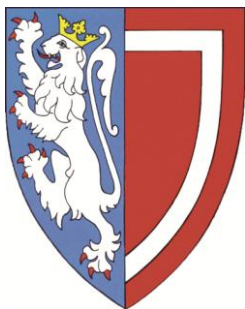


WISSENSCHAFT AT WAR:
BRITISH AND GERMAN ACADEMIC
PROPAGANDA AND THE GREAT WAR

Aoife S. O’Gorman

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Aoife S. O’Gorman
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Abstract

This thesis explores academic propaganda in the first two years of the First World War, examining the activity of the university men in Britain and Germany who were left behind when their students went to the Front. Using pamphlets and manifestoes, it seeks to highlight the way the War split the international academic community and the creation of a debate which examined not only the causes of the War, but the reasons for which the nations were fighting. By exploring the propaganda organisations of both countries, as well as the academic milieu in which the subjects of this thesis worked, it hopes to provide the context within which this propaganda was created, before turning to an examination of the content of the propaganda – an aspect which has often been overlooked in propaganda studies. The investigation of the content looks first at the outbreak of war and the reaction of the academic community to a shock which shook their community. It then turns to the arguments expounded on culpability for the War, and the ideals for which each side felt they were fighting, illustrating the shift in emphasis from a political war to an ideological conflict between two opposing world views. Finally, the thesis considers perceptions of the War in the early years of the conflict, and the way in which it was seen both as a panacea to overcome social divisions and a catharsis which would lead the way to a new world – ideas which would provide the foundation for later war aims. In taking this comparative approach, the aim is to provide new insights into a fascinating and relatively little-known aspect of the history of the First World War.

Abstract

This thesis concentrates on the propaganda produced by British and German academics in the early years of the War, seeking to examine a previously under-researched aspect of the ‘war for hearts and minds’ which was being waged on the Home Front as the guns boomed across no-man’s-land. Studies of First World War propaganda have tended to examine the big picture, exploring the work of propaganda organisations, both Governmental and voluntary, primarily on the surface level; investigating the creation and structure of the organisations, their difficulties and concerns. Of course, this information is vital, but it overlooks the aspect of propaganda which would have had the most impact during the War – content and author. Those studies which do explore content tend to focus on the output of single nationalities, rather than taking a comparative approach which allows us to better understand the context in which works of propaganda were created and within which they operated; after all, they did not appear in a vacuum, but were frequently part of a larger debate in which accusations were made and answered and competing visions were aired.

This thesis is based on a number of pamphlet series published in the first two years of the War, supported by the personal papers of some of the authors and the organisational records of publishing bodies. While historians such as Stuart Wallace, Peter Hoeres, and Klaus Schwabe have examined academic propaganda to an extent, their focus tends to be on individual nations, and is often discipline-based. This study, however, explores writings from a number of disciplines, seeking to create a comparative study which explains how academics and intellectuals tried to rationalize the War and plan for the future.

The work of academics during the War is not propaganda as it is commonly known. Its efforts to maintain a scholarly impartiality (in many cases at least), its reasoned and logical presentation, its erudite tone, and frequent academic references are fathoms away from propaganda as seen in the lurid atrocity stories of a Bottomley or Northcliffe, and the later impassioned ravings of the Fascist leaders.

Nevertheless, it *is* propaganda, and what sets it apart is the fascinating fact that this is not the propaganda of a leader manipulating the masses, but colleagues propagandising and being propagandised, men who are on an equal intellectual level, and who recognise this parity, attempting to convert each other. In order to draw out the nuances of the attempt to influence each other, the thesis is a cross-cultural study, focusing on the work of German and British academics who were often well-known to one another, having worked together, studied together, and often engaged in correspondence even during the War.

The thesis will open with an investigation of the nature of propaganda as it was conceived prior to the War, and with an overview of the propaganda organisations in Britain and Germany during the War. This will encompass both official governmental propaganda and the propaganda of voluntary organisations, with the aim of setting the context in which the academics were writing, in order to show how they felt they were contributing to the war effort. Through an examination of contemporary theories of crowd psychology and the growing awareness of the importance of the masses in politics, we see the concomitant necessity for propaganda (or so, at least, the ruling classes believed), and the way in which the stage was set for private propagandistic endeavour. Though it is easy to assume that the academics were writing solely for each other, those in Oxford at least were writing for the working man, and many of the German pamphlets were based on public speeches, and prided themselves on the wide audience they found. It is also extremely probable that they found an audience in the upper and upper middle classes, especially given the sheer volume of material produced. The more simplistic, black and white depiction of the War found in the yellow press was unlikely to convince an educated audience, while the more scholarly tone of the academic pamphlets would have had an appeal. Certainly the governments of both countries were eager to elicit the support of academics and intellectuals, and the first chapter explores the reasons behind this.

To further examine the context in which the academics were operating, the second chapter focuses on the nature of the university system in Germany and Britain, and the links between the two. The German system was internationally acclaimed for its excellence, and greatly admired and sometimes

imitated in Britain. As previously stated, ties were extremely close, with many personal friendships severed by the War. The academic community was a tightly knit body, and for some the War would have resembled a civil war, with former allies and collaborators transformed to enemies overnight. Through an investigation of the university system and the existing relationships between intellectuals, the magnitude of the impact of the War on the academic community is clearly illustrated.

The thesis then turns to an examination of the propaganda produced by the academics. The primary sources for Britain are the Oxford Pamphlets, a series written principally by Oxford academics with contributions from eminent intellectuals, comprising 86 Pamphlets in total. These are supplemented by a number of additional pamphlets from series such as the 'Papers for War Time' or books produced by individual intellectuals. The German side of the study relies primarily on two series of pamphlets: *Deutsche Reden in schwerer Zeit* ('German Speeches in Difficult Times') and *Der deutsche Krieg* ('The German War'), again supplemented by a number of pamphlets from smaller publishing houses by well-known authors. In selecting the pamphlets for inclusion in this study, I have concentrated my attention on those which deal directly with the enemy, attempting to explain and justify the War to their audience. Further information was found in the personal papers of some of the authors, which highlighted their thoughts on the War and on the enemy; and German governmental archives, as well as those of Oxford University Press, have shed light on the publishing process behind the pamphlets.

This examination of propaganda forms the principal section of the thesis, and is divided into three subsections. Each subsection deals with a particular topic, and explores its presentation in pamphlets from both sides, aiming to compare and contrast arguments, in order to investigate how each side viewed the War - or at least, to show how they wished the War to be viewed, as it can be difficult in some cases to determine if the beliefs presented were truly those of the author. This section also seeks to explore how the content of the pamphlets shifted over the initial months of the War, and how this shift reflected the change in propagandistic priorities from casting blame to idealist motivations for maintaining morale.

Chapter Three deals with the outbreak of War, and the reactions from both sides, ranging from shock and disbelief, to protest, to indignation. The chapter will explore the background of the pamphlets and manifestoes published during the War, before turning to a more detailed examination of the initial responses to the War. Sources such as the German ‘Manifesto of the 93’ and the British ‘Scholars’ Protest’ to *The Times* will feature prominently, establishing the parameters of an intellectual exchange which would remain a debate for the duration of the War. These exchanges were highly public, and it is clear that they continued in the pamphlets, as each side made reference to the publications of the other.

The next three chapters explore rationalizations of the War – the ‘how’ and the ‘why’. Chapter Four examines the arguments both sides used to account for the War, their attempts to apportion blame and to explain how the War came about. Chapters Five and Six explore the ideals for which each side claimed to be fighting – and the ideals for which they claimed their opponents had joined the conflict. Chapter Five investigates these arguments from the point of view of the actions of the belligerents in the pre-War period, showing how each side felt the others’ policies and activities revealed their inner nature. Chapter Six, on the other hand, takes a conceptual approach, examining the perceptions of motive and ideal which led the belligerents to believe that the War was one of ideology and *Weltanschauung*, rather than a fight for Belgium or Serbia. In each of these chapters we see how similar arguments were presented by both sides to reach very different conclusions, and the ways in which the ‘unprofessional’ behaviour of each side in abandoning academic impartiality for patriotic fervour was denounced by the other. These chapters also trace the change in focus in the pamphlets as the War progressed, from simple direct causes to a more complex theoretical clash of cultures.

Finally, Chapter Seven looks at academic perceptions of the War itself, both in terms of the ways in which it had transformed society, and in the ideas of a new era which would follow the end of the fighting. Even at this early stage of the conflict, there was a sense that it was a monumental event, which would leave the world forever changed. It is very clear from the pamphlets that the War was seen as a horrific catastrophe, a gruelling struggle, unlikely to be over soon. Yet at the same time, it

prompted theories of an ideal society, united by an almost religious fervour, purified by a War which would lead to a rebirth for Britain, Germany, and Europe, if not the world. In the initial stages of the conflict, this contributed to a depiction of the nation as healed of class conflict, rekindled by a new purpose and capable of marching to a glorious victory over their enemies. Though concrete war aims were not discussed by governments at this stage, this did not prevent academics from speculating about the world after the War, and we can find in the pamphlets hints of later schemes such as a Central European Federation, or the creation of a League of Nations. Such utopian visions also provide an insight into the determination to continue the War and the hopes the intellectuals had for the future.

The conclusion traces the main themes elucidated by the thesis, in the hope of having shed light on a side of the War which is often overlooked. In focusing on the efforts of an international community divided by war to maintain their values and ideals in a world utterly changed, my aim is to draw attention to the impact of the War on a personal level which transcended national boundaries, and highlight an area of propaganda which is not only unusual, but also enlightening.

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Abbreviations

BArch – Bundesarchiv (Berlin State Archives)

BdGK – *Bund deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler* (German Intellectuals' and Artists' Union)

Bod. – Bodleian Library

KPM – *Kriegs-Pressbüro München* (Munich War Press Office)

OUP – Oxford University Press

OUP in footnotes – Oxford University Press Archive

UDC – Union of Democratic Control

Zentralstelle – *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst* (Central Office for Foreign Services)

Introduction

Wissenschaft at War

Writing for the International Society for First World War Studies, Roger Chickering posed a pointed question for all First World War scholars: ‘Why are we still interested in this old war?’¹ Reading recent evaluations of the historiography of the conflict, there is an overwhelming sense that the scholarship of the Great War is undergoing a boom period, with exponential increases in the number of books and articles published combined with a dynamism and excitement as new approaches and research come to light.² The recent Centenary is an obvious explanation for this interest, but Chickering’s investigation of the subject raises a number of other factors which show just how enduring the legacy of the First World War is, both in terms of its intellectual attraction, and for the way it has been used as both a lens and a frame for the experiences of the 20th Century. He highlights not only the ‘vast dimensions’ of the War as a reason for the fascination it has exerted on scholars, but also its ambiguous position in modern history, being interpreted as the tragic end to the innocence of the Edwardian era with its faith in progress and civilization, or as the traumatic birth of the ‘short 20th Century’, characterised by tyranny and death on a mass and mechanized scale. Drawing a link between the end of the short 20th Century in 1989 and a simultaneous shift in the focus of historical research, he underlines the possibilities the First World War offers to the historian as a subject ripe for re-evaluation, even after 100 years of study.

For, of course, this interest is nothing new. As the pamphlets under consideration in this thesis show, almost from its outbreak, scholars were examining the issues of the War, seeking explanations and causes, exploring military questions and diplomatic intrigues. The problem of the origin of the War was particularly important after 1918, with issues of reparations and war guilt dominating the

¹ Roger Chickering, ‘Why Are We Still Interested In This Old War?’ in Jennifer Keene and Michael Neiberg (Eds.), *Finding Common Ground: New Directions in First World War Studies* (Leiden-Boston, 2011), p. 3.

² Jay Winter and Antoine Prost have shown a steady increase in the number of works relating to the First World War in the British Library from the 1980s onwards. Given the recent centenary, there is no doubt that this increase in interest has continued. See Jay Winter & Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History* (Cambridge, 2005) p. 17. See also Pierre Purseigle and Jenny Macleod, ‘Introduction: Perspectives in First World War Studies’, *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden-Boston, 2004), p. 2-4.

Versailles Peace Conference; and to this day it is still hotly debated, as Christopher Clark and Margaret MacMillan's recent monographs show.³ Robin Higham traces a parallel track between the publication of war memoirs and secondary analyses, charting a spike a decade after the War ended, followed by a slump until veterans reached an 'age of reminiscences', particularly in the 1960s – the outbreak of the Second World War, is of course, an important factor in this.⁴ Initially, these secondary analyses focused on the traditional aspects of the War, examining military, diplomatic and economic concerns. However, it is the move towards social and cultural history which emerged in the later decades of the 20th Century which has inspired recent scholarship, turning as it did from major actors and political manoeuvres to examine the impact of war on the individual – not just the soldier in the trenches, but daily life on the home front and the societal changes brought about by the War.⁵

This shift was also influenced by the intellectual climate in which later historians were operating – commenting on his *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975), Paul Fussell said it was as much about the Vietnam War as it was the First World War; and Pierre Purseigle and Jenny Macleod draw a connection between political and intellectual movements in the historiography of the War in this period, linking liberation movements to the rise of gender history and ideological conflict to social history.⁶ Dennis Showalter and Daniel Moran support this, noting attempts to create comparisons between contemporary international situations and those of 1914, or find the predecessors of the socialist system in the *Kaiserreich*.⁷ Whether this can be said of current scholarship, is of course, another matter – one could argue that such trends are difficult to recognize without the distance of time, but it is certain that popular interest in the War has been prompted by the Centenary, which may

³ Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London, 2012); Margaret MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace* (London, 2013).

⁴ Robin Higham, 'Introduction' in Robin Higham, Dennis E. Showalter (Eds.), *Researching World War I: A Handbook* (London, 2003), p. xvi, xix.

⁵ E.g. Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War* (Cambridge, 2008); David Welch, *Germany and Propaganda in World War I* (New York, 2014 (1st edition 2000)); Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford, 2000 (1st edition 1975)); Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined* (London, 1990); J.M. Winter & Jean-Louis Robert, *Capital Cities at War* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁶ Purseigle and Macleod, *Uncovered Fields*, pp. 18-9.

⁷ Denis Showalter, 'Origins', p 2. Daniel Moran, 'Germany', p. 24, both in Robin Higham, Dennis E. Showalter (Eds.), *Researching World War I: A Handbook* (London, 2003).

also have encouraged scholars to re-evaluate the questions posed by the War, particularly in light of the shifts in approach which are visible from the 1980s onwards.

Jay Winter and Antoine Prost in particular have championed the emphasis on cultural history which marked this period, viewing it as a continuation of social history which examines issues on a micro-level. They argue that this enables the historian to understand these issues in a way which the overarching general histories of the past did not, and allows the subjectivity of individual experiences to create an objective whole.⁸ Chickering rejects their veneration of cultural history as the apex of historical study, fearing that an undue emphasis on mentalities and emotions will lead to the isolation of cultural history from other approaches, but nevertheless acknowledges the importance of the cultural approach, which he views as a means of broadening our knowledge of the First World War, rather than a step in the evolution of historiography.⁹ While Fussell and others such as Cate Haste or Modris Eksteins took preliminary steps in these new approaches to war, histories of the First World War which examine the War from the viewpoint of those at home, of women, its impact on culture, labour questions, or the way it affected cities have come to dominate the field. More recently, scholars such as John Horne and Alan Kramer, Adrian Gregory, and Susan Grayzel have shown the opportunities offered by the cultural field, highlighting the impact of the War on daily life and approaching old questions from new perspectives.¹⁰

Winter and Prost, and Purseigle, note the increasing use of comparative approaches in Great War research, an approach which seems important if we are to come to a full understanding of the international impact of the War. Though the approach has its challenges, in the scale of the conflict, the differing historiographies of the nations involved, and in the difficulty of mapping one nation's unique experience of war onto another, nevertheless, we cannot forget that the War cut across national boundaries, and, as this study aims to show, affected international communities to a degree that purely

⁸ Winter and Prost, *Debates*, pp. 25-31.

⁹ Chickering, *Still Interested*, pp. 8-10, 18

¹⁰ See for example, Cate Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning* (London, 1977); Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring* (London, 1989); John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities in 1914* (London, New Haven, 2001); Susan Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (Harlow, 2002).

national studies tend to overlook.¹¹ However, as Purseigle points out, there is also a danger that comparative studies will remain mere juxtaposition, rather than highlighting ‘commonalities’ as well as ‘distinctions’ in their research.¹² In this thesis, I have attempted to underline both aspects of the comparison between the two, as in the past, studies of academic propaganda have tended to focus on individual nations in isolation. An examination of the similarities and differences between the arguments, however, offers a valuable insight into the values and concerns of the authors, as well as the degree to which they were aware of their opponents’ point of view.

Oskar Fleischer, a Professor of Music at the University of Berlin, epitomised one of the main themes on which my study is based when he wrote in 1915 that ‘When scholarship is in doubt, I decide to support the Fatherland.’¹³ This thesis aims to explore the early academic propaganda of Britain and Germany in the First World War, highlighting the effect of the War on the international academic community, and the way in which arguments on both sides about the issues of the War mirrored one another. Fleischer was actually writing in the context of attributing virtues or faults to one’s own nation, but his phrasing is significant, and can easily be applied to intellectuals’ attitudes towards their nations when the War broke out. However, academics tended to avoid any acknowledgement that there was doubt in the scholarship, and both sides turned to political history, diplomatic documents, the speeches of statesmen and the scholarship of their opponents in search of proof to support their arguments. Publicising their views in pamphlets, speeches and manifestoes, academics engaged in a propaganda war which, though far less famous than the propaganda of the Second World War, was just as vital to the home and fighting fronts of its time.

The First World War saw the birth of modern propaganda – in an age which had witnessed a new scientific approach to mass advertising, a growing academic interest in the crowd as a distinctive

¹¹ Winter & Prost, *Debates*, pp. 28-9, Pierre Purseigle, ‘Warfare and Belligerence: Approaches to the First World War’, in Pierre Purseigle (Ed.) *Warfare and Belligerence: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden, Boston, 2005) p. 8, 32; Daniel Moran, *Researching WWI*, p. 33

¹² Purseigle, *Warfare*, p. 3.

¹³ ‘Im Zweifel der Wissenschaft, entscheide ich mich fürs Vaterland’. Oskar Fleischer, *Vom Kriege gegen die deutsche Kultur* (Frankfurt a.M., 1915), p. 87. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

psychological entity, and an increase in political engagement as a result of wider suffrage, the idea that the masses could be influenced and even controlled by a clever orator seemed not only possible, but also important. Nevertheless, propaganda's image after the War was quite negative, and this affected the initial studies of wartime propaganda published in the decades immediately following the Armistice. Propaganda was often perceived as perfidious and treacherous: it had hoodwinked the peoples of the belligerent nations into a war prolonged by ambitious governing castes and war profiteers who played on the patriotism and bravery of the lions of the trenches. American political scientist Harold Lasswell's account was typical of the time:

That credulous utopianism, which fed upon the mighty words which exploited the hopes of the mass in war, had in many minds given way to cynicism and disenchantment, and with these earnest souls propaganda is a... serious matter... they writhe in the knowledge that they were blind pawns in plans which they did not incubate, and which they neither devised, nor comprehended nor approved.¹⁴

The British politician Arthur Ponsonby's judgement of war propaganda was even more critical, dwelling particularly on the treachery of those in power, who he felt had abused the trust placed in them by the people:

...there is not a living soul in any country who does not deeply resent having his passions roused, his indignation inflamed, his patriotism exploited, and his highest ideals desecrated by concealment, subterfuge, fraud, falsehood, trickery and deliberate lying on the part of those in whom he is taught to repose confidence and to whom he is enjoined to pay respect.¹⁵

¹⁴ Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques in the World War* (London, 1927), p. 3.

¹⁵ Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime* (London, 1940 (1st edition 1928)), p. 29.

Ponsonby was not alone. Many of the works analysing propaganda after the War saw it as a duty to 'expose the lies' of the First World War, and thereby put people on their guard against propaganda in future; there was 'a general effort even among those who were trying to see propaganda as a social phenomenon or "as a function of a particular kind of society" to build up an immunity against it, a self-acting, instantly releasable anti-venom'.¹⁶ Following the Armistice, although propaganda was accepted as a part of daily life, it was often seen as a negative device, a toy used by irresponsible elites, in contrast to the more neutral attitude towards propaganda before the War: 'There is hardly a nation in the world whose government is not busier tampering with public opinion than seeking solutions for grave and universal problems',¹⁷ proclaimed William E. Berchtold, while Frances G. Wilson went further, calling it 'an evasion of the moral principle of the agreement of free men in a free society', a 'means of emancipating government from responsibility and limitation.'¹⁸

The first wave of war studies was published a decade after the War ended, with Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime* and Lasswell's *Propaganda Techniques in the World War* both published in 1927. Ponsonby was a liberal MP, who had opposed Britain's entry to the War, and his study was highly critical; he viewed propaganda as an unscrupulous tool used by governments to fool their people and aimed to warn people against their machinations. During the War, Ponsonby worked with the Union of Democratic Control, a group founded to oppose 'secret diplomacy' which they felt had led to the War, and which pushed for an open discussion of war aims. When coupled with Ponsonby's feeling that the British Government had betrayed their people by entering the War, his attitude is not unexpected, and clearly coloured his attempt to disprove the 'lies' of the War. Lasswell too took a negative view of propaganda, but he tried to take a more scholarly approach, and his book is a study of the techniques of propaganda illustrated by their use in the War, rather than the focused study of

¹⁶ Ralph Block, 'Propaganda and the Free Society', in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Winter 1948-1949), p. 680. See also the article on 'How to Detect Propaganda', *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Jan. 1938), which was written expressly for this purpose.

¹⁷ William E. Berchtold, 'The World Propaganda War', in *The North American Review*, Vol. 238, No. 5 (Nov. 1934), p. 421. The use of the word 'tampering' is telling, implying as it does that governments are meddling with things best left alone.

¹⁸ Frances G. Wilson, 'Tradition and Propaganda', in *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Nov. 1943), pp. 402, 404.

wartime propaganda suggested by the title. George S. Viereck and George G. Bruntz more nearly achieved an academic distance from the War – perhaps because they were writing slightly later (publishing in 1931 and 1938 respectively), perhaps because, like Lasswell, they were American, and thus more removed from Ponsonby’s sense of governmental duplicity.¹⁹ Viereck’s view is particularly interesting given his position as a German-sympathiser in America, who then had to affirm his support for the United States when they entered the War, and though there is a strong German bias, his main emphasis seemed to be on proving his own innocence once America declared war on Germany. Of course, as these authors had lived through the War, their assertions are to be read carefully, as pure scholarly objectivity cannot be expected.

This objectivity did not come for a long time, and it was not until the later part of the 20th Century and the early years of the 21st that First World War propaganda came under scrutiny once more. Peter Buitenhuis’ *The Great War of Words* (1987) explored the response of British, Canadian and American literary figures to the War, highlighting their engagement with propaganda, and their involvement in official and unofficial propaganda agencies.²⁰ *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* by Gary Messinger (1992) is also of note, charting the various propaganda bodies in Britain, from their origins in the pre-war period, to the significant development during the War itself.²¹ Messinger presents a comparison of the propaganda agencies of the other major belligerents, as well as examining some of the major propaganda campaigns during the War – in particular the Bryce Report and the appeal to minorities within the Hapsburg Empire. More recently there has been David Monger’s *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain* (2012) and David Welch’s *Germany: Propaganda and Total War* (2000).²² Monger’s study focuses on the activities of the National War Aims Committee, founded in August 1917, and their attempts to maintain morale in Britain in the final years of the War. Welch, on the other hand, investigates the German situation,

¹⁹ George S. Viereck, *Spreading Germs of Hate* (London, 1931); George C. Bruntz, *Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918* (Oxford, 1938).

²⁰ Peter Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: British, American and Canadian Propaganda and Fiction, 1914-1933* (Vancouver, 1987).

²¹ Gary Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester, 1992).

²² David Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain* (Liverpool, 2012). Welch, republished as *Germany and Propaganda in World War I* in 2014.

looking at the various propaganda bodies at work in Germany throughout the War, as well as the changing issues on which they concentrated, and the ways in which the public responded. These studies thus explore the overarching propaganda systems in the countries on which they focus, offering an insight into both governmental and independent organisations and an analysis of the principal aims of those producing propaganda. However, there still remains scope for an in-depth analysis of the content of this propaganda, and, as noted above, of the different levels of propaganda produced – not simply the emotive and simplistic forms offered by the yellow press which are usually associated with the subject of propaganda, but also the rational, researched and complex propaganda of the pamphlets used in this study.

Intellectual propaganda is not a new subject, particularly in Germany, where a number of authors have explored the phenomenon. *War and the Image of Germany* (1988) by Stuart Wallace is perhaps the best-known of those texts which focus on Britain, investigating the response of academics to the War, with a focus on certain individuals in order to illustrate the pressures and influences on British scholars.²³ Wallace's analysis gives an overview of the effect of the War on the British academic community, and concentrates in particular on historians and philosophers, who seem to have been the most prolific writers during the War. His examination of war aims, propaganda and post-war reconciliation is a valuable aid to any student of academic propaganda, but the sole focus on British intellectuals provides us with only one side of the debate. Roland Stromberg also explores the subject in *Redemption by War* (1982), examining the engagement of prominent intellectuals in Britain, France and Germany with the War.²⁴ While he does make the point that many of the accusations made by both sides were equally applicable to those nations making allegations, he does not acknowledge that these were the images which the British and Germans chose to present, both of themselves and of the enemy. He glosses over the themes which I will explore in detail, and he fails to recognize the debate which can be found in the arguments proposed by the scholars in question, and the use of similar lines of argumentation to prove opposing points.

²³ Stuart Wallace, *War and the Image of Germany* (Edinburgh, 1988).

²⁴ Roland Stromberg, *Redemption by War: The Intellectuals and 1914* (Kansas, 1982).

On the German side, *Krieg der Philosophen*, by Peter Hoeres (2004) and Barbara Beßlich's *Wege in den >Kulturkrieg<* (2000) are probably the most recent contributions to the literature.²⁵ Hoeres engages in a thorough and exhaustive study of German and British philosophical responses to the War, but although he examines both sides of the conflict, his subject tends to be of a more erudite nature than the war literature reaching the mass of the people. This is due to his focus on the philosophical musings of the intellectuals in question, which were often inspired by the War, but were not necessarily aimed at the general public. Beßlich's work, on the other hand, centres on the concept of a cultural war, from pre-war conceptions to post-war reflections, and her focus on four intellectuals (Rudolf Eucken, Hermann Bahr, Johann Plenge and Thomas Mann) allows her to explore beyond academe, but does not give the same broad overview as other studies. Both Hoeres and Beßlich follow on the earlier analyses of the reactions of the German academics by scholars such as Klaus Schwabe, Rüdiger vom Bruch and Wolfgang Mommsen, writing from the late 1960s onwards. These tend to examine the engagement of select intellectual groups (historians, economists, etc.) with the War, or particular issues (such as war aims or the 'ideas of 1914'), but concentrate primarily on German intellectuals and their responses, rather than on the academic world as an integrated international community. Aribert Reimann's *Der große Krieg der Sprachen* (2000) is also a useful addition to the debate, although it does not focus on intellectuals, but examines British and German newspapers at key dates in the conflict, comparing them with trench letters and diaries in order to examine the similarities of discourse at home and at the front.²⁶ His sources reflect many of the same arguments as the pamphlets examined in this thesis – a logical coincidence when one considers that many authors were speaking in public and sharing their ideas, as well as the fact that many would have been influenced by information available to them in the press. However, while academics were not supposed to be motivated by a particular agenda, many newspapers displayed a strong patriotic bias – particularly the more vituperative papers of the yellow press.

Though French historiography has explored French intellectual engagement and the War, Martha

²⁵ Peter Hoeres, *Krieg der Philosophen* (Schöningh, Paderborn, 2004); Barbara Beßlich, *Wege in den >Kulturkrieg<* (Darmstadt, 2000).

²⁶ Aribert Reimann, *Der große Krieg der Sprachen* (Essen, 2000).

Hanna's *The Mobilization of Intellect* (1996) is probably the best known work on the subject in English, examining the activities of non-combatant French intellectuals in a lucid and insightful analysis. Unwittingly, this thesis owes a great debt to her approach, examining as it does the academic milieu before the conflict, and the outbreak of War, before turning to a more in-depth analysis of the main issues of the War for French intellectuals. Her conclusion that intellectual leaders were 'indispensable' to the war effort, 'uniquely qualified to articulate an intellectual rationale for why the nation was at war,'²⁷ supports the view that academics in Britain and Germany contributed in a vital way to the war effort on the home front, and helps to highlight the similarity of intellectual engagement in the belligerent nations. Her analysis of the questions of civilization and barbarism as articulated in French discourse also sheds light on the triple nature of this particular question – though this thesis focuses solely on the issue of *Kultur* and civilization from the point of view of British and German responses, it is important to remember that the debate was also a central concern of French academics, and, as we shall see in Chapter Seven, German pamphlets directly responded to the ideas of the French Revolution as the antithesis of the German values of 1914. Nevertheless, Hanna's study examines only the response of the French intelligentsia to the War rather than taking a comparative approach which sets their activities in context. Furthermore, her contention that the French and British responses to intellectual involvement were widely different is perhaps a little restricted, as it is based mainly on the utterances of those involved in the literature of disaffection, and biased towards literary figures.

The history of intellectual engagement with the War is heavily weighted to the German side, and this highlights a significant gap in the scholarship which merits addressing. Furthermore, the fact that most of these works date from 30 years ago cannot help but prompt a desire to re-examine the evidence in search of new insights. Given the interconnectedness of the academic world before the War,²⁸ the approach of these studies, which tend to focus on the national viewpoint of a single nation

²⁷ Martha Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect* (Cambridge, Mass.; London, 1996), pp. 16, 19.

²⁸ This interconnectedness has been examined by scholars such as Tamson Pietsch, who explores the links between universities throughout the British Empire. See Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars* (Manchester, 2013).

(Hoeres is a notable exception) excludes an important aspect of the war of ideas; namely the fact that the propagandists were not working in a vacuum, but were tacitly engaging in a debate with their opponents. As a result, we need to explore the way in which they read and responded to each other, and not just how they reacted to the War in their own milieu. By examining the content of the propaganda in depth rather than just the lives of the propagandists – a facet which is often glossed over – we gain a greater insight into the minds of a people at war. After all, this was what they were reading, what formed their thoughts and, as was often reiterated, what helped them to make sense of the conflict.

This thesis aims to be a small step towards filling that gap in the scholarship, building on the studies that have come before and exploring the work of a number of pamphleteers, analysing their arguments about the War in order to show how similar both sides really were. Pamphlets as a means of disseminating ideas among the general public have a long and illustrious history and served as an important way to extend the scholarly ‘Republic of Letters’ to the general public. The outbreak of the First World War was no exception, and hundreds of pamphlets dealing with the issues it raised were published by a variety of institutions, organisations and private individuals. These pamphlets examined all aspects of the War, from the big questions of origins, aims, and the way it was fought, to more niche topics like the defence of the Falkland Islands, or the way in which German women were supporting the war effort. The pamphlets under examination in this thesis come from various series whose origins will be discussed in more detail in Chapter One – primarily the Oxford Pamphlets, *Der Deutsche Krieg* and *Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit*, supplemented by a number of independent pamphlets by prominent authors. The majority of pamphlets used are held in the collection of Queen’s College, Oxford, and many were a gift from William Sanday, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, during the War. Not only did Sanday amass a considerable collection of war pamphlets in a number of languages (some of which would have been readily available, and some, particularly those in German, which would have been extremely difficult to obtain), he also contributed to the exchange with his own pamphlets.

Propaganda in the First World War did not aim solely at the home front, though this was an important part of their campaign, but also sought to influence neutral audiences, in order to win them to their cause, and tried to demoralise the enemy, at home and on the battlefield. The pamphlets in this thesis were chosen as they specifically discussed the enemy, in order to clearly draw the parallels in argument and highlight the debate which occurred. Judging by their content, their audience was the home front and neutral nations – they tended towards morale boosting and self-justification, rather than discouragement, and those which laid out comparisons between their own situation and that of their opponents emphasised a reassuring tone. Though there was certainly dissent among intellectuals, opponents of the War have already drawn scholarly attention, and I have chosen to focus on the majority, who supported the war effort, and tried to ‘do their bit’ at home rather than at the Front. *Deutschland und der Weltkrieg* (1915), a collection of essays edited by the historians Hermann Oncken, Otto Hintze, Friedrich Meinecke and Hermann Schumacher, is often cited in studies of academic propaganda, but has not been included in this study as those essays which deal with the topics under discussion in this thesis were written by authors whose ideas had previously been explored in other works which will be examined here.

The pamphlets are supported by the personal papers of a number of authors connected with them, as well as the papers of Oxford University Press, and the records of the propaganda department of the German Foreign Office, which dealt with several civilian propaganda organisations. These papers provide vital information on the publication of the pamphlets, on distribution and demand, and of ideas of propaganda and public engagement in both Britain and Germany during the War.

It is important to establish two fundamental concepts which form the basis of this thesis – the nature of propaganda for the purpose of this study, and the definition of an intellectual.

Despite the highly emotive condemnation of propaganda after the War, we must bear in mind that propaganda is not necessarily malign – even in the 1920s, one official could consider it ‘a good word

gone wrong'.²⁹ Propaganda aims to persuade – the method of persuasion can indeed be cynically manipulative, but equally, it can be an attempt by a true believer to convert others. There are multiple definitions of the term (nearly every work on the subject offers its own) but Raymond Dodge gives us a succinct explanation when he defines it as 'the art of making up the other man's mind for him'.³⁰ All definitions seem to agree that propaganda involves the communication of ideas in such a way as to encourage those receiving the message to behave in a certain way; and a number advocate a degree of secrecy in the dissemination of ideas – the word 'propaganda' when attached to a message tends to damage the cause.³¹

Above all, the focus is on the *deliberate* nature of propaganda. Although propaganda can be – and often is – an unconscious process, the focus of this study must be on propaganda deliberately created with a view towards influencing the attitudes of others to conform to the desires of the propagandist. This sort of definition has in the past led to an idea of the propagandist as a cynical manipulator gleefully making his puppets dance. It is easy to see how such an image could develop in light of the proliferation of atrocity stories during the First World War, or indeed, given Hitler's later advocacy of the 'Big Lie' in *Mein Kampf*. Richard S. Lambert's view, while less elitist, has no more faith in truth; in his view, under the conditions of war 'there is a sort of national wink, everyone goes forward, and the individual in his turn takes up lying as a patriotic duty.'³²

The issue of conviction is a contentious one, with some claiming that 'though [the propagandist] must be able to work himself into temporary enthusiasms for the causes he advances, he must never wholly lose the objective vision,' while others maintain that he 'cannot hypnotize others without first

²⁹ Nicholas J. Cull, David Culbert, David Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Oxford, 2003), p. xvii.

³⁰ Raymond Dodge, 'The Psychology of Propaganda', in *Religious Education*, 15 (Feb/Dec 1920), p. 242. Garth S. Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell present a good overview of the various definitions in *Propaganda and Persuasion* (3rd Edition) (London, 1999).

³¹ See for example, Jowett & O'Donnell, *Propaganda*, pp. 1-6; Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, (Manchester, 1995), p. 6; Dodge, 'Psychology', p. 242; Richard S. Lambert, *Propaganda* (London, 1938), pp. 12-13.

³² Lambert, *Propaganda*, p. 24.

hypnotizing himself'.³³ The latter seems to hold true with regard to the propagandists of the First World War: while the members of the various propaganda divisions were, without doubt, deliberately doing their utmost to influence others – be that on the Home Front, in neutral countries, or in enemy trenches – cynicism was largely absent. They were not mounting a campaign to prolong the suffering in the trenches. They truly believed in the justice of their cause and were willing to do anything to ensure victory. 'The conflict called forth an amazing variety of attempts, during an extremely trying period, to reconcile personal versions of truth and organisational obligations' Gary Messinger tells us,³⁴ and while facts might be rearranged, or details left vague, the propagandists aimed for truth as much as possible, not only because falsehood could be discovered and thereby discredit the source, but also because they had faith that they were fighting for what was right.

David Monger supports this argument, stating that

much previous work on patriotism and propaganda has been too characterised by distrust. Perceptions that the First World War propaganda was essentially about the cynical manipulation of the public by the state have encouraged equally cynical interpretations of the propaganda content... propagandists working for organisations like the [National War Aims Committee] did not actually spend their whole time bawling about bestial brutality, but provided discussion which directed familiar concepts to wartime purposes....³⁵

This facilitation of discussion, while not a concept readily associated with the traditional image of propaganda, is perhaps best found in academic propaganda, with its focus on logical argument, acknowledgement of the opposing side's views, and its reliance on substantial supporting evidence.

³³ Sidney Rogerson, *Propaganda in the Next War* (London, 1938), p. 32; Viereck, *Germs*, p. 26.

³⁴ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 3.

³⁵ Monger, *Patriotism*, pp. 273-274.

Given this diversion from the usual definition of propaganda, it is worth questioning whether the pamphlets under consideration in this study can truly be considered propaganda. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker have suggested that the experience of propaganda in the interwar years and the Second World War has distorted our view of the propaganda of the First World War, for which the term ‘propaganda’ is not quite adequate.³⁶ Certainly, we need to remember that discursive meanings change over time, and that, in turn, suggests that we must be careful not to consider propaganda solely in light of the interwar analyses, as a top-down imposition of opinion on ignorant masses.³⁷ Recent historiography has certainly turned away from the notion that nations went to war on the basis of this top-down model of propaganda, focusing instead on ideas of self-mobilization, largely indifferent to state-led attempts to create consensus, or of a specific war culture, in which support for the war was based on a deep-seated hatred for the enemy, reinforced by atrocity stories and the demonization of the enemy.³⁸ However, in their dismissal of propaganda as a motivating force, they too run the risk of overlooking what Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker themselves characterise as ‘horizontal propaganda’, a form in which the subjects of propaganda willingly participated in the propaganda process, becoming consumers and creators of the very material which reinforced their faith in the War.³⁹

It is possible that the dismissal of ‘mere propaganda’ has not only caused us to overlook true sentiment, as Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker suggest,⁴⁰ but also the variety of forms that propaganda could take. Rather than following the definition of propaganda as an attempt to manipulate, viewing it as an attempt to persuade expands propaganda to include logical, reasoned statements of opinion seeking to convince others of the validity of a particular point of view. John Horne notes that popular support for the war arose from ‘persuasion and self-persuasion, much more than from coercion’, and

³⁶ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau & Annette Becker, *Understanding the Great War* (London, 2002), pp. 108-9.

³⁷ The issues of rhetorical temporalities are elaborated by Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History* (Stanford, 2002). The discourses of the Great War in particular are discussed by Reimann, *Krieg der Sprachen*.

³⁸ On self-mobilisation, see John Horne, ‘Mobilizing for ‘Total War’, 1914-1918’, in *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge, 1997), pp.3-5; Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 6-7, 229; Tomás Irish, *The University at War* (Basingstoke, 2015), p. 27. For war culture, see Audoin-Rouzeau & Becker, *Understanding*, pp. 100-3.

³⁹ Audoin-Rouzeau & Becker, *Understanding*, pp. 109-1.0

⁴⁰ Audoin-Rouzeau & Becker, *Understanding*, p. 103.

that wartime mobilization was not just the work of military and civilian planners, but also the lived relationship of a variety of different groups... to the war and to its meaning.⁴¹ Catriona Pennell asserts that there was no need for a propaganda effort in Britain and Ireland, as people were convinced of the need to fight on the basis of their own interpretations of the information available to them and mobilised themselves.⁴² However, if we accept that coercion only played a minor role in the mobilisation for war, we have to ask why and how people were persuaded and persuaded themselves to go to war – and the role of horizontal propaganda as a persuasive force becomes of vital importance. Surely, part of self-mobilisation was convincing others that the War was one of defence and survival. This is not to say that every individual engaged in brain-washing – propaganda and the opportunity for critical assessment are not mutually exclusive, as the academic pamphlets show. Academic propaganda can thus be seen as a facet of this persuasion of self and other: if, as Horne suggests, mobilization was a process of engagement with the War as total war, and was also linked to morale and support for the war, then academic propaganda can be seen as the way this totality was expressed by academics, and the way in which they sought to mobilize others.

In characterizing academic propaganda as part of a solely top-down narrative, we run the risk of separating academic propaganda from the society to which it was intimately linked; the propagandists cannot be separated from the people, as they not only shaped opinion, but also followed it.⁴³ Whatever they may have felt about their own objectivity, it seems impossible that they should not have been influenced by the emotion of the War and of their own sense of duty and patriotism. On the other hand, it cannot be entirely divided from the propaganda created purely by the state – as Chapter Two will show, though academics had a high level of autonomy, there were still links with the state. It is perhaps best to view it as part of a process of self-mobilisation which was state-supported rather than state-directed, and the distinction between horizontal propaganda and top-down propaganda as one with blurred edges, as each responded to and fed into the other. As Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann

⁴¹ Horne, *Mobilizing*, pp. 3-5.

⁴² Pennell, *United*, p. 229.

⁴³ See Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, 'The Role of British and German Historians in Mobilizing Public Opinion in 1914', in Benedikt Stuchtey & Peter Wende (Eds.), *British and German Historiography 1750-1950* (Oxford, 2000), p. 342.

points out, the ‘border between propaganda and educational information was not clearly defined’, and the academics themselves viewed it in broad terms. ‘Propaganda in the narrower sense was not within our proper province,’ the historian J.A.R. Marriott recalled after the War, ‘But we substituted for our usual lecture subjects, courses which had a direct bearing on the war...’, showing the blurred lines between intellectual engagement and the attempt to encourage people to think about the causes and possible consequences of the conflict.⁴⁴ Above all, in determining the propagandistic merits of the academic pamphlets, we must bear in mind their ultimate purpose: the attempt to explain and justify the War, persuading others of the need to fight and maintain morale. We cannot dismiss them as propaganda simply because they do not fit a top-down narrative which has already been discredited as a motivating force in support for the War.

In focusing on the response of the academics and intellectuals of Britain and Germany to the War we encounter a propaganda which stands apart for two reasons. Firstly, unlike the propaganda produced by official propaganda agencies, the work of the intellectuals was aimed at a known audience. Though addressing nations at large, their work was often a direct response to a piece produced by their opponents, opponents they frequently knew, if not personally, then through an acquaintance with their work before the War. Roland Stromberg laments that a ‘wartime symposium’ in which Durkheim debated with Weber was impossible, underlining that war ‘severed virtually all such contacts,’ and Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg argues that in place of the personal debates which characterised academic exchanges in the Franco-Prussian War, the First World War saw an exchange of blows between inflexible collectives.⁴⁵ I would venture to argue that this was manifestly not the case. While the ‘lively exchange of ideas at international congresses’⁴⁶ missed by Berlin physician and political activist Magnus Hirschfeld could not take place, this thesis contends that a debate was created in the production of pamphlets which, though ostensibly addressed to neutral or home audiences, were read

⁴⁴ Pogge von Strandmann *Historians*, p. 351

⁴⁵ Roland Stromberg, *Redemption by War: The Intellectuals and 1914* (Kansas, 1982), pp. 53-54; Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg, ‘Wie gibt man dem Sinnlosen einen Sinn? Zum Gebrauch der Begriffe ‚deutscher Kultur‘ und ‚Militarismus‘ im Herbst 1914’ in Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Kultur und Krieg: die Rolle der Intellektuellen, Künstler und Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (München, 1996), pp. 89-90

⁴⁶ Magnus Hirschfeld, *Warum Hassen uns die Völker?* (Bonn, 1915), p. 3.

by the enemy, and prompted responses. These responses were either overt, such as the exchange of manifestos which accompanied the early days of the War, or were found in the pamphlets which dealt with similar topics and only occasionally referenced the work of their erstwhile colleagues. Such propaganda exchanges between those who knew each other well and considered each other intellectual equals, in a field which generally emphasises manipulation from above, deserves greater attention than it has received hitherto. Secondly, such propaganda can be considered as highbrow, in contrast to the cruder posters and atrocity stories found in other media. This is not to say that intellectual propaganda avoided emotional appeals and mud-slinging, but that it appeared to present reasoned and rational arguments, often footnoted, written in a sophisticated register very different from the vituperation which poured from the Bottomley press. Furthermore, the propaganda of both sides was remarkably similar, using comparable arguments and parallel examples to justify their own cause.

It is also important to define ‘intellectual’ as it will be used in this study. A rather fluid concept in itself, the definition seems to have been in constant flux, incorporating a range of figures from Coleridge’s clerisy to Julian Benda’s *clerics*. Stefan Collini, in his *Absent Minds*, tracks the changing vocabulary describing those whose main role was to think – from ‘men of letters’ to ‘sages’ to ‘social critics and commentators’. T.W. Heyck, too, describes the overlapping circles of ‘men of letters’, ‘philosophers and scientists’ and professors and dons.⁴⁷ Collini traces the rise of ‘intellectual’, and its gradual acceptance as a general overarching term for those who thought for a living (or those who wished to) to the Dreyfus Affair and the protestation of Dreyfus’ innocence in print, signed by a long list of literary and academic eminences, mockingly termed ‘*intellectuels*’ by their opponents, a term then taken up with pride.⁴⁸ Heyck, on the other hand, attributes the emergence of the concept of the intellectual to the rise of science, to university reform, and to a tradition of ‘culturally-oriented’ criticism of society, which led to the conception of a distinct class of ‘persons possessing knowledge, or in a narrower sense those whose judgement, based on reflection and knowledge, derives less

⁴⁷ Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford, 2006), p. 73; T.W. Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, (London, 1984 (1st ed. 1982)), p. 24.

⁴⁸ Collini, *Absent Minds*, pp. 80-1.

directly and exclusively from sensory perception than is the case with non-intellectuals'.⁴⁹ Examining the German case, Fritz Ringer describes a 'social and cultural elite which owe[d] its status primarily to educational qualifications rather than to hereditary rights or wealth', comprising doctors, lawyers, government officials and ministers as well as professors and teachers, and established through a long history of association with ruling bureaucracies, in a particular mid-point of social development from agricultural to industrial societies.⁵⁰

The intellectuals in this study are more in line with the definition suggested by Collini and Ringer – literary and academic eminences, who felt a duty to involve themselves in the important political issues of the day. Unlike Roland Stromberg, who excludes the university professors from his wartime redemption (though he then proceeds to include a number of them in his study), I will focus predominantly on the university teachers of both countries, though certain prominent figures who were not technically academics (such as Valentine Chirol or Magnus Hirschfeld) will also feature. Contrasting with those described by Stromberg, who rejected the establishment with a sense of despair and disillusionment,⁵¹ these intellectuals were frequently members of said establishment, and happily so, working with or even in government (Chirol was a diplomat and journalist and Hirschfeld was a physician and activist), and optimistic about the future of society and science. References to science at the time were not limited, as our own would be, to the fields of what then were known as the 'natural sciences' – chemistry, physics, and biology; science (or *Wissenschaft*) is a more flexible term, referring not only to laboratories and chemicals, but to a mode of study, a reliance on objectivity and rationalism, a seeking of truth, be it in philosophy, history, or nuclear physics. Nevertheless, those who contributed to the pamphlet series under discussion in this thesis predominantly belong to the humanities and social sciences (eminent physicians such as Magnus Hirschfeld or William Osler notwithstanding), presumably because their fields made them ideally suited to elaborate and explore

⁴⁹ Heyck, *Transformation*, p. 13.

⁵⁰ Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969), pp. 3-7.

⁵¹ Stromberg, *Redemption*, pp. 14-18.

the issues of the War, while those academics in the natural sciences were mobilised in a different way, offering their technical expertise, laboratories and practical experience to the war effort.⁵²

The thesis itself is structured so as to provide a general indication of the context in which intellectuals were acting, and the effect of the War on the academic community, before turning to a more in-depth examination of the propaganda they produced. A biographical appendix of authors can be found at the end of the thesis for the reader's convenience. The first chapter gives an overview of propaganda in the First World War in order to place the work of the academics within an institutional framework, before examining the publication of the pamphlet series discussed in later chapters in more detail.

The second chapter then turns to the world of the intellectuals, providing an outline of the university systems in Britain and Germany, and exploring the close relationships between academics which transcended national boundaries. The focus of the chapter then shifts to the impact of the War on this tight community, examining the relationships between former friends in wartime, and highlighting the perseverance of personal friendship despite national enmity.

The following chapters investigate the content of the propaganda produced by academics in the first two years of the War, and are divided according to the themes which characterised this work. We begin this section with an exploration of the initial response of the academic community to the outbreak of war, and the sense of shock, betrayal, and pain caused by the sudden rupture in relations, primarily through an examination of the manifestos published by groups of British and German intellectuals in support of their respective nations' cause (Chapter Three). The other chapters deal in turn with the debate over the causes of the War (Chapter Four), British and German ideas of the key issues of culture and civilization (Chapters Five and Six), and academics' hypotheses of post-war reconstruction and the new political constellation of Europe (Chapter Seven).

Such concepts, of course, changed over the course of the War in response to events at the Front and to political and social changes at home. This thesis focuses on the ideas of academics during the early

⁵² See Irish, *University at War*, pp. 29-32, 40-55.

years of the War for two main reasons. The first is source based, as one of the main primary sources used is a pamphlet series which initially attracted a mass audience, but, by the publishers' own admission, began to lose the interest of the public by the summer of 1915, and so was no longer commissioned.⁵³ The second is a result of the content of the pamphlets, which mirrored this loss of interest. Originally, issues such as the origins of the War, and the causes for which the nations were fighting were of major importance in the propaganda war, helping to boost morale and encourage recruitment. However, as the War went on, not only did the public grow weary of hearing the same arguments reiterated, but the events of the War themselves became motivations to fight, bolstering arguments which had previously relied on historical analysis and political intrigue – as the examples of the Lusitania, the use of poison gas or the British blockade show. This is not to say that academics did not use the events of the War to support their arguments in these early pamphlets (the invasion of Belgium is a prime example to the contrary), but the combination of a saturated market and new horrors helped to shift the debate from these early concerns to a new focus in the second half of the War on the need to see the fight through to the finish and a discussion of concrete war aims. Buitenhuis notes that after the fall of the Asquith Government in 1916, propaganda became less focused on literature, and at around the same time, enthusiasm for the War began to wane, and this too could have supported the gradual change of concern.⁵⁴ As a result, the sources used in this thesis are heavily biased toward the first year of the War in particular, with a smaller number of pamphlets from 1916 which continued the original arguments, or showed how they had developed.

With the shift in historiography to a greater focus on the cultural and social aspects of the First World War, both propaganda and the academic world present promising areas for re-evaluation. The propaganda efforts of academics in particular offer us an insight into the mindset of a social group which can shed light on a broader cultural attitude, as the pamphlets were aimed at a mass audience,

⁵³ Rudolf Eucken noted that audiences for his speeches began to decline at this stage as well – See Peter Hoeres, *Krieg der Philosophen* (Schöningh, Paderborn, 2004), p. 216.

⁵⁴ Peter Jelavich places this waning interest as early as spring 1915. See Peter Jelavich, 'German Culture in the Great War', in Aviel Roshwald & Richard Stites (Eds.), *European Culture in the Great War* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 34-9; Buitenhuis, *War of Words*, p. xvii. See also Klaus Böhme, 'Einleitung' in *Aufrufe und Reden der deutschen Professoren* (Stuttgart, 2014 (1st edition, 1975)), p. 21.

and therefore responded to their concerns, but did not operate under the tropes of propaganda as it is usually conceived. Their content is therefore unique and valuable. Given that this is meant only as a first step in the re-examination of war propaganda, the narrow focus of this thesis will allow for an in-depth analysis of content, as well as paving the way for further study of the history of the war of ideas

The Pen is Mightier than the Sword

Organised crowds have always played an important part in the life of peoples, but this part has never been of such moment as at present. The substitution of the unconscious action of crowds for the conscious activity of individuals is one of the principal characteristics of the present age.

-Gustave Le Bon, 1895

Those who would attempt a diagnosis of the present must find themselves more and more turning their attention from the individual to the aggregation... We have to deal... not only with the Crowd casually collected in sudden movement by persons accustomed to live alone, but with whole peoples which... are reared in a Crowd, labour in a Crowd, in a Crowd take their enjoyments, die in a Crowd and in a Crowd are buried at the end.¹

-Charles Masterman, 1909

This sense of the increasingly all-encompassing nature of the Crowd was a defining feature of the end of the 19th Century, and was reflected in a growing concern with the changing nature of society and in the attempt to determine and delineate those changes within a scientific framework. The 19th Century witnessed the mass industrialisation of much of western Europe, and a corresponding sense that as the production process became more and more mechanised, so too did society. No longer composed of skilled craftsmen in small communities, the social order had shifted, as the masses flocked to the towns, spent their days in huge factories, and their lives as cogs in a vast, alienating machine. Jaap van Ginneken describes the 'radical transformations' in European society between 1789 and 1888, with a huge increase in urbanization, mobility and ease of communication. Revolutions in the economic, technological, social and political spheres had completely transformed the face of Europe, changing both everyday interactions and crowd activities.² These improvements in mobility and

¹ Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (New York, 1973 (first published 1895)), p. 3.
C.F.G. Masterman, *The Condition of England* (London, 1909), p. 118.

² Jaap van Ginneken, *Crowds, Psychology and Politics, 1871-1899* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 3.

communication, coupled with rising literacy rates and the growth of urban centres, transformed the press, particularly in provincial areas, where local papers covering home and national news came into their own. This was especially important in Germany, where the local press was more likely to offer alternative opinions to those promoted by the Berlin government, as it was so far from the centre of Imperial power.³ Jose Harris marks this era as unique in British history, as a time in which ‘opinion had been emancipated from an ancient Church-State establishment but in which the homogenizing forces of the new mass media were still in their infancy’,⁴ but the same is broadly true for most of western Europe. If we combine this new state of development with the idea of the *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* community, and the breakdown between old habits and the new requirements of the age, the ‘sense of crisis among elites, generalised as a fear of the lower or dangerous classes’ underlined by John A. Mayer becomes completely understandable.⁵

Crowds were not a new phenomenon, but the focus had changed. Europe was at a crossroads – at least according to the 19th Century sociologist Gustave Le Bon, who felt that modern science had destroyed the religious, political and social illusions of the past, and with them, all sense of hope:

Notwithstanding all its progress, philosophy has been unable as yet to offer the masses any ideal that can charm them; but as they must have their illusions at all costs, they turn instinctively, as the insect seeks the light, to the rhetoricians who accord them what they want.⁶

This was especially dangerous, he believed, as crowds were rapidly becoming aware of their own power. According to George Rudé, this growing sense of strength could be traced to the Enlightenment, and ‘once the new and essentially forward-looking ideas of the “rights of man” and

³ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (London, 1980), p. 88. For an in-depth examination of Germany in particular, see Oliver Zimmer, *Remaking the Rhythms of Life* (Oxford, 2013), which explores the changes in three German towns at the turn of the century.

⁴ Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (London, 1994), pp. 38-39.

⁵ John A. Mayer, ‘Notes Towards a Working Definition of Social Control in Historical Analysis’, in *Social Control and the State*, Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull (Eds.) (Oxford, 1985), p. 17

⁶ Le Bon, *The Crowd*, p. 110.

“popular sovereignty” had gripped the popular imagination, riots and disturbances tended to acquire a new dimension and to assume a stable social-ideological content that they had lacked before.⁷ Gone were the days in which a crowd could be appeased by a carnival or feast, *panem et circenses*. This was a new age, and had to be approached in a new, scientific manner. ‘In a sense,’ says van Ginneken, ‘the 1880s were a celebration of this new world, but also of the need for new methods of management and control.’⁸

Le Bon and his contemporaries sought to analyse the crowd in order to better exert this control, examining the formation of ‘psychological crowds’ and the ways in which they could be manipulated. By 1890, fears regarding the nature of the crowd and social changes had spread beyond political thinkers to the wider academic world – chiefly to the new schools of sociology and social psychology.⁹ Their works found a large readership, particularly amongst the middle classes, so much so that by 1892, in his review of criminologist Scipio Sighele’s *Criminal Crowd*, Georges Valbert was able to denounce it as overly academic, proof that ‘today, even common sense itself feels compelled to parade about in an academic gown and doctoral bonnet’.¹⁰ By the end of the 19th Century, according to V. Giraud’s estimate, approximately two million people had read several of the works of Hippolyte Taine, whose writings on the French Revolution were a major influence on crowd theory; and 11 million had read at least one of his books, excluding the translations.¹¹

This focus on mass man was coupled with a growing sense that the support of the masses was necessary to legitimise government and ‘... even Bismarck... felt the need to demonstrate that his policies were ‘popular’’. Disagreement over the extent of the ‘political nation’ and the recognition of certain forms of opinion aside, most governments agreed that they could not afford to ignore public

⁷ George Rudé, *The Crowd in History 1730-1848* (London, 1981 (1st ed. 1964)), p. 234.

⁸ van Ginneken, *Crowds*, p. 3.

⁹ Salvador Giner, *Mass Society* (London, 1976), pp. 50-7.

¹⁰ Giner, *Mass Society*, p. 57; Susanna Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth Century France*, (London, 1981), p. 134.

¹¹ van Ginneken, *Crowds*, p. 47.

opinion, and there was a new focus on winning popular support.¹² Labour Party leader Keir Hardie disapprovingly suggested that the objective of the politician was to hoodwink the electorate: ‘the main part of their business is to mislead the people. They find out [what] questions are most likely to excite the prejudices and appeal to the passions of the mob, and they play upon these as though they were matters of life and death.’¹³ According to Labour MP Ramsay MacDonald, the masses could be moved by trivialities, were easily fooled, ‘absolutely tame, very obedient and very suspicious of new leaders and willing to believe anything against them...’¹⁴

This echoes Le Bon’s sentiments quite closely, and supports Harris’ contention that there was a ‘drift towards a more mass-produced, spectator-sport style of political life’ as a result of which ‘political oratory became the indispensable medium of the age.’¹⁵ Wolfgang J. Mommsen points out that the increasing participation of the populace in politics was accompanied by an increase in nationalistic sentiment,¹⁶ and for Hugh Cunningham, patriotism is the means by which the ruling class sought to control class consciousness, calling for loyalty to the state rather than to fellow workers, and ‘bludgeoning’ patriotic feeling into the working classes through the sheer weight of propaganda.¹⁷ This does not mean that the working classes were treated as one amorphous lumpen proletariat, lacking any political sense; on the contrary, a large section of the working class press expected its readers to pay attention to and to have opinions on the issues of the day.¹⁸

We must remember that politics based on mass manipulation did not exclude the concept of citizen participation – for many, the techniques were complementary rather than contradictory.¹⁹ Equally, while public opinion was influential, this did not mean that politicians were slaves to the demands of

¹² Kennedy, *Antagonism*, p. 87.

¹³ Quoted in Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 262.

¹⁴ Quoted in Lawrence, *Speaking*, p. 262.

¹⁵ Harris, *Private Lives*, p. 192.

¹⁶ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, ‘Domestic Factors in German Foreign Policy before 1914’, *Central European History*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Mar., 1973), p. 15.

¹⁷ Hugh Cunningham, ‘The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914’, *History Workshop*, No. 12 (Autumn, 1981), pp. 23-24. As the working classes interpreted patriotism in their own way, such efforts did not necessarily have the intended effect – see pp. 25-26.

¹⁸ Kennedy, *Antagonism*, p. 89.

¹⁹ Harris, *Private Lives*, pp. 192-193.

the masses.²⁰ Mass manipulation appeared instead as an incredibly delicate process and public opinion difficult to control – once roused it could easily take an unintended direction, or be difficult to quell.

In the context of these new concepts of public opinion, the propaganda of the First World War takes on a particular significance. In previous conflicts, as J.A.C. Brown points out, the professional soldier rarely needed a reason to fight.²¹ However, social and technological changes meant that war was no longer the preserve of the statesman and the professional soldier, but required the mobilization of whole societies. Propaganda played an important role in this mobilization, its role changing from election to enlistment as it targeted both the civilian and the soldier in the front lines in different ways and intellectuals played an important role in its creation.

Firstly, it is clear that intellectuals were influenced by crowd theory. John Carey's study of the attitudes of intellectuals towards the masses highlights a sense of disdain for the crowd amongst many of the prominent writers of the early 20th Century, as well as suggesting an innate discomfort at the growth of their influence in political and public life.²² Though his work focuses on literary circles rather than the academics which form the main part of this study, it seems unlikely that such attitudes would have been entirely absent from the academic sphere. Certainly, Fritz Ringer has claimed that German academics accepted a view of the masses as easily swayed and potentially anarchic.²³ Nevertheless, we should be wary of mapping negative views directly on to the university world, due to the enthusiasm which many universities showed for schemes to educate the working classes, and reach beyond the ivory tower – as we shall see in the next chapter. Perhaps more common, then, is the attitude of Liberal MP and former journalist Charles Masterman, whose 1909 book *The Condition of England* presented the crowd as something alien and slightly menacing, but also with great potential. Masterman's treatise on 'the multitudes' is a catalogue of tropes of crowd psychology – the crowd is emotional, easily led and easily manipulated; in a crowd the individual is lost and a new entity is born.

²⁰ Kennedy, *Antagonism*, p. 102.

²¹ J.A.C. Brown, *Techniques of Persuasion*, (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 90.

²² John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (London, 1992).

²³ Ringer, *Mandarins*, p. 129.

Yet his closing statement is telling, combining this sense of superiority and promise. Looking at excited attendees at a football match, and remembering the tenacious South African fighters of the Boer War, Masterman mused

...the irresistible query is suggested by the sight of that congestion of grey, small people with their facile excitement and their little white faces inflamed by this artificial interest, whether, in a day of trial, similar resources could be drawn from them, of tenacity, courage, and an unwavering devotion to an impersonal ideal.²⁴

Masterman put his theories into practice during the War, leading the British propaganda effort from its outbreak until 1917, but similar sentiments were also expressed by intellectuals engaged in the production of propaganda. Gilbert Murray, the famous Oxford classicist, gave a lecture on ‘The Herd Instinct and the War’ in February 1915, which was clearly influenced by the work of sociologist William McDougall. Murray compared the sense of unity in Britain during the War to a deeper biological instinct to band together in times of danger, and emphasised the intensification of emotions and increased suggestibility of this herd state. His elucidation of the way in which the individual became subordinated to the crowd, both physically and intellectually, was an exact reflection of contemporary crowd theory, as was his reminder that the crowd had the potential to turn violent.²⁵

Equally, Magnus Hirschfeld, a Berlin doctor and minority rights activist, explicitly referenced the use of crowd psychology in his examination of the British conduct of war in 1915. In his discussion of the techniques of propaganda and the role of suggestion in forming opinion we see the echo of the work of Gustave Le Bon, as Hirschfeld emphasised the importance of personality in spreading a message, explaining that the fame of a person, their class and charisma would impact on the effectiveness of their message. Similarly, he discussed the idea of ‘psychic infection’, which was analysed by Le Bon

²⁴ Masterman, *Condition*, pp. 118-133.

²⁵ Gilbert Murray, *Herd Instinct and the War*, accessed online at <http://www.gutenberg.ca/ebooks/murraygga-fwp03-herdinstinct/murraygga-fwp03-herdinstinct-00-h.html> (22/10/15).

in his theory of the crowd. Le Bon believed that a person in a crowd was more credulous than an individual, that in a crowd, one was caught up in mass enthusiasm, and would not question what one was told as deeply as one would when alone. This view would have been well known in Europe at this time, and if Hirschfeld's explicit reference to mass psychology is not considered sufficient evidence of his belief in such a theory, his pamphlet is clearly inspired by the ideas of crowd theory as they stood in the early 20th Century. He discussed the ease with which a 'spiritual epidemic' was spread around Europe, passed from one nation to another, each turning against Germany and believing the worst of her conduct. Paraphrasing Le Bon's theories almost exactly, he noted that the more exaggerated the slander against Germany, the more likely it was that it would be believed, and cited the atrocity stories which were circulating about Belgium as the best example of such tactics.²⁶

Given such concerns, it is not surprising that many of the intellectuals engaged in their countries' propagandistic efforts should explore the role of the Press in the War, and the focus on 'lying propaganda' will be discussed in Chapter Six. Despite their familiarity with the tenets of crowd psychology, however, academic propaganda tended not to follow the strictures laid down for the manipulation of crowds. For this reason, intellectual propaganda stands out in the history of First World War propaganda, (generally) being based on reasoned analysis, documented evidence and careful scholarship, rather than emotion, repetition and sweeping generalisations. Furthermore, it was often presented as a dialogue between equals, rather than an attempt to enlighten the ignorant masses, though of course, pedagogic tendencies were not entirely eradicated.

Before examining the content of academic propaganda, a general outline of the context in which it operated may be useful. Academics were frequently involved in both official and private propagandistic efforts, engaging in government work or labouring under their own initiative. The British were the first to set up an official propaganda apparatus – given the circumstances surrounding her entry into the War and the arguments needed to justify her participation, such an organisation

²⁶ Hirschfeld, *Warum hassen*, pp. 7-9, 11-2; Le Bon, *The Crowd*, pp. 110-1.

seemed necessary.²⁷ It was the first time that the entire nation had been drawn into war and in 1914, it was not enough to send the soldiers to the front; the Government had to explain why Britain was involving herself in a continental conflict for the first time since the Crimean War.

Censorship, obviously an important aspect of propaganda, had been implemented in the early days of the war, with an Official Press Bureau established on 7th August 1914, and plans for cable censorship had been in place before the War broke out.²⁸ Acting as a spur to the foundation of an official propaganda organisation was the concern expressed over German propaganda in neutral countries. This was brought to the attention of the Cabinet in late August 1914, with Lloyd George pushing for an organisation to ‘inform and influence public opinion abroad and to confute German mis-statements and sophistries’.²⁹ In response, Masterman was asked to take charge of a bureau for the creation and distribution of propaganda – he accepted, but insisted on as much secrecy as possible to avoid the chance that material produced would be regarded as ‘tainted’ by the recipient, and was so successful in this regard that the Government was frequently accused of doing nothing to counteract enemy propaganda abroad.³⁰ Setting up his operation at Wellington House, the Headquarters of the National Health Committee (of which Masterman was Chairman), the aim of the Bureau was to promote Britain’s cause abroad, preserve good relations with her allies, promote hatred of the enemy, win the friendship, and if possible the co-operation, of neutral powers, and demoralise the enemy.³¹

Despite his faith in the ability of the average man to reason and learn, Masterman’s conviction of the gullibility of the crowd, and of the fact that those with little education or worldly experience were not in control of their own lives but were open to manipulation by others, influenced his approach.³² Deciding his propaganda would be more effective if directed at elites, whose opinions, once changed, would sway those of others, his main focus was to be on literature – given the prominence of authors

²⁷ Charles Roetter, *Psychological Warfare* (London, 1974), p. 32.

²⁸ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, pp. 100-1.

²⁹ Herbert Asquith, reporting to the King on 31st August, 1914, quoted in Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 33.

³⁰ Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*, p. 33; Buitenhuis, *War of Words*, p. 131.

³¹ Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*, p. 33.

³² Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 33.

at the time, as well as his own literary career, this is hardly surprising.³³ One of his first acts was to rally British writers (some of whom would later join the intellectual propaganda effort) to the cause. On 2nd September 1914, a host of prominent British writers and intellectuals, including Thomas Hardy, John Galsworthy, Gilbert Murray, G.K. Chesterton, H.G. Wells, J.M. Barrie, and Arthur Conan Doyle, was summoned to a meeting at Wellington House, and all present pledged their support to disseminating the British point of view and helping to justify her actions.³⁴ Five days later, Masterman organised a similar conference with publicists and representatives of the Press – among them the editors of the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail* and *The Times*.³⁵

In the first six months of the War, government censorship was rigorous, reinforced by the unofficial censorship of Newspaper Proprietors' Association.³⁶ War correspondents were initially kept from British and French lines – a fact of which the Germans took advantage.³⁷ By early 1915, the British and French armies had followed the German lead, allowing certain authors, foreign correspondents and magazine contributors to visit the Front, where they were chaperoned by officers 'chosen for their charm... [and given] a sense of danger with as little real danger as possible.'³⁸ Correspondents were also carefully censored to ensure that a positive image was conveyed to the home front. This cooperation between press and government is seen by Alice Goldfarb Marquis as the result of a corrupt social snobbery, in which pressmen and politicians all belonged to the same club, and publishing anything untoward meant social suicide. In her view, 'social ostracism apparently meant

³³ See D.G. Wright, 'The Great War, Government Propaganda and English 'Men of Letters' 1914-1918', *Literature and History*, No. 7 (Spring 1978), pp. 70-71.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 72.

³⁵ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 35.

³⁶ Lambert, *Propaganda*, p. 26.

³⁷ From October 1914, correspondents were given access to the Front, always accompanied by 'a courteous but watchful escort' which ensured that they only saw what the German Army wished them to see. A tour of the German lines was organised for a party of American journalists who then signed a statement declaring that they had seen no proof for the stories of German atrocities in Belgium. On the contrary, American Will Irwin, one of the first to visit the Front, said that the German army was presented as 'a colossal aggregation of amiable boys, making the best of a bad personal mess, living recklessly and, when they could put fear into the back of their heads, humorously.' See Will Irwin, *Propaganda and the News* (London, 1936), pp. 132-133

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 153.

more to the newsmen than their professional duty to inform the public...³⁹

Though Goldfarb Marquis does not mention academics, her criticism could easily be applied to their actions, as they were expected to provide an objective analysis of a situation, without allowing personal bias to influence them. However, Goldfarb Marquis' interpretation is a great deal too cynical. Yes there *were* close connections between pressmen and politicians, and there *was* a good deal to be gained from co-operation. However, Lord Northcliffe did not hesitate to attack Asquith or Kitchener, anti-war poems found publishers, and casualty lists were published, even if details were usually vague. Although Monger argues that this was a government decision to preserve the image of a liberal state in the face of increasing restrictions on personal freedom, this does not negate the fact that such criticisms were published.⁴⁰ Therefore, it seems more likely that the press were willing to go along with self-imposed censorship because they were 'doing their bit'. Their job was to keep morale high, to aid the war effort by encouraging recruitment and by emphasising victory not defeat. Masterman did worry about the ethics of his task, and despite taking weeks to recover from the shock of his tour of the Front in June 1915, Arnold Bennett nevertheless wrote a series of articles on life in the trenches designed to encourage recruitment. His friend Frank Swinnerton recalled, 'I think he visited the front as a duty, and was horrified at what he saw and felt that he must not express that horror.'⁴¹ Patriotism came first. The same was true for many academics, who felt it was their duty to support the Government in wartime. Gilbert Murray encapsulated this view when criticised by Charles Smith for his stance on conscription. Smith accused him of 'surrender[ing his] judgement and conscience', and Murray responded by declaring that 'Thought is free and individual but action has to be in common... In the midst of a great war I decide... that I will not resist but on the contrary will unhesitatingly obey an order which I personally think unwise. I see no inconsistency here.'⁴² Even though his instincts varied from the official stance, publically at least, Murray maintained an attitude of support. We must

³⁹ Alice Goldfarb Marquis, 'Words as Weapons: Propaganda in Britain and Germany During the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Jul. 1978), p. 478.

⁴⁰ Monger, *Patriotism*, p. 19.

⁴¹ See Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 45, 228 (Messinger described Bennett's articles as 'artificial'); Buitenhuis, *War of Words*, p.80.

⁴² Smith to Murray, 30th May 1915, Murray to Smith, 31st May 1915, Bod.MSS.27 (Murray Papers), fols. 166-7, 170.

therefore remember the importance of the concept of duty, and the duty of the intellectual, particularly in wartime, before we condemn academics for their departure from the scientific impartiality which they idolised before the War, and believed they still maintained in their examination of the issues of the day.

By June 1915, Wellington House had produced 2.5 million books, official publications, pamphlets and speeches in 17 languages. By August of the following year, that number increased with a million copies of six illustrated papers issued fortnightly, and 300 books and pamphlets in 21 languages.⁴³ Wellington House benefitted from Masterman's friendship with Asquith, who took a 'hands-off' approach to propaganda, but when Lloyd George came to power, he took a great deal more interest in the subject, and as criticism of Masterman's rational approach rose in favour of a more strident campaign aimed at the masses, Lloyd George stepped in to reorganise the service.⁴⁴ In February 1917, a Department of Information was set up under Colonel John Buchan, himself a well-known author.⁴⁵ Interdepartmental conflicts and continued press criticism led to a further reorganisation in early 1918, with the abolition of the Department of Information and its replacement with a Ministry of Information under Lord Beaverbrook.⁴⁶

From the start, the staff was careful to use a light touch, using other publishing houses' imprints on books, and, in line with Masterman's emphasis on targeting the elite, sent material to specifically chosen influential people, always in a private capacity, either with the compliments of the author, or a personal message from a member of the Bureau. So effective was this approach that Gilbert Parker, who dealt with the distribution of propaganda in the United States, was able to boast in 1915 that they had created a propaganda organisation 'which does not know it is an organisation.'⁴⁷ They were not alone in their faith that a direct appeal would be effective, as a letter from C. Riddle shows. Believing

⁴³ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p.40.

