

**Representation and Resistance: The Representation of Male and Female
War Resisters of the First World War**

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of PhD

The University of Leeds

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies

August 2017

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others

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Abstract

This thesis explores press representations of male and female war resisters of the First World War during both the conflict and important points of its commemoration, with a specific focus on gender. My original contribution to knowledge is twofold. First, this thesis shows the significant ways that gendered representations of anti-war women and men responded to one another, creating a shifting depiction of the anti-war movement as a whole. The gendering of male and female resisters drew on, reinforced, and contested both pre-war and wartime conceptions of gender in a variety of ways and this thesis demonstrates how the construction of gender and resistance has implications for understanding the relationship between gender and war more broadly. The second original contribution to knowledge that this study makes is the connection between the depiction of masculinity and femininity during the conflict and the way that anti-war men and women have been included in commemorative narratives. Uncovering this connection underscores the importance of considering the role that gender plays in commemoration and the endurance of particular wartime gendered constructions in the interpretation of the war in the present day.

Using a chronological approach, this study explores the key narratives of resistance in both pro-war and anti-war press publications. It demonstrates the central role that the press has played as a key conduit through which public narratives of resistance have been formed, reinforced, and contested. The analysis throughout this thesis highlights how the press has offered a space in which the public have contributed to the shaping of these narratives in ways that have been implicitly and explicitly gendered both during the war and its commemoration. Consequently, this study demonstrates how the press has facilitated and played a key role in the important relationship that resistance has to gender, war, and memory.

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors at the University of Leeds, Professor Ingrid Sharp and Dr. Jessica Meyer, for their continuous support of my research, and their patience, advice, and knowledge. Their guidance helped me throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis. I would also like to thank my supervisor at the Imperial War Museum, Matt Brosnan, who has offered helpful suggestions on drafts of this thesis and has given me an interesting insight into his own research and work at the IWM.

I would also like to thank Professor Benjamin Ziemann at the University of Sheffield both for his insightful comments and questions on parts of this thesis, and for his continued advice and support more generally.

My most heartfelt thank you goes to my family. The love, support, and encouragement from my parents and brothers has given me the motivation to persevere even during the most challenging times. To Ralph, who has been by my side throughout and helped me to keep going. To my niece Eva, who came along unexpectedly during the writing of this thesis and has given me so much joy, thank you. I hope that, like the women and men in this thesis, you will have the courage to follow your convictions in doing what you believe will make this world a better place.

This work was supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (grant number AH/M004953/1).

Introduction

As the mother of one dear boy lying in a grave in France, while his brother is daily risking his life on the Passchendaele Ridge, I deem myself rich indeed to have so much to give my country, but oh, I passionately protest against the 'conscientious' canker in our midst!¹

Published in the *Daily Mail* in 1917, this letter evokes a number of the gendered layers of understanding that would come to influence the depiction of those who opposed the First World War in Britain. The patriotic mother, the sacrificing, courageous soldier, and the insidious and cowardly war resister were all tropes that contributed to a shifting and contentious configuration of war resistance as a gendered act. This gendering was central not only to the representation of conscientious objectors but was also fundamental to the consideration and marginalisation of anti-war women, as well as the position of men and women within the peace movement as a whole. This thesis seeks to explore the connection between gender and resistance by considering the role that gender has played in press representations of the war resisters of the Great War both during the conflict and in its significant anniversary periods. Indeed, male and female resisters were represented in clearly gendered ways, with conceptions of masculinity and femininity and their relationship to war and peace significantly impacting upon the distinct and shifting depictions of anti-war men and women. The press is a key conduit through which the narratives of war resistance have been formulated and has been central to how resisters were represented and understood, both by those who supported them and those who disagreed with their standpoint. The discussion of male and female opponents of the conflict in pro-war and anti-war publications worked to

¹ J. C. H., 'Well-Fed "Conchies"', *Daily Mail*, 15th November 1917, p. 2.

construct a number of key discourses which were intimately intertwined with conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Narratives of maternalism and the relationship between womanhood and peace, discourses of courage, duty and sacrifice, and representations of suffering and martyrdom all became integral to how resisters were depicted both throughout the war and in the years after it.

