Introduction

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As politicians and the general public alike debate the meaning of the First World War in the context of recent centennial anniversaries, this volume contributes to the discussion over what the conflict meant for various facets of British radicalism, broadly interpreted. The book emerges from a public conference held at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge on 3 May 2014, which saw papers from academics and archivists, and was attended by a divergent range of people from local Labour activists to doctoral students. The discussions seen at this event explored various social, economic and political themes related to Britain's path between 1914 and 1918 – and thus this book crosses over a number of historiographical debates too. The aim with the following introduction is not to provide a sweeping discussion of all facets of this work, but to draw out the relevant key themes and discussion points.

A significant part of this volume, though by no means all, concerns the evolution of the Labour Party itself. With the Labour Representation Committee only formed in 1900 (and assuming the label of the Labour 'Party' in February 1906), the war arrived at a time when Labour was still rather embryonic – and in a large part then a client of the majority non-Conservative force in British politics, the Liberal Party. Formed as a coalition of middle-class reformers from groups such as the Fabian Society and the working-class representatives from the major trade unions, the Labour Party spent much of the 1900s wrestling to keep together disparate elements, all the while being a long way from actually forming a government in its own right. This was a challenging time. For some lower middle-class voters, the achievements of the 'New Liberalism' under Herbert Asquith and David Lloyd George rendered Labour's political relevance questionable – and their impact was always limited at this time by the property (and gender) requirements inherent in the pre-1918

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franchise. The legacy of co-operation with the Liberals through the late nineteenth century also posed something of a quandary for Labour: were decent Liberals worthy of opposition at all?[1] In 1906, twenty-four of the twenty-nine Labour MPs returned to Parliament were elected in seats the Liberals had agreed not to contest – in line with the Lib–Lab Pact of 1903.
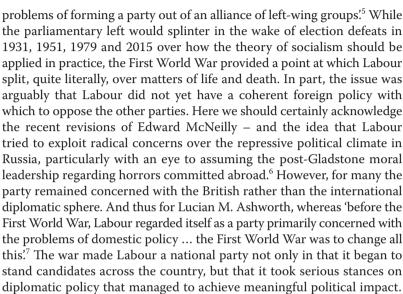
After the Liberal government passed legislation to ease the legal standing of trade unions, facilitate the delivery of free school meals for local authorities opting to introduce such schemes, and provide an old age pension for those over the age of seventy, Labour was initially able to applaud and vote for such measures, but not assume much of the credit for them. In the following years constitutional struggles over the House of Lords and Ireland produced hung parliaments in the two elections of 1910, thereby giving Labour's forty-two MPs greater influence than they otherwise may have enjoyed in a 670 seat House of Commons. Yet this was again only relative. Before the First World War Labour issued manifestos to exert pressure on others, principally reforming middle-class liberals, not with the prospect or even intention of forming a government on their own. Certainly without the conflict, and its puncturing of the generally optimistic liberal faith, along with the realignment of the Liberals as coalition partners with the Conservatives, it is difficult to envisage Labour taking office, as they indeed did, by 1924.

This narrative is broadly understood by today's Labour politicians. Speaking in 2014, the ex-serviceman and then shadow minister Dan Jarvis MP noted that 'the forces that led to [Labour's breakthrough] were already well underway before 1914, not least the fracturing of the Liberal Party. But there can be no doubt that the First World War accelerated these trends, and changed the balance of British politics forever. And its echoes would influence Labour politics for many years to come.'[2] In this regard, of course, every party has sought to 'own' the First World War, with the justification that victory was eventually achieved on the backs of working-class men and women under a Liberal prime minister supported by Andrew Bonar Law's Conservatives. Interest in the latter political force has also seen something of a renaissance through the work of younger scholars such as David Thackeray and Nigel Keohane.[3] But the fact that the war ended with Labour introducing its famous Clause IV, which – for all the symbolism over practical politics it embodied – promised to nationalise (or socialise) the means of production, distribution and exchange, renders it a key moment even within this generally reformatory context. If Eugenio F. Biagini and Alistair J. Reid were keen to stress 'the predominantly radical liberal nature' of what the Labour Party historically proposed, the First World War certainly marks a point at which socialism moved to the forefront of the agenda in various ways.[4]

The war clearly created particular procedural and policy dilemmas for Labour. As Rhiannon Vickers notes, for Labour the war 'revealed the

problems of forming a party out of an alliance of left-wing groups'.[5] While the parliamentary left would splinter in the wake of election defeats in 1931, 1951, 1979 and 2015 over how the theory of socialism should be applied in practice, the First World War provided a point at which Labour split, quite literally, over matters of life and death. In part, the issue was arguably that Labour did not yet have a coherent foreign policy with which to oppose the other parties. Here we should certainly acknowledge the recent revisions of Edward McNeilly – and the idea that Labour tried to exploit radical concerns over the repressive political climate in Russia, particularly with an eye to assuming the post-Gladstone moral leadership regarding horrors committed abroad.[6] However, for many the party remained concerned with the British rather than the international diplomatic sphere. And thus for Lucian M. Ashworth, whereas 'before the First World War, Labour regarded itself as a party primarily concerned with the problems of domestic policy … the First World War was to change all this'.[7] The war made Labour a national party not only in that it began to stand candidates across the country, but that it took serious stances on diplomatic policy that managed to achieve meaningful political impact.

