



War, Demobilization, and Memory: The Legacy of War in the Era of Atlantic Revolutions. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Department of History and UNC Winston House European Studies Center; King's College London, Department of History and Department of War Studies, 30.05.2013-01.06.2013.

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War, Demobilization, and Memory: The Legacy of War in the Era of Atlantic Revolutions

With the bicentenaries of several key events in the wars of revolution and liberation between 1775 and 1830 just past or fast approaching, questions still abound about this period and its impact. While the conflicts of this era have each been studied extensively within their own national or broader regional contexts, little has been done to understand them within a trans-national framework. Bringing together 30 scholars of Europe, Russia, North, Central, and South America from four countries, the organizers of the conference “War, Demobilization, and Memory: The Legacy of War in the Era of Atlantic Revolutions,” Karen Hagemann (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and Michael Rowe (King's College London), wanted to explore the transition from war to peace, which has rarely been studied through a comparative framework, from a transatlantic perspective. States and societies were ill prepared to deal with the consequences of a style of mass warfare legitimated by national ideologies that had arguably become “total.” To understand these challenges, military, economic and social, political and cultural demobilization need both to be explored together, within a broader comparative context, and reconsidered as part of evolving narratives of collective memory.

After opening remarks DAVID BELL (Princeton) presented the conference's keynote address on Thursday evening. Building on themes that he first laid out in his 2007 book, “The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It,” Bell argued that the revolutionary era spurred a new ethos of militarism within the western world. Once overlapping, civil and military spheres grew increasingly distinct during this period, eventually emerging as separate entities. This development, as Bell laid it out, had far-reaching consequences, particularly in the political realm, where it fostered a new sense of political legitimacy based on military achievement. Along with the brisk question-and-answer

session that followed it, Bell's address helped frame key conference themes such as the role of warfare in the period's prominent political developments, the social upheaval and reordering caused by the wars of revolution and independence, and the cultural consequences for the western world of warfare on an unprecedented scale.

The first panel on Friday, entitled “Demobilizing Armies: The Military and Cultural Legacy of the War,” delved into the consequences of demobilization for Europe, the United States, and Spanish America. LEIGHTON JAMES (Swansea) used veterans' accounts to examine changes to the political order within the German states. In particular, he asked what role veterans, and their reintegration into society, played in both the evolution of the political landscape and the development of a new “German” consciousness that emerged through opposition to the French occupation. ANDREW LAMBERT (London) explored the conflicted legacy of the War of 1812. Arguing that, in the course of actual hostilities, the United States lacked a real national response to the war, Lambert showed that, over time, the conflict became a unifying event within the republic's collective memory. For Britain, by contrast, the war was quickly forgotten in the wake of the nation's major victories in Europe, not to mention the more pressing problems of demobilizing and economic reorganization. RAFF BLAUFARB (Tallahassee) focused on the material consequence of demobilization in Europe, examining the exportation of manpower, materiel, and expertise following the end to hostilities in Europe. More specifically, he posited that the previously unexplored flow of soldiers and weapons to South and Central America helps explain the dramatic reversal in these conflicts immediately following 1815, something for which historians have yet to account. These papers, as well as the comments by WAYNE LEE (Chapel Hill), pointed to the unforeseen consequences of European demobilization in the construction of personal and national

memories, social change, and global conflict.

The second panel, concentrating on the theme of "Restoring Post-war Economies," studied not just the material costs of rebuilding after war, but also the social and political ramifications of this process. KATHERINE AASLESTAD (Morgantown) focused on the response in Saxony and the Hanseatic cities to the long-term disruptions caused by the Napoleonic Wars, such as the billeting of armies of occupation and the repatriation of refugees, particularly among understudied non-state social organizations. DAVID TODD (London) analyzed France's renewed interest, during the post-war period, in the protectionist commercial policies of the 1780s. Through these commercial experiments, Todd argued, we gain a new perspective on key events such as the 1830 expedition to Algiers, which, while traditionally seen as a political maneuver meant to overcome domestic political opposition, was also a response to economic problems inherited from the revolutionary and Napoleonic era. JANET HARTLEY (London) concentrated on Russia's post-conflict military colonies, settlements designed to defray the costs of mobilization. Paradoxically, her paper maintained, these colonies actually increased the cost of maintaining a standing army, extending beyond their original mission to become utopian projects aimed at training Russians to be citizens. As all three papers, and the comments by GEOFFREY ELLIS (Oxford), demonstrated, the economic effects of the Napoleonic wars cannot just be measured through their immediate costs, but also through a more varied set of personal, political, commercial, and social responses to the conflicts.