⁴⁴ Wright, 'Men of Letters', p. 74.

⁴⁵ Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*, p. 35.

⁴⁶ Lord Northcliffe was appointed Director of Propaganda in Enemy Countries, much to the disgust of German General von Hutier, who referred to the head of what he called 'the Ministry for the Destruction of German Confidence', as 'the most thoroughgoing scoundrel (*der getriebenste Schurke*) of the Entente' See the German Army Order, 29th August, 1918, in Bruntz, *Allied Propaganda*, p. 211.

⁴⁷ Buitenhuis, *War of Words*, p18.

Gilbert Murray's book *The Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey* (1915) should be widely circulated, he declared that he had 'a fairly large connection with influential persons in various countries; & as every little helps, shall be glad to send copies to suitable persons in Europe and America... I think I could do more good by sending copies of the Book to friends abroad than by circulating more copies in England.'⁴⁸

Murray was closely involved in the war effort, and was among those invited to work with Wellington House at the outbreak of the War. A prominent public figure during the War, he contributed to pamphlet series such as the Oxford Pamphlets, engaged in a number of public lectures at home and abroad, speaking for the Fight For Right Movement and taking part in lecture tours in Sweden and the United States. He firmly believed in the importance of lectures for the troops as well as for civilians, not only as a means of entertainment, but of 'keeping up morale and patriotism' and 'encouraging an intelligent interest' in the questions of the War.⁴⁹

However independent such endeavours appeared, the Government was often involved behind the scenes. The confidential memorandum in which Murray outlined his plan for lectures to the troops in November 1916 was directed to Lord Derby and the War Office, and he acted for the War Office Lectures Committee; his tour in Sweden was quietly subsidised by Wellington House, and was followed by an extensive report to the Cabinet.⁵⁰ Though his position on the War was certainly in line with the propaganda desired by the Government and he was clearly not simply fulfilling a brief in his writings or speeches, it is equally obvious that Wellington House's subtle approach meant a much greater governmental involvement than initial impressions imply.

An examination of Murray's papers provides some evidence as to the participation of Wellington House in the apparently independent activities of British propagandists. Murray is perhaps a special

⁴⁸ Riddle to Murray, 1st Sept. 1915, Bod.MSS.28 (Murray Papers), fols. 70-1.

⁴⁹ 'Plan for lectures to the Forces in France', Confidential Memorandum for the W.O. Committee, 1 Nov. 1916. Bod.MSS.32 (Murray Papers), fol. 79. See also, Bod.MSS.33, fol. 46, 47d-e.

⁵⁰ See letters in Bod.MSS. 29 (Murray Papers), fols. 181-2, 184-5, Bod.MSS.30, fols. 142-7.

case, as he was ready and willing to work with the Government, whereas Arthur Ponsonby's Union of Democratic Control, an irritant to officials, was likely to have received very different treatment. Nevertheless it is a useful indication of the subtleties of British propaganda, hidden in plain sight. The minutes of the meeting with British writers held on 2nd September 1914 at Wellington House provide us with valuable insight into the proposed interaction between intellectuals and establishment, and indeed, into the way this interaction was approached in order to further the war effort. Noting that the Germans were waging a press campaign in neutral countries not only through the official press organisations, but through 'the individual and collective efforts of eminent men of literature and science', Masterman asked those assembled for their assistance in counteracting the German campaign.⁵¹ From the opening statement, it was made clear that intellectuals were to be encouraged to show individual initiative in this counter-campaign, and Claud Schuster, who was to organise the campaign, wished the authors to take advantage of the translators, literature and newspapers provided by Wellington House in order to allow for multiple points of view in the presentation of the British case. Furthermore, he specifically stated that he did not expect full agreement from everyone on every point made in this propaganda, though he hoped for understanding, as all were working for the same goal.⁵² This is an important point as such an approach is visible in the Oxford Pamphlets, with a number of authors presenting opposing views on matters such as German philosophy or the culpability of the German people versus the German Government, but remaining united on the need to maintain morale and defeat Germany. Furthermore, if Wellington House had insisted on a uniform argument or approach, the propaganda would have been far more obvious and far less effective, quickly wearying the public with constant reiteration of the same tropes. By encouraging a more diverse content, propaganda was given the appearance of complete independence from Government, and was thus more likely to win over its audience.

It is also evident that Wellington House served as a kind of clearing house for pamphlets and articles to be sent to friends and colleagues abroad. When the Danish theologian J.P. Bang wrote to Murray

⁵¹ Minutes of Meeting with Masterman, 2nd Sept. 1914, Bod.MSS.25 (Murray Papers), fol. 11.

⁵² Masterman Memo, Bod.MSS.25, fol. 12.

requesting material with which to counter German propaganda in Denmark, it was Wellington House which sent him the information – with Murray’s compliments of course. Two years later, Bang remained unaware of Wellington House’s involvement, writing to Murray again for more material, and expressing the wish that ‘there was an English propaganda that would send to such a worker as me such books or pamphlets which an able man (as e.g. you!) should think useful and thoroughgoing!’⁵³ Similarly, Murray’s *How Can War Ever Be Right* (1914) was translated and distributed abroad by Masterman’s department.⁵⁴ Furthermore, they were willing to reimburse Murray for typing costs for other pamphlets, as well as commissioning articles, offering help with publishers and giving substantial feedback on initial drafts.⁵⁵ In a letter from Masterman in November 1917, he forwarded a cheque from an American literary agent and thanked Murray for writing for them⁵⁶ - an example of a situation in which the involvement of the British Government would have been difficult for the reader to detect (unless they were aware of Murray’s position on the Board of Education), as the article had been published by an American publisher, and written by a prominent academic, with no governmental imprint. This indirect approach was the preferred method for Wellington House, and pamphlets were distributed in a number of ways. Murray’s book on Grey was distributed by the Clarendon Press and by the General Federation of Trade Unions, but Wellington House was kept informed of demand and success.⁵⁷ The London Teachers’ Association was another conduit, but there was a problem in that it was ‘well known that they have no funds, and therefore they cannot distribute in their own name without giving the show away.’ As a result, Wellington House used the membership list of the Teachers’ Association, but sent pamphlets under the name of the author to disguise the source.⁵⁸

Wellington House was by no means the only organisation disseminating propaganda at the time.

⁵³ J.P. Bang to Gilbert Murray, 14th Nov. 1914; Claud Schuster to Murray, 26th Nov. 1914. Bod.MSS.25 (Murray Papers), fols. 181-2, 201. Bang to Murray, 1st Feb. 1916, Bod.MSS.30 (Murray Papers), fols. 1-2.

⁵⁴ Schuster to Murray 2nd Dec. 1914, 27th Jan. 1915, Bod.MSS.26 (Murray Papers), fols. 5, 104-5.

⁵⁵ See for example, Schuster to Murray, 31st May 1915, Schuster to Murray 14th June 1915, Percy to Schuster, 15th June 1915, Bod.MSS.27 (Murray Papers), fols. 171, 191-5, 197-200; Gilbert Parker to Murray, 8th Sept. 1916, Bod.MSS.31, fols. 170-2; Masterman to Murray, 15th May 1917, Bod.MSS.34, fol. 78.

⁵⁶ Masterman to Murray, 8th Nov. 1917. Bod. MSS.35 (Murray Papers), fol. 44.

⁵⁷ See W.A. Appleton to Schuster, 15th Sept. 1915, 13th Oct. 1915, Bod.MSS.28 (Murray Papers), fols. 103, 142.

⁵⁸ Schuster to Murray, 8th Jul. 1915. Bod.MSS.28 (Murray Papers), fols. 10-11.

There was a considerable degree of overlap between the War Propaganda Bureau and the Army itself. The War Office prepared material for distribution in enemy trenches – ‘simple and direct’, explicitly ‘unintellectual’; it aimed at the soldier in the trench, his daily life and worries, and ‘left to the News Department of the Foreign Office the congenial task... of firing essays and articles at the intelligentsia over the heads of the people.’⁵⁹ A semi-official War Aims Committee was established to combat pacifism in 1917; it was taken over by the War Cabinet, and worked closely with official propaganda sources, eventually becoming responsible for all propaganda distributed within Great Britain.⁶⁰ Newspapers also took initiative in spreading pamphlets – not only was the Oxford series well reviewed in the *Morning Post* and the *Spectator*, the *Daily Chronicle* wrote to Murray in August 1915 suggesting a cheaper version of Murray’s book on Sir Edward Grey, with a different title to reach a wider audience, and the editor of *The New York Times Current History* requested pamphlets from Britain as the articles which had been cabled to the United States might have been badly transmitted.⁶¹

There were also many unofficial organisations, such as the Parliamentary Recruitment Committee, made up of MPs, the Fight For Right Movement, the Victoria League, and the Council of Loyal British Subjects, all doing their part for the War.⁶² Others were not quite so helpful – for example, the Central Committee for National Patriotic Associations, which was formed in late August, 1914, and concerned itself with the justification of Britain’s position, organising lectures and patriotic rallies throughout the Empire, and commissioning favourable articles on the War. Not only did the Committee focus on encouraging patriotism in the Empire, but had a specific subcommittee to deal with neutral countries, informing them of the reasons for British involvement. However, their policy of indiscriminate propaganda went completely against the delicate approach of the official Bureau; and Harry Cust, one of the founders, loudly criticised the ‘slackness and lethargy’ of Government propaganda, which led Masterman and the Foreign Office to insist that Asquith demand the Central

⁵⁹ George Cockerill, quoted in Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 106.

⁶⁰ Bruntz, *Allied Propaganda*, p. 20.

⁶¹ See Brougham to Murray, spring 1915, Bod.MSS.27 (Murray Papers), fol. 65; *Daily Chronicle* to Murray, 20th Aug. 1915, Bod.MSS.28, fol. 57.

⁶² Wright, ‘Men of Letters’, p. 78

Committee work closely with Wellington House.⁶³ More ambiguous was the Union of Democratic Control (UDC), which produced propaganda emphasising the need for the rejection of secret treaties and agreements aimed at maintaining the balance of power, running ‘directly contrary to the official picture of honest and honourable British diplomats and politicians reluctantly going to war... out of a sense of decency and fair play’.⁶⁴

Turning to the German organisation, it seems as though German propaganda should have reigned supreme during the War. A strong belief in the importance of maintaining morale, both among troops and civilians, had built up in the German military (inspired by the ideas of General von Clausewitz) and considerations of morale were included in war plans. As a result, much propaganda material had already been prepared by the outbreak of war, and ‘almost from the first day of the Great War, the German army was circulating propaganda among its own troops, enemy troops, and civilian populations encountered as the army advanced.’⁶⁵ Furthermore, the propaganda organisation seemed formidable. According to Sidney Rogerson,

in 1914 Germany was the only power in Europe which had deliberately built up a national propaganda system. She had been at pains to ensure that news favourable to Germany was disseminated in [a] thoroughly organised a manner... Whether from the Press Bureau in the Foreign Office... from the embassies or legations oversea, from the official German telegraph agencies or from the head offices of German banks, industrial corporations and shipping companies, a steady volume of propaganda was emitted, designed on the one hand to spread favourable impressions of Germany... and on the other hand to neutralise or prevent unfavourable comment...⁶⁶

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁶⁵ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 15.

⁶⁶ Rogerson, *Propaganda*, p. 12.

German diplomatic representatives in other countries were also at work 'as soon as the German army crossed the Belgian border', well aware of their aims and prepared in advance.⁶⁷ From the start, German newspapers supported the War, mobilized with weekly lists of suitable topics, and instructions on the attitudes which were to be taken. German newspapers were circulated in neutral countries, while Embassies ensured the printing of papers both in German and in local languages. In the United States, propaganda was aimed at any groups which might offer support – those with revolutionary ideals and pacifists, German-Americans, anti-British Irish, and anti-Russian Jews.⁶⁸ Pamphlets sought to place Germany's actions in the best possible light, and answer the accusations made against her by the Entente. Private organisations such as the *Deutscher Überseedienst Transocean*, established by industrialists, also engaged with the propaganda effort, collecting and distributed clippings from German and foreign papers favourable to their cause, and publishing a monthly magazine.

Unlike British propagandists who did not immediately turn to propaganda aimed at the enemy, the Germans were quick in the attempt to demoralize their opponents, advancing 'behind a screen of rather awkward propaganda, dropped from airplanes,'⁶⁹ which aimed at driving a wedge between the Entente powers. Once the War settled into its static phase, they continued the effort to demoralise local inhabitants, publishing papers such as the *Gazette des Ardennes* which painted Germany in a favourable light (and cleverly included casualty lists as an incentive to read it), distributed in occupied territory using planes and balloons. They also employed a technique the Entente would later utilise against Austria-Hungary, attempting to stir up discontent among the Irish, Indians, Arabs, Egyptians, Boers, and Georgians.⁷⁰

Theoretically, it seemed bound for success, but German propaganda also had a number of unfortunate hindrances. The first major setback for German propaganda was the cutting of the transatlantic cables

⁶⁷ Irwin, *Propaganda and News*, p. 127.

⁶⁸ Goldfarb Marquis, *Words*, p. 469; Viereck, *Germans of Hate*, p. 51.

⁶⁹ Irwin, *Propaganda and News*, p. 161.

⁷⁰ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, pp. 16-18.

to America on 15th August 1914, which effectively isolated Germany from America at a crucial point for propaganda. It would take time for the establishment of a wireless service, and during that period, Britain was using her advantage.⁷¹ The most important failure of German propaganda however, was that of co-ordination; it suffered ‘through inconsistency, overlapping, and waste of effort’.⁷² Leaving aside unofficial propaganda, the only formal governmental cooperation was a Press Conference held two to three times a week, at which representatives of the War Ministry, General Staff, District Military authorities, the Navy the Ministry of the Interior, the Foreign Ministry, the Finance Ministry, the Colonial Office, the Post Office, and eventually the Food Office, met with the press to hand out official information and answer questions.⁷³

A *Kriegspresseamt* (War Press Bureau), formed in September 1915, dealt with censorship and issued information in three separate publications – the *Deutsche Kriegsnachrichten* (‘German War News’), *Nachrichten der Auslandspresse* (‘News from the Foreign Press’), and the *Deutsche Kriegswochenschau* (‘German War Newsreel’), as well as providing twice-daily briefings, and sending information over the Wolff telegraph service.⁷⁴ The Foreign Office created a *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst* (Central Office for Foreign Services) which produced its own material. In addition, the army had its own press service, which organised propaganda against the enemy, controlled the release of military information, and decided which papers reached the soldiers in the trenches.⁷⁵

The conflict between civilian and military propaganda was severe, and ultimately, prevented the establishment of a centralised propaganda organisation, despite repeated calls for one. This was aggravated by the establishment of Ludendorff’s *Deutsche Kriegsnachrichtendienst* (‘German War News Service’), which ‘aimed at reaching the German home public directly over the heads of the civil Government and Parliament and the domestic press.’⁷⁶ Such disorganisation made it impossible to

⁷¹ Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*, p. 38.

⁷² Lambert, *Propaganda*, p. 31.

⁷³ Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*, p. 38.

⁷⁴ Goldfarb Marquis, *Words*, p. 474.

⁷⁵ Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*, p. 39.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

continue a coherent policy, and the lack of cooperation seriously damaged the war effort.

Despite frequent accusations that the German propaganda machine was more clumsy and heavy-handed than its British counterpart, initiated by Ludendorff, but notably supported by scholars such as Howard D. Lasswell and Charles Roetter,⁷⁷ there is evidence that the German approach was actually quite similar to that of Wellington House. A series of Italian pamphlets edited by Dr. Fred. B. Hardt, of the University of Commerce in Munich, announced to its readers on the 16th October 1914 that the pamphlets were a private initiative, inspired by the editor's love for Italy and the time he had spent there; their aim to spread information on the War and Germany's role in it in Italy, creating strong intellectual and material bonds.⁷⁸ While Hardt admitted that the pamphlets were subject to censorship, the pamphlets do not mention the involvement of Hardt's *Kriegs-Pressbüro München* (Munich War Press Office) with the Foreign Office and *Reichskolonialamt* (Imperial Colonial Office), nor his petitions to the *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst* for financial aid.⁷⁹ He also specifically noted in a letter to the Berlin *Werkbund* (Craftsmen's Association) that the fact that his pamphlets lacked a War Office stamp meant they received a better reception.⁸⁰ An extensive memo from Freiherr von Gleichen of the *Bund Deutsche Gelehrter und Künstler* (German Intellectuals' and Artists' Union) to the News Department of the German Foreign Office in 1917 outlined the state of propaganda in Germany, and showed a thorough awareness of the importance of subject matter and means of distribution. It discussed content (the pre-war situation, culpability for war, Germany's ability to sustain the war effort), media (essays, pamphlets, lectures, films) and audience, as well as noting the significance of earlier propaganda attempts and the importance of State and Church support.⁸¹

Just as Wellington House sought to hide their involvement in propaganda, sending pamphlets and books directly to a select list of recipients, usually with the authors' compliments, so the *Zentralstelle*

⁷⁷ See Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*, Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques*.

⁷⁸ Pamphlet to Italy, No. 7. 16th Oct. 1914. BArch.R901/72260, (*Kriegs-Pressbüro, München, Bd.1*), fols. 14-5.

⁷⁹ See for example, his letters of 9th and 10th Oct. 1914. BArch.R901/72260, fols. 231-8, 51-3. BSA.

⁸⁰ Hardt to the Berlin *Werkbund*, 9th Oct. 1914. BArch.R901/72260, fol. 234.

⁸¹ von Gleichen to Deutelmoser, BArch.R901/71074 (*Propaganda des Bundes deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler*), fols. 1-19.

für Auslandsdienst had a list of potentially sympathetic recipients abroad to whom they sent material, and were swift to rein in those who might send too much – the *Kriegs-Pressebüro München* was made to promise that their initiative would be limited to sending material to selected individuals, once a week, and only sending more than three pamphlets to those who had requested them. Furthermore, these individuals were to be selected from a list of addresses of parties thought to be interested in the material, and of which the Foreign Office had a copy, expressly to prevent annoying neutrals with unsolicited propaganda which could turn them against the German cause.⁸²

Though the proliferation of propaganda organisations was certainly problematic, the interaction of the *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst* with the *KPM* implies that the *Zentralstelle* at least was attempting to maintain order. It suggested that the *KPM* coordinate with other organisations targeting Italy, send reports to the *Zentralstelle* to keep them informed of what was being said, share its address book, and Hardt was to meet with a representative from Berlin once a month.⁸³ In 1917, when the *Bund deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler* began organising an academic lecture series in Switzerland, the plans were forwarded to the *Zentralstelle*, who agreed to them going ahead only on condition that the lectures remained entirely apolitical – the same advice which was given to the British Gilbert Murray on his lecture trip to Sweden.⁸⁴ A selection of speeches by a number of German academics prepared by the *BdGK* was sent by the Foreign Office to ambassadors in Switzerland, Holland, Sweden and Denmark, and the ambassadors' comments on the collection's suitability for a Swiss, Danish, Dutch or Swedish audience, and suggestions as to which sections of the population the collection might appeal were passed back to the *BdGK* before orders for copies were placed.⁸⁵

⁸² See B.Arch.R/901/72263 (*Kriegs-Presse Büro München*, Bd. 4); *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst* Report, 20th Dec. 1914, which concludes that Hardt can maintain his Italian work if he continues to send pamphlets to personal contacts in intellectual circles rather than to a mass audience. B.Arch.R901/72261 (*Kriegs-Pressebüro*, München, Bd.2), fol.60. Also lists of addresses from the Netherlands and Switzerland, BArch.R901/71074 (*Propaganda des Bundes deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler*), fols. 170, 207-25.

⁸³ See *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst* to Hardt, 14th Dec. 1914. B.Arch.R901/72263 (*Kriegs-Pressebüro*, München, Bd.3), fols. 7-8.

⁸⁴ See von Gleichen to von Buro, 13th Oct. 1917, Romberg telegram, 21st Oct. 1917, BArch.R901/71904 (*Vorträge des Bundes deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler in der Schweiz*), fols. 3, 6; Esme Howard letter, 26th Jan. 1916, Murray on Swedish tour, 14th Feb. 1916, Bod.MSS.29 (Murray Papers), fol. 202, Bod.MSS.30, fol. 19.

⁸⁵ BArch.R/901/71276 (*Vorträge der Professoren Harnack, Meinecke, Troeltsch, Sering*).

The *Zentralstelle* also seems to have been reluctant to change the status quo, discouraging thoughts of propaganda centralisation, while admitting that greater decentralisation would lead to too many complications. There are also a number of indications that suggest that the German propaganda offices were not as ignorant of the possible impact of their activities as they are commonly believed to be. In January 1915, a letter from the *Zentralstelle* stated that the majority of propaganda organisations had done more harm than good, and reiterated the need to pay close attention to the activities of these organisations.⁸⁶ A letter from Hardt to the *Reichskolonialamt* on 10th October 1914 responded to their suggestion that a newspaper be established in Rome to promote the German point of view with a warning that a similar endeavour had already been tried, suspected, and boycotted, and advised discreetly funding an already-existing pro-German newspaper instead (Milan's *La Sera* was suggested).⁸⁷ This is a far cry from the ham-fisted widespread sowing of leaflets implied by many accounts of German propaganda; and suggests that its failures were less down to method, and more linked to an unfortunate pluralism of propaganda centres, a lack of compelling content and a failure to understand how the German point of view truly appeared to neutral nations.

Against this background, academics on both sides of the conflict sought to support the war effort in whatever way they could. Though the initial response to the War was not as enthusiastic as common perception would have us believe, there was a genuine feeling of duty to the nation in danger, and a desire to help the cause. The degree to which the state was involved in the production of academic propaganda is difficult to resolve, and the answer varies according to the propaganda in question.

The propaganda emanating from Oxford seems to have been relatively independent of government involvement. The Faculty of History was prompt to engage with the issues surrounding the War as six historians came together to produce *Why We Are At War: Great Britain's Case* (1914), an investigation of the causes of the War, including extracts from the Governmental Coloured Books

⁸⁶ Letter from *Zentralstelle* to Kirchhoff, 25th Jan. 1915, BArch.R901/72291 (Propaganda des Bundes deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler), fols. 105-6a.

⁸⁷ Hardt to *Reichskolonialamt*, 10th Oct. 1914. BArch.R901/72260 (Kriegs-Pressbüro, München, Bd.1), fols. 51-3.

which had reproduced diplomatic documents from the July Crisis for mass audiences. In the minutes of the Wellington House meeting held on 2nd September which referred to the actions already taken by the Foreign Office, it was stated that ‘Two Oxford University historians had asked whether they might prepare a statement setting out concisely the chief points in the Foreign Office White Paper and the German White Paper. Permission had been willingly granted for this to be done.’⁸⁸ Bearing this in mind, it seems that the initiative had come from Oxford rather than from the Government, and the introduction to *Why We Are At War* made clear that ‘The sole responsibility for this book rests... with those who sign this preface’, namely Ernest Barker, H.W.C. Davis, C.R.L. Fletcher, Arthur Hassall, L.G. Wickham Legg and F. Morgan.⁸⁹ They were careful to set out their credentials, emphasising that they differed in their political allegiances, and would endeavour to approach the evidence in a historical manner. To this end, the book contained a reproduction of the German White Book and extracts from British Diplomatic documents, and by the third edition (and sixth impression - published in 1914, so the book was clearly in demand), also included extracts from Austrian dossiers, the Russian Orange Book, French diplomatic documents, and the Belgian Grey Book.

The major Oxford initiative, however, was the ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, which numbered 87 by 1915, when the series was completed.⁹⁰ The provenance of the Oxford Pamphlets themselves is very difficult to trace; in some studies they are ascribed to the initiative of the Central Committee for National Patriotic Associations, in others, a product of the patriotic impulses of the University members.⁹¹ In his history of the Oxford University Press, Peter Sutcliffe states that the pamphlets were ‘written with intense conviction, and a spontaneity that distinguished them from works written later to manipulate public opinion or promote the war effort’.⁹² Given the way in which the Germans were presented, and the fact that the Series did promote the war effort, I would suggest that his

⁸⁸ Minutes of Wellington House Meeting, 2nd Sept. 1914, Bod.MSS.25 (Murray Papers), fol. 11.

⁸⁹ *Why We Are At War: Great Britain's Case* (Oxford, 1914), p. 6.

⁹⁰ William Whyte, ‘Oxford University Press 1896-1947’ in Wm. Roger Louis (Ed.), *The History of Oxford University Press: Volume III: 1896 to 1970* (Oxford, 2013), p. 73.

⁹¹ Alan Wilkinson suggests the Central Committee explanation, for example, as does Charles Roetter, while Stuart Wallace maintains that the Committee did not include an Oxford Delegation before 1915. See Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London, 1996, (1st ed. 1978)), p. 24; Stuart Wallace, *War and the Image of Germany*, (Edinburgh, 1988), p169; Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*, p. 32.

⁹² Peter Sutcliffe, *The Oxford University Press: An Informal History* (Oxford, 1978), p. 173.

reading is not entirely correct. The conviction he mentions, however, does imply an unprompted effort on the part of the University members. The historian H.W.C. Davis, who was the main editor of the series, does not seem to have kept records on this work, so it is difficult to be sure, but it is highly likely that, as he was a leading figure in the creation of *Why We Are At War*, he also played a role in the initiation of the Oxford Pamphlet series, particularly given his close relationship with the Clarendon Press.⁹³ Certainly, they seem to have been initiated by the Press rather than by Wellington House, though Wellington House was involved in distribution, and the Foreign Office was consulted on translations.⁹⁴ While some pamphlets were commissioned, others were sent to the Clarendon Press by authors for consideration for inclusion in the series.⁹⁵

Despite the neutral image of propaganda at this time, OUP did not want to be seen as propagandists, telling an enthusiastic correspondent who wished to give the pamphlets to schools that they were ‘anxious not to give the impression our pamphlets are propaganda or are being distributed by us except in the ordinary way of trade.’⁹⁶ Similarly, when the Squire Law Library at Cambridge requested a free set of pamphlets, on the basis that the series was probably published ‘for propaganda rather than profit’, Charles Cannan, the Secretary of OUP, refused, stating that while ‘we hope we are performing a public service’, the pamphlets were sold at a price which did not allow them to give away free copies.⁹⁷ This may have been simple capitalism at work, with OUP not wishing to lose profits on what was presumably a lucrative venture, but it also indicates a reluctance to overtly propagandise the public, though whether they felt this would be counter-productive from a propaganda point of view or a sales one is open to debate. Certainly when Dr. Jenkinson of the University Library of Cambridge asked OUP to send pamphlets to his colleague in Barcelona, Cannan

⁹³ I am supported in this suggestion by Pogge von Strandmann, who also notes Davis’ role in recruiting academics to the series. *Historians*, p. 352. For the relationship between Davis and the Clarendon Press, see J.R.H. Weaver, *Henry William Carless Davis 1874-1928: A Memoir* (London, 1933), pp. 29-31.

⁹⁴ See Memo, Milford to Clapman, 25th Sept. 1914, OUP.CPED001184, fol.12; Davis note, 15th Sept. 1914, OUP.CPED001183 fol. 5. Wellington House was supplied with pamphlets at trade prices – see Memo to Secretary, 15th Sept. 1915; Schuster to Cannan, 19th Oct. 1915, OUP.CPED001210, fols. 32, 52.

⁹⁵ See letters in OUP.CPED001230 fols.1, 5; OUP.CPED001231, fol. 1; OUP.CPED001229, fol.1.

⁹⁶ Chapman to W.E. Crum, 11th Jan. 1915, OUP.CPED001215, fol. 54.

⁹⁷ Austin H. Johnson to OUP, 1st Mar. 1915, Cannan to A.H. Johnson, 2nd March 1915. OUP.CPED001214, fols. 41, 40.

forwarded the request to Wellington House as OUP could not afford this, and Wellington House sent the pamphlets in Jenkinson's name.⁹⁸

The pamphlets were undoubtedly popular, with just under 300,000 sold in mid-January 1915, at an average of over 5,000 for each pamphlet, though a select few sold between 10,000 and 12,000, with two reaching sales of 20,000 (Murray's *How Can War Ever Be Right?*) and 24,000 (Vinogradoff's *Russia, the Psychology of a Nation*).⁹⁹ The low price (between 1 and 3 pence per pamphlet, with bound copies of four or five pamphlets sold for 1 shilling) certainly suggested a mass audience, and they were described as 'simply written' and issued 'for the benefit of the English working-classes',¹⁰⁰ though the language used and topics discussed indicate a more educated, middle-class readership, especially when we consider the use of Latin and German quotations. Equally, whereas Le Bon and his colleagues discussed the importance of repetition and emphasised emotion rather than logic to sway a crowd, these pamphlets presented reasoned argument, supported by documented evidence to make their point. This does not mean that they should be dismissed as propaganda however. We must remember that Le Bon's techniques were aimed at the crowd as a physical entity, his argument that the individual's faculty for reason was lost when he became part of a greater collective. While the pamphlets could certainly be seen in the light of a 'newspaper' crowd,¹⁰¹ each individual reading the same arguments in the knowledge that others agreed with him, we must remember that though simplistic language, reliance on sentiment and repetition were present in the pamphlets, according to contemporary theories of crowd psychology, they would not be able to convince an individual alone. Reason was a necessary approach. Furthermore, though we may be inclined to separate the sensationalist penny press from the reasoned tone of (most of) the academic pamphlets as indicative of a class difference when reading, we must remember that the pamphlets' authors did not do so – and at least two of the Oxford Series were adapted from lectures to the Workers' Educational Association.

⁹⁸ See letters in Sept. 1915, OUP.CPED001210, fols. 30, 32, 47, 52.

⁹⁹ Milford, 19th Jan. 1915, OUP.CPED001216, fol. 31.

¹⁰⁰ Davis to Joseph Bédier, 28th Jan. 1915, OUP.CPED001216, fol. 84. OUP.CPED001217, fol. 18.

¹⁰¹ See Serge Moscovici's work on crowd psychology, in which he describes newspaper readers as linked in an 'invisible crowd', influenced over a distance. Serge Moscovici, *The Age of the Crowd*, (Cambridge, 1985), p. 158, 189.

The aim may have been to enlighten the workers, but there seems to have been an underlying faith that the educated tone would not act as a deterrent – hardly surprising in the age which had seen the introduction of compulsory mass education, a population in which the great majority were literate and which had such faith in the progress of man.

Cannan and Davis were careful about what they would print as part of the series – when Ernest Barker wished to publish a response to a statement by German theologians, Cannan and Davis declined, due to the poor quality of the manuscript submitted. Davis was clearly conscious of the impact of the series, writing that ‘the “war of the professors” has already become a byword’, and he did not wish to draw out the debate Barker was engaging in any further. In December 1914, the editors had already decided to concentrate their efforts on particular topics rather than general opinions on the War, claiming that ‘the Oxford series has already as many dissections of the German intellectual position as the public desires.’¹⁰² As early as March 1915 Humphrey Milford, head of London operations at OUP, felt that the series had reached its end, and that, although the early pamphlets still found a ready audience, ‘the market show[ed] distinct signs of saturation’. By June 1915, the Press had decided to end the series.¹⁰³ This was entirely due to practical considerations, with Assistant Secretary to the Delegates John de Monins Johnson remarking in July that the series was ‘dead’, and declaring in August that ‘the appetite of the public... has apparently been satisfied as they refuse any longer to buy them.’ Oxford academic P.E. Matheson concurred, writing in July: ‘I fancy the public is apathetic about causes and wants shells.’¹⁰⁴

‘Papers for War Time’, also published by Oxford University Press, was more upfront about the reasons for production of the series. Each pamphlet noted the basis for publication, namely the contributors’ conviction that Britain was morally bound to declare war, of their belief in the Christian

¹⁰² See the series of letters between Davis, Cannan, Chapman and Barker in late Dec. 1914, OUP.CPED001227, fols. 4-8; Chapman, 7th Dec. 1914, OUP.CPED001218, fol. 37; Davis to Miller, 14th Dec. 1914, OUP.CPED001217, fol. 3.

¹⁰³ Milford to Cannan, 11th Mar. 1915, OUP.CPED001214, fol.59. Cannan to Raffi, 3rd Jun. 1915, Cannan to Cook, 28th Jun. 1915, OUP.CPED001211, fols. 10, 48-9.

¹⁰⁴ Johnson to Urquhart, 12th Jul. 1915, P.E. Matheson 12th Jul. 1915, OUP.CPED001211, fols. 58, 60. Johnson, 10th Aug. 1915, OUP.CPED001210, fol.8.

bonds that transcended nationality and race, and of their duty as Christians to forgive and love one another in war and peace. The authors were a mix of (predominantly) clergymen and academics; the series as a whole was edited by Reverend William Temple (a prominent cleric, formerly headmaster of Rugby and future Archbishop of Canterbury) and issued by a committee drawn from various Christian bodies and political parties.¹⁰⁵ With the involvement of prominent members of the Church and of political parties, though not a direct connection with government, it is to be expected that the content of such pamphlets would reflect this orthodox background, as indeed it did, preaching Christian forbearance and love, while maintaining the absolute necessity of Britain's declaration of war.

A parallel can be drawn between the Oxford Pamphlets and the *Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit* ('German Speeches in Difficult Times') series, written by members of the University of Berlin, and with no ostensible link to government, as it was issued by the *Zentralstelle für Volkswohlfahrt* (Central Office for Public Welfare), a society founded in the 1890s to aid the poor, and the *Verein für volkstümliche Kurse von Berliner Hochschullehren* (Association of Berlin Professors for Popular Courses), an organisation of teachers in higher education founded in 1899. Published editions of speeches by prominent academics on the subject of the War, the first collected volume of the speeches appeared in November 1914, and consisted of three volumes in total, though pamphlets were also published individually. These individual pamphlets were, once again, quite cheap, at 50 Pfennigs each, while the collections were 4 Marks apiece, and proceeds went to the Red Cross and to soldiers' funds. Though published in the usual pamphlet form and in hardback volumes, both were also available on thin paper specifically for those who wished to send them to the Front, at a slightly lower cost.¹⁰⁶ The title of the series echoed the philosopher Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation* ('Addresses to the German Nation', 1808) which sought to encourage a German nationalism in opposition to Napoleonic occupation, and which would have resonated with its audience in a similar

¹⁰⁵ See for example, James Hope Moulton, *British and German Scholarship*, 'Papers for War Time' Series, No. 31 (London, 1915).

¹⁰⁶ See C.F. Lehmann-Haupt, *Der Krieg und das Deutschtum im Auslande*, 'Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit' Series, No. 28 (Berlin, 1915) for details.

time of trial.¹⁰⁷

The foreword to the series directly addressed the motivation for publishing, speaking of the feeling of unity in Germany engendered by the outbreak of war, and the need to maintain the sense of exaltation above class and party hatred after the initial victories of early August. Their aim was ‘to create new courage, new strength and new confidence’, not only in the audiences addressed in Berlin, but also among a wider circle, both at the Front and at home. Finally, they wished to preserve a ‘witness’ to the spirit of the War for future generations as a reminder of German greatness.¹⁰⁸ The success of the speeches was spoken of in the introduction to the second volume, which described the crowded halls full of people from all classes and political creeds who came to listen to the speakers (over 1,000 people attended the opening lecture by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff on 27 August 1914¹⁰⁹), and the thousands of copies sent to the Front.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, the content of the academic German pamphlet series, similar to their British counterparts, exhibited few of the traditional tropes of crowd psychology, focusing on reasoned arguments with proof where possible, and though the themes were certainly repetitious, the language used was sophisticated.

A number of the German pamphlets investigated in this thesis were part of the ‘*Der Deutsche Krieg*’ (‘The German War’) series, published by Ernst Jäckh, who was also closely involved in the creation and publication of the infamous ‘Manifesto of the 93’, a declaration of support for the German war effort signed by 93 prominent intellectuals. Cheap pamphlets, costing only 50 Pfennigs, the series consisted of 35 official titles in early 1915, with a further 34 in production, its authors a mix of academics, military men, company directors and politicians.¹¹¹ The list of contributing authors is dominated by academics, though it also contains quite a number of Members of Parliament and

¹⁰⁷ See Steffan Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat* (Berlin, 2003), p. 37.

¹⁰⁸ Waldener & R. v. Erdberg, *Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit*, Vol. I (Berlin, 1914), pp. vi-x.

¹⁰⁹ Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft*, p. 38.

¹¹⁰ Waldener & R. v. Erdberg, *Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit*, Vol. II (Berlin, 1915), pp. vi-ix.

¹¹¹ See, for example, the frontispiece of G. v. Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Freie Meere!*, ‘Der Deutsche Krieg’ Series (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1915). Though the publication date is given only as 1915, the last published book in the list given is Richard Hennig’s *Der Kampf um den Suezkanal*, which presumably deals with the January-February 1915 campaign at Suez, thereby implying that this was early in the year.

commercial tycoons. Ernst Jäckh himself was a well-known publicist, closely connected with Captain Heinrich Löhlein, Head of the Press Department of the Imperial Admiralty. By 1st August 1914, Löhlein had plans in place for a news department to deal with propaganda, and had ensured the support of Jäckh and Dr. Paul Rohrbach (who wrote the first pamphlet in the *Deutsche Krieg* series). On 12th August, Jäckh and Rohrbach, together with the Liberal politician Freidrich Naumann and economist and banker Hjalmar Schacht, were asked to compose a pamphlet on the War for an American audience, and a month later, over 50,000 copies of *Die Wahrheit über den Krieg* ('The Truth About the War') were being printed in seven languages.¹¹² Calls to the German *Werkbund* for addresses to which to send pamphlets resulted in 25,000 names and the series of political pamphlets was set in motion.¹¹³

Jäckh was an old hand at the publishing game, acting as Editor-in-Chief of the *Neckarzeitung* newspaper from 1902-1912, and advising the Hirsch News Bureau in 1911. He was also closely involved in politics, helping with Naumann's campaigns in the elections of 1908 and 1912.¹¹⁴ Though the topics it dealt with were very similar to those of the Oxford Pamphlets (the reasons for war, Germany's relationships with other nations, economic concerns and the effect of war on Germany), this pro-government stance is clearly reflected in the *Deutsche Krieg* series, and we must bear in mind when we read the pamphlets that we are certainly reading documents which passed under the eye of government officials and were written by those intimately linked to government circles.

The activities of the *Bund deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler* (German Intellectuals' and Artists' Union) provides us with yet another analogous situation. Established under Wilhelm Waldeyer (Secretary of the Physical-Mathematical Division of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences) on 9th October 1914, with offices in the Academy building, its aim, according to a letter sent to its supporters after the War, was to maintain a spirit of self-assertion in the struggle for German

¹¹² German, English, Italian, Dutch, Swedish and Romanian. See Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg & Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg, *Der Aufruf „An die Kulturwelt!“* (Stuttgart, 1996), pp. 118-9.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

existence.¹¹⁵ By December 1914, the *BdGK* had 193 members and it worked closely with the Foreign Office, which provided (limited) funding and coordinated the work of the *BdGK* with the activities of ambassadors in neutral countries. In 1917, the head of the *BdGK*, Freiherr von Gleichen, even discussed accepting a position with the *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst*, maintaining his *BdGK* duties in order to bring *BdGK* propaganda in line with that of the *Zentralstelle*, though this was ultimately deemed inappropriate.¹¹⁶ The *BdGK* examined foreign and local papers for articles which could be used for propaganda purposes, arranged public speeches by academics and organised the publication thereof, put together speaking tours by prominent intellectuals (which did not always come off), and published a regular news digest of foreign and local papers on the War.

Other propaganda organisations included The *Bund Neues Vaterland* (New Fatherland League), a non-political pacifist organisation founded in November 1914, seeking a rapid return to peace, which was banned in February 1916.¹¹⁷ Proof of its peaceful intentions was to be found in its links with sister organisations throughout Europe – including the British UDC. Publishing cheap pamphlets (costing between 10 and 50 Pfennigs), its aim was the establishment of a supranational union of European states, based on political and economic sympathies, and it attracted academics such as Lujo Brentano, Ferdinand Tönnies, Franz von Liszt and Hans Delbrück, as well as the outspokenly pacifist Albert Einstein and Romaine Rolland.¹¹⁸ The *Verein der Soldatenfreunde* (Soldiers' Friends' Club) on the other hand, counted Generals and Government Ministers amongst its governing body, its aim 'to give our soldiers and the whole German people a true picture of this tremendous time and their struggle for our existence or extinction [sein oder nichtsein]',¹¹⁹ and with such a leadership, their message was undoubtedly more warlike than pacifist.

¹¹⁵ von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, p. 138. See also Letter to Supporters and Members, 9th May 1919, BArch.R/901/71075 (Propaganda des Bundes deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler), fol.7.

¹¹⁶ Von Gleichen to von Buri, 10th Apr. 1917, Von Buri to von Gleichen, 19th Apr. 1917, BArch.R901/71074 (Propaganda des Bundes deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler), fols. 25, 28-9, 31.

¹¹⁷ See Anne Rasmussen, 'Mobilising Minds', in Jay Winter (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Vol. III, Civil Society* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 411-2.

¹¹⁸ See a brief outline of the aims and affiliations of the Bund in Lujo Brentano, *England und der Krieg* (Berlin, 1915). An in-depth study of the *Bund*, in particular its connection with Romain Rolland can be found in Pierre Grappin, *Le Bund Neues Vaterland (1914-1916)* (Lyon, 1952).

¹¹⁹ See introduction in Dietrich Schäfer, *Sein oder Nichtsein* (Berlin, 1914), pp. 3-4.

While many pamphlets were original, some pamphlets were reworked from earlier essays and books, like Adolph Wagner's *Gegen England!* ('Against England!', 1914), published two years previously in the *Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Armee und Marine* as a treatise on the political position of Germany and the consequences thereof; and A. Pearce Higgins' *Non-Combatants and the War* (1915, which reproduced sections from his *War and the Private Citizen*, 1912). Belgian academic Charles Sarolea's *German Problems and Personalities* (1915) was first published in 1912 as *The Anglo-German Problem*, and the text was edited before republication to bring it up to date. In some cases, this was a way to show how prescient the authors were – the introduction to Sarolea's work explicitly makes this point – adding an additional authority to their words. In others, it was proof of the previously existing tensions and issues which had led to the War. Finally, there was also the pragmatic consideration that the essay existed, was suitable for republication, and would serve a propagandistic end, bringing public attention to an issue swiftly and effectively. Other pamphlets were reprinted from magazines and journals, such as Sir Charles Waldstein's *What Germany is Fighting For* (from *The Nineteenth Century and After*, 1917) and Roy Norton's *The Man of Peace* (1915, an abridged version appeared in the *Contemporary Review* in December 1914), which served to bring these articles to a wider audience. Spenser Wilkinson's *August 1914: The Coming of the War* (1914) first appeared in the *Morning Post* as the July Crisis unfolded, and the pamphlet edition collected his twelve articles into one volume, giving the reader an overview of his changing opinions, and allowing Wilkinson to clarify his thoughts – in footnotes, rather than in less obvious alterations, which could nevertheless be easily identified by anyone who had read the original essays.¹²⁰ This approach could also serve to highlight neutral support, as James M. Beck's pamphlet reprinted in the Oxford Pamphlet Series from the *New York Times* (championing the Entente view of the War) showed.¹²¹

It seems that both Britain and Germany feared that their opponents were ahead in the propaganda game. At Masterman's meeting with British writers on 2nd September 1914 it was stated that the

¹²⁰ See p. 30 for example. Spenser Wilkinson, *August 1914: The Coming of the War*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. VI (London, 1914).

¹²¹ James M. Beck, *The Double Alliance versus the Triple Entente*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. VIII (London, 1914).

Cabinet wished to initiate a campaign to counteract German activities in neutral countries, while in a letter to the Press Department of the Foreign Office in March 1917, Freiherr von Gleichen noted that ‘Germany only recognised the importance and necessity of systematic and ample propaganda activity in the service of the country later than our opponents...’¹²² It is obvious then, that each side was aware of the propaganda of their enemies, and this is made explicit in a number of pamphlets. The musicologist Oskar Fleischer depicted it as a parallel war, in which the ‘spirit of truth’ faced a lying spirit and Friedrich Delitzsch, Professor of Assyriology at Leipzig, spoke of Britain setting a record for telling lies (‘above that of the father of lies, the Devil’).¹²³ On the opposing side, English lecturer Thomas F.A. Smith derided the German press for corruption and bias; claiming that it could be ‘bought and sold’ by the Government, which did not allow full discussion of German affairs, but ‘permitted unlimited licence in their gibes at foreign countries...’¹²⁴ Neutral countries were clearly aware of this issue, as evidenced by the American Cale Young Rice, who ‘had begun to indict war utterly on another account – that of prostituting the sense of truthfulness of the higher minds of nations.’¹²⁵ William Sanday was willing to excuse the British press, though admitting that ‘just at the beginning of things... the Press of all the belligerents was thrown out of gear and many wild rumours were admitted with insufficient criticism.’ Since then, however, he felt that the British press had engaged not only in ‘an honest endeavour to tell the truth, but an honest endeavour to do justice to those who are ranged against us’.¹²⁶ In November 1916, A.H. Alden decided that German propaganda in the United States was failing ‘not because it was a propaganda, but because of the character of it...’, while advocating for ‘a propaganda on proper lines that will reach the understanding and heart of the American people.’¹²⁷ The United States was an important battleground in the propaganda war, and the combatants were aware of this, with German historian Hermann Oncken complaining that the American newspapers were dependent on the British telegraph service for news, and had been for

¹²² See Minutes of Meeting with Masterman, 2nd Sept. 1914, Bod.MSS.25 (Murray Papers), fol.11; Letter von Gleichen to Deutelmoser, 2nd Mar. 1917, BArch.R901/71074 (Propaganda des Bundes deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler), fol. 3.

¹²³ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, p. 15; Friedrich Delitzsch, ‘Psalmworte für die Gegenwart,’ in *Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit*, Vol. II (Berlin, 1915), p. 82.

¹²⁴ Thomas F.A. Smith, *The Soul of Germany* (London, 1915), pp. 215-6.

¹²⁵ Cale Young Rice to Murray, 1914, Bod.MSS.25 (Murray Papers), fol. 165.

¹²⁶ William Sanday, *The Meaning of the War for Germany and Great Britain* (Oxford, 1915), pp. 51-2.

¹²⁷ A.H. Alden to Murray, 21st Nov. 1916, Bod.MSS.32 (Murray Papers), fol. 171.

many years before the War, poisoning opinion against Germany.¹²⁸

As for how this debate was sustained, academics on both sides were very aware of their opponents' arguments and endeavoured to respond, both indirectly and explicitly. Indeed, some manifestos and declarations were open and public reactions to the utterances of the other side, and were particularly common in the early days of the War. The debate was not, however, a direct exchange of ideas, but was carried out on a wider stage, with each side addressing home and neutral audiences – though there is evidence that some academics also defended their views in letters to former friends turned enemy. The British classicist E.A. Sonnenschein had read the work of theologian Adolf von Harnack and the physician and philosopher Wilhelm Wundt; and German Liberal historian Friedrich Meinecke had read the work of his fellow historian H.E. Egerton and specifically referenced the Oxford Pamphlets.¹²⁹ Sanday's collection of German pamphlets was extensive, and he mentioned von Harnack, classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, historians Otto von Gierke and Hans Delbrück, and philosopher and Nobel laureate Rudolf Eucken amongst the 'melancholy and monotonous reading' their works presented.¹³⁰

Though we cannot be certain of the precise methods of obtaining information, we know that extracts from enemy speeches and pamphlets were often printed in the home press, and these statements undoubtedly informed some opinions.¹³¹ However, given the emphasis on scholarly research and empirical reasoning, it is no surprise to find that there is also evidence to show that despite censorship, it was possible to acquire pamphlets from the other side, though Sanday noted that German literature only began to reach Britain in December 1914.¹³² Bruntz, writing in 1938, discussed methods used to smuggle British propaganda aimed at demoralising the enemy into Germany, and some of these methods may also have been used to spread pamphlets – for example the use of false covers to

¹²⁸ Hermann Oncken, *Deutschlands Weltkrieg und die Deutschamerikaner* (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1914), p. 13.

¹²⁹ E.A. Sonnenschein, *Idols of Peace and War*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series (London, 1917), p. 17; Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 61.

¹³⁰ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 63-5.

¹³¹ See for example, A.D. Lindsay, *War Against War*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. IV (London, 1915), pp. 13-5.

¹³² Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 63.

disguise books as German, or the use of counterfeit seals to post material.¹³³ With both sides addressing neutral audiences, it is extremely likely that many pamphlets were purchased directly from suppliers in neutral countries, and the Taylorian Library in Oxford continued to receive the *Neue Jahrbuch* after the start of the War.¹³⁴ Equally, we know that colleagues in neutral countries were often willing to forward material, as well as letters to former friends. Murray and Sanday both corresponded with the Danish J.P. Bang, sending him pamphlets which Bang circulated among his own acquaintances as well as passing them on to colleagues in Germany, and a friend in Holland sent E.A. Sonnenschein copies of the German *Internationale Monatsschrift*. G. A. Bienemann, at the British Chaplaincy in Switzerland also forwarded pamphlets to other academics, and requested more copies from publishers in order to do so.¹³⁵ Sanday asked Oxford University Press for two new sets of the ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, as he had given his away, and the Press was also asked to forward a full set to a Princeton Professor who had volunteered to lecture for the British cause in the United States.¹³⁶ Academics also discussed the work of their opponents with their countrymen, suggesting books to be read, and sharing ideas on responses.¹³⁷

However, all this was to come later, when the original shock of the outbreak of war had faded. In the early days of the conflict, a sense of betrayal, disbelief, and outrage permeated the debate between academics on both sides, and it is to these initial responses that we will now turn.

¹³³ Bruntz, *Allied Propaganda*, p. 127

¹³⁴ H. Krebs to Murray, 1915, Bod.MSS.30 (Murray Papers), fol. 106.

¹³⁵ Bang to Murray, 18th Nov. 1917, Bod.MSS.35 (Murray Papers), fol. 53; Schack to Murray, 12th Jan. 1915, Bod.MSS.25, fol. 69; Sonnenschein to Murray 9th Nov. 1914, Bod.MSS.25, fol. 159. G.A. Bienemann to Sanday, 15th Apr. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.122/1 (Sanday Papers), fol. 139.

¹³⁶ See Sanday, 8th Nov. 1914; Davis, 11th Nov. 1914, OUP.CPED001186, fols. 38, 66.

¹³⁷ See, for example, J.P. Bang to Murray, undated (probably March/April 1916), Bod.MSS.30 (Murray Papers), fol. 87; Sanday to Murray, 11th Aug 1915, in which he discusses two recently published German books, and mentions that he is sending Murray’s pamphlet to Loofs. Bod.MSS.27, fols. 40-1, also Francis Youngusband to Murray, 25th May 1916, Bod.MSS.30, fol.182.

Interlocking Circles

'...early and mid-Victorian writers often regarded scholars as amusingly eccentric or worse... with the onset of Victorian values like hard work and productivity, many Victorians considered the 'useless' accomplishments of scholarship wanting.'

-T.W. Heyck, 1984

'From the day when he enters upon his career, [the Professor] is treated as an important public personality; and at every new stage of his progress the public is reminded of him...on every occasion he again appears under the calcium light of the stage, and is celebrated by the press, by his pupils and colleagues as an incomparable ornament of science.'

-Friedrich Paulsen, 1906¹

From the above, it would appear that the situation of the intellectual in Britain and Germany in the 19th and early 20th Centuries was widely different – one dismissed and derided, the other feted and favoured. In fact, public opinion of intellectuals in both countries steadily shifted over the course of the 19th Century, from dismissal of a caste of traditionalist elites with little impact on real life, to respect for a group which not only formed opinion and promoted the scientific and cultural prestige of the nation, but were closely linked to government and power. This shift was based both on changes in the university systems themselves, and on a steadily increasing engagement on the part of intellectuals with state and political life. This chapter will explore the position of academics in Britain and Germany before the War, as well as the ways in which they interacted, before examining the effect of the War on the scholarly community.

In Britain, there were a number of different university systems, varying as to both institutional

¹ Heyck, *Transformation*, p. 74; Friedrich Paulsen, *The German Universities and University Study*, Frank Thilly & William W. Elwang trans. (London, 1906), p. 177.

structure and degree of state involvement. In England, two different types of university system were in place – the traditional collegiate model found in Oxford and Cambridge, and the more modern ‘red-brick’ universities based primarily on the example of the University of London. Ireland and Wales tended to conform to the newer English model, and Scotland’s long-standing traditions set her universities apart until the later years of the 19th Century, when increased competition forced a restructuring more in line with her English counterparts.²

Prior to the establishment of the red-brick universities, Oxbridge was the exemplar of British university education, and for many, continued to be so – as evidenced by the German educationalist Paulsen’s sole focus on them when comparing British and German universities in 1906. From the 1850s onwards, Oxbridge had undergone radical reforms – partly in response to the establishment of the University of London, and the challenge it offered to Oxbridge’s supremacy, and partly due to an increase in state involvement in university affairs. These reforms opened Oxford and Cambridge to all religions, altered the governing bodies of the universities, and encouraged the establishment of new programmes of study, as well as pushing for changes among the professoriate. Between 1850 and the 1880s, calls were made for professors to teach and research along the German model, curricula were broadened, and restrictions on celibacy were removed to allow married men to teach. Members of the universities were themselves amongst the advocates of reform, and the changes prompted ‘a more responsible attitude in the universities to society outside, and in turn a greater trust and regard for the universities’ academic work on the part of society itself.’³

One major aspect of this new attitude in Oxford – putting ‘new heart and spirit’ into the university, according to Michael Sanderson – was the connection between Oxford and the Civil Service Exams, established in 1855. In preparing students for the Civil Service, the University could justify its own emphasis on liberal education as a useful foundation for a career, defending its status as a teaching

² Michael Sanderson, *The Universities in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1975), p. 83, 186.

³ Sanderson, *Universities*, pp. 77-8, 142; Sheldon Rothblatt, ‘State and market in British university history’, in Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore, Brian Young (Eds.), *Economy, Polity and Society: British Intellectual History 1750-1950* (Cambridge, 2000), p230; Heyck, *Transformation*, pp. 169-170.

university and claim that the Civil Service had the advantage of choosing its employees from a pool of highly trained, intelligent and cultivated young men. It also ensured that the University remained in contact with the political situation of the day, instead of retreating behind the safe walls of the colleges.⁴

Staying in touch with the modern world was vital, as they were in surprisingly close competition with the new universities. University College, London, founded in 1820, was the first to challenge the supremacy of Oxbridge, and initially, differed from the traditional universities to a substantial degree. Non-denominational, it was denounced by Oxbridge for its ‘godlessness’,⁵ and instead of working on a collegiate structure, was more in line with the Scottish and German universities, allowing its students to live where they chose, at whatever cost they could afford. The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was acclaimed at Oxford and Cambridge, but the purpose of UCL was to train its students for a career, and from 1836 examinations were open to all – a development which was of considerable importance in elevating the status of the other provincial universities.

The new red-bricks followed London’s lead, offering ‘flexible admissions criteria, low cost, professorial rather than expensive tutorial instruction, [and] broader curricula with provision for the introduction of new ‘modern’ or ‘practical’ subjects’.⁶ However, they lacked the prestige of the Oxbridge colleges (an important factor in such a class-based society), and the Oxbridge reforms went a long way towards addressing gaps in the curriculum and improving teaching standards. Initially, the new universities were intended to improve on Oxford and Cambridge, taking on their good points, while avoiding their faults.⁷ Determined to differentiate themselves from Oxbridge, they sought examples in Germany, the United States and Scotland, and ‘expected to provide a very different sort of education, to a very different type of student, in a very different kind of environment.’ Above all, they characterised themselves as ‘modern universities’, providing ‘training in modern disciplines’,

⁴ Sanderson, *Universities*, pp. 83, 212.

⁵ Rothblatt, *State and Market*, p. 230.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p240.

⁷ Sanderson, *Universities*, p. 79.

connected to the local community and conducting useful research in a way that the older universities, ‘remote from the great centres of industry’ could not.⁸ Indeed, the area in which the new universities excelled was in their connection to industry. Many were founded in industrial areas and made particular efforts to establish links with industry and local government, gaining support from the community and helping to build endowments. Professors were very much in touch with business concerns and governmental issues – a pattern already established in Germany – particularly after 1870, when the number of technologically-oriented regional colleges increased, and specialisation in fields such as economics, commerce and agriculture ensured their importance to industry, providing a practical alternative to the liberal education advocated by the older universities.⁹

The increasing emphasis on research affected both the old universities and their newer competition, and, with an eye to the example of Germany, teams of research students began to feature in the laboratories of universities.¹⁰ Equally, the opening of the universities to new members had an important impact on the image of the university as a modern and vital part of the nation, and reflected the significant expansion of the universities by the turn of the century (from 3,300 undergraduates in England in 1860 to 17,000 by 1900¹¹). Women were accepted to civic colleges founded after 1870, and women’s colleges were founded in Oxford and Cambridge throughout the 1870s, though women were not accepted as full members of the university until 1920 and 1948 respectively (London University, however, provided an avenue to women to earn a degree from 1878). The university extension movement was similarly important, offering university-level lectures and classes to the working class by sending tutors to lecture to groups, and the Workers’ Educational Association had strong links to Oxford and Cambridge.¹²

Developments in Britain were in line with developments on the continent, and German universities

⁸ William Whyte, *Redbrick: A Social and Architectural History of Britain’s Civic Universities* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 134-5. The description of a modern university comes from a 1908 article in the *Bristol University College Gazette*, cited on p. 132.

⁹ Heyck, *Transformation*, p. 172; Sanderson, *Universities*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁰ Sanderson, *Universities*, p. 189.

¹¹ Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 205-206.

¹² Sanderson, *Universities*, p. 147.

were the model for many observers in the 19th Century. Though they possessed an equally long-standing tradition, they were very different from their British counterparts. After unification, the German universities remained the responsibility of the individual state governments, but despite this, the ‘uniformity of academic traditions and habits, professorial career patterns, the popularity of student migration, and the sense that universities had a particularly close relationship with the successful process of unification, all meant that the universities were seen as a national system.’¹³ Contemporaries viewed this division as a strength, allowing universities to adapt to local needs, guaranteeing the independence of professors, and fostering competition which would encourage excellence, while universal conditions such as exemption from military service and school leaving exams still helped to maintain a degree of uniformity.¹⁴

Always prestigious, the international reputation of the German universities only improved after 1871, and by the turn of the century, they were famous for their acclaimed professors, the critical training of students, the orientation towards research, and their much-vaunted focus on *Lehrfreiheit* (freedom of teaching) and *Lernfreiheit* (freedom of study).¹⁵ ‘Freedom of teaching,’ said Paulsen, ‘is the pride of the German university... When other nations boasted of their power, their dominion, and their free institutions, the German people...prided itself upon its intellectual freedom...’¹⁶ The ideas of *Geist*, which encompassed both spirit and intellect, and *Wissenschaft* had strong roots in German culture, and were almost self-perpetuating, and certainly self-congratulatory ideals.¹⁷

German universities were considered to be the best examples of a modern university system, both within Germany, and in other nations, offering a broad course of instruction, combined with specialized training and scientific research.¹⁸ The primacy of scientific study in the German university

¹³ R.D. Anderson, *European Universities from the Enlightenment to 1914* (Oxford, 2004), p. 151.

¹⁴ M.E. Sadler, ‘The History of Education’ in J.H. Rose, C.H. Herford, E.C.K. Gonner, M.E. Sadler, *Germany in the Nineteenth Century: Five Lectures* (Manchester, 1912), p. 113. Paulsen, *German Universities*, p. 77.

¹⁵ Charles E. McClelland, *State, Society and University in Germany 1700-1914* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 2.

¹⁶ Paulsen, *German Universities*, p. 227.

¹⁷ For example, Paulsen boasted that ‘in Germany, more than elsewhere, learning is deeply cherished by the nation.’ *Ibid*, p. 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 2.

can be traced to the reforms of the 18th Century, and as the 19th Century progressed, the university system became more standardised, with the development of a specific career path within the university, and a gradual increase in state control. The number and size of universities escalated due to population growth, a rise in wealth, the lengthening of course requirements, and more spaces for women and foreign students, who frequently came to spend time studying in Germany.¹⁹

The late 19th Century saw the establishment of separate science faculties, and almost all universities expanded, modernised, or built new laboratories and institutes.²⁰ This was closely linked to industry, as many companies sponsored chairs, institutes and research, and while some professors remained absorbed in the purely theoretical aspects of their work, others such as Emil Fischer and A.W. Hofmann worked directly with industrial concerns, creating the first 'educational-industrial complex', which both fascinated and worried neighbouring powers.²¹

While the growth of laboratories and institutions underlined the idea of universities as research institutes,²² professors were still expected to teach, and teaching followed a scientific ideal. Students were not to be prepared for careers, but to be instructed in the scientific method, they were to be taught how to think, and to carry out independent learning.²³ Scientific research was not the only area in which the university was linked to the State, as the universities also held a monopoly over the training of candidates for posts in the civil service.²⁴

Despite the boom in university enrolments, which jumped from 33,688 in 1900 to 60,234 in 1914, the universities were not the sole option for those who wished to continue their education. The Technical High Schools, which provided training for careers in technical fields such as engineering and

¹⁹ Paulsen, *German Universities*, pp. 49-50; McClelland, *State, Society*, p. 242; Lothar Burchardt, 'Naturwissenschaftliche Universitätslehrer im Kaiserreich', in Klaus Schwabe (Ed.), *Deutsche Hochschullehrer als Elite 1815-1945* (Boppard am Rhein, 1988), p. 153.

²⁰ Anderson, *European Universities*, pp. 155-156; Burchardt, *Universitätslehrer*, pp. 151-155.

²¹ Burchardt, *Universitätslehrer*, pp. 157, 200-201; Anderson, *European Universities*, p. 160.

²² Sadler, *Education*, p. 109-110.

²³ Paulsen, *German Universities*, pp. 4, 63-65.

²⁴ McClelland, *State, Society*, pp. 7-8.

architecture, as well as conducting research in physics and chemistry, became more and more prominent throughout the 19th Century, and for those who were less technically-minded, the business schools founded in the late 19th Century provided an alternative. Usually founded by local elites and chambers of commerce, these extended the growing professionalization of the 19th Century, as well as developing the social sciences.²⁵ Furthermore, the universities themselves were attempting to reach new audiences, with evening courses in winter in a scheme resembling that of the WEA in Britain. The aim in reaching out to the working classes was to break the isolation of universities from society. Such exclusion, it was argued, endangered the solidarity of the nation.²⁶

However, the German universities were not the utopia they appeared to scholars in other countries. They became steadily more conservative towards the end of the 19th Century and conformity to ever narrower standards of conduct, both academically and otherwise, became essential to those who wished to succeed.²⁷ Those intellectuals who remained outside of the university sphere found life extremely difficult; and as a limited number of academics controlled the majority of professional societies, journals and review boards, it was easy to block the career of an offending individual.²⁸ Tensions bubbled over the increases in the size of the teaching body, conflicts between disciplines and the pressures of the specialization of fields and the creation of new chairs.²⁹

There was strong admiration for the German system in Britain, and a number of reformers took it as their model. Speaking of contemporary German scholarship, Charles Sarolea said that German theology was necessary to those who sought a career in religion, and H.W.C. Davis described Germany as ‘the focus of European thought’, stating that she had ‘profoundly influenced all other nations.’³⁰ British institutions awarded honorary doctorates to German academics and to statesmen –

²⁵ Such as economics. See Anderson, *European Universities*, pp. 156-158; McClelland, *State, Society*, pp. 236-237.

²⁶ Paulsen, *German Universities*, pp. 104, 116, 129.

²⁷ Daniel Fallon, *The German University* (Colorado, 1980), p. 23; McClelland, *State, Society*, p. 268.

²⁸ Paulsen, *German Universities*, p. 6; Fallon, *German University*, p. 46.

²⁹ Anderson, *European Universities*, p. 153.

³⁰ Charles Sarolea, *German Problems and Personalities* (London, 1917), p. 184; Lecture notes, MS.Top.Oxon.d.596 (H.W.C.Davis Papers), p. 126.

Thomas Weber suggests that this proceeding shows that respect for Germany was not limited to the academic sphere alone.³¹

Sanday compared the two nations in a letter to a German colleague in 1907, contrasting the German emphasis on logic and reason with the British reliance on feeling:

What we lack is the widely diffused scientific interest and instinct in the sense in which you think and speak of science. The average Englishman is not much given to philosophizing, or to study with the thoroughness which you devote to it. His canons of judgement are rather those of taste and feeling than of intellectual completeness, coherence and symmetry.

Nevertheless, Sanday saw some danger in the German approach to scholarship, particularly for religious faith, and felt this more acutely given the example that German universities set for the world.³² This qualified admiration is attested by Collini, whose study of intellectuals in Britain depicts an English culture in the latter half of the 19th Century which ‘could at times seem to be labouring under a sustained inferiority complex towards the achievements of German universities’, though envy of the status of German professors was tempered by a slightly sour satisfaction that ‘pedants were not allowed to take themselves so seriously’ in Britain.³³ He is seconded by S.D. Stirk, whose 1946 analysis describes a typical English attitude towards German professors in the 19th and early 20th Centuries characterised by ‘admiration qualified by hesitation and bewilderment, with a tendency towards ridicule, or even contempt.’ Appreciation of the ideals of German *Wissenschaft*, of *Lern-* and *Lehrfreiheit*, and of the organisation of German university life, contrasted with ‘well-founded English antagonism’ towards ‘Prussianism’ in the universities – a wariness of the rise of extreme nationalism espoused by university lecturers such as Heinrich von Treitschke, and of potentially politically-

³¹ Thomas Weber, *Our Friend “The Enemy”* (Stanford, 2008), pp. 56-7.

³² William Sanday to von Dobschütz, 30th Oct. 1907, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128 (Sanday Papers), fols. 46-8.

³³ Collini, *Absent Minds*, pp. 83-84.

oriented state interference in teaching.³⁴

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given their pride in their own universities, German authors said little on the subject of English educational institutions, except to point to a favourable contrast with their own, and it is easy to assume that the strong nationalism of the period extended to the universities and left them more Anglophobe than Anglophile. Thomas Weber argues that such a stark distinction between pro- and anti-British feeling is both overrated and simplistic, masking the shades of grey which were common to a large part of the establishment in both nations. He notes that German nationalism was not incompatible with a wish for good Anglo-German relations, suggesting that ‘the Anglophilia of... sections of the establishment went at times hand in hand with a frustration about what they thought was a British failure to find a suitable answer to the changed conditions in continental Europe.’ Equally, he points to the possibility that ‘good Anglo-German relations’ did not mean the same thing to both sides.³⁵ This attitude can easily be mapped on to the academics examined in this thesis who struggled to reconcile pre-war friendships with the bitterness of war, and were forced to examine not only the academic questions of the War, but also their own interactions with those who had become the enemy overnight. Nevertheless, there was some acknowledgement of British achievements in Germany – a Dr. Karl Peters wished the German system emulated the British in its emphasis on fair play, and in 1928 Gerhard Mueller, though acknowledging the admirable qualities of the German system, also pointed to a major flaw: ‘Thoroughness,’ he said,

bred onesidedness and led to a deplorable narrowness of outlook and often impeded work on a large scale. The... identification of book-learning and examination results with “education” made the German education-proud, gave a false impression to other nations, and created in Germany itself a

³⁴ S.D. Stirk, *German Universities Through English Eyes* (London, 1946), pp. 9, 15-21.

³⁵ Weber, *Our Friend*, pp. 93-6.

dangerous rift, by means of educational barriers which were often insurmountable.³⁶

Lord Haldane was another who saw shortcomings in the German system, claiming that in the real world, there was little time for intellectualism and contemplation – practical instinct, initiative, responsibility and leadership were taught through necessity, and the British system provided a solid foundation for such an education. Nevertheless, he conceded that science was becoming increasingly important, and that Britain had much to learn from Germany. Equally, Germany could learn from Britain: ‘such forces as we possess and such forces as Germany possesses could, if brought in aid of each the other, effect great things for the benefit of humanity at large.’³⁷

The idea that each system could benefit from the influence of the other was underlined by M.E. Sadler, Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University, in his introduction to Paulsen’s *German Universities*. He depicted a Germany which wished to implement some characteristics of British universities, and pointed to a concomitant awareness in Britain that research along the German model was undervalued in Britain, and that universities could benefit from greater state involvement.³⁸ Fear of the superiority of German science was a powerful motive for reform in Britain; there was a feeling that she had fallen behind due to a lack of scientific and technical education. This was emphasized by Britain’s relatively poor performance at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, and concerns for British industrial competitiveness were matched by a growing conviction throughout the second half of the 19th Century that the universities should encourage scientific talent and further the quest for efficiency.³⁹ Interestingly, this anxiety was mirrored in Germany, and, again, focused on the universities, as concern that the country was losing momentum and competitive ability found expression in governmental impatience with the

³⁶ Smith, *Soul*, p. 18; Gerhard Mueller, ‘The Organisation of German Schools’, in Rolf Gardiner & Heinz Rocholl, Eds., *Britain and Germany: A Frank Discussion Instigated by Members of the Younger Generation* (London, 1928), pp. 202-203.

³⁷ Viscount Haldane, introduction to J.H. Rose, C.H. Herford, E.C.K. Gonner, M.E. Sadler, *Germany in the Nineteenth Century: Five Lectures* (Manchester, 1912), p. viii.

³⁸ M.E. Sadler, introduction to Paulsen, *German Universities*, pp. xii-xiii.

³⁹ Sanderson, *Universities*, pp. 144, 207; Heyck, *Transformation*, pp. 82, 93, 114.

old-fashioned methods of the traditional universities.⁴⁰

State involvement in German universities was much more pronounced than in Britain, and relations between state and university varied according to state – understandably more personalised in the smaller states; in the bigger states, educational bureaucracy tended to be larger and more overbearing, and, as in many other areas, Prussia came to dominate after unification. There were no private universities, and private endowments were not encouraged. Within the university, there was a certain degree of autonomy, with control over the appointment of officials, discipline, and subjects taught, but the state appointed new faculty members (admittedly under advice from the relevant faculty, though this was frequently ignored).⁴¹ Professors were civil servants and ranked accordingly - this is partly what gave them their high social standing – and the states negotiated salaries and determined contracts directly with the appointee, rather than through the university.⁴²

Such incentives to conform to the state line must have had a profound influence on the political stance of the professoriate and while cases such as the famous ‘Göttingen Seven’ of 1837 had become increasingly rare with the rise of international prestige for the universities, this did not mean they were immune, as the 1898 *Lex Arons* proved.⁴³ These instances, however, were rare, and tended to rouse the academics in a fiery defence of the privileges of *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*. A number of professors signed a protest against Arons’ treatment (even the anti-Semitic Treitschke signed the defence of the Jewish Arons⁴⁴), and the defence of university privilege was further emphasised by the outcry raised in 1895 when Freiherr von Stumm denounced the *Kathedersozialisten*, a group of academics advocating social reform, condemning not only their actions, but also the universities’

⁴⁰ Anderson, *European Universities*, p. 157.

⁴¹ Fallon cites a study detailing appointments based on faculty recommendations. See Fallon, *German University*, pp. 49, 37-8.

⁴² McClelland, *State, Society*, pp. 5-6, 235-236; Burchardt, *Universitätslehrer*, pp. 105, 155, 181; Anderson, *European Universities*, p. 152.

⁴³ The Göttingen Seven were seven Göttingen professors who publically opposed the abolition of the Constitution of Hanover by the King. As a result, they were relieved of their posts at the University, and three of them were forced to leave the country. The Arons case centred around Leo Arons, an assistant professor at the University of Berlin. When the University refused to dismiss him for his public support of socialism on the grounds that it was unconnected with his teaching, a law was introduced which imposed similar conditions on assistant professors with regard to their public stance towards the state as those under which the full professors worked, and retroactively revoked Arons’ right to teach in Germany.

⁴⁴ Anderson, *European Universities*, p. 141.

freedom of teaching and their devotion to *Wissenschaft*. Immediately, the universities protested, even those who did not agree with the *Kathedersozialisten*.⁴⁵ Issues of *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit* were deemed untouchable by those most closely connected with them.