Foreign policy aside, and partly because of the parliamentary arithmetic, Labour was usually a chronicler rather than shaper of major trends at this stage. And things were certainly changing. Indeed, for W. G. Runciman the First World War was a moment that produced a new type of capitalism which marked a shift away from late Victorian values and the domination of the aristocracy, and which survived into the latter part of the twentieth century.[8] Lloyd George's dynamic leadership at the Treasury, the Ministry of Munitions and subsequently Number 10 Downing Street catapulted the machine of government into a whole new order. And for Runciman, as 'the roles of [government] ministers and officials – in the regulation of the economy and the provision of welfare' changed, so too did British capitalism.[9] After 1918 these trends stuck, and 'governments continued to be involved in industrial and labour policy to an altogether greater degree than they had been before 1914' – a state of affairs that lasted even through the Thatcher era.[10] As Larry Gerber somewhat corroborates, the First World War did not begat a return to laissez-faire, but the emergence of a corporatist system in both Britain and America. As such, the war is best understood not only as an eruption that shook the world before another global conflict did similarly twenty years later, but the start of a corporatist ethos that would last for decades.[11] The reforms brought in by the Liberal coalition during the First World War – greater regulation of the private sector, higher taxation of luxury goods and income, and the ultimate use of state force: conscription – created a new political climate in which all parties would have to adjust.

Beyond the British context, for Thomas Piketty the two world wars formed a powerful (yet temporary) disjuncture in capitalism's general
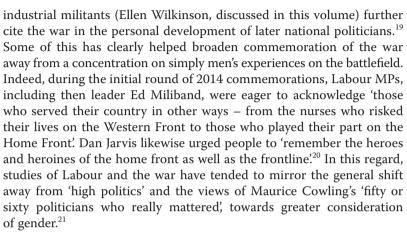
trend towards inequality. The death of future elites on the battlefield, the loss of imperial possessions after 1918 (and particularly 1945) and the extraordinary high rates of taxation levied by most western democracies augured the start of a golden age of equality lasting from roughly the 1920s to the 1970s.[12] While there are limits to the First World War as harbinger of the big state approach, just as historians have revised pre-conceptions of, say, Gladstonian liberalism being totally opposed to state intervention, the broad patterns hold up.[13] The Conservative-implemented Geddes Axe of the early 1920s could trim back the thickets of government, but they would only grow back thicker and faster. Thus W. H. Greenleaf's *Rise of Collectivism* owed much to the impact of the First World War. For Greenleaf, 'a belligerent nation in the circumstances of modern war turns over to a system of control in which a major proportion of its productive capacity and economy, indeed its life as a whole, comes in one way or another under public supervision; and the role of government is thus greatly augmented'.[14] This was, he lamented, true of Britain between 1914 and 1918.

Labour would accommodate themselves within this new order, rather than seek to fundamentally challenge it. While the Conservative Party would go on to portray Labour (often successfully, as seen in the Zinoviev letter of 1924) as in the pay of Soviet Communism, this was never close to true. Thus, through his examination of the sociological literature, Chris Chamberlain has observed that 'what is clear is that the Labour Party does not connote "socialist revolution" or "socialism in one country" or, indeed, even "socialism" in the minds of the great majority of its supporters'.[15] This would be true in the 1920s and 1930s, and in many ways aided the party's ability to claim former Liberal supporters. Although it was hastened by syndicalist influence before 1914, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* would be confirmed in the 1920s by moderate rather than revolutionary Labour.[16] And thus, even with the epoch-defining moment of the 1917 Russian Revolution, the later valedictory accounts of Soviet Russia put forward in the 1930s by the Webbs and the future Barbara Castle were the exception and not the rule here. Indeed, as Martin Pugh has noted, the period after 1918 in fact saw several *Tory* defections to Labour – not least former ex-servicemen, such as Oswald Mosley and Stanley Baldwin's son, Oliver.[17]

Changes were afoot for women too. As Caroline Rowan has shown through her analysis of the Women's Labour League (WLL), 'Labour Party feminism played an important role during and after the War in asserting the political importance of working-class women's domestic experience, and laid the foundations for further campaigns in the twenties and thirties on housing, women's health and maternity, which might not otherwise have been considered "political" at all'.[18] Recent biographies of future Labour ministers as children (Alice Bacon, Barbara Castle) or

industrial militants (Ellen Wilkinson, discussed in this volume) further cite the war in the personal development of later national politicians.[19] Some of this has clearly helped broaden commemoration of the war away from a concentration on simply men's experiences on the battlefield. Indeed, during the initial round of 2014 commemorations, Labour MPs, including then leader Ed Miliband, were eager to acknowledge 'those who served their country in other ways – from the nurses who risked their lives on the Western Front to those who played their part on the Home Front'. Dan Jarvis likewise urged people to 'remember the heroes and heroines of the home front as well as the frontline'.[20] In this regard, studies of Labour and the war have tended to mirror the general shift away from 'high politics' and the views of Maurice Cowling's 'fifty or sixty politicians who really mattered', towards greater consideration of gender.[21]