Whilst there have been some studies examining both the cultural representation of war resisters and the inherently gendered language and imagery connected to this, these have tended to focus on either male or female war resisters, not both.² Lois Bibbings' study of cultural representations of conscientious objectors' masculinity is thematically similar to this study but the different focus, methodology and timeframe of this thesis explores resistance and gender from a different perspective.³ Whilst Bibbings looks exclusively at conscientious objectors through a variety of cultural representations as well as how COs were regarded and dealt with by their families, communities, government, employers, the legal system and the military, this thesis looks at both men and women who resisted the war and the way that they were discussed and represented in the press. As John Tosh has noted, one conclusion that can be drawn from recent work on masculinity is its relational quality.⁴ 'Neither masculinity nor femininity is a meaningful construct without the other; each defines, and is in turn defined by, the other.'⁵ As a consequence of this analytical division of men and

² For example, Lois Bibbings explores the masculinity of conscientious objectors through cultural representations in *Telling Tales About Men: Conscientious Objectors to Military Service during the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009). Susan Grayzel has analysed the narratives used to discuss anti-war women in chapter 5, 'Feminism on Trial: Women's Dissent and the Politics of Peace' of *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics and Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill; N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

³ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*.

⁴ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2005), p. 104.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 104.

women, our knowledge of how opposition to the war was gendered in a variety of ways at different points of the war remains limited. Taking the relational connection between masculinity and femininity as a central analytical focus, this thesis has built on the work of Bibbings to broaden understanding of how gender inflected the representation of the First World War peace movement as well as its inclusion into the conflict's remembrance.

Taking a chronological approach which will look at the four years of the war, the five immediate post-war years, the 50th anniversary and the current centenary, this thesis will broaden knowledge of war resistance by considering two key research questions. First, what were the dominant discourses that were constructed with relation to male and female war resisters in the press and how did these develop over the course of the war and at significant periods of commemoration? Second, what role did gender play in the formation of these discourses? By undertaking a chronological survey of the representations of male and female war resisters, considerable insights can be gained into the way gendered representations were constructed in relation to one another and developed in response to changing contexts. Moreover, analysing war resisters through a gendered lens sheds light on the centrality of gender to how wartime experience was understood both at the time and in the years afterwards.⁶ In doing so, it

⁶ See for example the edited collection on gender and the two World Wars, Margaret Randolph Higonnet [et al.] (eds), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). There are number of studies which analyse masculinity and war in a broad sense. See Paul Higate's edited collection on military masculinities, *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (London: Paeger, 2003), Stefan Dudnik, Karen Hagemann and John Tosh's edited volume, *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004). There are also studies which explore the relationship between femininity and war. See Sharon Macdonald, Pat Holden and Shirley Ardener (eds), *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1987). A number of studies have focused specifically on gender during the Great War. For example, C. Hämmerle, O. Überegger and B. Bader-Zaar (eds), *Gender and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Laura Ugolini, *Civvies: Middle-class Men on the English Home Front, 1914-18* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013);

contributes to a much broader literature on gender and war which has examined the diverse ways that both masculinity and femininity have been constructed during times of conflict. Foregrounding the role of gender in narratives of war resistance also reveals why a marginal wartime group generated a relatively large amount of both admiration and derision within public narratives of the conflict. Indeed, by exploring conceptions of masculinity and femininity and how these were linked to wider questions of identity, it is clear that war resisters were understood in ways that had broad implications for how British society saw itself and its wartime experience in ways that continue to resonate in the present.

This thesis will explore how press representations of anti-war men and women configured war resistance as a gendered act through the formulation and contestation of a number of discourses which drew on a diverse conceptualisation of masculinity and femininity during the war. These discourses ranged from overtly gendered narratives such as motherhood and soldiering to more implicitly gendered discourses like degeneration, liberty, and suffering. It will be argued that the way these narratives were discussed in the press was influenced by both pre-war and wartime constructions of femininity and masculinity whilst also having a significant effect on how the experience of war was gendered both during and after the conflict. The centrality of gender to the shaping of the anti-war movement has not been confined to the years 1914-1918 but has also had a considerable influence over the way resistance to the Great War has been remembered and interpreted at important commemorative anniversary periods, such as the current centenary. Through an analysis of the discourses used by the press to depict men and women engaged in opposition to the war, this study highlights the complex and often contradictory ways that gender actively

Nicoletta F. Gullace, *“The Blood of our Sons”: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); S. Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War*.

formed understanding of male and female resisters to the Great War. In doing so, it will contribute to the study of war resistance through three significant areas of First World War historiography: gender, public narratives, and memory.