Socialism was a dangerous inclination for a German university member, as during the years of the anti-Socialist laws (1878-1890) anyone with SPD associations was banned from appointment as a state official.⁴⁶ Equally, during the *Kulturkampf*, it was made clear that those associated with the Catholic Centre Party would not be appointed to a professorship.⁴⁷ Throughout the period, political allegiance had a severe impact on career prospects, and Prussian Minister J.R. Bosse summed this up succinctly in 1898, saying that professors had “to fill youth with respect for the monarchy and the constitution and... our state institutions”.⁴⁸ Max Weber made his disgust with the situation clear, condemning the fact that ‘*The ‘freedom of science’ exists in Germany within the limits of political and ecclesiastical acceptability.*’⁴⁹

However, many professors did not object to this situation, seeing their position as above politics. Unlike their predecessors in the Frankfurt Parliament, professors in the late 19th Century often associated politics with demagoguery, looking down on the political world as corrupt and unethical. Others were indifferent, viewing politics as an unsuitable pursuit for academics, and believing that they were called to higher things in their devotion to *Wissenschaft*.⁵⁰ Exceptions, such as the editors of the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, and the *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft*, discussed political matters in their journals; but as a result, came close to losing their academic positions and were viewed with suspicion despite their loyalty to the state.⁵¹ State interference was accepted in exchange for funding – as the State was seen to be above parties and interest groups, it was felt that it did not threaten academic freedom, but rather acted as a protector against societal

⁴⁵ Hans Peter Bleuel, *Deutschlands Bekenner* (Bern, 1968), p. 40.

⁴⁶ Anderson, *European Universities*, p. 168.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p164

⁴⁸ McClelland, *State, Society*, p. 294.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Anderson, *European Universities*, p. 171. Italics in original.

⁵⁰ McClelland, *State, Society*, p. 317; Bleuel, *Bekenner*, p. 53.

⁵¹ McClelland, *State, Society*, p. 318.

pressures.⁵² For the vast majority, dissent was inconceivable and unnecessary – as Charles McClelland points out, loyalty was ‘an index of the very high degree of integration among university, state and society before 1914.’ Academics did not feel intimidated by the State, but rather felt that they belonged to the national community.⁵³ The distinction between state and nation was perhaps more marked in Germany than in Britain – the Germans had always felt a strong connection to the national idea of Germany, a spiritual community bound by a shared history, language, and literature (and, of course, university system), but before unification, there was no such thing as a national state, with a single government making policy. Even after unification, although Prussia took on a dominant role in national government, individual states still had a degree of autonomy. As such, the state-nation-university relationship was more complex, with a romantic attachment to the nation which was matched by a more prosaic sense of obligation to state – Sadler, writing in 1912, described this sense of duty to the state in Germany, far stronger than that felt by the British, emphasized through tradition, a comprehensive civil service, and the requirements of military service.⁵⁴

Whereas in Germany political academics had to worry about state intervention, in Britain, concern was focused on local businessmen and magistrates, particularly with regard to labour unrest. In 1910, a letter to *The Times* described the way in which lecturers in some of the northern universities were placed under pressure if they openly associated with any political party, for fear of offending local magnates who might contribute to university funds. Similarly, in the same year, the railway companies donating to the London School of Economics threatened to withdraw their support if Sidney Webb, who had commented on the 1909 Osborne Judgement, did not retire from his position as chairman of the Board of Governors.⁵⁵ State involvement in British education, however, was limited – despite the fact that it provided funding for the universities from the 1880s, and became the regulator of academic standards as a result of the establishment of the University of London, and its role in the reform of the ancient universities, it generally imposed little restraint on intellectual

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 291, 314.

⁵³ McClelland, *State, Society*, pp. 325-6.

⁵⁴ Sadler, introduction to Paulsen, *German Universities*, p. x.

⁵⁵ Wallace, *War*, pp. 10-11.

freedom.⁵⁶ Instead, a mutually beneficial arrangement developed, in which the State guaranteed public support for the universities through its authority over endowments and internal issues, and the universities ‘bestowed moral authority on government as the ultimate protector of civilisation’.⁵⁷

As a result, the ‘ivory tower’ was not quite as isolated as we may think of it today – universities in both nations trained senior government officials, and saw it as their role to prepare future leaders for a career in political or public service.⁵⁸ German professors did not engage in party politics to the degree they had before unification, but ‘when it came to consolidating the German Empire through popular publications as well as legitimizing and propagating an ever-increasing role of Germany in the world, German... professors... were still eager to play their role...’⁵⁹ Though Paulsen explicitly denied that the universities had a duty to instil patriotism in their students, Thomas F.A. Smith, a British lecturer who had taught in German universities for twelve years before the First World War, pointed to the work of the *Flottenprofessoren* (‘Fleet Professors’), who had been involved in the propaganda of the German Navy League and the Pan-German League.⁶⁰ Smith claimed that they had written many pamphlets without the knowledge of the public, anonymously spreading the ideals of *Weltpolitik*.⁶¹ There is a sense in this of the insidious side of propaganda – while the public work of the professors played on their prestige to persuade, Smith’s emphasis on their anonymity while writing for nationalist groups was a tacit condemnation of a use of their skills and expertise which Smith seemed almost to see as dishonest – writing in support of a cause without acknowledging their position or abilities to persuade. Certainly, Smith saw the professors as stooges of the state, obliged to take an oath promising not to speak against the monarch or the state:

... their activity before the war – in omitting to denounce the glaring

⁵⁶ Rothblatt, *State and Market*, p. 231; Sadler, ‘History of Education’, pp. 121-122. Universities in Scotland, Wales and Ireland had benefited from State funding to a degree earlier in the century. Sanderson, *Universities*, p. 187.

⁵⁷ Rothblatt, *State and Market*, p. 242.

⁵⁸ Weber, *Our Friend*, pp. 28-33,

⁵⁹ Weber, *Our Friend*, p. 60.

⁶⁰ For a thorough discussion of the activities of the *Flottenprofessoren*, see Rüdiger vom Bruch, *Wissenschaft, Politik und öffentliche Meinung* (Husum, 1980).

⁶¹ Smith, *Soul*, pp. 44-5. Paulsen, *German Universities*, p. 258.

injustices...in Germany, and their activity after the war began – in appraising German *kultur* and denouncing England's perfidious barbarism, shows them to be what they really are – paid, obedient servants of the State.⁶²

The much-publicised role of professors in political causes such as the Navy League or Pan-German League is less inconsistent with an apolitical stance than it seems. As the State was seen to be the supreme authority, and above transitory political interests, contribution to State causes was not seen as an infringement on academic independence.⁶³ Certainly, Ringer's analysis of the work of the *Flottenprofessoren* suggests an emphasis on moral and cultural questions rather than political concerns, emphasising the world mission of Germany as a nation.⁶⁴ Paulsen saw a role for universities as a kind of 'public conscience' - separate from the world, they were less exposed to 'the temptation of power, to partisanship and party hatred', and so, could act as judges of the State.⁶⁵ Though professors were not a prominent group in the Reichstag, they remained active in state parliaments and pressure groups (where they exerted the most influence on national affairs), particularly as everyday politics included university concerns. They retained a strong presence in honorary positions in local clubs and groups, but tended to stay in the background on a national level (some exceptions, like the involvement of Delbrück and the historian Dietrich Schäfer in the elections of 1907, aside).⁶⁶ Though it has been argued that academics acted more as 'multipliers' than creators of public feeling, there was certainly a public perception that they were both engaged with and shapers of public opinion – in a 1910 book, the Councillor Rudolf Martin proclaimed that '[t]he times when German professors had nothing to say are gone. Public opinion does not diverge far from the opinion of our leading professors of economics and history.'⁶⁷

⁶² Smith, *Soul*, p. 47.

⁶³ McClelland, *State, Society*, p. 237.

⁶⁴ See Ringer, *Mandarins*, p. 140.

⁶⁵ Paulsen, *German Universities*, pp. 259-260.

⁶⁶ Rüdiger vom Bruch, 'Historiker und Nationalökonomien im Wilhelminischen Deutschland', in *Deutsche Hochschullehrer*, Klaus Schwabe, (Ed.), pp. 140-147; Anderson, *European Universities*, p. 174.

⁶⁷ See Rüdiger vom Bruch, *Wissenschaft*, p. 73. Rudolf Martin quoted in Rüdiger vom Bruch, 'Krieg und Frieden' in Jost Dülffer & Karl Holl (Eds.), *Bereit zum Krieg: Kriegsmoralität im Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890-1914* (Göttingen, 1986), p. 76.

This does not mean that all academics blindly followed where the State led of course; as in other countries, such a broad group of people could not but hold a broad range of views, and though critics of the State were a minority, critics did exist, and were not afraid to speak out, as the Arons case shows.⁶⁸ Again, we turn to Paulsen, who maintained despite his undoubted devotion to the nation that ‘an investigator who permits circumstances to influence him in his theories... who acts like a politician, loses all claim to consideration. We desire to know from him what is true and a necessity of thought, not what happens to be permitted or seems to be opportune at the present time or in this particular place.’⁶⁹

British academics took a similar stance to public engagement – indeed as Heyck points out, in the early 19th Century many intellectuals felt that their duty was to be useful to the nation at large; and this sense of duty remained a strong impulse as the century progressed.⁷⁰ British academics saw it as their responsibility to educate the nation, and there was ‘an acute sense among members of the intellectual elite that they were as much public servants as those who they regarded the duty of the universities to nurture for the high offices of church and state.’⁷¹ There was a strong feeling that it was the task of the intellectuals to help instil national pride and patriotism among the increasingly-literate masses.⁷² Collini describes a world in which leading figures played a prominent role in public debate, attempting ‘to throw their cultural authority into the balance’,⁷³ and this is echoed in Stromberg’s contention that British academics exercised both direct and indirect influence, providing ‘moral and mental resources’ from which the ruling class could benefit.⁷⁴

Paulsen confirmed the contemporary sense of British intellectual engagement with the State, writing that ‘in England the universities are part of the political system, the scholars are enmeshed in the

⁶⁸ McClelland, *State, Society*, pp. 320, 323.

⁶⁹ Paulsen, *German Universities*, pp. 255-256.

⁷⁰ Heyck, *Transformation*, pp. 36-8.

⁷¹ Julia Stapleton, *Political Intellectuals and Public Identities in Britain since 1850* (Manchester, 2001), pp. 17-19.

⁷² *Ibid*, pp. 26,32.

⁷³ Collini, *Absent Minds*, p. 75.

⁷⁴ Stromberg, *Redemption*, p. 20.

views and judgements of the governing class of society.’ This was in contrast with the German universities, who lived ‘in their own world’, separated from politics, and, he implied, free of this mesh of views and judgements.⁷⁵ The close association with the middle and upper classes allowed the British intelligentsia to influence politics, through ‘intellectual intimacy with members of the governing class,’⁷⁶ based on a shared educational and professional background. Collini points out that such intimacy made it easy, ‘even damagingly easy’ for these intellectuals to believe that they were speaking from ‘a vantage-point that combined reflective disinterestedness with judicious realism’, rather than indicating the views of a particular group or interest.⁷⁷

Despite this, however, political involvement made many British academics uncomfortable – Julia Stapleton describes how a number of prominent intellectuals, including H.A.L. Fisher, Minister for Education in Lloyd George’s government, felt a tension between the independence required for scholarship, and the compromises demanded by political involvement.⁷⁸ The Cambridge historian G.M. Trevelyan’s attitude was typical of the time; he felt that the research ideal was inherently incompatible with civic involvement, and so, spent much of his life in limbo between committed academic study, and a political career.⁷⁹ Many felt that university lecturers had a duty to remain impartial with regards to political issues – as reflected in the objections raised in 1903 after the publication of a letter in *The Times* signed by 14 economics lecturers, debating government Tariff Reform proposals.⁸⁰ During the First World War, when the German ‘Manifesto of the 93’ was published, the response of the British academic community made it clear that there was ‘a deep sense that academics had a collective responsibility *not* to let their special standing be compromised by political activity.’ Sir Frederick Kenyon, President of the British Academy, underlined this in 1920, when he stated that the German academics should not have used their position as scholars to support

⁷⁵ Paulsen, *German Universities*, p. 262.

⁷⁶ Stromberg, *Redemption*, p. 15.

⁷⁷ Collini, *Public Moralists*, pp. 57-58.

⁷⁸ Stapleton, *Intellectuals*, p. 4.

⁷⁹ Victor Feske, *From Belloc to Churchill: Private Scholars, Public Culture and the Crisis of British Liberalism 1900-1939* (Chapel Hill, 1996), p. 142.

⁸⁰ Collini, *Public Moralists*, p. 235.

an issue they had not investigated.⁸¹ Prominent opposition to the Government was rare in Britain, and E.L. Woodward noted that the chief interests during his time in Oxford (1908-1913) were social questions, or theology, not public affairs.⁸² Even in the more outspoken Cambridge, only a small minority protested in favour of the Bulgarian Agitation or against the Boer War, and once Britain was at war in South Africa, there was a general feeling that it was an Englishman's duty to affirm his loyalty to his country when at war – however free he was to criticise before war was declared.⁸³ This attitude should be noted, as it would come into play in August 1914. The academic community was largely self-regulating – as can be seen in the Boer War, when Walter Raleigh criticised those who opposed it as 'dainty and self-indulgent moralists', living 'in the abstract and imaginary world... of discussion and theory'.⁸⁴

This obligation to the nation at war continued in the First World War and Francis Younghusband, leader of the British Fight for Right Movement, epitomised this view in 1915, stating that 'Rousing the spirit of the country should be in the main the work of its spiritual leaders not of its political leaders'. This reference to 'spiritual' leaders was not limited to religious leaders, but seems to have been intended in a similar sense to that of the German *Geist* – the idea of men of intellect, capable of articulating the national spirit, and spreading it throughout the nation - the 'men who really lead the thought and spirit of the people...'⁸⁵ In Germany the legal scholar Franz von Liszt, legion councillor Georg Irmer and the historian Karl Lamprecht called on 'all men of the quill' to do their part for Germany's future, proclaiming that 'sword and quill should not be at rest until the German Empire rises again from this new trial of fire...'⁸⁶ Magnus Hirschfeld specifically approached the issues of the war from a scholarly position, claiming that he sought to understand them not from a political point of view, but through the lens of scientific research, examining it from a racial psychological

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 233.

⁸² Wallace, *War*, p. 12.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

⁸⁴ Walter Raleigh, quoted in Wallace, *War*, p. 14.

⁸⁵ Younghusband to Murray, 25th Aug. 1915, Bod.MSS.28, (Murray Papers) fols. 61-2.

⁸⁶ See introduction to Franz von Liszt, *Ein Mitteleuropäischer Staatenverband als nächstes Ziel der deutschen auswärtigen Politik*, 'Zwischen Krieg und Frieden' Series, No. 2 (Leipzig, 1914), p. iii.

perspective.⁸⁷ Similarly, the introduction to the second volume of the *Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit* ('German Speeches in Difficult Times') pamphlet series referred to the speakers, academics from universities throughout Germany, as the 'spiritual leaders of our people in these difficult times', who sought to help their audience to understand the War.⁸⁸ It is important to note that although the German pamphlets examined in this thesis represent a range of universities across the *Kaiserreich*, the British pamphlets under investigation emanated primarily from Oxford, with contributions from intellectuals at other English universities and in other fields. As a result, the different experiences of intellectuals outside of England are not specifically discussed (Ireland's case in particular stands out, and references to Britain in this thesis should not be taken to include the Irish experience). This does not mean that the pamphlets should not be viewed as a vital contribution to wartime academic debate – not only would the pamphlets have been sold throughout Britain, and therefore been read beyond England, but we should also remember that their authors felt they were speaking on behalf of British values and ideals, appointing themselves spokesmen of the British Empire. Though their experience was certainly not universal, their utterances had a representative value which resonated with the British population.⁸⁹

John E. McFadyen admired the scholars' engagement with the War, writing in 1916: 'What one just a little missed, I think, in the Oxford of my time, was this contact with the real live issues of the modern world. Whether it is good for the scholars' leisure or temper or peace of mind may be doubted, but it is certainly a good thing for the world.'⁹⁰ On the other hand, the author and translator W.R. Paton flatly contended that the 'savant's opinion on such a matter is not better than that of the man in the street', particularly condemning the German intellectuals for their belief that their word alone would convince the world at large of Germany's innocence of war guilt.⁹¹ He was not alone, as a report from a Professor Steindamm on the *Bund deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler* shows. Steindamm condemned the political activity of the members, wishing that they would confine their utterances to historical

⁸⁷ Hirschfeld, *Warum Hassen*, p. 3.

⁸⁸ Waldener & v. Erdberg, *Deutsche Reden*, pp. vi-vii.

⁸⁹ As Catriona Pennell demonstrates. E.g. *Kingdom United*, pp. 3, 46, 64.

⁹⁰ McFadyen to Murray, 24th Oct. 1916, Bod.MSS.32 (Murray Papers), fols. 56-7.

⁹¹ Paton to Murray, 27th Dec. 1915, Bod.MSS.29, (Murray Papers) fol. 116.

matters and artistic comparisons and he feared that their ‘idealistic’ idea of ‘serving Germany through scholarship’ was impractical and potentially damaging to the war effort.⁹²

Some academics were scrupulous about their activity, and tried to maintain a spirit of scholarly inquiry with regard to the War – when asked to sign a manifesto supporting the British cause, the anthropologist J.G. Frazer refused on the grounds that it referred to documents which he had not read, and to sign would imply that he had.⁹³ William Sanday showed a similarly upright nature when he expressed his censure of the manipulation of evidence in the British Blue Book, which had incorrectly dated a document, saying ‘That is not straightforward dealing; it is treatment that ought not to be possible in an official publication.’⁹⁴ Once again, we see a reliance on scholarly investigation, and a thorough disapproval of any attempts to interfere with it. Others put their duty to the nation above all personal concerns. When Gilbert Murray was offered the newly-founded title of Companion of Honour in June 1917 in recognition of his contribution to the war effort, he refused, explaining that his work had been to defend Britain, and the value of his work might be weakened if he accepted.⁹⁵ Murray’s obligation to the nation at war superseded personal glory, but his concept of duty extended further, as he also believed in Britain’s wider duty to the world, opining that Britain was right to declare war on Germany, because ‘to have remained neutral in that crisis would have been a failure in public duty.’⁹⁶

The conflict between personal inclination and national duty was a difficult matter for many academics, as the international academic community was a close one, and the outbreak of hostilities cut off many long-standing friendships between intellectuals in the two nations. National academic communities were highly cohesive – in Britain, according to Stapleton, the intellectuals formed ‘something in the order of a self-perpetuating elite, whose impact on the lives of the non-university

⁹² Report on *Bund deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler*, 28th Dec. 1914, BArch.R901/72299 (Propaganda des Professors Steindamm), fols. 130-2.

⁹³ J.G. Frazer to Murray, 14th Oct. 1914, Bod.MSS.25, (Murray Papers) fols. 66-7.

⁹⁴ Sanday to Loofs, 22nd Jul. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128, (Sanday Papers) fol. 212.

⁹⁵ Draft Letter, 3rd Aug. 1917, Bod.MSS.34, (Murray Papers), fol. 163.

⁹⁶ Gilbert Murray, *How Can War Ever Be Right?*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. IV (London, 1914), p. 3.

population was limited accordingly'.⁹⁷ Stapleton described 'small overlapping circles of loyalty,' built up from school, through colleges and universities which acted as 'intellectual cement', and helped to maintain these ties, even beyond the academic world. Personal, professional and family links, added to a broad consensus on values, and a 'liberalism, which became almost a definitional aspect of intellectual life and the end of the nineteenth century',⁹⁸ contributed to a unity which remained secure despite differences of opinion on religion, democracy or state power.

In Germany, such ties were also to be found, and the university system was seen as a world in itself, with links between universities encouraged by student exchanges, which had always promoted a sense of national unity.⁹⁹ A sense of solidarity was also fostered by the fraternities and within faculties, cementing the community of the educated classes.¹⁰⁰ Amongst the faculty, what could be considered 'professorial families', almost dynastic in interests and career, were established and for some, marrying into such a family was a sure path to academic success – so much so that Prussia introduced a ban on hiring a relative as an assistant to prevent blatant nepotism.¹⁰¹ The social circle was just as important as the professional, and Lothar Burchardt describes the frequency of 'women's cabinets' (*Kabinett der Damen*) in smaller universities, in which the influence of family members and personal friendships between wives could provide a much-needed professional boost.¹⁰² Bearing in mind the control of a small number of influential academics over academic publishing, and that faculty members made recommendations to state governments with regard to appointments, it is clear that under the German system, personal influence was paramount, and who you knew could be as important as what you knew. Equally, the ease of mobility in German universities brought many into contact who would otherwise perhaps have remained strangers, and maintained a sense of national community which was particularly strong for such a new state – though of course, the universities had always contributed to national feeling.

⁹⁷ Stapleton, *Intellectuals*, pp. 14-15.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2.

⁹⁹ Paulsen, *German Universities*, pp. 185-186.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 432, 434.

¹⁰¹ Burchardt, *Universitätslehrer*, pp. 177-179.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p177.

Internationally, links between Germany and Britain were strong, and many prominent British intellectuals spent time in Germany and vice versa. A large number of German academics held British honours, and many British academics held honorary German degrees. They visited each other, corresponded regularly, collaborated on projects, and translated each others' books. Thomas Weber's study of Heidelberg and Oxford Universities in the late 19th Century clearly shows the similarities and exchanges between the two, and they can be taken as examples of the degree of interaction between the two nations before the War. 'So many of Oxford's dons had a German educational background,' Weber says, 'that it would be tedious to cite more than a few examples', and he notes that even in times of political tension between Germany and Britain, 'Anglo-German life at Oxford was characterized by much more than academic friendship in times of deteriorating relations between the two countries.'¹⁰³ Similarly, student exchanges were seen as a way to overcome 'misunderstanding and mutual mistrust' between the two nations. This was supported by organisations such as the King Edward VII British-German Foundation, which provided funds for students of either Germany or Britain to study in the other country, and Rhodes Scholarships were also available to German students, chosen by the Kaiser. Both countries also had clubs which aimed at maintaining friendships between the two nations, encouraging students to travel, and debating political and cultural questions.¹⁰⁴

There were also many personal links between German and British academics. Many had studied in the opposing nation, some had intermarried, and academics in both countries frequently corresponded, as William Sanday's long-standing friendship with theologian Friedrich Loofs, or Gilbert Murray's closeness with Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff showed.¹⁰⁵ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff addressed Murray as 'honoured friend' in his letters, Murray invited Wilamowitz-Moellendorff to stay with him when visiting Oxford, and they discussed theories in classical studies and sent each other copies of their works, sharing a 'feeling of belonging' through their studies, as Wilamowitz-Moellendorff put

¹⁰³ Weber, *Our Friend*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁴ Weber, *Our Friend*, pp. 62, 64, 73-80.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, Wallace, *War*, pp. 29-31.

it.¹⁰⁶ Sanday also corresponded with a number of German scholars, including the theologians Ernst von Dobschütz (who was invited to stay with Sanday for a conference in 1908), Friedrich von Hügel, Hans von Soden, and Adolf von Harnack, again, sharing work and opinions – and often much praise.¹⁰⁷ The biblical scholar Alfred Plummer wrote of his friendship with the theologian Ignaz von Döllinger on the latter's death as something incomparable and irreplaceable –

A friendship of nearly 18 years and an acquaintance of nearly 20 has come to an end; & if I lived to be twice his age I could not hope for such another. I had the run of his library, went in & out as I pleased, read there or carried off his books, just as suited me. I went to his lectures before breakfast or after dinner, & walked with him before supper almost daily – sometimes for weeks together....¹⁰⁸

Academics in the two countries often read the same journals, sent each other copies of lectures, and discussed new theories and approaches to topics.¹⁰⁹ Marks of respect for individual German scholars were not confined to honorary degrees – on the occasion of von Döllinger's 90th birthday in 1889, Lord Bryce (who would later head the committee investigating German atrocities during the 1914 invasion of Belgium) wrote to Sanday to request that he compose an 'address of good wishes and congratulations [sic]' from Oxford, which was signed by a number of Oxford scholars.¹¹⁰

That is not to say that there was no tension between the nations – Professor of Assyriology Dr. Friedrich Delitzsch, perhaps retroactively biased, spoke in December 1914 of his time working at the

¹⁰⁶ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff to Murray, 1st Feb. 1909, Bod.MSS.15, (Murray Papers) fols. 106-9. Letters between the two in Murray's papers date back to 1895 – see for example Bod.MSS.13, fols. 39-40, 104-5; Bod.MSS.8, fols. 83-8, 98-102.

¹⁰⁷ See for example, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128 (Sanday Papers), fols.76-80; Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.123/1, fols. 94-5; Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.123/3, fols.610-11; Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128, fols.84-5; Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.126, fol. 182 – this letter from von Soden expressing his appreciation for Sanday's work is particularly notable for its date, only two months before the war (1st May 1914).

¹⁰⁸ Alfred Plummer to Sanday, 26th Jan. 1890. Bod.MS. Eng.Misc.d.125 (Sanday Papers), fols. 108-9.

¹⁰⁹ See for example, Sanday to W. Loofs, 3rd May, 1913, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128 (Sanday Papers), fols. 110-114; Harnack to Sanday, 7th Mar. 1911, fols. 145-6.

¹¹⁰ Lord Bryce to William Sanday, 18th Feb. 1889, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.122/1 (Sanday Papers), fols. 243-7.

British Museum in the 1870s, describing an outburst by one of the trustees, presumably jealous of German success, and of the resentful response of the British to German prowess at sea.¹¹¹ Generally, however, relationships between academics were characterised by a mutual admiration which made the shock of the First World War even more bitter. Hirschfeld wrote of the astonishment of Germany when faced with the ‘violent hatred’ of other nations, and Adolf von Harnack could never forgive Britain for what he saw as a calculated attempt to destroy Germany.¹¹² The economic historian W.J. Ashley viewed the War as ‘a special and personal grief’, the end of ‘cherished’ hopes of Anglo-German cooperation and of ‘friendly interchange with men whose work... I have long admired.’¹¹³ Sanday’s grief over the separation caused by the War was clearly personal as well as intellectual, as he lamented those Germans who had spoken out against Britain, writing that

it is saddest to us to have to put at the head of the list, Adolf von Harnack, whom we believed that we understood even better than some of his own countrymen and who we thought understood us... Dr. Friedrich Loofs, whom under no circumstances could we believe to be other than a true friend... too repeats the same unhappy fixed ideas...¹¹⁴

This disappointment would persist throughout the War – in July 1918, Alfred Plummer wrote that ‘one of the most distressing & disheartening features in this most appalling of all human tragedies is the attitude of... the German Professors...’, and Sanday felt that articles written by fellow theologian Ernst Troeltsch had ‘let [him] down badly.’¹¹⁵

It is clear that the War had shaken British admiration for German institutions –in April 1915, the legal scholar A.V. Dicey, responding to an article on British and German scholarship, declared that ‘There

¹¹¹ Delitzsch, *Psalmworte*, pp. 69-70.

¹¹² See Eksteins, *Rites*, p. 201.

¹¹³ Hirschfeld, *Warum*, p. 3; W.J. Ashley, *The War and its Economic Aspects*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. X (London, 1914), p. 3.

¹¹⁴ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 66.

¹¹⁵ Plummer to Sanday, 5th Jul. 1918, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.125, (Sanday Papers), fol.164-6; Sanday to Chalmers Mitchell, 15th May 1918, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128/2, fols. 258-9.

never was a time when it was more difficult for an Englishman to be fair to Germany. The few defenders she has here almost invariably display as much unfairness in their apologies as English critics generally show in their invective...'¹¹⁶ Dicey himself took a moderate view, as he believed that many Germans were unaware of 'the odiousness of the doctrine and the practice maintained or introduced by the German Government', and was inclined to lay the blame on 'the maddening effect' of public opinion.¹¹⁷ Not all Britons were so charitable, and some saw the German professors as highly dangerous – the instigators of the spirit which had led to war. Reflecting a common impression of the War as inspired by militaristic doctrine, poet and art historian Laurence Binyon categorized the professor as the 'most dangerous of animals', dogged in his pursuit of theory, blind to the truth, pedantic and weak, worshipping an 'age of science' which encouraged a ruthless attitude towards humanity.¹¹⁸ A correspondent of Gilbert Murray agreed, stating that 'inactive intellectuals... are the... most dangerous advisors in war-time – see the German professors.'¹¹⁹ Even Sanday found it difficult to clear German intellectuals from the charge of underestimating the danger of militarist ideals in Germany, and he disapproved of what he saw as a passive tendency to allow them to spread.¹²⁰

Many Germans viewed the British position as particularly dishonourable due to the racial links between the two nations, referring to the British as 'cousins', who had betrayed their race by siding with Latin and Slav nations against their Teutonic brethren.¹²¹ Treachery on the part of racial kin was one thing, but far worse was betrayal by compatriots. The statement of loyalty to Britain made by some German professors in British universities after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, was greeted with sorrow by colleagues in Germany, who felt it as a deep betrayal.¹²² Similarly, the case of Professor F.C. Conybeare is also well known – in 1915, Conybeare wrote private letters to Professor Kuno Meyer of Berlin, then in the United States, blaming Sir Edward Grey for the outbreak of war and

¹¹⁶ A.V. Dicey to Murray, 26th Apr. 1915, Bod.MSS.27, (Murray Papers) fol. 107.

¹¹⁷ Dicey to Sanday, 10th May 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.123/1 (Sanday Papers), fol. 74.

¹¹⁸ Laurence Binyon, *Bombastes in the Shades*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. XIX (London, 1915), pp. 7-9, 20.

¹¹⁹ Pearsall Smith to Murray, 14th Feb. 1915, Bod.MSS.26, (Murray Papers) fol. 147.

¹²⁰ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 62.

¹²¹ See for example, Ernst zu Reventlow, *England der Feind*, 'Der Deutsche Krieg' Series, No. 16 (Berlin, 1914), p. 7; Walter Raleigh, *Might is Right*, 'Oxford Pamphlet' Series, Vol. II (London, 1914), p. 8.

¹²² See Lehmann-Haupt, *Krieg und Deutschland*, pp. 30-1.

professing no objection to having his ‘opinions [be] known’. Meyer then published the letters in America, and Conybeare’s opinions caused outrage amongst his colleagues. Conybeare retracted his statement, but not before facing a storm of protest.¹²³ Not all felt the break so deeply of course. The Germanist Berthold Litzmann pointed to the work of the poet Ernst von Wildenbrook, who had warned of encirclement and British hypocrisy from the late 19th Century, praising von Wildenbrook’s prophetic vision; and the staunchly conservative historian C.R.L. Fletcher waxed lyrical on the stupidity of Germany in going to war.¹²⁴

Despite the estrangement imposed by the War, many British academics maintained a positive attitude towards Germany and their own particular friends, at least in the early stages of the conflict, professing a sense of disappointment rather than hatred. A public declaration by British authors in September 1914, signed by H.A.L. Fisher (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield), Murray, and G.M. Trevelyan amongst more literary figures, asserted that ‘many of us have dear friends in Germany, many of us regard German culture with the highest respect and gratitude..’, but regardless, they felt themselves obliged to oppose German war aims.¹²⁵ W.J. Ashley refused ‘to deny to Germany the qualities which first called forth [his] respect,’ nor did he wish ‘to pay any German the poor compliment of returning his ‘hatred’.’¹²⁶ Others, such as E.A. Sonnenschein, questioned the previously venerated German scholarship, without wishing to detract from German achievements, and in 1915, a number of books on the cultural achievements of Germany were published in an attempt to be just (there were many counterarguments, as we shall see in later chapters).¹²⁷ Sanday looked to the accomplishments of German learning, and asked ‘how a nation of the intellectual power and attainments of Germany could possibly have arrived at a judgement or series of judgements that are so far removed from the reality,’ seeing no sign of the research methods or historical methodology which

¹²³ See Wallace, *War*, p. 143.

¹²⁴ Berthold Litzmann, *Ernst von Wildenbruch und der nationale Gedanke*, ‘Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit’ series, Vol. II (Berlin, 1915), pp. 13-20. C.R.L. Fletcher, *The Germans, their Empire, and what they covet*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. II (London, 1914), pp. 23-31.

¹²⁵ The War: Declaration by British Authors, Bod.MSS.25 (Murray Papers), fols. 1-2.

¹²⁶ Ashley, *Economic Aspects*, p.3.

¹²⁷ E.A. Sonnenschein, *Through German Eyes*, ‘Oxford Pamphlet’ Series, Vol. XIV (London, 1914-5), p. 16. For books on German culture, see Hynes, *War Imagined*, pp. 69-71.

had distinguished German scholarship in their comments on the War.¹²⁸

This positive attitude was coupled in many cases with a strong desire on both sides to encourage links between Britain and Germany despite the War, remembering feelings of fellowship and seeking to understand the opponents' point of view. Ernst Troeltsch called for a better understanding between Britain and Germany, an attempt to explain misunderstandings, and to clarify ideals, on both sides.¹²⁹ In late September, Sidney Webb wrote to Murray about an acquaintance who sought to establish a 'movement to create a better feeling between the German & English intellectual public, and to do something to prevent the spread of bitterness,' though this was to remain quite separate from any discussion of the justness of British entry to the War.¹³⁰

Again, of course, there were those who wished to cut all ties between the belligerents – Oskar Fleischer responded to the expulsion of German intellectuals from the academies and universities of the Entente countries with a call to break away from the decadent civilizations of western Europe, and Walter Raleigh proclaimed that until the Germans held more moral views, 'I can't conceive how we are to meet, and laugh, as social friends.'¹³¹ 31 German academics (including Franz von Liszt and Rudolf Eucken) publically renounced honorary British degrees in 1914, and the following year, a number of British societies struck German academics from their membership lists, with the notable exception of the British Academy and the Royal Society.¹³² Furthermore, according to Roderick McKenzie, who was anxiously awaiting news of some articles which he had submitted for publication in Germany before war broke out, 'all foreign theses for German degrees [had] been handed back', and fees had been repaid.¹³³ Nevertheless, even at this early stage in the War, some academics were sharing their thoughts on scholarship after the War, and on the need to recreate the international community. There were attempts to persuade the Berlin Academy to remove enemy academics from

¹²⁸ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 66-7.

¹²⁹ Ernst Troeltsch, *Der Kulturkrieg*, 'Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit' Series, No. 27 (Berlin, 1915), pp. 32-4.

¹³⁰ Sidney Webb to Murray, 21st Sept. 1914, Bod.MS.25 (Murray Papers), fols. 36-7.

¹³¹ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, p. 26. Raleigh to Sanday, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.125 (Sanday Papers), fol. 212.

¹³² von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, p. 97; Bleuel, *Bekenner*, Matthew Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 51; Wallace, *War*, p. 40.

¹³³ Roderick McKenzie to Murray, 21st Dec. 1914, Bod.MSS.26 (Murray Papers), fols. 34-5.

its membership lists in 1915, but ultimately, it was decided that such a step could damage the Academy in future.¹³⁴ In March 1915, H.G. Woods thought it was too early to successfully convince Germany of the British point of view, but he felt that it was important to show that Britain wished to understand Germany, and to try to come to a fair peace whenever it should come.¹³⁵ Similarly, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff spoke of being proud of Germany's independence in wartime, but reminded his audience that most intellectual work required contact with the outside world, and while the War continued, asked them to remember that the great writers of Italy, France and Britain had not lost their greatness just because they were at war, for relations would resume once peace was declared.¹³⁶

Even in late 1916, Dean of Wells J. Armitage Robinson could write that he 'didn't feel irreconcilability, because I have never once felt hate towards the individual German. And, oddly enough, I don't feel that shooting him would be inconsistent with loving him in quite a large sense of the word.'¹³⁷ The classical scholar P.E. Matheson felt a similar difficulty, telling Sanday that while he would probably shake hands with a German he knew before the War, because a pre-existing friendship would have been based on a knowledge of character and general belief in their morals; 'if I met an unknown German... though I should, I hope, do my best to behave charitably so far as to control my temper, I should feel that to shake hands with him... would be in a sense a betrayal of all we are fighting for.'¹³⁸ Edwyn Bevan, the philosopher and ancient historian, spoke of the importance of establishing the degree to which German scholars actually believed in the theories they proposed, or whether they were presenting an 'obstinate misapprehension of the facts.'¹³⁹ Even Walter Raleigh, Professor of English Literature at Oxford, who was passionately anti-German in his pamphlets, stated in a private letter that he had friends in Germany who must think 'sanely and humanely' on the War,

¹³⁴ von Ungern-Sternberg, *Sinnlosen*, p. 82.

¹³⁵ H.G. Woods to Sanday, 10th Mar. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.127 (Sanday Papers), fols. 335-6.

¹³⁶ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 'Rede beim Antritt des Rektorates der Berliner Universität', in *Reden aus der Kriegszeit*, Vol. 4 (Berlin, 1915), pp. 12-3.

¹³⁷ J. Armitage Robinson to Sanday, 22nd Nov. 1916, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.122/1 (Sanday Papers), fol. 68.

¹³⁸ P. E. Matheson to Sanday, 6th Dec. 1916, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.124/2 (Sanday Papers), fols. 410-13.

¹³⁹ Edwyn Bevan to Sanday, 21st Apr. 1918, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.140 (Sanday Papers), fols. 38-9.

and his belief that there were many Germans who did.¹⁴⁰

Murray and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff would both take outspokenly patriotic positions in the War, which makes their friendship particularly bittersweet. In a speech given in October 1915, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff spoke of the camaraderie of the international community of classical scholars before the War, and though he was resigned to the necessity of setting it aside in wartime, he took the loss to heart: ‘We will not see each other again, will surely walk beside each other as strangers for the rest of our lives. A hard personal sacrifice, but nothing is too hard when the Fatherland demands it.’ He also spoke of his expulsion from the French Academy of Sciences, consoling himself with the fact that though it had been an honour to be a member, it was a far greater one to be able to say he had been honourably ejected for his country. For Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, the War had, in a way, surpassed academia, expanding the world of the university to encompass the action at the front. All his intellectual prowess was not sufficient to describe the experience of war: ‘the professor is not enough’.¹⁴¹ It is worth noting that one of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff’s sons had died in battle on the Eastern Front in 1914, but his support for the War does not seem to have wavered.

Murray brought Anglo-German enmity to a personal level in his *Thoughts on the War* (1914), which drew out the contradictions of the enmity between former friends. He admitted that he ‘desperately desire[d]’ news of the sinking of German ships, and was sorry when reports of large numbers of Germans killed had been exaggerated. At the same time, he remembered the German students he had taught in Oxford, and the warm friendship which had existed:

...there is Paul Maass [sic]... a young Doctor of Philosophy, recently married. He sent me a short time back the photograph of his young baby, Ulf, and we exchanged small jokes about Ulf’s look of wisdom and his

¹⁴⁰ Walter Raleigh to Sanday, 25th Nov. 1916, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.125 (Sanday Papers), fols. 208-9.

¹⁴¹ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Berliner Universität*, p. 11, 26.

knowledge of Greek and his imperious habits. And now of course Maass is with his regiment, and we shall do our best to kill him, and after that to starve Ulf and Ulf's mother.¹⁴²

Though he admitted that the course of the War might well change attitudes towards the opposing side, and unfolding events encourage hatred, the use of such personal anecdotes in his pamphlet serve as a poignant reminder of the way in which the War shook a close community, and could even be seen as a civil war within academia – indeed, Sanday made this very comparison in a letter to Loofs in July 1915.¹⁴³ A month after the publication of his pamphlet, Murray actually received a letter from a cousin of Paul Maas, thanking Murray on behalf of Maas' parents for remembering him, letting him know that Maas was working with the Red Cross, and his family were well.¹⁴⁴ Even in the midst of such a shattering conflict, small acts of friendship remained. A seemingly insignificant comment by a H.L. Lorimer is just as enlightening – referring to a German colleague as ‘a friend, or I suppose I must now say, an enemy of mine...’, he showed that the initial instinct was often to think on a personal level, rather than in larger political terms.¹⁴⁵

In fact, academics on opposing sides did manage to correspond, and maintained a friendly tone despite their differences of opinion on the War. In March 1915, Murray wrote to Wilamowitz-Moellendorff through the Danish theologian J.P. Bang, who doubted Murray would receive a reply. Less than three weeks later, a response arrived, thanking Murray for the letter, which Wilamowitz-Moellendorff described as a ‘heartfelt joy’ [Herzensfreude]. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff expressed his belief that they would never see each other again, and referred to happier days as a ‘paradise lost’. Nevertheless, he professed that the War ‘should not hinder us from caring for these recollections and despite everything, the love of shared ideals remains a fixed connection.’¹⁴⁶ The mention of shared ideals is striking, given contemporary passionate debates about the nature of culture and the ideas for

¹⁴² Gilbert Murray, *Thoughts on the War*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. X (London, 1914), p. 8.

¹⁴³ Sanday to Loofs, 22nd Jul. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128 (Sanday Papers), fol. 189.

¹⁴⁴ H.L. Ettinghausen to Murray, 25th Nov. 1914, Bod.MSS.25 (Murray Papers), fol. 199.

¹⁴⁵ H.L. Lorimer to Murray, 6th Oct. 1914, Bod.MSS.25, fols. 49-50.

¹⁴⁶ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff to Murray, 22nd Mar. 1915, Bod.MSS.27 (Murray Papers), fols. 41-2.

which both sides were fighting. Given the patriotic efforts of Murray and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, it is significant that Wilamowitz-Moellendorff could still recognize the common ground on which their friendship had been built, and furthermore, could still value that friendship, without allowing it to conflict with his love for Germany. Even more striking, he wrote of his eldest son's courageous death, sharing that his second son was a pilot, like Murray's, and that he hoped they would both come home safe to their families. This is a clear example of opponents finding solidarity in the face of the uncertainties of war (a phenomenon often noted in accounts of soldiers at the Front), and the ability to disconnect the individual from the nation and the ideals for which they were fighting. While this is not surprising in light of Murray and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's pre-war friendship, it is interesting that it could still take place between individuals who had so publically supported the war efforts of their respective countries. Finally, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff closed with greetings to his former friends in Oxford, though unsure if they would be welcome – again an unambiguous example of friendship persisting despite the War, though perhaps he would have been encouraged to see the response of historian G.W. Prothero, who was greatly interested in the friendly letter, and inspired by it to write to some former friends of his own.¹⁴⁷

The scholar H. Latimer Jackson wrote to von Dobschütz and Loofs, and passed word of the effect of the War on their families on to Oxford friends. Latimer Jackson felt that the Germans were sadly misinformed with regard to the War, writing to Sanday: 'Poor dear [von Dobschütz]! Like the rest of them he calls evil good – if not in word, by implication. The 'brutality' of our men is, for him and his friends, beyond question.'¹⁴⁸ In March, he sent copies of Sanday's *The Meaning of the War* to a number of German friends, and in May, both von Dobschütz and Loofs asked him to pass their thanks on to Sanday 'for the kindly thought', though they '[found] it hard to thank you for the pamphlet itself.'¹⁴⁹

Sanday and Loofs had been good friends before the War, and exchanged letters in 1915 when Loofs

¹⁴⁷ G.W. Prothero to Murray, 23rd Apr. 1915, Bod.MSS.27 (Murray Papers), fol. 100.

¹⁴⁸ Latimer Jackson to Sanday, 28th Dec. 1914, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.124/1 (Sanday Papers), fols. 44-5.

¹⁴⁹ Latimer Jackson to Sanday, 9th May 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.124/1, fol. 52

reviewed Sanday's *The Meaning of the War for Germany and Great Britain*.¹⁵⁰ Sanday was delighted that they would have the opportunity to discuss the issues of the War, believing that the only way to revive good Anglo-German relations was 'if two real friends, bound by the ties of mutual regard and genuine goodwill, can come face to face with each other, and talk over these burning questions in the manner of friends' and desiring to have this conversation with Loofs above all.¹⁵¹ The reason for this upfront discussion of the War is found in *The Meaning of the War*, in which Sanday explained his belief that the best way to restore understanding between Germany and Britain was to 'face this opposition in all its sharpness', to confront conflicting ideals rather than to evade difficult topics, and thus find a more lasting peace.¹⁵² These four letters provide a valuable insight into the mindset of academics at war, showing that despite the conflict, many still felt the strength of the old ties, and as such, merit a closer examination.

Sanday's letters were quite long, and the tone was similar to that of his pre-war exchanges with Loofs, displaying respect for his opinions and a scholarly engagement with the questions of the War without emphasising the enmity between their two countries. The first letter, sent on 19th June 1915, clearly showed a cordial attitude, as Sanday assured Loofs that he had no intention of hurting German feelings, and explained how Loofs' response had hurt him in exchange. It is also clear that Sanday was sincere in his efforts to understand the German point of view and sought an open-minded discussion of the causes and conduct of the War – he clarified both his own position, and that of Britain on entering the War, readily accepted criticisms made by Loofs with regard to documents which Sanday had not seen, and wrote of looking forward to reading Loofs' interpretation of the outbreak of the War. He ended with an expression of his appreciation for Loofs' efforts to be considerate, and of his own sadness that his attempt to achieve at least the initial steps towards understanding between Germany and Britain with his book had failed.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ See Latimer Jackson to Sanday, 19th Mar. 1915, 30th Mar. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.124/1, fols. 46, 50.

¹⁵¹ Sanday to Loofs, 19th Jun. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128 (Sanday Papers), fol. 174.

¹⁵² Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 21.

¹⁵³ Sanday to Loofs, 19th Jun. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128 (Sanday Papers), fols. 174-188.

Loofs replied on 30th June, thanking Sanday for his friendly attitude and for leaving enmity aside in the attempt to understand the War, explaining that the statements which had hurt Sanday had been misinterpreted. His sadness over the fact that he and Sanday would probably never see each other again was palpable, but nevertheless, Loofs did not waver in his conviction of Germany's justification for war, arguing that the invasion of Belgium was necessary for the safety of Germany, and believing that the War's effect on Germany could not be understood by a country like Britain, which did not have conscription. He felt it would be difficult for Britain and Germany to recover from the atmosphere of mistrust and hostility engendered by the War, because the War was not being fought by governments, but by people. Nonetheless, he was willing to explore the possibility of getting Sanday's letter published, as Sanday had requested, and reiterated his personal respect for Sanday.¹⁵⁴ He continued to address Sanday as his 'highly esteemed colleague' as he had before the War, a small, but significant detail which shows that despite the conflict, he still thought of Sanday as an honourable compatriot in the academic realm.¹⁵⁵

His esteem was repaid a month later by a letter 31 pages in length, in which Sanday, buoyed by Loofs' response, took new heart in his efforts to better relations between the British and German people. Again we see Sanday's unhappiness with the split caused by the War, and he fully appreciated the effect of the conflict on Germany – though was unwilling to concede that the British could know nothing of the all-encompassing nature of the conflict. He was particularly grateful to Loofs for sharing his opinions as he considered Loofs to be representative of the majority of the German people, and was careful to reassure him that there were many in Britain 'among the quiet thinking classes' who wished to be as fair to Germany as possible, regardless of their conviction that Britain was in the right. Sanday hoped that Loofs would meet him halfway in the scholarly aim of trying to prepare the way for peace, and to that end, arranged to send Loofs two pamphlets on the War and – in a

¹⁵⁴ Sanday hoped that his letter would be republished in the moderate journal *Deutsch-Evangelisch*, but it seems that the journal refused, or Loofs did not forward it. See Mark D. Chapman, 'Anglo-German Theological Relations during the First World War' in *Zeitschrift für neuere Theologieggeschichte/Journal for the History of Modern Theology*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2000), p. 119.

¹⁵⁵ Loofs to Sanday, 30th Jun. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.140 (Sanday Papers), fols. 220-223.

pardonable regression to pre-war interests, a theological paper of his own.¹⁵⁶ The final letter did not come until October, as Loofs was hindered by practical difficulties in sending a response through a nephew in Geneva, and his task was made still harder by new limits on the length of letters to be sent abroad, which prevented him from exploring his thoughts in detail. Though he was personally very glad to read Sanday's opinions, and reiterated that his regard was unchanged, he explained that there was little hope for Sanday's aims, as there was no market for the publication of Sanday's first letter – the magazine in question had already discussed the issues, and did not wish to revisit them. He felt that Murray's book on Sir Edward Grey (which Sanday had sent) was the product of naive research methods, which had led to a mistaken conclusion. However, he sought to leave such thoughts aside, and to 'isolate the English for whom I still retain warm and true feeling from all such considerations,' as 'only thus can I make my personal situation easy.' He asked Sanday to do the same 'when you think of me and of other Germans, whom you formerly valued.' This plea is underlined by Loofs' conviction that the division caused by the War was too deep to be easily overcome, and his desire to preserve old friendships in spite of the differences between them shows how difficult the War was for the academic community.¹⁵⁷

We have seen in this chapter that academic engagement with the War was a highly complex issue, both from a personal and a professional level. Though intellectuals were highly engaged with political and social questions in both nations, questions on the propriety of academic involvement in such concerns certainly aroused debate, as we shall see in the following chapter. Nevertheless, duty to the nation trumped duty to the academic community, leading to the outpouring of pamphlets, articles and manifestoes which helped to make this an incredibly literate war. On a personal level, however, intellectuals struggled to reconcile pre-war friendships with the experience of the conflict, and many seemed to experience an automatic differentiation between hatred of the nation they were fighting, and their feelings towards former colleagues, towards whom they maintained a sense of friendship. Their correspondence proves this, as well as showing us how painful the rupture of the international

¹⁵⁶ Sanday to Loofs, 22nd Jul. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128 (Sanday Papers), fols. 189-220.

¹⁵⁷ Loofs to Sanday, 9th Oct. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.140 (Sanday Papers), fol. 224.

academic community was to its members. Having examined the experience of the War for the academic community in overview, this thesis will now explore the pamphlets and articles of the early years of the War in more detail, investigating the impact of the outbreak of war, attempts to determine who was to blame, and the deeper questions of culture and values which transformed the War from a political conflict to an ideological crusade between two irreconcilable systems of thought.

Academic Artillery

War and scholarship have not in the abstract much to do with one another. The scholar is normally in a backwater where the tide of public life flows past him without ruffling his environment; and men of affairs put him out of their reckoning as an excellent person who may be a national asset but is very little qualified to be a national advisor. In this war, unique as it is in so many directions, the scholar has become a storm centre.

-James Hope Moulton¹

Even during the War, it is clear, there was a sense in the academic world that intellectuals were central to the war effort. Writing in 1915, the biblical scholar James Hope Moulton presented the scholar as a ‘storm centre’ around which the maelstrom of public opinion and propagandistic endeavour swirled. On each side, primarily motivated by private endeavour, the academic artillery swung into action, mobilising as rapidly as the armies. This chapter will investigate the opening days of the War, tracing the initial positions of academics in Germany and Britain, their immediate responses to the War, and the ‘battle of manifestos’ which shook the certainties of the academic world.

The intimate links between British universities and government have already been discussed, and as war loomed over Europe, many of those who had felt a tension between disinterested scholarship and political involvement found their scruples overcome by their sense of duty to the nation. That this duty should come to the fore even before Britain had officially declared war is testimony to the perception of the momentousness of the times, and it was maintained beyond the emotion of the initial outbreak of war – in 1915, W.F. Ridgeway, Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge, and President of the Classical Association, called for a suspension of normal scholarship during the War, considering

¹ Hope Moulton, *Scholarship*, p. 3.

academic 'business as usual' to be immoral. His cause was a common one, and many believed that scholars should do their bit for the nation in their own way, helping to inform public opinion on the issues of the War.² Similarly, we have already seen the close connection of state and university in Germany, and the curious logic by which agitation for political causes espoused by the State was not seen as in any way incompatible with academic impartiality. In a crisis which affected the State so thoroughly, it is no surprise that German academics should feel it was their duty to serve the Fatherland whatever way they could. Most of the academics who engaged in propaganda were too old to go to the Front, but 'felt obliged to do their best to support the national war effort with their professional expertise as historians, political scientists, lawyers, or even doctors and scientists.' Wolfgang J. Mommsen argues that an additional impetus was given to their actions by a sense that their intellectual pursuits now had a definite social function and could make a valuable contribution to the war effort.³ Though he writes of the German response to war, this is also applicable to the British intellectuals, as their immediate engagement with the war effort shows. For Rudolf Eucken, it was the task 'of the spiritual [geistigen] leaders, the so-called intellectuals, to strengthen courage and to advocate for the good justice of Germany'.⁴

This sense of duty was strengthened by the transformation which the War brought to university life. The ivory tower could not remain untouched by war, when students were called up to the front, university buildings were turned over to the war effort, and laboratories made the shift to war work. For those forced to stay behind, 'the absence of students made the war ubiquitous. It disrupted the basic rhythms and flows of daily life at what were once vibrant institutions.'⁵ Tomás Irish has made the point that universities were more than lecture halls and libraries, that they were communities of

² Wallace, *War*, pp. 41-2, 58.

³ Wolfgang J. Mommsen 'Intellettuai, scrittori, artisti, e la Prima Guerra Mondiale, 1890-1915', in Vincenzo Cali, Gustavo Corni, Guisepe Ferrandi (Eds.), *Gli intellettuai e la Grande Guerra* (Bologna, 1998), p. 49; Wolfgang J. Mommsen, 'Einleitung: Die deutschen Kulturellen Eliten im Ersten Weltkrieg', in *Kultur und Krieg* (München, 1996), p. 8.

⁴ Eucken quoted in Barbara Beßlich, *Wege in den >Kulturkrieg<* (Darmstadt, 2000), p. 95, 97. Again, 'spiritual' in this sense does not mean religious, but encompasses an idealistic sense of self, a way of being.

⁵ Irish, *University*, p. 63.

students, staff and alumni, bound by strong ties which were stretched, but not broken by the War.⁶ This is an important aspect of academic engagement with the War, as they were thus highly aware of the sacrifices being made others, and desirous of playing what part they could. Both Irish and Martha Hanna have noted the continued correspondence of academics with former students,⁷ and the experience of loss brought a traumatic immediacy to the issues of the War which was highly likely to have influenced their work. This is seen not solely in the disparagement of the enemy, but also in their search for meaning in the War, a reassurance that soldiers had not died in vain.⁸

Academic engagement, of course, took a number of forms, from enlistment to recruitment, to government work. Though scientists certainly signed manifestos, the majority of those who participated in the pamphlet war belonged to the faculties of humanities and social sciences. Kurt Flasch examined the major German academics writing during the War, and historians, theologians and philosophers, dominated the field, supported by philologists, sociologists and economists.⁹ The Oxford Pamphlets display a similar pattern, with 23 historians contributing to the series of 87, aided by the work of classicists, theologians, jurists and political scientists.¹⁰ As discussed in the introduction, the paucity of pamphlets from those in the natural sciences was partly due to the suitability of those with expertise in the humanities to contribute to the war effort in this way, contextualising and explaining the issues of the War; and partly due to the engagement of scientists in more tangible fields, working with munitions and medicine, wartime production and new ways of fighting.¹¹

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷ Irish, *University*, pp. 73-8; Hanna *Mobilization*, pp. 50, 60. Irish also points out the presence of Belgian scholars who had fled the German invasion, which would also have reinforced the meaning of the War for British academics. Irish, *University*, p. 22.

⁸ For the need for a higher meaning to the War to justify deaths, see Patrick Porter, *Slaughter or Sacrifice? The Religious Rhetoric of Blood Sacrifice in the British and German Armies, 1914-1919*, D.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 2005, pp. 102-5.

⁹ See Kurt Flasch, *Die Geistige Mobilmachung* (Berlin, 2000), pp. 229-30.

¹⁰ Pogge von Strandmann has also noted the dominance of historians in the Oxford series. See Pogge von Strandmann, *Historians*, pp. 354-5.

¹¹ For the engagement of the scientists, see, for example, Irish, *Universities*, pp. 40-55; Hanna, *Mobilization*, p. 12. Jeffrey Allan Johnson and Roy MacLeod have edited a volume that examines the work of chemists in particular – see Jeffrey Allan Johnson & Roy MacLeod (Eds.), *Frontline and Factory: Comparative Perspectives on the Chemical Industry at War 1914-1924* (Dordrecht, 2006).

Before we look at the flurry of oppositional rhetoric which typified the exchange of manifestos in the initial months of the War, however, we will begin with a statement which is easily overlooked – the ‘Scholars’ Protest Against War with Germany’, published in *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* on the 1st August.¹² At this stage for many Britons, the war breaking out on the Continent was still an affair centred on the Balkans, an affair which had nothing to do with British interests, and in which they could see no possible gain. The ‘Protest’ saw a number of academics, including the Cambridge scholars C. G. Browne (Professor of Arabic), F.C. Burkitt (Norris Professor of Divinity) and F.J. Folkes-Jackson (a theologian and Dean of Jesus College); the theologian W.B. Selbie of Oxford; and the archaeologist W.M. Ramsay of Aberdeen, state their enjoyment of friendship and cooperation with German colleagues, and call on other British scholars for their support. It underlined German pre-eminence in the arts and sciences, and the fact that Britain had learned and was learning from her; and asserted, in marked contrast to later pro-war utterances, that war with Germany on behalf of Serbia and Russia would be ‘a sin against civilization.’¹³ Furthermore, the protesters emphasized a sense of kinship with Germany, ‘with whom we have so much in common’ – a sense of kinship which would soon be disavowed (and a betrayal of which their German colleagues saw as the mortal blow in the fact of ‘Perfidious Albion’s’ entry to the War).

On the same day a number of letters appeared on the subject in the *Manchester Guardian* – one, from the eminent sociologist and co-founder of the London School of Economics, Graham Wallas, expressed fears that war with Germany would be a disaster for the British working class, leading to an intellectual and moral stagnation.¹⁴ Wallas was a founding member of the British Neutrality Committee, established at the end of July 1914, which issued a similar statement to that of the ‘Scholars’ Protest’ two days later. The Committee, which counted Gilbert Murray and the prominent historian G. M. Trevelyan amongst its members, condemned the idea of war with a state which had not only contributed greatly to European civilization, but also shared a kinship with Britain. Rejecting

¹² A short examination of the exchange of manifestoes is also to be found in Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft*, pp. 41-45 – however, his focus is primarily on the ‘ideas of 1914’ and does not go into the same depth as this chapter.

¹³ ‘Scholars’ Protest Against War with Germany’, *The Times*, 1st Aug. 1914.

¹⁴ Wallace, *War*, pp. 24-5.

an alliance with a ‘partly civilized’, autocratic state like Russia, which was opposed to Western culture, it wished Britain to act as an arbiter, but remain aloof. Others pushed for neutrality on economic grounds, or reasoned that it was not Britain’s place to intervene in a conflict which manifestly did not concern her.¹⁵

Their German counterparts seem to have had no such scruples. Though initially focused on the enmity of Russia, as Matthew Stibbe points out, by the end of August, England (or rather Britain, as the distinction between the two was only rarely made) had become the major enemy.¹⁶ This was made clear in a declaration published by the historians of Bonn University on 1st September 1914 which touched on many of the arguments we will see in later chapters. While explaining that the origins of the War would not be clear for many years, the Bonn historians were convinced that some truths had already been established by the diplomatic documents published by governments – namely that the war had been forced on Germany, and she had no choice but to fight in order to defend her existence. Proclaiming that Britain aimed at the destruction of Germany, they proudly declared the support of the whole German nation for the War, and closed with a clarion call to those who had admired Germany before the War to maintain their support now.¹⁷

A similar appeal was made in October, in the *Kundgebung deutscher Universitäten* (‘German Universities’ Rally’), which sought to discredit the idea of Germans as barbarians which the Entente promoted with descriptions of the invasion of Belgium and the destruction of Louvain and Rheims Cathedral. They repeatedly called on those who had studied in Germany before the War for their support, reminding them of the virtues of the German people, their love for truth and justice, and their great respect for all the arts:

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

¹⁶ Stibbe, *Anglophobia*, p. 11. German pamphlets – and most of the British pamphlets – use ‘England’ to signify Britain as a whole, though Ireland is almost always excluded. Sanday commented on this practice, noting that the Scottish were unhappy with the elision (Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 9). This thesis will refer to Britain rather than England for clarity.

¹⁷ ‘Aufruf Bonner Historiker’, in *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart, 2014 (first published 1975)), pp. 50-1.

...we appeal to the love of truth and justice of the many thousands in the world who were welcome guests in the inheritance of German culture in our schools, and who there had the opportunity to see the German people in their work of peace...their diligence and lawfulness, their sense of order and discipline, their deep respect for all intellectual work and their inner love of science and art.... You... who have seen... that there is nothing so deeply impressed in [the youth of Germany] as care and wonder for the creations of the human spirit in art, science and technology... we call as witnesses to answer if it can be true, as our enemies claim, that the German army is a horde of barbarians, and a band of murderous incendiaries...¹⁸

This appeal to friends abroad is a marked tendency in German declarations (along with a sense of defensiveness), and, as we saw in the previous chapter, both sides were reluctant to relinquish the friendships of the pre-war academic world. This was coupled with shock and disbelief that former colleagues and friends could profess opinions so opposed to what they themselves believed to be true, as the other declarations discussed in this chapter will show.

Returning to the early days of the War, the Bonn historians were not the first to act. Though Anne Rasmussen argues that the famous German ‘Manifesto of the 93’ was the spark for the intellectual war, and the point from which arguments would take on an ethical dimension, ‘using a moral standpoint to condemn the enemy’s alleged crimes, savage behaviour and quasi-anthropological inferiority,’ a defence of German culture was published only a few weeks after the outbreak of war.¹⁹ The German *Address to Evangelical Christians Abroad*, dated ‘Berlin, August 1914’ and published in Britain on 9th September 1914, was one of the earliest sallies in the ‘battle of manifestos’.²⁰ It was

¹⁸ ‘Kundgebung deutscher Universitäten’, Oct. 1914, in *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart, 2014 (first published 1975)), pp. 51-4.

¹⁹ Rasmussen, *Mobilising Minds*, pp. 398-9.

²⁰ Wallace, *War*, p. 32. Bruendel considers an appeal ‘To the Truth’ (‘An die Wahrheit’), signed by von Liszt and Marcks which appeared sometime towards the end of August denouncing Entente lies to be the first such appeal. However, ‘An die Wahrheit’ is undated in Hermann Kellermann’s *Krieg der Geister* (a collection of

signed by 29 professors, pastors and missionaries (and one Bank Director), among whom were Eucken, Loofs, von Harnack, and Wundt, and denounced the ‘systematic network of lies’ which sought to cast blame on Germany for starting the War, and ‘dared to dispute’ Germany’s right to call on God’s aid in the struggle.²¹ Pointing to Germany’s record of keeping the peace in Europe over the previous 43 years, the *Address to Evangelical Christians* expounded on the pacific aims of Germany, her contribution to modern culture and the way in which she was forced into the War, to ‘defend our existence, our individuality, our culture and our honour,’ as a result of a long-planned conspiracy of encirclement.²² Presenting the War as one of German culture versus Asiatic barbarism, the authors accused the Entente of a complete lack of civilization, claiming that Germany’s enemies had committed ‘unnameable horrors’ against wounded soldiers and Germans living abroad. Bringing in a religious aspect, it denounced the involvement of non-Christian powers by the Allies, and presented the idea of a war against German Protestantism.

A Reply from Oxford to the German Address to Evangelical Christians was published as the second pamphlet in the ‘Oxford Pamphlet’ Series and was signed by 25 prominent Oxford theologians, including Sanday and Edwyn Bevan. It opened by dismissing out of hand the claims that cruelties had been inflicted on Germans living in Britain, and, in the absence of evidence, doubted that they were any more real in Belgium. Besides, they argued, reprisals against Belgian civilians were far more reprehensible, as they seemed to be carried out under orders.²³ They then turned to the account given of the start of the War in the German document, and though expressing their belief in the sincerity of their German counterparts, methodically disproved each of the claims put forward in the *Address to Evangelical Christians*. The sword-rattling of German foreign policy and the Naval Race, German

writings published in 1915) and it appears to be aimed at the German people rather than a foreign audience, listing ‘lies’ which appeared in the foreign press and appealing to the people to combat this. Furthermore, there is reference to other appeals in the text. As such, I have chosen not to examine it in detail. Samuel Hynes cites a protest published in *The Times* of 25th August 1914 which I have been unable to trace. See Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft*, pp. 41-2; ‘Der Kampf um die Wahrheit’, in Hermann Kellerman, *Krieg der Geister* (Weimar, 1915), pp. 1-26; Hynes *War Imagined*, p. 70.

²¹ ‘Address of the German Theologians to the Evangelical Christians Abroad’, in ‘A Reply from Oxford to the German Address to Evangelical Christians’, ‘Oxford Pamphlet’ Series, Vol. I (London, 1914), p. 19.

²² *Ibid*, p. 20.

²³ ‘A Reply from Oxford to the German Address to Evangelical Christians’, ‘Oxford Pamphlet’ Series, Vol. I (London, 1914), p. 2.

actions in the Balkans and the imperialist tone of German education were brought forward as evidence that Germany was not promoting peace in Europe, and the fact that Italy had not joined the War on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary, despite the defensive terms of the Triple Alliance, was proof positive that the War had not been forced on them by an aggressive Russia. Russia itself was no barbaric power making war on civilization, but a country progressively becoming more democratic and culturally developed (Russia would be an awkward problem for those attempting to answer this claim until the Revolution in 1917). The idea of a war against Protestantism was rejected with the example of the mix of Catholic and Protestant faiths in Britain (the Ulster Unionists were mentioned, but the authors presented the Irish nation as standing together in the face of war), as well as the fact that Austria-Hungary was primarily Catholic. As for the involvement of non-Christian peoples, Germany's alliance with Turkey highlighted the hypocrisy of this argument.²⁴

The Reply of the Oxford Theologians ended with a condemnation of the burning of the library of Louvain University, and the destruction of the Cathedral of Rheims – and more particularly, of the failure of the German professoriate to speak out against it.

Until the saner elements of German public life can control the baser – and we have not heard of even any protest by the representatives of German art and German learning – will not the Christian scholars of other lands share our conviction that the contest in which our country has engaged is a contest on behalf of the supremest interests of Christian civilization?²⁵

The Oxford theologians were not alone in their response, and *The Times* of 30th September carried a further response under the headline, 'Theologians and the War. British Declaration. Reasoned Reply to German Appeal', signed by 42 eminent theologians and leading men of the Church – including Burkitt, Sanday, and several Archbishops and Bishops. The first point made regarded the respect and

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 3-13.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 15.

friendship felt for the signatories of the *Appeal to Evangelical Christians* as individuals, and disbelief that former colleagues and friends could produce such a document:

It [the Appeal] is signed by brothers and friends of ours in the Church of Christ – men of whose honesty, capacity, and good faith there can be no conceivable question, and whose names carry weight throughout the world among those who think and teach and pray.

It fills us with amazement that those who occupy the positions held by the signatories of this appeal should commit themselves to a statement of the political causes of the war, which departs so strangely from what seems to us to be the plain facts of this grave hour in European history.²⁶

The signatories expressed how difficult the decision to support the Government in the war effort was for them, but in light of the facts as they knew them, they felt that Britain had no choice if she was to maintain the sanctity of a pledged word and the duty to defend weaker nations. Basing their evidence on the official papers, whose veracity, they felt, could be relied upon, they then turned to the facts of the case. The reply outlined the negotiations of the July Crisis and the importance of the neutrality of Belgium, seeking to prove that Britain was working for peace right up until the last moment, and that the deliberate German decision to invade Belgium left Britain no choice but to declare war on Germany.

They then sought to excuse the signatories of the German appeal with a suggestion of ignorance: ‘We can only suppose, incredible as it seems, that those honourable and gifted men who signed the German appeal were unaware of the obligations by which we were bound, and also of the story of the

²⁶ ‘Theologians and the War. British Declaration. A Reasoned Reply to German Appeal.’, *The Times*, 30th Sept. 1914.

negotiations.’²⁷ One could certainly read an echo of Shakespeare’s ‘Brutus is an honourable man’ in this, but such a cynical tone scarcely fits with the collection of respectable clergymen whose signatures adorn the document. It seems more likely that the suggestion was sincere, an attempt to find some sort of explanation for statements which were to them inexplicable.

The reply closed with an acknowledgement of an important aspect of the War for academics – the distress which the War occasioned for intellectuals accustomed to collaborating with colleagues abroad, and the effect of the rupture of relations on personal and academic friendships.

God knows what it means to be separated for a time by this great war from many with whom it has been our privilege – with whom we hope it will be our privilege again – to work for the setting forward of the Christian message among men. We unite wholeheartedly with our German brethren in deploring the disastrous consequences of the war, and in particular... in directing the energies and resources of the Christian nations from the great constructive tasks to which they were providentially called...²⁸

The British signatories hastened to add a caveat. Though eager for peace, and ‘keen especially to promote the close fellowship of Germany and England’, there was no choice: ‘...dear to us as peace be, the principles of truth and honour are yet more dear.’²⁹

Not content to let the British have the last word, ‘Another Word to the Protestant Christians Abroad’ was published in English in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* on 12th December 1914, signed by 27 prominent theologians, including Wundt, Loofs, Eucken and von Harnack. As with other manifestos discussed in this chapter, they opened with a statement of their ‘great sorrow’ at the British academics attitude toward the War, and added their astonishment at the scholarship which had overlooked certain

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

vital points for the German case. This address argued many of the same points as the other German manifestos – British secret diplomacy had brought about the War (interestingly, the authors also argued that it was the British who had made it a world war, by ‘transplanting’ a European conflict to Africa and Asia), that the issue of Belgian neutrality was nothing more than a pretext as Belgium had already violated it herself, and that the Germans were a peace-loving people who had been forced into war for her own preservation. However, it stood apart for the proud rebuttal of any hint that the Germans had been misled or had not received the full information: ‘They assume that we had not the knowledge of these facts... the English press... express the expectation that we would now make known our regret for having, as a result of insufficient knowledge of the conditions, supported the reprehensible attitude of our Government...’

The authors felt that they ‘must not allow a harmful misunderstanding to occur’, despite a wish to avoid ‘further public discussions’. Though they referred to government books, they treated the British Blue Book with caution, denouncing it as a reliable source, as there had been evidence that the documents quoted had been tampered with.³⁰ Instead, they focused on the report of the Belgian Chargé d’Affairs in St. Petersburg, which had become public knowledge though not intended for publication, and official documents supposedly found in Belgium to support their claims – copies of which they were happy to supply to ‘any one who wishe[d] to convince himself of the truth.’ Having revealed their evidence as to the treacherous actions of Britain, they turned the British suggestion that the Germans did not have all the evidence back on them, suggesting that: ‘In consideration of the esteem in which we hold these... gentlemen, and the decisive importance which is attached by them to the question of the Belgian neutrality, we may expect that this exposition if the secret measures of their own Government will give them serious food for thought.’ They expressed the hope that in the future, British Christians would try to dissuade their government from the policies which they believed had led to the War, and denounced those who had misrepresented Germany to neutral

³⁰ A dispatch dated London, 30th July was published as having contained an enclosure dated Paris, 31st July in the first edition of the Blue Book, the second eliminated the dates, and a third edition added a footnote, which disappeared from the German translation intended for German prisoners’ use. See Sanday to Loofs, 22nd Jul. 1915, Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.128 (Sanday Papers), fol. 212.

nations, claiming that ‘if the war must be fought out, it should be the concern of Christians of all lands to use their influence to the effect that honourable weapons be employed, not lies and calumnations.’³¹ Despite all their efforts however, the response was not what they wished, with one of the Oxford theologians dismissing it as ‘a most unworthy piece of special pleading’.³²

Ineffectiveness seems to have been the defining characteristic of many of the German appeals, as the *Erklärung der Hochschullehrer des Deutschen Reiches* (‘Declaration of the University Lecturers of the German Empire’), published on 16th October 1914, shows. Written by Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and promoted by Dietrich Schäfer, it was translated into English, French, Spanish and Italian, and signed by over 3,000 academics, representing every university in Germany – Klaus Böhme has described it as ‘the most emphatic [eindringlichste] document showing the willingness of the academics in the intellectual war effort.’³³ It vehemently denied any division between the German army and the German people, rejecting the British accusation that militarism had destroyed the old intellectual spirit of Germany. Instead, the signatories argued that the army and German intellectual spirit were inextricably entwined, each supporting the other. The German military, they claimed, was not only fighting for German peace and freedom, but also for all European culture.³⁴ Bernhard vom Brocke has interpreted the *Erklärung* as an ‘inversion’ of the militarist concept which elevated militarism to a heroic duty, as well as playing an important role in wartime publications. However, despite its popularity in German universities, it had little impact on the rest of the world, and, failed to have the desired effect.³⁵ Instead, it was viewed by Germany’s opponents as a betrayal of the German

³¹ ‘Another Word to the Protestant Christians Abroad’, *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 12th Dec. 1914, p. 13.

³² W.B. Selbie, quoted in Wallace, *War*, p. 32.

