> Ritter proved the more stubborn negotiator in the discussions, but he too was attentive to the limits of historical documentation. In the same exchange, Ritter accepted Renouvin’s proposition that French Emperor Napoleon III “feared” war more than he “wished for” it, even though, in accepting such a formulation, Ritter departed from his own teachers’ interpretations of historical evidence.<sup>31</sup> In referring back to the documentary record, the two men built confidence in each other as well as in the scientific validity of their endeavour.

Although the standards of evidence to which Ritter and Renouvin adhered helped the two historians bridge a number of differences, their correspondence makes clear that these standards were far from sufficient. Historical interpretation, both men were forced to admit, was often a subjective exercise. “What practical conclusions can we draw?” Renouvin asked Ritter as they sought to bring the matter of Bismarck to a close. “On this question [...] the documents are not decisive, I admit. We each draw conclusions based on *indications* that we interpret in different ways [...]. The only possible solution it seems to me is to develop a ‘compromise’ formula.”<sup>32</sup> Point by point, the two men negotiated, testing out a word or a phrase, reciprocating one act of cultural generosity with another. “I thank you for having inserted mention [of the Prussian press campaign to take Alsace] in your new text,” Renouvin wrote to Ritter. “Your formula ‘promoted rather than discouraged’ nonetheless seems rather ambiguous to me [...]. However, I accept this wording if it seems absolutely necessary to you.”<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, the concessions they made rested on semantics as much as on evidence, on finding compromise language capable of sustaining many possible historical truths. Though they hesitated to admit it publicly, their exchange—and the agreement born from it—was at heart an act of cultural diplomacy.

As they struggled to come to a compromise, Ritter and Renouvin reminded themselves that the historical narratives in question were scholastic rather than academic and thus served a very different public function than scholarly work. By nature simplified for their audience, textbook narratives could not be expected to split the fine hairs of historical interpretation that framed conflicting academic studies. The logic and justification of history teaching in school curricula, moreover, was tied to the future as much to the past; the stories, images and interpretations of scholastic history were destined for children and adolescents;

they constituted nothing less than the building blocks of national memory. The particular truths history textbooks endorsed were partial and selective, and they promised to shape national consciousness on both sides of the Rhine for generations to come.

In the political context of the 1950s, both men understood that purely nationalist history would ill suit the needs of future generations of French and Germans. For Ritter, this was a particularly tricky proposition given Germany's recent past, and he strove to defend a historical narrative that both celebrated German unity and anchored it in a broader story of European development. "Please consider," he implored Renouvin at one point, "what it would mean if German textbooks today did not celebrate the war of 1870/71 as a great German triumph anymore, but instead suggested that it should be viewed as a tragic, painful event with respect to the European community."<sup>34</sup> Yet Ritter also recognized that the French and Germans needed to overcome past grievances before they could successfully collaborate in the future. "There is a good chance I will have to endure political attacks after the publication of the document," Ritter wrote, "but I shall not be deterred by that—especially not at this moment when the European peoples are apparently taking such a big step forward."<sup>35</sup> "Certainly we have not eliminated all the divergences in French and German historiography," Renouvin responded to Ritter at the end of their exchange, "but we have cleared the air on some important points."<sup>36</sup>

When it came to clearing the air, no question was more difficult than that of the immediate causes of the First World War. Fully one-quarter of the entire Agreement dealt just with the events of July 1914.<sup>37</sup> A close reading of these resolutions reiterates the fact that the compromise reached by Ritter, Renouvin and their counterparts did not resolve—indeed, did not seek to resolve—many scholarly differences. Instead, the Agreement offered language that could accommodate interpretive differences even as it sought to deescalate the rhetoric that had long framed such disputes in absolute and moral terms. On the question of war responsibility, the Agreement was more designed to dispel myths of French vengeance and German imperialism than to provide a definitive explanation of the war's outbreak, stating respectively: "In 1914, French political policy was not determined by the intention to initiate a war of revenge against Germany", and "German political policy was not geared toward provoking a European war."<sup>38</sup> Most controversially, the Agreement sought to separate the historical question of causes

from the moral question of guilt by emphasizing the shared responsibility of all parties, stating: “The documents do not permit us to attribute to any government or any people a premeditated desire for war in 1914.”<sup>39</sup> This single resolution, perhaps more than any other in the entire Agreement, sought to release the people of France and Germany from the vicious cycle of retribution that had fed the calamitous conflicts of the twentieth century; it is also the claim that continues to draw the harshest criticism from diplomatic historians today.

Did Renouvin or Ritter compromise his own scholarly principles to endorse such a claim? Renouvin, in particular, had built his scholarly reputation in the 1920s on opposing revisionist theses absolving Germany and Austria-Hungary of responsibility for the outbreak of war.<sup>40</sup> Why did he sign now? The answer can be found in the subsequent resolution in the Agreement, which qualified the assertion of shared responsibility by noting that German military leaders believed that their chances for a successful war were higher in 1914 than they were likely to be for years to come, and that the German people—pushed by those in military circle—were more predisposed to see war as inevitable than the French.<sup>41</sup> To Renouvin, the Agreement endorsed the thesis, derived in part from his own scholarship, that in Germany, military leaders and the general public were more willing than in any other belligerent state to countenance war in 1914. For Ritter’s part, such a compromise was acceptable because it neither implicated the German imperial government in war lust nor insisted on the moral language of responsibility.<sup>42</sup> On the question of the war’s origins, in other words, Ritter and Renouvin successfully devised compromise language and negotiated truths that could accommodate their differences of scholarly opinion, even as they sought to downplay historical controversy in children’s textbooks and demote the issue of war guilt from the polemical place it had once held in French and German public memory.

### RITTER, RENOUVIN AND THE FISCHER CONTROVERSY

In February 1952, Renouvin brought the discussion to a close, writing to Ritter: “Here we thus are at the end of this long exchange of viewpoints [...]. Let us now hope that our effort will be well received by the teaching corps and that our recommendations have real influence!”<sup>43</sup> By most measures, the Franco-German Historians Agreement of 1951 did have a real and positive effect on history education and on bilateral cultural

relations. Circulated among educators and discussed in the broader media, the Agreement was well received, and a decade later French and German teachers—who continued to meet annually after the Agreement was signed—pronounced themselves convinced that textbooks published after 1951 had taken the recommendations fully into consideration. “A future historian,” one participant in these meetings concluded, “may rightfully call this the heroic phase of textbook work.”<sup>44</sup>

“Heroic” is not the term, however, that has flowed from the pens of diplomatic historians, particularly Annika Mombauer and John Keiger, who have recently argued that in sealing the 1951 Agreement, both Ritter and Renouvin sought to close off debate on the war’s origins, thus stifling further scholarship and impeding future historical inquiry into the causes of the First World War. Mombauer and Keiger both point to Ritter and Renouvin’s response to the 1961 release of West German historian Fritz Fischer’s controversial book *Griff nach der Weltmacht* as evidence of their supposed intransigence to re-opening discussion of the war’s origins.