Gender

A central contention of this thesis is that the myriad ways that gender shaped the conceptualisation of the Great War during 1914-1918 is of particular importance because it has had a considerable effect on how First World War peace activism is understood today. The importance of this research is thus underscored by the current centenary commemorations of the conflict where remembrance remains a sensitive and contested issue, and the war resister continues to occupy an uneasy place in public remembrance. This research will therefore broaden the current historical view about how opposition to the Great War was understood in gendered terms as well as the way that gendered narratives and constructions have informed how the conflict has been remembered.

Using gender as a central point of analysis, this study is envisaged as a work of gender history and has taken influence from and will add to the growing work of literature on war and gender generally, as well as specific examinations on the construction of masculinity and femininity. Scholarly inquiries into the connections between gender and war have revealed the way the relationship between the two has been historically and culturally constructed by both the state and in the wider public sphere. Margaret and Patrice Higonnet's metaphorical analysis of the 'double helix' gender structure, which examines masculinity and femininity as two intertwined strands, has important implications for the way in which male and female

war resisters can be analysed.⁷ Although this metaphor has come under criticism for failing to adequately interrogate how masculinity and femininity are constructed,⁸ the image of the 'double helix' bears the important argument that neither women nor men can be looked at in isolation but must be analysed within a 'persistent system of gender relations.'⁹ This is particularly significant for this study, as the comparative examination of representations of male and female war resisters demonstrates that constructions of femininity and masculinity and their relationship to peace shift both in response to each other and to external events. This relational connection between masculinity and femininity is crucial to understanding how gender became a central yet contested symbolic aspect of war resistance during the First World War.

Understanding the way in which masculinity and femininity have been constructed, particularly with relation to war and peace, is critical to an examination of how they were routinely invoked in representations of war resisters. Gail Braybon takes issue with the way some historians of the First World War have used the vocabulary of gender without exploring the context behind these terms, noting that terminology such as masculinity and femininity is not neutral but is culturally constructed.¹⁰ In this regard, the literature on the construction of masculinity and femininity, as well as more specific analyses of military masculinities, and women and peace will inform this study.

⁷ Margaret and Patrice Higonnet, 'The Double Helix' in *Behind the Lines*, pp. 31-47.

⁸ See Gail Braybon, 'Winners or Losers: Women's Symbolic Role in the War Story' in Gail Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914-1918* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), pp. 86-112 (pp. 99-100).

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 34.

¹⁰ Gail Braybon, 'Winners or Losers', p. 99.

The history of masculinity is a relatively new field and is particularly relevant to the First World War as masculinity was central to configurations of the soldier and became one of the main sites of contestation when it came to male war resisters. More specifically, the growing body of work that analyses the connection between masculinity and militarism has significant implications for exploring the gendering of male war resisters.¹¹ Of particular importance to this study is the concept of hegemonic masculinity, developed by R. W. Connell and expanded upon by others.¹² Hegemonic masculinity describes a hierarchical system of masculinities in which the hegemonic masculinity is constructed against both other subordinated masculinities and women.¹³ This concept is fundamental to the analysis of male war resisters as they were situated within a hierarchical structure that placed martial masculinity based on the principles of sacrifice, duty, and courage at the top. Conscientious objectors were thus gendered with specific reference to the hegemonic masculinity of the soldier.

Unsurprisingly, the masculinity of servicemen has been examined from a number of different perspectives. Jessica Meyer has analysed how masculine identity was configured by soldiers through their letters, diaries, and post-war memoirs and argues that two masculine ideals emerge most clearly in these personal narratives: the heroic and the domestic.¹⁴ Soldiers' letters and diaries also form the basis of Michael Roper's study of the emotional and

¹¹ For example: David H. J. Morgan, 'Theatre of War: Combat, The Military and Masculinity' in *Theorizing Masculinities*, ed. by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (London: Sage Publications), pp. 165-182; P. Higate (ed.), *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*; Paul Higate and John Hopton, 'War, Militarism and Masculinities' in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, ed. by Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and R. W. Connell (London: Sage Publications, 2005), pp. 432-447; Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion, 2000); Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); S. Dudnik, K. Hagemann and J. Tosh (eds), *Masculinities in Politics and War* and Stephen McVeigh and Nicola Cooper (eds.), *Men After War* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

¹² R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).