³³ Böhme states that 3,016 academics signed it, but the *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst* stated that it had 3,125 signatories. See Böhme, ‘Einleitung’, p. 13; *Zentralstelle to BdGK*, 17th Jun 1916, BArch.R901/72291, (Kulturbund Propaganda), fol. 1; Christophe Prochasson ‘Intellectuals and Writers’ (Heather Jones trans.) in John Horne (Ed.) *A Companion to World War I* (Chichester, 2010), p. 324; Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral* (Göttingen, 1969), p. 23; Bernhard vom Brocke, ‘La guerra degli intellettuali tedeschi’, in Vincenzo Cali, Gustavo Corni, Giuseppe Ferrandi (Eds.), *Gli Intellettuali e la Grande Guerra* (Bologna, 1988), pp. 374-5.

³⁴ ‘Erklärung der Hochschullehrer des Deutschen Reiches’, 16th Oct. 1914, in *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg*, (Stuttgart, 2014, (first published 1975)), pp. 49-50.

³⁵ vom Brocke, ‘Intellettuali’, p. 376.

scholarship which had formerly been so admired.³⁶

The infamous ‘Manifesto of the 93’, published on 4th October 1914, however, is the best-known document in the ‘battle of manifestos’, and according to Georg G. Iggers, paved the way for later propaganda, confirming the idea that militarism was the central issue of the War, and providing ammunition to Germany’s enemies.³⁷ Though originally attributed to Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, it was actually written by the poet Ludwig Fulda, with the collaboration of Berlin Mayor Georg Reicke and dramatist Hermann Sudermann. Centre Party politician Matthias Erzberger, who was engaged in the creation of a semi-official propaganda agency trying to improve Germany’s image abroad, was also involved.³⁸ Signed by 93 prominent artists and intellectuals of different political inclinations and backgrounds, from the moderate Lujó Brentano to the annexationist Reinhold Seeberg, ‘every confessional outlook and political opinion was represented’ in the *Aufruf*, apart from the Social Democrats.³⁹ Bernhard vom Brocke has compared the list of signatories to a ‘*Who’s Who* of arts and sciences’, 58 of whom were professors at German universities, and 48 were members of the Prussian Academy of Sciences.⁴⁰ It protested against the ‘falsehoods and calumnies with which our enemies are endeavouring to blacken Germany’s just cause’, and declared that it aimed to ‘proclaim the truth to all nations,’ systematically denying German culpability for the War, the violation of Belgium, the crimes of German soldiers in Belgium, and German infringement of international law. It too denounced any separation of German militarism from German culture, pronouncing them inextricably linked, and asked the world to have faith in Germany and in the German people.⁴¹

Though translated by the authors themselves as ‘An Appeal to the Civilized World’, the German title,

³⁶ von Ungern-Sternberg, ‘Sinnlosen’, p. 92. Professor of Medicine and consultant to the Empress Georg Friedrich Nicolai’s counter-manifesto, *Aufruf an die Europäer* found only 4 signatories – himself, Albert Einstein, the scientist Otto Buek and the astronomer Wilhelm Foerster. It was only published in 1917, as part of Nicolai’s book *Die Biologie des Krieges*, and so will not be discussed here.

³⁷ Georg G. Iggers, ‘Gli storici di fronte alla guerra’, in Vincenzo Cali, Gustavo Corni, Guiseppe Ferrandi (Eds.), *Gli intellettuali e la Grande Guerra* (Bologna, 1998), p. 106.

³⁸ Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, p. 14. Vom Brocke notes the misattribution of authorship in ‘Intellettuali’, p. 377. See also Mommsen, ‘Intellettuali, scrittori, artisti’, p. 51.

³⁹ Prochasson, ‘Intellectuals’, p. 324.

⁴⁰ vom Brocke, ‘Intellettuali’, p. 400.

⁴¹ ‘An Appeal to the Civilized World!’, corrected English version, reproduced in von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, p. 163.

Aufruf an die Kulturwelt, has other connotations. ‘*Kultur*’ and ‘culture’ were significant terms in propaganda on both sides, and ‘*Kulturwelt*’ has connotations not only of a civilized, but of a cultured world. The *Aufruf* was thus not simply an appeal to the ‘civilized’ nations of the world, but to the men who inhabited the same intellectual milieu as the signatories, a fact which was underlined in the closing paragraphs:

To you who know us, to you who, with us have heretofore defended the noblest possession of mankind, to you we make this appeal:

Believe us! Believe that we shall fight this fight to the bitter end as a civilized people, a people to whom the heritage of a Goethe, a Beethoven, a Kant is as sacred as are its fire-side and its glebe.

Believe us! we pledge you our names and our honour!⁴²

This is more than an appeal to nameless citizens of civilization, it is a direct call to former colleagues and friends, those who defended ‘the noblest possession of mankind’ – truth – side by side with the German signatories. In pledging their names and honour, those who signed the *Aufruf* ensured it was seen as a highly personal appeal, intimately connected with their own reputations and careers.

This faith in the value of their word is repeated in the essay *Das deutsche Volk und der Krieg* (‘The German People and the War’) by Franz von Liszt, Professor of Law at Berlin University, and a key figure in the creation of the *Aufruf*. Writing on 7th September 1914, he admitted that foreign intellectuals and artists were not to be expected to see into the soul of the German people, but believed that the word of the German intellectuals on the subject should be sufficient:

Our colleagues abroad know our names, our work, our dedication to the great problems of national and international life. Almost without exception, we have worked in the great associations of science, art and technology,

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 164.

with men of all countries, to further the common interests of humanity. We are closely and personally bound to innumerable friends and students abroad, who know our lives, our work and our wishes from their own observation. Few of us have shied away from working to the best of our ability in our subjects for the improvement of the understanding of all peoples. It is not immodesty if today we demand that the honesty of our patriotism, the sincerity of our words, be not doubted.⁴³

As far as the *Aufruf* went, the friends and students abroad, were, to put it mildly, unimpressed. Rather than acting as a guarantee for the veracity of the *Aufruf*, the reliability of German academics was undermined by what British academics saw as blatant disregard for the impartial analysis of facts and blind faith in the veracity of the German Government. This was particularly true of the disavowal of atrocities, which was incomprehensible to the British, but, as we will see in Chapter Six, was due in Germany to a deep-seated belief in the existence of an imaginary Belgian guerrilla war against German soldiers. As a result, many in Britain struggled to reconcile their respect for German academia with their disgust at the *Aufruf*, which was seen ‘as proof of how deeply the Prussian militarist spirit and German aggressiveness had penetrated the minds of the German intelligentsia’.⁴⁴ Following its publication in Allied and Neutral countries, there was a strong backlash against the *Aufruf* and anger at the perceived ‘abdication of moral responsibility’ by the German academics. For scientists in particular, it ‘was taken to be a rejection of the universality of science, for the signers were acquainted with the methods of analysis and investigation’.⁴⁵

Jürgen and Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg, in their comprehensive study of the *Aufruf*, note the rejection of the protest by the *Kulturwelt* – ‘To them the *Aufruf* seemed soaked in arrogance and

⁴³ von Liszt, Franz, quoted in von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, p. 136.

⁴⁴ Mommsen, *Intellettuoli, scrittori, artisti*, p. 51.

⁴⁵ Lawrence Badash, ‘British and American Views of the German Menace in World War I’, in *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, Vol. 34, No. 1, (Jul. 1979), p. 103.

scholarly conceit'.⁴⁶ The philosopher Georg Misch expressed the sensation felt by many on reading the document, declaring that though lies were expected at the start of any war, 'here men who are not in the lumpish mechanism of the everyday cry out, men who swell the eternal in humanity, thinkers and poets! We fancied ourselves bound to them in the will for truth and humanity; they have cut the cord.'⁴⁷

The historian Eduard Meyer, despite appending his signature to the *Aufruf*, immediately saw that it would fail – in a letter to archaeologist Theodore Wiegand on 7th October 1914, he wrote:

that it will really help, I cannot believe; because in it we affirm things about which we know nothing and can testify nothing, other than that we believe *our* authorities... about Louvain, about the way in which war is conducted, about the deliberate nature of the violation of Belgian neutrality by England and France and so on, which cannot convince cool judges.⁴⁸

His frustration that the German government had not published documents and declarations to support their case, but was relying on intellectuals to fill the gap, particularly when they knew nothing of the particulars, highlighted the difficulty of defending the German war effort.⁴⁹

Faced with such criticism from abroad, it is no wonder that many of the signatories of the *Aufruf* regretted their unqualified support. In 1916, the economist and reformer Lujo Brentano had already confessed that he had not read it before signing, and nine others withdrew their signatures after publication on the same grounds.⁵⁰ Many had been asked for their signature on a 'protest against

⁴⁶ von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Georg Misch, quoted in *ibid*, p. 56.

⁴⁸ Meyer, quoted in *ibid*, p. 61.

⁴⁹ Stibbe, *Anglophobia*, p. 73.

⁵⁰ Ernest A. Menze notes that Brentano still defended the content of the *Aufruf* in 1916, while Christophe Prochasson numbers him with Wilhelm Foerster among the ten who withdrew their support after publication. Regardless, he had dissociated himself from the *Aufruf* by 1917. Menze, 'War Aims and the Liberal

foreign lies' via telegram, and agreed to put their names to it in a gesture of scholarly solidarity, reminiscent of similar actions in the past protesting the suppression of academic freedom.⁵¹ By the end of the War, at least 61 of the 93 had already renounced their support or were willing to retract their signatures, and only 16 held fast to the declaration. Some of those who did not withdraw their support, such as Eucken and von Harnack, were even willing to admit that the wording of the *Aufruf* may have been mistaken, though they maintained their commitment to the content.⁵²

The von Ungern-Sternbergs make the important point that one cannot read the *Aufruf* in isolation; it was part of a dialogue, and must be placed in this context.⁵³ Proof of this dialogue is found in a declaration by British scholars published in *The Times* of the 21st October 1914. Organised by Gilbert Murray, under the auspices of Wellington House, it contained the signatures of 118 prominent British academics from universities throughout Great Britain, including Oxford Pamphlet writers Sanday, Murray, H.A.L. Fisher, Walter Raleigh, E.A. Sonnenschein and the prominent physician Sir William Osler.⁵⁴ Later sent to Germany as *A Declaration by the Professors of Great Britain Addressed to the Academical Circles of Germany*, it has been interpreted as a response to the *Erklärung der Hochschullehrer des Deutschen Reiches*, published on 16th October, or an answer to the *Aufruf*, published 12 days earlier.⁵⁵ As with the German manifesto, each signatory's name was followed with his academic affiliations and accreditations, making the British reply a formidable document. Underlining their impartial stance in contrast to the bias perceived to be shown by the German manifesto, the response was printed under the headline: 'Reply to German Professors: Reasoned Statement by British Scholars'.

Conscience', *Central European History*, Vol. 17, No. 2/3 (Jun.-Sept., 1984), p. 142, 144; Prochasson, 'Intellectuals', p. 324.

⁵¹For example, the protest against the Lex Heinze in 1900, see von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, p. 13, 23, 39.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 74. See also Wallace, *War*, p. 194. Prochasson, 'Intellectuals', p. 324; vom Brocke, 'Intellettuali', p. 404; Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft*, p. 22; Beßlich, *Wege*, pp. 98-9.

⁵³ von Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, pp. 55-56.

⁵⁴ F.C. Conybeare was another signatory – this was prior to the publication of his letter to Kuno Meyer in 1915. See 'Reply to German Professors', *The Times*, 21st October, 1914. Also Charles E. Bailey, 'The British Protestant Theologians in the First World War', *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 77, No. 2 (Apr., 1984), p. 203.

⁵⁵ Bernhard vom Brocke, 'Intellettuali', p. 390; Stromberg, *Redemption*, p. 3

The opening sentence understatedly expressed the sense of consternation and disbelief with which the British academics had greeted German accusations against Britain, and their amazement at the perceived lack of scientific judgement shown by the German intellectuals:

We see with regret the names of many German professors and men of science, whom we regard with respect, and in some cases with personal friendship, appended to a denunciation of Great Britain so utterly baseless that we can hardly believe that it expresses their spontaneous or considered opinion.⁵⁶

Though professing faith in the personal sincerity of the German academics in their horror of war and enthusiasm for the achievements of culture, their British counterparts could not refrain from emphasizing the destruction caused by the German army. The declaration followed many of the patterns which we will see in the pamphlets discussed in the following chapters, blaming Germany for the outbreak of the War, focusing on the Austrian Note to Serbia and the invasion of Belgium, and expressing the conviction that the German government planned the overthrow of Europe. In directly addressing their opponents however, the authors also made a number of points which characterise academic propaganda, particularly in the exchange of manifestos. The disappointment they felt in the position taken by German professors was clear, as was their sadness that those they considered friends should have such a poor opinion of Britain. The authors explicitly recognised the difficulty of maintaining objectivity in wartime, but, rather patronisingly, suggested that it might be even more difficult for a German, accustomed as he was to adulation of the Kaiser and the army, and living under a government which, the British believed ‘[did] not allow them to know the truth.’ Nonetheless, the authors emphasized that a scholar’s duty was to ‘make sure of their facts’, stressing the importance of impartiality in scholarship, as they accused the German professors of relying on a ‘scanty and cautiously chosen’ set of documents in the German White Book for their conclusions.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ ‘Reply to German Professors’.

⁵⁷ ‘Reply to German Professors’.

The recognition of the German professors as colleagues and friends was repeated throughout the *Times* 'Reply', and emphasis was laid on the respect of the British for their work: 'We ourselves have a real and deep admiration for German scholarship and science. We have many ties with Germany, ties of comradeship, of respect, and of affection.' They stated their grief that the country they so honoured had become the enemy of Europe as a result of the influence of militarism and its lust for conquest – an echo of the idea of two Germanies, one militaristic and one peaceful, which the *Aufruf* expressly denounced. Nevertheless, the appeal to the *Kulturwelt* made by the *Aufruf*, its call to those who knew the signatories to have faith in their honour, was roundly rejected: 'The German professors appear to think that Germany has in this matter some considerable body of sympathizers in the universities of Great Britain. They are gravely mistaken.'⁵⁸ However courteously done, the ties had been cut.

The British 'Reply to German Professors' made less of a splash than the *Aufruf*, no doubt due to its less provocative (to all but the Germans) tone. The von Ungern-Sternbergs pronounce the fatal mistake of the *Aufruf* to be the lack of understanding of the significance to neutral countries of the violation of Belgian neutrality,⁵⁹ and with its depiction of Britain as the protector of international treaties, the British 'Reply to German Professors' was bound to find a more sympathetic audience. This may be the reason that the 'Reply to German Professors' appears less frequently than the *Aufruf* in studies of academic propaganda, rarely appearing as more than a brief sentence to the effect that the British responded.

However, the Germans did not let the debate rest there, and replied to the 'Reply' in 1915, in a response orchestrated by the *Kulturbund deutscher Gelehrter und Künstler*, signed by 150 academics. The signatories spanned the political spectrum, including the conceiver of the *Aufruf*, Ludwig Fulda, Brentano, the novelist Thomas Mann, the physicist Max Planck, and the historian Hermann Oncken. Despite the delayed response, it found a wide audience, as the *Kulturbund* and the *Zentralstelle für*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Ungern-Sternberg, *Aufruf*, p94.

Auslandsdienst sent it to neutral Scandinavia, Spain, Switzerland, Brazil, Portugal, Greece and to allies in Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The authors maintained that they had refrained from responding to the British declaration at first, due to a feeling that ‘even men intellectually eminent, truth-loving and masters in the use of language, no longer find it possible to understand each other’ and a fear that any attempted rebuttal would run ‘the risk of speaking to no purpose’, an attitude which mirrored that expressed in the letters of Loofs and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in the previous chapter.⁶⁰ The authors determined to speak up however, as their silence had been taken for acquiescence, and they wished to set the record straight. The ‘Answer’ was a detailed rebuttal of the points made by the British declaration, accusing Britain of masterminding the War and exonerating Germany of any blame with regard to Belgium. It too dwelled on the importance of objectivity and scholarly detachment, responding to the British suggestion that impartiality was particularly difficult in Germany with the pointed comment that though disinterested judgement was difficult when one’s own nation was involved, it seemed ‘yet more difficult to do the adversary justice in the midst of the hurly-burly of the moment’, and it contrasted the German authorities’ clear communication of losses with the accusations of the British Press that the British military were withholding information.

With regard to maintaining academic standards, they implied that it was in fact the British who were curtailing their sources for propaganda purposes, stating: ‘We shall never shirk the duty of most accurately testing the facts, but we seek the truth far back of the published diplomatic documents...’, turning to pre-war diplomacy for evidence of British diplomatic manoeuvring for war. Just as the British had accused the Germans of ignoring evidence, the Germans charged the British with a lack of thoroughness, declaring their astonishment ‘that men, who in their investigations are accustomed to aim in other cases at the greatest accuracy’ had left Germany’s justification out of the Oxford History Faculty’s analysis of the causes of the War in *Why We Are At War: Great Britain’s Case* (1914). The argument that overall trends were more important than documentary evidence is obviously problematic, but it was coupled with the statement that an unbiased analysis of the outbreak of the

⁶⁰ *Answer of the Kulturbund to a Declaration by the Professors of Great-Britain addressed to the Academical Circles of Germany* (Berlin, 1915), p. 2.

War would not be possible until long after peace had been declared, either recognizing, once again, the difficulty of scholarly objectivity, or simply saying that the truth was yet to emerge. Echoing the regret expressed by the British, the signatories of the *Answer* commented on their disappointment that arguments about British honour, ‘reckoned upon to catch those whose powers of discernment were untrained’, had been taken up by academics, who, it was implied, were supposed to know better. The authors were most indignant at the accusation that Germany was attempting a European take-over, stating that ‘this language is a regrettable departure from the lines of a scientific mode of thinking and discussing, and we disdain to speak further of an insinuation which is contradicted by the whole course of the politics of the German Empire.’⁶¹

It is clear that the Oxford History Faculty’s *Why We Are At War: Great Britain’s Case* had a significant impact in German academic circles, as it was also the subject of an *Erklärung gegen die Oxforder Hochschulen* (‘Declaration against the Oxford Colleges’). *Why We Are At War* will be discussed in the next chapter, as, despite the joint authorship, its analysis and reproduction of government documents on the origin of the War, not to mention its length, place it in the realm of pamphlets rather than manifestos. The *Erklärung* is worth noting here, however. Signed by 26 German lawyers and historians, including Franz von Liszt, Friedrich Meinecke, Erich Marcks and Dietrich Schäfer, it was published in December 1914, and vehemently refuted the accusations made against Germany by the Oxford historians.⁶² Once again, we see an expression of regret that certain members of the Oxford History Faculty had ‘disowned’ the intellectual truth which was the ‘foundation of future cultural movements’ and which was the ‘special and holy task of all representatives of science... to uphold.’ Above all, the authors were disappointed that their Oxford counterparts had misused their position as representatives of the truth, for ‘it must shake trust in the truthfulness of intellectual work, if such men misuse science for political ends.’⁶³

⁶¹ Kulturbund *Answer*, pp. 4-6, 9.

⁶² Bruendel gives some of the names of the signatories in *Volksgemeinschaft*, p. 45.

⁶³ ‘Erklärung gegen die Oxforder Hochschulen’, 3rd Dec 1914, in *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart, 2014 (first published 1975)), pp. 54-5.

They argued that the Oxford historians had ignored the Kaiser's love of peace – a love shared by the German people, and had overlooked Britain's own history in their condemnation of the illegality of the invasion of Belgium. The phrase 'do the Oxford Historians not know...' was used repeatedly, implying ignorance and careless scholarship on the part of the British authors, while the points raised served to underline the peaceful nature of Germany's actions in the last days of July 1914. They closed with a denunciation of the 'denigration of the truth and the prostitution of science to which the Oxford university teachers [had] lowered themselves', and 'repudiated the poisoning of the spiritual weapon in the struggle of nations'.⁶⁴

The *Aufruf*, the 'Reply to German Professors', and the less well-known manifestos discussed here, are key in the academic exchange which took place when the War broke out, exemplifying the tenor of the interchange which would persist throughout the War. The situation presented in the dialogue, with the Germans on the defensive, crying out 'it is not true' while the British calmly respond with 'the German Government admits it', is not present in many of the later documents, but the important fact is that a dialogue persisted throughout the War. Though not always present in a statement-reply format, there is no doubt that British and German scholars read each others' utterances and responded to them, even though there was ostensibly no contact between the opposing sides. The palpable sense of betrayal in many of the early exchanges did fade as the War continued, although it still coloured some approaches to the issues surrounding the origins and motivations of the War, as did the disapproval of the bias shown by many academics. Indeed, Wolfgang J. Mommsen showed how abiding was the disappointment in the lack of objectivity displayed by academics in 1984, when he wrote that 'It must be said with regret that [German] academics in particular excelled in most extreme anti-British agitation of all sorts.'⁶⁵ The pamphlets which form the backbone of the following chapters tried to take a more impersonal approach to these issues, examining them as intellectual arguments, though patriotic bias could not be entirely excluded. The first major debate concerned the origins of

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 55-6.

⁶⁵ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Two Centuries of Anglo-German Relations: A Reappraisal* (London, 1984), p. 21.

the War, seeking to apportion blame – a debate which continued long after the War itself ended. It is to this debate that we now turn.

4

Who is to Blame?

When we are all long buried, the historians will still engage in the battle of pens over the great questions in the history of... the World War of 1914.

-Arnold Oskar Meyer, 1914¹

The question of culpability for the First World War was a contentious issue throughout the 20th Century, and, as the above quote shows, was debated from the earliest days of the War. On both sides, government officials and intellectuals were keenly aware of the necessity of appearing to be under attack, both to unite the country against foreign aggression and to win the support of neutral powers.²

The controversy over the origins of the War has occupied historians down to the present day, and debates on the question of war guilt still come to widely divergent conclusions. Throughout the 20th Century, historical investigations have shifted blame from a German military caste pushing war on Europe, to an intransigent and vengeful France seeking revanche, to Russian desires to avoid humiliation in the Balkans, and to Serbian machinations which unwittingly sparked a conflagration. In the immediate aftermath of the War, the Allied consensus concluded that Germany was solely responsible for the War (and therefore also responsible for reparations), though as attitudes towards Germany softened in the interwar period, so too did accusations of war guilt. The resulting re-evaluation, influenced by a sustained German campaign to prove her own innocence, concluded that all of the major belligerents were in some way responsible, and that Europe had slid unwillingly into war. This was challenged in the 1960s by Fritz Fischer, whose analysis determined that the German leadership had made a conscious choice for war, hoping to exploit the Austro-Serbian conflict to expand German territory in Europe and in Africa. This sparked a heated debate in which the nationalism of the early debate once again reared its head, as many of Fischer's German detractors accused him of betraying Germany, while others noted that his sole focus on Germany overlooked the

¹ Arnold Oskar Meyer, *Worin liegt Englands Schuld*, 'Deutsche Krieg' Series (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1914), p. 6.

² MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, p. 600, 625-6.

actions of other belligerents. A compromise emerged, determining that though Germany was responsible for the outbreak of war, it was not the war which she had intended – and the focus returned to a modified version of events in which every nation played a role.

In 2002, Annika Mombauer's *The Origins of the First World War*, which explores these debates in detail, concluded that the current generation of historians would 'find it difficult to argue' with the consensus reached in the wake of the Fischer debate, suggesting that though Russia and Austria-Hungary wanted war, it would have been impossible without the actions of Germany, which escalated the crisis.³ Nevertheless, recent work has continued to debate these conclusions, particularly in the work of Christopher Clark, Sean McMeekin and Margaret MacMillan. MacMillan has argued that all were guilty, though some were more guilty than others, pointing to the 'mad determination'⁴ of Austria-Hungary for war with Serbia, the German decision to back her ally at all costs, and Russia's haste to mobilize as the real push for war, while France and Britain did not want war, but could have done more to prevent it. This is diametrically opposed to the conclusions of Clarke and McMeekin, who, although agreeing that all bore some blame, emphasise that Austria-Hungary sought a localised war with Serbia (not fully considering the probable complications of war with Russia), and that Russia and France were the real motivators of European war, prompted by a long-standing Russian desire for expansion in the Black Sea, and French Germanophobia, underscored by fears of a loss of power on the international stage.⁵ In this narrative, Germany, though certainly blameworthy, blundered into war, her blank cheque to Austria poorly thought-out, and undermined by Austro-Hungarian prevarication as to the timing of the ultimatum to Serbia. In all three accounts, Britain is considered to have been sincerely seeking peace, though McMeekin and Clark emphasise French and Russian efforts to mislead both Britain and Germany about the real state of mobilization and military plans underway at the end of July 1914. Clearly, modern historians are still coming to widely differing conclusions as to the true origins of the War, and they are working with far more source material than was available to intellectuals seeking to answer the same questions in the early stages of

³ Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War* (Essex, 2002), p. 212.

⁴ MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, p. xxv.

⁵ See Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, and Sean McMeekin, *July 1914: Countdown to War* (London, 2013).

the War itself. It is no surprise then, that contemporary attempts to answer the question of war guilt should also come to different conclusions, based on the evidence then available – as Clark has pointed out, the multiplicity of actors and voices in play in July 1914 has made it extremely difficult for observers, past and present, to determine the true events of the Crisis.⁶

This chapter will examine these contemporary attempts to determine the origins of the War in the writings and speeches of leading intellectuals, highlighting the parallels between the arguments used, and exploring the dialogue which guided these arguments. It is important to recognise that while a clear dialogue did exist in some cases, with intellectuals referring directly to a work written by an opponent,⁷ in most cases, the intellectuals were contributing to an overarching propaganda discourse, and thus, their responses were not to individuals, but to a collective, filtered through the public sphere. This may appear to invalidate the idea of a dialogue, but intellectuals on both sides were fully cognisant of the fact that they and their opponents were part of this discourse, and indeed, saw it as their duty to clarify and respond to the situation, speaking to and on behalf of the nation. Furthermore, in examining the arguments used, and the way in which they were linked to each other, we may shed light not only on contemporaneous attitudes to the War, but also on the prioritization of the moral issues which were felt to be of vital importance in the propaganda war.

In the initial months following the outbreak of war, attempts to justify their actions proliferated on both sides of the conflict, aimed both at the home audience and at neutral states. Already in the beginning of 1915, Sanday acknowledged the breadth of publications and their role in contextualising the War, stating:

Since the war began there has been on this side [of] the water quite a remarkable output of books and pamphlets, the object of which is to help the nation to a stronger grasp and fuller understanding of its own mission in the

⁶ Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, pp. 168-70.

⁷ E.g. Sanday referred directly to Paul Rohrbach's *Der Krieg und die deutsche Politik* in *The Meaning of the War*, p. 25.

world; of the principles for which it stands, and ought to stand; of the significance of its past history and its outlook towards the future; of its relations with other nations and theirs with it. ...There has certainly never been a war... which has had so much strong light thrown upon it, not only in its main issues but also in its side issues.⁸

Nevertheless, Sanday felt moved to shed further light on these main issues, feeling that earlier publications had done nothing to help the opposing sides to understand each other:

All the discussion that has been going on has brought them no nearer. Neither side in the controversy seems as yet to have made the slightest impression on the other. It is like two hostile batteries, neither of which has succeeded in locating the other's position; each goes on showering shot and shell on ground where the other is not.⁹

Intellectuals sought to create a scholarly dialogue on the causes of the War, free (insofar as possible) from bias and provocation. In his pamphlet *The Meaning of the War* (1915) Sanday aimed to depersonalise the issues, trying to examine them as an impartial judge might. He wanted to explain the British case in such a way that it 'could be *put into the hands of a German...* so... that a German reader, if it should ever have one, should not feel injured and insulted at every turn.'¹⁰ This concern to avoid polemic was shared by Dr. Robert Piloty, a jurist at the University of Würzburg, who felt it was important to judge the issues carefully and unemotionally, based on an examination of the facts.¹¹ Sanday (perhaps unsurprisingly) felt that British writings on the War were less provocative than their German equivalents, noting that the language at least, was more restrained in the British pamphlets,

⁸ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 17. The publication date for this pamphlet is simply 1915, but it is referenced in a letter to Sanday from James M. Beck, dated 5th May 1915 (Bod.MS.Eng.Misc.d.122/1 (Sanday Papers), fols.96-7). Beck was in America, which implies a publication date of April at the latest.

⁹ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 18.

¹⁰ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 19. Italics in original.

¹¹ Robert Piloty, *Ursachen und Aussichten des Krieges* (Tübingen, 1915), p. 6.

but nevertheless thought that a revision of the issues was necessary, even a short time after the outbreak of war.¹²

The manifestos of the previous chapter, though certainly thoughtfully written, were immediate responses to the events of the War, functioning as shouts of outrage, objections in the debating chamber, and relying on the prestige of the signatories to give them weight. More detailed analysis was reserved for pamphlets and books in which authors could provide a nuanced elaboration of their opinions, supported by documented evidence. Given their intellectual background and their belief in the importance of impartial scholarly research, it is not surprising that the authors sought to give these writings an authoritative academic tone, and many of the pamphlets are logically argued and meticulously referenced, with footnotes. The authors relied on past evidence as well as the immediate antecedents of the War, turning to official documents published by the belligerent Governments – primarily the Colour books, which reproduced official communications,¹³ though internal reports and memoranda are also mentioned.

Why We Are at War: Great Britain's Case (1914), written by six members of the Oxford History Faculty is a perfect example of this careful scholarship, with its meticulous notation of official reports and files accompanying the analysis in the main text, and its extensive appendices which reproduced (in translation where necessary) various extracts from the Belgian Grey Book, the Russian Orange Book, the German White Book (including a supposed Austrian dossier on the assassination, with comments on its probable authenticity), as well as from the correspondence of Sir Edward Grey and from ambassadorial dispatches from Berlin and Vienna. It is clear from this that the British authors at least had access to a wide array of source documents and were using them to attempt to come to an understanding of the Crisis – fortunately for them, many of the official documents were published by the Entente, and so provided evidence for their case. Stuart Wallace points out that this led to a ‘very

¹² Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 20-22. He notes that ‘the English equivalents for *Lügen* [lies] and *Heuchelei* [hypocrisy] do not occur nearly so often’ in the British pamphlets as in the German ones.

¹³ The German White Book, British Blue Book, Russian Orange Book and Belgian Grey Book were all published between August and October 1914. The French Yellow Book was not published until December 1914.

partial version of events’, suggesting that it may have ‘been the result of over-readiness to accept official papers at face value.’¹⁴ Official documents, however, were not as unbiased as their readers may have assumed, as we saw in Chapter Two with reference to the British Blue Book, and as has since been proven with regard to both the French Yellow Book and Russian Orange Book. While the Orange Book backdated Austro-Hungarian general mobilization to 28th July (from 31st July) in order to make it appear that Austria-Hungary had acted before Russian mobilisation, the French Yellow Book went even further, including forged telegrams from the French Ambassador in Russia stating that Russia was acting in response to Austro-Hungarian mobilisation and German secret manoeuvres.¹⁵ As we examine academic responses to the July Crisis, we must bear this faulty information in mind, remembering that many of their conclusions were based on incomplete evidence, despite their own assurance of thorough scholarship and faith in the reliability of their sources.

Given that *Why We Are at War* was published on 14th September, only two days after the Battle of the Marne and a few weeks after the Battle of Mons, it is easy to see how the authors could have been caught up in the tumultuous emotions of the time, making it all too easy to have faith in their own leaders, while utterly denigrating their opponents’.

The German equivalent is probably *Die Wahrheit über den Krieg* (‘The Truth About the War’, 1914) mentioned in Chapter 1.¹⁶ Though originally intended for an American audience, it seems to have been tailored to specific audiences, as the Italian version specifically addressed the Italo-German relationship and had chapters on the Italian economy and Italian naval aspirations.¹⁷ Though it presented Russia and France as the instigators of the conflict (with a brief reference to British machinations) and dwelled on the ‘lies’ of Germany’s enemies, it gave equal emphasis to the greatness of Germany. Self-congratulatory chapters on mobilization and political unity seem designed to inspire admiration abroad, but the contention that Belgian atrocities had been both exaggerated and justified could not compete with stories of German brutality and ‘Brave Little Belgium’ – particularly

¹⁴ Wallace, *War*, p. 61.

¹⁵ See Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, pp. 509-10.

¹⁶ This was also a collaborative effort, attributed to Paul Dehn, Matthias Erzberger, Ernst Jäckh, Dr. Drechsler, Dr. Francke, D. Naumann, Count Oppersdorff, Dr. Schacht, Paul Rohrbach and Ernst zu Reventlow.

¹⁷ *La Verità sulla Guerra* (2nd ed.), (Berlin, undated, estimated 1914).

the argument that Germany would have lost if it had not invaded Belgium, which Alexander Pearce Higgins, a Law Lecturer at the London School of Economics and the Royal Naval War College, pointed out was not adequate justification.¹⁸ It too reproduced official documents, but these were primarily German – extracts from the German White Book, the telegrams which passed between the Chancellor and his Ambassadors at St. Petersburg, Paris and London (and occasional telegrams between Berlin and Vienna), the telegrams of the Kaiser and the Tsar in the final days of the Crisis, speeches given in the Reichstag, and the report of the Belgian Chargé d’Affairs in Russia which was quoted in ‘Another Word to the Protestant Christians Abroad’. However, as the American lawyer James Beck pointed out, this and other German pamphlets lacked the same overwhelming volume of documents depicting both sides as their Entente counterparts,¹⁹ and as a result their reasoning was less focused on precise facts and dates, and more concerned with political tensions and motivations.

As this chapter will show, the arguments presented by intellectuals regarding the issue of responsibility for the War revolved around a number of key themes, examining the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Hapsburg throne, the July Crisis, and mobilisation. The British point of view focused primarily on German and Austrian machinations and evasions during the Crisis, seeing these as proof that the Central Powers wanted war – or at least, were not actively avoiding the possibility. For many British writers, the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, though a tragedy, was not a valid reason for war. The cause of the conflict, they felt, was simple: the Central Powers had declared an unjust and aggressive war on their neighbours, threatening small states to further their own power, and wantonly invading neutral Belgium to secure military advantage. The Entente powers thus had no choice but to engage them, both for their own protection and for the good of Europe.

The German representation of the issues was more complex: the invasion of Belgium placed Germany firmly in the position of aggressor as far as most onlookers were concerned, and so the German

¹⁸ See *La Verità*, and A. Pearce Higgins, *The Law of Nations and the War*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. V (London, 1914), p. 6.

¹⁹ Beck also makes the point that the German case would have been stronger if telegrams to Vienna had been published, Beck *Double Alliance*, pp. 10-2, 25.

argument of a defensive war was developed primarily in the context of the political situation in Europe in the years before the War and of German claims of isolation from, and victimisation by, the other Powers. Furthermore while the British pamphlets treated Germany as the primary aggressor, with an occasional nod to Austria-Hungary and the Serbian Ultimatum, the German pamphlets presented varied opinions on who bore responsibility for the tragedy of the War, veering from Russia to France to Britain according to the authors' own inclinations – sometimes even within the same pamphlet. The causes of the War were alternately Russia's refusal to back down over the Serbian issue, the threat of a French attack to support her ally while Germany's attention was elsewhere, or Britain's reluctance to use her influence over the other Entente Powers to ensure the maintenance of peace. The motivations behind these actions were interpreted in a number of ways, but all generally returned to a perceived hatred of Germany amongst the other Powers, based on jealousy, fear and vindictiveness. These deeper motivations for the War will be discussed in the next chapter, but first, we will examine the immediate justifications for the outbreak of hostilities, as presented in pamphlets and speeches in the initial months of the War, focusing first on European declarations and then on the invasion of Belgium which prompted Britain's entry.

All agreed that the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, on 28th June 1914, and the subsequent Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia was the spark which ignited the War. However, opinions as to the true significance of the assassination – and even the true culprits – unsurprisingly, differed according to one side or the other.

For many German analysts, the assassination was an 'abominable royal murder'²⁰. Dr. Oskar Fleischer wrote in 1915 that enemy diplomats were responsible for the War, having agreed on both the scale and time of their joint attack on the Central Powers, using 'a funded assassination and horrid lies' as the spur to war.²¹ The idea that the assassination was intended to prompt war was supported by the official German White Book, which stated that Serbia, encouraged by Russia, had been planning the

²⁰ 'German Theologians to Evangelical Christians', p. 20.

²¹ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, p. 8.

destruction of the Hapsburg Empire for years.²² Paul Rohrbach, a political writer who worked with the German Naval and Foreign Offices during the course of the War, went further, asserting that the assassins were aided by the Serbian Government (in turn inspired and supported by Russia) in order to destroy Austria-Hungary. Austria was faced with a fight for her very existence, he claimed, and neither of the Central Powers had any choice but to resist.²³

These three arguments formed the basis of the German case. The growing nationalist movement in the Hapsburg Empire undermined what semblance of unity allegiance to the Emperor maintained, and Russia's support for the Slavic minorities in Eastern Europe allied to the long history of Austro-Russian antagonism made the case for a Russian-inspired plot to destroy Austria-Hungary a believable one in German eyes. For many, it was entirely plausible that the assassination was a direct attack on the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, intended to break the main unifying factor in the Empire, and spark a conflict in which Austria would be crushed, leaving a vacuum for other states – and other Powers – to fill. By extension, this attack was also an assault on Germany, for if Austria-Hungary collapsed, Germany would be left friendless in a hostile Europe (very few of the pamphlets mentioned the third partner in the Triple Alliance, presumably because at the time of writing, Italy had already made her neutral status clear, and it was obvious that she could not be counted on as a strong ally). In fighting for Austria-Hungary, therefore, Germany was also fighting for her own survival.

Despite sympathy for Bosnian nationalism in Serbia, and a certain tolerance of and support for the actions of nationalist Serbs in enemy countries, the assassins of the Archduke were Bosnians, and Austro-Hungarian citizens, seeking to liberate Bosnia from foreign rule – an important point for Entente defenders of Serbia.²⁴ This does not mean that Serbia was entirely innocent – though it is uncertain whether the initiative came from Gavrilo Princip, the assassin, or from members high in the Serbian secret nationalist society, the Black Hand, Princip and his co-conspirators certainly received training and weapons in Serbia, as well as assistance crossing the border to Bosnia. Equally, the

²² *Why At War*, Appendix I, p. 129.

²³ Paul Rohrbach, *Warum es der deutsche Krieg ist!*, 'Deutsche Krieg' Series (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1914), p. 21.

²⁴ MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, p. 547

Serbian Prime Minister was aware of the plot, and made a lacklustre attempt to warn the Austrians about it, which was not followed up.²⁵ Though this was unclear at the time, there was no doubt in the German presentation of events that Serbia was responsible for the assassination. Both Rohrbach and Dietrich Schäfer described it in terms which emphasised the irrationality of the act: Rohrbach depicting it as a murder committed due to criminal insanity, while Schäfer saw it as a mad outrage.²⁶ A Professor of History at Berlin, the Pan-Germanist Schäfer used Serbia's recent history as a demonstration of the brutality of Serbian official institutions, noting that the Serbian National Assembly had enthusiastically greeted the situation which followed the assassination of their own King and Queen in June 1903. He saw no difference in the response of the Serbian Government to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand: the institutions of Serbia had cooperated with the criminals in Sarajevo, had made the assassination possible, and now were refusing to bring the culprits to account.²⁷

However, there were also expressions of doubt as to the validity of Austrian claims against Serbia, particularly when she failed to produce any solid evidence that the Serbian Government was complicit in the assassination (despite German suggestions that Austria-Hungary produce a dossier prior to sending the Ultimatum).²⁸ Many of the British authors used these doubts to challenge the legitimacy of the German case. Sir Valentine Chirol, diplomat, journalist and historian, viewed the assassination of Franz Ferdinand as extremely mysterious, noting the unsatisfactory nature of security arrangements for the Archduke, along with the fact that his sympathy for minorities in Austria-Hungary meant that his assassination did not serve Pan-Slav interests. Chirol also pointed out that although the assassins were racially Serbian, they were Austro-Hungarian citizens.²⁹ A second pamphlet by Rohrbach, *Der Krieg und die deutsche Politik* ('The War and German Politics', 1914) indirectly provided a rejoinder

²⁵ See Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, pp. 56-63, 383-5; McMeekin, *July 1914*, pp. 7-14, 50-1.

²⁶ Rohrbach, *Warum*, p. 21, Schäfer, *Sein oder Nichtsein*, p. 9.

²⁷ Schäfer, *Sein oder Nichtsein*, p. 9.

²⁸ See McMeekin, *July 1914*, p. 394; MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, p. 566.

²⁹ Valentine Chirol, *Serbia and Serbs*, 'Oxford Pamphlet Series', Vol.III (London, 1914), pp. 14-15. McMeekin has suggested that the level of security was Franz Ferdinand's own choice, due to a dislike of the overwhelming security on a previous state visit, and was carefully planned with his own military staff and the relevant authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. See McMeekin, *July 1914*, p. 4.

to this observation, explaining that it was clear that the assassination originated in Serbia, found support in Serbian circles in Austria-Hungary and was aimed directly at the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. According to Rohrbach, the Pan-Serbian movement posed a direct threat to the existence of Austria-Hungary, and its success would spell the end of the Hapsburg Empire.³⁰

C.R.L. Fletcher disagreed with this interpretation, doubting the allegiance of the culprits to the Serbian cause, and his comments were a masterstroke in conspiracy theorising: pointing out that Franz Ferdinand was believed to support Slav rights in Austria-Hungary rather than being entirely pro-German, he remarked in his pamphlet *The Germans, their Empire, and what they Covet* (1914) that the Pan-German League could ‘hardly have seen his disappearance from the world without some joy. Many people, indeed, have speculated on the possibility that the crime of June 28 may have been planned in Berlin rather than Belgrade.’³¹ If such speculation had not existed previously, his pamphlet certainly would have prompted it! However, Franz Ferdinand’s support of Slav rights was far more likely to have angered Serbia than the Pan-Germans, as a potential future Triple Monarchy in Austria-Hungary would undermine Serbian irredentism, and reduce the probability of unhappy minorities seeking reunification with their Serb brothers.³²

Not one, but three British authors drew attention to the Austro-Hungarian government’s history in the forgery of official documents, questioning the reliability of Austria-Hungary’s evidence of Serbian complicity in the assassination. Pearce Higgins claimed there was no proof of Serbian involvement, and referred to the Friedjung trial of 1909 as evidence of Austria’s capacity to falsify evidence.³³ Spenser Wilkinson, Chichele Professor of Military History at Oxford, referenced the same incident in an essay written for the *Morning Post*, published on 27 July 1914, stating that the forgery of evidence

³⁰ Paul Rohrbach, *Der Krieg und die deutsche Politik* (Dresden, 1914), p. 80.

³¹ Fletcher, *Covet*, p. 19.

³² Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, p. 49.

³³ Pearce Higgins, *Law of Nations*, p. 23. Heinrich Friedjung was a Pan-Germanist Austrian historian, who had published an article during the Bosnian Crisis, accusing Serbo-Croatian leaders of treason. When they sued, it was revealed that the Austrian Foreign Office documents on which he had based his analysis were forgeries. See <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Heinrich-Friedjung> (accessed 25/10/15).

in that case ‘destroyed men’s belief in the integrity of the Austrian bureaucracy.’³⁴ Finally, Chirol’s pamphlet on *Serbia and the Serbs* (1914) also referred to the Friedjung case and concluded that the Ultimatum to Serbia was unacceptable, the case ‘supported by no evidence whatsoever, beyond statements ascribed to witnesses in the course of a secret enquiry conducted by the Austrian authorities themselves.’³⁵ German advice to publish evidence of Serbian complicity was thus proven sound – though as Austria-Hungary did not have enough concrete evidence to stand in a court of law, it could be argued that the very experience of the Friedjung affair had held her back from making accusations.³⁶ As it was, the parallels drawn between the case of 1909 and that of 1914 clearly implied that Austria was repeating past behaviour in order to implicate Serbia and precipitate a conflict.

E.A. Sonnenschein also supported this view. Given his surname, his pamphlet *Through German Eyes* (1915) must surely have caught the attention of many, but Sonnenschein was born and raised in England, to an English mother and German father. In *Through German Eyes*, he described a telegram produced in the Italian Chamber of Deputies in December 1914, dating from August 1913, from the then Austrian Foreign Minister. The telegram supposedly stated that Austria-Hungary was considering action against Serbia which would be represented as defensive, and instructed Italy to comply with the terms of the Triple Alliance. To Sonnenschein, this was further evidence that the assassination was just a pretext: ‘We knew before that Austria had demanded ‘Sentence first, trial afterwards’, like the Queen in Alice’s Adventures. But we did not know that Austria had proposed to punish Serbia before the crime of Sarajevo had been committed.’³⁷

Important though the assassination was, most authors focused on the Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia as the real provocation to a Europe-wide conflagration. For the German writers, Russia’s insistence on involvement elevated the conflict from a local to a European concern, and was the main reason for the War, though some shifted the blame to Britain, claiming that Britain’s refusal to declare neutrality had

³⁴ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, p. 12.

³⁵ Chirol, *Serbia*, p. 16.

³⁶ Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, p. 454.

³⁷ Sonnenschein, *German Eyes*, pp. 11-12.

encouraged an uncompromising stance in Russia and France. For their British counterparts, however, the terms of the Ultimatum were excessively harsh, and the uncompromising attitude of the Central Powers, especially with regard to the time limits imposed for a response, meant that war was almost inevitable, if not actively desired by Germany and Austria-Hungary. It is important to be clear on the issue of Germany's 'blank cheque' to Austria-Hungary, in which Germany promised her support, even if it led to war with Russia. Though it has been argued that this was a sign that Germany was determined to provoke a war, in fact, Germany did not think that Russian involvement was likely, and they did not wish to prompt it. The blank cheque was also premised on the assumption that Austria-Hungary would move swiftly against Serbia, in essence presenting Europe with a *fait accompli*, as Germany was unaware of the anti-war stance of the Hungarian Prime Minister which slowed the Austro-Hungarian response.³⁸ Nevertheless, it has also been claimed that while Germany was not overtly pushing for war, she was prepared for the possibility, though whether this was due to a belief that the time was favourable is open to debate.³⁹

Though Germany's intentions were open to interpretation, observers thought that Austria-Hungary's actions were obviously aimed at war. In his pamphlet on *The Responsibility for the War* (1914), the Gladstone Professor of Political Theory at Oxford, W.G.S. Adams, was forthright about Austria's clear intention to provoke a war with Serbia. In his opinion, '...the Austrian Note was not simply a humiliating demand, but one which no sovereign State could be expected to accept,' and he pointed out that even the German Secretary of State had agreed that certain conditions were unacceptable.⁴⁰ As it happened, the Austrians had never intended that Serbia would accept, and there was some disquiet in Vienna at the thought that she might.⁴¹ 'The action of Austria was nothing short of a crime against the peace of Europe,' Adams continued. 'Austria meant war.'⁴²

³⁸ See McMeekin, *July 1914*, pp. 98-105; Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, pp. 415-8.

³⁹ MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, p. 557. McMeekin argues that in fact, the German strategic position was almost at a 'worst possible case' scenario, and that Germany was dragged into the War against her will. McMeekin, *July 1914*, p.p. 387, 405.

⁴⁰ W.G.S. Adams, *The Responsibility for the War*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol.I, (London, 1914), p. 5.

⁴¹ MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, pp. 566-9

⁴² Adams, *Responsibility*, p6-7.

Members of the Oxford History Faculty agreed in *Why We Are At War*, seeing in Austria-Hungary's refusal to engage in any discussion of the Ultimatum a justification of the impression that the Austrian Note was drawn up in such a way as to make war inevitable.⁴³ The authors of *Why We Are At War* also made careful note of the evidence of the British Ambassador in Vienna that Germany was acting in concert with Austria-Hungary – and emphasised this with documents in an appendix dealing with the rupture of diplomatic relations with Austria-Hungary.⁴⁴ The reliance on this documentary evidence in *Why We Are At War* highlights the authors' use of primary sources, and supported their claim to present an unbiased view of the facts, even if their sources were not as unbiased as they asserted.

The idea that the Austrian Ultimatum was drawn up by Austria-Hungary and Germany in concert, and that its presentation and intransigent tone shocked Serbia and the Entente powers, featured in many accounts of the War, but recent scholarship has revealed that the Entente powers were not entirely in the dark – and suggests that they may, in fact, have known as much as the Germans did. The Germans were aware that the Ultimatum would be sent, and had an idea of what it would contain. However, they were not fully aware of the extent of the document, as they did not see the text before it was sent, and when Austria-Hungary became aware of potential leaks in their security, Germany was blamed, and communications on the Ultimatum were shut down. However, these leaks meant that not only was Russia aware that Austria-Hungary was planning some sort of response to the assassinations, Britain, France, Italy and Serbia were all aware of it before it was officially communicated to them, though the text may not have been known. This allowed Russia and France to speculate on possible cooperation during the state visit which took place before the Ultimatum was presented (a discussion Austria-Hungary was specifically hoping to avoid), and considerably undermined any attempt to shock Europe into inaction if Austria-Hungary were to declare war on Serbia.⁴⁵

⁴³ *Why at War*, p. 107.

⁴⁴ *Why at War*, p. 69. Appendix, pp. 207-9

⁴⁵ See MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, p. 533; Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, pp. 427-8; McMeekin, *July 1914*, pp. 130-1, 142, 168-75.

At the time, however, the Historical Advisor to the British Foreign Office, G.W. Prothero, emphasised German involvement in the question of the Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia in his pamphlet on *Our Duty and Our Interest in the War* (1914). Though admitting that Britain would not have joined the War if the conflict had remained localised, he presented her involvement as a righteous defence of the weak, and thereby drew a parallel between the actions of Britain and Russia, perhaps in an attempt to emphasise the alliance. Serbia and Belgium, he argued, were both small countries attacked by a powerful neighbour, and both required a powerful protector.⁴⁶

British writers were convinced of German complicity in the Austrian Ultimatum, but their opponents emphasised Russia's culpability in supporting Serbian resistance – support which Russia certainly provided.⁴⁷ In his pamphlet *Deutsche Kultur und Machtpolitik* ('German Culture and Power Politics', 1915), the nationalist historian Friedrich Meinecke denounced the presentation of the Austro-Serbian issue by the Entente powers:

That they have made a wanton war of aggression on the part of Austria against a small nation out of the bitter self-defence against the subterranean subversive activity of Pan-Slavism is one of the direst obfuscations of truth of which our opponents are guilty. This small nation was in truth as dangerous to Austria as a submarine is to a battleship, and Russia hurried to aid her, not to protect the freedom of a small nation ...but to cleave a path to Constantinople with the sword.⁴⁸

Meinecke went further, alleging that those who did not appreciate the Central Powers' position were

⁴⁶G.W. Prothero, *Our Duty and our Interest in the War*, from the Central Committee for National Patriotic Associations (London, 1914), pp. 4-5. Gilbert Murray drew the same parallel, in *How*, p. 20.

⁴⁷ See Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, p. 462-3. This support was both moral and concrete, as Russia had sent arms to Serbia on 30th July. See McMeekin, *July 1914*, p. 59.

⁴⁸ Friedrich Meinecke, *Deutsche Kultur und Machtpolitik im Englischen Urteil*, 'Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit' Series, No. 29 (Berlin, 1915), p. 19.

‘incapable of making an objective and scientific judgement on historical events,’⁴⁹ thus (ironically) directly accusing his opponents of an unscholarly bias. Though he acknowledged that there was an argument in favour of Russia and Serbia, Meinecke was convinced that history would rule in the Central Powers’ favour. ‘We have no doubt how posterity will decide: Russia and Serbia wanted to weaken or even destroy Austria. Austria and Germany had to defend themselves.’⁵⁰

For Gustav Roethe, Professor of German Language and Literature and Secretary of the Prussian Academy of Science, Franz Ferdinand’s death was only a minor concern in light of the larger issues of the War. According to Roethe, initially, the German people had been filled with ‘wrathful indignation’ by the assassination, but they soon began to suspect that the ‘impudent’ Serbia was being prompted by Russia.⁵¹ By early September, he was thoroughly dismissive of ‘miserable Serbia’ - no one, he said, was interested in Serbia any more.⁵² His attitude foreshadowed the way in which the Great Powers would come to dominate the war narrative, with smaller states frequently featuring in propaganda primarily as an entity in need of rescue, as we shall see when we turn to discuss Belgium.

In *Sein oder Nichtsein* (1914) Dietrich Schäfer also expressed his disdain for Serbia, albeit in a less overtly mocking tone. Outlining Serbia’s history, he pointed out that Serbia had only slowly won back its independence in the previous 100 years, and only with foreign aid. This was hardly a solid basis for Serbian hopes of Balkan conquest, he wrote, failing, of course, to acknowledge that Germany had an even shorter history as a united nation, and had high aspirations herself. ‘That which never belonged together historically was to be part of the Great Serb Empire of the future. And all on the basis of a principle of nationality, supposed national similarity and national relationships...’⁵³ Running counter to the trend towards nationalism which characterised the 19th Century, Schäfer saw national unity as entirely unnecessary, given how few European states had all the members of their race inside

⁴⁹ Meinecke, *Kultur*, p. 19.

⁵⁰ Meinecke, *Kultur*, p. 20.

⁵¹ Gustav Roethe, *Wir Deutschen und der Krieg*, ‘Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit’ Series, Collected Speeches, Vol.I (Berlin, 1915), p. 18.

⁵² Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, p. 23. He was similarly contemptuous of Montenegro, and referred to King Nicholas as an ‘Operetta King’, a ‘comical intermezzo’, not to be taken seriously.

⁵³ Schäfer, *Sein oder Nichtsein*, p. 17.

their borders. He objected to an ideal which sought to free ‘brothers’ in one region, while oppressing members of other ethnicities elsewhere. Again, Schäfer failed to see a parallel to the ambitions of the Central Powers (or at least, failed to examine it). Instead, he condemned Serbia’s aspirations, and with them, Germany’s opponents:

And a State, whose “culture” views murder as a tool of statecraft, wishes to play the role of liberator?... The ‘friends of peace’ should stand as one man and denounce this State, instead of indulging in meaningless lamentations and obnoxious admonitions.⁵⁴

He blamed Russia entirely for the conflict, claiming that it would never have become a European issue if Russia had not supported Serbia – Austria had made it clear that she was only acting to secure her own rights, and that Serbian sovereignty would not be violated, but Russia insisted on protecting her protégé and so brought about a general war.⁵⁵

The Austrian Ultimatum, of course, led to the frantic diplomatic crisis of the last week of July 1914, which each side claimed to have spent scrambling to maintain peace and localise any conflict. The British arguments relied on documented evidence of the actions of the Entente, in the form of telegrams, government notes and ambassadors’ reports, and on scholarly analysis of motivations for war which would encourage the Central Powers to allow the crisis to escalate. The German intellectuals, lacking the same plethora of published government documents, emphasised what they viewed as the long-established hostility of the Entente Powers towards Germany, and presented the War as a struggle for German existence against an Entente plot to destroy the growing threat which the new Germany presented to the old order.

The facts of the July Crisis are still under debate, particularly with the confusion of mobilization

⁵⁴ Schäfer, *Sein oder Nichtsein*, p. 18.

⁵⁵ The word used is ‘Schützling’, and the diminutive, intentionally or not, undermines Serbia’s sovereignty and underlines Schäfer’s disdain for Serbia (p. 18).

orders across belligerent nations, and the complexities of war plans which meant that mobilization and declarations of war could be viewed as equivalent, given the need to move swiftly in modern warfare. All of the nations involved were eager to appear as the attacked party, not only to justify the War to their own peoples, but also to appeal to neutral nations, and so, the intentions of each party become even more obscure, and are still debated today. Nonetheless, a brief outline of the Crisis is necessary to understand the positions taken by the intellectuals.

On 23rd July 1914, Austria issued the Ultimatum to Serbia, following a promise of support from Germany, given in early July, and a warning from France and Russia that very day against presenting an ultimatum to Serbia. On 26th July, Russia initiated her 'Period Preparatory to War', a state of preliminary mobilization, ostensibly against Austria-Hungary, but necessitating action near Germany as well. On 28th July, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, and the following day, the Tsar ordered general Russian mobilization, rescinding it, only to re-order it on 30th July. Unsettled by the preparations for war occurring on her eastern border, Germany presented an ultimatum to Russia on 31st July, requesting that she halt mobilization. When this went unanswered, Germany ordered her own general mobilization, and declared war on Russia on 1st August. France also ordered her own general mobilization on 1st August, prior to that of Germany. On the Franco-German border, rumours of troop movements abounded, with each side accusing the other of crossing international boundaries. Aware of the Franco-Russian alliance, and of her own plans to eliminate France to prevent a war on two fronts, Germany declared war on France on 3rd August, citing French border violations as the reason for war. Finally, having requested passage through neutral Belgium on 2nd August, a request which was refused by the Belgian government, German troops crossed the Belgian border on 4th August, contravening Belgian neutrality, and breaking the 1839 Treaty of London which guaranteed it. Throughout the Crisis, the British cabinet, though sympathetic to French and Russian views, had been divided over the issue of intervention. Her *entente* with France, though not a formal alliance, had led to naval agreements and an expectation in France that the British would provide aid in a future European war. However, there were also those who argued that British interests were in no way involved in any conflict arising from Balkan issues, and that the nation should remain neutral. The

invasion of Belgium cut through the issue, and at 11p.m. on 4th August, Britain declared war on Germany, ostensibly to defend Belgian neutrality.⁵⁶ However, as we shall see, the flurry of telegrams and orders later published by the belligerent governments, and the speed with which the Crisis unfolded, made it difficult for intellectuals seeking the origins of the War to come to a consensus about what exactly had happened to bring it about.

The official German response to the July Crisis was unambiguous. The German White Book represented Germany as a valiant knight, chivalrously standing by an ally despite the danger, and claimed that throughout July 1914, her priority was the localisation of the conflict. It was asserted in the White Book that no country had the right to interfere with Austria-Hungary's 'struggle with barbarism and political crime' or to prevent the 'just punishment' of Serbia. The negotiations surrounding the Ultimatum to Serbia were presented as an attempt at prevarication on the part of Serbia, which was trying to evade the claims of Austria-Hungary. According to the White Book, Austria-Hungary's intention to respect Serbian independence had been made clear to Russia, and therefore, Russia bore the responsibility for destroying the peace of Europe.⁵⁷

France and Russia were accused of preparing for war during the Crisis, thus preventing an understanding from being reached.⁵⁸ Russian mobilisation was seen as ultimately responsible for the failure of diplomatic mediation, and Russia was charged with making the first move, due to German reports that Russian troops had entered German territory before the official declaration of war.⁵⁹ Thus, the German White Book completely transferred the accusations commonly made against Germany to Russia – it was Russia who wanted war, Russia who was attempting to infringe upon the sovereignty of another nation, and Russia who stole a march on another Power in order to gain a military advantage. This tallied with the stance of the German military leadership, who had convinced themselves that Russia and France would attack Germany when Austria-Hungary attacked Serbia, and

⁵⁶ McMeekin has a useful timeline of the events of July 1914 – see McMeekin, *July 1914*, p. xvii.

⁵⁷ German White Book, reproduced in *Why At War*, Appendix I, pp. 130-133.

⁵⁸ *Why At War*, pp. 135-6. This was in fact true – see McMeekin, *July 1914*, pp. 178-92, 269.

⁵⁹ *Why At War*, pp. 140-1. Though Russia did mobilise first, the initial attacks were not made until mid-August 1914.

that it was vital for German survival that Germany be ready to respond quickly.⁶⁰

Russia was commonly seen by German observers as the instigator of war in the early days of the conflict, and the *Address of the German Theologians to the Evangelical Christians Abroad* (1914) presented a righteously outraged description of the Crisis, proclaiming that

As our Government was exerting itself to localise the justifiable vengeance for an abominable royal murder, and to avoid the outbreak of war between two neighbouring Great Powers, one of them, whilst invoking the mediation of our Emperor, proceeded (in spite of its pledged word) to threaten our frontiers, and compelled us to protect our land from being ravaged by Asiatic barbarism.⁶¹

In one expertly phrased sentence, we see the summation of the German argument – an abominable murder, rampaging Asian barbarians and Germany’s attempt to keep the peace. Unfortunately for the German theologians, as we have seen, their Oxford counterparts had little sympathy.⁶²

The Oxford History Faculty also called Germany to account for her apparent confusion with regard to Russia’s involvement with the Austro-Serb conflict, pointing out that on the one hand, the German Government were maintaining the stance that it was a purely local concern, in which Russia had no stake, and on the other, that the German White Book admitted that Germany was aware that the actions of Austria-Hungary might provoke war with Russia. ‘Both stories,’ the authors concluded,

cannot be true: the German Government have... to choose between ineptitude and guilt; the ineptitude of not recognizing an obvious fact, and

⁶⁰ McMillan, *Ended Peace*, p. 597.

⁶¹ ‘German Theologians’, p. 20. Reproduced in translation.

⁶² *Reply from Oxford*, pp. 8-10.

the guilt of allowing Austria to act in such a way that Russia was bound to come into the field.⁶³

Why We Are At War accused Germany of wasting time over a ‘quibble’ when the proposal for a conference to mediate between the Powers was rejected, assuming that Germany was not opposed to the conference in principle. If this was so, the authors felt, then there was no choice but to conclude that the German Government was wasting time until war was inevitable. The authors tried to reserve judgement on the premeditated nature of this prevarication, attempting to present a balanced view, and simply left it to ‘impartiality’ to decide if Germany’s actions were deliberate. Their own opinion of Germany’s guilt, however, was clear.⁶⁴

Above all, blame was laid on Germany due to the fact that Russia and Austria-Hungary seemed prepared to discuss the issue on 31st July, but German mobilisation prevented it. Though Austria-Hungary did not declare war on Russia until 6th August, this assertion seems to be without foundation. In fact, on 30th July, even as the Russian Foreign Minister was responding to German pleas for suggestions to keep the peace with requests that Austria-Hungary modify the Ultimatum, he was simultaneously preparing for a meeting with the Tsar in order to push for general mobilization. However, this was kept from the British and French Ambassadors in Russia, who were instead told that Russia had proof that Germany was preparing for war.⁶⁵ Little wonder then, that the shock and outrage which prevailed in the academic community at the outbreak of war was reflected in the incredulous tone of the Oxford Historians when they asked ‘what kind of diplomacy is this, in which, with both of the principals ready to negotiate, a third party issues an ultimatum couched in such terms that a proud country can give but one answer?’⁶⁶ The authors dismissed Germany’s contention that Russian mobilisation had precipitated the conflict, asserting that the situation could have been saved if Germany had not interfered – echoing the German contention that it was Russian interference which

⁶³ *Why at War*, pp. 70-1.

⁶⁴ *Why at War*, p. 74.

⁶⁵ McMeekin, *July 1914*, pp. 298-9.

⁶⁶ *Why at War*, p. 79.

prevented the localisation of the War. Likewise, they rejected the German accusation that France had provoked Germany, claiming that in fact, it was German troops who had entered French territory, while French troops had been withdrawn from the frontier.⁶⁷ Prefiguring the common idea of the ‘two Germanies’, which we will discuss in the next chapter, *Why We Are At War* expressed the authors’ sincere belief that the ‘highest authority’ in Germany was working for peace, and placed the blame for the pressure for war on the lower ranks in the German hierarchy (presumably the military, rather than the middle or working classes).⁶⁸

On the German side, Piloty placed the blame for the War firmly on the shoulders of the Entente Powers. Serbian agitation was certainly responsible for the Austro-Serbian conflict, he admitted, but the fault lay with the Entente Powers who had planned the War.⁶⁹ The July Crisis he judged to be the implementation of a long-planned attack, each step leading to the next. In a neat parallel, Sanday also asserted that the systematic way in which the crisis unfolded was proof that it had been meticulously planned – but by the Central Powers rather than the Entente.⁷⁰ War between Austria-Hungary and Serbia was certain, Piloty said, and there was no reason for any other Power to get involved until the time came for a peace treaty. Though he felt that Russia bore a large part of the blame for war, Piloty placed the primary guilt with France, who had ‘paid’ Russia, and did not act to prevent the War.⁷¹

Rohrbach was another figure who blamed France and Russia, explaining in two pamphlets that Germany was aware that as early as 1912 the two Powers had planned an attack on Germany which was to take place in 1916.⁷² This, he said, placed Germany and Austria-Hungary in the position of

⁶⁷ *Why at War*, p. 80. Though the French certainly told the British that they were withholding troops from the frontier, McMeekin has argued that this was a calculated move to convince the British that the French were not the aggressors. Certainly rumours of German troops crossing the French border, and of a French cavalry patrol, French saboteurs and French pilots acting in German territory were circulating from 2nd August, but both sides had orders not to act first at that time. A French pilot was shot down over German territory prior to the declaration of war. See McMeekin, *July 1914*, pp. 304-5, 355.

⁶⁸ *Why at War*, p. 90.

⁶⁹ Piloty, *Ursachen*, p. 23.

⁷⁰ William Sanday, *The Deeper Causes of the War*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol.I (London, 1914), p. 3.

⁷¹ Piloty, *Ursachen*, pp. 30-33. The idea that France had ‘paid’ Russia is a reference to French loans before the War. French support was certainly a vital aspect of Russian willingness to go to war. See McMeekin, *July 1914*, pp. 258, 399.

⁷² Rohrbach, *Warum*, p. 20.

having to wait until Russia and France were ready to attack, as neither of the Entente Powers was overtly hostile.⁷³ Nevertheless, he explicitly denied that Germany was engaged in a preventative war.⁷⁴ Unlike Piloty, Rohrbach cast France in the role of accomplice rather than instigator, following Russia's lead. The only possible explanation he could see for Russia's actions was an attempt to precipitate events while the country could still withstand the consequences of Pan-Slavism and guard against internal revolution.⁷⁵ Britain's position was more difficult to explain, and Rohrbach recognised that the decision for war had not been taken lightly. However, he had doubts as to the innocence of Britain's motivations for war, reflecting a view of Britain which would become more common as the War progressed, as we shall see in the next chapter.

C.R.L. Fletcher, one of the authors of *Why We Are At War*, was fully aware of the German arguments, and in *The Germans, their Empire, and how they have made it* (1914), flatly denied that France had given Germany any cause for war. In fact, he said, for years she had been 'scrupulously careful' to avoid provocation. He presented Germany in the role of a predator, always on the watch, and ready to pounce should France give her an opening. That France did not rise to the bait was admirable, in Fletcher's opinion, and her restraint earned her the respect of Europe and the alliance of Russia and Britain.⁷⁶ True or not, this shows how Fletcher had been affected by the tensions in European politics in the preceding years. He was remarkably paranoid about the activities of the Pan-German League in particular, and was convinced that they had pushed the Kaiser to war.⁷⁷

Fletcher also felt that Germany had good reason for provoking a war at that time. Referring to the Central Powers rather colourfully as a 'syndicate of wickedness', Fletcher outlined possible motivations for Germany and Austria-Hungary. It was commonly argued that Germany may have felt

⁷³ Rohrbach, *Krieg und Politik*, pp. 82-3.

⁷⁴ Rohrbach, *Warum*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Rohrbach, *Krieg und Politik*, p. 83.

⁷⁶ C.R.L. Fletcher, *The Germans, their Empire and how they have made it*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol.II, (London, 1914), p. 35. Roger Chickering's in-depth study of the Pan-German League argues that although they had public influence, the Pan-Germans did not have the support of the German government. See *We Men Who Feel Most German* (London, 1984). He is supported by Mildred S. Wertheimer, whose 1924 study examined contemporary views before and immediately after the War. Mildred S. Wertheimer, *The Pan-German League 1890-1914* (New York, 1971 (1st edition, 1924)).

⁷⁷ Fletcher, *Germans Covet*, p. 15.

it was best to act while Austria-Hungary was still strong enough to support her, while the growing hostility of Italy was still dormant, and before the armies of France and Russia grew too powerful to oppose. Both Sanday and Murray Beavan (Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Aberdeen) made this point, with Beavan elucidating the advantages for Austria-Hungary as well as those for Germany.⁷⁸ Fletcher however, focused on the perceived influence of the German army in policy-making, its potential need to prove itself, after German-trained Turkish troops were defeated in the Balkan Wars, and a looming financial crisis caused by an increase in output with no corresponding growth in markets.⁷⁹ His was thus a rather unusual explanation, clearly influenced by ideas of Prussian militarism and perhaps also by accusations that Britain was acting from economic motives.

Beavan's account of German motivations was based on the common conclusion that war was inevitable, due to 'twenty years of a 'mailed Fist' policy',⁸⁰ and in Germany too, there was a strong feeling that a war with the Entente Powers was inevitable at some point, though for different reasons. Erich Marcks, Professor of History at the University of Leipzig, explained in his pamphlet *Wo stehen wir?* ('Where do we Stand?', 1914) that France had been threatening war since 1871, Russia since 1879, and Britain since the 1890s. To the question, 'did Germany cause the War', surprisingly, he answered 'yes', but with a caveat:

We were the cause in that we are the new European power, the new World Power... We are the ones who destroyed everything, but not through attacks, but in that ... we effaced the huge anomaly of 1500 to 1870, we built anew our life, our strength, our right to live in the middle of Europe.⁸¹

We will return to the German victim-complex epitomised in this statement in the next chapter, but, in opposition to Beavan, Marcks went on to claim that it was not German foreign policy which was to

⁷⁸ See, Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 27. Murray Beavan, *Austrian Policy since 1867*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol.II (London, 1914), p. 25.

⁷⁹ Fletcher, *Covet*, pp. 32-5.

⁸⁰ Beavan, *Austrian Policy*, pp. 25-26.

⁸¹ Erich Marcks, *Wo stehen wir?*, 'Der Deutsche Krieg' Series (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1914), p. 15.

blame for the conflict.⁸² He admitted that it may have been a contributory factor – undoubtedly true, given its aggressive nature in the years before the War. Germany had sought peace, Marcks continued; she was the one who was threatened, and the War was one of survival or annihilation.⁸³ Thus, the reason for the War was explained – not a diplomatic crisis stemming from assassination, but long-standing jealousy, vindictiveness and reluctance to share power.

Otto von Gierke agreed, and was clearly convinced that Germany was not the aggressor in the War, and that the Kaiser had worked for peace in Europe. In a speech given on 18th September 1914 he proclaimed that Germany was not acting from fear of defeat, but from a well-established love of peace. It was the Entente Powers who had threatened Germany and Austria-Hungary, and their treachery had brought about the War:

Never before did a powerful leader, who commanded the strongest army in the world, work with such tireless efforts and such moral earnestness for the maintenance of peace as our Kaiser did from the beginning of his reign to the last possible moment... But once the plan of the encircling powers, with its deceitful intrigue and hypocritical lies, was put into action by way of a treacherous attack, we were left with no choice!⁸⁴

Sanday addressed both these points in his attempt to give a balanced examination of the outbreak of war. Though doubting that the German people as a whole wanted peace, he did note that this did not mean that the German government wanted war. Pre-figuring recent scholarship, he thought that the initial aim of the Central Powers was the humiliation of Serbia, and not necessarily a European conflict.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, he argued that the Central Powers were the aggressors, whether this was viewed in terms of the July Crisis or the ultimatums sent to France and Russia on 31st July 1914

⁸² Marcks, *Wo stehen wir?*, p. 16.

⁸³ Marcks, *Wo stehen wir?*, p. 17.

⁸⁴ Otto von Gierke, *Krieg und Kultur*, 'Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit' Series, Collected Speeches, Vol. I (Berlin, 1915), p. 77.

⁸⁵ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 25. For recent work, see Mombauer, *Origins*, pp. 15, 177.

demanding that they cease mobilisation. Germany and Austria-Hungary precipitated affairs ‘in such a way that it was extremely likely to lead, as it has led, to a general war’.⁸⁶ Russia had been patient and Austria-Hungary was willing to enter discussions, but the German government was focused on military plans, and ‘...it became clear that Germany’s desire for peace was less strong than her determination to gain the full advantage of her preparedness for war.’⁸⁷ Sanday was willing to believe that German professions of friendliness towards Britain were sincere, that the shock of the German Chancellor when he found that Britain was on the verge of declaring war was real, and the German White Book was genuine when it claimed to have been working together with Britain for peace. Charitably, Sanday suggested that perhaps the German Foreign Office simply did not understand the urgency of the situation – a conclusion later echoed by McMeekin in his *July 1914* (2013).⁸⁸ Two years later, in 1917, Sanday was even more convinced that Germany had orchestrated the outbreak of war:

They chose the moment admirably; they laid down the conditions in such a way as absolutely to suit themselves; by the skilful use of “ultimatums” and “mobilisations” (their neighbours and their own) they at once provided themselves with pretexts which they could employ just as they were wanted, and they were also able to strike with a rapidity and unexpectedness, with a mass and momentum, that seemed wellnigh irresistible.⁸⁹

In this way, Germany, he claimed, gave herself the chance of crushing France, Russia and Britain, and becoming the dominant power in Europe.

James M. Beck, though American, featured in the Oxford Pamphlet Series, as the publishers felt his summation of the Crisis in the *New York Times* firmly supported the British cause – an extremely

⁸⁶ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 23.