The day ended with a third session entitled "Demilitarizing and Re-ordering Societies." Shifting the focus to the Revolutionary Caribbean, CASSANDRA PYBUS (Sydney) sought to redress the general neglect of free women of color within the economic history of the southern Caribbean in the period of the Revolutionary Wars. Arguing that, in fact, these women were highly entrepreneurial, she claimed that the late eighteenth century was actually a period in which they came into their own as an economic force. CHRISTINE HAYNES (Charlotte) explored the allied occupation of France following the defeat of Napoleon. Examining how soldiers and civilians experienced the occupation on the ground, she claimed that, more broadly, this event played a critical role in the establishment of a new post-war order in both France and the rest of Europe. JOHN DAVIS (Storrs) analyzed how, in Italy, the experience of the French occupation inspired new forms of democratic liberalism. Examining the development and activities of secret societies opposed to France, he argued that the Italian re-

sponse to the French inspired an especially conservative brand of liberalism - one that evolved in concert with the religious and political establishment. ALEXANDER MARTIN (South Bend) concluded the panel with an exploration of Moscow's development after the Napoleonic wars. He argued that, after the conflict, Muscovites adopted a bifurcated strategy designed to strengthen the stability of the city, resuming a long-term process of Europeanization while, at the same time, rejecting the European tradition to recast Moscow as the site of a distinct sense of Russian morality. Brought together, these two divergent threads helped turn Moscow into a key symbol of a new brand of Russian nationalism. Ending on comments by ALAN FORREST (York), this panel brought to light the political and social opportunities created within a global context by the conflicts of the revolutionary period.

Saturday opened with a lively fourth session, which discussed "The Conflicted Aftermath of War in Politics and Political Culture." STEFAN DUDINK (Nijmegen) began by looking at the new dominant conception of masculinity that arose within Dutch political culture in the nineteenth century. He argued that this thread of masculinity centered on the family and home - a particularly "domestic" understanding of manliness that, contrary to expectations, emerged not merely after the Napoleonic Wars, but also before and during the French occupation, suggesting that it was a deeply ingrained part of the political imaginary. MICHAEL ROWE (London) followed this presentation with an analysis of the political challenges faced in Germany after the Wars of Liberation. While acknowledging the repressiveness of this period, the theme most emphasized in the current scholarship, Rowe also highlighted the creative strategies deployed by the German governments to craft new political identities after the dislocation and destruction brought on by the Napoleonic occupation. CATHERINE DAVIES (Nottingham) expanded the session's scope in an exploration of how, in both Spanish America and Spain, gender shaped post-liberation political culture. Whereas in the former, she suggested, models of masculinity proved sufficiently robust to include revolutionary women, in the latter the predominant models of femininity highlighted female fragility. Thus conceptions of masculinity and femininity came to play drastically different roles in the post-independence political cultures of Spanish America and Spain. JOHN BEW (London) closed the panel by reassessing the impact of demilitarization and foreign policy on the political crises of post-war Britain. More specifically, he argued that, with government decisions open to an unprecedented level of scrutiny, problems of demobiliza-

tion posed system-wide threats to the post-war government, leading to a new dynamic in which the cultivation of public support would prove crucial to future foreign policy decisions. LLOYD KRAMER (Chapel Hill) offered the concluding comments, noting how, together, the papers show that there is no clean break between political, cultural, and military history.

The fifth panel brought together perspectives from Europe, North America, and recently liberated Spanish America in a study of "Post-War Culture and Contested Post-War Memories." GREGORY KNOUFF (Keene) explored the gendered language through which loyalists both reconstructed their identity in the post-revolutionary years, moving from the traitor trope imposed on them by the revolutionaries to one of victimhood and reimagining revolutionary Americans as rebels guilty of seducing the general population. ALAN FORREST (York) returned to Europe, where he analyzed memories of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars in Britain and France. In France, Forrest claimed, these periods were remembered as a glorious age and Napoleon as a liberator. In Britain, by contrast, despite celebrations of Waterloo, Wellington never quite gained a similar hold on the popular imagination in victory as Napoleon did in defeat. KAREN HAGEMANN (Chapel Hill) approached the politics of memory from a longer-term perspective, studying the two dominant, but conflicting, scholarly narratives within German academia of the period of the Anti-Napoleonic Wars. Whereas one thread described the conflict in Germany as a "War of Liberation" fought with the support of the populace, the other saw it as "Wars of Liberty" that were part of a larger struggle by the German people against repressive forces and for more political liberty. The competition between these narratives, she argued, proved significant in both the construction of German popular memory and in the creation of a collective European memory of the Napoleonic Wars. MATTHEW BROWN (Bristol) finished the session with a meditation on the competing narratives of memory of the Spanish American Wars of Independence. He concentrated especially on how Simon Bolivar, and his cult of memory, was portrayed and manipulated both in Spanish America and globally - probing, through this history, the more general conflicts in the commemoration of these wars. Comments by REBECCA EARLE (Warwick) connecting the different forms of memory construction in these papers followed.