Many women did indeed serve in the war, but a significant number were stanch pacifists, or at least anti-militarists. However, the leaders of the two main suffrage organisations, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and (after 1915) the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), officially supported the war, the WSPU moving from militancy to militarism and patriotism, and symbolically changing its newspaper's name from *Suffragette* to *Britannia*. When, at the NUWSS council meeting in February 1915, Millicent Fawcett declared that until Germany was out of France and Belgium 'I believe it is treason to talk of peace', all the NUWSS officers (except the treasurer) and one-half of the national executive resigned. One hundred and eighty British women requested to attend the Women's Peace Congress at The Hague in April that year (the Netherlands being neutral) but Winston Churchill at the Admiralty 'closed' the North Sea. After The Hague Congress, rupture between pacifists and patriots became irreparable. The former concentrated on problems of post-war reconstruction. And they set up the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in autumn 1915, which by 1917 had grown in membership to 3,500. Some feminists worked with Belgian refugees, assisted enemy alien women and their families, as well as supporting the families of conscientious objectors. In addition to WILPF, the Women's Peace Crusade (WPC) was founded in 1916 to provide socialist opposition to the war – first in Glasgow, but spreading to other cities. It worked with the Independent Labour Party (ILP) (the only political party to oppose the war). By 1917 there were forty-five local WPCs through Scotland, Wales, Northern England and Midlands.[22] Other women worked alongside socialists and trade unionists in organisations such as the Women's International League, and Sylvia Pankhurst's East London Federation of Suffragettes also actively campaigned against the war.[23] In this regard women's peace activism dovetailed, as Marcus Morris' chapter in this book notes, with many British socialists' call for peace.
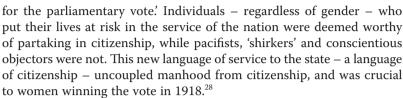
When people mention 'women and the First World War' one question that is often posed is 'did women's war work earn women the vote?' The Representation of the People Act 1918 (also known as the Fourth Reform Act) extended the franchise to include virtually all men over the age of twenty-one by abolishing the former property qualifications (and including men under twenty-one who had served in the war). Women over thirty who were either independent householders or married to householders were also granted the vote. The female franchise was therefore very limited and it was not until 1928, a decade later, that politicians finally granted the suffrage to women on equal terms as men. Some historians believe that the limited vote was a 'reward' for the efforts made by women to support the war effort, although of course the fact that the vast majority of women munitions workers were too young to receive the franchise undermines this argument. The War Cabinet was concerned to extend the suffrage to all men who had contributed to the war effort, requiring not simply a change in the property qualification but also in that of residency (which at the time required twelve months residence – impossible for men in the armed forces). Given that the groundwork for granting women's franchise had been prepared before the onset of the war (and in fact women had been close to gaining the vote on a number of occasions) a small majority of the Cabinet were prepared to consider extending the suffrage to women too.[24] Nonetheless, many politicians were anxious that if women were to be included in the new franchise bill, they would outnumber men, and it was agreed that the least objectionable way to keep the numbers of women down was by raising their voting age. Suffragist Millicent Fawcett, who was consulted on the bill, was prepared to go along with this, believing that married women and mothers (the majority of whom were over thirty) in having given their sons and husbands to the war, deserved the vote even more than (the generally younger) industrial workers.[25] Politicians viewed women over thirty as much more likely to be married, have children and have less interest in pursuing employment, in other words, they were less likely to upset the pre-war status quo.[26]

Sandra Stanley Holton argues that gaining the suffrage was not so much a top-down process led by Cabinet ministers, but a response to pressure from women suffragists, which continued on through the war.[27] Nicoletta Gullace convincingly points to the more indirect way that certain feminists contributed to women's winning of the vote. She suggests that patriotic feminists, especially Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and Millicent Fawcett, all involved in urging women into war work, developed a right-wing wartime nationalist feminism that renegotiated citizenship – away from gender, property and legal majority, towards patriotism (women were patriotically 'sacrificing their sons'), duty and service, and British blood. 'Patriotism replaced manhood as the fundamental qualification

for the parliamentary vote.' Individuals – regardless of gender – who put their lives at risk in the service of the nation were deemed worthy of partaking in citizenship, while pacifists, 'shirkers' and conscientious objectors were not. This new language of service to the state – a language of citizenship – uncoupled manhood from citizenship, and was crucial to women winning the vote in 1918.[28]

So, given such extensive previous analysis, why this book? The answer lies in the fact that while studies of the First World War and its meaning clearly abound, there lacks a major and comprehensive volume on the Labour Party, the British labour movement and the radicalism generated by the First World War. To date, historians have considered such questions at the intersection of others – perhaps naturally – but there has been no volume to date that tackles all the issues explored in the following. For all its clear utility, John Horne's monograph on *Labour at War: France and Britain 1914–1918* is a transnational study now over one-quarter of a century old.[29] Likewise, Adrian Gregory and Senia Paseta's excellent 2002 edited volume on *Ireland and the Great War* considers the Labour Party in passing, but is naturally centred on events across the Irish Sea.[30] Elsewhere, Gregory's own *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* and Martin Pugh's recent *New History of the Labour Party* denote one chapter each to the theme of labour/Labour and 1914–18.[31] Content related to individual chapters of this work have received monographs – such as Janet Watson's *Fighting Different Wars* and Susan Grayzel's *Women and the First World War* – but the point is there is no unifying monograph which ties many of these divergent strands together.[32] That is the aim here.