⁸⁷ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 29-30.

⁸⁸ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 31-2.

⁸⁹ William Sanday, *When Should the War End?*, Evangelical Information Committee (London, 1917), p. 7.

valuable contribution from a neutral – and reprinted it as part of the series. Beck believed that the German claims to be working for peace should be ignored – no modern war, he said, began without such assertions. If Germany was truly sincere, all that was necessary was to persuade Austria-Hungary to give Serbia more time to respond to the Ultimatum.⁹⁰ Like the authors of *Why We Are At War*, Beck viewed Germany's actions during the July Crisis as 'quibbles' just to gain time, her efforts to distinguish between the conflict between Austria and Serbia, and Austria and Russia as an attempt 'to measure the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee.'⁹¹ As for the excuse that Russian mobilisation forced Germany to act, Beck argued that mobilisation and aggression were not synonymous: Germany, Austria and Russia all had the right to mobilise, but mobilisation was not an act of war. As it stood, 'The demand of Germany that Russia could not arm to defend itself, when Austria was preparing for a possible attack on Russia, has few, if any, parallels in history for bullying effrontery.'⁹² Whatever the legal position, this overlooks the practical ramifications of mobilisation in the German military plans, which meant that success was contingent on a swift mobilisation of troops. If Germany was to have any hope of avoiding a war on two fronts, she had to defeat France before Russia was fully mobilised – and so for Germany, mobilisation did mean war.

Piloty provided a direct parallel to Beck's argument in *Ursachen und Aussichten des Krieges* ('Causes and Prospects of the War', 1915) dismissing the declarations of war which opened the conflict as evidence of aggression and accusing the Entente of much more devious behaviour. Tactically, he said, it was better for the Entente to hold back, and so ensure firstly, that Germany would be unprepared, and secondly, that they would later be able to claim that Germany was the aggressor.⁹³ Both Britain and France were just as culpable as Russia if not more so, he said – they could have chosen to stay neutral, as Germany offered guarantees to both, but they did not. He even accused France of invading German territory before the German declaration of war, thus further underlining French culpability. Germany could not go further in the cause of peace without demeaning herself, he said, and the 'furor

⁹⁰ Beck, *Double Alliance*, pp. 21-3, 27.

⁹¹ Beck, *Double Alliance*, p. 26.

⁹² Beck, *Double Alliance*, p. 41.

⁹³ Piloty, *Ursachen*, p. 33.

teutonicus' was unleashed not from a desire for war, but from a need for defence against a treacherous attack.⁹⁴

Of course, the opinions of the intellectuals were not as fixed as they may appear to be, and many changed their views as the Crisis progressed, as we saw in the preceding chapter. Spenser Wilkinson's pamphlet, *The Coming of War* (1914) offers a fascinating insight into the changing mindset of many Britons during the July Crisis. The pamphlet reproduced a series of articles written by Wilkinson for the *Morning Post* between 27th July and 15th September 1914, and his shifting attitude to Germany is clear. In the article 'Germany at the Crossroads' from 28th July, Wilkinson expressed some sympathy for Germany's position. He professed his belief that Germany had not armed for war but for self-defence in the preceding years, and took comfort from a conviction that Germany would be particularly concerned to maintain peace due to a belief that a war between Germany and France would lead to the destruction of one of the powers (he overlooked that many Germans felt they would win). He sympathised with Germany's dilemma, torn between supporting Austria-Hungary and maintaining peace, and thought it improbable that Germany was aware of the text of the Austrian Ultimatum before it was sent, concluding that Austria-Hungary had acted alone.⁹⁵

By 2nd August, however, Wilkinson's opinion had changed.

There is no longer any doubt that Austria was encouraged from Berlin to make this attack [on Serbia]... Germany... has refused to listen to any suggestion for a peaceful settlement with Servia, well knowing that the attack on Servia... must bring Russia into the field... well knowing that France must needs stand with Russia, and well knowing again, after the warning of 1911, that England must stand by France.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Piloty, *Ursachen*, pp. 33, 36-8, 40.

⁹⁵ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, pp. 17-9.

⁹⁶ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, p. 22

If Germany had truly wanted peace, she would have prevented the Austro-Hungarian attack on Serbia and the conclusion, Wilkinson felt, was obvious: the Crisis had been orchestrated by Austria-Hungary and Germany in order to provoke a war in which Germany appeared to be the victim of aggression, much as Piloty had argued in *Ursachen und Aussichten des Krieges*. By 4th August, Wilkinson was accusing Germany of attempting to divide the Entente Powers with false offers for neutrality, and by 7th September, he was proclaiming that Germany's aim was the 'conquest of Europe'.⁹⁷

Even in 1916, the causes of the War continued to be under discussion, as a famous pamphlet by the Reverend H.M. Gwatkin, Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge, proved. A reply to a letter from an unnamed Swedish commentator who sympathised with Germany, the text of *England's Case Against Germany* (1916) originally appeared in *The Nation* on 14th October. Gwatkin reiterated the assertion that Britain never sought war, and then brought forward evidence that Germany had been actively working towards war from an early stage. Gwatkin delineated a series of incriminating circumstances in a timeline stretching from May 1914 to the outbreak of war which led him to the conclusion that Germany had planned the offensive well in advance of the assassination at Sarajevo. He noted as evidence the calling up of reservists in May, the arming of cruisers in June, and interestingly, the fact that large bills for trade – which were not due to be repaid until after 1st August – were drawn by Germany on London. His crowning evidence was a cipher received by a German battle cruiser, opened on 31st July, but sent two years previously, which stated that Germany was at war with Russia, France and Britain, although Britain and Germany were not yet at war. This, he claimed, all 'converged' on the 'certainty' of war early in August.⁹⁸ Clearly, ideas of German deviousness had penetrated the national consciousness, as these events had aroused no suspicion at the time, and could easily be dismissed as coincidence – it is hardly impossible that German tradesmen should call on bills for trade due after the war broke out (there is no mention of the sums, or of bills which were due before 1st August), or that, in light of the tensions between Germany and Britain following the Moroccan Crises, a cipher should be sent to a battle ship which envisaged that Germany

⁹⁷ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, pp. 22-3, 28, 78.

⁹⁸ H.M. Gwatkin, *England's Case Against Germany* (London, 1916), pp. 3-4.

and Britain might be at war at some stage in the future. However, despite Gwatkin's attempt to be impartial, two years of war had made it impossible not to see the worst in German actions.

Magnus Hirschfeld compared the mobilisations of July 1914 to the actions of suspicious neighbours – one watching the other with gun in hand, simply because their counterpart also possessed a good gun. He described how one neighbour takes up his pistol, and the other follows suit, one cocks the gun, so does his counterpart. One puts his finger on the trigger, so does his neighbour, one asks the other to put the gun down, and the more mistrustful of the two tightens his finger on the trigger – as his opponent, convinced that a bullet is about to be fired, simultaneously shoots.⁹⁹ Admittedly, Hirschfeld's analysis appears a little naive to the modern reader (perhaps deliberately so), as the neighbour pulling the trigger in his scenario is Russia rather than Germany, but the analogy is deft, and certainly a useful way of thinking about the July Crisis. Extending the metaphor slightly further, it is perhaps fair to say that for Britain, the point at which the trigger was pulled was not the orders for mobilisation, but the moment the first German boot landed on Belgian soil.

The invasion of Belgium was a key part of the German Schlieffen Plan, which sought to deal with the difficulties of fighting a war on two fronts against the allied Russia and France. Relying on a slow mobilisation of Russian troops, the Schlieffen Plan envisaged a lightning strike on France through Belgium in the west, sweeping to face Russia in the east before Russian mobilisation could be completed. However, Belgium was a neutral country, and its neutrality had been guaranteed by Prussia, Austria-Hungary, Britain and France in the 1839 Treaty of London. As a result, violating Belgian territory carried a high risk of intervention from Britain, as well as revealing Germany's *Realpolitik* approach to international treaties – hardly an ideal position for a country already facing war against two opponents, wishing to maintain the neutrality of other Powers. On 2nd August 1914, the German Government requested free passage for German troops across Belgian territory, citing a planned French invasion of Germany through Belgium, promising that reparations would be made when the War was over, and threatening that Belgium would be treated as an enemy if this request

⁹⁹ Hirschfeld, *Warum Hassen*, pp. 15-6.

was denied. Belgium's response the following day was an unequivocal refusal, pointing to her obligations to resist invasion, and the French statement of 1st August that Belgian neutrality would not be violated. Despite this refusal, German troops crossed the Belgian border on 4th August.

Invading Belgium was a calculated risk – one which was ultimately unsuccessful, as unexpected Belgian resistance delayed the German troops and the violation of the Treaty of London provided Britain with a much clearer reason to enter the War than contentious debates about British honour and the need to support France. Propagandistically, it can be said that the gamble also failed, though this did not prevent intellectuals on both sides from using the invasion as an argument, with British academics pointing to the German breach of international law, and their German colleagues responding with accusations about the 'real' motivations behind British intervention. The violation of international law became an important issue in the debate, linked as it was to the sense of an international community, bound by the same values. In ignoring international law, Germany undermined this community ideal, creating a sense that the principles of Europe were crumbling in the face of military exigencies, civilization being destroyed by a primitive desire for conquest.¹⁰⁰ Thus, it was easy for Britain to argue that she was fighting for the ideals of law and civilization, as Germany had so manifestly dismissed them.

The first issue in this debate was the nature of the Treaty of London, and the degree to which it was binding. Despite his membership in the pacifist *Bund Neues Vaterland* (New Fatherland Association), Lujo Brentano had no doubt that the Treaty of London was not binding – clearly, war might be wrong, but this did not mean that Germany was. In his essay, *England und der Krieg* ('England and the War', 1915), first published in the Viennese newspaper *Neue Freie Presse*, Brentano called attention to the actions of William Gladstone during the 1870 Franco-Prussian War to highlight the forgetfulness of British politicians in their claims that the Treaty of 1839 was inviolable. In 1870, both France and Prussia had promised to uphold the neutrality of Belgium, provided that the other power did the same.

¹⁰⁰ Isabel Hull, *A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law During the Great War* (Ithaca, 2014), pp. 17-9.

Concerned that this would lead to a ‘dual violation in which both powers blamed the other for acting first,’ Gladstone concluded separate treaties with each power, guaranteeing that Britain would aid the innocent power in protecting Belgian neutrality should this agreement be broken, and clarifying the British position, which said that even if other guarantors defaulted, the rest were still obliged to protect Belgian neutrality.¹⁰¹ Brentano’s interpretation, however, was that Gladstone’s actions dismissed the 1839 Treaty, showing that the existence of a treaty was not a guarantee without an examination of the particular situation in which the treaty might be called into action and he used British reluctance to act alone in the defence of Belgium as an example of a situation in which the Treaty would not be considered binding.¹⁰² Triumphantly, Brentano compared Gladstone’s apprehension that Britain might be forced to defend Belgium alone to Germany’s fear for her own existence – both were situations in which adherence to the Treaty might be considered to be voluntary, but Germany’s case, as far as Brentano was concerned, was much more critical, particularly in light of the fact that the German violation was ‘only a formal violation’ as the territorial integrity of Belgium had been repeatedly assured by the German Government.¹⁰³ Leaving aside the fact that allowing German troops to cross Belgian territory would expose Belgium to the censure of the international community, abandoning her neutrality and leaving her at the mercy of two warring Powers, Brentano’s conclusions were based on shaky logic. Gladstone’s actions, even according to this account, were to create a further treaty to guarantee that Britain would not be forced to fight alone, not to back out of Britain’s obligation to honour the original Treaty (an action which Britain actually repeated in 1914 when she asked France and Germany to reaffirm their commitment to Belgian neutrality), whereas Germany sought to invalidate it. Brentano’s comparison did not hold.

The members of the Oxford History Faculty referenced the war of 1870 months before Brentano looked to it for his examples. In their account, Germany had used the 1839 Treaty to her own advantage, with Bismarck calling on it to ensure that Britain did not support France in the conflict, and publishing a French proposal from 1866 which suggested that Prussia help France annex Belgium

¹⁰¹ Hull, *Scrap*, p. 20.

¹⁰² Lujo Brentano, *England und der Krieg* (Berlin, 1915), pp. 8-9.

¹⁰³ Brentano, *England*, p. 9.

in compensation for Prussian territorial expansion. It was this publication, the authors claimed, which pushed the British Foreign Secretary to insist on another treaty supporting that of 1839 – the treaty which Brentano referred to above. If we follow the implications in this account, then the reason Gladstone insisted on a secondary treaty was not due to Britain's own consideration of the possibility that the 1839 Treaty might be broken, but because Germany had hinted that it might.

The violation of the Treaty by Germany in 1914 was particularly condemned due to the many occasions on which Germany had promised to uphold it. Beck pointed out the statements of the German Secretary of State and the Minister of War acknowledging the international treaties protecting Belgium in a Reichstag debate in 1913 as proof that Germany had gone back on her own word, as well as violating the Treaty of London. He then quoted from the Belgian Grey Book to show that the German Chancellor had affirmed in 1911 that Germany had no intention of violating Belgian neutrality, and the German Ambassador's assurance in 1914 that these 'sentiments... *had not changed*'.¹⁰⁴ The neat diplomacy of this statement – a side-step from an explicit declaration that Germany had no plans to attack through Belgium is perhaps commendable in an Ambassador, but served to underline the impression that Germany was going back on her pledged word.

Brentano was not the only German to examine the legality of the Treaty in order to justify German actions, and the responses of his countrymen seem to fall into two categories – those who denied that Germany had in fact broken the Treaty, and those who admitted that Germany had broken international law, but felt that the breach was justified. It is also worth noting the difference between the interpretation of a purely 'formal' violation and a violation in fact, as the argument between international law and state necessity proved a fundamental point of dispute between German and British observers.¹⁰⁵ For the British, there was no justification for the violation of a treaty of which Germany herself was a guarantor; such a violation undermined the value of treaties in future and threatened the fabric of Europe. In Germany, state survival overrode these considerations, particularly

¹⁰⁴ Beck, *Double Alliance*, p. 7. Italics in original.

¹⁰⁵ Hull, *Scrap*, pp. 26-7, 30, 34-5.

in light of the fact that she professed no territorial ambitions, and promised reparations when the War had ended.

A number of authors on both sides noted the speech of Chancellor Bethman-Hollweg in the Reichstag on 4 August 1914, in which he stated that Germany was ‘compelled to override the just protests of the Luxemburg and Belgian Governments. The wrong – I speak openly – we are committing we will endeavour to make good as soon as our military goal has been reached,’ admitting that Germany was aware that she was committing a crime against the law of nations.¹⁰⁶ The interpretation placed on this admission was widely different, however.

For the British authors, it was a clear sign that Germany knew that what she was doing was wrong, and did it anyway. She had no excuse but ‘necessity’, and necessity was a flimsy pretext on which to base an argument. Pearce Higgins began his pamphlet with a list of the international agreements Germany was violating by her conduct in the War, as well noting the statements of a number of German lawyers written before the War which justified the ‘German doctrine of Necessity’ – the idea that the laws of war were not binding in situations in which observing them would either endanger troops, or, a vital point, endanger the success of the operation.¹⁰⁷ Pearce Higgins came to the conclusion that the ‘German theory introduces a new meaning of the term necessity different from that which finds acceptance in the Hague Conventions’ – that it was not a question of necessity, but of success, and his disdain for a State which put its own concerns above international law is clear: ‘From whatever point of view we examine the necessity for the attack on Belgium, the evidence of treachery, and complete and callous disregard for international obligations by Germany, is overwhelming.’¹⁰⁸

Pearce Higgins’ comment on the discrepancy between the German and British interpretations of necessity draws attention (though unwittingly) to a crucial factor for understanding the wartime writings of academics. In the extract from Sanday’s *The Meaning of War* quoted at the start of the

¹⁰⁶ Bethman-Hollweg quoted in *Why at War*, p. 91.

¹⁰⁷ Pearce Higgins, *Law of Nations*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Pearce Higgins, *Law of Nations*, p. 5-7.

chapter, he made reference to the way in which the outpourings of intellectuals on both sides failed to hit their mark and part of the reason for this was the lack of consensus on both sides with regard to the terms of the debate which they were creating. The lack of a common definition of the values and ideals held by both sides made a true understanding extremely difficult to achieve and certainly explains the bafflement with which many greeted the statements of their opponents.¹⁰⁹ In a situation in which former friends and colleagues appeared to have suddenly changed their values, such confusion, coupled with a sense of betrayal, is unsurprising, but we must remember that the extent of the change may not be as extreme as it appears – if the values are undefined, how can they be truly shared? In peacetime, there is no real emotional weight to such definitions, but in wartime, ideas become a vital currency.

Interestingly, we are presented with a slightly different point of view by W. Benett in his pamphlet *England's Mission* (1914). Though most British authors condemned Germany outright, Benett seemed to subscribe to a Social Darwinist theory of international affairs, and acknowledged the right of a state to fight for its own existence: 'In the present case, the recent victories of the Slavs threatened the Teutonic races... They are no more to be blamed for struggling for escape than a wasp is, when one of its legs has been entangled in a spider's web.' There was nothing unnatural about this reaction, in fact, it was an inevitable consequence of a growing population, and no one was to blame. However, Benett went on to state that this did not mean that Britain agreed that Germany had the right to ensure her own safety at the expense of France or Belgium. Furthermore, Britain's involvement meant that Britain's own existence was at stake.¹¹⁰ Thus, Benett saw the issues from a German point of view, drawing on ideas of an inevitable struggle for life. Rather than invalidating the British case, he used this approach to confirm it, reasoning that if Germany was fighting for her safety, her fight nevertheless put Britain at risk, and Germany could no more baulk at Britain's reaction than she expected Britain to baulk at hers.

¹⁰⁹ I am grateful to Professor John Horne for sharing his thoughts on this aspect of the academic propaganda effort. Christophe Prochasson expresses similar ideas in 'Intellectuals', p. 325.

¹¹⁰ W. Benett, *England's Mission*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. V (London, 1914), p. 10.

The German Chancellor's admission that his country was wrong to invade Belgium was a boon to the British cause, especially in light of later German backtracking which claimed that Belgian neutrality had already been violated by the Entente. H. E. Egerton, Beit Professor of Colonial History at Oxford, acknowledged the difficulty of finding the truth in a case in which one was so closely involved, but argued that 'when the case of our adversary can be decided by his own admissions, it would be the merest pedantry to affect an attitude of uncertainty.'¹¹¹ Sonnenschein viewed Bethman-Hollweg's confession as 'cynical frankness', and felt that the British position was in no way undermined by later arguments that if Germany had known about military agreements between Britain and Belgium, the statement need never have been made.¹¹² If anything, such arguments strengthened the British case, giving the impression that Germany was scrabbling for any way of justifying her actions. H.W.C. Davis, historian and editor of the Oxford Pamphlets, saw the Chancellor's speech as prudent, rather than cynical – certainly more so than those Germans who denied that Germany had a responsibility to maintain the Treaty of London. Nevertheless, for Davis, this did not excuse German behaviour in any way, for 'if promises can be repudiated at any moment on the unproved plea of necessity, international law is reduced to a sham.'¹¹³ Wilkinson too dismissed the idea that it was utterly necessary for Germany to invade Belgium – 'A general's plans are not cut up and dried in that way' – and pointed out that if Germany had not attacked Belgium, she also would not have had to fight the Belgian army.¹¹⁴

For the Germans, however, necessity was a valid excuse, and the fate of the Empire was in the balance. What was a 'scrap of paper' (as Bethmann-Hollweg had described the Treaty) when measured against the new Reich? As for the Chancellor's speech, Gustav Roethe admired it, seeing it as a perfect example of the German value for truth and honesty. Unlike the hypocrisy of the Entente, who were seeking out excuses to wage a long-planned war on Germany, Bethmann-Hollweg openly admitted that Germany's actions were wrong. 'Whether this confession was wise is immaterial; it was

¹¹¹ H.E. Egerton, *The War and the British Dominions*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. V (London, 1914), p. 22.

¹¹² Sonnenschein, *German Eyes*, p. 10.

¹¹³ H.W.C. Davis, *What Europe Owes to Belgium*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. IX (London, 1914), p. 10.

¹¹⁴ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, p. 28.

truthful, and therefore was in accordance with German requirements.¹¹⁵ This meant that the admission retained its value, according to Roethe, even after it became clear that the neutrality of Belgium was not true neutrality.

The Germans argued this latter point from two directions – claiming either that the French had already violated Belgian territory (in reality, the French Government had expressly forbidden the army to enter Belgium before the German invasion¹¹⁶), or that the military agreements between Britain and Belgium in case of an invasion invalidated the London Treaty, which did not allow Belgium to form military alliances with other states. Rohrbach argued both, stating that French officers were already in Liège when German troops attacked Belgium, and that English munitions had been discovered stockpiled in Maubeuge in 1913 – clearly, he felt, this was a sign that British troops had planned to coordinate with the French, and operate from Belgium.¹¹⁷ Under such circumstances, how could Belgium claim to be neutral? Hermann Oncken, a well-known historian and political writer, also claimed that Belgium had followed the great Powers for years under the appearance of neutrality,¹¹⁸ and Piloty supported this, saying that German leaders had found documents in Belgium proving that England had planned an attack on Germany through Belgium years before the War.¹¹⁹ For Oncken, these documents proved that Belgium had broken her own neutrality, and forfeited all requirements that other countries respect it. All Germany's actions did was to prevent the well-laid plans of the Entente from coming to fruition – and their bitterness over the German invasion simply showed that the speed of the German advance had undermined her enemies' calculations.¹²⁰

Their British counterparts strenuously denied these allegations. Pearce Higgins quoted an official report from the Belgian Minister of War which had been printed in *The Times* explicitly stating that no French troops were in Belgium before the 3rd of August, and no British soldiers before the 4th of

¹¹⁵ Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, p. 41.

¹¹⁶ See MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, p. 622.

¹¹⁷ Rohrbach, *Krieg und Politik*, p. 90. The same argument was made in *Die Wahrheit über den Krieg*. See *Verità*, pp. 37-8.

¹¹⁸ Oncken, *Weltkrieg*, p. 11.

¹¹⁹ Piloty, *Ursachen*, p. 36.

¹²⁰ Oncken, *Weltkrieg*, p. 19.

August 1914.¹²¹ Sanday dealt with accusations of Anglo-Belgian military plans, dismissing the ‘trivial and technical breaches of neutrality’ of which the Germans complained (presumably ideas that France had already broken the Treaty, either with troops or airships crossing the border) as something to be dealt with after the War. However, he saw the accusation that Britain and Belgium had drawn up plans to deal with a potential German invasion as more serious. He dealt purely in the hypothetical, never stating concretely that such plans existed – but it was in the hypothetical that the justification for the existence of such plans resided.¹²² Sanday pointed out the obvious – to establish a treaty guaranteeing the neutrality of a country without establishing theoretical plans to maintain that guarantee was entirely impractical, and Sanday summed this up with a slightly snide aside:

The whole transaction was purely hypothetical. Until the contemplated emergency arose, plans relating to it had no more value than so much blank paper... The Germans have certainly not shown themselves so scrupulous in such matters that they can rightly take offence if other States considered beforehand the contingency that they might on any particular point prove less scrupulous than they were bound to be.¹²³

He went on to reference Erich Marcks’ argument that there was no need for war between the two Powers, praising his pamphlet as one of the best of the German writings. Marcks based his contention on similarities of race and religion, culture, and shared political and military alliances, and blamed the War on cool calculation and a deliberate British misinterpretation of Germany’s wishes.¹²⁴ Sanday denied this explicitly, placing the blame squarely on the German attack on France and Belgium – if Germany had not violated their territory, no jealousy of Britain would have prompted her to

¹²¹ Pearce Higgins, *Law of Nations*, p. 11.

¹²² It seems uncertain that such plans ever existed, beyond the obvious assurances that Britain would uphold the 1839 Treaty. Hull notes that there were theoretical discussions in both France and Britain on the possibility of attacking Germany through Belgium, but that such plans remained theoretical. Certainly when France tentatively approached Belgium to sound out their opinion on French intervention, they were answered with a positive statement that Belgium would oppose such an intervention by force, seconded by Britain. See Hull, *Scrap*, p. 23, 30.

¹²³ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 39.

¹²⁴ Marcks *Wo Stehen Wir*, p. 14.

intervene.¹²⁵

This brings us to the weightier part of the German argument. Understandably, there seems to have been little written about the violation of Belgium, aside from the arguments already mentioned, though *Die Wahrheit über den Krieg* did devote a chapter to the fall of Louvain, presenting the common justification that German soldiers had been attacked by Belgian *franc-tireurs*, and retaliated only in self-defence.¹²⁶ One of the basic tenets of propaganda is not to respond to enemy accusations, and German propaganda has been criticised for its defensiveness in the past.¹²⁷ It seems that here, that principle may have been in play, for rather than dwelling on international treaties or justifying the dismissal of the ‘scrap of paper’, many authors counter-attacked, accusing Britain of using the invasion of Belgium to justify a long-planned war against Germany, or of similar actions themselves in the past.

Rohrbach turned to historical precedent (a tactic we see frequently in academic propaganda during the war), pointing to a British attack on the Danish fleet in 1807, despite the fact that Denmark was a neutral state in the Napoleonic Wars. Denmark refused an alliance with Britain, so Britain attacked Copenhagen and captured the entire Danish fleet to prevent Napoleon from using it against her. Rohrbach drew a parallel between this behaviour and that of Germany in 1914, presenting Britain’s motivations as far less pressing than those of Germany: ‘England acted in the interest of her safety against the threat of French attack. In the Belgian question, Germany acted not only in the interest of her safety, but in the interest of her existence.’¹²⁸ He also criticised British ‘hypocrisy’ in the way they approached the 1807 attack, highlighting the similarities in the rhetoric used by Britain then and in 1914.

Characteristically for the English, a wordy manifesto was sent to the Danish

¹²⁵ Marcks, *Wo Stehen Wir*, p. 13-4. *Sunday Meaning*, p. 113.

¹²⁶ See *Verità*, pp. 41-58

¹²⁷ Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*, pp. 48-9.

¹²⁸ Rohrbach, *Krieg*, p. 88.

people at the same time as the attack: the measures taken did not occur due to enmity towards Denmark, but were in the interests of peace and humanity, i.e. to take the opportunity of attacking England, the garden of freedom, from Napoleon the peace-breaker.¹²⁹

Rohrbach explained why Germany had no choice but to attack through Belgium, and then turned to the longstanding hostility of Britain. Rohrbach believed that, sooner or later, Britain would have joined the war against Germany and avoiding Belgium would simply have reduced the scope of the German offensive, with huge losses. Such an outcome, he pointed out, would be beneficial to Britain even if Germany won in France, as she could then intervene on the basis of the Entente agreements against a much weakened Germany.¹³⁰

Pearce Higgins also referred to the 1807 attack on Denmark, perhaps in response to the accusations against Britain. He openly acknowledged that the attack on Denmark was something for which Britain should be criticised, but denied that it was comparable with the attack on Belgium. The situation in Europe in 1807 had been vastly different to that in 1914, and Britain and France had already been at war for ten years. The information Britain had been acting on was not perfect, but was highly probable, and international law and principles of neutrality were not as firmly established in 1807. Even so, Pearce Higgins claimed the attack on Denmark was a blow to the reputation of Britain, and her actions were censured by other powers. In contrast, in 1914, Germany would have to prove that France intended to attack through Belgium – but France had already pledged to maintain Belgian neutrality, and Germany knew that Britain and Belgium would fight her if she broke her word. Additionally, Denmark had no protector in 1807, whereas Belgium did.¹³¹

Obviously, there are some issues with this line of reasoning. It is easy to see how a German could counter the idea that Britain's actions in 1807 were justifiable on the grounds that the commandeering

¹²⁹ Rohrbach, *Krieg*, p. 88.

¹³⁰ Rohrbach, *Krieg*, pp. 89-90.

¹³¹ Pearce Higgins, *Law of Nations*, pp. 8-11.

of the Danish fleet by Napoleon was highly likely with the probability that France would attack through Belgium – after all, Germany herself was planning to violate Belgian neutrality, so it was not impossible that France would do the same. Equally, Pearce Higgins’ final point is highly problematic for the British argument, implying as it did that if Belgium had no strong Power to come to her aid the invasion would have been acceptable to Britain. If we look to the case of Luxemburg, however, we see that this was in fact the case there, though it was argued that France was the country to which Luxemburg should primarily turn for protection.¹³² Nevertheless, this severely undermines the British argument to be fighting for the rights of small countries, and makes the German contention that Britain was only acting in her own interests more believable.

Brentano placed the blame for war firmly on the shoulders of Sir Edward Grey, claiming that his actions meant that there was no possibility but war for Britain, despite his protestations that Britain was not committed to anything, and was free to choose.¹³³ According to Brentano, the evidence was against Grey. Despite the fact that Britain was not formally bound to intervene on behalf of France or Russia, the arrangements were such that Britain would have no choice, she was bound in honour – and Grey knew that public opinion would be in his favour.¹³⁴ Brentano’s analysis was not inaccurate – the question of British freedom to act was a contentious one, as despite Grey’s repeated protestations that no formal agreement had been entered into, the nature of the Entente created a sense of expectation and obligation in both France and Britain that made it difficult for Britain to act with complete freedom.¹³⁵

Others considered it a foregone conclusion that England would have engaged in the conflict with Germany regardless of the issue of Belgian neutrality. As far as Oncken was concerned, Britain had already decided for war based on the economic threat Germany posed to Britain, and the invasion of

¹³² See *Why We Are At War*, p. 21.

¹³³ Brentano, *England*, p. 13.

¹³⁴ Brentano, *England*, pp. 13-4.

¹³⁵ See MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, pp. 590-1, 596

Belgium served as an excuse to hide the calculation which lay behind the British declaration of war.¹³⁶ For Paul Nathan, journalist and founder of the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden* ('Friendly Society of German Jews'), there was a parallel to be drawn between Serbia and Belgium – but not in the sense that the British used them. Rather than examples of small nations in need of protection, as exemplified by G. W. Prothero above, Nathan saw them as victims to the ambitions of the Great Powers – Russia's protection of Serbia had served as the spur for the War, just as Britain's role as protector of Belgium had drawn her in. However, Serbia had been sacrificed by Russia, and Belgium would suffer the same fate.¹³⁷ Both small nations, in Nathan's view, were just pawns in the Great Powers' game, and both would suffer despite the rhetoric of their self-appointed champions.

While Piloty felt the blame for the War rested primarily with French desires for *revanche*, he described the 'power-hungry, commercially envious, and two-faced' Britain, declaring war on Germany only for its own calculated advantage.¹³⁸ He argued that Britain had planned for war with Germany from 1904 (the date of the *Entente Cordiale* between France and Britain), but had envisaged an attack from Germany. When Germany was attacked on two sides – note the defensive presentation of the start of the War – Britain had to reformulate her plans. Assuming that Germany would win, she would then be able to use her fleet to attack Britain from the northern coasts of France. Equally, if Britain did not join the War, it was likely that France would move her fleet from the Mediterranean to protect against German attack – giving Britain two reasons to go to war.¹³⁹ However, Piloty explicitly stated that he was far more interested in the psychological reasons Britain joined the War. He argued that the fear that Germany might control northern France was not a sufficiently honourable reason for Britain, and neither was a vague agreement to support France. Similarly, there was even less reason to support Russia in a conflict in the Balkans. This explained Britain's initial attempts at mediation, he felt, but while pushing for war, her freedom of action, and the fact that Germany was not moving against her left Britain in an embarrassing position, and a pretext to intervene had to be found. The

¹³⁶ Oncken, *Weltkrieg*, p.18-9.

¹³⁷ Paul Nathan, *Die Enttäuschung unserer Gegner* (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1914), p. 10.

¹³⁸ Piloty, *Ursachen*, p. 20.

¹³⁹ Piloty, *Ursachen*, p34.

German march through Belgium was a perfect excuse, Piloty explained – Britain could lie to herself about her reasons for war, taking on the role of the protector of small nations, and argue that she was fighting not for herself, but for international law and principles.¹⁴⁰

Piloty's arguments are particularly interesting in the focus on the psychological reasons for Britain's declaration of war. The idea that Britain needed an 'honourable' motive for war was a common one, and much of the British rhetoric revolved around the nation's honour, and 'gentlemanly behaviour'.¹⁴¹ Honour as a concept was 'intangible yet very precious' to those who considered themselves gentlemen, an ideal worth fighting for. In the days before Britain declared war, many government figures felt that Britain's honour was at stake should she fail to aid France, particularly as the Anglo-French agreement on naval placements had left the French north and west coasts defenceless.¹⁴² The implications of such a theory for neutrals are also clear – if, as Piloty said, Britain was lying to herself, or rather, British leaders were lying to their people, about the reasons for war, what was to say that they were also not lying to neutral powers about the causes of the War?

Defending Britain's actions on precisely this point, Sonnenschein argued that 'honour and self-interest are happily not always inconsistent with one another.' Though he professed that Britain certainly felt strongly about the rights of small countries, he admitted that Britain did not join the War for Belgium alone.¹⁴³ Arguing that the German contention that Britain could have persuaded France to stay neutral suggested that Britain had more influence than she actually held, he claimed that 'The real fact is that Germany by her own acts has ringed herself around with enemies.'¹⁴⁴ British policy, he said, had been designed to protect the British Empire, not 'to strangle Germany, as the Germans think or pretend to think'. The invasion of Belgium was the final straw in the decision for British intervention - she had a

¹⁴⁰ Piloty, *Ursachen*, p. 35-6.

¹⁴¹ Gwatkin's response to the Swedish commenter's dismissal of the Edith Cavell case is a wonderful example of this: the Germans were within their rights to execute her, 'and all that can be said is that women are not executed for that offence in civilized countries'. Gwatkin, *England's Case*, p. 3.

¹⁴² MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, p. 253, 624.

¹⁴³ Sonnenschein, *German Eyes*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁴ Sonnenschein, *German Eyes*, pp. 6-7.

duty to Belgium, to France and Russia, and also to herself, and Sonnenschein did not think that there was anything blameworthy in this admission:

I see nothing unworthy in self-preservation ... self-preservation may also be a duty to others. Great Britain is responsible for a Greater Britain – responsible to the world and to history. Self-sacrifice is not necessarily a virtue; it may mean the betrayal of a great cause.¹⁴⁵

The price for non-intervention, according to Sonnenschein, would have been the loss of British supremacy at sea, and the degradation of Britain.

Rohrbach touched on this aspect of British policy in his consideration of British motives. He claimed that ‘England had no intention of respecting the neutrality of Belgium, so long as the violation of the guarantee of neutrality was in the interest of the military prostration of Germany,’¹⁴⁶ and that Germany’s security was threatened as a result. Britain’s objection to the German invasion, in Rohrbach’s view was less about the violation of international treaties, and more to do with the British desire to keep Belgium from the control of a strong continental power – a tradition in English politics dating back to the 17th Century. Britain’s real concern was that if the Germans occupied Belgium, they would not leave, and would then control the coast opposite her own, threatening Britain commercially – a threat Britain would not allow.¹⁴⁷ Thus, Rohrbach argued, it was not concern for Belgian independence which motivated Britain, but pure self-interest. Given that Germany’s justification was based on her own survival, it is not surprising that Rohrbach does not mention the military concern which would affect Britain if Germany controlled Belgium – a concern which Sonnenschein and Murray articulated in their assertion that Germany would use France and Belgium as a stepping stone to Britain.

¹⁴⁵ Sonnenschein, *Idols*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴⁶ Rohrbach, *Krieg*, p. 91.

¹⁴⁷ Rohrbach, *Krieg*, p. 92.

The historian Arnold Oskar Meyer took an unusually balanced approach to the question of British agency, drawing a distinction between responsibility for the War and desire for war. Focusing on an examination of Anglo-German relations before the War, he approached this in as scholarly a manner as possible, acknowledging the paucity of source material, and basing his search for truth on British Foreign Policy before the War, the British Blue Book, and on the character of the Cabinet and Parliament of 1914.¹⁴⁸ Examining the reconciliations of Britain with France and Russia, the tensions surrounding the naval race, and the two Moroccan Crises, he concluded that Britain certainly took steps which led to war, but did not necessarily plan to bring it about. The evidence was too uncertain. With regards to the idea that Grey was creating alliances behind the scenes, he pointed out that while there was no evidence to disprove it, there was also no evidence to prove it, and it went against previous British policy which aimed at freedom of action. He firmly believed that war with Germany was not in Britain's best interests, and that Britain knew this; as a result, he reasoned that Britain had not created alliances for the purposes of war, but to place herself in a strong diplomatic position.¹⁴⁹

Nevertheless, he still felt that Britain bore a measure of the blame for the outbreak of war. Though many assumed that Britain could have halted the march to war by decisive action in Paris and St. Petersburg, Meyer argued that Britain had lost control of the leadership of the Entente, and had placed herself in a vulnerable position by using the hostility of Russia and France against Germany for her own ends. Mirroring the accusations of the Oxford History Faculty that Germany's actions in July 1914 were either blind or stupid, Meyer condemned the British policy which he said relied on either an over-estimation of her own diplomatic abilities to avoid a European conflagration, or a short-sighted view which did not think that continental war would affect the island nation.¹⁵⁰ From at least 1911, according to Meyer, Britain knew that Germany had no aggressive intentions towards her, and shared her goal of maintaining peace. Therefore, she had 'absolutely no excuse for not turning away in time from a route which offered an incomparable diplomatic support from the power of the alliance [between France and Russia], but simultaneously led directly and clearly to the abyss of world war. It

¹⁴⁸ This is explicitly explained before he begins to present his arguments. Meyer, *Schuld*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴⁹ Meyer, *Schuld*, pp. 6-18.

¹⁵⁰ Meyer, *Schuld*, pp. 20-1.

was a policy of gigantic frivolity.’¹⁵¹ Though Meyer believed that Britain did not want war, he felt that her statesmen lacked a true sense of the consequences of their actions, pursuing a policy which endangered peace in order to strengthen Britain’s position – actions which only a statesman lacking in feelings of responsibility would take. Above all, he argued, Britain was responsible for the Belgian response to the German ultimatum, as the offer of British aid decided the Belgian resistance.¹⁵²

On the other hand, Gilbert Murray contended that remaining neutral was just as monumental a decision as declaring war, particularly for a world power, and like Sonnenschein, he felt that a German presence in Belgium or Northern France was a direct danger to Britain, regardless of issues of honour.¹⁵³ In common with Sonnenschein, Murray believed that honour and self-interest were compatible, and both were at play in Britain’s decision for war in August 1914, though his presentation of the circumstances in which Germany and Britain found themselves was a little more black and white than he himself declared the situation to be.¹⁵⁴ His explanation was given in the form of a dialogue, in which Germany appeared cold-minded and arrogant, airily dismissing treaty obligations before threatening Britain, should she ‘be so insane as to plunge your whole Empire into danger for the sake of “a scrap of paper”.’ Britain’s response, in Murray’s version, was a tersely heroic ‘Evacuate Belgium within twelve hours or we fight you.’ He presented the case to Britain in a simple dialectic – we promised to protect Belgium, Belgium needs protecting – which was nevertheless highly emotive: ‘will you keep your word at a gigantic cost, or will you break it at the bidding of Germany?’ In a completely contradictory vein, he continued ‘For my own part, weighing the whole question soberly and without undue passion, I feel that in this case I would rather die than submit.’¹⁵⁵ This was hardly a sober conclusion to his reasoning!

Sanday turned to the ‘infamous proposals’ which Germany made in the attempt to secure British neutrality, offering to maintain the territorial integrity of mainland France (not her colonies), if Britain

¹⁵¹ Meyer, *Schuld*, p.22.

¹⁵² Meyer, *Schuld*, pp. 21-23.

¹⁵³ Murray, *How*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁴ Murray, *How*, p22.

¹⁵⁵ Murray, *How*, p. 15.

would remain neutral.¹⁵⁶ Though admitting that Britain might have refrained from joining the War had Germany promised to respect Belgian neutrality and avoid attacking the French coast, he argued that Germany had no right to ask for British neutrality in exchange for maintaining Belgium, as Germany had already promised to do so herself and would be merely keeping her own word. Nevertheless, even if such a promise had been made, and Britain was morally in the right to keep aloof, Sanday felt that ‘we should never have been satisfied that we had done all that we ought. If in the end France had been crushed, Europe would have cried shame upon us, and we should have cried shame upon ourselves.’¹⁵⁷ However, he denied any British plan against Germany before the War. Acknowledging the suddenness with which the War began, he suggested (conciliatorily) that perhaps the German people had not had an opportunity to examine the diplomatic negotiations which had clouded the march to war. Given this obscurity, Sanday felt, it was natural for Germans to assume that Britain had joined a war which was ostensibly none of her business out of spite. But though Britain ‘had no grudge against Germany on account of which we should ever have thought of going to war’, she could not trust German intentions, and could not stand by while she attacked another power.¹⁵⁸

As we have seen, a great deal of attention was given to establishing the cause of the War. This was a vital question for both sides, especially in the attempt to win neutral support, and was particularly important in Britain, where many had initially opposed involvement in a continental conflict. Though there was no unified line of argument on either side, with intellectuals disagreeing as to the degree of involvement of certain Powers, and ideas of the real motivations behind the Crisis, there was nevertheless an overarching consonance of purpose. Both sides were endeavouring to prove that they had been attacked, they had had no choice, and were therefore not to blame for the horror which had been unleashed. The assassination of Franz Ferdinand was far enough removed from both Britain and Germany that it became an easy peg on which to hang the immediate cause of the War – Germany could claim it was a direct attack on Austria-Hungary, while Britain could call the response of the

¹⁵⁶ See MacMillan, *Ended Peace*, p. 607.

¹⁵⁷ Sanday, *Meaning of War*, pp. 37-8. Germany did offer not to attack the northern French coast in exchange for British neutrality, but maintained the necessity of the march through Belgium. See *Verità*, p. 18.

¹⁵⁸ Sanday, *Meaning of War*, pp. 57-8.

Central Powers an overreaction. Both also used the confusion of the July Crisis in their favour, using their actions as ‘proof’ that they were not at fault. Their differences become clear in the nature of the evidence they used to support their claims. While the Germans could assert that they were trying to localise the conflict, and that Russia would not cooperate, the lack of documentary proof acted against them, as Beck’s conclusions showed. The British use of published government reports not only made a stronger case, but also supported the intellectuals’ claim to scholarly impartiality against an emotional patriotism.

Lacking solid evidence for their conclusions with regard to the July Crisis, the German argument rested instead on the deeper reasons for the War, on ideas of an Entente plot to destroy Germany, of encirclement and jealousy of a new and rising power. As the War continued, attention became more and more focused on these deeper causes of the conflict and on the values for which each side was fighting. As we shall see in the next chapters, the result was a shift in the content of intellectual propaganda to an exploration of the idea of an inevitable clash of cultures, the outcome of which was to determine the future of Europe.

Gut Questions and Ideal Goals

Every great war is ruled by an intellectual catchphrase, which should bestow upon it inner authority and moral consecration in the eyes of the belligerents. This... shows that the gut questions, ultimately, are not shaped by the determining factors of commercial life, and that people, when they decide to go to war with one another, always require an idea, an ideal goal to inspire them to the highest degree of self-sacrifice which every war demands. Let the proclaimed word be true or not – more important is the fact that such a word is always proclaimed.

-N. Goldmann, 1915¹

The previous chapter explored the arguments surrounding the culpability for war from a pragmatic perspective, focusing, as many of the early pamphlets did, on considerations of cause and effect – the actions or failure to act of various national agents, and the consequences which implied that they were to blame for the War. However, as P. E. Matheson pointed out in an address given at University College, Nottingham in May 1915, many in the belligerent nations believed that the War could not be reduced to such simple terms – whatever the immediate causes, it was seen as fundamentally a war of principles.² This chapter and the next seek to examine these ideas, the ‘deeper causes of the war’, as Sanday phrased it, investigating the concept of an inevitable clash of values, between ‘culture’ and ‘Kultur’. Such ideas were present from the early stages of the War, particularly following the invasion of Belgium and the rumours circulating about the actions of the German soldiers, but they became a dominant narrative in pamphlets once the immediate shock surrounding the outbreak of war had subsided, and the War settled into its static phase. This is an obvious route for such propaganda to take – when the excitement of the first stages of the War had settled, and bulletins from the Front were no longer full of stirring tales of pitched battles and rapid troop movements, it was natural for authors to seek a more profound meaning for the War, trying to engage readers and maintain morale

¹ N. Goldmann, *Der Geist des Militarismus*, ‘Der Deutsche Krieg’ Series, No. 52 (Berlin, 1915), p. 7.

² P. E. Matheson, *National Ideals*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. XIX (London, 1915), p. 3.

with the consolation that it served a higher purpose.

Such issues, as we shall see in this and the next chapter, moved beyond questions of fact and on to interpretation, extrapolating from events to intentions and drawing a sharp line between their own values and those of their opponents. These debates contributed to the ‘totalizing logic’ of the War, and led in many cases to black-and-white thinking which made compromise suspect, if not impossible to conceive of during the War.³ Implicit values and codes of behaviour were made explicit,⁴ and in a community which had assumed the fundamental agreement on such values and behavioural codes, the revelation of disparity became a deep gulf between opposing cultures. Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker have suggested that ‘the entire culture of war may rest on a kind of narcissism, turning minor distinctions into major areas of contention, with symbolic elements seen as all the more important because the real differences are insignificant.’⁵ Rather than being a kind of narcissism, these ‘symbolic elements’ were important not only because they revealed the lacuna between opposing sides, but also because they became a way to explain how a people formerly seen as comrades and kin could hold such different values. This debate, was not, of course, confined to Germany and Britain – the French philosopher Henri Bergson had declared the War to be one of civilization versus barbarism as early as 8th August 1914, French texts were translated and distributed in Britain and vice versa, and, as Chapter Seven shows, the German ‘ideas of 1914’ were set in direct opposition to the values of the French Revolution.⁶ However, this thesis is confined to the German and British arguments, and indeed, for Germany, the ‘heaviest polemical weapons were directed against the English’, as the greatest threat to German society and values, while attitudes to France were less fraught by a sense of betrayal, and were marked by condescension or a kind of ‘benevolent sympathy’ for a nation valiantly struggling against inevitable decline as a Great Power.⁷

³ Flasch, *Mobilmachung*, p. 270; Audoin-Rouzeau & Becker, *Understanding*, p. 138. For the ‘totalizing logic’ of the War, see Horne, *Mobilizing*, pp. 3-4

⁴ Pennell, *Kingdom United*, p. 57

⁵ Audoin-Rouzeau & Becker, *Understanding*, p. 150.

⁶ Irish, *Universities*, p. 24. Bergson’s own *The Meaning of the War* was published in Britain in translation in May 1915. Martha Hanna’s *Mobilization of Intellect* explores the French debate on civilization and culture in detail, particularly the question of ‘two Germanies’ – See Hanna, *Mobilization*, Chapters 3 and 4.

⁷ See Ringer, *Mandarins*, pp. 185-6; Stibbe, *Anglophobia*, pp. 16-7.

The essays examined here, which were predominantly published in late 1914 and early 1915, explored the different values and cultures of the two sides, differentiating between their own, progressive and humanitarian, and that of their opponents, which was presented as barbaric and selfish. While British authors condemned German *Realpolitik*, lamenting the loss of the old, philosophical Germany, content with her beer and her poetry, and gave dire warnings as to the future of Europe crushed under the boots of Prussian soldiers, their German counterparts attacked British commercialism and high-handed ideas of empire, and denounced the fears of a once-strong nation losing her grip on the current of the times. As we will see, however, there is a striking similarity to be found in the cases presented by both sides: British hand-wringing over German militarism was countered by German arguments against British supremacy at sea; German protests against the ‘barbarity’ of employing colonial troops were answered with the evidence of German actions in Belgium and northern France. Many of these arguments seemed fuelled by hatred, fear, or a combination of the two, and indeed, many focused on the ‘do or die’ aspect of the conflict, arguing that the War was not a war for Serbia, Belgium or Austria-Hungary, but for the very existence of Germany or Britain and explained how defeat would lead to annihilation.

As we saw in the last chapter, the idea of a German-occupied Belgium was a cause of disquiet for a number of British authors, and it was closely linked to the belief that if Germany won the war on the continent, Britain would be the next target. Spenser Wilkinson thought that a victorious Germany would turn against Britain eventually, whether alone or with the aid of the defeated armies of Europe: ‘if Germany wins, England will have ceased to be free and independent’. Interestingly, he also showed an awareness of the German point of view, acknowledging that the Germans too felt that their future was at stake, but he made a common distinction between the German people, and their leaders who were planning the ruin of British freedom.⁸ On the German side, Robert Piloty, at least, was aware of such concerns, and dismissed them. He argued that Britain’s assumption that Germany would use a defeated France as a base from which to launch a naval attack provided Britain with a good reason to go to war, but was highly unlikely to actually occur – Germany had been attacked on

⁸ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, p. 31, 52.

both sides, and had enough to contend with in facing France and Russia.⁹ Gilbert Murray, however, presented the British attitude more pithily, declaring ‘we are fighting for our national life, for our ideals of freedom and honest government and fair dealing between nations’, and that Britain’s only aim was ‘to be safe from the recurrence of this present horror’.¹⁰

Murray’s concern for freedom and fair dealing amongst nations was shared by the Oxford History Faculty, for whom such concerns were inextricably linked with Britain’s fate. German militarism saw national greatness as destruction of others, they claimed, and Germany viewed any Power that could claim equal status with her as an enemy. For her own sake, as well as for her duty to other nations, Britain could not let Germany crush any other country.¹¹ E.A. Sonnenschein concurred, arguing that those who viewed the War as a foreign campaign had failed to understand its true nature. Prussia, he claimed, intended to rule the world, and Britain’s independence and supremacy at sea were at stake. The fact that the War was not being waged on British soil did not mean it was not a war to defend the nation, and to ‘fail to realize that at the present moment our frontier is in Flanders shows a lamentable lack of intelligence.’¹²

In *All for Germany*, his anonymous parody of Voltaire’s *Candide*, the political scientist Ernest Barker, presented his interpretation of the German attitude towards this question. Barker was obviously aware of how German writers were approaching these issues, though the statements of Dr. Pangloss, the character representing the German point of view, were deliberately and unambiguously biased, showing Barker’s own dismissal of the German case: ‘[England] has thrown her world-power in the scale against us; and now we know that either we must go to ruin to please England, or stride to our world-power over the world-power of England.’¹³

⁹ Piloty, *Ursachen*, p. 34.

¹⁰ Murray, *Thoughts*, p. 9-10.

¹¹ *Why At War*, pp. 120-2.

¹² Sonnenschein, *Idols*, p. 6.

¹³ Anon., *All for Germany. Or the World’s Respect Well Lost. Being a Dialogue, in the satyrick manner, between Dr. Pangloss and M. Candide*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. VIII (London, 1914), pp. 18-9.

This was certainly reflective of German attitudes, but was taken to an extreme. Just as many British authors argued that if Britain had not intervened in the War, Germany would attack her next, Rohrbach declared that the Entente would come for Germany after Austria-Hungary had been crushed. The French would still want revenge for the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, he reasoned, and the British would feel just as threatened by German economic development in the future. If Germany held back now, she was just as certain to be attacked – but would have lost her ally, and would face a stronger Russia.¹⁴ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff took up the same theme, echoing Sonnenschein and Murray in his declaration that the War of 1914 was not a war for power, but for the ‘existence or otherwise of our Empire and our well-being.’¹⁵ For Roethe too, it was Britain who was trying to crush Germany. He denied that Germany was seeking wealth or power, claiming that she fought for ‘our political, yes, our spiritual independence, for our whole inner and outer existence.’ Britain, he said, was trying to return Germany to her former state, reducing her to the unthreatening collection of states she was before unification. But Germany would resist, even if she lost the War, and would remember who her true enemy was until Britain recognised her as an equal power in world affairs.¹⁶ The reference to an older Germany was a common one, which recurred frequently in British writings dealing with German culpability for the War, so it is clear that Roethe was also familiar with this side of the British argument – and, like many of his fellows, dismissed it as a desire to eliminate the competition in international politics.

Erich Marcks presented the longer view, declaring that ‘for the last half-century, we have lived in a silent, daily war.’ The war of 1866 had established the German state, he went on, that of 1870 established a new European Power, and the war of 1914 would establish a new world Power. As a result, the War was indeed a question of life or death for Germany, of ‘blooming or withering’. This was the true test of the new nation, and would determine her position in the world. If she were crushed, so too would be her economy, culture, and the entire soul of Germany – the *Geist* which

¹⁴ Rohrbach, *Warum*, pp. 21-2.

¹⁵ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, ‘In den zweiten Kriegswinter’, *Reden aus der Kriegszeit*, Vol. IV (Berlin, 1915), p. 33.

¹⁶ Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, pp. 29-30.

formed the foundation of the ideals discussed in the next chapter.¹⁷ Just as Piloty acknowledged British fears, Marcks too recognised that the stakes were high for Britain, stating that her commitment to the War was higher than Germany had expected (perhaps a reference to hopes that Britain could be persuaded to remain neutral during the July Crisis). However, Marcks felt that Britain's position was not admirable but short-sighted, she had not considered her own interests before declaring war.¹⁸ While many in Britain might argue that this was a point in Britain's favour, Marcks felt it was a decision made in cold enmity and nothing more.

Such interests were paramount for Germany, and Ernst Troeltsch argued that a democratised state like Germany only went to war for a national purpose – what he described as a *Volkskrieg* ('People's War'), fought for 'pressing, evident and principled reasons'. This, of course, meant that such wars would only be fought for self-defence and the salvation of the nation – apart from the aggressive wars, which were waged to 'save' a brother-country from a foreign state, for oppressed nationalities, or to win back old claims. He failed to recognise that this essentially gave any state a loophole in justifying a war of aggression – or at the least, did not acknowledge it in his pamphlet. This war was a war to ensure Germany's political future, he claimed, and the Entente (apart, perhaps, from France) had no justifiable reason for their involvement. He linked the British belief that the outcome of the War would affect the existence of Britain to the *Kulturkrieg* – the 'culture war' which pitched 'Western' culture (that of Britain and France), against that of Germany. For Troeltsch, the *Kulturkrieg* was the true fuel of the war between the two nations.¹⁹

This brings us to the main focus of this chapter and that which follows: the idea of the War as a clash of civilizations, the decadent West versus the German rising star, or of democratic Britain against a militarist autocracy. Germans specifically set their culture apart from that of France and Britain, to whom they referred as 'Western' powers, viewing them as decadent and degenerate, jealous of the new German state. Culture and civilization were concepts which were closely entwined with one

¹⁷ Marcks, *Wo stehen Wir?*, p. 10

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 14.

¹⁹ Troeltsch, *Kulturkrieg*, pp. 12-3, 16, 22-3.

another, as each country tangled the strands of who they were and what they stood for with the War and the motives of their opponents. Similarly entwined were the arguments of those who stood on opposite sides of No Man's Land, their accusations and justifications mirroring each other as the debate surrounding the outbreak of war developed into a deeper discussion about the nature of each state and the ways in which they had interacted in the past and would in the future.

A frequent theme found in British pamphlets was the idea of two Germanies – a peaceful, philosophic, friendly people, and an aggressive, expansionist military caste; an idea which was largely supported by liberals, who sought to democratize Germany, and which allowed British authors to condemn German actions but not the people as a whole.²⁰ It was a commonplace in progressive ideology to draw a distinction between the people, who were always good, and their government, who could be bad,²¹ but as we shall see, such divisions could be eroded as the War continued. Sonnenschein's comments were typical of this early distinction, describing the 'good old Germany' which had been turned into a nation of soldiers. He felt that the War had exposed a new side of German character, a side so different it was 'hard to believe in a better Germany as having once existed.'²² Here we see an attempt to divide the Germany many knew from the policies she followed, an attempt to reconcile personal feelings of solidarity and kinship with the Germany who had wantonly attacked Belgium and France.

Gilbert Murray gave voice to the dichotomy faced by many in Britain in *Thoughts on the War* (1914), stating that though they might hate the German government, German diplomacy, and German militarist ambition; he knew very few people who hated the German people. He drew a sharp line between those in power and the general population who had been 'trebly deceived: deceived by their Government, deceived by their own idolatry, deceived by their sheer terror'. For Murray, the Germans were fighting because they believed their culture, what he called 'that idol of blood and clay and true

²⁰ Hoeres, *Philosophen*, p. 131, 156. The 'two Germanies' idea had also been present in France following the 1870 Franco-Prussian War – see Hanna, *Mobilization*, pp. 9-10.

²¹ Kennedy, *Antagonism*, p. 63.

²² Sonnenschein, *Idols*, pp.15-6.

gold', was at stake.²³ His pamphlet was reprinted from the October 1914 edition of *The Hibbert Journal*, and was written sometime between the end of August and September 1914, so Murray's statements were clearly a reflection of his feelings in the early stages of the War. He recognised that it might be difficult to maintain a distinction between Germany and the German people as the War continued. Despite the tales of horror which had reached Britain since he started his pamphlet (whether he wrote it over a few weeks or made later revisions is unclear), he continued to advocate forbearance, claiming that the Germans were 'naturally fine and good people. And they will wake from their evil dream', underlining the idea that the peace-loving Germany of old had been tricked into the War, and would re-emerge in due course.²⁴

In a pamphlet on the creation of the German Empire, C.R.L. Fletcher emphatically agreed. 'Nothing,' he said, 'shall persuade me to believe that the German people as a whole... wanted this war. But I fear that they have been blown up by those governing classes into a sort of madness which has made them believe that they wanted it.' He blamed a Press controlled by the Government, which, in his opinion, had convinced the populace that Germany was indeed under attack.²⁵ Roy Norton, presented a similar view, dismissing the idea that either the German people or a military caste could be blamed for the War, and stated that Wilhelm II was entirely in control of his Government and his advisors: 'It is his individual will alone that rules, and it is his individual will alone that is responsible for whatever of good or misfortune that may happen.'²⁶

For Sanday, the distinction between Government and people was not quite so easily defined. In *The Deeper Causes of the War* (1914), he declared his belief that the War had come about as a result of a Prussian military policy which did not accord with the wishes of a large part of the German nation,

²³ Murray, *Thoughts*, pp.7-8.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁵ Fletcher, *Made*, pp. 3-4.

²⁶ Roy Norton, *The Man of Peace*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. X (London 1914), pp. 4-5. Norton has no entry in the DNB. Clark has demonstrated that the idea of the Kaiser's omnipotence was untrue – see Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, p. 168.

who were, he felt, content to live in peace.²⁷ Yet in *The Meaning of the War for Germany and Great Britain*, published the following year, his interpretation of the situation was more complex. Though not focusing explicitly on the idea of two Germanies, his argument that Government and people were not easily separated highlights the difficulty created by this concept for many. Sanday pointed out that the German government was closely linked with the nation as a result of the strong bureaucracy in Germany, and both influenced and was influenced by the nation. Added to this, the nation itself was divided into different factions, all with different aims and ideals. As a result, there were other influences at play in German policy.²⁸ Nevertheless, Sanday felt that there was a definite distinction to be made between ‘that side or aspect of Germany which we are fighting and the German people in its essence and as a whole’, and was proud of the fact that the British did separate the militarist character from those who consented to war, but were otherwise innocent.²⁹ However, he went on to contradict the idea of a ‘bad’ military Germany and a ‘good’ peace-loving Germany, stating that ‘I know that the two conceptions run subtly into each other. I know that Germany as a whole is consciously and deliberately following the lead given to it.’ He felt that Germany was a ‘noble nation for a time *gone wrong*’.³⁰ Again, we see an attempt to delineate between a Germany known and admired, and the Germany which Britain was facing in France, and Sanday’s evident difficulty in drawing a satisfactory distinction shows us how dear the concept of a second, peace-loving Germany was to many academics who found it difficult to reconcile the Germany they had experienced with the evidence with which the War presented them. As we saw in Chapter Three, however, arguments that Germany had been misled or had lost her way were often seen in Germany as condescending, and indignantly refuted.

Fletcher used the narrative of two Germanies in a different way – rather than a military caste and a peaceful people, he separated Germany from Prussia, describing Germany as ‘eminently peaceful, frugal and learned – till 1870’, when Prussia came to dominate. His description of Prussia is that of a

²⁷ Sanday, *Deeper Causes*, p. 5.

²⁸ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 22-3.

²⁹ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 50-1.

³⁰ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 109.

barbaric state:

Culture in the German (or in any other) sense they had absolutely none, and desired none; freedom they hated; parliamentary government they despised; riches alone, and principally the riches of other people, they coveted. Their ideals were, and remain, those of the days of Frederick the Great, the ideals of conquest, of war for its own sake, the ideals of 'blood and steel.'³¹

Though admitting that such a spirit could be valuable to a nation in certain circumstances, Fletcher saw no redeeming qualities in Prussian values, simply a desire for conquest and gain.

On the other hand, Walter Raleigh denied absolutely the idea that there was a peaceful section of Germany, or that Prussia had imposed herself on the other states. As far as he was concerned the military values of Germany was 'virtually the creed of all Germany.' Though Prussia had invented it, the other states had accepted it willingly, as it offered them a position of power on the world stage: 'The Prussian doctrine has paid the Germans handsomely; it has given them their place in the world. When it ceases to pay them, and not till then, they will reconsider it.'³²

The representation of Prussia as a bastion of militarism and a danger to liberal ideals was not new, and had been discussed as far back as 1872.³³ Militarism as a concept had been a contentious topic in the years before the War, and was long used within Germany as an indictment of the Government by its critics, especially on the Left, from the 1860s. With the advent of the War, as we shall see, 'sections of the Wilhelmine establishment attempted to take over the concept and set it alongside patriotism and national defence as a true teutonic [sic] virtue.'³⁴ Wallace suggests that the characterisation of Prussia as an alien force in Germany was not only an attempt to reconcile conceptions of Germany as a

³¹ Fletcher, *Made*, p.22.

³² Raleigh, *Might*, p.3.

³³ Mommsen, *Reappraisal*, p. 15.

³⁴ Nicholas Stargardt, *The German Idea of Militarism* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 9.

civilized and progressive state with reports of actions in Belgium, but was also connected to ideas of revenge – ‘[i]t was clearly easier to consider reprisals against Germany if it could be separated off from the rest of Europe.’³⁵ While this seems to be borne out in the pamphlets, with the idea of a changed or misguided Germany functioning as a way to resolve the conflict between the high opinion once held of Germany and her conduct in the War, the focus of Wallace’s analysis on the depiction of Prussia as a barbaric, ‘Slavic’ force is problematic. Certainly, there were occasions on which Prussia was considered Slavic, but as Britain was allied with the protector of the Slavic race, any portrayal of Germany as influenced by Slavic ideals could create confusion and most British authors were wary of denouncing Russian principles, preferring to depict her as a nation which was rapidly progressing. As a result, we should view the attempt to divide Germany from Europe primarily as a division based on philosophy and action rather than on racial antecedents.

The Germans were clearly aware of the idea of two Germanies, and had little sympathy with it – it was denounced in the ‘Manifesto of the 93’ and in pamphlets. Troeltsch entirely disagreed with the distinction suggested by Fletcher, denouncing the idea of the ‘Prussianization’ of a peaceful Germany. He recognised that this idea was an attempt to find a middle ground ‘between a just recognition of German intellect [Geist] and the radical denunciation and destruction of the German Empire, to find an agreement between earlier friendly judgements and the famous world-influence of German scholarship on the one hand, and the radical war of attrition on the other...’, acknowledging the attempt to reconcile the two sides. Yet Troeltsch did not empathise with those making the attempt, admitting that it was sincerely meant, but ascribing it to an underlying desire to return Germany to her former insignificant position in European politics. In Troeltsch’s view, the ‘Prussian spirit’ was seen as a negative influence on Germany because it was considered undemocratic, but it was the Prussian spirit which led to unification, a strong world position and the growth of German power at sea – the factors which threatened Germany’s opponents.³⁶ Thus, while acknowledging the change in German politics and values, he saw the ‘Prussian spirit’ as intrinsically linked with the new Germany rather

³⁵ Wallace, *War*, p. 184.

³⁶ Troeltsch, *Kulturkrieg*, pp. 28-30.

than a separate influence, and viewed his opponents' arguments as inspired by jealousy, fear and misunderstanding.

The Nobel Prize-winning philosopher Rudolf Eucken also admitted that Germany had changed, and traced it to Prussia's defeat in the Napoleonic Wars of the early 19th Century. Prior to this, he said, Germany had focused on intellectual endeavours, devoting herself to the world of the mind. But as Germany realised that her philosophic pursuits did not protect her from attack, she began to turn towards the practical – industry, science and economics. Eucken claimed that Germany's previous lack of ambition was to the advantage of her opponents, who now accused Germany of abandoning her principles. For Eucken, there was no incompatibility between philosophy and technology in the German mind, it was simply another, older side of the German character re-emerging – the warrior Germany of the Roman period, the German chivalric orders and Hanse League, the inventors of the 17th Century. He dismissed the idea that Germany had lost her way, arguing that she had instead found it again.³⁷

The emphasis on militarism in the idea of a Germany who had lost her way leads us to an important issue in the war of ideas, and a key argument for the British propaganda effort. The War was loudly declared to be a 'war against war', a final struggle to overthrow the evils of the glorification of violence and a reliance on force. It was presented to the British nation and to neutrals as a war to prove that a strong army did not, and should not, supersede international law or the rights of states, and Germany was depicted as the main proponent of the idea that 'might was right'. As a result, there was a strong emphasis in many academic pamphlets on German militarist ideals, and on the glorification of the military in Germany as something to be condemned. Unsurprisingly, this was greeted with outrage in Germany, and German academics defended their army as the bulwark of the State, a unifying body and an essential part of national life.

³⁷ Rudolf Eucken, *Die Weltgeschichtliche Bedeutung des deutschen Geistes*, 'Der deutsche Krieg' Series, No. 8 (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1914), pp. 6-9.

Ernest Barker's pamphlet, *Nietzsche and Treitschke. The Worship of Power in Modern Germany* (1914), is perhaps a good place to start, combining as it does both the idea of two Germanies and what he viewed as the increasingly militarist nature of German ideology. For Barker, ever since the wars which unified the German nation, German academics had fallen 'more and more under the glamour of the sword'. Many British authors attributed a large part of this perceived change to the influence of the theories of the philosopher Nietzsche and the extreme nationalist historian Treitschke, and Barker was no exception, citing Treitschke's maxim that war was the supreme function of the state as the impetus behind Germany's aggressive policies and increasing nationalist fervour. This, he felt, posed an incomparable danger to Europe, as it encouraged Germany to turn to war as the means of 'preserving' her culture, and subordinated that culture to the dictates of might.³⁸

Nietzsche and Treitschke will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, but we should explore the eminent philosopher J.H. Muirhead's examination of the militarist aspect of these ideas here. Denouncing the association of State and Force, he decried the manner in which such theories had descended 'to even a lower grade of crudity' in the hands of militarist writers. He spoke in particular of von Bernhardi, whose book *Germany and the Next War* was viewed in Britain as an inspiration for the military ideals which had led to the War, despite a number of writers, both British and German, attesting to Bernhardi's unpopularity in Germany. Certainly when he was writing *Germany and the Next War*, Bernhardi was out of favour with the German General Staff, and von Moltke, the Chief of General Staff called him 'a perfect dreamer'.³⁹ To Muirhead, popularity was irrelevant: '[Bernhardi's] books are written for the military class, and you would no more expect to find them on the bookshelves or drawing-room tables of the ordinary educated man than you would expect Hegel's *Logic* or *Philosophy of Right*. The point is that these ideas have been taken up by able specialists and made by them the philosophical background of military instruction.'⁴⁰ The underlying message of his analysis was that such a militarist theory, relying on force to achieve its aims, was alien to the land of

³⁸ Ernest Barker, *Nietzsche and Treitschke. The Worship of Power in Modern Germany*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. IV (London, 1914), pp. 24-7.

³⁹ Buitenhuis, *War of Words*, pp. 31-2.

⁴⁰ J.H. Muirhead, *German Philosophy and the War*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. XIV (London, 1914-5), pp. 22-6.

Kant and Hegel, and regardless of the actual copies of books sold, its ideals had permeated German society, with truly detrimental results.

Denouncing the dominance of militarist ideals in German political life, Sonnenschein concluded that democracy was the essential criterion of a system with military service if it was not to fall under the spell of militarist ideals. This, he felt, was fundamentally lacking in Germany, and implied that if Germany were to be free of such ideals, democracy had to be introduced.⁴¹ Murray agreed, declaring that ‘Crushing Germany would do no good... It is not Germany, it is a system that needs crushing.’⁴² Prothero too was of this opinion, and viewed militarism as a ‘terrible menace to civilization’. For him, the only way to defeat it was to defeat Germany at war – not because this would wipe out the militarist principle, but because it would show that it was not a viable option.⁴³

Thomas F.A. Smith’s extensive study of the German people supported the conclusions of Sonnenschein and Murray. Smith argued that Germans truly took pleasure in military service, sacrificing their individual will to their love of discipline.⁴⁴ As far as Smith was concerned, the German nation was in a less advanced stage of civilization, one to which the militarist lifestyle was particularly suited – an echo of the accusations of barbarism we will see in the next chapter:

They love discipline, and the spectacular side of militarism appeals irresistibly to their warlike instincts... Militarism is to the German mind a great, heroic science; the consummation of human greatness, demanding and worthy of every sacrifice – even life itself. In return for his sacrifices, the German has oppression in the place of freedom, shams and baubles for realities. But, all in all, he is content with his bargain...⁴⁵

⁴¹ Sonnenschein, *Idols*, pp. 6-8.

⁴² Murray, *Thoughts*, p.10.

⁴³ Prothero, *Duty*, p. 8.

⁴⁴ Smith, *Soul*, pp. 105-6, 114-24.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 132-3.

Smith also noted that Germans themselves did not recognise the distinction being drawn between the German army and people by their opponents, stating that ‘all Germans would be amused at any attempt to separate them...’ He had little patience for such attempts, and his disdain for those calling for an end to militarism is clear, as he dismissed slogans such as ‘war against war’ and ‘the destruction of Prussianism’ as attempts by those who had been fooled by Germany to distract themselves from the shame they felt at being taken in. This is an interesting interpretation of the two Germanies theory, implying as it does that those who proposed it were simply trying to justify the fact that they had failed to see the reality of the German character and had placed their trust in an untrustworthy state. Smith also rejected the influence of Bernhardt on the German people, believing that Bernhardt had simply articulated a sentiment which was already present. The militarist ideals of Germany were the result of her history, Smith proposed, of her conviction that the Empire had been forged by the sword, and would be held by the sword.⁴⁶ His disdain is all the more noteworthy given the twelve years he spent in Germany before the War.

The Oxford History Faculty denounced the ‘worship of brute force’ as distasteful in itself, but the presentation of such an ideal as ‘political idealism’ and ‘the vehicle of the highest culture’ was particularly repellent in their eyes. Quoting Theodor Mommsen, they argued that the former powerhouse of intelligence and arms had lost its intelligence to be left with nothing but ‘the pure military state... The fruits of *Heldentum* are Louvain smoking in ashes to the sky.’⁴⁷ *Heldentum*, heroism, was a concept particularly dear to those arguing about the essential differences between Germany and British culture, and its use here was particularly barbed, undermining as it did the claims of Germany to be a civilized state, when her heroism resulted in burned towns and the destruction of an ancient seat of learning. It is uncertain whether the authors would have approved more of a system which openly declared itself to be barbaric, but this particular section of *Why We Are At War* highlights the true depth of the miscommunication between German and British academics in the area of philosophical and political theory. The attitude of the authors of *Why We Are*

⁴⁶ Smith, *Soul*, pp. 254-5, 333-4.

⁴⁷ *Why At War*, pp. 113-4.

At War implied that the Germans were fully aware that their political doctrine was merely a cover for the desire to grab land wherever possible, using whatever means necessary to achieve their ends, no matter the consequences. The defence of German militarism is thus seen as a sly attempt to mask this desire in a futile grasping for legitimacy in the eyes of the world.