Fischer’s argument—that in 1914, Germany deliberately unleashed an expansionist war on Europe—set off “a storm of rage from the German historical profession almost without exception.”<sup>45</sup> At the front of the line of outraged German historians was Gerhard Ritter, whose initial response to the publication of Fischer’s book has rightfully drawn criticism from Annika Mombauer, among others. Ritter saw the publication of Fischer’s book as nothing less than a national emergency, claiming Fischer’s views would re-ignite “a renewal of the guilt accusation of Versailles” and would set Germany apart as a pariah nation all over again.<sup>46</sup> Ritter wasted no time dashing off a letter to German Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder, warning him of the “radical nature” of Fischer’s thesis. Schröder took Ritter’s concerns seriously enough that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs withheld funds promised to Fischer to conduct a book tour in the United States.<sup>47</sup> In October 1962, Ritter also sent a plaintive letter to his old friend Pierre Renouvin, imploring him to use his influence to prevent the translation of Fischer’s book into French, arguing that the work posed a real danger to Franco-German friendship.<sup>48</sup>

Ritter’s actions seeking to repress Fischer’s work were inexcusable, particularly for a scholar who, in other arenas, staunchly defended the “continuing honest labors of historians in search of historical truth.”<sup>49</sup> But did Ritter, as Mombauer suggests, seek to repress Fischer’s work because it threatened to “make a mockery” of the thesis of shared

responsibility that he and Renouvin had endorsed in 1951?<sup>50</sup> I would not go that far. Ritter's defensive response to Fischer's book had as much, if not more, to do with the historical context of *Griff nach der Weltmacht's* publication than any threat the book posed to Ritter's scholarly reputation. In a year when the Eichmann Trial was capturing global headlines and the first bricks were being laid on the Berlin Wall, the normalization of relations between West Germany and its European neighbours already seemed on rocky ground.<sup>51</sup> Ritter clearly feared the collateral damage of a thesis that, in his eyes, could only threaten West Germany's fragile place in the nascent European community. Despite the defensiveness of his initial response, moreover, Ritter ultimately did not continue to wage a censorship campaign against Fischer's book. Instead he threw himself into a scholarly dispute about the evidence on which Fischer based his claims.

As for Pierre Renouvin, John Keiger argues that the Sorbonne historian was, in his own way, no less determined to stifle further research into the causes of the First World War. Keiger asks why it was that Fischer's book, which evoked such vitriol among historians in West Germany, generated no such scandal or excitement among French historians. To him, the French academy's collective yawn at Fischer's book is all the more curious given that the book was published just prior to the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of World War I and the attendant opening of French diplomatic papers to the public domain. One might reasonably have expected Fischer's book to have sent a new generation of French historians scrambling back to the archives to prove or disprove German guilt. It did not. Keiger attributes French scholars' relative historical disinterest in further investigating the origins of the First World War, in no small part, to the "towering figure of Pierre Renouvin."<sup>52</sup>

To Keiger, Renouvin's response to Fritz Fischer's book in 1961 helps explain this indifference. Keiger points, in particular, to what he calls Renouvin's "stinging review" of Fischer's book, and he asks: "One wonders whether Renouvin's severe position on Fischer's work may in some part also be due to his working relationship with Gerhard Ritter and to Fischer's overturning of Ritter and Renouvin's 'official' work and hard-won compromise on the Franco-German committee 10 years earlier."<sup>53</sup> In other words, in supposedly panning Fischer's book, Renouvin, no less than Ritter, sought to protect both his own reputation and the Agreement he helped to forge a decade earlier. Such an assessment is puzzling, however, given the review in question, which appeared in

the *Revue historique* in 1962. In it, Renouvin described Fischer's book as "precise, solid, constantly backed up by documentary evidence [...] remarkable for the scope of the study, the quality of the research, and its independence of spirit."<sup>54</sup> Though the review took issue with various details in Fischer's book, on the whole it was quite positive. Renouvin also politely rebuffed Ritter's request to intervene with French publishers, writing to him that the book was original and fully merited translation.<sup>55</sup> The two historians disagreed about the merits of Fischer's work, but their dispute remained scholarly, not personal, and the two maintained their intellectual friendship in the years that followed.<sup>56</sup>

The response of Jacques Droz—one of Renouvin's colleagues at the table in 1951—to Fischer's work further suggests that the framers of the Franco-German Historians Agreement never believed their compromise would settle all differences of interpretation or stifle further debate on the causes of the First World War. Writing in 1972, Droz tried to explain to a French public why Fischer's research—both *Griff nach der Weltmacht* and later work—evoked so much controversy in Germany. Droz explained that, until Fischer, much of the German historical establishment had lived in a state of "wilful ignorance" about the origins of the First World War. Interestingly, Droz pointed to Gerhard Ritter's assertion that German society was more receptive to war than that of France or England as a rare case of perceptiveness among German historians on the question of the war's causes. His comment hints at just how much emphasis Droz placed on the qualifying language couching the 1951 thesis of collective responsibility. Despite such limited acknowledgement of German openness to war, Droz claimed, it had only been with the publication of Fischer's book that German historians, particularly those of a younger generation "hungry for the truth," underwent a true "crisis of conscience" regarding their country's role in unleashing the debacle.<sup>57</sup>

The Fischer Controversy of 1961, far from revealing the entrenchment of prominent historians clinging to a hard-won but untenable compromise thesis on the causes of World War I, instead demonstrates the flexibility of the negotiated truth at the heart of the Franco-German Historians Agreement that they authored. Gerhard Ritter and Pierre Renouvin continued to maintain and defend divergent positions on the war's causes even after signing their names to the Agreement, but they also did not seek to re-ignite a cultural war. The Historians' Agreement was an integral part of a peace process that facilitated, perhaps even

completed, the cultural demobilization of two nations whose bitter claims on the past could easily have fed an endless cycle of war and retribution. “Forging a continuing peace process,” Irish novelist Colum McCann reminds us, “means understanding that there are always going to be several viable truths.”<sup>58</sup> Gerhard Ritter and Pierre Renouvin did not settle the controversial historical disputes surrounding the causes of World War I, but they did in an important sense seek to end the *Kriegsschuldfrage* of the inter-war years by separating the historical question of the war’s outbreak from the moral question of guilt. As such, they forged a negotiated truth with which they both could live, and with which future generations of French and Germans could live as well.

## NOTES

1. Martha Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect*, especially chapter three, and Fritz Stern, “Historians and the Great War: Private Experience and Public Expectation,” *The Yale Review*, 82: 1 (1994): 34–54. This essay builds upon the coauthored article: Mona Siegel and Kirsten Harjes, “Disarming Hatred: History Education, National Memories, and Franco-German Reconciliation from World War I to the Cold War,” *History of Education Quarterly*, 52: 3 (August 2012): 370–402. I wish to thank Dr. Harjes and the *History of Education Quarterly* for permission to reprint parts of the original article. All German translations from German are by Dr. Harjes. Translations from French are my own.
2. Holger H. Herwig, “Clio Deceived: Patriotic Self-Censorship in Germany after the Great War,” *International Security* 12: 2, (Fall 1987): 5–44; and Andrew Barros and Frédéric Guelton, “Les Imprévus de l’histoire Instrumentalisée: Le Livre jaune de 1914 et les Documents diplomatiques français sur les origines de la Grande Guerre, 1914–1918,” *Revue d’histoire diplomatique* 120: 1 (2006): 3–22.
3. See Mona L. Siegel, *The Moral Disarmament of France: Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1914–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
4. John Horne, “Introduction,” 14/18, *Aujourd’hui-Today-Heute* 5, special issue “Démobilisations culturelles après la Grande Guerre” (2002): 45–53.
5. Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997), 91–105; See also F. Roy Willis, *France, Germany and the New Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 241, and John E. Farqueson and Stephen C. Holt, *Europe from Below: An Assessment of Franco-German Popular Contacts* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1975), 65–66.

6. Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus* (London, 2002), 123–125, and Fritz Fischer, *Juli 1914: Wir sind nicht hineingeschlittert. Das Staatsgeheimnis um die Riezler-Tagebücher. Eine Streitschrift* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1983), 49. The most recent critical assessments of Ritter and Renouvin's contributions to the Agreement were presented at a 2011 conference marking the fiftieth anniversary of Fritz Fischer's controversial book on the war's origins, *Griff nach der Weltmacht*. On Ritter, see Annika Mombauer, "The Fischer Controversy," *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, 2 (April 2013): 290–314; and on Renouvin, see J. F.V. Keiger, "The Fischer Controversy, the War Origins Debate and France: A Non-History," *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, 2 (April 2013): 363–375.
7. Edouard Bruley, "Introduction," *Rencontres franco-allemandes d'historiens, 1950–1953*, ed. Edouard Bruley (Baden-Baden: Haut-Commissariat en Allemagne. Affaires culturelles, 1954), 1–6; Emile Hombourger, "Zwischenbericht der Schulbuchkommission der Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale über die deutsch-französische Zusammenarbeit," in *Deutschland-Frankreich-Europa*, ed. Georg Eckert and Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf (Baden-Baden: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1953), 93; and Corinne Defrance, *La Politique culturelle de la France sur la rive gauche du Rhin, 1945–1955* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires, 1994), 247–253. Professor Fritz Kern of Bonn and Professor Coornaert of the College de France were early academic participants. Both were primarily medievalists.
8. Emile Hombourger, "Zwischenbericht der Schulbuchkommission der Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale über die deutsch-französische Zusammenarbeit," in *Deutschland-Frankreich-Europa*, 74.
9. Cited in Defrance, *La Politique culturelle*, 265, fn. 10.
10. *Ibid.*, 114.
11. *Ibid.*, 248.
12. Bruley, "Introduction," *Rencontres franco-allemandes*, 1–6.
13. See Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945–1995*, trans. Brandon Hunziker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
14. Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*. trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).
15. Eckert participated in twenty seven bilateral meetings between July 1949 and May 1951 alone. Eckert founded an International Textbook Institute in Braunschweig, which was re-named in his honour in 1974 and was eventually fully subsidized by the government. It has become an important centre for international textbook work. See "Kleine Mitteilungen," *Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht*, I (Braunschweig:

- Albert Limbach Verlag, 1951), 207–210, and Rainer Riemenschneider, “Transnationale Konfliktbearbeitung,” *Das Willy-Brandt-Bild in Deutschland und Polen*, ed. Carsten Tessmer (Berlin: Bundeskanzler-Willy-Brandt-Stiftung, 2000), 120–131.
16. René Girault, “Pierre Renouvin, la BDIC et l’historiographie française des relations internationales,” *Matériaux pour l’histoire de notre temps* 49: 49–50 (1998): 7–9.
  17. The German delegation was composed of G. Bonwetsch, G. Eckert, K. Erdmann, Kaier, H. Krausnick, K. Mielcke, O.H. Müller and H. Röhr. The French delegation was composed of Ed. Bruley, P. Renouvin, G. Zeller, J. Droz, J.-B. Duroselle, J. Sigmann, A. Alba, R. Mangin, J.-M. Hoop, A. Aubert and H.-M. Bonnet. “Les Entretiens franco-allemands, mai-octobre 1951,” in *Deutschland-Frankreich-Europa*, 15.
  18. The letter to Eckert was addressed from the *Badische Kulturministerium* and is discussed in Christoph Cornelißen, *Gerhard Ritter. Geschichtswissenschaft und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2001), 472.
  19. Cornelißen, *Gerhard Ritter*, 309–311.
  20. See the introduction to *Gerhard Ritter: Ein politischer Historiker in seinen Briefen*, ed. Karl Schwabe and Rolf Reichardt (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1984), 9.
  21. Defrance, *La Politique culturelle*, 97, fn 8.
  22. Cornelißen, *Gerhard Ritter*, 394. Dr. Hans Herzfeld, Dr. Martin Göhring and Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf also joined the German delegation in Mainz. From the French delegation, Professors Zeller, Duroselle, Alba and Mangin did not participate in the Mainz meeting. M. l’Inspecteur general Fouret joined the delegation. See “Les Entretiens franco-allemands, mai-octobre 1951,” in *Deutschland-Frankreich-Europa*, 15.
  23. Cited in Cornelißen, *Gerhard Ritter*, 475.
  24. During the Second World War, Pierre Renouvin risked his own life hiding Jews, while his brother Jacques joined the Resistance and died during deportation. See Antoinette Becker and Jacques Becker, “Pierre Renouvin,” *Les Historiens* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2003), 109.
  25. Cited in Farquharson and Holt, *Europe from Below*, 65.
  26. Hans Herzfeld, “Gerhard Ritter zum Gedächtnis,” in *Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichts- und Geographieunterricht*, vol. XI (Braunschweig: Albert Limbach Verlag, 1967), 3.
  27. Ritter to Renouvin, 15 October 1951, Bundesarchiv Koblenz D-56075 (henceforth BArch), N 1166/293, 338, 339.
  28. Ritter to Renouvin, 22 February 1952, BArch, N 1166/293, 338, 339.
  29. Ritter to Renouvin, 23 November 1951, BArch, N 1166/293, 338, 339.
  30. Renouvin to Ritter, 20 November 1951, BArch N 1166/293, 338, 339.

31. Ritter to Renouvin, date illegible [October or November 1951], BArch N 1166/293, 338, 339.
32. Renouvin to Ritter, 20 November 1951, BArch N 1166/293, 338, 339.
33. Ibid.
34. Ritter to Renouvin, date illegible [October or November 1951], BArch N 1166/293, 338, 339.
35. Ritter to Renouvin, 23 November 1951, BArch N 1166/293, 338, 339.
36. Renouvin to Ritter, 4 May 1952, BArch N 1166/293, 338, 339.
37. Ten of the forty resolutions dealt with events of 1914, with another eight focusing on World War I and the Treaty of Versailles.
38. "Les Entretiens franco-allemands, mai-octobre 1951," in *Deutschland-Frankreich-Europa*, 24–27.
39. Ibid.
40. Pierre Renouvin, *The Immediate Origins of the War (28th June–4th August 1914)*, trans. Theodore Caraswell Hume (New York: Howard Fertig, 1969).
41. Les Entretiens franco-allemands, mai-octobre 1951," in *Deutschland-Frankreich-Europa*, 24.
42. For Ritter's analysis of the outbreak of World War I, see Gerhard Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, trans. Heinz Norden, vol. II, *The European Powers and the Wilhelminian Empire, 1890–1914* (Coral Gables, FL.: University of Miami Press, 1970). On Ritter, see William Harvey Maehl, "Gerhard Ritter", in *Historians of Modern Europe*, ed. Hans A. Schmitt (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 151–205.
43. Renouvin to Ritter, 27 February 1952, BArch N 1166/293, 338, 339.
44. Otto Ernst Schüddekopf, *History Teaching and History Textbook Revision* (Strasbourg: Conseil de l'Europe, 1967), 25–26.
45. Jonathan Steinberg, "Old Knowledge and New Research: A Summary of the Conference on the Fischer Controversy 50 Years On", *Journal of Contemporary History* 48:2 (2013): 242.
46. G. Ritter, "Eine neue Kriegsschuldthese? Zu Fritz Fischers Buch 'Griff nach der Weltmacht'," *Historische Zeitschrift* 194: 3 (June 1952): 646–668, 667, cited in Mombauer, "The Fischer Controversy," 294.
47. Mombauer, "The Fischer Controversy," 297–298.
48. Patrick Finney, "J.F.V. Keiger, "The Fischer Controversy, the War Origins Debate and France; A Non-History," *Journal of Contemporary History* 48: 2 (2013): 353–375; *H-Diplo Article Reviews*, 442 (8 January 2014), accessed 10 February 2016, <http://h-diplo.org/reviews/PDF/AR442.pdf>. Finney draws on the analysis of Fischer's private correspondence presented in Stephan Petzold's doctoral dissertation, "Fritz Fischer and the Rise of Critical Historiography in West Germany, 1945–1965: A