¹³ R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, The Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), p. 183.

¹⁴ J. Meyer, *Men of War*.

psychological aspects of masculinity during the war in which he contends that the domestic and martial aspects of male identity were intertwined and dependent upon one another.¹⁵ In Ilana Bet-El's examination of wartime masculinity, the focus is specifically on the conscript soldier and she argues that, unlike the hegemonic masculinity of the volunteer soldier, the masculinity of conscripts was constructed as inferior.¹⁶ Although the soldier has been the main focus of the study of First World War masculinity, Laura Ugolini's analysis of middle-class men who remained on the home front sheds light on the social and gendered dislocation felt by these men during the war because of the particular construction of wartime masculinity which was so intertwined with the soldier.¹⁷ Similarly, Lois Bibbings' examination of conscientious objectors and masculinity has offered a crucial basis for this study and demonstrates the impact of constructions of wartime masculine identity on the depiction of male war resisters.¹⁸ This study will contribute to this body of literature by considering how public dialogues within the press contributed to the representation of conscientious objectors through a specifically gendered framework both during the war and in its commemoration. The analysis throughout this thesis will demonstrate that this gendering responded to and was informed by not only pre-war and wartime conceptions of masculinity but also the construction of femininity during the war, specifically the gendered representation of anti-war women.

By exploring the ways that masculinity during wartime was formulated, this study can also be situated within a wider historiography of masculinity and conflict. The studies of soldiering during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars and Georgian period collated in Catriona Kennedy and Matthew

¹⁵ Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

¹⁶ Ilana Bet-El, *Conscripts: Forgotten Men of the Great War* (Stroud: The History Press, 2009 2nd edition).

¹⁷ L. Ugolini, *Civvies: Middle-class Men on the English Home Front, 1914-18*.

¹⁸ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales About Men*.

McCormack's edited collection touch upon a number of themes that are examined in this study.¹⁹ The soldier and his association to the nation, military identities, and citizenship are all central themes of the collection, demonstrating the links between masculinity and warfare in different time periods. The way that the different facets, complexities and contradictions of masculinity are formed during times of conflict and the way that these are related to broader questions of identity, the nation, and citizenship are all also explored in this study and consequently demonstrate the wider relevance of the examination of resistance and masculinity during the Great War.

The identity of women during the war has similarly been examined with specific reference to gender. Christa Hämmerle, Oswald Überegger and Brigitte Bader-Zaar's edited volume on gender and the Great War offers a number of recent studies which explore different facets of femininity, from the mourning mother, to the remembrance of female heroines and anti-pacifist debates in the women's movement.²⁰ The construction of female patriotism during the war has also been explored by Nicoletta Gullace, who examines women's involvement with the 'White Feather' campaign, and Susan Grayzel who has focused in particular on the construction of patriotic motherhood, have established important insights into how patriotism was gendered during the war.²¹ Grayzel's work also explores how motherhood became one of the conflict's central gendered narratives. Indeed, her

¹⁹ Catriona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack (eds), *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

²⁰ C. Hämmerle, O. Überegger and B. Bader-Zaar (eds), *Gender and the First World War*. See especially the chapters by Claudia Siebrecht, 'The Female Mourner: Gender and the Moral Economy of Grief during the First World War', pp. 144-162; Alison S. Fell, 'Remembering French and British First World War Heroines', pp. 108-126; and Ingrid Sharp, "'A Foolish Dream of Sisterhood": Anti-Pacifist Debates in the German Women's Movement, 1914-1919', pp. 195-213. This volume also includes a number of important recent studies of masculinity and the First World War.

²¹ Nicoletta F. Gullace, 'White Feathers and Wounded Men: Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (April, 1997), 178-206; S. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*.

comparative study of the different ways narratives of motherhood and citizenship were employed in Britain and France during the war highlights the centrality of maternalist discourses during this period.