However, when we read the German texts, we see that this is not the case, and that in fact, many of the authors were truly convinced of the symbiosis between German culture and German militarism. The militarist doctrine was not as simple as ‘might is right’, but rather in Germany, a reliance on force was viewed as a guarantee that the State, which had faced so many difficulties in the past through military weakness, would retain its position in the world. Klaus Schwabe points out that many German authors considered militarism to be essential to Germany, given her exposed geographical position in Europe – militarism was a ‘particularly unsophisticated patriotism’.⁴⁸ It is worth noting, however, that this positive interpretation was not common before 1914, and in fact, there was much criticism of militarism before the outbreak of war. The identification of militarism with the German state and values was, therefore, possibly influenced by foreign censure, and its denigration by Germany’s enemies may have helped to rehabilitate it in Germany – certainly the ‘Manifesto of the 93’⁴⁹’s defence seems to have played an important role. This was supported by the fact that the War was presented as a war of defence in Germany, and militarism was seen as a justified response.⁴⁹ Equally, militarism was not entirely condemned in Britain before the War – aside from the actions of Lord Roberts and the National Service League to introduce conscription in Britain before the War; in his inaugural lecture as Chichele Professor of Military History in 1909, Spenser Wilkinson, who had campaigned for reform in the British army and navy, praised German militarism for recognising that the nature of war had changed, and that the nation must change with it.⁵⁰

The historian Hans Delbrück’s speech, *Über den kriegerischen Charakter des deutschen Volkes* (‘On

⁴⁸ Schwabe, *Wissenschaft*, p. 21.

⁴⁹ See von Ungern-Sternberg, ‘Sinnlosen’, p. 91; Stefan Meinecke, ‘Friedrich Meinecke und der „Krieg der Geister“’, in Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Kultur und Krieg: Die Rolle der Intellektuellen, Künstler und Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (München, 1996), p. 114.

⁵⁰ Weber, *Our Friend*, p. 124

the Warlike Character of the German People’) traced the history of the German people at war from the time of the Teutonic tribes battling the Romans to the war of 1914. He emphasised the continual military prowess of the German nation, arguing that even in times of peace, the ‘warlike spirit’ was maintained by those who made the army their career, echoing the ancient tribal system of a ruler’s chosen warriors over the mass of potential fighters. This system allowed a degree of separation and unity between the professional soldier and the wider national body.⁵¹ Delbrück’s ‘unity and separation’ echoed the many German authors who argued for a German definition of freedom, different from that of Britain – a freedom in which the individual and the state were inextricably linked, and the individual found his freedom in the collective.

Nachum Goldmann, a Jewish student of law and history quoted at the beginning of this chapter, argued that the ‘war against militarism’ was the basis of all the arguments being made about the War in Britain and France. The publisher introduced his pamphlet with a brief biography, emphasising his Russian birth and his loyalty to the German state as proof of the appeal of German ideals.⁵² Goldmann’s refusal to dismiss the question of militarism due to the calibre of those conducting the debate is proof that he viewed an academic exchange of ideas as a vital aspect of war writing.⁵³ Nevertheless, he declared it absurd to accuse the German people of being particularly warlike, as he proclaimed, in an echo of Norman Angell, ‘there has seldom been a time so adversarial to all warlike inclinations, so peace-loving as the spirit of our times, the character of our modern economy and the peculiarity of the modern spirit’ and attributed the call of militarism to a dislike of the way military ideals influenced other aspects of life in Germany.⁵⁴ In an argument aligned with that of Delbrück, Goldmann contended that the German army provided a unifying element to German life, subordinating all to the same duties to the collective nation, in a peculiarly German way. For Goldmann, the army contained the two principles of subordination – to a hierarchy; and uniformity – in an equality of training and duty. These principles were also the fundamental basis of German life in

⁵¹ Hans Delbrück, *Über den kriegerischen Charakter des deutschen Volkes*, ‘Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit’ Series, Vol. I (Berlin, 1914), pp. 50-67.

⁵² See introduction in Goldmann, *Geist*.

⁵³ He mentioned Bernard Shaw, G.K Chesterton, Henri Bergson and Emile Boutroux in his analysis.

⁵⁴ Goldmann, *Geist*, pp. 7-9.

the subordination of the individual to the collective interests of the State, and the uniformity necessary to create order within the State. As such, the military spirit was inseparable from the German state. Goldmann proudly proclaimed the military spirit, and therefore the German spirit, to be the spirit of the age, and the spirit which made Germany great. Militarism and anti-militarism were competing for the mastery of the world, he declared, and the anti-militarist spirit of Britain could no longer hold its own over the militarist spirit of Germany, as the War would prove.⁵⁵ It is important to note that this was not a declaration that Germany desired world domination, but rather that a new world spirit was coming to the fore, and that in future, a militarist way of life (militarism in the sense Goldmann had presented it) would become the norm world-wide.

The diplomat Edmund von Heyking also believed in the essential unity of the militarist spirit with the German intellect. In a delicate use of suggestion, he implied that the idea of a war against militarism was part of an attempt to discredit Germany in the eyes of the world, while overtly asserting his confidence that it was merely due to a lack of understanding on the part of Britain as to how interlinked the intellectual and moral powers of Germany were with what the British called militarism. He maintained that German militarism had existed as long as the German Empire, and had kept the peace of Europe for the previous 40 years.⁵⁶ Marcks agreed, viewing German militarism and German intellectualism as mutually beneficial. In his opinion, there was no opposition between the military and German culture, rather they inspired and strengthened each other.⁵⁷

Viewing the German army as a noble entity, Eucken elevated it to a philosophical level which many soldiers doubtless never even contemplated, arguing that the soldiers 'putting their soul into their work' was what enabled the German army's successes. He saw mercenary considerations of compensation as a sign that the British soldier sought only external reward, and would therefore always be dependent on others for his self-worth, never achieving a sense of completion in himself,

⁵⁵ Goldmann, *Geist*, pp. 9-20, 27-8.

⁵⁶ Edmund von Heyking, *Das Wirkliche England* (Berlin, 1914), pp. 21-2.

⁵⁷ Marcks, *Wo stehen wir?*, p. 21.

unlike his German counterpart.⁵⁸ Such metaphysical musings would probably have been laughed out of the trenches, but Eucken's disgust at British attentions to the remunerative aspects of war highlight a German trope to which we will return – the commercial aims of Britain versus the heroism of Germany, fighting for her place in the world.

The German authors did not just defend German military ideals, but also counterattacked, pointing to the British Navy and to British supremacy at sea as a much greater threat to the freedom of Europe, and a sign of the hypocrisy of the British. The author and economist Davis Trietsch argued this point succinctly, stating that 'In the imaginations of our opponents, German militarism has the aim of establishing a rule of force. Yet Great Britain has already done this...' He noted that the Navy had made a significant contribution to the arms race, emphasising that the German army had never followed a 'Two Power Standard' as the British navy had.⁵⁹ Heyking agreed, contending that British attempts to maintain supremacy at sea were far more problematic than claims of German militarism. He accused Britain of ignoring human rights conventions to which she herself had agreed, and of attempting to hinder Germany's efforts to acquire naval bases and expand her Empire.⁶⁰ Focusing more on the naval rivalry between Germany and Britain, Magnus Hirschfeld noted that it was especially galling for Britain to be challenged at sea, where she felt she should be the superior power. Hirschfeld described with satisfaction the development of German sea-power, and in particular the maritime force, but commented bitterly that this development, perfectly natural and within reasonable limits, was viewed as a bid for power by a jealous Britain:

Albion went completely mad when we established a national armed fleet... according to our share in world commerce and the threatening restrictions and dangers which came from England. This rule, taken for protection and as a precaution sufficed to present us as troublemakers and peace-breakers

⁵⁸ Eucken, *Bedeutung*, pp. 16-7.

⁵⁹ The Two Power Standard stated that the British Navy had to be at least as large as the next two navies combined. D. Trietsch, *Kriegsziele gegen England* (Berlin, 1915), pp. 8-9.

⁶⁰ Heyking, *Wirkliche England*, pp. 22-3.

before the whole world.⁶¹

The economist Gerhart von Schulze-Gaevernitz also argued this point, stating that British supremacy at sea had in reality led to a monopoly, in which Britain controlled the colonisation of the rest of the world. The ‘freedom of the seas’ actually meant a ‘silent assumption of British mastery at sea’ and not the liberty it promised. Furthermore, according to Schulze-Gaevernitz, Britain’s control of trade routes, in a time when so much of world commerce depended on them, led to extreme hardship when the War broke out. He solicitously pointed out that this did not just apply to Germany, but also to the nations with which Europe traded and neutral countries which were forced to bear losses when the War had nothing to do with them. His attempts to win neutral support continued in an even less subtle vein, when Schulze-Gaevernitz singled out the United States as the only country which could stand with Germany as an economic equal of Britain, and prophesied a difficult future for her if Britain was allowed to win the War.⁶²

In a rare balanced analysis, Meyer testified to British anxieties over the growth of the German navy, and viewed the naval race conducted between Germany and Britain in the early 20th Century as an attempt to intimidate rather than a plan to attack. He was convinced, however, that from at least 1911 onwards, Britain was aware that Germany’s naval expansion was in no way aimed at a confrontation with Britain, and so found it difficult to accept British apprehensions in the years that followed.⁶³ Ernst zu Reventlow, an outspoken and extreme nationalist and former naval officer, disagreed, however, contending that the naval race had nothing to do with the tensions between Britain and Germany. He presented the German naval programme as a vital step in the attempt to preserve German independence in contrast to a British programme which sought to maintain British custodianship over the seas. Yet, he claimed, at the time Germany was expanding her Navy, Britain was attempting to align her interests with those of Germany, abandoning her policy of splendid isolation. The expansion of the German fleet was initially viewed not as a threat by the British

⁶¹ Hirschfeld, *Warum lassen*, pp. 25-6.

⁶² von Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Freie Meere!*, pp.13-6.

⁶³ Meyer, *Schuld*, pp. 11, 15, 22.

Government, but as a presumption, a dream which would never actually come to pass. The true barrier to an Anglo-German alliance, according to Reventlow, was Germany's refusal to support British policies against Russia.⁶⁴ However short-sighted this vision was – and it is quite clear that German naval expansion was a cause for worry to the British Government from an early stage, and more probably part of the inspiration in Britain's search for allies in the early years of the 20th Century than an insignificant consideration to be subsumed under colonial disputes – Reventlow's argument presented an image of Britain as a haughty dictator, secure in her sea-power and disdainful of upstarts, against a plucky Germany, seeking only her own protection. Reventlow went on to claim that Britain's true aim was the oppression of Germany, and from 1905 onwards, attempted to crush her fleet and limit her naval expansion.⁶⁵

The question of British supremacy at sea was also seen as part of a wider issue, namely the Balance of Power, which had been viewed only in terms of the nations of Europe. The historian Friedrich Meinecke felt that the Balance of Power should be extended to the rest of the world and to the seas, and British sea power undermined this balance. British insistence on maintaining supremacy at sea in the face of the increasingly strong navies of other nations in particular was a fight against modernity. This modernity grew, he said, in the face of attempts to bolster absolutist monarchies, and he equated Britain's mastery of the seas with the absolutist monarchies of the past. As such, he was convinced that a day would come when other nations would be grateful to Germany for fighting for the freedom of the seas.⁶⁶ This directly contradicted the notion of Germany as a backwards or uncivilized nation, presenting her instead as a bastion of modernity in the face of a reactionary and conservative Britain.

Sanday sought to respond to such arguments in *The Meaning of the War for Germany and Great Britain*. The British emphasis on freedom of the seas, he explained, was a question of life or death for the Empire, which relied on the opportunities for communication which her sea-power provided. The British sought no 'theoretical precedence' over other nations, but rather maintained the freedom of the

⁶⁴ Reventlow, *England*, pp. 14-5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 21-5, 30-2.

⁶⁶ Meinecke, *Kultur*, p. 27.

seas as a duty to the world: 'This sea-power of ours is held by us in trust for the interests of the world at large,' he proclaimed. 'We are anxious that it should not be abused; we desire to show the fullest respect for the rights and liberties of other states, great or small.' As we have seen, however, these lofty aims held little ground with Sanday's German opponents, who focused less on claims to avoid 'theoretical precedence', and more on the actual supremacy on which the British Admiralty insisted.⁶⁷

Others attacked the Germany Navy, such as Smith, who declared that Britain was in no way threatened by German ambitions, as long as the expansion of Germany's navy was aimed only at self-defence. He also turned on the German Navy League, saying that it had 'done more than any other agency to poison German opinion against England... [and] to prevent a working arrangement between the two countries on the fleet question coming into existence...' He pointed out that if another country had taken similar measures with their army, Germany would have been outraged and would have retaliated, implying that the German reaction to the British response was both unreasonable and hypocritical in the extreme.⁶⁸ Charles Sanford Terry, Burnett-Fletcher Professor of History and Archaeology at Aberdeen University, also viewed the German navy as an integral part of the German desire for world domination, stating that it was believed in Germany that 'by sea-power only could Germany take her 'place in the world' – the *first* place...'. As far as Terry was concerned, the German Naval Law of 1900, the second to increase the size of the German navy, was overtly anti-British, despite Germany's claims to the contrary. Again, we see reiterated the view that Britain did not object to the creation of a German navy, merely to a navy which seemed to be primed for attack rather than defence. Terry supported his argument that the German navy was larger than necessary by pointing out the restricted coastline of Germany and the limits of her colonial engagements when compared to the size of the fleet she claimed to need. The only conclusion, he felt, was that the German navy was an 'open challenge' to the British.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 81-2.

⁶⁸ Smith, *Soul*, pp. 288-306.

⁶⁹ Charles Sanford Terry, *German Sea-Power*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. VIII (London, 1914), pp. 8-9, 16-9, 27.

The frequent recurrence in German writings of the unjust nature of the British condemnation of militarism and her attempts to ‘stifle’ the growth of the German navy was closely linked to ideas of British commercialism and the mercenary nature of British culture. The contrast between the profit-oriented British and the idealistic up-and-coming Germany was drawn out to its fullest, with the British condemned for their fixation on the economic advantages of every situation and their jealousy of German growth. The British authors, of course, dismissed this as German paranoia, claiming that German competition had only ever been a spur to greater efforts of their own, and that Britain would never stoop to underhanded means of hampering a competitor. These concerns were based on a sense of economic rivalry which had been growing since the 1880s, but which had very little basis in fact. Though there was a feeling of competition for markets and resources, ‘there were still too many economic forces tending towards reasonable ... Anglo-German relations’ to imply an inevitable clash.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it was to simple commercial jealousy that the German authors attributed the British motivation for war, and it was a strong theme in many of the German pamphlets, even at an early stage.

The argument made in the economist Werner Sombart’s *Händler und Helden* (‘Tradesmen and Heroes’, 1915⁷¹) is the most frequently quoted example of this point of view. He established Germany and Britain as the representatives of two radically different world views, and the War as the clash of these cultures, contrasting British individuality and materialist selfishness with German heroism, idealism and community. Many of his ideas were discussed by other German authors, and his emphasis on British commercialism as a motivating force, both in the origin and conduct of the War will be seen elsewhere. However, his use of the materialist/unmaterialist dichotomy as the basis for his argument has had an impact on scholarship, and his division of the world into heroes and tradesmen has become shorthand for the examination of this particular line of reasoning. As we will

⁷⁰ Kennedy, *Antagonism*, p. 58.

⁷¹ It has also been translated as ‘Merchants and Heroes’, but ‘tradesmen’ may better convey the sense of exchange which Sombart wishes to convey – a negative sense, it must be said, as his tradesmen are avaricious, seeking only their own profit. Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden* (München, Leipzig, 1915).

see however, he was not the first to expound such views.⁷²

On 18th September 1914, Otto von Gierke declared that the growth of German trade and the competition posed by Germany in world markets led directly to the War: ‘This was what awakened the foul passions of envy and resentment... what instilled the courage to commit this shocking betrayal in the grocer’s soul of the degenerate English nation...’⁷³ His description of Britain as having a ‘grocer’s soul’ (‘Krämerseele’) is both offhand and dismissive, and his disdain is clear: the implication is that Britain was small-minded, focused on money and far from the lofty heights of German research, art and technology. A similar description is found in Schulze-Gaevernitz, who described the Briton as ‘economic man’, earning in order to earn and for no higher purpose, his philosophy transformed to a ‘sober empiricism’ which focused on the worldly and on earthly pleasures rather than the transcendence for which the German strove.⁷⁴

Brentano took this further, claiming that Britain’s insistence on the maintenance of a Balance of Power in Europe was nothing more than an attempt to prevent any other nation from posing a threat to Britain. He argued that this was a sign that Britain was still using war as a means to prevent other nations from progressing – an unsubtle implication that Britain was still a primitive state in many ways, given that this very action was one which Brentano had attributed to an earlier stage in the development of nations.⁷⁵ Heyking supported him, claiming that German competition had discomfited British businessmen, and that ill-feeling in British business circles had caused them to blame Germany for an economic slump before the War – ill-feeling which prepared the way for the War.⁷⁶

Baldly laying out the situation as he saw it, Nathan agreed: The War was not a war for France, for

⁷² As Sombart is often quoted in other works on this subject, his work will not be explored in detail here. See for example Friedrich Lenger, ‘Werner Sombart als Propagandist eines deutschen Krieges’, in Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Kultur und Krieg: Die Rolle der Intellektuellen, Künstler und Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (München, 1996); Wolfgang J. Mommsen, ‘Intelletuali’.

⁷³ von Gierke, *Krieg und Kultur*, pp. 85-6.

⁷⁴ von Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Freie Meere*, pp. 11-2.

⁷⁵ Brentano, *England*, pp. 10-1.

⁷⁶ Heyking, *Wirkliche England*, pp. 18-9.

Belgium or for Russia.

It is a trade war against Germany. Its aim is to destroy German trade, as much as possible... What England has called... the theory of the “balance of power” in Europe means in fact that the continental powers of Europe hold each other in mutual check, that they are constantly in a state of mutual enmity, and that they, ensnared in this enmity, give England the opportunity to tip the scales of European politics and get the most economic benefit for the small English island nation from the world.⁷⁷

Hirschfeld found evidence of British attempts to prevent other nations from posing an economic threat to her in the past, claiming that throughout the centuries, whichever continental nation was the strongest became the enemy of Britain: ‘any state whose economic position seemed to approach their own, or run the risk of surpassing it...’ For Hirschfeld, the paradox in this was not only that Germany was Britain’s best customer in Europe, but also that while German trade was increasing, so too was Britain’s.⁷⁸

For C.F. Lehmann-Haupt, historian and orientalist, on the other hand, British envy towards German trade was a long-established fact, as was the British attempt to hinder German growth abroad with ‘every instrument of hatred and misrepresentation.’⁷⁹ Meinecke too, traced British enmity towards Germany back to the 1870s, claiming that if France had won the Franco-Prussian War, she would have been the focus of Britain’s enmity rather than Germany.⁸⁰ The economist Adolph Wagner went even further back, citing the creation of the German Customs Union in the early 19th Century as the first spur to economic jealousy in Britain and he argued that as German competition grew in the 19th Century, so too did Britain’s respect for Germany, with a corresponding decrease in her affection for

⁷⁷ Nathan, *Enttäuschungen*, pp. 18-20.

⁷⁸ Hirschfeld, *Warum hassen*, p. 17, 20.

⁷⁹ Lehmann-Haupt, *Krieg und Deutschtum*, p. 11.

⁸⁰ Meinecke, *Kultur*, pp. 20-1.

her 'poor cousin'. Again, the Balance of Power in Europe was mentioned as a tool to maintain British hegemony, and Wagner felt that Britain was blaming Germany for the growth of other nations' economies, selfishly trying to keep world trade under British control: 'It is none other than bare jealousy, ignoble jealousy, measureless avarice. It is the same old spirit which has always moved British economic policies...'⁸¹

The commercial jealousy of Britain was also viewed as the motivation to ally with France, as both had something to gain from the downfall of Germany, and Rohrbach quoted an 1897 article in the *Saturday Review* which said that if Germany was destroyed, England would be richer, and the other nations in Europe could expand into formerly German territory – an article which was also referenced by Schulze-Gaevernitz in his *Freie Meere*. If a nation was willing to fight for a right or for territory, Rohrbach asked, would they not also be willing to fight for a valuable trade?⁸² Reventlow appeared to deny this, as Germany would never go to war for purely economic reasons, so Britain's assurances to that end were plausible – particularly because a war would damage European trade.⁸³ This is a classic example of a back-handed compliment, implying as it did that Britain would not go to war for economic reasons, but she would stay at peace for them. Nevertheless, he went on to argue that economic motives had provoked the British, placing the blame firmly on competition created by German industry and commerce. Linking the Navy and the economic question, Reventlow suggested that during the 1890s, Germany, without a fleet and surrounded by Britain's colonial rivals, could have been a useful ally on the continent. Based on this reasoning, he said, British statesmen aimed at an alliance with Germany which would have provided her with a strong continental presence to counterbalance France and Russia, while preventing further threatening German economic development in the guise of an ally.⁸⁴ In contrast, historian Felix Salomon blamed colonial tensions, claiming that economic competition had not prevented Britain from suggesting an alliance with

⁸¹ Adolph Wagner, *Gegen England!* (Berlin, 1914), pp. 23-8, 32-6, 41, 45-6.

⁸² Rohrbach, *Warum*, pp. 11-4; *Krieg*, p. 90; von Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Freie Meere*, p.19. See also Schwabe, *Wissenschaft*, p. 27 for more on the *Saturday Review* article.

⁸³ Reventlow, *England*, pp. 6-7.

⁸⁴ Reventlow, *England*, pp. 8-12.

Germany until Germany opposed British political aims.⁸⁵

British writers rejected such notions, and A.D. Lindsay, an Oxford philosophy tutor who also served in France, was convinced that the War had come about as a result of Balance of Power politics – but blamed German policy rather than any British intentions. He condemned the idea of a balance as one which assumed that all nations were rivals, intent on their own interests and heedless of any other obligations, and declared that while every nation thinks ‘they are trying to create a balance of power, they are really seeking an over-balance in their own favour’. It was in a German attempt to reconstitute the balance after the upheaval of the Balkan Wars that the origins of the war of 1914 were to be found.⁸⁶ This view, of an anxious Germany seeking to reclaim a dominant position in the shifting sands of European politics, contrasts completely with the German depiction of the situation, in which a meddling Britain manipulated the European nations to her own ends.

Laurence Binyon’s *Bombastes in the Shades* (1915) was another indication that the British were aware of German arguments on the subject of British commercialism, and from Binyon’s evidence at least, were inclined to dismiss them entirely. A short play showing the encounters of Bombastes, an exaggeratedly cruel, blood-thirsty and jingoistic German officer, on his arrival in the afterlife, *Bombastes in the Shades* highlighted many of the tropes in Germany’s arguments in an extremely overstated manner, answering each one in the voices of Germany’s opponents. When it came to the mercantile nature of the British, Bombastes was vocal and indeed, hysterical, describing an

England clutching her money-bags in terror of the German name and egging
on the world to strike [Germany] in the back,’ the ‘colony-snatcher, dead to
every sentiment of honour, mean, calculating, covetous, cold!...
Traacherously she seizes our commerce, inhumanely she blockades our

⁸⁵ Felix Salomon, *Wie England unser Feind Wurde* (Leipzig, 1914), p. 20. He referred to attempts at détente in 1912 and 1913, in which colonial conflict and naval concerns were discussed in an effort to reach a satisfactory compromise. Though and naval negotiations failed in 1912, colonial terms were reached but not signed before the war broke out. See MacMillan, *Ended*, pp. 540-2.

⁸⁶ Lindsay, *War Against War*, pp. 19-20.

coasts and seeks to starve our noble, our highly educated population.⁸⁷

Binyon's description of the German population as 'educated' showed the scorn with which British writers greeted the emphasis on German erudition, and seemed to jeer at those academics who had disappointed the British in their support for the War.

Further proof that the German arguments were commonly discussed in Britain is found in Sonnenschein's comments – in fact, he cited the German *Address to Evangelical Christians Abroad* and a declaration by professors and scientists entitled 'European War' in his statement that the idea that Britain had gone to war from motives of economic jealousy was a commonplace in Germany.⁸⁸ Not only did he dismiss this idea as a 'figment of the imagination', Sonnenschein averred that Britain had only ever seen German competition as a spur to greater economic and industrial efforts, so that she should not be 'outstripped in the race'. His analysis of a Treitschkean theory of Germany was subtly undermining, presenting Germany as a 'young and enterprising burglar' in competition with Britain's 'middle-aged burglar' seeking retirement, viewing it as her right and duty to take Britain's ill-gotten gains from her. Sonnenschein noted that the British Empire was not such a straightforward tale of conquest, arguing that the colonies supported and were supported by the motherland; they were not colonies as Germany would understand them.⁸⁹ Leaving aside the pitfalls of that particular argument, which have more to do with the colonial history of Britain than the question at hand, his presentation of Germany as a robber state clamouring for her share of the spoils effectively underlined the image of Germany as an unscrupulous, uncivilized nation, tugging at the tails of the more mature states (it was quite obvious that Sonnenschein did not think that Britain could be called a burglar by the more refined judgement of the rest of the world).

Taking up the colonial theme, C.R.L. Fletcher maintained that it was Germany who was jealous of Britain – of her success, indomitable spirit, and colonial empire. Arguing against the German

⁸⁷ Binyon, *Bombastes*, pp. 21-2.

⁸⁸ I have been unable to trace 'European War'.

⁸⁹ Sonnenschein, *German Eyes*, pp. 14-5.

contention that Britain had blocked German expansion, he noted that Britain did not seem to be blocking France, Russia, or ‘any other power that will live at peace with us and not lay down a new set of commandments in the place of the old set.’⁹⁰ Obviously, this was a highly flawed argument – Britain, France and Russia had wrangled over colonies for a long time before the agreements of 1904 and 1907, and undoubtedly had been accused of blocking each other (the Cape to Cairo/east-west clash between Britain and France which resulted in the Fashoda Crisis of 1898 is a significant example). The idea of a new set of commandments is, out of context, a highly loaded one, and it would be easy to argue that this was simply an example of a British reluctance to accept economic or political competition from the new German Reich. As a result, it is important to clarify that Fletcher presented Germany’s new ‘commandment’ (a commandment which he attributed to Germany) as the worship of force, in a rather dramatic passage epitomising the British idea of the militarist Germany discussed earlier.⁹¹ His objection to the new ‘commandment’ was thus not to a new order in Europe, but to a new order which prioritised force as a political tool. Germany was presented as bitter and jealous, creating a rivalry where none should exist and attempting to impose her methods on Europe.

This particular aspect of the War was also being discussed in neutral countries, as the exchange of letters between Spenser Wilkinson and the pro-German American political scientist John Burgess which appeared in the *American Springfield Republican* at the end of August 1914 shows. Burgess’ letter to the *Springfield Republican* viewed the expansion of German industry from the American point of view, arguing that while the ‘marvellous growth... excited... the jealousy, the envy, and then the hostility of Great Britain’, it was an advantage to the U.S. who profited from the competition, and ‘were amused at the pettishness of Great Britain in representing it as something unfair and illegitimate.’⁹² The description of Britain as ‘pettish’ entirely accorded with German arguments on the subject, undermining British concerns, and his emphasis on the benefit of industrial competition for America seemed intended to raise sympathy for Germany and hostility towards Britain who appeared

⁹⁰ Fletcher, *Covet*, pp. 21-2.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 5.

⁹² The letters are reproduced in Spenser Wilkinson, *Great Britain and Germany*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. I (London 1914). John Burgess, p. 13.

to wish to control the market and cheat other nations. Interestingly, Wilkinson did not respond directly to this point in his reply, focusing more on disproving the idea that Britain had worked against Germany politically, and emphasising Britain's good-will towards Germany and her wish for peace in Europe.

The concept of Britain as a nation purely motivated by economic concerns was elaborated in one other particular direction – the idea that Britain was conducting the War as a business transaction, encouraging her own soldiers to fight with the promise of financial gain, and paying other countries to fight her battles for her. Closely linked to this was the notion that Britain had manipulated the other countries to go to war on her behalf because she was too cowardly to fight.

Lujo Brentano condemned Britain's strategy as 'heedless capitalism', firstly conducting her recruiting campaigns as a business while other nations' citizens gladly gave their lives for their country, and secondly allowing other nations to fight on her behalf, while she took on a commanding role, distanced from the fighting. He compared the War of 1914 to wars of the 18th Century, in which Britain risked comparatively little, while the continental nations faced a struggle for their existence.⁹³ Noting that Britain's island position allowed her to become involved in continental conflict in accordance with her interests rather than by necessity, Wagner too compared 1914 to Britain's past actions, stating that she had 'once again found her fools in Frenchmen, Russians, Belgians and Japanese, who carry their skins to market for England, to save her chestnuts from the fire.'⁹⁴ This was echoed by Roethe who described how the old in Germany were envious of the young who were fighting (a comment only possible at the start of the War, perhaps). This could not be said of Britain, he declared: 'the best of her youth stays pretty at home and prefers to struggle for victories in football; the paid hirelings may spill their blood.'⁹⁵ Fleischer agreed, stating that Britain's 'main weapon' was money – she bought her soldiers, and when Kitchener's Army quailed, their 'spirits were lifted with

⁹³ Brentano, *England*, p. 11.

⁹⁴ Wagner, *Gegen England*, pp. 18, 47-8.

⁹⁵ Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, pp. 25-6.

more money.⁹⁶ Eucken took up this theme, quoting an unnamed British newspaper which suggested that the war was a good opportunity for a soldier to earn ‘a nice little sum’, and claimed that the idea of winning a battle to earn higher wages was a way of thinking ‘incomprehensible’ to Germany, where men fought for an ideal which was worthy in itself – an unfair accusation, given how many British men were signing up to fight at the time.⁹⁷

This critique extended to the use of colonial troops, as can be seen in Hans Delbrück’s approach, describing the British as ‘the salesmen, who merely pay, who send out their mercenaries and summon the barbaric masses, and think they can flatten us with them...’⁹⁸ The use of colonial troops was seen by many in Germany as an assault on civilization, pitting ‘less civilized’ peoples against those of Europe, with correspondingly barbaric methods of warfare. It was predicted that this would encourage colonial peoples to think of Europeans as their equals – a strategy which many felt was bound to lead to unrest and upheaval in the colonies after the war. Brentano was a particular proponent of this view, stating that it ‘meant none other than Europe’s abdication of the mastery which it once held over the Asian peoples.’⁹⁹ Liszt spoke of the mistake of allowing the natives of Africa and the Pacific islands to see a war between white, Christian powers, and resentfully noted that Germany would not forget the way Britain had encouraged the Japanese to ‘rob’ German colonies.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, Oncken asked in 1914 if the nations who sent ‘Turkos’ (black soldiers in the French army), Senegalese, Indian and Japanese troops, as well as the ‘animalistic hordes of Russian barbarism’ could justifiably condemn the highly civilized Germany for militarism (there was, of course, no mention of the atrocities in Belgium and northern France).¹⁰¹ Paul Nathan was simply dismissive, derisively noting how British newspapers boasted of the support and help available to the nation, while her statesmen begged

⁹⁶ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, p. 33.

⁹⁷ Eucken, *Bedeutung*, p. 17. By 24th August 1914, 113,000 men enlisted – a figure which was more than quadrupled in September 1914, when 462,901 men joined up. By the end of 1915, over 2.5 million men had joined the British armed forces. See Pennell, *Kingdom United*, pp. 52, 144, 146.

⁹⁸ Delbrück, *Kriegerischen Charakter*, p. 74.

⁹⁹ Brentano, *England*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Liszt, *Staatenverband*, p. 24.

¹⁰¹ Oncken, *Weltkrieg*, p. 15.

‘smaller and smaller nations of all skin colours’ for troops.¹⁰²

All for Germany once again provides an insight into the currency such notions had in Britain, and his cutting cynicism is a sign that Barker, at least, felt that Germany’s condemnation was highly hypocritical. His Dr. Pangloss (the German character) declared ‘Your Englishman talks of the comity of nations and the public law (whatever that may be) of Europe; but his eyes are on his till. He is a good internationalist because Free Trade is a paying proposition...’ Furthermore, ‘with one eye on Heaven, [the Briton] pleads the noble moral cause of Belgium; with the other eye on his ledger, he proclaims the war against German trade. With both eyes on the main chance, he fills his pockets.’¹⁰³

Caught up in the same narrative was the question of the encirclement of Germany as a British plot, designed to trap her and slowly crush her. Germany’s exposed geographical location was a central part of her national identity; ‘[t]he lack of territorial, ethnic, religious and commercial definition was a hallmark of German history, and the legacy was a tradition of regionalism, particularism, and provincialism, not to mention insecurity and mistrust.’ Combining geographical insecurity with her relative youth as a nation state, fears for her national integrity were perhaps, not unnatural, and they became linked to the idea that Britain was attempting to stifle innovation and competition.¹⁰⁴

Rohrbach asserted that the Entente was not the first time Britain had tried to hem Germany in, and described how the three powers had plotted in 1908 to gain territory in the Middle East and block German influence in the region, before being prevented by the Turkish Revolution.¹⁰⁵ However, he felt that the Franco-German crisis in Morocco was the true test of Anglo-German enmity, the point when her desire to isolate Germany politically became clear.¹⁰⁶ Certainly the Moroccan Crisis of 1905 was a turning point, solidifying the Anglo-French Entente and damaging Anglo-German relations, but it was not a deliberate attempt to cut Germany off from the rest of Europe. The German conviction of

¹⁰² Nathan, *Enttäuschungen*, p. 22.

¹⁰³ *All for Germany*, pp. 12-4.

¹⁰⁴ Eksteins, *Rites*, pp. 65, 86-7.

¹⁰⁵ Rohrbach, *Warum*, pp. 18-9.

¹⁰⁶ Rohrbach, *Krieg*, pp. 46-7.

a planned encirclement of Germany by the Entente, was underscored by the American Burgess, who wrote of the increase in hostility towards Germany on the part of France and Russia and ‘the part that Great Britain had played and was playing in bringing about both these movements...’¹⁰⁷ Wilkinson responded directly to these concerns in a letter published on 3rd September 1914, pointing out firstly, that all of Burgess’ information on British intentions seemed to come from Germany rather than from Britain (which would be the logical place to seek clarification) and that Burgess held a double standard, which objected to an alliance between France, Russia and Britain, but viewed that between Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy as eminently reasonable, despite their aims: ‘To his mind it was right and proper that Germany, Austria, and Italy should be allied, even though Germany’s mission is directed against decaying Latin civilization; but when England, France, and Russia compare notes he thinks they are doing something wicked.’¹⁰⁸

The British dismissed any claim that Britain had aimed at the encirclement of Germany in her policies in the early years of the 20th Century, Sonnenschein writing that policy ‘was not designed to strangle Germany, as the Germans think or pretend to think. And it was the only policy consistent with the safety of the British Empire. Even Bernhardi admits this.’¹⁰⁹ The use of the word ‘pretend’ is interesting, implying as it did that the Germans were using this accusation purely to support their own case, and not because they truly believed that Britain had any hostile intentions – a cynical position, but one which the propagandist knew all too well.

The historian F.S. Marvin, however, expressed some sympathy for the German point of view, their conviction that they faced a barbaric, expansionist horde in the east, a vindictive, ancient enemy to the west, and a traitorous commercial and maritime rival taking the opportunity to destroy them: ‘The picture is a hideous nightmare of fear, hostility and distrust. But so far as it is really present to the minds of multitudes of otherwise rational and moral people – and of this there is no doubt – it behoves us to understand its genesis, and, if possible, its cure.’ To the east, Marvin continued, Germany *was*

¹⁰⁷ Burgess, in Wilkinson, *Britain and Germany*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ Wilkinson, *Britain and Germany*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁹ Sonnenschein, *Idols*, p. 5.

faced by a less civilized nation ('according to ordinary Western standards', he hastened to clarify, reminding us of the ambivalent position of Russia in British propaganda), and an old enemy to the west. But it was her own militarist policy which threatened Europe, a policy of protection turned into attack. 'This is the explanation of the strange paradox... that German action was prompted both by fear and by overweening strength.'¹¹⁰

For Barker, the motivation of Germany also came down to fear – his Dr. Pangloss declared that the German state was surrounded by danger, 'it is full of fear; and there is nothing more ruthless than fear.' This was the justification Pangloss offered for Germany's actions, 'Fear says 'Necessity knows no law;' fear says, *Salus populi suprema lex.*'¹¹¹ This statement stood in sharp relief to the bravery of Britain as depicted in the British newspapers and pamphlets – entering the War to save a defenceless nation, the Expeditionary Force holding out despite overwhelming odds, the gallant troops marching off to war and the long lines at recruiting stations as British men strove to 'do their bit'. The contrast between Brave Britain doing the honourable thing and a Germany motivated by base fear to violate treaties and engage in barbaric acts was striking.

Many of these arguments rested on assumptions of political processes, social constructions and moral expediency, which were, despite the assertions of propaganda, fundamentally similar. A common approach in propaganda was to turn to the past as a firm foundation for present justification, both sides seeking a historical basis for their claims to culture. We saw this earlier in the allusions to previous wars, and *The Historical Precedent for the New Army* (1915) by Ivo d'O. Elliott (who served in the Indian Civil Service) is an obvious example of a pamphlet taking this approach. He compared the German Army and the New Army of Kitchener to the armies of Napoleonic and Revolutionary France – on one side, a professional army, following a dynasty and hoping for plunder, facing an army strengthened by volunteers, inspired by ideals.¹¹² The Oxford historians also mentioned these wars, reminding their readers that Britain had also stepped in to defend Holland and Switzerland from

¹¹⁰ F.S. Marvin, *The Leadership of the World*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. X (London, 1914), pp. 6-7.

¹¹¹ *All for Germany*, p. 8.

¹¹² Ivo d'O. Elliott, *The Historical Precedent for the New Army*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. XIX (London 1914-5), pp. 3-6.

Napoleon, when she had nothing to gain from this defence. They were careful to note that Holland was a commercial rival, as though to underline the fact that German accusations of economic jealousy were unfounded, and went on to declare that Britain had always fought for right in Europe, proclaiming ‘we stand for the reign of law.’¹¹³

The Napoleonic Wars in particular were a touchstone for British authors, as Spenser Wilkinson showed when he asked on 17th August ‘Is the England of George V less spirited than that of George III?’ Ten days later he gave a further reminder of the glorious British past when he observed that the British army were once again fighting in the same part of France they had fought in a century before. Although they were now fighting with France instead of against her, ‘the cause then was the same as now, that of a free Europe and a free England against a great Monarchy that sought to extend its power.’¹¹⁴ Murray specifically referenced the ‘Great War’ of 1815 when pondering the post-war world,¹¹⁵ and while the parallel between that ‘Great War’ and the ‘Great War’ of 1914 is perhaps coincidental, it is nevertheless noteworthy when we consider the weight attached to such names in propaganda, and the connotations that the term would carry for the British – a reminder of another war against a militarily intimidating foe which Britain won, though the struggle was long and difficult. The historian Gerard Collier linked this history to the German accusations of British commercialism, stating that ‘We were a nation of shopkeepers, we had beaten Napoleon with our industry and our credit’,¹¹⁶ in a clear retort to German slurs, and the implication was clear – we may be shopkeepers, but we will win.

There was some difficulty in referencing Napoleon, of course, as it underlined the traditional enmity between France and Britain – hardly desirable in the attempt to maintain a strong alliance. Instead, the emphasis was placed on the defence of freedom in Europe against *any* power who attempted to circumscribe it, as was proudly asserted by Marvin: it was ‘in the mid stream of [Britain’s] best

¹¹³ *Why At War*, pp. 16-7, 115-6.

¹¹⁴ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, p. 47, 56.

¹¹⁵ Murray, *Thoughts*, p. 12.

¹¹⁶ Gerard Collier, *The Leading Ideas of British Policy*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. X (London, 1914), p. 15.

tradition to clinch the opposition of Europe to any Power which threatens the security and independence of others.’¹¹⁷

That the British would rely on the Napoleonic Wars in the search for historical equivalencies is unsurprising, as it was the last European war in which they had played an active role, but it also served as a fertile source for their German counterparts. When we remember that ‘national consciousness was first awakened in Germany with Napoleon’,¹¹⁸ and the importance of the philosopher Fichte and his 1807 ‘Speech to the German Nation’, it is perhaps to be expected that Napoleon would serve as a reference point for German authors too. Certainly parallels were drawn between the Wars of Liberation (1813-1815) and the War of 1914.¹¹⁹ Schulze-Gaevernitz reminded his readers that the British had referred to it in their declaration of war against Germany, but presented a counterpoint to British claims to be fighting for European freedom in claiming that in fact, Napoleon had been fighting for the freedom of the seas against the British monopoly – a claim which may have raised some eyebrows. According to Schulze-Gaevernitz, not only was Napoleon’s Egyptian campaign aimed against Britain, so too was his conquest of Europe and his attack on Germany (due to Anglo-German trade).¹²⁰

Echoing Wilkinson, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff noted where the British had fought in Belgium in the past, but he gloated that the old battlefields had not been reached by the British in this war. He charted Britain’s history of war with France, arguing that Britain had fought to gain France’s fleet and her empire and thus undermined British assertions that they were fighting for a higher ideal. He argued that Britain’s claims to have saved Europe from Napoleon were only a partial acknowledgement of the facts, as it was the Prussian forces who brought about the victory at Waterloo, while Britain took

¹¹⁷ Marvin, *Leadership*, p. 16.

¹¹⁸ Hoeres, *Philosophen*, p. 150. Hoeres discusses Fichtean philosophy and the war in detail – see *Philosophen*, pp. 293-8.

¹¹⁹ See Christoph Cornelißen, ‘Politische Historiker und deutsche Kultur’, in Wolfgang Mommsen (Ed.), *Kultur und Krieg: Die Rolle der Intellektuellen, Künstler und Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (München, 1996), p. 132.

¹²⁰ Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Freie Meere!*, pp. 10-1.

credit for it.¹²¹ Salomon supported the idea that the Napoleonic wars were simply a cover for British ambition, and claimed that British hostility towards France in previous centuries was based on a perceived threat to British interests. Britain had simply presented the wars of the 18th and early 19th Centuries as a fight for the interests of Europe, using peace treaties to her own advantage in 1713 and 1814 and he rejected the idea that Britain was fighting for the freedom of Europe as ‘fairy tales and lies’.¹²² The emphasis on past enmity with France is an interesting aspect of this facet of propaganda, suggesting both an attempt to drive a wedge between the Entente powers by reminding them of former hostility, and also an underlying suggestion that ‘Perfidious Albion’ still lived, that Britain could not be trusted, she would always place her own interests first, and her allegiances would shift accordingly.

This brings us to a concern in many of the German pamphlets, namely the revelation of the ‘true face’ of Britain in contrast to the image she presented to the world, particularly with reference to the British Empire. This was a major part of German propaganda, an attempt to counteract Germany’s poor image in neutral states as well as maintain their support of their own people.

The British were depicted as grasping and greedy, particularly with regard to colonies – Piloty described their attitude as ‘Do not touch any other nation without asking us if they belong to us first’. He blamed King Edward VII for British Germanophobia, citing the King’s dislike of his nephew, the Kaiser, and his love for Paris as the inspiration for the series of alliances upon which Britain embarked after his accession in 1901 – a common trope in German propaganda.¹²³ Reventlow and Hirschfeld agreed with Piloty on this point, with Hirschfeld accusing Edward VII of turning a number of nations, including Russia and Japan, against Germany.¹²⁴ Reventlow, on the other hand, maintained that Edward had not wanted war, though he remained ambivalent as to whether this was a point in the King’s favour. In Reventlow’s view, Britain wished to intimidate and suppress Germany through

¹²¹ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Die geschichtlichen Ursachen des Krieges*, in ‘Zwei Reden’ (Berlin, 1914), pp. 21-2

¹²² Salomon, *England*, pp. 17, 31-2.

¹²³ Piloty, *Ursachen*, p. 9, 27.

¹²⁴ Hirschfeld, *Warum*, pp. 10-1; Reventlow, *England*, p. 17.

diplomatic rather than military means, and he accused the British of attempting not only to isolate Germany from potential allies, but to ensure that her neighbours shared Britain's hatred, a hatred which he took for granted. He seems to have been convinced that if it weren't for British enmity, German expansion would have met with no opposition from Russia or France, that it was the encouragement of Britain that prompted them to follow policies which went directly against Germany's interests – clearly a rather limited view of European tensions before the War.¹²⁵ Germany's own policies of aggressive expansionism seem to feature nowhere in Reventlow's theories; to him, Germany's ambitions were not only eminently reasonable, but entirely justified, and when we factor in his outspoken support for naval expansion and the Pan-German League, it is hardly a surprise that this should be glossed over.

Again, the British denied that the formation of the Entente alliance was in any way a plot against Germany orchestrated by Edward VII, Sanday stating that the Government had moved to regain the respect Britain had lost following the Boer War, and the King had cooperated due to his own inclination for friendship with Europe and his suitability as a mediator. For Sanday, Germany bore all the blame for the tension between Germany and Britain – Britain would have been happy to co-exist in friendship, it was Germany who had forced the conflict.¹²⁶

Highlighting the multiplicity of arguments within an overarching narrative, Rohrbach placed the blame for Anglo-German tension during the Moroccan Crises on France, but alleged that Britain's initial attitude was of indifference to the conflict on the continent, and that she would be quite contented should either coalition (France and Russia or Germany and Austria-Hungary) emerge victorious, as her aim was to 'pluck the fruits of victory' regardless of the outcome.¹²⁷ This, apparently written before war was declared, counteracted the narrative that Britain had masterminded the War with the aim of crushing an upstart Germany, but still depicted Britain in a most unsavoury light, not motivated by ideals but willing to let others fight around her, ready to act at the close in

¹²⁵ Reventlow, *England*, pp. 20-1, 27-8, 34.

¹²⁶ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 91-2, 103-4.

¹²⁷ Rohrbach, *Krieg*, p. 81.

order to gain as much as possible from the situation. Wagner also explored the unscrupulous nature of the British, stating that for centuries they had sought control of the power held by other nations, taking over the colonies of France and Spain, Holland and Portugal, and watching safe in their 'island fortress' while the continent was at war, free to choose whether to involve themselves with troops and gold, or stay neutral, as suited their own interests.¹²⁸ Salomon presented Britain as an opportunistic manipulator, and suggested that the emergence of Britain from diplomatic isolation was motivated by greed and shrewd business sense. He explained how the alliance with Japan was a clever piece of diplomacy which allowed Britain to ensure the safety of her own interests by playing on Japanese desires; and how Britain had acted in Europe to create a series of alliances which seemed harmless on the surface, merely dealing with colonial matters, but which were highly dangerous to the peace of Europe.¹²⁹

A number of authors commented on what they viewed as British hypocrisy, comparing the values which Britain professed with her own actions in other countries. Lehmann-Haupt focused on the expulsion of Germans from Egypt, which was technically an independent, neutral state, though under British influence and Nathan differentiated between Britain, who had used Egypt for her own ends, and Germany, who had used Belgium in self-defence, with the intention of making full reparations when the War was over.¹³⁰ Trietsch used the example not of Egypt, but of Persia, explaining that Russia and Britain had plotted to divide Persia into two spheres of influence, each taking control of one, and thus robbing Persia of the very independence Britain claimed to uphold.¹³¹ Wagner echoed these complaints, but his chosen example was 'poor Ireland', an obvious target for those seeking to undermine British pretensions to the role of Protector of Europe. Fleischer also scoffed at the idea that the British were fighting for freedom and liberty using the example of the suppression of Ireland to show that the British causes were highly hypocritical. The British, Wagner claimed, believed they had a mission to bring British 'culture, civilization and political calm and maturity' to other nations, but

¹²⁸ Wagner, *Gegen England*, pp. 17-8.

¹²⁹ Salomon, *England*, pp. 17, 21-2.

¹³⁰ Lehmann-Haupt, *Krieg und Deutschland*, pp. 24-5; Nathan, *Enttäuschungen*, p. 29.

¹³¹ Trietsch, *Kriegsziele*, p. 25.

did not hesitate to exploit their colonies for their own interests without regard to such considerations.¹³²

In their defence on the subject of Ireland, the British authors sought to differentiate between the behaviour of the English towards Ireland in the unenlightened 17th Century, and that of modern Germany in Poland.¹³³ Ludwik Ehrlich, a Polish professor at Oxford, linked this to German brutality in Belgium, and denounced German policy in Poland, citing harsh punishments for those who wished only to preserve their culture, and the way in which Polish farmers had been forcibly removed from their farms to make way for German settlers. Germany's treachery was sealed when Ehrlich revealed that the Poles, while second class citizens in their own country, were counted as German citizens when it came to war and taxation – in other words, Germany was using them for her own interests, with no regard for the well-being of the people, while claiming to be a paragon of civilization and good-will.¹³⁴ W.R Prior took a similar stance on the treatment of Danes in Schleswig, describing political oppression, attempts to quash nationalist feeling, and unprovoked arrests as an answer to the loyal response of the people of Schleswig to the outbreak of war.¹³⁵

The British Empire in general came under a great deal of criticism, both for its extent and for the way in which it had been acquired. Salomon initially disparaged the haphazard manner in which the British Empire had been built, condemning the British for their supposed belief that they were the chosen people of God, and stated that this was the inspiration behind their Empire, a 'puritan conviction' that they were set apart from the rest of mankind. It was only in the late 19th Century, he said, that a truly 'imperialist creed' began to influence political life, motivated by greed and jingoism.¹³⁶ The contradiction here is plain – the British were derided for not approaching colonisation in an organised fashion, and then criticised when they did just that. Salomon's issue

¹³² Wagner, *Gegen England*, p. 40; Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, pp. 40-3

¹³³ See Julia Stapleton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 96-7.

¹³⁴ Ludwik Ehrlich, *Poland, Prussia and Culture*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. IX (London, 1914), pp. 18-27.

¹³⁵ Another unfortunately unknown figure, with no entry in the Dictionary of National Biography. W. R. Prior, *North Sleswick Under Prussian Rule*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. IX (London, 1914), pp. 5-7, 10-15.

¹³⁶ Salomon, *England*, p. 9, 13.

seems in fact to have been the colonisation of Africa, and the fact that the British were expanding their own territory to the detriment of other nations.¹³⁷ Trietsch also dealt with the complexities of the British Empire, criticising its size as ‘unnatural’ and argued that it was built not on power, but on prestige. ‘The English [were] masters at bluffing’, and had convinced the world to view the British Empire through British eyes, and not through the lens of reality. The real crux of the matter, however, became obvious when we read Trietsch’s resentful statement that Britain, with her small population and economic growth, had acquired an empire so big that it blocked the expansion of other states¹³⁸ - as with Salomon, his concern seems to have been not the dangers of an unwieldy empire, but the fact that the British Empire had blocked Germany from attaining a similar world position.¹³⁹

Meinecke wrote of the ethics of colonialism, explaining that there were limits to power politics – namely that states should not aspire to more than was necessary to keep them safe and allow them to develop freely. Acknowledging that it was difficult to delineate strict boundaries for such goals, he nevertheless felt that Britain had crossed the line with her Empire, particularly in the case of South Africa and the Boers.¹⁴⁰ This was a delicate line of argument, but tied closely with the ideals for which the German authors felt they were fighting and their attempt to differentiate what they perceived to be the aims and methods of Germany from the way in which these aims and methods were depicted in the propaganda of their opponents. In essence, Meinecke’s argument was that militarism, expansion and colonisation were acceptable, as long as they were necessary for the future development and safety of the nation. However, it was extremely easy to argue that any expansion, be it territorial or in terms of military force, was vital to the nation, and equally easy to claim that a nation was transgressing the limits of what was reasonable. Meinecke recognised this, and his argument was thus based on what he referred to as the difference between ‘healthy political interests’ and ‘prestige politics’ – the colonies gained for the good of the state, and those which served no practical purpose, but were acquired purely for show. Obviously, Meinecke felt that the British had

¹³⁷ Salomon, *England*, p13.

¹³⁸ Trietsch, *Kriegsziele*, p. 6, 8, 10-1.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 18-20.

¹⁴⁰ Meinecke, *Kultur*, pp. 17-9.

enough colonies, and that their scramble for more was a display of greed to be condemned. This viewpoint, however, ignored the complexity of issues surrounding the Scramble for Africa, and also glossed over the fact that while German colonial policy was influenced by concerns over increasing population, and possible outlets for that overflow, it was also shaped by ideas surrounding the trappings of a 'real Empire' and the desire for 'a place in the sun' – the latter of which was openly demanded by many German authors before and during the War.

Accusations of jingoism were answered by Collier, who admitted that there had been a jingoistic atmosphere in Britain in the last years of the 19th Century, but believed that this had been overcome with the Boer War. Britain's aim, he continued, was the 'making of the world, at whatever present sacrifice, into a more and more perfect home for the united human family...' Arguing that no one in Britain felt that the British had an 'exclusive gift' for ruling others, he nevertheless presented her as having a special mission in the political and economic spheres, though she had fallen short – for if she had 'provided the world with a true politic adequate to the conditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it [was] inconceivable that the Germans... could have fallen so far as they have done under the sway of a system of thought untenable in logic, hideous in sentiment, and glaringly incompatible with the religion that we all profess.'¹⁴¹ The contradiction was clear, and underlined the durability of the idea that the British were leaders in Europe, a shining example for others to follow. Whatever Collier claimed, it is difficult to escape the impression that it was a doctrine to which he subscribed.

In *The War and the British Dominions* (succinctly titled *Is the British Empire the Result of Wholesale Robbery?* on the cover of the collected volume, 1914), H.E. Egerton specifically dealt with accusations that the British Empire was gained through underhand means. Answering the German 'suggestion ...that a Power whose hands are so foul can hardly pose as the champion of public rights or the sanctity of treaties,' Egerton denied that British behaviour had been worse than other colonial powers. He snidely remarked that the Dutch colonies in America which became British possessions had been more loyal to Britain than Alsace and Lorraine were to Germany, even though they had

¹⁴¹ Collier, *British Policy*, pp. 18-20.

shared no common ancestry – a clear rebuke that Germany had no right to question another nation’s colonial policies. With regard to comments that the Boer War was motivated by British greed or remarks about the British push for colonies in the late 19th Century, Egerton’s explanations were simple: the issues in South Africa were due solely to bad policy, ‘blunders and misfeasances’ and nothing more. As for the Scramble for Africa, well, Britain couldn’t be left behind!¹⁴² There are obvious problems with such simplifications, but Egerton thought this was justification enough for Britain’s colonial policy, which underscores contemporary views on colonisation, no matter how problematic we may find them today. As definitive proof that German and British authors were aware of each other’s comments, Meinecke explicitly referenced Egerton in his *Deutsche Kultur und Machtpolitik* (May 1915), but drew from it the opposite lesson, emphasising Egerton’s confession that much had occurred during the founding of the British Empire that was to be regretted.¹⁴³ This shows us once again, the depth of misunderstanding (deliberate or not) which occurred between both sides.

Collier too, was a firm believer in the essential mission of the British Empire, stating that Britain was

doing real work towards shaping the material earth itself and the organization of man upon it, so that this planet might become a perfected whole... we stood for work rather than life, for the future rather than the present, for achievement rather than enjoyment. ... we organized ourselves for an object, not for the sake of the organization, nor, indeed, for the sake of the people.¹⁴⁴

In one fell swoop, he dismissed both German accusations that Britain was working for her own ends, aiming at world domination, and undermined the much-publicised German love of order and organisation as an unworthy end in itself. Britain in this view was working for more than just her

¹⁴² H.E. Egerton, *The War and the British Dominions*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. V. (London, 1914), pp. 4-5, 16-8.

¹⁴³ Meinecke, *Kultur*, pp. 14-5.

¹⁴⁴ Collier, *British Policy*, pp. 8-9.

people, she was working for all people, now and for generations to come – a lofty aim indeed, far above German grasping for a place in the sun.

The arguments discussed in this chapter, exploring pre-war tensions in Europe, questions of militarism and navalism, historical actions, and present-day political machinations all deal, to a greater or lesser extent, with tangible acts and changes in the years before the War, finding concrete explanations for the outbreak of war which stretched beyond the immediate caused in the July Crisis. However, the problems of culture and civilization were not limited to such concerns, but also found expression in ideas of character and political ideals, of internal values and the ways in which Britain and Germany framed and approached not only the War, but the wider questions of life, and the reasons for which they were fighting. Many of the concerns presented in this chapter did not prohibit the possibility of reconciliation after the War, though their proponents did not see eye to eye – for the British, Germany could return to her peaceful nature, militarism could be eradicated, and for the Germans, British acceptance of the German right to a place on the world stage could bring an end to commercial jealousy and attempts at diplomatic isolation. However, it is difficult to see how an open dialogue could continue after accusations of hypocrisy and hatred, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, the debate on culture and ideals made the gulf between the two nations even more obvious.

***Kultur* Clash: Why we are (Really) at War**

Everywhere we strike to a greater degree against oppositions of spirit and culture, political and social principles... What we are fighting, says an English historian, is not an army, but a false idea... which in its essence disturbs the principles and conditions of the rest of the world.

-Ernst Troeltsch, 1915¹

Troeltsch wrote of the anti-German literature appearing in Britain, making a distinction between the newspapers and journals, and the learned literature of the intellectuals, who were familiar with Germany and her history. It was the latter who were to be condemned in Troeltsch's view, for their work was not the 'utterances of instinctive opposition or cultural aversion, but was a plan and system with an entirely specific political slogans.' He went on to describe a 'literary encirclement' to match the diplomatic one, with France and Britain seeking to undermine German culture and depict it in an unfavourable light in the eyes of the world long before the War broke out: 'The cultural war is a ... long-prepared, cleverly calculated political campaign against us...'² The previous chapter highlighted the way in which questions on the motives for war were closely intertwined with perceived political motivations and national identities. Concepts of culture and civilization did not just focus on the actions of enemy states, but also explored more abstract themes, examining notions of national *Geist* and native ideals, contrasting an invigorated and revitalised German *Kultur* with decadent and degenerate British *Zivilisation*; humane, just, British 'civilization' with Germany's superficial 'culture'.³

Before we explore these concepts in more detail, it is important to recognise the loaded history of these words. The distinction between culture and civilization had been debated long before the War,

¹Troeltsch, *Kulturkrieg*, pp. 6-7

²*Ibid*, pp. 8-11.

³ In the interests of clarity, quotation marks will be used when referring to the particular British concept of 'culture' and 'civilization', as opposed to a more general discussion.

particularly in Germany, placed in a dichotomy which can be traced back to the 18th Century. In essence, the British or French conception of civilization encompassed artistic, social and political achievements, as well as a certain mode of behaviour and attitude. In contrast, German thought separated these attributes, *Zivilisation* becoming an outer polish, a veneer of culture which stood in marked contrast to the real *Kultur* of intellectual and artistic achievement. Equally importantly, whereas ‘civilization’ could transcend national boundaries, acting as a marker for the progress of mankind, *Kultur* tended to emphasize national achievements, separating self from other – a important factor in wartime debates.⁴ Nevertheless, in the final decades of the 19th Century, such divisions were frequently softened, if not entirely erased – in 1904, Eucken explained that what the Germans considered ‘Kultur’, the British called ‘Zivilisation,’ and in 1907, the German lawyer Georg Jellinek proclaimed that the two were interchangeable, that ‘civilization [Zivilisation] itself is nothing other than urban culture [Kultur], whose purpose is to fashion the average man into a citizen, rather than a battle-hungry warrior.’⁵ As such, the division seems to have become less about the difference between inherent German and British values, and more focused on what was meant by the terms. Indeed, much of the debate on civilization was directed inwards, to a critique of self and contemporary society, sometimes coupled with a sense of panic that civilization was under threat from the changes in modern society.

During the War, this division became more pronounced, and in Germany, *Kultur* became synonymous with spiritual, inner values, as opposed to the more materialistic, external ‘civilization’ of Britain – in 1914 the author Thomas Mann juxtaposed *Kultur*, emotional and instinctive, with the reasoned and stagnant ‘civilization’, in an echo of the Sturm und Drang reaction against the Enlightenment.⁶ On the British side, German *Kultur* was associated with the pursuit of the Nietzschean Superman, in contrast to British ‘culture’, which idealised the ‘gentleman’, and the British classicist Alfred Zimmern opposed the German emphasis on intellectual achievements with the British focus on ‘things we have

⁴ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford, 1994 (1st published 1939)), pp. 4-8.

⁵ See Elias, *Civilizing*, pp. 239-40; Eucken cited in Beßlich, *Kulturkrieg*, pp. 67-8, 70; Jellinek cited in Weber, *Our Friend*, p. 63.

⁶ Beßlich, *Kulturkrieg*, pp. 4-5, 104. Hynes, *War Imagined*, p. 4. For Mann, see Stibbe, *Anglophobia*, p. 75

done'.⁷ *Kultur*, once admired by the British, was now contrasted with accounts of barbaric atrocities and unscrupulous morals, and seemed a hollow ideal, particularly in comparison with British values, which were presented as freedom, justice and democracy. Peter Jelavich has described the emphasis on culture as 'a spiritual crusade' to restore the values of the middle classes to a dominant position, but it seems rather to have been an attempt to find meaning in the War, to give it a purpose which would justify the hardships endured – as David Monger pointed out, in presenting the War as a fight for civilization, authors 'sought to elevate it above matters of national interests and power politics', and so maintain a sense of purpose.⁸

This focus on the values and morals of each country brings us to the second major element of cultural conflict between the Entente and the Double Alliance – the notion of civilization, what it meant, and how it had been affected by the War. Many of the British speculations were based on outrage and disbelief over the outbreak of war and the reports of German atrocities in Belgium and Northern France, while German academics were frequently responding to accusations with a counter-claim of their own. As a result, while the notion of the 'real Britain' was often passed over by British authors, perhaps as part of an unspecified desire not to fuel the debate by engaging in that particular aspect of it, German authors were just as invested in defending Germany against accusations of barbarism, unscrupulousness and duplicity as their British opponents were in making them. In Britain, this was a simple declaration that Germany could no longer have any pretension towards the title of a civilized nation, having revealed a barbaric tendency in her actions in Belgium and Northern France, though some saw it as a departure from her old cultured ways, and some viewed it as a revelation of her real instincts and character. In Germany, on the other hand, a clear distinction was drawn between Western 'civilization', decadent, degenerate and decaying, and German *Kultur*, which maintained the purity of a fresh and youthful power, while still drawing on Germany's past achievements in the realms of philosophy and scholarship. The juxtaposition of the two types of civilization rested on two

⁷ Gregory Moore, 'The Super-Hun and the Super-State: Allied Propaganda and German Philosophy During the First World War', *German Life and Letters*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Oct. 2001), p. 323; Zimmern quoted in Stromberg, *Redemption*, p. 145.

⁸ Jelavich, 'German Culture', p. 43; Monger, *Patriotism*, p. 154; Gregory, *Last War*, p. 59.

main arguments – the contrast between the values held by each nation, and the barbarism of their actions, in its various manifestations. However, it seems that German arguments about *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* had no impact, as even in the later years of the War, Sir Charles Waldstein, the American-born archaeologist and former Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge, viewed the German retreat to culture as a ‘specious concession... made to the moral consciousness of the civilized world’.⁹ The problem, as he saw it, was that the culture to which Germany referred was a specifically German one, and Germany was convinced that her championship of this form of culture would benefit the whole world. German values were also attacked, based primarily on the outbreak of war and accusations of a long-planned attempt to take over Europe. These accusations rested not only on ideas of militarism, which have already been discussed, but also on German historical views of society, the way they conducted themselves in international politics, and the degree to which they had been taught to see themselves and their culture as superior to other nations.

Each side charged their opponent with a desire for world domination, despite claims to be fighting for world freedom, and, interestingly, each side accused the other of failing to comprehend their true nature, of being blinded by jealousy and hatred to their pacific and friendly intentions before war was forced upon them. Prothero quite frankly opposed the reasons for war presented by Germany, arguing that she was not seeking to defend Austria, but was motivated by a desire first to dominate all of Europe, and then the whole world.¹⁰ Terry also wrote of German colonial aims, noting that Germany sought to rationalize her aggressive policies on the grounds that she had only recently become a power in international politics.¹¹

This was linked to Germany’s growth as an international power, which Sanday believed had led from self-confidence to self-assertion – rather than being content with her position, Germany viewed international relations and territory in terms of what she felt she should have, rather than what she did, and sought to redress the balance, without a true cognisance of what was required, or the honourable

⁹ Charles Waldstein, *What Germany is Fighting For* (London, 1917), pp. 43-4.

¹⁰ Prothero, *Duty*, p. 10

¹¹ Terry, *Sea-Power*, p. 20.

way to go about it. Her disavowal of such ambitions, regardless of the evidence presented in her actions, was what had lost her the sympathy of other nations, Sanday felt. By 1917, his feelings on this had intensified, and he denounced the ‘unbridled egoism’ of Germany, acting on ‘principles... incompatible with civilization,’ doing as she pleased simply because she was strong, and other nations were too weak to prevent her from acting.¹² As for the many German objections to the doctrine of the Balance of Power, Sanday felt that rather than a blanket objection to the principle involved, the Germans simply did not think it applied to them: ‘They deny that they have been domineering; they deny that they have given cause for suspicion; they regard themselves as the most docile and well-behaved of European nations.’¹³

This egoism was also made manifest for the British in the supposition advanced by many German authors that the only true culture was German. Sonnenschein in particular found this arrogant and overbearing, quoting von Harnack, who had described Germany, Britain and America as the protectors and bearers of ‘higher culture’ in the world. For von Harnack, Britain had betrayed the cause of culture by allying with Russia, leaving only Germany and America to bear the weight. Sonnenschein thought such an approach was ridiculous, stating:

I am aware that the German Kultur included more than what we call ‘culture’; but at any rate it does include all that we call culture. And to deny the claims of all but three nations to be the bearers of the torch of civilization at the present day is, on the most charitable supposition, insane.¹⁴

Terry also denounced the assumption of many Germans that they were in some way morally or culturally superior to other nations, and the consequent idea that they were acting in the interests of

¹² Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 101, 111-2, 115; *War End*, pp. 8-9.

¹³ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 51, 58, 89, 101, 103, 111-2, 115.

¹⁴ Sonnenschein, *Idols*, pp. 18-9.

the world by seeking to expand their influence.¹⁵ Of course, he failed to draw the obvious parallel to the imperialist agenda of Britain with its ideas of the ‘white man’s burden’, and the many arguments that Britain’s Empire was beneficial to the world at large and to those nations who were a contented part of it, which were frequently enumerated in the same pamphlets which criticized German ambition. Germans also attacked the characteristics of the British, presenting them as selfish and superficial, using ‘personal interest as their guide to life.’¹⁶ Fleischer denounced Britain’s overblown self-confidence and audacity, and her conviction that she was better than other nations, and Meinecke too attacked the British on a personal level, denying that they had any understanding of ‘higher cultural talents... aesthetic, scholarly, philosophical, and unconventional gifts...’¹⁷

Many British authors laid the blame for the War on the strength of the German state, and the obedience of German citizens towards authority, believing that their theory of the state – particularly that proposed by Hegel in the early 19th Century – was the source of German aggressive policy.¹⁸ The idea of an aggressive German state was maintained after the War - writing in 1928, William Temple wrote that it ‘was a struggle between the idea of the state as essentially Power—Power over its own community and against other communities—and of the state as the organ of community, maintaining its solidarity by law designed to safeguard the interests of the community.’¹⁹

The fundamental distinction between the two seems to have been that where the British viewed the state as the protector of the individual, the Germans saw the individual as the protector of the state. The common view of the state in Britain was that it was ‘a set of useful but limited institutions that were functionally quite separate from society at large’, though the changing nature of the state and its duties was hotly debated by scholars at this time.²⁰ Both A.D. Lindsay and Ernest Barker published papers on the role of the state in the *Political Quarterly* (in early 1914 and 1915 respectively) which

¹⁵ Terry, *Sea-Power*, p. 20.

¹⁶ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, p. 34.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 40-3; Meinecke, *Kultur*, p. 6.

¹⁸ Wallace, *War*, p. 49.

¹⁹ Temple quoted in Matthew Grimley, *Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England* (Oxford, 2004), p. 1.

²⁰ Harris, *Private Lives*, p. 181.

discussed the nature of state authority and its claims to allegiance over other corporative entities, emphasising the necessity of citizen acquiescence in the creation of state authority.²¹ Barker's 'discredited state' in particular contrasted with the German notion of the state in his assertion that the state could have a 'oneness without a transcendent one', allowing the individual shared motivation without complete identification, and advocating that the state's authority in internal affairs be tempered due reference to the circumstances in which it was operating.²² The British tended to emphasise individual conscience and identity, while the Germans, as we shall see, elevated the collective above personal concerns. In Germany, many rejected the Enlightenment adulation of the 'individual' who, in misusing his freedom, was unable truly to benefit from it; in favour of a German emphasis on the 'personality' [*Persönlichkeit*] – the individual who was willing to curtail his liberties and thus, achieved a higher sense of self worth.²³ Fritz Ringer has suggested that a number of intellectuals in Germany in the late 19th Century saw the Enlightenment as a west European phenomenon, separate from a distinct German *Aufklärung*. Retrospectively applying this attitude to their predecessors, German intellectual tradition thus became a reaction against French and British thought, rather than developing in conjunction with it.²⁴ Theories of the state were also linked to ideas of Social Darwinism, in which war was seen as the natural outcome of states' struggle for existence. This tied in neatly with Hegel's view that struggle was an integral feature in history; and with the political debates of the British Idealists of the late 19th Century which were 'dominated by the vocabulary of evolution'.²⁵

A prime example of the belief in German political naivety is found in Matheson's assertion that freedom was what separated Britain from 'the German people so efficient and so powerful, but... so

²¹ A.D. Lindsay, 'The State in Recent Political Theory', *Political Quarterly*, 1 (Feb. 1914); Ernest Barker, 'The Discredited State', in *Church, State and Study* (London, 1930).

²² Barker, 'Discredited', pp. 161-2, 169.

²³ Beßlich, *Kulturkrieg*, p. 110.

²⁴ As Ringer points out, this overlooked the significance of Kant and Herder to the Enlightenment across Europe. Ringer, *Mandarins*, pp. 83-5.

²⁵ See Jelavich, 'German Culture', p. 43; David Boucher & Andrew Vincent, *British Idealism and Political Theory* (Edinburgh, 2000), p. 7. Stromberg does claim that Social Darwinism was 'no longer in fashion' as a political ideology by the 1900s, but its clear influence on many of the pamphlets seems to contradict this. See Stromberg, *Redemption*, p. 78.

wanting in political sense, so dependent on authority.’²⁶ Noting that duty was a weighty obligation for both British and German people, Benett described the German people as particularly prone to blind obedience, following a superior simply because of his position as a superior.²⁷ Barker traced this specifically German sense of duty back to Kant and Hegel, presenting the former as the proponent of duty, and the latter’s theories as the source of much of the German glorification of the state, war and of the lack of respect for international law. However, it was Nietzsche and the nationalist historian Treitschke who bore the blame for the corruption of the German spirit in Barker’s opinion, and his pamphlet *Nietzsche and Treitschke* outlined the teachings of both in such a way as to make this obvious to the lay reader. Nietzsche’s philosophy was summarized as a sort of morality of dominance, glorifying violence as a purifying force, and advocating the use of any means to gain power, since power determined what was right and just. For Barker, it was Treitschke who provided the extreme nationalism frequently associated with Germany and the outbreak of the War, and taught that the state was the supreme authority, the source of culture, to which every German owed an ineluctable duty. Barker felt such teachings were indefensible, and he blamed them for a gradual decline in the moral standing of the intellectual classes, who ‘fell more and more under the glamour of the sword... learning bowed the knee before the soldier as the saviour of culture.’²⁸ The issue with such a philosophy, according to Barker, was that ‘Power cannot be the servant of defence; power in its nature becomes the master of offence.’²⁹ While he acknowledged that German culture should be protected against attack, he felt that this did not justify it becoming a threat to other cultures, and thus, could not accept that it deserved any particular consideration as a result of its offensive actions. He further underlined his conviction that this was the new German philosophy in *All for Germany*, when Dr. Pangloss proudly proclaimed

We Germans are the Greeks of the modern world; ‘we do not suppose that
any one of the citizens belongs to himself, for we know that they all belong

²⁶ Matheson, *Ideals*, p. 6

²⁷ Benett, *England’s Mission*, p. 7.

²⁸ Barker, *Nietzsche and Treitschke*, pp. 3-20, 24.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 26.

to the state;’ and we hold that ‘the citizen should be moulded to suit the form of government under which he lives.’³⁰

Dr. Pangloss was convinced of the ‘omnipotence’ of the state and of the Kaiser, his Germany was a ‘voluntary outlaw’ from a Europe which sought to threaten her existence by forcing her to follow international laws. The state, in Pangloss’ depiction, was ‘an ultimate and transcendent value...the fundamental granite rock of the moral universe’³¹

The prominent position in propaganda given to the ‘unholy Trinity’ of Treitschke, Nietzsche and General von Bernhardi was undeserved however, and many German authors ‘derisively repudiated’ their enemies’ focus on these authors.³² Nietzsche was read in Germany, but had been ‘virtually unknown in Britain outside avant-garde circles’ – his connection with German militarism led to a boom in sales, as publishers advertised him as ‘The Mind that Caused the Great War’. For most British authors, however, though the concept of the ‘Superman’ was linked to German ambition, Nietzsche himself had not created what they saw as German egoism, though he had allowed his ideas to be used to such ends.³³ Equally, though Treitschke was a popular and influential lecturer during his lifetime; after his death in 1896 German historians tended to follow Leopold von Ranke, and ‘to the great majority of Germans, as to the great majority of Englishmen, Treitschke [was] little more than a name.’³⁴ Nevertheless, many of the ideas attributed to Treitschke (colonial expansion, naval policy and Anglo-German rivalry) were part of the world-view of the later German historians, and Treitschke’s ideas were kept in play by nationalist writers.³⁵

While Barker traced German egoism back to the philosophers of the 18th Century, J.H. Muirhead

³⁰ *All for Germany*, p. 4.