- Study in the Social Production of Historical Knowledge,” PhD thesis, Aberystwyth University, 2010.
49. Gerhard Ritter, “Scientific History, Contemporary History, and Political Science,” *History and Theory* 1: 3 (1961): 267.
  50. Mombauer, “The Fischer Controversy,” 297.
  51. Jonathan Steinberg argues that these and other events of 1961 help explain the scholarly and media attention given to Fischer’s book, which ultimately few people actually read. See Steinberg, “Old Knowledge and New Research,” 241–250.
  52. Keiger, “The Fischer Controversy,” 368.
  53. *Ibid.*, 366.
  54. Pierre Renouvin, “Les Buts de guerre de l’Allemagne d’après les travaux de Fritz Fischer,” *Revue historique* 228: 2 (1962): 382.
  55. Finney, H-Diplo Article Review of Keiger, “The Fischer Controversy,” accessed 25 July 2016, <http://h-diplo.org/reviews/PDF/AR442.pdf>.
  56. Gerhard Ritter acknowledged his appreciation for Pierre Renouvin several years after the Fischer Controversy, in his preface to *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*. Vol. III. “The Tragedy of Statesmanship—Bethman Hollweg as War Chancellor (1914–1917),” translated by Heinz Norden (Coral Gables, FL.: University of Miami Press, 1972), 4. The preface was originally published in 1964.
  57. Jacques Droz, “Les Relations franco-allemandes dans l’oeuvre des historiens allemands et français de 1918 à nos jours,” *Revue d’Allemagne* (1972): 600–602.
  58. Colum McCann, “Ireland’s Troubled Peace,” *New York Times*, 15 May 2014, A27, accessed 10 February 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/16/opinion/irelands-troubled-peace.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/16/opinion/irelands-troubled-peace.html?_r=0).

PART IV

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Conclusion

# The World of Science, the Great War and Beyond: Revisiting Max Weber's *Wissenschaft als Beruf*

Roy MacLeod

A century ago, the world was at war. We may never have been truly at peace ever since. The academic world we know today is a product of that anxious century, and is framed by its moral, social, intellectual and geopolitical consequences. As Peter Scott has tellingly recalled, the Great War was a major stimulus to new ideas, quickening political and economic change, and focusing the application of ideas. We are all too aware that during the past century, while many defended their traditions, universities were to become “bases for war” as much as “islands of peace.”<sup>1</sup> In this context, many scholars came to the fore, attempting to explain, to justify or to condemn war and all its causes. High in this catalogue of combat came the humanities, whose very existence was challenged,

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Scott, “Universities have helped Fuel, not Oppose, this Century of War,” *The Guardian*, 5 August 2014, 32.

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but close to them came the natural and social sciences, which imparted a deeply anxious essence to the broad canvass of scholarship that in Germany was (and is) called *Wissenschaft*.

Beneath the carapace of modernity, no scholar was more critical than the historian and political philosopher Max Weber.<sup>2</sup> And perhaps no single work of Weber's bore greater witness to the sense of academic foreboding than an apparently ephemeral lecture he was asked to give, and which he entitled *Wissenschaft als Beruf*. In this lecture, Weber evoked the traditions and the traductions of science as a vocation, its endangerment by bureaucracy and its endangerment by politics. He spoke to the nature of science (including, as in the German word itself, both the natural and social sciences), and the challenges of scientific inquiry and the boundaries of authority. Published after the war, and just before his death, this document and its circumstances speak to this book and to us today, and especially to the changing role and responsibility of the natural sciences. In looking back to the structure of the present book, and forward to questions that await future historians, this essay will recall some of the many moments that sharpened the clash of academic ideas in the Great War, and created a new world for the sciences in the world to come.<sup>3</sup>

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Some saw it coming, many did not; some welcomed it, others could not fathom what had happened and was happening. In 1917, the war entered its third year. No one knew how or when it would end. The academic world of Europe was mobilized, and depopulated, committed, commandeered or closed. Few knew hope.

Early on the morning of 7 November 1917, Professor Max Weber, aged 53, left his study in Heidelberg for a carriage and train to Munich,

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<sup>2</sup>For the life and work of Max Weber, see Dirk Käsler, *Max Weber: An Introduction to his Life and Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), Joachim Radkau, *Max Weber: Die Leidenschaft des Denkens* (Munich: Hanser, 2005) and Jürgen Kaube, *Max Weber—Ein Leben zwischen den Epochen* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2014). For important insights into Weber's war, see Hinnerk Bruhn, *Max Weber und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017). I am indebted to Dr Bruhn of the Centre des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, for his advice and for his book.

<sup>3</sup>For an accessible survey of the sciences at war, see Jon Agar, *Science and the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (London: Polity, Press, 2012), chapter 5, "Science and the First World War," 89–117.

where he had been invited—more than once—to address a small student society at the university. Uncertain of his audience, but anxious about the state and direction of the war, Weber chose a topic on which he had been thinking for months. Deeply patriotic, proud of being a reserve officer in his youth, he had volunteered as a medical orderly at the outbreak of war and was deeply loyal to the fatherland. An *Ordentlicher Professor*, he had become internationally famous for his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), and during 1916 and 1917 turned to wider questions in the sociology of religion, and especially the economic and religious history of China and India. For students attending the Freistudentenschaft in Munich, however, he chose a different topic, which he entitled “*Wissenschaft als Beruf*” (“Science as a Vocation”), and in a little less than an hour delivered a text that was long to survive him, and to make a lasting impact upon the academic world.<sup>4</sup> Speaking to a group that was predominantly anti-war, with whose views he claimed no affinity,<sup>5</sup> he spoke of the values of scholarship that the war around him threatened to undermine. In so many ways, he was the perfect choice for this podium. The war had become an emblematic representation of the intellectualization of society, the forcing factors of modernity that had

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<sup>4</sup>See H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Society* (London: Routledge, 1952, new ed., 1991), “Science as a Vocation,” 129–158. See also Wolfgang J. Mommsen und Wolfgang Schulchter, with Birgitt Morgenbrod (eds.), *Max Weber, Wissenschaft als Beruf* in Horst Baier, M Rainer Lepsius, Wolfgang Mommsen, Wolfgang Schluchter and Johannes Winkelmann (eds.), *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe*, Band 17 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992). For an introductory, online account, see Craig Hammond, “Max Weber, 1864–1920,” [www.slideshare.net](http://www.slideshare.net). Weber’s first lecture was followed by a second, “*Politik als Beruf*,” delivered in January 1919. Both appeared in print in May/June 1919, the delay owing to the publisher’s wish to bring out both together. For this and other advice, I am indebted to Dr. Eckart Krause of Hamburg University.

<sup>5</sup>This student society belonged to the Bavarian branch of the Deutsche Freie Studentenschaft, one of a number of critical *Freistudentenschaften* which met at several German universities and *Technische Hochschulen* from the 1890s. In Munich, the society met in the evening to discuss philosophical, social and political issues from a liberal perspective that often challenged the university authorities. They often invited speakers, who were in turned viewed with distrust by the authorities. Meetings took place in the rooms of a Munich bookseller, Carl-Georg Steinicke, a Schwabinger sympathetic to liberal views. About 80–100 students were in Weber’s audience. See Hans-Ulrich Wipf, *Studentische Politik und Kulturreform, Geschichte der Freistudenten-Bewegung, 1896–1918* (Edition Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung, Band 12 [Schwalbach: Wochenschau Verlag, 2004]).

led, and were leading, in his famous phrase, to *Entzauberung*, the “disenchantment” of the world.<sup>6</sup>

The year 1917 had seen great hardship and suffering across Germany. Even as the Russian Front collapsed, monumental and mounting casualty lists were accompanied by the exhaustion of raw materials. Across Germany, aggravated by the British blockade and a poor harvest, food was scarce, and as many as 800,000 had starved. In April, the imperial government’s decision in February to unleash unrestricted submarine warfare had finally provoked neutral America into the war, and seemingly inexhaustible numbers of men and amounts of munitions were soon to be on their way.