In the last panel MICHAEL BROERS (Oxford) offered concluding remarks that highlighted the salient themes of the conference. Of particular significance, he found, were the dual tensions of dislocation and opportunity

produced by the wars of revolution and liberation, and the constant negotiation between these tensions in a variety of contexts. The dislocation produced by war led to shifts in social relationships, trade, and production, some of which proved transient, while others left indelible marks on society. These tensions helped produce a sense of nostalgia, one that would help shape the era's legacy. While synthesizing the disparate themes examined during the conference, Broers's conclusion also serves as a reminder of the complex, conflicted, and context transcending history of the revolutionary conflicts between 1775 and 1830. Comparative comments on Broers summary by Arthur Burns, Francisco Bethencourt (London) and Lloyd Kramer (Chapel Hill) closed the conference.

Conference Overview:

Keynote Address:

David Bell (Princeton): *The Birth of Militarism in the West, 1780-1815*

Panel 1: Demobilizing Armies: The Military and Cultural Legacy of the War

Moderator: Karen Hagemann (Chapel Hill)

Leighton James (Swansea): *War Veterans in the Central European Armies and Societies after 1815*

Andrew Lambert (London): *The Cultural Construction of the American-British War of 1812*

Rafe Blaufarb (Tallahassee): *Arms for Revolutions: Demobilization after 1815 and Latin American Independence*

Commenter: Wayne Lee (Chapel Hill)

Panel 2: Restoring Post-War Economies

Moderator: Michael Rowe (London)

Katherine Aaslestad (Morgantown): *Immediate and Enduring Costs of War: The Economic and Social Legacy of the Napoleonic Wars in the Hanseatic Cities and Saxony*

David Todd (London): *The Restoration of the Economic Old Regime in France and its Colonies, 1814-1830*

Janet Hartley (London): *Russia in the Napoleonic Era: War, Economy, and Utopianism*

Commenter: Geoffrey Ellis (Oxford)

Panel 3: Demilitarizing and Re-ordering Societies

Moderator: Andrew Lambert

Cassandra Pybus (Sydney): *Enterprising Women: Race, Gender and Power in the Revolutionary Caribbean*

Christine Haynes (Charlotte): *Making Friends Out of Enemies: The Allied Occupation of France, 1815-1818*

John Davis (Storrs): War and Peace in Italy, 1812-1815

Alexander Martin (South Bend): Moscow after Napoleon: Reconciliation, Rebuilding, and Contested Memories

Commenter: Alan Forrest (York)

Panel 4: The Conflicted Aftermath of War in Politics and Political Culture

Moderator: Alan Forrest (York)

Stefan Dudink (Nijmegen): Domestic Masculinity in Pre- and Post-war Dutch Political Culture

Michael Rowe (London): The Post-war Political Culture in German Central Europe

Catherine Davies (Nottingham): Gender in the Political Discourse of Post-Liberation Spanish South America and Spain

John Bew (London): The High Politics of Post-war Reconstruction in Britain

Commenter: Lloyd Kramer (Chapel Hill)

Panel 5: Post-War Culture and Contested Post-War Memories

Moderator: Stefan Dudink

Gregory Knouff (Keene): Seductive Sedition: New Hampshire Loyalists' Memories of the American Revolution

Alan Forrest (York): Remembering the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in France and Britain

Karen Hagemann (Chapel Hill): War, History, and Memory: The Anti-Napoleonic Wars in Nineteenth Century German Historiography

Matthew Brown (Bristol): Creating National Heroes: The Memories of the Spanish American Wars of Independence

Commenter: Rebecca Earle (Warwick)

Final roundtable

Moderator: Karen Hagemann (Chapel Hill)

Michael Broers (Oxford): Concluding Remarks

Commenters: Arthur Burns (London), Francisco Bethencourt (London) and Lloyd Kramer (Chapel Hill)

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the list discussion logs at:

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