³¹ *Ibid*, pp. 10-1.

³² Hoares, *Philosophen*, p. 328.

³³ Moore, ‘Super-Hun’, p. 311, 316. For a thorough discussion of Nietzsche’s reception in Britain see Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Inter-War Britain* (Liverpool, 2002).

³⁴ J.W. Allen, quoted in Wallace, *War*, p. 68.

³⁵ Wallace, *War*, p. 68.

provided an alternate explanation, arguing that the theories which had inspired the spirit of the Germany with which Britain was at war were part of a ‘violent break with the ideas for which Kant and the whole early idealist movement stood...’³⁶ Hegelianism was also a strong influence in British philosophy, which meant some difficulty in separating British philosophy from German – as we shall see in Muirhead’s case.³⁷ Muirhead turned to the text which Barker overlooked, using Kant’s *On Perpetual Peace* (one of the first texts to emphasize the importance of international laws in a scheme for European federation in 1795) to support his contention that the pacifist Kant could not be blamed for the War. He also disagreed that Hegel had influenced the glorification of the state. Muirhead acknowledged Hegel’s praise of a strong state, but denied that Hegel had equated the state with the use of force as a primary mechanism. He argued that rather than seeing war as the natural extension of the power of the state (which would accord with contemporary British interpretations of German philosophy), Hegel would have seen the state as the natural product of order, and the antithesis of the violence and chaos of war. Hegel and Kant were thus not the roots of the current German philosophy, Muirhead argued, but the established thought against which it reacted.³⁸

This reaction in philosophical thought was attributed to Germany’s economic expansion, the danger ‘when the commercial, money-making spirit is tempted to seek a materialist philosophy for the justification of what it would like to believe as to the chief ends of life.’ This led to the worship of Power, which Muirhead attributed to Nietzsche, as Barker did, though Muirhead denied that Nietzsche’s teachings justified national violence, particularly as Nietzsche himself was so strongly opposed to nationalism. Again, we see the spectre of Treitschke rise in the British conscience – it was to his work and influence that Muirhead ascribed the growth of an extremist nationalism in Germany, accompanied by an inviolable faith in the need for a strong state and a ruthless approach to international relations.³⁹

F.S. Marvin was unusual in attributing the diatribes of Treitschke not to hatred, but to fear, and was

³⁶ Muirhead, *German Philosophy*, p. 3.

³⁷ Wallace, *War*, p. 50.

³⁸ Muirhead, *German Philosophy*, pp. 6-12.

³⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 19-23.

quite sympathetic in his depiction of the historian as ‘bluff, genial ... a man of insight, not without moments of tolerance and even sympathy for his neighbours’. Marvin blamed the Pan-German League for the spread of nationalism in Europe, saying that they had used Treitschke’s teachings, without retaining any of Treitschke’s own humanity in their transmission. A defence of Treitschke was highly unusual amongst British authors at this stage, though this was possibly neutralised by the fact that Marvin went on to describe the danger inherent in Treitschke’s philosophy.⁴⁰ Similarly, William Archer, the prominent literary critic and writer, admitted in his pamphlet *Fighting a Philosophy* (1915) that Nietzschean philosophy was contradictory, but argued that the ideas which remained dominant were ‘precisely those which might be water-marked on the protocol-paper of German diplomacy and embroidered on the banners of German militarism.’ Nevertheless, for Archer, Nietzsche and Treitschke were not the originators of German militarism, ‘but rather the most conspicuous symptoms, of the modern German temper.’ Instead, he traced militarism to 1870, to the ‘inebriation of victory’ and to the desire to create a philosophical justification for a new, aggressive policy and the glorification of force as a means and end.⁴¹ Taking up the theme of the glorification of war in the unsubtly titled *Might is Right* (1914), Walter Raleigh argued that while physical power might give one an inescapable advantage, a truly powerful nation would never fall back on this trope, not having any need to impose their power on others. In most cases, he argued, this was not therefore ‘a statement of abstract truth; it is a declaration of intention.’ For Germany, it was a dangerous article of faith, as it ‘flatters their self-sufficiency and distracts their attention from the difficult, subtle, frail and wavering condition of human power.’⁴² Thus we see how even within the same pamphlet series, authors differed in their interpretation of events, underlining the lack of homogenization in the production of intellectual propaganda. Whether this was due to a genuine desire to let different voices be heard (within reason of course), or whether it was a particularly cunning ploy which gave the appearance of free speech is impossible to say, but it is likely to have been a blend of both, in which authors were allowed to write freely, but would be carefully chosen, and their work vetted before publication.

⁴⁰ Marvin, *Leadership*, pp. 8, 10-1.

⁴¹ William Archer, *Fighting a Philosophy*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. XIV (London, 1914-1915), pp. 4-5.

⁴² Raleigh, *Might is Right*, pp. 4, 6-8, 11.

The Oxford History Faculty described German policy as inspired by the principle that ‘national independence means the power of taking the aggressive in any case where national interests or *amour-propre* may prompt it,’ and saw Treitschke as an inspiration for this policy. They were careful to distinguish between simple power and the power of the state in Treitschke’s philosophy however. State power was set apart, as the state was a ‘vehicle of culture’, and its power was therefore in essence the power of German culture.⁴³ Thus they combined the idealisation of German culture and the idea of the glorification of power, using the teachings of one of Germany’s most prominent historians. This could then be seen as a way for British intellectuals to link the old Germany of thinkers and poets with the new Germany of soldiers and industrialists, through the notion that military power was a means to promote philosophical progress, and place German culture above all others.

All of this philosophizing was summed up by Binyon’s Officer Bombastes, who acted as a mouthpiece for the values that Britain attributed to Germany:

BOMBASTES. ...The world is for the great and the strong.

SOCRATES. And justice?

BOMBASTES. It is the will of the stronger.

.....

BOMBASTES. Force, I say, and the will to use force to the uttermost, that is the one truth and the only reality... The world is for Germany, and by force she will impose her enlightenment, her arts, her freedom on it.⁴⁴

Barker’s *Candide*, on the other hand, compared the Germans to the Elizabethans, ‘bragging, buccaneering’, convinced that they were the chosen ones and incapable of understanding other nations:

⁴³ *Why At War*, pp. 43-4, 108-10.

⁴⁴ Binyon, *Bombastes*, pp. 13-4.

You have made yourselves a self-contained national world of your own, which cannot understand the outside world; which giving no sympathy gets no sympathy, and then complains that it is misunderstood and misinterpreted. Cease to be bad Elizabethans; begin to be good Europeans.⁴⁵

Such ideas, however, were rejected by German authors. Meinecke argued that *Machtpolitik* ('power politics') as practised by Germany and the 'prestige politics' of which she was accused could not be equated. German *Machtpolitik* sought to achieve her aims with all her power, but in a measured and reasonable way, he argued, not with ruthless guile and needless violence.⁴⁶ According to Meinecke, Germans valued the interchange of ideas and culture, on which intellectual growth relied, and he derided the idea that Germany was seeking to take control of Europe: 'The suspicion that we seek to establish a world empire... is arguably the most stupid of those directed against us. Our historical thinking and our cultural ideal lives and is woven into the assumption of diversity and the coexistence of free, strong states, nations and cultures.'⁴⁷

Benett's analysis of Germany contradicted this statement, speculating that the Germans wished to turn each nation into a carbon copy of Germany, a process which he felt would lead to the inevitable stagnation of European culture: '... the advance of civilization is dependent on the interaction, friendly or hostile, between two or more types; if there were only one type, there would be no interaction and no advance; and this would certainly be the consequence of our defeat.'⁴⁸ It is worth noting that both sides argued for the importance of interaction and exchange between cultures in the creation and maintenance of culture, and feared that this culture would stagnate without such interaction, while simultaneously maintaining that their opponents were attempting to stifle this development. The irony that the war which they argued would protect culture had cut off any real cultural exchange cannot have been lost on them, and is underscored by the similarity of argument between the two sides.

⁴⁵ *All for Germany*, pp. 23-4.

⁴⁶ Meinecke, *Kultur*, p. 19.

⁴⁷ Meinecke, *Kultur*, pp. 25-6.

⁴⁸ Benett, *England's Mission*, p. 12.

However, as we shall see in the next chapter, it was tempered by a belief that war inspired cultural development as well as destroying it.

In the previous chapter, we saw the way in which the creation and government of the British Empire was seen as proof of British hypocrisy, which proclaimed the freedom of nations while the British themselves oppressed others. In a pamphlet addressed to Americans with German heritage, Oncken highlighted the way the British protested against German actions in Belgium and France, and skimmed over the attacks of Belgian citizens on German soldiers (of which Oncken was convinced). He continued with a very neat example of comparative propaganda, suggesting that the British explain their destruction of the White House in 1813 before they criticised the Germans.⁴⁹ In this way, he sought to remind his readers not only of Britain's past history of violence, but also of the former enmity between Britain and America – a subtle hint that America should side with Germany rather than the Entente.

Closely linked to this notion that British actions flatly contradicted their professed beliefs was the old trope of 'Perfidious Albion', untrustworthy, duplicitous and false. German authors marshalled an array of examples to prove that Britain was not the honourable nation she pretended to be, either openly accusing her of spreading lies about Germany, or implying it through a judicious use of historical evidence. Citing the 'web of lies' created by the Entente as the reason that neutral countries were reluctant to support Germany, Roethe condemned the British in particular: the 'English man lies systematically and cold-bloodedly and consciously; he forges from the lie a poisonous weapon, against which his infamous Dum Dum bullets look virtually humane.' This was in sharp contrast to German behaviour, he claimed, which valued the truth above all else (though his use of Bismarck's politics as an example of this is, of course, highly suspect).⁵⁰ Eucken saw British 'defamation' as an 'unworthy' method of war, focused as it was on belittling the German character, presenting them as

⁴⁹ Oncken, *Weltkrieg*, p. 18.

⁵⁰ Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, pp. 19-20, 40.

reactionary, bellicose and militarist.⁵¹ The inconsistency of such a reproach, when German authors, including Eucken, were thoroughly engaged in attacking the British character was seemingly lost on Eucken, whose pamphlet *Die Weltgeschichtliche Bedeutung des deutschen Geistes* ('The Historical Significance of the German Spirit for the World', 1914) emphasised the nobility and greatness of the German character.

Authors took pride in this nobility – Fleischer described the German people as morally upright to a fault, so much so that even when Germany was being villanized by other nations, her honesty was not denied, though it was derided as impractical. The outbreak of military war had been matched by the declaration of a 'war of spirits. A systematic campaign of lies and slander against the German character, German views and German deeds commenced, cleverly devised, long organised, carried through with malicious tenacity', and Germany was unprepared for it. His awareness of the techniques of this propaganda is clear, and shows the influence of theories of crowd psychology on his thought: 'The method is simple and tested... One raises secretly... a number of accusations against which [the enemy] cannot defend himself, because he knows nothing of them... Just slander diligently and something will always stick...' He acknowledged the difficulty faced by Germany in the effort to counteract the image created by the Entente, noting that all the manifestos and declarations of internationally recognised Germans merely made the situation worse, because they were speaking in self-defence, and were therefore automatically at a disadvantage: 'All those professors' protests and pamphlets with which we have pestered the neutrals... can, however well meant, only impair our case. With them we fall into the failings of our enemies, and that is the most idiotic thing one can do.'

The only solution, he felt, would have been for Germany to fight back with more lies, but not only was it too late, the Germans did not have the same talent for lying as their opponents (a subtle gibe at the mendacity of the British) and would not have the same success.⁵² Salomon agreed that while lying might be an acceptable British trait, it was not in the nature of a German to behave in such a manner:

⁵¹ Eucken, *Bedeutung*, p. 5.

⁵² Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, p. 7-9, 15-7, 21-2, 25, 85.

‘It is not the good German way to replace the blow of weapons with the sharpness of the quill. We leave misconceptions, lies and the perversion of the truth to our opponents...’⁵³ In Nathan’s opinion, Britain had failed to make any headway against Germany militarily, and so had turned to ‘lying news reports, intimidation and diplomatic pressure’ to achieve her aims, and blamed the British cutting of the Atlantic telegraph cable in early August 1914 for the lack of sympathy Germany found in neutral countries.⁵⁴ The timing of this act was seen as significant – Hirschfeld opined that it showed that the British sought control of the news above all else, because ‘they knew only too well how dangerous the truth could be to them.’⁵⁵

Sanday sought to defend Britain against these accusations, and was frank in his belief that the British press had not deliberately distorted the truth in their reports. As for the charge that the British were hypocrites, Sanday was far more forgiving than his German counterparts. He argued that rather than acting against their professed ideals, the British, being human and fallible, merely failed to live up to them at times. Far worse, according to Sanday, was the German behaviour, which justified barbaric conduct as necessary and acceptable, asking if ‘[Germany] may... not be guilty of worse things’ than hypocrisy.⁵⁶ He also responded to ideas of the British character, asserting that they were at war for idealistic reasons: ‘It is not for commerce that Great Britain is at war... If Britons are fighting now, it is for more spiritual issues.... It is for an ideal that we are fighting...’⁵⁷ While the Germans might have philosophy, the British had poetry, a tradition of chivalry, and of respect for freedom.⁵⁸ The classical archaeologist Charles Waldstein (anglicised to ‘Walston’ in 1918) agreed, claiming that the British could indeed be selfish, but had never thought their needs alone were a sufficient justification for their actions⁵⁹ – a sharp retort to the Germans who rationalized the invasion of Belgium as a national necessity.

⁵³ Salomon, *England*, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Nathan, *Enttäuschungen*, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Hirschfeld, *Warum lassen*, p. 7.

⁵⁶ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 51-2, 77-8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 72.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 84-5.

⁵⁹ Charles Waldstein, *What Germany is Fighting For* (London, 1917), p. 52.

The Germans, on the other hand, championed the cause of German culture, and von Gierke praised youthful German culture over the old culture of France, admiring in particular the ‘internalisation’ (*Verinnerlichung*) of the German legal and political system – a system which examined its own mechanisms and meanings, and which extended to the German people rather than being restricted to their institutions. He had faith that this process of self-examination would continue while the War affected the soul of Germany⁶⁰ – in essence, he seems to have seen the War as a useful lens through which to examine the German sense of self and German society, a facet of the theory that war led to creation as well as destruction which we will explore in the next chapter.

The focus on internal versus external concerns was not new in Germany, but was part of a long tradition of a philosophical process of self-identification firmly founded in her history of division: ‘Germanness was, by necessity, a matter of spiritual negotiation rather than geographical or even racial delineation’.⁶¹ This is reflected in the propaganda, which often concentrated on internal values rather than concrete actions, on ‘internal, private virtues’ rather than the ‘external public values’ espoused by the Entente. These private virtues were presented as truth, authenticity and freedom, in contrast to the superficiality and pretence of their opponents.⁶²

Meinecke explored the picture of Germany presented by the Entente, and ridiculed their idea of German culture. According to the view of Germany’s enemies, he said, the actions of Bismarck and the teachings of Bernhardt, Treitschke and Nietzsche had distorted the German concept of culture, leading Germany to glorify power and the state above all else, an evaluation which distorted the German way of life. This characterization, Meinecke said, was categorically untrue. He cast the accusations made against Germany back to Britain, stating that they were the ones who valued success and wealth above cultural achievements, not Germany. ‘We are of the opinion that other traits of the picture which Britain has drawn of us do not fit us as well as they fit the English. Many

⁶⁰ von Gierke, *Krieg und Kultur*, pp. 93-4.

⁶¹ Eksteins, *Rites*, p. 67.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 77, 160-1, 200. Patrick Porter has noted a similar emphasis in German pastors’ statements, contrasting *Innerlichkeit* as the ‘crowning achievement of Germanic culture’ with the ‘spiritual emptiness of mercantile Britain.’ See Porter, *Slaughter*, p. 153.

portraits by subjective painters are self-portraits in the end, and therefore we say to their depiction of us: you resemble the spirit which you comprehend, not I!’⁶³ The idea frequently proposed by the British that Germany had been culturally richer before unification he dismissed as hypocrisy. According to Meinecke, the British valued wealth and social power, not the ‘life of the spirit’ which inspired the Germans.⁶⁴ Schulze-Gaevernitz indulged in similar speculations, postulating that the British, inspired only by the practical and cold, would subject the world in all its romance to the same pragmatic considerations. Revelation would be replaced by empiricism, duty by desire, happiness, and not good, would become the highest ideal of the world.⁶⁵ This is exaggerated, certainly, but it underlines the deep gulf between the German philosophers’ world view and the views they attributed to their opponents, while depicting a future which, they implied, no self-respecting German could relish.

Another author who explored the German concept of ‘innerness’ as a unique trait, which focused less on external appearances, and more on the intangible qualities of a character was Eucken. In 1898, he had expressed his concern that industrialisation had ‘usurped’ the world of the intellect, and thus constricted inner life. The War became for him a way to refocus German priorities, and create a new balance between the two.⁶⁶ In *Die Weltgeschichtliche Bedeutung des deutschen Geistes* (‘The World Historical Meaning of the German Spirit’, 1914), he described how the focus on the internal extended to all aspects of German society, and thereby had a profound effect on the development of each person in Germany. The German system, he claimed, aimed to cultivate the soul in its entirety, creating an ‘independent personality’ who could then apply such lessons to all aspects of life (this is remarkably similar to what the British professed to be their educational aims, despite each side claiming that their ideals were entirely different from those of their opponents). Eucken explained that there were therefore two intertwined elements in German life – the outer, which worked towards the ‘subjection of the physical world’ and was responsible for German technological

⁶³ Meinecke, *Kultur*, p. 6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 6-11.

⁶⁵ Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Freie Meere*, p. 12.

⁶⁶ See Beßlich, *Kulturkrieg*, p. 77-8.

and industrial progress; and the inner, which aimed at the cultivation of the soul.⁶⁷

Waxing lyrical on the qualities of Germany and the Germans, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff noted their diligence, their strength, and their innovativeness, all of which were under threat from the Entente.⁶⁸

Fleischer took up this theme, explaining how the War had brought out the true natures of the European nations, and compared the German 'worthy, pious and strong' to the degenerate powers of the Entente:

The good, honest German Michel! The innocent, simple man of truth! The high-minded, earnest, great youth, childlike and strong as an ox! No, you German working man, you will not erupt against Latin intrigue, Roman perfidy, Russian cynicism and Anglican hypocrisy.

In his view, the War was about the ideals of loyalty, truthfulness and justice, the 'struggle of nations for the spirit of humanity', and just as the War had brought out the best in the German character, so it had brought out the worst in her opponents.⁶⁹ He saw the two cultures as divided by irreconcilable differences:

There the expedient state, here the people's state, there cold reason, here warm feeling and wishes. There calculating use, outward advantage and lust for profit, here inward obligation, victory or death. There cold logic... here warm ethics... There civilization, here Kultur.

It was to the German spirit that the future belonged.⁷⁰ His separation of 'civilization' and '*Kultur*' reflected the earlier debate, differentiating between 'civilization' – the outer appearance of a cold

⁶⁷ Eucken, *Bedeutung*, pp. 13-5, 19.

⁶⁸ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 'Krieges Anfang', in *Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit*, Vol. I (Berlin, 1914), p. 8.

⁶⁹ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, pp. 14, 17-8, 25-6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 44, 63-4.

sophistication, and ‘culture’ – a more human, inner state which had a higher value, because it was based on emotion and true feeling, rather than pragmatic considerations of loss and gain.

Fleischer’s censure of Western civilization bears a remarkable resemblance to the criticisms that were frequently levelled at Germany. Basing the confluence of values on the ‘Roman spirit’, Fleischer decried the lack of political and social engagement in the Western countries, following laws because they were the law, and never questioning the morality behind them. Any method of war was acceptable to the West, Fleischer argued, as long as it served the interests of the state, and would have no bearing on the civilized nature of the nation because of its ultimate objective. He also explored the deployment of colonial troops, which he viewed as barbaric, though he denounced the manner in which they were being used by the Entente, as cannon fodder, whose only purpose was to die for ‘civilization’ (implying at least that he subscribed to the notion that Europeans had an almost paternal duty towards the inhabitants of their colonies, preserving them from harm).⁷¹

He also used Germany’s past achievements as proof of her culture, pointing to scientific discoveries and technological achievements as well as her feats of art and culture. This was a heritage of which no other country could boast, and yet, he was astounded, they could continue to call Germany uncivilized and barbaric.⁷² Hirschfeld also spoke of Germany’s cultural achievements, noting her contributions to music, philosophy and science, though he was anxious to recognise that France and Britain had also made contributions, even if they were not comparable with those of Germany. He noted that the other nations of Europe frequently turned to Germany as an example, in education, public services and in her army, and saw this as part of the motivation for war, as older nations disliked having younger nations outstrip them, and sought to destroy that which was innovative and new. To this cause for dislike, he added the ‘somewhat coarse, earthy speech and manners’ of the Germans’, which went against the more polished behaviour of the French and British, and inspired a sense of condescension and superiority. However, he compared the elegance of French and British society to the forthright nature of Germany, emphasising the values of *Lehr-* and *Lernfreiheit*, and noting that many foreign

⁷¹ *Ibid*, pp. 28-9.

⁷² Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, pp. 89-94.

intellectuals had decided to make their work public in Germany first, where it was sure to get a fair hearing.⁷³

This reference to the German idea of freedom is important, highlighting as it does another major area of dissension between the two sides. German freedom was seen as distinct from that of their opponents, being based on the collective rather than the individual. The state was seen as the guarantor of freedom, but the freedom it protected was, again, an internal one – it was argued that only in the collective could the individual find true freedom, and the emphasis was equally divided between the duties of freedom, and the intellectual advantages provided by the German system.⁷⁴ Goldmann contended that despite her reputation, Britain was not as democratic as she claimed to be, contrasting the values of liberalism and democracy to prove that they were ultimately incompatible. Liberalism was founded on the idea of the freedom of the individual, he explained, while democracy, with its emphasis on equality, required conscious regulation. He extended this to state that total freedom would lead to radical inequality, and total equality to radical constraint. As the fundamental premise of British life was liberalism, democracy could therefore only exist in an incomplete state.⁷⁵ The flawed logic here is obvious – he took his examples to extremes, and forced an incompatibility which did not exist in reality, but it is clear that the obvious conclusion to his argument is that though Britain might be incapable of maintaining a truly egalitarian and democratic state, Germany, with its more ordered society, was perfectly suited to it.

Against the contention that Germans had no individuality, and were simply following the rules laid out for them by the governing classes, Marcks argued that the German devotion to the state was, in fact, evidence of their commitment to unity and the nation. This commitment was not forced, he said,

⁷³ Hirschfeld, *Warum lassen*, pp. 28-30, 33.

⁷⁴ See Bleuel, *Bekenner*, p. 80-1.

⁷⁵ Goldmann, *Geist*, p. 24. Ringer explores German intellectuals' connection between *laissez-faire* politics and cultural dismissal in *The Decline of the German Mandarins*, arguing that for them, the subordination of social and political concerns to industry left no room for cultural and intellectual life, which was seen as 'non-productive'. See Ringer, *Mandarins*, pp. 145-6.

but freely given, and as a result would support the German nation through the hardships of war.⁷⁶ This was connected to the image of the German military as highly mechanised, each individual knowing his place and incapable of stepping out of it. On the contrary, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff claimed, the German army was a particularly free institution, with each soldier aware of his place, and choosing to follow orders *because* of that freedom.⁷⁷ Roethe, as we have seen above, had great respect for the German army, and praised it as developing the strengths and virtues of the nation. While his British counterparts viewed the German army as an institution which stripped the individual of all autonomy and initiative, Roethe saw it as a school of leadership, reliant on independent men who knew how to take orders, but also how to lead when necessary. This, he felt, was a reflection of a deeper German ideal of freedom, which united the individual and the State: ‘Belonging and independence, the individual and the whole, the unification of both of these is German freedom, and we want no other freedom than that.’⁷⁸

Von Gierke indignantly defended the German state against accusations of tyranny and autocracy, claiming that freedom was better protected in Germany than in any other country:

... the popularity of our State and legal system is so manifestly visible, one ceases to leer covetously at the allegedly freer institutions of our western neighbours. So little have the democratic Republics and the mock kingships subjugated by parliamentary regiments... been tried in the storm!... Through our representation of the people, our self-government, our free community constitution all the classes of our society take an active part in the decisions of political life.⁷⁹

This was supported by Troeltsch, who stated that the German idea of freedom was very different from

⁷⁶ Marcks, *Wo Stehen wir*, pp. 17-21.

⁷⁷ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Ursachen*, pp. 26-7.

⁷⁸ Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, pp. 35-7.

⁷⁹ von Gierke, *Krieg und Kultur*, pp. 95-6.

that of the Entente, but that in fact, the German devotion to and dependence on the State meant greater freedom for the individual than the more obviously free nations of the West – Georg G. Iggers has described this as an ideal which was seen as more ‘socially responsible’ than the states of the West.⁸⁰ However, it is clear that the German argument that German freedom was of a particular kind, in which obedience to the State was a path to greater freedom than that of the Western democracies had little impact on British thinkers, as Smith reiterated the trope of German obedience – this time not because the German knew no better, but because he had no choice, his obedience was not founded on respect.⁸¹

British values also came under discussion, and were hotly defended by the British intellectuals. The principles they espoused were presented as ‘integral to national life and threatened by adversaries’, focusing on stirring words such as honour, democracy, justice, and liberty.⁸² On the German side, Roethe denounced the morality of the British as ‘Bandit Morality’, following a principle of doing what was right for the country, regardless of the actual morality of the case – an argument which would no doubt have prompted outrage in Britain. He echoed the idea of two Germanies in his suggestion that Britain had degenerated from her great past, noting that the old England of Shakespeare was far from the hypocrisy of the Britain of his time, so caught up in ‘cant’ that she deceived even herself.⁸³ Others such as Hermann Oncken, took up this theme, dividing a ‘peace-loving’ Britain from an imperialist one, and hoping for the ultimate triumph of the peaceful British over those who had come to prominence with the outbreak of war.⁸⁴

Just as the Germans were frequently accused of being incapable of understanding other peoples, Fleischer used the idea of the English tourist, following a guidebook to check things off rather than truly experiencing the culture, as a metaphor for the British inability to comprehend other nations and

⁸⁰ Iggers, ‘Storici’, p. 107

⁸¹ Smith, *Soul*, pp. 18-20, 93, 96, 102.

⁸² Monger, *Patriotism*, pp. 155-64.

⁸³ Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, pp. 26-7.

⁸⁴ See Schwabe, *Wissenschaft*, p. 27.

peoples.⁸⁵ Heyking deconstructed the notion of Britain as the home of political freedom and parliamentary rule, questioning the automatic assumption made by many in Britain that their political system was more representative than the German autocracy. According to Heyking, the Kaiser served as the guarantor against a misuse of power by class leaders in parliament, whereas the much-lauded British system was dominated by the wealthy in both the House of Lords and the House of Commons. In his view, even the constitution of Russia, which was a by-word for repression and a lack of representation, was more advanced than that of Britain, which was incredibly slow in beginning to introduce reforms to improve the lot of the lower classes.⁸⁶

In Britain's defence, Matheson depicted the British as quiet and unassuming (a portrait which would perhaps surprise the colonies), stating that they tended not to talk of ideas, but rather 'do the right thing and make no fuss' and felt that this was what prompted accusations of hypocrisy. He compared the ideals of Britain and Germany, arguing that despite the Germans' many references to *Kultur*, the 'sense of honour, fair play, and gentleness to women and children' which was an essential part of the British character had found no place in the German army. This savours a little of the same failure to appreciate the culture of others of which the Germans themselves were accused, but Matheson went on to state that 'Freedom and Justice as we understand them, have no vital meaning in Germany,' citing the tight control of the Press in Germany, the glorification of the state, particularly by the intellectual classes, and the lack of criticism levelled at the policies of the ruling classes. Nevertheless, the definition he gave of British liberty, with his critique of 'abstract freedom, unbalanced by discipline, order, and control, unguided by a positive ideal...' is strikingly similar to the ideal of freedom proposed by the German intellectuals – freedom with boundaries, ordered and regulated.⁸⁷ This was a typically Idealist view of freedom, which was presented as the ability to make choices – but these choices were expected to conform with the general good.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, pp. 10-1.

⁸⁶ Heyking, *Wirkliche England*, pp. 5-10.

⁸⁷ Matheson, *Ideals*, pp. 4-8, 12-3, 17.

⁸⁸ Boucher, *Idealism*, p. 12.

W. G. S. Adams proclaimed that the War was a war of liberty for Britain, and a love of liberty was the common bond of all in the British Empire. His pamphlet was a call to arms for the other nations of the British Empire, though clearly aimed at the Dominion countries rather than the colonies which were directly ruled, as he was careful to note that it was the self-governing states in the Empire which were free to leave should they so choose. By declaring that liberty was the hallmark of the Empire, he called on the Dominion nations to join with Britain in defending it, to make a choice as free men to stand up for the freedom of humanity.⁸⁹

For the German Goldmann, on the other hand, the individualist perspective of the British lifestyle led to a concomitant lack of community feeling. He compared the heroes of Shakespeare – all individuals – to those of Schiller, who were symbolic of the people as a whole. This, he felt, was mirrored in the difference between British and German philosophy, law and science, all of which were based on the good of the individual in Britain, and that of the collective in Germany. For Germany, he claimed, all people were equal but this was not the case for Britain, which saw the world in terms of ‘British’ or ‘not British’, upper or lower class, urban or rural. Every individual in Britain had freedom, but ‘that all citizens – or all people – should be equal, appears to be bare nonsense to the true Englishman.’⁹⁰

Equally, Schulze-Gaevernitz had little time for the British notion of freedom, stating that

On the one side is all that the Briton summarises in the word ‘freedom’... self-determination, self-responsibility, self-help... On the other side... the claim to power of the ‘chosen people’... Service of one’s nation appears as service of humanity, which can have no greater blessing, than that the British colour the map of the world red.⁹¹

It is worth noting that both sides accused the other of considering themselves to be a ‘chosen people’,

⁸⁹ Adams, *Responsibility*, p. 18.

⁹⁰ Goldmann, *Geist*, pp. 22, 25.

⁹¹ Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Freie Meere*, p. 11.

specially set apart and particularly worthy – a supposition which the accusers considered to be hubristic and arrogant.

Of course, these underlying values were closely linked to ideas of barbarism, and many in Britain saw the actions of the German army as proof that despite her high ideals, Germany was a barbaric state at heart. Tomás Irish has noted that the burning of Louvain and shelling of Rheims Cathedral were particularly important to the intellectual world, as symbols of culture whose destruction ‘played a key role in precipitating a schism in the international community’.⁹² Stories of atrocities committed in Belgium by German soldiers were circulating from the early days of the invasion, and thoroughly undermined German claims to culture. In *When Should the War End?* Sanday described German principles as ‘incompatible with civilisation’ and a danger to its future.⁹³ Arthur Hassall, a Fellow and tutor at Christ Church, Oxford, called the Prussians ‘savages’, their actions in Belgium ample justification for ‘their new and generally accepted designation of ‘Huns’,’ and saw the invasion of Belgium as a revelation of the true nature of Germany, claiming slightly hysterically that,

...by letting loose swarms of Huns upon defenceless towns like Louvain and Tirlemont and Dinant, and allowing them to destroy priceless art and architectural treasures, and generally to pillage and burn, Germany has shown Europe that her triumph and that of her ‘Huns’ would throw civilization centuries back, and would eliminate the word ‘Honour’ from all dictionaries.⁹⁴

For Gwatkin in 1916, the events in Belgium were the only proof necessary of the barbarism of the Germans as a nation, and it was underlined by the fact that the soldiers seemed to be following orders, rather than acting at random. This was proof of the irredeemable nature of the loss of German national virtue:

⁹² Irish, *Universities*, p. 25.

⁹³ Sanday, *War End*, p. 8.

⁹⁴ Arthur Hassall, *Just for a Scrap of Paper*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. I (London, 1914), p. 10, 12.

It seems as well established as facts can be... that these outrages are not due to the passions of undisciplined soldiers, or even to the connivance of brutal officers, but to the direct commands and systematic policy of the highest authorities. No doubt there has been some exaggeration... but a very large discount will still leave the Germans below the level of savages, for savages are not in the same way sinners against light.⁹⁵

The Russian émigré and historian of medieval England Paul Vinogradoff admitted that Germany had contributed a great deal to the development of European culture, but believed that her growth in the years since the Franco-Prussian War had led to a dangerous arrogance and a mistaken belief in her own superiority, and again, he turned to the events of the early weeks of the War: ‘There are other standards of culture besides proficiency in research and aptitude for systematic work,’ he said. ‘The massacre of Louvain, the hideous brutality of the Germans towards non-combatants... have thrown a lurid light on the real character of twentieth-century German culture...’⁹⁶ Matheson spoke of other civilian deaths to be placed at Germany’s door – the shooting of an English tourist in Germany by a Prussian officer the day before war was declared (the detail is telling), the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the poisoning of wells in South Africa. Matheson attributed this to the glorification of militarism, which allowed actions which would have been condemned by a civilized state.⁹⁷ Even Binyon’s Heine, the personification of the old Germany, noted the way German bombs ‘aimed at a fortress... fly straight to a cathedral,’ while his French Knight condemned the German officer for attacking civilians simply because they defended their homes: ‘But now it seems the victors butcher, and applaud themselves for butchery.’⁹⁸

Though atrocities certainly occurred, and some were committed according to official orders, John

⁹⁵ Gwatkin, *England’s Case*, pp. 4-5.

⁹⁶ Paul Vinogradoff, *Russia: The Psychology of a Nation*, ‘Oxford Pamphlets’ Series, Vol. III (London, 1914), pp. 5-6.

⁹⁷ Matheson, *Ideals*, p. 15.

⁹⁸ Binyon, *Bombastes*, p. 11, 19.

Horne and Alan Kramer's extensive study of the issue has shown that many German soldiers, including commanding officers, were convinced that Belgian civilians were participating in a *franc-tireur* war, prompted by fears stemming from the experience of guerrilla fighters in the Franco-Prussian War. Though civilian resistance on the scale assumed by the German army did not exist, stories of Belgian attacks and atrocities on German soldiers appeared in the home press as early as 9th August, both reinforcing soldiers' beliefs (and thus, their willingness to see sabotage in every mishap), and helping to convince Germans at home that the German Army was being treacherously attacked by a population feigning docility only to act when the Army's back was turned.⁹⁹

No wonder then, that on the German side, Lehmann-Haupt accused the Entente of committing atrocities against German troops, recounting tales of German women and children being interred in France, of German prisoners of war kept under guard by colonial troops, of the cruelty of Belgians, and of the unjust Russian policies which forced German farmers from their land into poverty and distress.¹⁰⁰ Russia was a useful counterpoint to accusations of German barbarism, and German authors accused Britain of 'betraying' Western civilization in their alliance, presenting Germany as the defender of Europe against Russia imperialism.¹⁰¹ Roethe waxed lyrical on the fine qualities of the German soldier, heroic, respectful of women and children, courageous, generous to their opponents, good-humoured and big-hearted. Showing either a deliberate attempt to deceive or, more likely, a touching faith in the veracity of the reports reaching Germany, he even claimed that the German soldiers had attempted to save the Town Hall of Louvain when the savage inhabitants fired at it.¹⁰² Proudly rejecting the civilization of the Entente, Fleischer proclaimed: 'If this civilization can do no more than lie and depredate, nothing more than make snide remarks, vilify, beslobber, revile all that is holy, whip up all satanic powers and human desires, trample loyalty and faith underfoot – then away with this civilization!' Western civilization denounced the civilization of Germany, he said, but

⁹⁹ For a full examination of the issue, see Horne & Kramer, *Atrocities*, especially pp. 18-23, 77, 94, 134-8, 175, 419. Also Audoin-Rouzeau & Becker, *Understanding*, p. 51

¹⁰⁰ Lehmann-Haupt, *Krieg und Deutschtum*, pp. 20-22.

¹⁰¹ See Schwabe, *Wissenschaft*, p. 30.

¹⁰² Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, pp. 36-7.

Germany wanted no part of their ‘decadence and impotence.’¹⁰³ Refusing to see ‘barbarian’ as an insult, he instead used it as a link to the glorious Teutonic past, to the German tribes who had defeated the Roman Empire – and subtly implied that they would do so again.¹⁰⁴ This was probably influenced by a wider veneration of the German past in the early years of the 20th Century – as recently as July 1914, the *Berliner Tageblatt* had begun the serialisation of a novel focusing on the Germanic tribes defeating the Romans, and publication continued after the outbreak of war.¹⁰⁵

Of course, the British were not immune to accusations of barbarism and cruelty in their turn, particularly when it came to the participation of colonial troops in European conflicts. Salomon contended that British brutality in waging war was inescapable, as it was the way Britain had always fought. He suggested that it was her constant struggle with uncivilized nations in the colonies which had inured her to the barbarity of her methods, and reminded his readers of the British use of Dum Dum bullets in colonial wars. It should therefore be no surprise, he argued, that she should use similarly unscrupulous tactics in Europe.¹⁰⁶ Fleischer too wrote of the assassination and murder of innocent Germans in Britain, Russia and Belgium, the mutilation of wounded German soldiers on the battlefield, of British troops using Dum Dum bullets and of Belgian treachery. He underlined that such horrors were not merely the actions of the savage peoples of Russia or the colonies, but from those who had been an example of civilization to the world.¹⁰⁷ This civilization was ‘self-interest, clothed as virtue and logical principle. Morally taken it is hypocrisy, English Cant...’; it was form without substance and without true emotions. Deception was a fundamental part of the civilization championed by Britain, in Fleischer’s opinion, and would continue to be so unless Germany fought against it: ‘In the future too, they will dissemble and lie, deceive themselves and us and not stop until our German culture, built on morality, practicality, justice and manly virtue is extended to them.’¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, pp. 25-6.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 64-5.

¹⁰⁵ Eksteins, *Rites*, p. 84.

¹⁰⁶ Salomon, *England*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, pp. 19-20, 29.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 35-6, 53-7, 52, 95.

Lehmann-Haupt focused on the conduct of the War, turning the case of the Lusitania, which was frequently used as an example of German ‘frightfulness’, into a damning indictment of the British. He maintained that the British were outraged not because of the loss of civilian lives, but because of the loss of munitions, and suggested that in fact, it was possible that the British had hoped the ship would be sunk, in order to turn American public opinion against Germany. He closed by stating that ‘England had no right to endanger and sacrifice American citizens as a shield to protect their weapons’ transports’.¹⁰⁹ This was a transparent effort to regain the support lost as a result of the sinking of the Lusitania in an attempt to place Britain in the role of perpetrator – the obvious counter-argument was that while Britain should not have used civilians as a shield, Germany should not have fired on them.

Though the British denied any suggestion that they had used Dum Dum bullets at the Front, they rarely engaged in the same sort of defence as the Germans on this point, preferring to emphasise German brutalities.¹¹⁰ Perhaps the reason for this was that any attempt at justification was invariably rather simplistic and open to counter-argument, as we see in Gwatkin’s response to accusations of immoral conduct. He stated that British attacks were aimed only at military positions, and that the actions of her Navy were far more humane than those of the German Admiralty. Furthermore, he claimed that Britain was only following the lead of the Germans with regard to the use of gas or the blockade – one could, of course, contend that following the lead of an acknowledged barbaric enemy was hardly an acceptable defence.¹¹¹

Despite these differences, there were still a number of factors which both sides claimed to be fighting to defend – such as the rights of small states, the freedom of the world, and international law. The latter point has already been touched on in Chapter Three, in connection with the German invasion of Belgium, but here we will take the opportunity to draw it out into the wider debate on morality which

¹⁰⁹ Lehmann-Haupt, *Krieg und Deutschland*, pp. 28-9.

¹¹⁰ Though Sanday’s denial is slightly equivocal – he explained that there was no reason for Britain to risk her good standing by using them, but also said that mistakes occur. See *Meaning*, pp. 39-40.

¹¹¹ Gwatkin, *England’s Case*, pp. 5-6.

was a significant concern for many academics in wartime.

The members of the Oxford History Faculty presented the cause of the War as the ‘noblest for which men can fight’ – the preservation of the European community of nations. They suggested that it was easier for Britain and Russia to think in transnational terms due to their positions on the edge of Europe, secure and free of geographical pressure, and contrasted the German insistence on necessity with a belief in the public law of Europe. They admitted that it was in Britain’s interest to do so, but argued that this did not invalidate the nobility of the cause.¹¹²

Particularly important was the duty of upholding international treaties, which became valueless if they were not defended: Prothero asked ‘...if treaties are thus to be broken with impunity, if the most solemn international agreements can be thrown aside the moment they prove irksome to a great military power, what becomes of all international morality?’¹¹³ Barker’s treatise on Treitschke and Nietzsche answered this question in his presentation of Treitschke’s views on international treaties. Barker pronounced that in Treitschke’s view, international treaties were a voluntary self-limitation on the part of a power, and thus open to repudiation at any time the state chose.¹¹⁴ The reader can conclude that allowing international agreements to bow to the interests of the state steers one treacherously close to the morality of Treitschke and his compatriots, and, given the damning indictment of their philosophy in British texts, to a dangerous and undesirable outlook. H.W.C. Davis gave a much clearer answer in *What Europe Owes to Belgium* (1914), and stated that if international treaties could be overthrown at will, with no consequences, ‘the inevitable result will be a frightful anarchy, a ceaseless warfare of all States against all.’¹¹⁵

For Murray the War had a greater purpose than the defence of Belgium, it was not simply ‘one of the ordinary sordid and bloody struggles of nation against nation’, but a war to save Europe, and by

¹¹² *Why At War*, pp. 115-7.

¹¹³ Prothero, *Duty*, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ Barker, *Nietzsche and Treitschke*, p. 23.

¹¹⁵ Davis, *Belgium*, p. 9.

extension, the world, from German values.¹¹⁶ Benett agreed, calling the ‘preservation of... freedom’ the ‘special task which has been set before England’, both her own freedom and that of others. He acknowledged that the Germans also claimed to be fighting for freedom, but argued that theirs was a ‘freedom of thought’ as opposed to the British fight for political freedom, and that it was limited to Germany only. In Benett’s opinion, the fundamental difference between Germany and Britain was the difference between ‘the love of humanity and the love of country’ – Britain was fighting for a higher cause, and a higher purpose.¹¹⁷ Adams too spoke of the rights of small countries, claiming that because of Britain’s sense of nationalism she had great sympathy with small nations struggling for independence and sought to support them.¹¹⁸ Again, Adams seemed to be rather short-sighted in his statements – just as his statements on the freedom of the colonies was limited to those which were already practically independent, here, his sympathy for nationalism seems to have been confined to those nations which were already self-governing. Ireland’s struggle for independence was entirely overlooked, and though obviously a complicated case, completely contradicted Adams’ benevolent pronouncement of sympathy and support. Adams was not the only one to raise such concerns, and British authors tried to present ‘a conditional right of nationhood’, which maintained the integrity of Empire, while still emphasising Britain’s commitment to liberty.¹¹⁹

For many Germans, such high-handed statements were meaningless. Piloty argued that there was a fundamental flaw in the European system of states, as each sought to be a great power, regardless of their actual status, and each followed its own interests without regard to others.¹²⁰ In his view, international law was a sham, ignored until a country sought redress, and incapable of functioning as intended. As a result, it hardly seemed to deserve protection. Fleischer scoffed at British pretensions to be the defender of human rights, noting the oppression of the natives in Egypt and India, the lack of concern for South African civilians during the Boer War and the attempt to starve the German people

¹¹⁶ Murray, *Thoughts*, p. 7, 17

¹¹⁷ Benett, *England’s Mission*, pp. 13-5.

¹¹⁸ Adams, *Responsibility*, p. 19.

¹¹⁹ See Stapleton, *Englishness*, pp. 93-4.

¹²⁰ Piloty, *Ursachen*, pp. 7-8.

in the war of 1914.¹²¹

In opposition to British claims, Marcks maintained that it was actually Germany who sought to defend the freedom of the world alongside her own, and the War was one which would affect the whole world, because the British had set their mark everywhere. It was Germany's task to protect the liberty of those areas that were currently free of British rule from falling under her oppressive thumb.¹²²

Schulze-Gaevernitz supported this, proclaiming that

Germany declares any condition to be adverse to culture and hostile to humanity in which a Power arbitrarily contrives to hobble the world economy, to hit the existence of all other peoples in the heart, and carry destitution and suffering to the most remote huts. Germany fights for the freedom of the seas, therefore for humanity – even for France.

He explained that Germany sought equality for herself and in this fight, was also fighting for the freedom of humanity.¹²³ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff also presented Germany as the watchdog of humanity, protecting the culture of the world. Nevertheless, although he rejected the idea that Germany was trying to absorb other nations, his approach did not quite allow for free development. He was convinced that the time had come for Germany to lead the world, not politically, but in values and ideals, and quoted Schiller's statement that 'every people has their day in history, but the German day will be the harvest of the whole world'.¹²⁴ While he offered the world their share in this German harvest, it seems that there was little room for others to go their own way.

Both sides also argued that the other was mistaken in their impression or ideas of the opposing nation.

Terry categorically stated that 'the picture of England as the 'robber State' is the creation of German

¹²¹ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, p. 30.

¹²² Marcks, *Wo Stehen wir*, p. 14.

¹²³ Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Freie Meere*, pp. 23-4.

¹²⁴ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 'Ursachen', pp. 29-31.

professors trying to find in our past history an excuse for the policy of conquest they have been taught to admire.’ He accused Germany of generalising from ‘very imperfect’ knowledge when it came to statements on British colonies and dominions, and related only the evidence which suited her conclusions rather than the real state of the British Empire.¹²⁵ Sanday also discussed German ideas of British foreign policy, and in his opinion, the Germans viewed Britain as being far more manipulative than she actually was, accusing her of ‘embroiling nations with one another while we carry off the prizes.’¹²⁶ He saw the War as a tragic mistake, stating that

The Britain that Germany is fighting, or thinks she is fighting, is not the real Britain. It is Germany’s own fault. She has constructed out of her own imagination an idea of Great Britain which certainly does not correspond to the reality...¹²⁷

Barker’s *Candide* made the same point, stating:

You are practical enough in daily business... and yet when it comes to politics, where you profess to be realists, you seem to me to be the slaves of pictures. The ‘England’... which you detest... it is all a picture-England, an ogre out of a fairy book.¹²⁸

However, the German authors were convinced that the British were labouring under similar misapprehensions. Fleischer was sure that British statesmen were relying on imperfect information when making judgements, too self-absorbed to learn other languages, and getting their facts from newspapers and reports second-hand and in translation.¹²⁹ Lehmann-Haupt and Reventlow agreed,

¹²⁵ Matheson, *Ideals*, pp. 22-3.

¹²⁶ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 86.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 108.

¹²⁸ *All for Germany*, p. 7.

¹²⁹ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, p. 12.

stating that the average Briton knew nothing of Germany and had never wanted to know.¹³⁰ Troeltsch took another approach, suggesting that the German culture was repulsive to the decadent Western nations, and so they were less inclined to understand Germany.¹³¹ Just as Terry accused the Germans of generalising from imperfect knowledge, so Troeltsch charged the British with selectively choosing specific statements and theories to ‘prove’ that Germany was an autocratic, power-hungry state.¹³²

The distinction drawn by Sanday above, that Britain might not be living up to her own ideals, but that Germany had committed far worse crimes, highlights an important factor in the debates discussed in this chapter – the difference between those questions which allowed a dialogue to continue, and those in which consensus had broken down and been replaced by polemic. Approaches such as that of F.S. Marvin, who attributed Germany’s actions to fear, rather than hatred, and viewed Treitschke rather sympathetically, or suggestions that their opponents held a mistaken view of each nations’ intentions stand in sharp contrast to denunciations of political values or methods, accusations of ‘bandit morality’ and barbaric behaviour. The latter highlighted the loss of shared values (or at least, the assumption of them), and were underscored by statements such as those of Barker, Lehmann-Haupt and Reventlow, which accused their opponents of a fundamental lack of understanding of the nation they were fighting. The mistrust which characterized these denunciations could not but make dialogue difficult, both during the War, and in its aftermath. Nevertheless, these convictions, however mistaken, strongly informed each side’s opinion of their opponent, and not only provided motives for the War, but also suggested predictions for future conduct when the War ended. As the conflict continued, war aims became a more and more vital subject for propagandists, but many ideas about the War’s effect on society and the recreation of the post-war European constellation of states were circulating even in the early days of the conflict. The next chapter analyses these visions of how the War would rescue a failing society, recast the political stage, and create a new world.

¹³⁰ Lehmann-Haupt, *Krieg und Deutschtum*, p12; Reventlow, *England*, p. 26.

¹³¹ Troeltsch, *Kulturkrieg*, p. 7.

¹³² *Ibid*, p. 17

A New Society

A great war is the day of judgement; a mighty earthquake, in which everything that can be broken is shattered to atoms, in which men and nations find themselves alone and naked in the presence of God.

Only what is indestructible abides the shock.

-Spenser Wilkinson, 1914¹

The First World War has often been viewed as a major turning point in the history of the 19th and 20th Centuries, marking the transition from the long 19th Century to the short 20th, creating a schism between the apparent halcyon idealism of the Edwardian period and the disillusioned and disenchanted post-war era, with its mechanised society, economic crises and much-vaunted loss of innocence (fifty years later, Philip Larkin's *MCMXIV* would lament 'Never such innocence again'). Even in the earliest days of the War itself it was seen as a transformative experience, revolutionising all strata of society and creating a new unity, sense of purpose and strength in the belligerent nations. Such considerations also prompted visions of a world reborn from the ashes of the War, of a new and brighter future, and in these early days, authors frequently speculated on the nature of that world, varying from the ideal future resulting from the victory of their own country, to the disaster which would accompany the victory of the opposing side. These predictions acted as a useful support to that propaganda which focused on diplomatic machinations or the brutality of invading forces, inspiring soldiers and civilians to maintain morale for the sake of a new world in the future, or warning of the terrible consequences should they give up hope.

This chapter will explore these interpretations of the War, first examining the notion that society had been transformed by war, and then investigating the futures envisaged by the authors of the pamphlets in the early stage of the War, both in terms of how it would or should end, and of their visions of the European structures of power in the post-war world. There was a strong link between these post-war

¹ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, p. 50.

predictions and the feeling that the war had revolutionised society – both were based on an assumption that the War would create a new, utopian world, in which the petty disagreements of the past would be erased, and a new and better future would be born. Such visions were undoubtedly naive and idealistic, and some indeed, could only have been possible at the start of the War, before the realities of trench warfare and the horror of modern fighting became apparent. Nevertheless, we see in these predictions the germinal ideas which would later inform the actions of the Versailles Peace Conference, with hints of the spread of democracy, of international governing associations, and of future cooperation between states.

The rhetoric of degeneration and rejuvenation was a major influence in artistic circles in the pre-war years, inspiring new movements in art and literature and espoused by groups such as the German Youth Movement, as well as the more extreme Futurists and Vorticists. Though the ‘universal dissatisfaction’ with the old order expressed by many artistic circles was not shared by the majority of academics, the idea of decadent and degenerate societies became a concern in many European countries at the end of the 19th Century, which led to concerns about a loss of community and social cohesion.² These themes also entered the public consciousness, and found a new expression in wartime, which seemed to offer an opportunity to bring about renewal, acting as a way of unifying the nation, while also creating the necessity to maintain such unity in face of enemies without and within.³ The War also contributed to a sense of spiritual renewal, focused on what Aribert Reimann describes as ‘religiosity’ rather than religion, a search for meaning in the conflict which encompassed traditional religion, but also found symbols and talismans in superstition, the links between home and fighting front, and the natural world; and the idea of the War as a way to rejuvenate and redeem society was expressed both by those at home and at the front.⁴ In particular, the rhetoric of sacrifice, adapted from Christian doctrine, and based on 19th Century modes of thought which shifted pre-war

² Wolfgang J. Mommsen, ‘German artists, writers, intellectuals and the Meaning of War 1914-1918’, in John Horne (Ed.), *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe During the First World War* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 22-5; Ringer, *Mandarins*, pp. 258-68.

³ See Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Massachusetts, 1979), pp. 43-4, 87-92; Reimann, *Krieg der Sprachen*, pp. 190-6.

⁴ Reimann, *Krieg der Sprachen*, pp. 91-114; Porter, *Slaughter*, p. 6.

anxieties about anomie onto the War, ‘helped recast wartime death as a sacred undertaking that would change the nation’, not only protecting it, but also transforming it into a united and cohesive community.⁵ In Britain, the War was seen as a ‘medium of truth’, a test of the nation and a revelation of her real character and ability to stand fast in the face of death;⁶ in Germany, the unity of the *Burgfrieden* was a sure sign of future greatness, and of the essential oneness of the German people, strong in adversity and sure to lead to victory.

The idea that the War was a transformational experience was frequently repeated, and in Germany, it was often accompanied by a strong sense of isolation from the rest of the world – evidenced by the emphasis given to theories of encirclement which were discussed in Chapter Five. This was articulated by Erich Marcks on 13th October 1914 in a speech given in Munich, when he spoke of the ‘huge amount of hatred’ on all sides, and of the way Germany had been cut off from other nations by the War. He described the War as ‘exhilarating’, ‘harrowing’, and ‘confusing’, affecting and altering every aspect of life and every person in Germany, causing them to question their sense of self and their position in the world.⁷ Given the dominant role of historians in academic propaganda before and during the War,⁸ Marcks’ emphasis on his training as a historian in his examination of the War carries extra weight, and underlines the contemporary sense of the importance of the War as a world-altering event. Already in the early months of the conflict, the title of his pamphlet, *Wo Stehen Wir? Die politischen, sittlichen und kulturellen Zusammenhänge unseres Krieges* (‘Where Do We Stand? The Political, Moral And Cultural Relationships Of Our War’) highlighted the awareness of the significance of the War as a new locus for the orientation of international relations, personal identity and cultural frameworks. He spoke of the sense of unity which had permeated German society, and emphasised the desire of the intellectual classes to participate in the war effort – highly conscious of the richness of German culture, they were therefore more inspired to fight for it, in Marcks’ view. His view of war, even in October, when the heroic image of the Western Front was beginning to fade, was

⁵ Porter, *Slaughter*, pp. 17, 45, 51.

⁶ Reimann, *Krieg der Sprachen*, p. 46.

⁷ Marcks, *Wo Stehen Wir* (Berlin, 1914), pp. 5-6.

⁸ vom Bruch, *Krieg*, p. 75.

of a transcendent experience, the individual sacrificing himself for the good of the nation as a whole, lost in the masses, he became the spirit which animated the nation and enabled it to survive – a view which Barbara Beßlich categorises under neo-idealistic approaches to the War.⁹ Marcks' interpretation of war was a Nietzschean one; it appeared as the test of the nation, masculine and purifying, pushing the nation into the future, and he spoke of it in religious terms, seeing it as the ultimate human endeavour.¹⁰

Many German authors highlighted the new sense of unity and shared experience engendered by the War. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff compared the solidarity and camaraderie of the soldiers at the Front to the people at home, admonishing them to support one another regardless of social class or religious affiliation.¹¹ A year later, in October 1915, he made the same plea, praising women and children for playing their part and calling on those at home to support those in need as long as they were doing their best for the War, not only because all Germans were one family, but also in order to reassure the soldiers at the Front that their loved ones were being cared for.¹² The Centre Party politician Matthias Erzberger's pamphlet, *Die Mobilmachung* ('The Mobilization', 1914), was fervent in its admiration for the way the whole German nation had pulled together at the outbreak of war, all facets of society doing whatever they could to support the war effort whether they could join the army or not, and both Lehmann-Haupt and Hermann Oncken extended this unity beyond the German borders – Oncken highlighting the renewed sense of commonality with Austria; and Lehmann-Haupt looking to the United States, where there were not only thousands of Germans seeking to return home to fight, but also a strong community of German-Americans who could potentially prevent America from acting against German interests.¹³

Furthermore, this unity was seen by some as the fulfilment of a German socialism, and was thus a

⁹ Beßlich, *Kulturkrieg*, p. 8.

¹⁰ Marcks, *Wo Stehen Wir*, pp. 20-3.

¹¹ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Krieges Anfang*, pp. 5-6.

¹² Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Kriegswinter*, pp. 39-43.

¹³ M Erzberger, *Die Mobilmachung* 'Politische Flugschriften' Series, No. 5 (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1914), pp. 25-6; Lehmann-Haupt, *Krieg und Deutschtum*, p. 23-4; Oncken, *Weltkrieg*, pp. 16-7.

revolution comparable to that of 1789.¹⁴ We have already seen the importance of history in the propaganda narratives of the War, and the ‘ideas of 1914’, a phrase taken from the social scientist Johann Plenge, functioned as shorthand for the culture for which Germany was fighting, presenting the War as something more than simply self-defence against a world of enemies, but as a ‘higher, predestinate necessity rooted in the antithesis between the German spirit, German culture, German political forms, and the life and forms of her enemies.’¹⁵ In particular, they were contrasted with the values of the Entente, which were characterised by the French Revolution, and a dichotomy was created between the ‘ideas of 1914’ and the ‘ideas of 1789’. The ideas of 1914 were presented as a natural progression from those of 1789, and the history of the German Empire was set in opposition to the traditions of the French Revolution – ‘liberty’ and ‘equality’ had been co-opted by France, and in contrast, Germany proposed a particularly German freedom and inner life.¹⁶ 1789 had proclaimed the centrality of liberty, equality and democracy, but in the German view, this had really led to the dominance of anarchy, self-interest, greed, and individualism. Against this, German authors held up the ‘ideas of 1914’ – namely a strong monarchy and government, and the primacy of the state over the individual, which led to inner freedom and benefited the whole community.¹⁷

The idea of war as a cathartic force had been present in German philosophy since the early 19th Century at least, and was articulated in 1914 in particular with the German notion of the ‘August Days’, or the ‘Spirit of 1914’.¹⁸ This emphasised a sense of social unity caused by the War which transcended divisions of class and party. The *Burgfrieden*, or ‘fortress peace’ mentality reflected the sense of political unity in the face of an external threat, and was a vital part of the German propaganda effort – indeed, David Welch describes it as the ‘fulcrum upon which [imperial war propaganda] developed,’ and it was seen almost as a duty to the nation in danger.¹⁹ In particular, the Kaiser’s

¹⁴ Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 132.

¹⁵ Fritz Fischer, *Germany’s Aims in the First World War* (New York, 1967), pp. 155-6. Mommsen has argued that the presentation of Germany as a missionary of culture was based on an unrealistic assessment of Germany’s real power in the world’. See Mommsen, *Meaning of War*, pp. 29-32.

¹⁶ See von Ungern-Sternberg, ‘Sinnlosen’, p. 87.

¹⁷ Bleuel, *Bekennen*, p. 77; Mommsen, ‘Intellettualli’, p. 53; Schwabe, *Wissenschaft*, pp. 43-4

¹⁸ See Schwabe, *Wissenschaft*, pp. 38-9.

¹⁹ Welch, *Germany and Propaganda*, p. 2; Verhey, *Spirit*, p. 119.

declaration that ‘I know no parties any more, I know only Germans’ was repeated as proof of the unifying effect of the War and the shared feeling of being under attack. In a speech given on 2nd September 1914, Roethe spoke of this new unity, emphasising the change in society from the peace of July to the War, and a concomitant awareness of what was really to be valued in life:

The world of vanities lies behind us in unsubstantial outline,²⁰ as if they had never been there. We have been awoken. That unsettled peace is like a dream. Now we feel free, now we feel as though we have recovered, and we perceive through all the terrible solemnity the deep, infinite happiness of a great, full national feeling, such as everyday life has never granted us. Those who have lived through these days, through these weeks, can never lose their sacred benefits. The tremendous experience binds us together, it purifies us, it elevates us, and it will purify and cleanse us, so we trust, to the far-off days of the future, as long as the memory of the fateful hour of the German Empire and the German people remains.²¹

Roethe spoke of the German people as a ‘Holy Phalanx’, indivisible and united by a faith in their leaders and in their Emperor, in the sacred mission of Germany against ‘barbarism’ and ‘over-culture’.²² This was in sharp contrast to the degenerate Germany of the pre-war days, which had been focused on party struggles, selfish concerns and indulgence. The transformation which had come over German society, the way in which Left and Right had joined together in spite of their differences, was a surprise even to Germans, according to Roethe, and was joined to a new awareness of the

²⁰ ‘...wesenlosem Scheine’, presumably a reference to Goethe’s *Epilogue to Schiller’s “Song of the Bell”*. Written after Schiller’s death, the verse in question (verse four) speaks of Schiller’s spirit passing on to a place of beauty and truth, leaving the vulgarities of life behind – an image which also accords with the idea that the War had purified society. Given the idolised status of Goethe in Germany, the aphorism ‘Und hinter ihm, im wesenlosen Scheine/Lag was uns alle bändigt, das Gemeine’ (‘And behind him, in unsubstantial outline/Lay that which subdues us all, the vulgar’) would not have been unfamiliar to Roethe’s audience.

²¹ Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, pp. 17-8.

²² ‘Überkultur’, Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, p. 32.

nationhood of Germany.²³

Discussing German degeneracy in more detail, von Gierke described the ways in which special interest groups had taken over public life before the War, and the increasing tensions of the class struggle in Germany. The people, in von Gierke's view, had become alienated from the State, and also from their heritage, ignoring their own history in favour of a new fascination with foreign peoples and cultures. This is perhaps not entirely fair, given the popularity of the Pan-German and German Navy League movements, but von Gierke clearly lamented the loss of old German values and felt that they had been twisted to bring about the deterioration of society of which he spoke. German freedom had been used to promote pacifism, which emasculated the people, he explained, German good humour had been poisoned by a new materialism. He went on to denounce the envy, self-interest, frivolity and sensuality which had come to dominate the new Germany, and praised the War for allowing the German people to find their way back to a patriotic and united society, highlighting the advent of a new world, in which German culture would be purified and strengthened.²⁴

Similarly, Fleischer denigrated Germany's internationalism in the years before the War, blaming the loss of the primacy of German culture on the growing influence of other nationalities in many circles – industrial, academic and cultural – and the glorification of foreign artists, musicians and playwrights above German artists. He reserved a special disapprobation for the new role of Berlin as a city of amusement, with its late nights, flowing champagne, and loose morals. It is clear that he felt that this too was due to the pernicious influence of internationalism which weakened national feeling and encouraged people to forget the old German principles in favour of the louche and sordid pleasures of the new city. This was dangerous, Fleischer opined, suggesting that Germany was at risk of forgetting her own values, and he held Britain up as an example of a nation once Germanic which had fallen prey to the 'lying spirit' of Latin civilization. This, above all, was to be guarded against, and he ended

²³ *Ibid*, p. 19.

²⁴ von Gierke, *Krieg und Kultur*, pp. 86-9, 93.

his pamphlet with a call to his readers to recognise and value their own culture.²⁵

The evangelical theologian Paul Kaufmann took up this theme, comparing German culture to a star which shone through the darkness, the ‘hidden treasure brought to light’ through the War. While von Gierke viewed the War as opportunity for new growth, Kaufmann saw it as a process of refinement, allowing Germany to slough off her outer shell and reveal the ‘noble kernel’ of the German people, returning to her old purity and greatness.²⁶ Kaufmann viewed war as a creative as well as a destructive force, and opined that the national feeling awakened in Germany at the outbreak of the War could not be erased, ending divisions and replacing them with a sense of national unity.²⁷ Von Gierke saw war in Darwinian terms, and believed that war only destroyed what was already weak and ailing, while allowing the new and strong to thrive. He felt that the war of 1914 was no different, and that German culture would emerge triumphant when the war ended:

There is no doubt that it will be German culture which spreads her rays from the centre of our part of the world. She will remain the basis of all being in the German Empire, which stands and falls with her, but she will also emerge purified and strengthened from the rejuvenating bath of this vast struggle for existence.²⁸

Such optimism that the War would renew culture would fade by 1916, but even in the early months of the War not all German authors believed that the divisions in Germany had been banished forever.²⁹ Ernst Troeltsch warned that the ‘August Days’ should not be seen as proof that internal conflicts would no longer trouble German society, predicting that when Germany was no longer under threat, the unity engendered by the War would also pass. However, he felt that the memory of the ‘August

²⁵ Fleischer, *Vom Kriege*, p. 58, 96.

²⁶ Paul Kaufmann, *Soziale Fürsorge und deutscher Siegeswille*, ‘Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit’ Series, Vol. II (Berlin, 1914), pp. 33-4.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 49.

²⁸ Von Gierke, *Krieg und Kultur*, p. 81, 93.

²⁹ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, ‘Einleitung: Die deutschen Kulturellen Eliten im Ersten Weltkrieg’, in *Kultur und Krieg* (München, 1996), p. 11.

Days' should live on, and the sense of solidarity inspired should be maintained.³⁰ Franz von Liszt agreed, though he viewed political conflict as the lifeblood of a state and so the return to party struggle was not necessarily to be dreaded. Nevertheless, he too envisaged an ideal future, describing a new order, in which the bitterness of such conflict would be left behind, the class struggle would be resolved, and all groups would find political representation, be they landowner or factory worker, Christian or Jew, Prussian or Alsatian. Arguing that the bond created by the experience of war would remain in peacetime and would change social interactions in Germany, von Liszt constructed an ideal future society despite his apparent realism.³¹

Schulze-Gaevernitz, on the other hand, described a mobilized Germany which already seemed to have become this ideal society as a result of the war effort, with an increased faith in government and in the economy, a decrease in unemployment, new organisations established to promote war work and new initiatives designed to maximise German resources. He also praised the speed with which German authorities had begun to utilize the resources of occupied territory, describing how German soldiers and the peoples of the occupied territories were working together. He seems to have taken genuine pride in this fact, viewing the requisition of crops and lumber as proof of the benevolent nature of German occupation and of their rehabilitation of farmland and industry. Presumably, there was little information available as to the nature of the occupation and the resistance of locals to the occupying forces, but we should also bear in mind that this text was written in the first six months of the War, before the German economy began to falter in the face of the increasing demands of industrial warfare. Again, he presented a vision of a German society liberated by war, stating that the War was a test which would allow Germans to examine themselves and their homeland, 'deepening and refining' her soul, allowing for a 'renewal of our corporeal as well as our spiritual, our personal as well as our national being.'³²

German authors were not alone in viewing their nation as a degenerate society, redeemed and

³⁰ Troeltsch, *Kulturkrieg*, , pp. 34-5.

³¹ von Liszt, *Staatenverband*, pp. 9-10.

³² Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Freie Meere*, pp. 25-6, 30-1.

cleansed by war. The resonance found by Rupert Brooke's 'swimmers into cleanness leaping'³³ is a prime example of the way in which many interpreted the War in its early days, and British academics were by no means exempt from such considerations. William Benett described pre-war Britain as an easy target for the military aims of Germany, seemingly divided by party conflict and the question of home rule for Ireland, focused on selfish concerns and unconcerned by issues of national defence. Though he openly admitted that such a view was one-sided, he maintained that it was based on tendencies which were very present in British society, tendencies against which Britons had to guard:

We are the heirs of the noblest cause of all times, that of Freedom, and, by our apathy, and indolence, and selfish luxury, we have come near to betraying it. Many of us have never fallen, many others, but not all, have repented. Let our repentance be heartfelt and general....

Britain had awoken, Benett claimed, and now had not only to fight for peace, but to ensure that she did not fall back into her old ways, the 'sloth and self-indulgence' of the past.³⁴ P.E. Matheson repeated such concerns in May 1915, noting the way Germany had assumed Britain would be divided internally, decadent and unwilling to intervene in international affairs, and condemning the 'indolence' which had marked British organisation before the War.³⁵

On 25th August 1914, Spenser Wilkinson echoed the rhetoric of the War as a test of nations, describing it as 'the day of judgement', which only the strongest would survive. He too criticised many in Britain for allowing themselves to lapse into indolence and selfishness, confident that the Navy would protect them and failing to prepare themselves for war. Nevertheless, he was sure that Britain would rise to the challenge, and spoke of the realisation that despite the superficial divisions between classes 'we are all of us only men and women, with one common bond between us – our

³³ From 'Peace' (1914), in Rupert Brooke, *1914 and Other Poems* (London, 1915), p. 11.

³⁴ Benett, *England's Mission*, pp. 18-9.

³⁵ Matheson, *Ideals*, pp. 17-8.

country'.³⁶ In a letter to the *Springfield Republican* written on 3rd September 1914 he reiterated this conviction, proclaiming that though Britain might 'go down in the struggle... we shall go into it united and in good faith.'³⁷

Sanday explicitly acknowledged the notion of war as a purifying force, and noted five areas in which the War could be said to have a positive effect on society – not only in Britain, but in Germany as well. The first was the 'sobering influence of war', which he felt was sorely needed to combat the increasing decadence and luxury of European life. The War had reminded people of what was truly important, he felt, and materialism was giving way to real values. National unity was his second point, and though it was to be expected that patriotism would encourage the setting aside of other concerns in the face of a greater threat to the nation, the effect had been greater than Sanday could have hoped. This was supported by his fourth point, which was the feeling of solidarity between allies on each side of the conflict. Furthermore (point three), the War had tested the 'moral fibre' of Britain, and had shown that she would stand and fight for justice in Europe. His fifth point was based on the proliferation of pamphlets examining the issues of the War, which not only examined Britain's 'mission in the world', but also served as a 'political education' for all of Britain.³⁸ These more complex interpretations of the positive aspects of war did not exclude the straightforward purifying function described by the German authors, and indeed, it was Germany that would be cleansed in Sanday's view, after the War

We shall see the real Germany... slough off this spotted skin which through an unfortunate chain of circumstances has grown about her. We shall see the real Germany emerge, chastened and purified by suffering, with brain cleared and conscience quickened, speaking the old great language and haunted by the old far-off visions... the Germany of many a book that stands upon our own shelves, our companions and our teachers, the product of

³⁶ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, pp. 50-2.

³⁷ Wilkinson, *Britain and Germany*, p. 28.

³⁸ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 11-7.

concentrated and disciplined thinking and of laborious and patient toil.³⁹

As with Kaufmann we see the War presented as a way to return to the old Germany, free of dangerous modern ideals, but from the opposing side, which saw German modernity as the originator of the War and the cause of the suffering which was to end its rule.

Just as Germans focused on the Kaiser's subordination of party conflict to the national cause, Murray emphasised the way in which political divisions in Britain had been put aside in the face of the War, describing the 'bond of fellowship' which now united men who had not had any common ground before the War: 'Thank God, we did not hate each other as much as we imagined; or else, while hatred was real enough on the surface, at the back of our minds we loved each other more.'⁴⁰ Arthur Hassall made the same point, noting that the 'party squabbles' of England had been forgotten in the fight against Germany, thwarting any German plan to take advantage of British divisions at home or in Ireland.⁴¹

Unity was a strong theme in many of the pamphlets, and many authors dwelled not only on the way in which society had come together against a common enemy, but also on the importance of maintaining this cohesion when the War ended. In Britain there was a further strong emphasis on the support of the colonies, which served to remind her opponents of her strength as well as acknowledging the efforts made by those otherwise unconnected with the War. A Fellow of All Souls, Sir Ernest Trevelyan's pamphlet *India and the War* (1914) is a perfect example of this, noting the many expression of loyalty from Britain's Indian subjects, even those not under direct British rule.⁴² Such a pamphlet could be directed at India, aimed at encouraging others to support Britain and discourage rebellion with the knowledge that potential rebels would stand alone; at other colonies, holding India up as an example to be followed; at neutrals, to counteract German accusations of oppressive regimes;

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 124.

⁴⁰ Murray, *Thoughts*, pp.3-4.

⁴¹ Hassall, *Scrap*, p. 8.