In April, Arthur Balfour, the British foreign secretary, philosopher and fellow of the Royal Society, had led a mission to the United States to strengthen ties between British and American academics. Such links had been given a new lease as early as mid-1916, when scientists from Johns Hopkins and Harvard sent their own delegations to France and Britain, to see what they might do in the event that America entered the war.<sup>7</sup> The same year, Woodrow Wilson instructed the US National Academy of Sciences to establish a National Research Council (NRC) to “recruit specialists from the larger scientific and technological communities” to help focus the Academy’s war work. At the NRC, war committees were formed in each major discipline, bringing to Washington, DC academics from across the country.<sup>8</sup>

By the middle of 1917, courses in European languages and world geography were showing increased enrolments at Harvard and Yale, Chicago and Princeton; and at the land-grant colleges of the Middle West, military studies were being taught by a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). In New York, Columbia University scheduled a new course in military geology for the academic year 1917–1918. American

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<sup>6</sup>Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (1971), 270. Weber is thought to have borrowed the concept from Friedrich Schiller.

<sup>7</sup>Joseph Ames, “Science at the Front,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, 121 (1918), 90–100.

<sup>8</sup>F. Lyman Wells, “Science and War,” *Science*, 44 (25 August 1916), 275–276. For further details, see Roy MacLeod, “The Scientists Go to War: Revisiting Precept and Practice, 1914–1919,” *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 2 (1), (2009), 37–51.

professors did not wear uniforms, but the military soon marshalled many of the best into the army's Signal Corps and the naval reserve.<sup>9</sup>

Across the ocean, British academics, who for the previous two years had acquired a reputation for what H.G. Wells called "self-mobilization," had begun to master the art of winning contracts for war-related projects. Some were funded at the universities by the newly created Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), which soon stimulated the establishment of similar organizations across the Empire, in India, New Zealand, Australia and Canada.<sup>10</sup> In France, from August 1914, the Académie des Sciences and the Institut de France led the universities and the *grandes écoles* to consolidate a well-established alliance with the military.<sup>11</sup>

In Germany, the Technische Hochschulen and the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes (KWI), rather than the universities, dominated research and the development of weapons, but in mid-1917 the government created a new department, along the lines of the DSIR, called the Kaiser Wilhelm Stiftung für Kriegstechnische Wissenschaft (KWKW), with a board of military men and academics who, for the first time, began systematically to cultivate the professoriate, from aerodynamics to telecommunications, mining to medicine.<sup>12</sup> In December 1917, a contract to produce an improved gyrocompass was issued to Albert Einstein, the "practical pacifist," who had in 1914 signed a peace-seeking "Manifesto to the Europeans," drafted by Georg Nicolai, but who in October 1917 became head of a Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin and took on war work for Mercur Flugzeugbau and the Reichsmarine.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>See Carol S. Gruber, *Mars and Minerva: World War I and the Uses of the Higher Learning in America* (Baton Rouge Louisiana State University Press, 1975).

<sup>10</sup>Roy MacLeod and E.K. Andrews, "The Origins of the DSIR: Reflections on Ideas and Men, 1915–1916," *Public Administration*, 48 (1), (1970), 23–48.

<sup>11</sup>Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People* (Dover: Berg, 1993). See Roy MacLeod, "Science," in Jay Winter (ed.) *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 434–459, 704–708.

<sup>12</sup>Manfred Raush, "Science and the Military: The Kaiser-Wilhelm Foundation for Military-Technical Science," in Roy MacLeod and Jeffrey Johnson (eds.), *Frontline and Factory: Comparative Perspectives on the Chemical Industry at War, 1914–1924* (Dordrecht: Springer Verlag, 2006), 179–202.

<sup>13</sup>See MacLeod, "Science," in Winter (ed.), *op. cit.*

For three years, Germany's science-based industry had forced the pace in the militarization of science.<sup>14</sup> But by the beginning of 1917, Germany's leadership was being successfully challenged. Across Britain and France, academic scientists and engineers were producing innovations that were leading to tanks, improved aircraft and more deadly chemicals than the Germans had used in Russia and France since 1915. At sea, where the U-boat campaign raged, the best physicists of Britain, France and the United States were summoned from their classrooms to apply the lessons of the research laboratory.

Against this background, the war's toll on academic life had been disastrous. By 1915, the German universities and *Hochschulen* had lost more than half of their students and a third of their staff.<sup>15</sup> In Britain and France, and across the British Empire, universities lost students and staff and saw their buildings turned into hospitals and drill halls. At the start of Michaelmas term 1914, Oxford's vice-chancellor and dean of Christ Church, Thomas Banks Strong, expressed regret that "we have taken up arms against the one power in Europe with which we have had closest affinity." But by October resistance had evaporated, and by December only half of Oxford's students had not left for the war. By 1917, many Oxford colleges were filled with more hospital beds than student bedrooms.

From October 1914, academics on both sides of the Channel had been active in the massive campaigns of propaganda that characterised *das papier Trommelfeuer*, "the paper barrage," as the Germans called it. Oxford's historians rallied behind a pamphlet, "Why we are at war," which appeared on 14 September 1914 and catapulted through three editions in three weeks. On 18 September 1914, 53 British authors, including H.G. Wells, famously called readers to arms in the name of "Civilisation," encapsulating in a single word the spirit that seemed to define the defence of Europe against its mortal enemy: *Kultur*. A series of "Oxford Pamphlets," whose authors embraced John Buchan and Sir

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<sup>14</sup>Bernhard Vom Brocke, *Wissenschaft und Militarismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985).

<sup>15</sup>See F. Frech, "Die Naturwissenschaften im Kriege," *Die Naturwissenschaften*, 3 (1), (1 January 1915), 1–6.

William Osler, was soon followed by similar manifestoes and lectures by university staff as far as Sydney and Melbourne.<sup>16</sup>

In Britain and across the English-speaking world, university scientists had at first taken a more cautious approach to war mobilization. The war might end by Christmas and remain confined to the Continent. Possibly, early expressions of the *Krieg der Geister* could be dismissed. Until October 1914, science celebrated a cosmopolitan ethos. Unlike their French colleagues, leading British scientists, including Sir William Ramsay of UCL, who like many British chemists had close friends in Germany, hoped the crisis would pass. Professor J.J. Thomson of Cambridge hoped not to see the scientific world divided, as Daniel Kevles has put it, into hostile political camps.<sup>17</sup>

However, in the first week of October, all such hopes disappeared into a swirl of anguish surrounding the publication of the “Manifesto of 93 German Professors”—“*An die Kulturwelt*” (“Appeal to the Civilized Nations”). Arriving at *The Times*, and circulated in major newspapers and common rooms around the world, the twenty-one German scientific signatories joined other intellectuals in rejecting Allied accusations of German crimes in occupied Belgium. As Marie-Eve Chagnon has shown, the Manifesto seemed to wed the will of German science, art and industry to the aims of the fatherland. The die was cast. The same month, twenty-two German rectors issued another manifesto, urging foreign academics to reject their criticisms of Germany; then came others, similar in tone, one signed by 3016 German teaching staff, led by the philologist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and the historian Dietrich Schäfer. Scholars in Berlin created a nationalist Kulturbund Deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler (Cultural Federation of German Scholars and Artists), led by the anatomist Wilhelm Waldeyer. All identified German academia with the interests of the fatherland.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>MacLeod, *Imperial Science under the Southern Cross* (Sydney: University of Sydney Press, 2009), chapter 14, “Gentlemen to Arms,” 398–417.