This volume begins with three chapters looking at the Labour Party at a national level, and Westminster politics per se. First, Marcus Morris teases out the different attitudes to the conflict the British left could take up before and during 1914. Moving beyond simplistic assumptions of a pro-cuts to defence spending ILP (and their allies) and a jingoistic, verging on pro-war Labour right, Morris invites us to reconsider how the common goal of peace could be pursued through seemingly divergent means. On the one side stood those who viewed military spending as inevitably leading to war – why improve one's military, after all, not to use it – but on the other side emerged a 'patriotic Labour' who urged Britain not to remain defenceless in the face of German aggression. In this regard, spending on arms was a way to prevent rather than increase the likelihood of conflict. As Robert Blatchford put it, 'there is no "war party" in England: only a party of defence'. As such, and as Morris highlights here, it was tactics rather than principles that often divided figures of Labour right and left. Together with works such as Matthew Johnson's recent *Militarism and the British Left*, this chapter therefore helps us reconfigure our attitudes towards pacifism and political progressivism.[33]
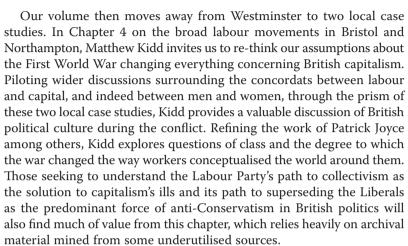
Chris Wrigley then provides a vital sweeping overview of the path the British Labour Party took during the war in Chapter 2. Utilising comparative data highlighting the labour movement across Europe, Wrigley shows how the trade union movement played a key role in the growth of the Labour Party in a much-needed transnational context. Here we see Labour moving from the status of a client of the Liberals in the summer of 1914 to one where it could meaningfully compete to form a government of its own in under a decade. This remains an important debate. For all the war did the personality of Ramsay MacDonald some damage with ex-servicemen England after 1918, the conflict did not interrupt the almost continual rise the party experienced between the nine general elections that took place between 1900 and 1929. Across that period, Labour stood more candidates, gained more votes, increased their percentage of the vote and gained more seats at every single general election, which the exception of seats in 1924. In this light it is instructive to consider how Labour successfully navigated the war through Wrigley's prism.

This changing polity would be reflected in the gender of parliamentarians too. Mari Takayanagi, Chapter 3, examines the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act of November 1918 whose significance has been largely overlooked, all attention centring on the Act earlier that year which gave women over thirty (with a small property qualification) the right to vote. The November 1918 Act, which was enacted ten days after the Armistice, for the first time permitted women to become Members of Parliament. It contained a surprising anomaly: there was no age (or property) qualification, which meant in theory that women too young to vote could nevertheless become MPs. (This was to occur when Jennie Lee, aged twenty-four, became a Labour MP just before the 1928 extension of the suffrage to women over twenty-one had come into effect.) The Act was introduced by Liberal MP Herbert Samuel, a senior backbencher who had held office in the past, and it was supported by the government with very little opposition.

It is possible that many believed there was no danger of the Act leading to an influx of women into the House, which indeed proved to be the case. While seventeen women stood for Parliament in the December 1918 election, only one was elected, Constance Markievicz, but as member of Sein Féin opposed to the British Parliament, she refused to take up her seat. The first woman to become an MP was Nancy Astor, who won a by-election the following year when her husband moved to the Lords. Despite feminist groups campaigning in the interwar years for women's access to the House of Lords, it was not until 1958 that this was granted. Women still remain grossly under-represented in Parliament today (following the June 2017 election there are 208 women MPs out of a total of 650) but the Act helped pave the way for women to enter other professions, such as the law. Takayanagi convincingly argues that its radicalism and contribution to gender equality needs greater recognition.

Our volume then moves away from Westminster to two local case studies. In Chapter 4 on the broad labour movements in Bristol and Northampton, Matthew Kidd invites us to re-think our assumptions about the First World War changing everything concerning British capitalism. Piloting wider discussions surrounding the concordats between labour and capital, and indeed between men and women, through the prism of these two local case studies, Kidd provides a valuable discussion of British political culture during the conflict. Refining the work of Patrick Joyce among others, Kidd explores questions of class and the degree to which the war changed the way workers conceptualised the world around them. Those seeking to understand the Labour Party's path to collectivism as the solution to capitalism's ills and its path to superseding the Liberals as the predominant force of anti-Conservatism in British politics will also find much of value from this chapter, which relies heavily on archival material mined from some underutilised sources.