⁴² Ernest Trevelyan, *India and the War*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. V (London, 1914), p.6.

or indeed at Germany, as an indication that any attempt to foment rebellion was doomed to failure. A.B. Tucker's pamphlet on Canada (*Canada and the War*, 1915) served a similar purpose though aimed at a Dominion nation rather than a colony, noting the troop numbers pouring in from Canada despite the sacrifices which had to be made to support Britain financially, the contribution of native tribes, and the unhesitating manner in which she had accepted a role in the War.⁴³ Wilkinson has already been mentioned above, and in August 1914 he acknowledged the support of the colonies for Britain, and Britain's support for her Government. Nevertheless, he seems to have felt that there was still room for improvement as he called for absolute support of the Government, greater solidarity between the regular army and other military institutions, and spoke of the way in which every British citizen was seeking a way to do their part for the War – a subtle way to remind those who were holding back that they had a duty to the nation.⁴⁴

Clearly, ideas of transformation and national unity received particular attention in Germany, analysed in greater depth than that in which many of the British authors chose to engage, and both Charles Sarolea and Thomas F.A. Smith recognised the importance of this sense of unity to the German war effort. Smith attributed this closing of ranks to the manipulations of the Kaiser, who had convinced his people that Germany was under attack by a deliberate twisting of the truth, uniting them 'in an unjust cause.'⁴⁵ Sarolea described the 'driving power of tremendous spiritual and moral forces, of an inflexible purpose, of a compelling idealism' which motivated the German people, united in their loyalty to the Fatherland and inspired their military achievements. However, he later went on to discuss the 'drooping spirits of the [German] nation', their willingness to accept the hardships of war only maintained by a belief in a final victory and by ignorance of the war aims of the leadership.⁴⁶ It is clear that this particular volume was adapted from an earlier text, and its inconsistencies mean that Sarolea's statements should be approached with caution, as it can be extremely difficult to establish

⁴³ A.B. Tucker, *Canada and the War*, 'Oxford Pamphlets' Series, Vol. XIX (London, 1915), pp. 4-14. Tucker, again, is an obscure figure.

⁴⁴ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, pp. 66, 53-4.

⁴⁵ Smith, *Soul*, pp. 257-8.

⁴⁶ Sarolea, *German Problems*, pp. 101-2, 228. Though published in 1917, the introduction is dated 1915, and the book was adapted from *The Anglo-German Problem*, which was published in 1912. The content tends to jump between time periods, and as such, can be difficult to situate in the propaganda narrative.

the context in which he was writing. In this instance, it is likely that the latter statement, which accompanies a discussion of war aims, was added at a later date to highlight the increasing difficulty of maintaining German morale as the War continued.

The German authors also examined the morale of their opponents, specifically pointing to divisions in society. Rohrbach claimed that in both France and Britain popular opinion was against the War on a fundamental level, and pro-war sentiment would crumble with military defeats. He argued that this was because, unlike Germany, neither Entente Power was defending their very existence, but were acting from nationalist sentiments which could not sustain morale in the longer term⁴⁷ – though this does overlook the riposte that France had been invaded and could therefore claim to be defending her existence. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff noted the pre-war divisions in Britain due to the Home Rule and Suffragette movements, and cited a lack of confidence in then-Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George in comparison with the healthy unity of the German nation.⁴⁸

Considerations of national unity and morale led naturally to speculations as to how the War would or should end, and a number of authors were firm in their convictions. Pearse Higgins denied that it would be the end of all war, but hoped that it would ‘make wars increasingly difficult and rare in the future’. Above all, he felt that Britain must fight to destroy the glorification of war as a political tool, to give the ‘death-blow... to the anarchical doctrine that might is right, that war is a necessity to political idealism and politics *par excellence*.’⁴⁹ Though much of the ‘fight to the finish’ narrative is connected with the later years of the War, even at this early stage both British and German authors wrote of the dangers of coming to a premature peace before their aims were achieved. Rohrbach insisted that the whole German population would oppose a ‘half-peace’, which would end the War, but would leave Germany’s opponents in a position to prevent Germany from achieving world power status or attack her again. In his opinion, all the sacrifices of war would be worthless if the European

⁴⁷ Rohrbach, *Krieg*, p. 96.

⁴⁸ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, ‘Ursachen’, pp. 25-6.

⁴⁹ Pearse Higgins, *Law of Nations*, pp. 27-8.

situation remained unchanged and an ‘empty peace’ was signed.⁵⁰ Sanday took a similar stance in 1917, when the issue of war aims was more openly discussed by governments, arguing that those who called for peace were taking a short-sighted view of the War by focusing on ending the present horror rather than on preventing its repetition. He maintained that until Germany had repudiated the principles which had inspired her bellicosity, principles which fundamentally opposed civilized values, Britain could not make peace with her and had to hold out until Germany agreed to ‘renounce her doctrine and the practices she has based upon it’.⁵¹ Lujo Brentano acknowledged that there were those in Britain who also wanted a peace which would ensure that a recurrence of the War was impossible, but argued that the only way this was possible was if a peace was signed which would allow the free development of all peoples, end British dominance at sea, and protect Europe from the menace of Russia – in other words, a peace which achieved German war aims.⁵²

However, discussions as to how to end the War paled in comparison to predictions as to what the peace would be like. A sharp division was drawn between the future following a German victory, and that following a British one, with each side foretelling disaster should they lose, and a glowing new world if they won. Though there was a great deal of discussion regarding the internal changes which the War would bring, this thesis aims to explore the interaction of Britain and Germany, and so will leave that to other pens. Equally, speculative war aims were just that, speculation, as at this stage of the War, governments held back from explicit discussions of war aims. It is also worth bearing in mind that the war aims debate was aimed at a home audience as well as abroad, which may help to explain some of the more extreme positions, particularly among German annexationists.

In Britain, there was little official acknowledgement of war aims before 1916, as not only did they have to be coordinated with Britain’s allies,⁵³ she still hoped to bring Italy onside and concrete plans would undermine potential bargaining power (though Spenser Wilkinson approached this issue from

⁵⁰ Rohrbach, *Warum*, pp. 27-30.

⁵¹ Sanday, *War End*, p. 3, 8-9.

⁵² Brentano, *England*, p. 14

⁵³ See H.E. Goemans, *War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination and the First World War*, (Princeton, 2000), p. 190:

the opposite point of view, seeing the establishment of war aims as the first step towards winning neutral support⁵⁴). Nevertheless, some indication of what Britain was fighting for was found in Asquith's speech at the Guildhall on 9th November 1914, in which he stated that Britain would keep fighting until Belgium had recovered what she had lost in the War, France had been safeguarded against future aggression, the rights of small nations had been placed on an 'unassailable foundation', and Prussian militarism had been destroyed.⁵⁵ Given the circumstances surrounding Britain's entry to war, this focus on restoring freedom to Europe and destroying German militarism rather than on any British gains was unsurprising. Though the majority in Britain supported the War, a small number of anti-war groups pushed for a rapid end to the fighting, advocating a 'peace by negotiation' which would ensure that negotiations were based on 'equity' rather than victory, preventing a future war of revenge. However, there was little sympathy for pacifist views in Britain in 1914, with Bertrand Russell one of the very few intellectuals to speak out. Dissent would not grow until 1916 with the introduction of conscription, and even then, intellectual dissent was mainly focused around Cambridge and the liberal Bloomsbury Group, rather than a widespread objection to the War.⁵⁶

In Germany, the issue was viewed as potentially divisive by both military and political authorities, who forbade discussion of war aims in the press in any but the most general terms, focusing instead on vague notions of freedom for oppressed peoples.⁵⁷ Ideas of war aims were certainly circulating, and a number of war aims programmes were drawn up - Bethmann-Hollweg's September Programme, composed before the Battle of the Marne, though not made public, explored ideas of a German *Mitteleuropa* (Central Europe) and territorial expansion in Europe and in Central Africa, as well as the future dependence of the French economy on Germany. War aims were pushed in particular by Pan-Germanists and industrialists, and the Pan-German Programme, written on 28th August, followed similar lines to Bethmann-Hollweg, though suggesting more extensive territorial annexations. Nearly 2000 copies of the Pan-German programme were circulated in December 1914, at a time when the

⁵⁴ Wilkinson, *August 1914*, p. 49.

⁵⁵ H.H. Asquith, 'Speech at the Guildhall, 9th November 1914', in *War Speeches by British Ministers, 1914-1916* (London, 1917), p. 59.

⁵⁶ See Pennell, *Kingdom United*, pp. 88-9; Irish, *Universities*, pp. 17, 70.

⁵⁷ Welch, *Germany and Propaganda*, p. 68.

uncertainty of the military situation had prompted the Government to repress all talk of war aims. This meant that the Pan-Germanist push for annexations and expansion dominated the discussion of war aims, untempered by an official government statement. Though petitions were made to the Government to discuss war aims in February and March 1915, they were denied, accompanied by assurances that Germany would not settle for a premature peace, and that war aims would be discussed once victory was assured. Italy's declaration of war in May 1915 forced a brief statement on war aims to boost morale, focused on the need to safeguard Germany against future attack.⁵⁸

The official silence on war aims did not prevent a division among German intellectuals between annexationists, who sought total victory and territorial expansion, and a non-annexationist minority, who recognized the practical limits to German expansion, and focused instead on securing the future safety of Germany, with limited territorial adjustment.⁵⁹ In both cases, however, the War became almost a 'divine judgement', the trial of fire through which German ideals would pass in order to achieve their true prominence in the world.⁶⁰

Concerns over the future existence of a nation, as discussed in Chapter Five, could have a significant impact, with anxieties over the future of Germany prompting extreme nationalist views amongst previously moderate thinkers, influencing their attitudes towards war aims.⁶¹ There was a sharp division between moderate and annexationist authors, which probably found its roots in the 1890s, in the conflict between ultranationalist conservatives who pushed for an aggressive foreign policy, and more restrained intellectuals who believed that Germany should have a place on the world stage, but sought internal reforms as a way to bring this about.⁶² The views of the annexationists are perhaps best epitomised in the most well-known statement of German war aims in this early stage of the War:

⁵⁸ For an in-depth discussion, see Fischer, *Aims*, pp. 101-9, 165-7, 194; Ringer, *Mandarins*, pp. 189-92; Stibbe *Anglophobia*, pp. 80-135.

⁵⁹ See Ringer, *Mandarins*, pp. 189-92

⁶⁰ For a thorough examination of this debate, and of its impact on the political life of the Reich, see Welch's *Germany and Propaganda*, particularly chapters 3 and 6. Peter Hoeres discusses the idea of the War as a 'divine judgement' in *Philosophen*, p. 266.

⁶¹ von Ungern-Sternberg, 'Sinnlosen', p. 79.

⁶² See Iggers, 'Storici', p. 109.

the 'Seeburg Address', seen as the 'high point of the Pan-German Campaign', and published by theologian Reinhard Seeburg on 20th June 1915. Written in conjunction with prominent Pan-Germanists and signed by 1,347 intellectuals, among whom were 352 university lecturers including Erich Marcks and Dietrich Schäfer, the 'Seeburg Address' promoted a strongly annexationist approach to war aims, and it reiterated many of the tropes of German propaganda – the War had been forced upon Germany, who was happy to live in peace with her neighbours; her enemies sought to destroy the German Empire; Germany was fighting for the freedom of Europe from the barbarous East and the power-hungry West.⁶³ Though claiming that Germany only sought 'worldwide recognition in accordance with the extent of [her] cultural, economic and martial power',⁶⁴ the detailed enumeration of German war aims seemed to completely contradict this statement. Again, we find a warning against a premature peace which would not last, and the 'Address's insistence on securing Germany's future so that a similar situation would never arise echoed British calls for a war to end war.

However, it is difficult to see how the harsh peace terms proposed would lead to a lasting peace. France was to lose territory in the east and along the northern coast in order to secure Germany against Britain, as well as much of her colonial empire. The 'Address' also proposed that control of industrial concerns in these territories would be passed to Germans, and the inhabitants of the area would have no political influence in the Reich. Similar controls were to be put in place in Belgium, which would be entirely under German rule to prevent it from acting as a shield for British machinations, and an eastern expansion was to create a barrier between Germany and Russia. Britain was to be forced to recognise Germany as a world power, and the authors suggested the creation of a European economic community independent of British influence. Furthermore, they emphasised the necessity of the freedom of the seas ('the one war aim on which all German academics... agreed'⁶⁵), and discussed ways in which to break British maritime dominance, via the North Sea or the Suez

⁶³ See Böhme, 'Einleitung', p. 19; Bleuel, *Bekenner*, p. 89; Iggers, 'Storici', p. 105; 'Seeburg-Adresse', 20th Jun. 1915, in *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart, 2014 (first published 1975)), p. 125.

⁶⁴ 'Seeburg-Adresse', p. 126.

⁶⁵ Stibbe, *Anglophobia*, p. 62.

Canal, on which communication in the British Empire depended. These stringent terms also included reparations, and though the authors recognised that these would be contingent on the economic situation of their opponents after the War, they felt that ‘no amount of money could be too high’ for Britain.⁶⁶

More moderate thinkers answered the ‘Seeburg Address’ two weeks later, publishing a counter-manifesto on 9th July 1915. This was composed by Hans Delbrück, who opposed the Pan-Germanist movement, and members of his *Mittwochabendkreis* (‘Wednesday Evening Circle’), a group of intellectuals who had gathered together since the earliest weeks of the War in order to discuss the concerns of the day. Directed to the Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, the response to the ‘Seeburg Address’, known as ‘Delbrück’s Counter-Manifesto’ (*Delbrücks Gegenerklärung*), was signed by a smaller number of intellectuals (estimates vary between 70 and 141), including Troeltsch, Einstein and Max Planck, who sought to distance themselves from annexationist aims.⁶⁷ Reminding the Chancellor that Germany had entered the War for self-defence, the authors urged him to follow a peace policy which corresponded with this aim. Just as the signatories of the ‘Seeburg Address’ saw it as their duty as intellectual leaders to clarify German attitudes towards a future peace, the signatories of the Counter-Manifesto considered it their duty to oppose these attitudes, believing that expansion would merely weaken the German Empire. Furthermore, ‘*we profess the principle that the annexation or incorporation of peoples who are politically independent and accustomed to autonomy is to be condemned.*’⁶⁸ They were concerned with maintaining the integrity of the German Empire, feeling that the introduction of subject peoples would undermine its hard-won unity, and professed their conviction that there were other ways to obviate the danger of future war than the establishment of barrier states. Convinced that the sacrifices and heroism of German could only lead to victory, they trusted that this victory would secure Germany’s future as she would no longer have anything to fear from other nations. They were not as moderate as this may suggest, however, concluding that

⁶⁶ ‘Seeburg-Adresse’, pp. 126-33.

⁶⁷ Jelavich states it was signed by 141, Bleuel says 80, Böhme gives a figure of 70. Böhme, ‘Einleitung’, p. 19; Jelavich, *European Culture*, p. 46; Bleuel, *Bekenner*, p. 90.

⁶⁸ ‘Delbrücks Gegenerklärung’, in *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart, 2014 (first published 1975)), pp. 135-6. Italics in original quote.

Germany could only sign a peace which corresponded with her interests and strategic needs, including the freedom of the seas.⁶⁹

Both annexationists and moderates were particularly concerned to secure Germany from future attack, and to undermine British dominance. These were the primary points made by Marcks in his suggestion of war aims, which included, at the very least, British recognition of Germany's world power, and territorial acquisitions to east and west which would secure German borders. Though emphatic in his statement that Germany did not wish to enlarge the Empire, he argued for a new organisation of states in Europe, suggesting the freedom of Poland, and a Central European League with Germany in the position of *primus inter pares* as a bulwark against Russia, Britain and the Americas. He also predicted the creation of a greater German colonial Empire, which would allow her a new forum for interaction with her neighbours and a new field for internal endeavours.⁷⁰ Similarly, Von Gierke foresaw a future in which France would no longer be able to seek revanche, Russia would accept the limits of her influence in Europe and above all, Britain would lose her supremacy at sea and learn that 'only through hard work, not perfidious thieving politics can one claim economic ascendancy'. Though unsure of the political constellation of this future Europe, he was certain that Germany, in coordination with Austria-Hungary, would hold political supremacy, and that such an outcome would be worth the hardships of war.⁷¹ Agreeing with the general tone of these predictions, Rohrbach argued that France should remain a great Power, though Russia should lose territory in the west and south, where oppressed peoples who were not of Russian descent wished to be free. It was to Britain that he attributed the real threat to the future of German peace, and declared that 'no peace can be concluded with England before England's power to damage is destroyed forever.'⁷²

Roethe hoped for a future in which those of Germanic antecedents would come together in a closer friendship than that which had existed before the War, particularly mentioning Belgium as an

⁶⁹ 'Delbrücks Gegenerklärung', pp. 136-7.

⁷⁰ Marcks, *Wo Stehen Wir*, pp. 28-31.

⁷¹ von Gierke, *Krieg und Kultur*, pp. 91-2.

⁷² Rohrbach, *Krieg*, pp. 99-100.

important connection for the post-war nation.⁷³ Taking a more radical approach, Goldmann prescribed a complete overthrow of the old order of Europe and the establishment of a new system, in which those who had talent would thrive and society would achieve a state of real unity. Though he believed in the Social Darwinist view of war, in which the struggle of nations was the process of natural selection on a larger scale, he felt that although Germany was bound to fight younger nations in the future, it was entirely possible to establish peace within Germany's own circle.⁷⁴

The idea of a central European federation was not new, and theories of *Mitteleuropa* were debated before the War – leading industrialist Walther Rathenau had suggested an economic union between Germany and Austria-Hungary to the Chancellor as early as 1913, and the *Deutsch-Österreichischer Wirtschaftsverband* ('German-Austrian Economic Association') was founded just before the outbreak of war.⁷⁵ It was the First World War which made the concept famous, however, particularly after the 1917 publication of Friedrich Naumann's *Mitteleuropa* ('Central Europe').⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Naumann was not the first to articulate this concept during the War – in 1915 Schulze-Gaevernitz argued for a confederation of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy and France as a counter to the power of Britain, which had been gained at the expense of the peace of Europe.⁷⁷ He was not the only author to include Germany's enemies in this potential future federation – Wilamowitz-Moellendorff specifically spoke of his wish that France and Britain take part in a concert of nations, though he suggested that they should perhaps be subordinate to Italy and America. Just as Schulze-Gaevernitz claimed that Germany had no desire for territorial expansion, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff cited Germany's value for other nations as proof that she had no wish to absorb other Germanic nations inside her borders.⁷⁸

⁷³ Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, p. 31.

⁷⁴ Goldmann, *Geist*, pp. 38-41.

⁷⁵ Fischer, *Aims*, pp. 10-11, 101-6. He suggests that it was a way to 'mend' the split between Austria-Hungary and Germany which resulted from the *Kleindeutsch* solution to the question of unification following the war of 1866 (p. 4).

⁷⁶ John Neubauer mentions a number of earlier schemes for central European political cooperation in 'The Idea of Europe – Treading on Native Ground?', *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Fall, 2006), p. 364.

⁷⁷ Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Freie Meere*, p. 29.

⁷⁸ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Ursachen*, pp. 29-30.

As early as 1914, von Liszt described his plans for the future of Europe in great detail, seeking to establish that Germany was fighting a war of defence to ensure a stable peace after the War. He began by reassuring his readers that Germany had no desire to annex territory, though he too emphasised the importance of securing German borders against future attack and of gaining new colonies for Germany's growing markets and increasing population. Despite the collapse of international law in the summer of 1914, von Liszt was convinced that it would be rebuilt after the War, in conjunction with the reestablishment of a community of states. However, the system needed reorganisation, as the outbreak of war had proven its weakness. His vision was of a state grouping which worked in concentric circles, with a central European confederation held within a wider European organisation, which was in turn linked to other states beyond Europe. These groupings were then to be made strong enough to stand against individual state ambitions and ensure peace. In particular, Germany's relationship with France, Russia and Britain had to change. Von Liszt was sure that France would no longer be a threat following a German victory and wished for a cordial relationship between the two. Russia would remain an enemy, but would be rendered harmless, as she could not stand against Germany alone, particularly if Russia's western borders were altered. Britain, however, with her superiority at sea and vast colonial Empire, was and would continue to be a danger to Germany, and security against Britain should be the primary aim of German foreign politics after the War.

The only way to create this security, and by extension to ensure the freedom of the other states of Europe from the power of Russia, Britain, and America, was to create a union of continental states. Germany and Austria-Hungary were to form the core alliance in this confederation, which would include the Netherlands, Holland, Scandinavia, Switzerland and Italy, as well as the Balkan States (some of whom, von Liszt noted, would have to be kept in line) and European Turkey. The inclusion of Switzerland was to provide a link to France, should she choose not to join, and Turkey offered access to Asia and Africa, while Liszt hoped that France, Spain and Portugal would strengthen the federation as well. This union, built on a foundation of international law, mutual aid treaties and a common army, would provide continental Europe with the economic strength to stand on an equal footing with the other larger states, and would weaken British dominance in the economic sphere. His

vision was close to what would later become the structure of the League of Nations or the European Union, with common affairs to be decided on by a council of representatives, standardisations of currency, and certain common laws. He predicted that it would also bring cultural benefits, as each nation would contribute the best of their culture to a new internationalism. Again, we see repeated the idea of Germany not as a leader or ruler, but as *primus inter pares*, her duty to bring about this new European understanding. Von Liszt was unusual in presenting his vision not only as the future path of Germany should she win the War, but also as the best option for a defeated Germany to protect herself from Britain and Russia, her resilience giving hope to other oppressed nations.⁷⁹

Not all German authors supported the idea of a union of European states, however. Though Piloty admitted that a European Confederation might be a positive measure for the future peace of Europe, he argued that it needed some form of overarching power to sustain it, legally equal to the others, but more powerful. He rejected the idea that the Entente powers could comprise this supreme Power, as the exclusion of Germany, the strongest representative state of the German race, could not be countenanced. His scepticism became clear as he later argued that unions of states were unlikely to survive, pointing out that if neutral states could not agree to form such a union, it was highly unlikely that the belligerent states embittered by war could achieve this. To those who contended that the alliances of the War were proof that a union was possible, he replied that coalitions of states tended to fall – if defeated, they would not re-emerge, and if victorious, they would be torn apart by internal disagreements sooner or later.⁸⁰

Trietsch expanded these ideas beyond Europe, and explored the outcome for the British Empire should she lose the War. Mistrustful of the power of the British, he sought to return control of those areas that he felt had been unjustly taken by Britain to their rightful owners. In particular, he criticised the British occupation of Egypt, the Sudan and the Sinai Peninsula, and felt Egypt should be returned to Turkish control, as Britain held too much influence in the region. He specifically advocated the loss

⁷⁹ Von Liszt, *Staatenverband*, pp. 5-8, 17-39. 44-5.

⁸⁰ Piloty, *Ursachen*, p. 13, 44.

of control of the Suez Canal, which was to become a neutral international route. Arguing that the freedom of these territories from British control would strengthen European markets, offering new sources of raw materials, he went on to advocate the extension of the Turkish sphere of influence to Cyprus and Arabia, counteracting British dominance, which also threatened the independence of Persia. Trietsch hoped to reconfigure the map of Africa as well, collaborating with the Dutch and the Boers to come to a new arrangement in South Africa, and re-examining the ownership of the rest of the colonies. Clearly speaking from a place of some bitterness (he expressly wrote of hurting Britain), he saw the War as an opportunity for the creation of a new world order, one in which Germany had her proper place, and Britain lost her undeserved supremacy.⁸¹

Many British authors, at least in the early stages of the War, were less practical (indeed very few were as prescriptive as von Liszt and Trietsch at this stage) and more idealistic in their visions of the world after a British victory. The Bryce Group was formed in late September 1914 (named for Lord Bryce, who led the committee investigating German atrocities in Belgium, though in fact, it originated with Cambridge political scientist Goldsworthy Lowes Dickenson), and gathered together a number of intellectuals to discuss the possibility of a future league of nations. As the group was connected with the UDC, however, the public viewed them as a movement seeking to end the War, and thus, public debate was impossible, though a League of Nations Society was established under their leadership in May 1915, which attracted 2000 followers.⁸² Again, such ideas were not new – from the time of Kant’s *On Perpetual Peace* European thinkers had subscribed to the idea that states could act in concert with one another, based on a system of international laws.⁸³ These theories had found a place in Napoleonic ambitions, as Napoleon hoped that a ‘peaceful sisterhood of European nations’ could grow from his Empire; and with the establishment of the Quadruple Alliance of 1815, European unity became a political as well as a cultural entity, and ‘the principle of permanent consultation and

⁸¹ Trietsch, *Kriegsziele*, pp. 19-34.

⁸² Wallace, *War*, pp. 96-7; Irish, *Universities*, p. 130.

⁸³ Anthony Pagden, ‘Introduction’ in Anthony Pagden (Ed.), *The Idea of Europe from Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 6.

concerted agreements' was seen as a vital facet of future stability.⁸⁴ Before the War, international peace movements had laid the foundations for ideas of a League of Nations, encouraging recourse to international arbitration, and hoping to make war more humane. The successes of the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 in codifying laws of war were promising steps in this direction, though they failed to promote the disarmament some hoped for. With the outbreak of war, it was a logical step to assume that international organization had failed, and that a new and better scheme was required.⁸⁵

Charles Sarolea's discussion of war aims took on this internationalist perspective, though again, we must be wary of accepting his utterances as typical of the early days of the War, given the uncertainties over publication dates. His main propositions included the liberation of small nations and an end to Prussian militarism, not only in the Central Powers, but throughout Europe. Shying away from ideas of a punitive peace, he denounced economic war as likely to lead to offensive or defensive alliances in Europe which would counteract a permanent peace. Feeling that an emphasis on nationalist claims as the basis for the future borders of Europe would lead to a dangerous imperialism, he advocated an internationalist principle, which would look to politics, rather than to armies, to solve disputes on a constitutional and democratic basis, guaranteed by all the nations of Europe, including neutral powers.⁸⁶

Also focusing on international law as the basis for future peace in Europe, A.D. Lindsay argued against the idea that Germany and Austria-Hungary should 'impose' it on the rest of Europe. If British dominion had caused the War, he asked, why would German supremacy ensure peace? Looking at the alliances in place, he made the same suggestion against which Piloty argued, pointing out that if two countries could work together, there was no reason that more could not agree, and stated that this was

⁸⁴ Biancamaria Fontana, 'The Napoleonic Empire and the Europe of Nations,' in Anthony Pagden (Ed.), *The Idea of Europe from Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 128.

⁸⁵ Irish, *Universities*, pp. 128-30.

⁸⁶ Sarolea, *German Problems*, pp. 248-53.

the only real basis for a lasting peace.⁸⁷

E.A. Sonnenschein was less sanguine about the certainty of a British victory, and warned of the dangers of overconfidence. His advice was to treat the peace process as a way to ensure that such a war could not recur, trying to leave 'to all parties, so far as possible, no legitimate grievance to be remedied in the future.... Not retribution, not vengeance, not humiliation for the sake of humiliation, but protection of the family of nations against a repetition of the horrors of 1914-15 should be its principle.' In domestic policy, he hoped for the establishment of an 'Imperial Parliament', in which the British Dominions would be represented and to which they would contribute – such ideas had been debated since at least the 1870s as a way to protect imperial interests in an age of growing democratisation, and maintain the strength of the British Empire.⁸⁸ Rather than aspiring to a European confederation, Sonnenschein felt that a more democratic British Empire which was more closely allied to the United States was a much better guarantee of peace after the War.⁸⁹

In 1915 Sanday spoke of the restoration of France and Belgium, and stated that the Entente should try to revise the map of Europe in line with nationalist demands, and possibly to extend this consideration to the rest of the world. Like von Liszt, he hoped that Britain's enemies would contribute to the creation of a better world post-war, and to the reestablishment of international law on a strong and stable footing.⁹⁰ Two years later, he was convinced that international laws would be more secure than they had been before the War, as they would be tied to the peace process, which in itself would be a fair settlement, based on the 'deliberate and consentient judgement' of the nations involved.⁹¹

Other predictions for the end of the War were rather naive – for example, Wilkinson argued that the restoration of the old frontier between France and Germany and the reestablishment of Alsace and Lorraine as French territories would end Franco-German tension, overlooking the fact that this would

⁸⁷ Lindsay, *War Against War*, pp. 14-6.

⁸⁸ For a full discussion, see Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain* (Princeton, 2007).

⁸⁹ Sonnenschein, *Idols*, p. 15, 22-3.

⁹⁰ Sanday, *Meaning*, p. 116.

⁹¹ Sanday, *War End*, p. 11.

merely reverse the desire for revanche. His vision of the future of Europe was of a map redrawn along nationalist lines, with the redistribution of Balkan territory to the detriment of Austria-Hungary, the reunion of Poland under the protection of Russia, and the creation of a 'United States of Europe' instead of a 'German Empire co-extensive with Europe outside of Russia.'

These predictions were not limited to the peaceful and prosperous results of an Entente victory however, but also extended to the dangers of a British defeat. In this case, he claimed, Germany and Austria-Hungary would redraw the map of Europe, with the Balkans going to the Hapsburg Empire; the absorption of Belgium, Luxembourg and a large part of France into Germany, as well as any British colonies Germany chose; the establishment of Holland, Denmark and Switzerland as German vassals; and the creation of a 'buffer state' between Russia and Germany from the Russian parts of Poland. Such an outcome was unacceptable to Wilkinson, and had to be prevented at all costs – even at this stage (August 1914) he already spoke of a fight to the finish to ensure a satisfactory peace, even if it meant the War dragged out for years: 'England has to see this war through to the end, to a peace which she can accept, even if it costs her ten years of fighting and a million men.' This peace would be one which would ensure the safety of Europe from German domination well into the future, and the only way this could be accomplished in Wilkinson's view, was to 'crush' the German armies.⁹²

Further examining the possibilities of a German victory, H.E. Egerton predicted a vindictive Germany which would force the Dominion nations to break off political relations with Britain to ensure that Germany would have a monopoly on trade, though he consoled himself with the fact that this would probably fail, as 'the members of the German governing classes excel in offending those whom it is their interest to conciliate.'⁹³ Walter Raleigh was equally contemptuous of German abilities, stating that even if she were to achieve her aims and overrun Europe, she could never match the cultural achievements of France and the civilization which she had destroyed. Germany, in his opinion, was

⁹² Wilkinson, *August 1914*, pp. 46-8, 81.

⁹³ Egerton, *British Dominion*, p. 10.

unimaginative and dull, following rules with no awareness of the joys of life: ‘They lay down rules for life, and if they be asked what makes such a life worth living they are without any hint of an answer. Their world is a workhouse, tyrannically ordered and full of pusillanimous jealousies... A Germanized world would be a nightmare...’⁹⁴

Other authors focused on Germany’s reputation for autocratic rule, and Prothero suggested that a German victory would seriously undermine popular government in Europe (there was, of course, no mention of Russia). In his opinion, Germany’s aim was nothing less than world domination, beginning with Europe and her colonies, then turning to America. Like Wilkinson, he wrote of a future in which Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland were firmly under German control; France had been crushed by reparations and limits on her army and navy, as well as the loss of her colonies; and Germany ruled the North Sea coast, posing a danger to Britain. Prothero painted a grim picture should Britain lose the War, predicting the end of the Empire, huge war indemnities, a significant increase in emigration and a mental devastation engendered by the loss of Britain’s place in the world, her humiliation at defeat, and the destruction of her ideals: ‘We should lose all that widens and ennobles national life; our history would no longer be an inspiration but a reproach; and we should be reduced to the base and pitiful condition of a “foggy little island in the North Sea”.’⁹⁵

Barker’s anonymous *All for Germany* presented the reader with a German professor who could not see any issue with Germany reclaiming the borders of the old Holy Roman Empire, even if these former territories did not wish to return. His professor not only argued for markets, territory and sea power as a life-threatening issue for Germany, but also seemed to view it as Germany’s right to achieve these aims by any means – a common British presentation of German war aims and methods, if perhaps a little crude.⁹⁶ Wilkinson supported this view in his letter to the *Springfield Republican* on 22nd September 1914, stating that ‘...Germany and Austria have declared in common that they will

⁹⁴ Raleigh, *Might is Right*, p. 5, 12.

⁹⁵ Prothero, *Duty*, pp. 6, 10-5.

⁹⁶ *All for Germany*, pp. 5-6, 15.

have their way in Europe, and that if it is not accepted they will impose it on Europe by force. If they succeed, the King of Prussia will be the overlord of Europe.’⁹⁷

These exaggerated fears were epitomised in C.R.L. Fletcher’s pamphlet on German ambitions published in September 1914, in which he accused Germany of attempting to subjugate those nations which she felt were inferior to her, as well as ‘reclaiming’ all those of German descent and restoring their lands to Germany (comprising parts of Belgium, Switzerland, Holland and France). He was very clear in his meaning: ‘Germany, actually and in the near future *aspires to the dominion of the world and to nothing short of that dominion.*’⁹⁸ Once again, we see the argument that Germany would begin this quest by defeating France, Russia and Britain, then the rest of Europe, and finally would turn to America and Japan. Britain’s defeat was depicted in particularly black terms, as in Fletcher’s opinion, Germany would demand war indemnities, Britain’s colonies and fleet, as well as stationing a garrison in Britain and demanding that Britain follow policies which supported German interests.⁹⁹

Such fears continued in 1915, as Binyon’s stance proved, when his fictional officer Bombastes railed ‘We will seize her colonies, we will sink her merchant ships at sight, we will starve her out, the land of cowards...’ Bombastes promised to burn London and seize British colonies, breaking the Empire and taking it for Germany: ‘we will take it all; we will rule it as it should be ruled. Everywhere shall our iron heel be pressed. We will impose on it at last our glorious German freedom.’¹⁰⁰

Such mistrust in German war aims would continue to the later stages of the War. Writing in 1917, Waldstein examined the German war aims and found them wanting. Though he could admit the usefulness of territory in Alsace-Lorraine for defensive purposes, he could see no valid reason for Germany to seek to retain territory in Belgium and along the North Sea coast, unless it was sought for offensive aims. The industrial advantages offered by Belgium and northern France were also obvious,

⁹⁷ Wilkinson, *Britain and Germany*, p. 10.

⁹⁸ Fletcher, *Covet*, p10. Italics in original.

⁹⁹ Fletcher, *Covet*, pp. 22-3.

¹⁰⁰ Binyon, *Bombastes*, pp. 22-4.

as was Germany's complete lack of consideration for justice and fair play in a future peace dictated by her.¹⁰¹

It is interesting that the characterisation of Germany as hungry for world domination should appear so frequently, especially from an Empire which covered most of the globe – there is clearly some disconnect between the proprieties expected of German ambition and the allowances made for British expansion (after all, it is highly likely that an impartial observer might ascribe the same trait to Britain over the growth of her Empire and the clashes with France and Russia in Africa and Asia). This selective blindness can perhaps best be attributed to patriotism, and to an ingrained belief that Britain was truly providing great benefits for her colonies, whereas German expansion was motivated by a vain desire to appear to be more important on the world stage, without sharing the same need for colonies as Britain.

Representing the German view, the American Burgess argued that there was no way a German victory could significantly alter the political composition of Europe. What it would accomplish was the frustration of Russian Pan-Slavic plans, the end of French attempts to regain Alsace-Lorraine, and the thwarting of British attempts to destroy German commerce. However, if the Entente were to win, Russia would control Europe and Britain would control the seas – effectively handing world domination to the two Empires, as well as posing a significant threat to the United States.¹⁰²

These themes are also to be found in German texts, and Oncken was frank in his depiction of Entente war aims. France sought Alsace-Lorraine, Russia wanted parts of East Prussia and Austria-Hungary. Britain was the worst offender in Oncken's eyes however, as she claimed simply to desire the restoration of Schleswig-Holstein to Denmark, but in reality, would take German colonies, destroy the German fleet and take over German commerce. In contrast to British declarations that Germany would turn on America should they succeed in defeating the Entente, Oncken stated that the British,

¹⁰¹ Waldstein, *Germany*, pp. 38-41.

¹⁰² Burgess, in Spenser Wilkinson, *Britain and Germany*, pp. 21-2.

‘unscrupulous traitors to white culture’, would use Japan against America just as she had against Russia and then Germany, using any means to achieve her aims of supremacy at sea and in the colonies.¹⁰³ Von Liszt concurred, claiming that Germany’s opponents would take her colonies, reduce her territory, and cripple her economy, demoting her to a second rate power in Europe.¹⁰⁴

Taking a slightly different tack, Roethe presented the possibility that if Germany lost, Britain would find herself abandoned by her Russian and Japanese allies, who would ensure that they were the ones to profit from the War. In this light, it would actually be of benefit to Britain if Germany won.¹⁰⁵

Equally worrying to the Germans was the future of German culture if she was defeated in the War. Marcks argued this point in particular, reminding his readers that the Entente sought the destruction of German culture in all its aspects and that the Germans were fighting to defend it.¹⁰⁶ However, Gwatkin explicitly denied that Britain had any such aims, stating that she did not dream of violating German independence or any territory that was truly German, nor did she wish to impose impossible war indemnities on Germany. He also rebuffed the accusation that Britain wanted to destroy German trade, despite contemplating the possibility of economic measures to prevent German economic hostility in future.¹⁰⁷ Two years earlier, Murray had made the same point, stating unequivocally: ‘We seek no territory, no aggrandizement, no revenge; we only want to be safe from the recurrence of this present horror. We want permanent peace for Europe and freedom for each nation.’¹⁰⁸

Leaving aside the question of deliberate war aims and the promises for the future, many authors explored ideas of the world after the War, how it would be affected and changed by what had occurred. Von Gierke’s vision for Germany tied quite closely with the aims attributed to Germany by his British counterparts, anticipating new fields for the expansion of the German economy after her victory, alongside the growth of German colonies, and a world newly opened to German commerce

¹⁰³ Oncken, *Weltkrieg*, pp. 11-2, 22-3.

¹⁰⁴ von Liszt, *Staatenverband*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Roethe, *Wir Deutschen*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁶ Marcks, *Wo Stehen wir*, p. 16, 24.

¹⁰⁷ Gwatkin, *England’s Case*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ Murray, *Thoughts*, pp. 9-10.

and industry. This could only come about if Germany achieved a total victory and broke the ‘tyranny’ of Britain, in his view.¹⁰⁹ This was echoed by Lehmann-Haupt, who spoke of the coming century as Germany’s: her enemies crushed, Austria reborn, and liberty for Poland and the Ukraine from Russian oppression. Speaking as he was on the topic of German culture and peoples abroad, he demanded that in future, Britain show a greater respect for the German language and culture, recognising the contribution Germany made to the world in her interactions with the German nation. He added his conviction that after the War, links between émigrés and the home country must be made stronger, with greater support for those abroad from those at home.¹¹⁰ This tied in quite closely with the idea of a world open to German commerce and manufacturing, with the creation of a strong network of German loyalties and inclinations which could rival the commercial heavyweights of Britain and the United States. This goal was shared by Piloty, who called for a post-war Germany so strong that all those of German extraction would be permanently connected to her, spreading German ideals throughout the world. Though he explicitly denied that he intended this German cultural dominance to equate to the political control of the world, it is easy to see how the British could interpret his aims as such, particularly when he stated that the German throne should ‘inspire the respect of all countries, peoples and governments which she deserves according to the German spirit and German labour, and when necessary command it.’¹¹¹ He was not alone in his hopes for a new Germany after the War, as Wilamowitz-Moellendorff proved, asking for a greater understanding of Germany’s neighbours after the War, not only of their languages, but also of their inner value, their culture and values. He also expressed the hope that Germany would not allow herself to slacken after the War, but would retain her momentum and spirit.¹¹²

Such hopes of future cooperation between nations were also expressed in Britain. F.S. Marvin argued that until the attitudes between European states were improved, all attempts to redraw the political map of Europe would be futile, as the ‘atmosphere of deceit, lying, jealousy, and suspicion’ would

¹⁰⁹ von Gierke, *Krieg und Kultur*, pp. 96-7.

¹¹⁰ Lehmann-Haupt, *Krieg und Deutschtum*, pp. 4-5, 37-9.

¹¹¹ Piloty, *Ursachen*, pp. 45-6.

¹¹² Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, ‘Berliner Universität’, pp. 14-7.

prevent any proposals for disarmament or open diplomacy from bearing fruit. Nevertheless, his was an optimistic view of the situation, as he felt that although the War was bound to result in changes in European alliances and state rankings, the fundamental unity of Europe, based on her science, language and history, would remain a firm basis on which to rebuild a shared culture.¹¹³ Tucker expanded this unity to the Dominions, believing that the support they had offered to the British war effort would be rewarded with a greater say in Imperial affairs, drawing the Empire closer together.¹¹⁴

While Sanday warned his readers of the danger that Britain might fall into the trap of behaving like the enemy they were fighting, attempting to impose her own rule and ideals on the Central Powers¹¹⁵ other authors took a harsher stance towards Germany, advocating little pity should they lose the War. W.J. Ashley was a representative of this more hard-line view, stating that Germany would probably lose her colonies after the War, and warning that Britain would be less willing to be generous towards Germany in matters of commerce.¹¹⁶ Sarolea, perhaps unsurprisingly, given his Belgian background, loudly proclaimed that Germany would lose stature after the War, no longer respected for her education, music and learning. He admonished the Germans that she must try to earn this respect back after the War, by behaving like the Germany of old, rather than the militarist power which began the War: 'let her understand that no nation will allow herself to be bullied into sympathy. Sympathy must be spontaneous.'¹¹⁷

These predictions on the War were of course limited by the information available at the time to those making them, and were characterised by a strong degree of almost-wishful thinking, which predicated great things on the outcome of a war each side believed it would win. Given the difficulty of comprehending all of the events of the War at one time and the basis of predictions on as yet unrealised goals, such idealisations, while offering potential future outcomes, could not be more than

¹¹³ Marvin, *Leadership*, pp. 21-4.

¹¹⁴ Tucker, *Canada*, pp. 17-8.

¹¹⁵ Sanday, *Meaning*, pp. 116-8.

¹¹⁶ Ashley, *Economic Aspects*, p. 18, 21.

¹¹⁷ Sarolea, *German Problems*, p. 183, 201-2.

idealisations at this stage of the War.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, they remain expressions of an optimistic view of the future, and, in the emphasis on unity, renewal and rebirth, of a search for meaning in the conflict which echoes that expressed in the debated on culture and values examined in previous chapters. Indeed, the sympathy called for by Sarolea did grow after the War, but in 1915, it was still a long way off. Despite the hopes expressed for unity and understanding, for a new world in which each European nation was fairly represented and none held dominion over the others, the realities of the War could not help but harden hearts as the fighting continued. When the Armistice was signed in 1918, it was a very different world to that imagined by the authors of 1914 and 1915. War aims had obviously changed and been much debated over the course of the War, particularly with the entry of the United States and Woodrow Wilson's 14 Point Plan, but we can see in this chapter the outlines of such ideas – freedom of the seas, state borders established on national principles, a union of nations to arbitrate disagreements and act in concert. We can also trace some of the lines of the Treaty of Versailles, with discussions of territorial loss and war indemnities, arms limitation and political change. Most striking is the awareness that it was the creation of the peace which would guarantee its future, the knowledge that a bad peace treaty would merely postpone the War, rather than ending it. Nevertheless, a division was drawn between those who sought punitive measures to ensure the weakness of their enemies, and those who felt a fair settlement was the best guarantee of peace. It is impossible to say what would have happened had the latter prevailed at Versailles in 1919, but in hindsight, the historian cannot help but feel the tragedy that they did not.

¹¹⁸ Reinhard Koselleck has noted that such predictions, particularly when coupled with a belief in the unique nature of the time in which the authors are living, are rarely fulfilled. See Koselleck, 'The Unknown Future and the Art of Prognosis', in *The Practice of Conceptual History* pp. 140-4

Conclusions

The propaganda used in this study differs from stereotypical propaganda in its use of reasoned argument, documentary evidence and careful reconstruction of events in preference to emotional appeals, black-and-white statements and sweeping assertions. As such, it prompts a reconsideration of what we view as propaganda – it is more than slogans on posters or brain-washing rallies, but also includes quieter attempts at opinion-making on a large scale. It should come as no surprise that intellectuals were highly involved in the creation of propaganda, not only through official channels, working with government organizations, but also on their own initiative, fighting with the pen when they were unable to fight with the bayonet. Though they were devoted to the scholarly ideals of objectivity and rationalistic methods, in wartime, patriotism came first. Although many believed that they were in no way disloyal to these ideals, firmly trusting in the justice of their nation's cause, their patriotism often blinded them to contradictory facts, and encouraged an inherent bias towards their own side, colouring their arguments and their response to events – to return to Oskar Fleisher, quoted at the start of this thesis: where evidence was insufficient or open to interpretation, scholars chose to support the fatherland first. That the debate occasionally veered closer to polemic, as consensus broke down and differing values were seen as a revelation of a deep gulf between both sides, should not undermine the propagandistic values of the academics' actions, as both sides were still addressing their own nations as well as each other, and were still attempting to persuade their readers that their cause was just.

Nevertheless, the close connections within the international academic community were not completely severed by the War and feelings of personal friendship persisted despite national enmity. Intellectuals remained linked throughout the War, both on a personal level, through the exchange of letters, and in the public sphere, through pamphlets and speeches. Though these public utterances were not always in direct response to those of their opponents, the arguments used on both sides to justify their positions reflected one another, and often sought to address the accusations made against

them, showing an awareness, if not an acceptance of the adversary's point of view.

These arguments revolved around a number of key areas in the early stages of the War, and this thesis has sought to explore them in detail, highlighting their similarities despite their differing positions. The initial responses of academics in the late summer of 1914, when protests for peace changed to support for the cause, highlights the shock which accompanied the outbreak of war, and though some were unwavering in their defence of the need to fight, many nevertheless felt the rupture as a deep blow to the European community, a traumatic event which shook their belief in the advancement of civilization and their ideas on future progress. This response further undermines the popular impression of enthusiastic mass support for the War, adding another facet to the complex study of popular opinion and the War. Academics not only felt disappointment in national governments, but also expressed a sense of betrayal that their former colleagues could champion a cause which they themselves felt to be a rejection of the civilized ideals and progress for which they stood. They condemned what they viewed as an abandonment of the search for truth in the service of political ends, decrying biased scholarship and lack of impartiality on the part of their opponents, while simultaneously engaging in similar lines of argumentation themselves.

Nonetheless, it is clear that many academics believed that *they* were revealing the truth, especially in those pamphlets and speeches dealing with the direct causes of the War. In the attempt to defend their nations against the accusations of responsibility for the horrors of the Front, academics turned to diplomatic papers published by the belligerent governments, to recent political history and to public statements by governmental figures in order to prove beyond doubt that their leaders had done their utmost to maintain peace. Here in particular we see different interpretations of the same evidence used to support entirely opposing conclusions, coupled with a strong belief in the authors' own open-mindedness, and in their opponents' bias.

The issues of culture and civilization give the reader a real sense of the divide between Germany and Britain, while simultaneously highlighting similarities between the two. The contrast of Western

European 'civilization' with German '*Kultur*' exposes not only the values and ideals of both nations, but reflects the development of such ideals long before the War. Questions of rationality versus sensibility, practicality or poetry, mundane or spiritual had been debated since the Enlightenment at least, and both Germany and Britain had their Romantic and Rationalist phases. The civilization/*Kultur* debate drew on these existing strands, adding a patriotic nationalism, which turned such tendencies into national characteristics, to be pitted against each other in yet another Darwinian struggle. The idea of nations variously positioned on the ladder of progress was in no way new, and while British authors suggested that Germany had descended to a level of barbarism, or was lower on the rungs than previously believed, German writers depicted Britain as having climbed too high, overbalancing in her own decadence and luxuriousness. At the risk of anachronism, there are also hints on the German side of this debate of a German *Sonderweg* – the idea that Germany was set apart in her development from the rest of Europe, and that this influenced her history. Looked at through the lens of history, both nations were isolated from Europe, Britain geographically and politically, Germany before 1870 in the contradictory position of a potentially powerful nation, unable to realise this potential due to an inability to unify and therefore excluded from the list of Great Powers. In both there was a very strong idea of the nation – the British Empire was bolstered with ideas of Britain's power and duty to the world; and in Germany the sense of shared nationhood eventually helped to bring about unification. Certainly, many German authors saw German values as very distinct from both West and East, and the German way as a new path for the future of Europe. The German values of 1914 were to be a new beginning from the French values of 1789, and would revolutionise Europe in the same manner. However, Britain too had defined herself against the French Revolution (albeit much earlier), seeking to establish herself as the home of true liberty in politics, and we see a number of British authors justify her position in the War in this light, depicting Germany as the enemy of freedom, and Britain as the saviour of Europe.

The values and ideals discussed in the chapters on civilization and culture were the basis of the many plans for Europe after the War, as both sides accepted the possibility, and indeed necessity of future cooperation, but only after significant change in their opponents' attitudes. The ideas explored in this

thesis are limited by their time period – as the authors themselves recognized, it was still too early to contemplate concrete plans for post-war reconstruction. Nevertheless, we see the seeds of the League of Nations in German ideas for a central European confederacy and British plans for international congresses, and these ideas were further elaborated as the War continued.

After the War, intellectuals would be severely criticised for their involvement, but, as Christophe Prochasson argues, this overlooked the social position of the professors, and the expectation that they would engage with the questions of the War – after all ‘[t]he culture of war allowed little room for manoeuvre and it was practically impossible to avoid being caught up in it.’¹ In *A War Imagined*, Samuel Hynes claims that ‘The war of professors was not a really serious war; nothing suffered except the scholarly ideals of accuracy and objectivity nothing was destroyed except the scholar’s vision of a community of scholars.... in the end, it simply ceased to matter.’² Though this attitude may have been reflected in the emphasis on the academic war in scholarship, it completely overlooks the contribution of the intellectuals to the war effort, and the fact that their writings offered a way in which to interpret and cope with the shattering of an entire world. While they may not have directed troop movements or halted the slaughter, they had an impact on their audience, and we should not be so ready to dismiss it – Hynes himself makes the point that the War was more than a military or political event, it was also an imaginative one, and changed the way in which people thought about the world.³

The field of wartime propaganda is vast, and that of the First World War has yet to receive the same attention as the propaganda of the Second World War. While German scholars have examined the engagement of academics with the war effort, there remains scope for further study in Britain and in the other belligerent nations, both as in-depth studies and comparative analyses. Though links between Britain and German academia were close, there were also links with other belligerent

¹ Prochasson, ‘Intellectuals’, p. 326, 335.

² Hynes, *War Imagined*, p. 74. See also Ponsonby, *Falsehood*, pp. 25-6, in which he notes the added credibility given to propaganda due to intellectual support, though he condemns it, of course.

³ Hynes, *War Imagined*, p. ix.

nations, and as the War dragged on, concerns over war aims, morale and reconstruction became new subjects for their pens. This thesis goes only a short way towards filling the gap, focusing as it does on only two nations in the early years of the War.

In conclusion, we see that despite vituperation in the press, atrocity tales and hymns of hate, propaganda in the First World War was not as simple as a severing of ties and condemnation of the enemy. Though some authors certainly responded with hatred, many felt hurt and sadness at the separation caused by the War, and were able to acknowledge their adversaries' point of view without wavering in their conviction that their own nation was in the right. As a result, their work suggests that they were not only trying to gain neutral support, but were also trying to convince their opponents that their cause was just, and many maintained a scholarly tone in their arguments. This may have been nothing more than an attempt to maintain morale and win support, but perhaps it can also be read as a sign that, in seeking to make sense of the War, many academics continued to reach out to a community, which, like so many others, had been divided by the conflict.

Biographical Appendix

For more information, see also the relevant national biographies.

Adams, W.G.S 

(1874-1966)

Gladstone Professor of Political Theory, All Souls College, Oxford

1902 lectured in USA, frequently returned. Also involved in university extension scheme in Manchester. 1914 founded *Political Quarterly*. 1915 joined Ministry of Munitions, served as a private secretary to Lloyd George from December 1916 to end of War.

Archer, William 

(1856-1924)

Journalist, Theatre Critic

Wrote for a number of London papers, travelled extensively, including in USA and India. Worked with War Propaganda Bureau during War. Hoped for socialist future. 1918 son killed in action. Post-war worked with predecessors of League of Nations.

Ashley, W.J. 

(1860-1927)

Economic Historian, Professor of Commerce, Birmingham

1888-92 lectured in Toronto. 1892-1901 taught at Harvard. 1910 awarded PhD by Berlin University, 1912 lectured in Hamburg. From outbreak of War acted as advisor to Government on food and living costs.


Barker, Ernest 

(1874-1960)

Fellow of Modern History, New College, Oxford, Political Theorist

Influenced by ideas of Otto von Gierke. During War occasionally conducted factory inspections for

the Ministry of Labour. WWI crystallised views on nationalism as a dangerous force. 1920 appointed Principal of King's College London.

 *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle* (1906), *Political Thought in England from Herbert Spencer to To-Day* (1915), *Reflections on Government* (1942), *Principles of Social and Political Theory* (1951). Also translated von Gierke's *Genossenschaftsrecht* (*Natural Law and the Theory of Society*, 1934).

Beaven, Murray 

*Lecturer in Modern History, Aberdeen*¹

Beck, James M. 

(1861-1936)

Lawyer

1888-1900 Assistant United States Attorney for Eastern District of Pennsylvania. 1896-1900 United States Attorney, 1900-03 Assistant Attorney General. Republican. Strong links with Britain.

Benett, W. 

Benett is an obscure figure, referred to in the OUP papers only as 'Mr. Benett: Late LCS'.²

Binyon, Laurence 

(1869-1943)

Poet, Head of Oriental Prints and Drawings, British Museum

Most famous poem, 'For the Fallen', published in *The Times*, 21 September 1914. 1915-16 orderly in a French military hospital.

¹ OUP.CPED001215, Fols.8-10.


² *Ibid.*

Brentano, Lujo 

(1844-1931)

Professor of Economics, München

1868 visited England. 1871 founding member of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (German Economic Association) and *Kathedersozialist*. Noted pacifist, also opposed militarism in Germany.

 *Die Arbeitergilden der Gegenwart, Ethik und Volkswirtschaft in der Geschichte* (1901), *Der wirtschaftende Mensch in der Geschichte* (1923), *Eine Geschichte der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung Englands* (1927-29).

Chirol, Valentine 

(1852-1929)

Journalist, Diplomat, Historian

Raised in France and Germany. 1892 posted to Berlin with *The Times*, returned to Britain distrusting of German ambitions. Actively promoted British ties with Japan, France and Russia as a result. 1915 sent on a secret mission to the Balkans to try to convince them to join Allies, but attempt failed.

Collier, Gerard 

(1878-1923)

Historian, Birmingham

Studied education in Germany and England, 1907 taught in Sydney. 1908 worked with WEA.³

Davis, H.W.C 

(1874-1928)

Historian, Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford

Editor of Oxford Pamphlets, also published on political theories of Treitschke. 1915 worked in war

³ http://www.archive.org/stream/balliolcollegere01balluoft/balliolcollegere01balluoft_djvu.txt;
<http://www.thepeerage.com/p51578.htm#i515776>

trade intelligence sponsored by Admiralty and Board of Trade – Vice-Chairman of division from summer 1915. December 1918-March 1919 served on British Delegation to Paris Peace Conference.

Delbrück, Hans

(1848-1929)

Professor of Modern History, Berlin, Military Historian, Politician

Fought in Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), 1874-79 Tutor to one of younger sons of Prussian Crown Prince. *Gelehrtenpolitiker* (academic in politics, rather than career politician). 1882 Member of Prussian House of Representatives with free Conservative mandate. 1883-89 edited *Preußischen Jahrbücher*. 1889 shifted to *Kathedersozialist*. Opposed politics of Naval League and Pan-German League. Promoted moderate war aims during War, opposed unrestricted submarine warfare and annexation. Constitutional Monarchist, saw self as ‘enlightened Conservative’.



Das Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen Neidhardt von Gneisenau (1864), *Die Perserkriege und die Burgunderkriege* (1887), *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte* (1900-20), *Bismarcks Erbe* (1915), *Regierung und Volkswille* (1920).

Delitzsch, Friedrich

(1850-1922)

Professor of Assyriology, Berlin, Director of Near Eastern Department of Royal Museum

Also lectured on theology and the New Testament.

Egerton, H.E.

(1855-1927)

Beit Professor of Colonial History, Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

Imperialist, had been assistant private secretary to Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State for the Colonies (1886-87).

Ehrlich, Ludwik 

(1889-1968)

Professor of Law, Lvov, Krakow

Elliot, Ivo D'Oyly 

(1882-1961)

Indian Civil Service

1906 joined Indian Civil Service after graduation from Balliol College, Oxford. 1916 appointed Under-Secretary of Indian Department of Commerce and Industry.⁴

Erzberger, Matthias 

(1875-1921)

Politician


1903 Member of Reichstag for Catholic Centre Party. Very active in Press. During War occupied in official propaganda aimed at Catholics abroad. Also involved in diplomatic missions. One of signatories of Armistice.

Eucken, Rudolf 


(1846-1926)

Professor of Philosophy, Jena

1908 won Nobel Prize for Literature. Well known abroad, especially in USA (taught there 1912-13), and Britain.

 *Die Grundbegriffe der Gegenwart* (1878), *Die Lebensanschauung der großen Denker* (1890), *Der Kampf um einen geistigen Lebensinhalt* (1896), *Grundlinien einer neuen Lebensanschauung* (1907), *Der Sozialismus und seine Lebensgestaltung* (1920).

⁴ See entry in <http://www.thepeerage.com/p39783.htm>.

Fleischer, Oskar 

(1856-1933)

Professor of Music, Universität Berlin

1899 founded International Society of Music

Fletcher, C.R.L. 

(1857-1934)

Historian, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford

Conservative, imperialist, opposed socialism and liberalism. Delegate of Clarendon Press 1912-27.

Strongly opposed reductions in size of Navy or the surrender of British colonies.


von Gierke, Otto 

(1841-1921)

Lawyer, Legal Historian, Rector of Berlin University (1902-03)

Fought in Franco-Prussian War. One of best-known German legal thinkers. Highly involved in social reform, from 1872 a member of *Verein für Sozialpolitik* ('Social Welfare Association'). Co-founder of Evangelic Congress. Conservative with national liberal leanings, supported constitutional monarchy.

1909 awarded honorary doctorate from Harvard. Extremely patriotic – 1888 criticised the new Civil Code of Germany for including unnecessary elements of Roman law, when German practices were enough.

 *Das deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht* (1868-1913), *Naturrecht und Deutsches Recht* (1883), *Deutsches Privatrecht* (1895).

Goldmann, N. 

(1895-1982)

Zionist Leader

Born in Russia, 1900 moved to Germany. During War, worked in Information Department of German Foreign Office. Later a prominent Zionist Leader.

Gwatkin, H.M. 

(1844-1916)

Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Editor Cambridge Medieval History.

Hassall, Arthur 

(1853-1930)

Historian, Fellow, Christ Church, Oxford

von Heyking, Edmund 

(1850-1915)

Diplomat

1874 worked in Russia. 1876 in US.


Hirschfeld, Magnus 

(1868-1935)

Physician, Sexual Minority Rights Campaigner

Travelled in USA and North Africa. 1896-1900 edited newspaper *Der Hausdokter* ('The Home Doctor'). From 1897 highly involved in campaigning for homosexual rights. 1908 co-founded Berlin *Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft* ('Psychoanalysis Society'). 1910 long visits to London and Paris.

1913 co-founded *Ärztliche Gesellschaft für Sexualwissenschaft* ('Doctors' Society for Sexology').
During War worked in a military hospital.

Kaufmann, Paul 

(1856-1945)

Lawyer, Civil Servant


President of Imperial Insurance Department. Previously *Vortragender Rat* in Home Office (senior rank, with access to Kaiser).

Lehmann-Haupt, C.F. 

(1861-1938)

Professor of Ancient History

1901 Professor of Ancient History, Berlin. 1911 Professor of Greek Archaeology, Liverpool. 1914-15 moved to Constantinople. 1918 returned to Germany.

Lindsay, A.D. 

(1879-1952)

Philosophy Tutor, Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford

Served in France. Also involved with WEA, founded Scottish Institute of Adult Education.


von Liszt, Franz 

(1851-1919)

Jurist, Lecturer in Law, Berlin

Born in Vienna, cousin of the famous composer. 1879 moved to Germany. 1881 founded *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Strafrechtswissenschaft* ('Journal for Collective Penology'), 1889 founded *Internationalen Kriminalistischen Vereinigung* ('International Criminological Society') with Belgian

Adolphe Prins and Dutch Gerard Anton van Hamel. Was a Deputy for the German Free-Minded Party (a Liberal Party from 1884-93) in the Reichstag.

 *Das deutsche Reichstrafrecht* (1881), *Das Völkerrecht* (1904), *Lehrbuch des deutschen Strafrechts* (1919).

Matheson, P.E. 

(1859-1946)


Classical Scholar, Fellow of New College, Oxford

Marcks, Erich 

(1861-1938)

Professor of Modern History, Munich

Studied under Treitschke. 1913 went to USA as visiting lecturer. Wrote a biography of Wilhelm I for the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* ('General German Biography'), visited Bismarck and was permitted to use Bismarck family archives for study of the Chancellor. Imperialist. Promoted idea of Central Europe under German leadership during War.

 *Kaiser Wilhelm I* (1897), *Königen Elisabeth von England und ihre Zeit* (1897), *Bismarck. Eine Biographie* (1909), *Der Aufstieg des Reiches* (1936).

Marvin, F.S. 

(1863-1943)

Historian, Schools Inspector


Active Positivist, supporter of League of Nations.

Meinecke, Friedrich 

(1862-1954)

Professor of Modern History, Berlin

Studied under Treitschke. 1892 editor of *Historischen Zeitschrift* ('Historical Journal'). Played down nationalism of contemporary Germany in work. Originally conservative, later Left-Liberal. At heart a monarchist, but criticised monarchy during the War. Opposed annexation.

 *Das Zeitalter der deutschen Erhebung 1795-1815* (1913), *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* (1908), *Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* (1924), *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (1936).

Meyer, Arnold Oskar 

(1877-1944)

Professor of Modern and Medieval History, Rostock, Kiel

1903-1908 member of *Preußischen Historischen Instituts*, Rome. Doctoral thesis on Catholicism in England under Elizabeth I, much of his later work focused on England during the Reformation.

Moulton, James Hope 

(1863-1917)

Biblical Scholar, Greenwood Professor of Hellenistic Greek and Indo-European Philology, Manchester

Interested in social reforms and foreign missions. 1915 lectured in India. 1916 son killed in action in France. 1917 died at sea.

Muirhead, J.H. 

(1855-1940)

Professor of Philosophy, Birmingham

1886 co-founder of Ethical Society. 1888 Editor of Library of Philosophy (introduced English readers to major philosophical works). Important in converting Mason College to University of Birmingham.

Murray, Gilbert 

(1866-1957)

Regius Professor of Greek, Fellow of New College, Oxford

Born in Australia, educated in Britain. Publicly criticised British policy in Boer War. Strong academic friendship with Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (below). His translations of Greek texts were well-known, and plays were often performed. From 1911 General Editor of the Home University Library, which aimed at general public. 1912, lectured in USA. From 1915 involved with League of Nations Society, 1916 became its Vice-President. From 1917, worked part-time for Board of Education.



History of Ancient Greek Literature (1897), translations of *Euripides*, *Sophocles*, *Aeschylus*, *Euripides and his Age* (1918).

Nathan, Paul 

(1857-1927)

Politician, Publicist

Worked with Berlin newspapers (*Berliner Bürger-Zeitung* and *Berliner Börsen-Couriers*). Member of National Liberal Party, Editor of liberal paper *Die Nation*. 1901 founded *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden* ('Friendly Society of German Jews'), opposing anti-Semitic violence and aiming to aid Jews in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Oncken, Hermann 

(1869-1945)

Lecturer in Modern History, Heidelberg, Politician

1892 co-founded historical journal *Oldenburger Jarhbuch* ('Oldenburg Yearbook'). 1905-06 visiting professor in Chicago. National Liberal, represented University in First Chamber of Baden from 1915. Even before War sought to politicise nation through knowledge of history. Against excessive armament policy.

Pearce Higgins, A. 

(1865-1935)

International Lawyer


Taught International Law at London School of Economics and Royal Naval War and Staff Colleges. During War was advisor to Procurator General and Treasury Solicitor.

Piloly, Robert 

(1863-1926)

Professor of Law, Würzburg.

Member of *Verband für Internationale Verständigung* ('Association for International Understanding') and *Internationalen Komitees für Sozialversicherung* ('International Committee for Social Insurance').


 *Das Reichsunfallversicherungsrecht, dessen Entstehungsgeschichte und System* (1890-93), *Das parlamentarische System* (1917), *Das Friedensangebot der Mittelmächte* (1917).

Prothero, G.W. 

(1848-1922)

Historian, Editor Quarterly Review

1873-4 studied at Bonn University. From 1899 Editor of *Quarterly Review*. 1901-05 President of Royal Historical Society, 1903 elected Fellow of British Academy and Rede Lecturer. 1910 lectured in USA. 1915, appointed Chichele Lecturer. Co-editor of *Cambridge Modern History*, general Editor of Cambridge Historical Series. From 1917-19, acted as Historical Advisor to Foreign Office.

 *Life and Times of Simon de Montfort* (1877), translation of Vol. 1 of Ranke's *Weltgeschichte* (1883), *Select Statutes and other Documents Illustrative of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I* (1894).

Raleigh, Walter 

(1861-1922)

Professor of English Literature, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford; Honorary Fellow Magdalen College, Oxford, King's College, Cambridge.

1885-1887 Professor of English Literature, Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, India. 1888-89 lectured for Oxford University Extension Delegation. Advisor to Clarendon Press. 1907 lectured in South Africa. 1907, 1911 lectured in Cambridge. 1915 responsible for *The Times* broadsheets for soldiers and sailors. Also lectured in USA.

zu Reventlow, Ernst 

(1869-1943)

Author, Politician

1888-1899 served in Navy. Married a Frenchwoman. 1899-1905 lived in Central America. Anti-Semitic. 1907, 1912 stood for Reichstag elections with *Deutschsoziale Partei* ('German Social


Party'). 1908-14 lead writer for Pan-German League's *Alldeutschen Blätter*. 1909-20, edited *Deutsche Tageszeitung*.

Roethe, Gustav

(1859-1926)

Professor of Philology, Berlin

1892 co-editor of *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deren Literatur* ('Journal of German Antiquity and its Literature'). From 1911 permanent Secretary to Prussian Academy of Sciences.


 *Vom literarischen Publikum in Deutschland* (1902), *Deutsches Heldentum* (1906), *Deutsche Dichter des 18. Und 19. Jahrhunderts und ihre Politik* (1919), *Goethe: gesammelte Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1932).

Rohrbach, Paul

(1869-1956)

Theologian, Writer

1897-1902 travelled in Siberia, Turkestan, Persia and Turkey. From 1901 editor of weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*. 1903-06 Royal Commissioner for settlement in German South-West Africa. Believed in 'ethical Imperialism'. 1914 led Press Department of *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst*, and published newspaper *Das größere Deutschland* ('Greater Germany'). Promoted German cultural imperialism, but hoped for a negotiated peace in War.

 *Deutschland unter den Weltvölkern* (1903), *Der deutsche Gedanke der Welt* (1912).

Salomon, Felix

Professor of History, Leipzig

Wrote on William Pitt the Younger (1906).

Sanday, William 

(1843-1920)

Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, Canon of Christ Church, Oxford

1903 appointed one of original Fellows of British Academy. Politically conservative. Made a concerted effort to keep up to date with German theological scholarship, and was friends with a number of German academics.



The Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel (1872), *The Gospels in the Second Century* (1876), *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel* (1905), *Outlines of the Life of Christ* (1905).

Schäfer, Dietrich 

(1845-1929)

Professor of History, Berlin, Publicist

1870-71 military service. Followed historical style of Heinrich von Treitschke. Antisemitic, Member of German Colonial League, German Naval League, Pan-German League and German Eastern Marches Society. Annexationist during the War, supported unrestricted submarine warfare, and opposed Bethmann-Hollweg. *Vaterlandspartei* ('German Fatherland Party') founded in 1917 on his initiative.

von Schulze-Gaevernitz, Gerhart 

(1864-1943)

Professor of Economics, Freiburg

Study trip to England inspired book on social-political education of English (published 1890). 1892-93 went to Russia to study industrialisation there. Member of liberal *Fortschrittlichem Volkspartei* (Progressive People's Party) in Reichstag.



Zum sozialen Frieden (1890), *Volkswirtschaftliche Studien aus Rußland* (1899), *Britischer*

Imperialismus und englischer Freihandel zu Beginn des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts (1906), *Zur Wiedergeburt des Abendlandes* (1934).

Smith, Thomas F.A. 

Lecturer in English, Erlangen


Spent 12 years in Germany as a lecturer in English in Nuremberg (1902-05) and Erlangen (1906-14). Position made him a Bavarian State Servant, and entitled him to Bavarian citizenship, which he did not adopt. Returned to Britain 31 July 1914.⁵

Sonnenschein, E.A. 

(1851-1929)

Professor of Greek and Latin, Birmingham

German father, English mother, born and raised in England. Two of his sons changed their surname during the war (one to 'Somerset', one to 'Stallybrass'). Close friends with German classical scholar Oskar Seyffert. 1903 co-founded Classical Association, served as Secretary. Fought successfully for a charter for University of Birmingham. During War worked for relief of Belgian refugees. First to bring manifesto of German academics to general attention in Britain.

 *Ideals of Culture* (1891), *The Unity of the Latin Subjunctive* (1910), *The Soul of Grammar* (1927).

Terry, Charles Sanford 

(1864-1936)

Professor of History, Aberdeen

Also a musician, with special interest in J.S. Bach

⁵ See Smith, *Soul*, pp. ix-xi.

Trevelyan, Ernest 

(1850-1929)

Jurist, Fellow of All Souls, Oxford

Specialist in Indian Law. 1905-15 Councillor on Oxford Town Council. From 1910 Assessor of Chancellor's Court, Oxford.

Trietsch, D 

(1870-1935)

Zionist leader, Economist

1893-99 lived in US. 1907-11 Member of Zionist Council. 1901-02 co-founder and editor of *Ost und West*, and *Palaestina*. War service in Army statistical department.

Troeltsch, Ernst 

(1865-1923)

Professor of Cultural, Historical, Social and Religious Philosophy and Christian Religious History, Berlin

Theological work well-known in Germany, Europe and USA. 1906-07 Prorector of Heidelberg University. 1909 founding member of German Sociology Society. 1909-14 represented Heidelberg University in First Chamber of Baden. 1912-15 City Councillor for National Liberal Party. 1914 appointed to Chair in Berlin, which specially created for him.





Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte (1902), *Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* (1912),

Wagner, Adolph 

(1835-1917)

Professor of Economics, Berlin

Financial advisor to Habsburgs and Chancellor von Bülow. 1872 co-founder of *Verein für Socialpolitik*. 1878 involved in creation of right-wing Christian Social Party, later served in Berlin House of Representatives. 1885 left politics.

Waldstein [Walston], Charles  

(1856-1927)

Classical Archaeologist


Born in New York, educated at Columbia and Heidelberg. 1880 moved to Cambridge. 1889-93 Director of American School, Athens. 1895-1901, 1904-11 Slade Professor of Art, Cambridge. Strong commitment to international co-operation. 1899 took British citizenship. 1912 knighted. 1918 Anglicised name.

Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Ulrich 

(1848-1931)

Professor of Classics, Berlin

Fought in Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). Travelled in Greece and Italy, worked at Prussian Archaeological Institute in Rome. International reputation as classical scholar, collaborated with Gilbert Murray. Torn between conservative tendencies and liberal leanings.

 *Homerische Untersuchungen* (1884), *Griechisches Lesebuch* (1902), *Der griechische und der platonische Staatsgedanke* (1919), *Geschichte der Philologie* (1921).

Wilkinson, Spenser 

(1853-1937)

Journalist, Chichele Professor of Military History, Fellow of All Souls, Oxford

In youth a member of Oxford Volunteers, 1880 took a commission in Manchester. 1883-92 journalist with *Manchester Guardian* (left as not as Liberal enough for Editor C.P. Scott). Later worked with *Morning Post* until outbreak of War. Argued for greater naval and military preparation for potential war. Not taken seriously until Boer War, when influenced army and Foreign Office. 1890 wrote study of German Army. 1894 important figure in foundation of British Navy League, though did not approve of their subsequent actions. 1909 appointed Chichele Professor of Military History. During WWI, volunteered services to War Office and Admiralty, but frequently turned down. One of his sons killed in action.



The Brain of an Army (1890), *The Command of the Sea* (1894), *The Brain of the Navy* (1895), *The Nation's Awakening* (1896).

Vinogradoff, Paul  

(1854-1925)

Corpus Chair of Jurisprudence, Oxford, Historian

Russian, attended Moscow University. 1875 won scholarship to Berlin. Liberal. 1903 elected to Oxford Jurisprudence Chair though not formally a lawyer. 1905 elected Fellow of British Academy. 1908-1911 visiting lecturer at Moscow, while maintaining Oxford post. 1915, 1916, 1917 visited Russia, sought to improve Anglo-Russian relations. 1917 knighted as result. Following Russian Revolution renounced Russian citizenship and became British subject.

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Gerard Collier:

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