<sup>17</sup>Daniel Kevles, “Into Hostile Political Camps: The Reorganisation of International Science in World War I,” *Isis*, 62 (1971), 47–60.

<sup>18</sup>A careful exposition of the Allied response is given by Harry Paul, *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice: The French Scientist’s Image of German Science, 1840–1918* (Gainesville, FL.: University of Florida, 1972). For a recent re-appraisal, see Roy MacLeod, “The Mobilisation of Minds and the Crisis in International Science: The *Krieg der Geister* and the Manifesto of the 93,” *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 10 (3), (2017), 1–21.

By November, partly in response to such manifestations, Allied science was fully at war. Professors who had been photographed sitting next to each other at international conferences in Brussels in 1911 and 1913 were now sworn enemies, and neutrals were hard pressed to keep communications intact. As essays in this book have shown, belligerent sentiment ran high, as learned societies across Europe took steps to expel foreign members, however distinguished their contributions to humanity. Patriotism trumped community, when Max Planck told the world, “one thing only we know, that we members of our university will stand together as one man [...] until the entire world comes to recognise the truth and German honour.”<sup>19</sup> On both sides, nations mobilized scientific minds, mentalities and methods into a war of invention, innovation and industry that would endure long after the Armistice. The war gave a vast impetus to the scientific enterprise. As the *Cambridge Magazine* put it in 1916:

The word ‘science’ [is] on everyone’s lips and does yeoman’s service in almost every newspaper [...] Its very name seems to have suddenly discovered a talismanic power which is somewhat perplexing to those who find their paths menaced by the glare of limelight.<sup>20</sup>

With its wartime applications and unprecedented public acceptance, science became a profession, sharing a special set of values, methods and ethos. As Hyman Levy, the London physicist, famously put it, “the war fostered [...] a new sense of solidarity [...] it was the occasion for the birth of the scientific profession.”<sup>21</sup>

British and French universities witnessed the introduction of modern studies, research laboratories and international relations. Even more conspicuous was the recognition increasingly accorded women pulling their weight in academia just as, in far greater numbers, they had in the factories. No wonder that, as Helena Denek, bursar of Lady Margaret Hall, put it, the “anachronism of excluding women from Oxford could no longer be reasonably maintained.” In 1920, women were admitted as full

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<sup>19</sup>Anne Rasmussen, p. 9.; John L. Heilbron, *Dilemmas of an Upright Man: Max Planck as Spokesman for German Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 85.

<sup>20</sup>*Cambridge Magazine*, 6 (4 November 1916), 76.

<sup>21</sup>Hyman Levy, *Modern Science - A Study of Physical Science in the World Today* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1939), 95.

members of the university, and made eligible for degrees. The provincial universities and the Commonwealth universities were already well ahead. A national and an imperial system was in the making.

From November 1914 onwards, what we can now call the “professors’ war” developed speedily across the world of science. By April 1915, a “makeshift war” of late 1914 gave way to a war of mobilization, which by 1916 had acquired a sense of mission that would last the duration. The Council of the Royal Society of London, which had resolved itself into a War Council in 1914, had mustered a Conjoint Board of Scientific Societies—a “war cabinet” of professors—to coordinate the twenty-seven leading scientific and professional societies of Britain and their counterparts across the Empire. By mid-1918, the British government was recruiting academics to a Ministry of Reconstruction to prepare for the advent of a post-war Anglo-American ascendancy in world affairs. In the meantime, Winston Churchill at the Ministry of Munitions was consulting academics in planning what would have been the great Allied offensive of the spring of 1919, which would have wished on Germany fleets of American and British aircraft, equipped with the worst of chemical weapons.<sup>22</sup>

In early 1917, Max Weber was at work on a history of Eastern religion and culture. Across the Channel, the war had become a vast social experiment, challenging religion and customs across classes and cultures. In April, H.A.L. Fisher, Oxford historian and President of Britain’s Board of Education, informed an audience of American educators that:

The war has shown that one of the great needs of England is that a larger proportion of the population should find its way through the Secondary Schools into the Universities. We want more brains, more knowledge, a more scientific method in National life [...] that the universities will take a place of increased importance in the scheme of English life is one of the most assured results which the enterprise of this tremendous conflict will bring in its train.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Jeffrey Johnson and Roy MacLeod, “The War the Victors Lost: The Dilemmas of Chemical Disarmament,” in MacLeod and Johnson (eds.), *op. cit.*, 221–246.

<sup>23</sup>H.A.L. Fisher, *The Place of the University in National Life* (London: Oxford University Press, 1919), 15.

The reforming spirit in higher education was equally evident in France where, since the “victory of the Prussian schoolmaster” in 1870, the universities had struggled against a reputation for backwardness and inefficiency, which the contrasting achievements of the *grandes écoles* had helped to magnify. Across the seventeen French universities, the war brought new developments in subjects ranging from modern languages, planning and international law to chemical physics, aeronautics and automotive engineering. Defenders of the status quo may have mourned the violation of traditional values but, as Elizabeth Fordman has put it, French academics left the war empowered.<sup>24</sup>

The war particularly strengthened science at universities across France, and stimulated a sense of national commitment. Just as in Britain David Lloyd George made much use of academics,<sup>25</sup> so Albert Thomas, the Ministère des Munitions, did the same. Parisian professors—drawn from the Ecole Centrale, the Ecole Normale, the Ecole Polytechnic and the Ecole des Beaux Arts—prepared posters and propaganda, tested guns, examined captured weapons, re-drew maps, mixed colours for camouflage and designed orthopaedics for the disabled. Nowhere was professional influence felt more strongly, or more strongly driven, than in the relatively new disciplines of psychology and psychiatry.<sup>26</sup> Medical schools quickly adopted new methods of triage, trauma surgery and disease control. Remarkable cooperation, even by comparison with Berlin and London, flourished among institutions that historically prided themselves on their separate status. In Paris, the need for speed in gas defence and retaliation in kind prompted urgent rapprochement between academic chemists, the artillery and the forensic laboratories of the Prefecture de la Police.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps even more remarkably, French academics cooperated regularly with their British colleagues, exchanging methods of

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<sup>24</sup>Elizabeth Fordham, 101.

<sup>25</sup>See Michael Pattison, “Scientists, Inventors and the Military in Britain, 1915–1919: The Munitions Inventions Department,” *Social Studies of Science*, 12 (1983), 521–568.

<sup>26</sup>See W.H.R. Rivers’ “Psychiatry and the War,” *Science*, 49 (18 April 1919), 367–369; Ernest Jones, “War Shock and Freud’s Theory of the Neuroses,” *International PsychoAnalytical Library*, 2, (1921), 44–59. cited in Agar, *op. cit.*, 110. For Germany, see Mitchell Ash, *Gestalt Psychology in German Culture, 1890–1967 Holism and the Quest for Objectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>27</sup>See Patrice Bret, “Managing Chemical Expertise: The Laboratories of the French Artillery and the *Service des Poudres*,” in MacLeod and Johnson (eds.), *op. cit.*, 203–220.

munitions-making and acoustic studies for sound-ranging and submarine detection. The Ministère de la Marine, renowned for doing things in its own way, opened its laboratories at Toulon to Parisian Physicists.<sup>28</sup>

As Weber must have seen, by 1917 the “order of learning,” to use Edward Shils’ phrase,<sup>29</sup> had changed, and academics were embraced in the management of nations at arms. Perhaps nowhere was this more visible than in the United States, for which Weber had great admiration. In America, the war established new relationships between universities and government, in which historians, geographers and social scientists were recruited as advisors. Between government and industry, new forms of research contracts evolved, lifting the resources of MIT, Johns Hopkins, Wisconsin and California. In ways that few could then foresee, government and academia had begun to draft blueprints for the “academic-military-industrial” complexes of later decades. It was clear that universities, public and private, could no longer return to pre-war traditions of self-containment and self-entitlement. Working for the nation meant a lasting change in the American academic centre of gravity.