Moving further north, Jack Southern, in Chapter 5, then explores the impact of the outbreak of war on the weaving districts of north-east Lancashire, with particular reference to Burnley, the 'world's weaving centre', where 40 per cent of male labour and 76 per cent of female labour worked in the cotton industry. Indeed on the outbreak of war all the weaving districts of north-east Lancashire employed three times more women than the national average. Weaving was dominated by small manufacturers, many of who had worked their way up from the 'shop floor', promoting a view of north-east Lancashire as a 'stronghold of Liberalism'. But it was not individualist liberalism so much as an industry built on kinship and community networks, giving loyalty to the employers and security to the employees through a family wage (although some women weavers received [nearly] equal pay and had a strong sense of economic and political entitlement).

On the outbreak of war, however, the familial system started to break down, as men signed up to fight and the mills began to close. While some of the machines could theoretically be switched to weaving cotton khaki, woollen khaki entailed expensive modification of the looms and thus was not pursued. Many women became their family's sole breadwinner, but they faced a spiralling cost of living and many families sort welfare relief. It was female campaigners who spearheaded local welfare issues, including those focusing on women's maternity and infant health. Women were also active in trade unions, especially the Amalgamated Weavers Association (AWA) and they made up the majority of its membership, although the top positions continued to be held by men. While there was a brief post-war revival in the Northern cotton industry, the 1920s and 1930s saw wage reductions and a plummeting trade union membership in the area. By the 1930s such membership was being replaced in Burnley by the National Unemployed Workers Committee Movement. The war had

seen the beginning of a slow decline in the cotton industry, which was never to recover; the pre-war community networks that had contributed to north-east Lancashire's relative radicalism and greater gender equality also never re-materialised.
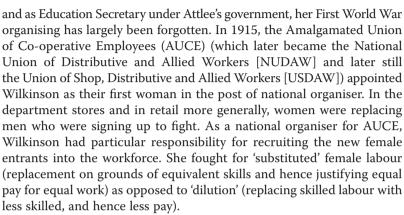
The First World War witnessed a radical transformation in the level of the formal economic activity of women, most notably bringing women in large numbers into the munitions factories. Trade unions were strengthened by wartime labour shortage and women's union membership rose by 160 per cent during the war. Deborah Thom compares two central figures who were organisers of women during the war: Mary Macarthur and Sylvia Pankhurst. Macarthur was a leading light of women's trade unionism before the war, best known for her involvement in the Cradley Heath chain-makers' strike of 1910 and her role as general secretary of the National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW). She was instrumental in aiding the expansion of the war economy through the recruitment of women workers. Sylvia Pankhurst likewise worked with women during the war, but her organisation, the East London Federation of Suffragettes, campaigned overtly against the war, campaigning for peace and opposing the introduction of conscription. She had broken ties with her mother and sister, Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and their WSPU, to form her own group, which aimed to place class at the heart of feminist struggle. The East London Federation gave practical help to women in surviving wartime hardships, working with and for East End women around issues of rent, food prices, child care, community restaurants and clinics. Both Macarthur and Sylvia Pankhurst were socialists but Pankhurst was an internationalist and a supporter of the Russian Revolution, changing the name of her organisation's paper in 1917 from *Women's Dreadnought* to *Workers' Dreadnought* accordingly. In 1920, Pankhurst was one of the founders of the British Communist Party.

While Pankhurst moved towards greater internationalism and away from Parliament as the favoured model of socialism and class politics, in May 1918 Macarthur was the first woman selected by the Labour Party (or indeed by any political party) to stand as a parliamentary candidate. As Mari Takayanagi points out in Chapter 3 in this volume, the selection occurred before the Act permitting women to stand had even been enacted. The distinctive political careers of these two impressive women reflect wider questions about what kinds of socialist politics appealed to, and were open to, women during and after the war. While Pankhurst and Macarthur followed very different paths, what united them during the war was their joint commitment to bettering the position of women, whether through fighting for equal pay or providing welfare for soldiers' wives and children.

In Chapter 7, Matt Perry focuses on another important woman organiser, Ellen Wilkinson. Best known as a leading figure in the 1936 Jarrow March

and as Education Secretary under Attlee's government, her First World War organising has largely been forgotten. In 1915, the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees (AUCE) (which later became the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers [NUDAW] and later still the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers [USDAW]) appointed Wilkinson as their first woman in the post of national organiser. In the department stores and in retail more generally, women were replacing men who were signing up to fight. As a national organiser for AUCE, Wilkinson had particular responsibility for recruiting the new female entrants into the workforce. She fought for 'substituted' female labour (replacement on grounds of equivalent skills and hence justifying equal pay for equal work) as opposed to 'dilution' (replacing skilled labour with less skilled, and hence less pay).