Maternalism and its connection to women's peace activism more broadly has also come under interrogation in recent decades, with a number of scholars working to both explore and deconstruct the connection between the two.²² Maternalist discourses were invoked both by pro-war and anti-war voices and played an important yet contentious role in the representation of women's wartime experiences.²³ The theoretical underpinning to this key discourse and the specific way it was invoked with reference to female war resisters will thus inform this study's exploration of gender and peace activism during the Great War. Furthermore, this thesis will add to this literature by exploring the multifaceted ways that maternalism and femininity were constructed in relation to anti-war women in a manner that

²² A number of works theorise the relationship between femininity, care-giving, and peace. See for example, Sharon Macdonald, 'Drawing the Lines- Gender, Peace and War: An Introduction' in S. Macdonald, P. Holden and S. Ardener (eds), *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives*, pp. 1-26; Renate Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz and Susan Stuard, 'Introduction' in R. Bridenthal et. al. (eds), *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), pp. 1-12 (p. 2); Laura Duhan Kaplan critiques the argument that women are naturally pacifistic and argues that this conceptualisation obscures the role that women have played in supporting wars in Laura Duhan Kaplan, 'Woman as Caretaker: An Archetype that Supports Patriarchal Militarism' in *Feminism and Peace*, ed. by Karen Warren and Duane Cady (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 123-155 (p. 123). There are also a number of studies which examine the relationship between femininity, motherhood and peace within the specific context of historical women's peace activism: Joyce Berkman, 'Feminism, War and Peace Politics: The Case of World War One' in Jean Bethke Elsthain and Sheila Tobias (eds), *Women, Militarism and War: Essays in History, Politics and Social Theory* (Savage, Md: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990), pp. 141-160; Susan R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*, specifically the chapter 'Feminism On Trial: Women's Dissent and the Politics of Peace', Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement*, particularly chapter 4 'The International Bonds of Womanhood'; Jill Liddington explores a number of strands of female anti-militarism, including maternalist peace narratives in *The Long Road to Greenham: Feminism and Anti-Militarism in Britain since 1820* (London: Virago, 1989).

²³ Susan Grayzel looks at both anti-war and pro-war maternalist narratives in chapters 5 and 6 respectively of *Women's Identities at War*; Leila J. Rupp examines the ideology of motherhood in the prominent anti-war women's organisation, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in *Worlds of Women*, pp. 83-89. Nicoletta Gullace examines pro-war maternalist discourses in chapter 3, 'Redrawing the Boundaries of the Private Sphere: Patriotic Motherhood and the Raising of Kitchener's Armies' in "*The Blood of our Sons*".

also impacted upon the configuration of female citizenship, duty and patriotism.

Whilst the historiography on gender and the First World War, and theories of masculinity and femininity, offer important examinations of the role that gender played during the conflict, they have broadly been separated along gendered lines, focusing on either men or women. Consequently, there are still significant insights to be gleaned from undertaking analysis which looks at both men and women together, particularly in the realm of peace activism where such analysis has not yet been conducted. Taking inspiration from Janet Watson's *Fighting Different Wars* and Gullace's "*The Blood of Our Sons*"²⁴ both of which examine men and women and their relationship to the changing gender structure during the war, Watson from the perspective of the experience and memory of active participants in war and Gullace through a focus on the construction of citizenship in relation to soldiers, mothers and conscientious objectors, this study will explore constructions of masculinity and femininity in tandem. This thesis will contribute to the literature of gender, war, and peace by examining how gendered representations of both male and female war resisters contributed to shifting and complex constructions of masculinity and femininity and their association with peace activism during the Great War. Crucially, these gendered configurations of war resistance responded, reacted, and changed in relation to one another and the symbolic position of men and women within the anti-war movement shifted in response. Exploring the representations of male and female resisters together therefore sheds light on how peace was gendered and how the depiction of resistance to war evolved through the invocation of constructs of femininity and masculinity.

²⁴ Janet S. K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); N. Gullace, "*The Blood of Our Sons*".

Public Narratives

Using newspapers as the primary source base for an analysis of war resistance yields especially fruitful insights when foregrounding gender as an analytical tool because the press became a forum through which gendered ideas about war and peace were discussed and contested with specific reference to war resisters. Indeed, the way that the press has established and reinforced the narratives of resistance by focusing on particular stories and people, the frameworks of understanding that newspapers employ, and the manner in which the public engage with and contribute to public discourses through correspondence and online comments means that newspapers have played an important role in shaping the way resistance has been understood both during the war and in the years after its end. Crucially too, the press has considered both male and female resisters in varied ways and therefore offers important insights not only into key gendered discourses but also how narratives of masculinity and femininity, and the position of men and women within the peace movement responded and shifted in relation to each other and external events. Analysis of the press can widen our understanding of how specific debates and narratives interacted with, subverted, or were constricted by the dominance of certain discourses of masculinity and femininity. As Sharon MacDonald has argued, ‘in the realm of gender, peace and war, the “unchangeable” seems particularly entrenched and this is manifest in the complex network of imagery.’²⁵ This gendered imagery was present within the pages of the press and an examination of how correspondence, opinion pieces, and reports constructed male and female resisters in specifically gendered ways points to the underlying conceptions of masculinity and femininity that have underpinned, informed, and been contested to construct war resistance as a gendered act.