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Reading the lecture that Weber delivered in November 1917, it is clear that he found in Munich an opportunity to pose questions about academic life in general that spoke to the future of academic life in Germany. Looking especially to the United States, what, he asked, would be the fundamental responsibilities of the scholar—the *Wissenschaftler*—in the modern day, and what were the limits and duties of scholarship as a profession?

Such questions were not easy to answer in peacetime, and had become more problematic as the war wore on. In parallel with an incipient *Krise der Wissenschaft* that, with relativity and the new physics, threatened the dominance of “rational experiment,” had come fears that governments were undermining the traditions, and potentially the academic freedom, of the professoriate.

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<sup>28</sup>Roy MacLeod and Kay Andrews, “Scientific Advice on the War at Sea, 1915–1917: The Board of Invention and Research,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 6 (2), (1971), 3–40.

<sup>29</sup>Roy MacLeod, “Consensus, Civility, Community: Minerva and the Vision of Edward Shils”, in Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte Lerg (eds.), *The Global War of the Mind: The Journals and Networks of the Congress for Cultural Freedom* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 55.

When, in November 1917, Max Weber delivered his lecture in Munich, news of the October Revolution was still fresh, but war weariness was universal. Inconvenient facts, dominated by what he called “party opinions,” had been suppressed. He must have seen that the war was still far from over. With victory increasingly remote, what future role would German universities play? Earlier that year, Emil Fischer had famously said that “modern warfare draws its means from the progress of the sciences.” Germany continued to place hope in scientific discovery. But in the shadows lurked a sense that, since 1914, the vocation of academic science in the prosecution of chemical warfare, the bombing of civilians and the ravages of hunger and disease was everywhere on the defensive. However it could be justified—whether in producing everyday applications, in improving methods of thinking or in expressing abstract theories with greater clarity—recent science had not brought solutions. On the contrary, as Weber argued, the nature of science itself had forced the *Wissenschaftler* to review his moral values, his duty to objective enquiry and his obligations to society.

What Weber could not have known, but which would have given added urgency to his remarks, was that British and French scholars were equalling and even surpassing their pre-war German mentors. This was especially true in the natural sciences. The Western Front, the Middle East and the Pacific had become vast experimental laboratories. British, British Empire and American scientists were creating a new world order, learning side by side. By the summer of 1917, the German army on the Western Front had lost the tactical advantage of Vimy Ridge to a handful of Canadian, British and Australian geologists—led by Professor T.E. Edgeworth David of Sydney University—whose success in secrecy and subterranean warfare brought a decisive end to the mining war.<sup>30</sup> When in 1918 American physicists arrived in France, they found an invitation from Australian-born W.L. Bragg, FRS, aged 26, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Nobel Prize-winner in 1915, to attend weekly seminars on sound-ranging. Later that year, his father, W.H. Bragg, FRS, and Ernst Rutherford, FRS, shared submarine detection methods sponsored by the British Admiralty with naval researchers at New London,

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<sup>30</sup>Roy MacLeod, “‘*Kriegesgeologen* and Practical Men’: Military Geology and Modern Memory 1914–1918,” *British Journal of the History of Science*, 28 (4), (1995), 427–450.

Connecticut. For British and American scientists, a “special relationship” existed long before it was politically fashionable.<sup>31</sup>

The war would have another year to run, and the great battles of 1918 were yet to come. But the German army had begun to withdraw to the Hindenburg Line, and with the introduction of Allied convoys, the U-boat campaign was faltering. German supplies and resources dwindled. By November 1917, widespread distribution of ersatz materials, products of remarkably innovative science—clothing from paper, coffee from chicory, and bicycle tyres from wood—had become a reluctant acknowledgment of approaching defeat.

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For Max Weber, living in Heidelberg, safe from the Front yet not far from the Rhine, the fatherland was in crisis. The universities were largely reduced to women and wounded. While accounts of French mutinies, alleged and real, were avidly surveyed in the Württemberg press, fear of the future underlines the language of his lecture. The day before he spoke in Munich, the Canadians captured Passchendaele, at the cost of 325,000 Allied and 260,000 German casualties. Constant shelling with high explosives designed and refined by university chemists and metallurgists finally dislodged the deep, iron-reinforced concrete bunkers designed by professors of geology and metallurgy, defended by guns made to specifications at Charlottenburg.

One week after Weber’s lecture, the British made the first sustained use of tanks at the French village of Cambrai. Church bells in England rang for the first time since 1914. How deeply Weber felt at Germany’s loss is hinted at in his correspondence.<sup>32</sup> It is not clear from his archives what turned his attention from the history of religion in India and China to the role of German scholarship threatened by war. Nor is it clear how deeply the ravages of scientific warfare influenced his thinking. Elsewhere, however, he had coined the term *Wertfreiheit*, or “value-neutrality,” to define the boundaries to which science could and should be put to use. Without seeking to defend the misuses of science, he sought boundaries that would save science for civilization.<sup>33</sup> Failure to adhere

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<sup>31</sup>See Daniel Kevles, *The Physicists: The History of a Scientific Community in Modern America* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 19071), 113.

<sup>32</sup>See Bruhns, *op.cit.*

<sup>33</sup>For a general survey, see H.H. Brunn, *Science Values and Politics in Max Weber’s Methodology* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1972).

to these norms would endanger not only science, but also all that proceeded from scientific enquiry. At that moment, between the February and October Revolutions in Russia, as modern science had notably failed either to prevent or win the war, the future of scientific rationality as means, method and mentality was under threat. Unless science could set and defend its boundaries, the academic traditions sacred to German scholarship hung by a thread.

One month after Weber's lecture, Russia sought an armistice. Within a year, the war was over, and imperial Germany lay in defeat. In January 1919, Weber would use another invitation from the Munich student society to lecture on *Politik als Beruf*, to warn against the danger posed by academic complicity with an overarching state. The two lectures were published together in 1919; thereafter, their fate became intertwined. Weber died of the Spanish flu in 1920, but his lectures resonated long after his death and greatly influenced the coming generation, including Karl Mannheim, Robert Merton and Talcott Parsons.<sup>34</sup> Where in the post-war world would the university's traditions of academic freedom, objectivity and value-free enquiry best survive? Perhaps not in France, with its state formations and tightly controlled curricula; nor, possibly, in Britain, with increasing state involvement in its self-regulated communities. Perhaps in the New World, and especially in the United States—or so went the argument of the Council for Cultural Freedom in the 1950s. A new form of academic internationalism was needed, and the search for its leadership became a challenge facing universities for the rest of the 20th century.

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Under the guidance of its editors, the chapters of this book illustrated the role of war and the consequences of war for intellectual and academic life in three chronological and thematic phases: mobilizations, ruptures and demobilizations. The authors have given equal regard to re-capturing known and exploring less well-known histories across many disciplines and several countries. They have generated a wealth of information and insight. Even so, it is perhaps worth hinting at a few themes and areas to which future scholars may wish to give greater attention—areas

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<sup>34</sup>Roy MacLeod, "Consensus, Civility, Community: The Origins of Minerva and the Vision of Edward Shils", *Minerva*, 53 (3), (2016), 255–292.

in which scholars are generating new and revealing insights, and in which there is much interesting work yet to be done.