Wilkinson was involved in AUCE's first strike over substituted female labour, which took place in Carlyle in late 1915/early 1916, lasted only a week and was a resounding victory, resulting in equal pay. There was further success in Lanarkshire the following month, and other Scottish victories followed. Wilkinson believed in women's ability to lead union struggles, but was well aware of the attitudes of many in the labour movement towards female activists. Nevertheless, the AUCE admired her organising powers, and in October 1917 it founded a woman's department with her at its head. Having a woman's department was seen as one way of avoiding separatism while ensuring that a union addressed women's specific concerns. The AUCE opposed craft union-ism, adopted industrial unionism and emphasised militant grass roots activity. Wilkinson's involvement affected her subsequent politics, and she, like Sylvia Pankhurst, welcomed the Russian Revolution and was likewise a founding member of the British Communist Party. Unlike Pankhurst, and despite her commitment to extra-parliamentary politics, Wilkinson became a Labour MP in 1924, but always remained distinctly on the left.

Krisztina Robert, in Chapter 8, looks at a rather different group of women, those who joined the Women's Volunteer Reserve (WVR) or Women's Corps. Feminist historians have tended to view the 'true' radical heroines of the First World War as munitions workers, women trade unionists and feminists – women who demanded equal pay or protested against the war; these are precisely the women discussed in the chapters by Thom and Perry. Robert however argues that the WVR can themselves be seen as radical in their challenge to the established social order. They did not accept a second-class status but pushed for wider recognition as militarised female subjects. Established in 1914, the WVR saw their role initially as participating in home defence, but once invasion seemed unlikely, the WVR leaders arranged vocational training, including in previous 'male' occupations, such as truck driving. From

1917, with military manpower shortages, women were replacing men in auxiliary military roles as members of the newly formed WAAC (the Women's Army Auxiliary Corp) and the other women's services (Women's Land Army, Women's Royal Naval Service [WRNS] and Women's Royal Air Force [WRAF]).
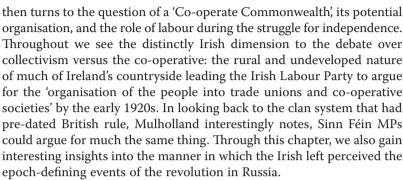
Drawing on wartime press articles and photographs, post-war memoirs and oral history interviews, Krisztina Robert identifies two main strategies, both actual and discursive, through which the women constructed the meaning of their work. The first one, militarisation, entailed working under martial discipline at military sites, wearing service uniforms of khaki (controversial for some) and performing duties previously done by soldiers, sailors and airmen. The second strategy included a strong emphasis on occupational training and/or previous experience as an entry condition into the WVR, with emphasis on the mental and physical difficulty of the jobs and the use of modern technology in the work processes. The WVR's egalitarian entry criteria lessened class distinctions to some degree, giving a cross-class membership. The chapter concludes that through these strategies WVR members created a new gender role, namely auxiliary soldiering, which combined the previously incompatible concepts of military service and 'women's work'. The WVR thus carved out a radical martial form of war participation for women along with new martial female identities.

The book then takes a different direction to look at British trends and how they fit into the shifting global sands. In Chapter 9, Richard Carr builds on his recent biography of the filmmaker Charlie Chaplin, who rose to become the most famous man in cinema, and one of the famous in the world, all told. British-born Chaplin would view the war from the comfortable surroundings of Los Angeles, California, but he would be profoundly shaped by its developments. This chapter teases out his reaction to the conflict, and the controversy his reluctance to serve at the front generated. It then moves on to discuss how the conflict affected Chaplin's own left-wing politics, which were always of a radical nature but did not universally subscribe to the increasing consensus that the big state was a force for good. Chaplin was not a Labour member or, given his residency, somebody who would ever vote in a British general election. But he was a radical, and someone whose politics has been underexplored to date. Looking beyond wartime films such as *Shoulder Arms* and *The Bond*, this chapter focuses on Chaplin the living, breathing radical propagandist.

Rather closer to home, Marc Mulholland, in Chapter 10, also includes much discussion on the notion of collectivism and the big state. Exploring such questions through Ireland (part of the UK until 1921), Mulholland walks us through the divergent beliefs and tactics of collectivised unskilled urbanised labour, and the craft-based co-operative tradition. His analysis

then turns to the question of a 'Co-operate Commonwealth', its potential organisation, and the role of labour during the struggle for independence. Throughout we see the distinctly Irish dimension to the debate over collectivism versus the co-operative: the rural and undeveloped nature of much of Ireland's countryside leading the Irish Labour Party to argue for the 'organisation of the people into trade unions and co-operative societies' by the early 1920s. In looking back to the clan system that had pre-dated British rule, Mulholland interestingly notes, Sinn Féin MPs could argue for much the same thing. Through this chapter, we also gain interesting insights into the manner in which the Irish left perceived the epoch-defining events of the revolution in Russia.

Speaking of Russia, Jonathan Davis then recounts how 1917 served as a formative moment in the development of two influential left-leaning voices, and by extension, the Labour Party itself in Chapter 11. By analysing the then liberal journalist Morgan Phillips Price – later to join Labour and, from 1929, serve as an MP – and Arthur Henderson, then Labour leader and a member of the Lloyd George Cabinet, we gain a new perspective on Labour's shifting sands. Charting the shift such men made from being uncomfortable opposing the Liberals to, by 1918, being willing to back Clause IV and all the nationalising elements there within, Davis reconfigures the Russian Revolution as a significant influence in the development of the British Labour Party.