First, underlying much of the analysis of wartime consequences may be mentioned the changing nature of academic communication. The interruption of German dominance in the natural and social sciences represented a major shift in the history of Western thought. And while the replacement of German by English as the universal language of scholarship is generally well known, its ramifications have been little studied in detail, field by field. How were ideas differently documented and how were disciplines differently shaped by the demands made by different languages and forms of discourse?

Second, and in response to Weber, we might ask more about the ways in which governments and academics—and not only in the Anglo-Saxon world—became inter-dependent, and what consequences flowed from this sometimes turbulent, often unequal marriage that was in many ways conceived by the Great War, even if later consummated in the Second World War. Enough has been said in this book to show that many innovations owe their spirit, and even their form, to the experiences of 1914–1919.

Third, with these careful and insightful essays come several questions which are perhaps not yet fully answered. For example, what can be said about the demands made by the relationship between the “traditional” and the “modern” in a world at war, in which both existed side by side? Weber’s lecture is useful in that it occupies a key point on the cusp of changes in academic values which he, as a patriotic polymath, widely travelled in the literature of the world, helped shape. In ways not only metaphorical, the war saw horses and motor cars occupying the same roads, aeroplanes emerging from bicycles, and battlefield bunkers taking their form and function from urban buildings. Wartime applications created traditions of innovation, as tractors were turned into tanks, farmers’ fields were called upon for barbed wire, and wireless telegraphy became radio intelligence. What can our studies of the war tell us about the methods and processes that helped accelerate or suspend the rate, direction and even content of technical change in science and art, in a decade that celebrated the arrival of relativity, expressionism and quantum theory?

Fourth, as all our authors acknowledge, chronology is vital to our understanding of intellectuals at war. At the same time, it is not always easy to resist the temptation to think of 1914–1919 as a historical

“period,” and to impose on the five years of the war a superstructure and historicity that exists only in retrospect. We recall that in 1914 the war was expected to be short-lived, and not necessarily global; and that, by late 1916, it was so terrible that no end was in sight. As several chapters in this book have shown, nothing was, or could reasonably have been, predicted at the outset. The experience of “demobilization” varied widely, and the consequences of the war remain with us today, notably in the Middle East, but also throughout the post-war history of international organizations, human rights and the rule of law.

Within the sciences, the demands of war were nearly universal, but different disciplines fared differently. The outcome owed nothing to developments in the dramatic new fields of quantum theory and relativity, but much to the application of X-ray techniques in medical diagnosis and surgery. The “New World of Science,” whose arrival was greeted by the US National Academy of Sciences in 1920, spoke only of those fields that had flourished in wartime applications.<sup>35</sup> The war promoted chemistry, but also certain fields of biology and physics, and the mental and health sciences. And in most ways it created markets that in turn inspired new industries. A general history of academics and intellectuals in the post-war commodification of war-generated knowledge has yet to be written.

With closer scrutiny is bound to come work on the new architectures, environments and spaces of learning the Great War brought about. No account of academic life in the West—whether at Oxford or Cambridge, or the provincial universities of Britain and France, or at Harvard or Yale, or MIT, or in Moscow, Berlin or Paris—can be complete without considering the transformations the war began. As Suman Seth has observed, total war was a total experience, in which all nations, empires and colonies were simultaneously involved.<sup>36</sup> We await the fuller contribution of scholars who are writing about Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

As this book well illustrates, history gains greatly from close attention to the “disruptions”—what Gerald Feldman once called “the great disorder” that formed part of the war’s legacy. This has been especially true in cases, from oceanography to meteorology, where established traditions

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<sup>35</sup>Robert M. Yerkes (ed.), *The New World of Science: Its Development during the War* (New York: The Century Co., 1920).

<sup>36</sup>Suman Seth, *Crafting the Quantum: Arnold Sommerfeld and the Practice of Theory, 1890–1926* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 319.

were interrupted and new ideas flourished. Raymond Poincaré and Max Planck saw the war coincide with a disruption in philosophical and metaphysical debate, when an earlier unified perspective—a circle of the sciences—was replaced by a disciplinary commonality, a basis of shared understanding that united man, nature and society. This worldview was familiar to Max Weber, who saw its contradictions and limitations. What would the future hold? As in the “new physics,” no longer was scientific knowledge to be considered “final.” A golden age was unrecoverable.

For some disciplines, “demobilization” was never an option. As George Ellery Hale, California Institute of Technology astronomer and foreign secretary of the US National Academy of Sciences, put it: “I really believe this is the greatest chance we ever had to advance research in America.”<sup>37</sup> To different degrees, his view was shared by the Allies and their enemies alike. The end of the war, and the poverty of post-war Europe, saw a diminished German leadership in some but by no means all of the sciences. But the features of “demobilization” are disputable. German science was not defeated—and refused to demobilize. Although German science failed to win the war, it went on to win the peace, as Germany retained and extended its pre-war leadership in mathematics and physics. Its leadership in industrial chemistry remained unhurt and its factories unclosed, as in turnkey fashion its production was transformed overnight from poison gas to fertilizers. German aviation prospered, as did physics and many other sciences, and within three years German university students had almost returned to their pre-war numbers.

Finally, we might reserve a last word not for historians of institutions, of disciplines or even of ideas, but for the biographers of intellectual life, of academia, whose commemoration can often overcome the general trends of mobilization, rupture and demobilization. The war questioned the ethos of science, but it failed to damage its spirit. In this sense, science was never demobilized. Max Born speaks movingly of a young physicist, huddling in the trenches, reading the *Zeitschrift für Physik* and scribbling scientific notes for a scientific paper between bombardments. The biographer has much to offer in understanding a conflict in which vast numbers of men and women, including intellectuals, were so often reduced to mere statistics.

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<sup>37</sup>Quoted in Helen Wright, *Explorer of the Universe: A Biography of George Ellery Hale* (New York: W.P. Dutton, 1966) 288; cited in Kevles, *Physicists, op.cit.*, 112.

For such insights, we also ought not to neglect the poet. Thus, W.H. Auden, writing from New York, captured the post-war life of Oxford, when its best and brightest returned from the front, field and factory:

Professors back from secret missions  
 Resume their proper eruditions  
 Though some regret it:  
 They liked their Dictaphones a lot  
 They met some big wheels and do not  
 Let you forget it.<sup>38</sup>

A further hint of things to come might be found in the recollection, by Jack Morrell, of Harold Hartley, chemistry tutor of Balliol—better known as Brigadier Sir Harold Hartley, FRS, architect of Britain’s contribution to the chemical war—of whom it was not unkindly said:

When the war was over  
 General Hartley  
 Returned to civil life again  
 Partly.<sup>39</sup>

With this confession, we leave Max Weber and *Wissenschaft als Beruf*. Its publication, retrieved after the war, spoke to posterity and charted a program that resonates a century later. In 1920, Weber left the room. Scarcely a decade later, Walter Benjamin’s generation, wishing to remake the world, could look to him, and to his defence of the academic vocation, in hope, if not always in confident expectation. For those drawn by Paul Klee’s angel of history, both for those who survived him in the classroom and for those who served in the professors’ war, his legacy and his lecture remain to counsel and to warn.

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<sup>38</sup>W.H. Auden, “Under Which Lyre: A Reactionary Tract for the Times,” Phi Beta Kappa Poem, Harvard, 1946, in Edward Mendelsohn (ed.), *WH Auden: Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 260.

<sup>39</sup>Jack Morrell, *Science at Oxford, 1914–1939: Transforming an Arts University* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 7.

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