Such international influences continue, in Chapter 12, with Gavin Baird and Bradley W. Hart's consideration of David Starr Jordan, a largely forgotten figure in Britain, but someone with significant academic and political clout in the USA. Although Starr Jordan's fame largely rested on his role as the first president of Stanford University, his interventions into diplomacy lent heavily on his belief in eugenics. As Baird and Hart illustrate, during the lead-up to the war and in the period before America entered the Allied side, Starr Jordan used his academic prominence to stress the dysgenic impact of the conflict on both sides of the Atlantic. Tracing his story from California to the corridors of Westminster, this chapter chronicles the interactions of an American pacifist with the Snowdens, Ramsay MacDonald and Fabian thinkers, such as Graham Wallas.

We end, logically enough, with the issue of war aims and the peace treaties. In Chapter 13, John Callaghan walks the reader through the various debates and contradictions seen in the Labour movement prior to the end of hostilities, as well as the dilemmas soon posed by the march of events thereafter. Along the way, he discusses Labour's reactions to the diplomatic path pursued by Edward Grey in the summer of 1914, the subsequent impact of the Union of Democratic Control, and then Labour's relationship with the Lloyd George government and Wilsonianism abroad. Callaghan also, like Davis and Wrigley before him, includes vital discussion of the continuation of hostilities beyond 11 November 1918. Here his

chapter may be of particular use to those considering Labour's later attitudes to colonialism and the League of Nations too.

All in all, this volume is intended to cover both Labour and labour, but also other forms of radicalism. Indeed, since the very term 'radicalism' has proven so malleable for historians, this broad approach seems a necessary precondition for any analysis. In perhaps the quintessential consideration of its various *Currents*, Biagini and Reid stressed the continuities of 'popular radicalism through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century'.[34] But understanding radicalism requires not merely chronological considerations but thematic ones too, for the reformist axis of British liberals, socialists and others unhappy at the various inequalities of capitalism ranged across causes, such as 'open government and the rule of law, … freedom from intervention both at home and abroad, and for individual liberty and community-centred democracy'.[35] Since the instruments and patterns of conformity – the state or the church on the one hand, marriage and the domestic sphere on the other – were so all encompassing, their opponents could scarcely be any less varied. Recent edited volumes have served to only widen the analytical scope into issues of divorce and the popular press as a statement on non-conformity, and begun to look at the Anglo-American and generally transnational dimension to such questions.[36] Likewise, Emily Robinson has been at the forefront of a greater consideration of language – where terms such as 'radical' and 'progressive' carry heavy 'historical baggage', but also allow politicians and social actors 'to gesture towards a supposedly self-evident (though, in practice, undefined and open) set of political principles'.[37] In short, there is much to debate here.

All that said, by covering everything from actions in Parliament to the challenging of patriarchy we hope to have made a contribution to the ongoing way in which we understand and interpret a tragic but transformative moment in modern British history. Existing assumptions regarding high politics, gender relations, industrial militancy and transnational narratives are all explored in the pages that follow. The transnational turn is built upon through looking at America, Ireland and Russia, and social, political and cultural historians will all hopefully find much of value in what follows. Certainly this collection makes a contribution to the tripartite developments raised by the innovative Modern British Studies group at the University of Birmingham: the 'uneven and often hesitant development of new forms of mass democracy', the effects of 'globalisation [on] Britain's place in the world' and the 'shifting patterns of rule' experienced in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[38] There is doubtless more to do, but this volume can at least help push several of the debates contained here on somewhat. Refinements to the arguments expressed remain, of course, more than welcome – and in this time of commemoration where we consider the meaning of 1914–18, perhaps only appropriate.

Notes

1 See, for example, Jon Lawrence, 'Popular Politics and the Limitations of Party: Wolverhampton, 1867–1900', in Eugenio F. Biagini and Alastair J. Reid (eds), *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics in Britain, 1850–1914* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 65–83.

2 Dan Jarvis, 'Labour and the First World War', *Labour List*, 18 June 2014 at http://labourlist.org/2014/06/full-text-dan-jarvis-labour-and-the-first-world-war-speech/ (accessed 11 October 2017).

3 See David Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age: Conservative Cultures and the Challenge of Mass Politics in Early Twentieth Century England* (Manchester, 2013); Nigel Keohane, *The Party of Patriotism: The Conservative Party and the First World War* (Farnham, 2010). For the aftermath see also, Richard Carr, *Veteran MPs and Conservative Politics in the Aftermath of the Great War* (Farnham, 2013).

4 Eugenio F. Biagini and Alastair J. Reid (eds), 'Introduction', in Biagini and Reid, *Currents of Radicalism*, p. 19.

5 Rhiannon Vickers, *The Labour Party and the World, Volume 1* (Manchester, 2003), p. 56.

6 Edward McNeilly, 'Labour and the Politics of Internationalism, 1906–1914', *Twentieth Century British History*, 20:4 (2009), 431–53.

7 Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Rethinking a Socialist Foreign Policy: The British Labour Party and International Relations Experts, 1918 to 1931', *International Labor and Working-Class History, No. 75, Rethinking the Left in Victory and Defeat* (Spring, 2009), pp. 30–48, 30.

8 W. G. Runciman, 'Has British Capitalism Changed Since the First World War?', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 44:1 (1993), pp. 53–67.

9 Runciman, 'Has British Capitalism Changed', p. 56.

10 Runciman, 'Has British Capitalism Changed', p. 57.

11 Larry G. Gerber, 'Corporatism in Comparative Perspective: The Impact of the First World War on American and British Labor Relations', *The Business History Review*, 62:1 (1988), pp. 93–127.

12 Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (London, 2014), passim.

13 Biagini and Reid, 'Introduction', p. 19.

14 W. H. Greenleaf, *The British Political Tradition, Vol 1: The Rise of Collectivism* (London, 1983), pp. 50–1.

15 Chris Chamberlain, 'The Growth of Support for the Labour Party in Britain', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 24:4 (1973), pp. 474–89, 480.

16 George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London, 1935).

17 Martin Pugh, ' "Class Traitors": Conservative Recruits to Labour, 1900–30', *The English Historical Review*, 113:450 (1998), pp. 38–64.

18 Caroline Rowan, 'Women in the Labour Party, 1906–1920', *Feminist Review*, 12 (1982), pp. 74–91, 90.

19 Rachel Reeves and Richard Carr, *Alice in Westminster: The Political Life of Alice Bacon* (London, 2017); Lisa Martineau, *Politics & Power: Barbara Castle* (London, 2011); Paula Bartley, *Ellen Wilkinson: from Red Suffragist to Government Minister* (London, 2014); Matt Perry, *'Red Ellen' Wilkinson* (Manchester,

2014); Laura Beers, *Red Ellen: The Life of Ellen Wilkinson, Socialist, Feminist, Internationalist* (Cambridge, MA, 2016).

20 Labour Party press release, 4 August 2014, at http://press.labour.org.uk/post/93762440584/one-hundred-years-ago-britain-entered-into-the (accessed 11 October 2017).

21 See the introduction of Maurice Cowling, *The Impact of Labour 1920–1924: The Beginning of Modern British Politics* (Cambridge, 1971).

22 Jill Liddington, *The Long Road to Freedom: Feminism and Anti-militarism in Britain Since 1820* (London, 1989), chs 5 and 6; Anne Wiltsher, *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War* (London, 1985), chs 4 and 5; Jo Vellcott, *Pacifists, Patriots and the Vote: the Erosion of Democratic Suffragism in Britain During the First World War* (New York, 2007).

23 Barbara Winslow, *Sylvia Pankhurst: Sexual Politics and Political Activism* (London, 1996), ch. 4; Mary Davis, *Sylvia Pankhurst: a Life in Radical Politics* (London, 1999), ch. 3; Shirley Harrison, *Sylvia Pankhurst: a Maverick Life* (London, 2004), chs 15–19.

24 Martin Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914–1959* (London, 1992), ch 2.

25 Harold L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866–1928* (London, 1998, 2nd edn 2007), pp. 132, 83.

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27 Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy* (Cambridge, 1987) pp. 134–50.

28 Nicoletta Gullace, *"The Blood of Our Sons": Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (New York, 2002).

29 John Horne, *Labour at War: France and Britain 1914–1918* (Oxford, 1991).

30 Adrian Gregory and Senia Paseta, *Ireland and the Great War: 'A War to Unite Us All'?* (Manchester, 2002).

31 Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Oxford, 2008); Martin Pugh *Speak for Britain! A New History of the Labour Party* (London, 2009).

32 Janet Watson, *Fighting Different Wars* (Cambridge, 2004); Susan Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (Longman, 2002). And see also Angela Woollacott, *On Her their Lives Depend* (London, 1994); Deborah Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls: Women Workers in World War 1* (London, 1998); Cathy Hunt, *The National Federation of Women Workers, 1906–1921* (Oxford, 2014).

33 Matthew Johnson, *Militarism and the British Left, 1902–1914* (Basingstoke, 2013), passim.

34 Biagini and Reid, 'Introduction', p. 1.

35 Biagini and Reid, 'Introduction', p. 3.

36 See e.g. Anne Humphreys, 'Divorce and the New Woman', in Joseph Bristow and Josephine McDonagh (eds), *Nineteenth Century Radical Traditions* (London, 2016) pp. 137–56; and the essays by Jon Mee and Adam I. P. Smith in Ella Dzelainis and Ruth Livesey (eds), *The American Experiment and the Idea of Democracy in British Culture, 1776–1914* (Farnham, 2013).

37 Emily Robinson, *The Language of Progressive Politics in Modern Britain* (London, 2017), p. 3.

38 Modern British Studies at Birmingham, Working Paper No. 1, February 2014.