²⁵ Sharon MacDonald, ‘Drawing the Lines’, p. 2.

Within this context, it is particularly interesting that whilst the motivations and acts of female war resisters were often explicitly linked their gender, the gendering of male war resisters was shaped in more implicit but no less significant ways. Gisela Bock contends, 'men appear to exist beyond gender relations to the same degree that they dominate them.'²⁶ In this way, the realm of representation is particularly important for gaining an understanding of how the reinforcement and renegotiation of key discourses, many of which related to masculinity and femininity, were played out. As Joan Scott has argued 'if we treat the opposition between male and female ... as something contextually defined, repeatedly constructed, then we must ... ask not only what is at stake in proclamations or debates that invoke gender to explain or justify their positions but also how implicit understandings of gender are being invoked and reinscribed.'²⁷ The press in particular can shed light on important gendered narratives because it allows for a chronological investigation which can highlight both subtle and overt constructions of gender as well as underlying tensions in representations as they evolve over a certain period. By offering spaces where the public can actively contribute and respond to these narratives, analysing the press can also highlight the way that the public have added to the configuration of discourses of resistance.

Lois Bibbings' study of gender and the cultural representation of conscientious objectors is one work which highlights the significant insights that can be gleaned from public narratives.²⁸ Using a variety of cultural sources such as newspapers, magazines and novels, Bibbings demonstrates how the masculinity of the First World War CO was constructed through representations of them as cowards, heroes, traitors, patriots, criminals,

²⁶ Gisela Bock, 'Women's History and Gender History: Aspects of an International Debate', *Gender & History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring, 1989), 7-30 (p. 17).

²⁷ Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No 5 (December, 1986), 1053-1075 (p. 1074).

²⁸ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*.

degenerates and moral men. Locating her analysis in wider social discourses of masculinity, Bibbings' study highlights the centrality of public narratives to the formation of gendered ideas about men and their wartime experience, and her analysis therefore forms a crucial theoretical and methodological base for this thesis. Where this study departs from Bibbings is in the examination of discourses of anti-war masculinity alongside the public narratives of femininity and war resistance. By considering how the gendered representations of female war resisters impacted upon the masculinity of objectors and vice versa, this study will build on the work of Bibbings to demonstrate how the press was a forum through which gendered constructions of war resistance, which were informed by conceptions of both femininity and masculinity, were formulated. Through a focus on a broader timeframe than Bibbings' study, this thesis will also highlight how wartime gendered discourses have influenced the way that the anti-war movement has been included in commemorative narratives and will consequently contribute further understanding of the relationship between gender and resistance.

Examining the public narratives of resistance during and after the Great War, this study will also contribute to a broader literature on public representations and narratives of the conflict. Cultural narratives of the war have formed a significant point of analysis, and literary responses, the press, and film have been the focus of various studies. There has, for example, been substantial exploration of the literature written in response to the war by a number of scholars, including the seminal studies of Bernard Bergonzi and Paul Fussell as well as more recent explorations of women's consciousness and writing, and the work of the soldier poets.²⁹ The emphasis on the

²⁹ Bernard Bergonzi, *Heroes' Twilight: A Study of the Literature of the Great War* (London: Constable, 1965); Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); Rosa Maria Bracco, *Merchants of Hope: British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War, 1919-1939* (Providence: Berg, 1993); Claire M. Tylee, *The Great War and Women's Consciousness: Images of Militarism and Feminism in Women's Writings, 1914-1964* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990); Keith Grieves, 'The Propinquity of Place: Home

literature of the Great War as the central source of interpreting the conflict has been questioned by more recent studies which have focused more on television and film such as Emma Hanna's examination of how public narratives in television programmes have shaped understanding of 1914-18.³⁰ The representation of the First World War British Army in a variety of mass media including television and film, has also been analysed by Stephen Badsey who demonstrates the interconnectedness of the military history and cultural history of the army in our knowledge of the Great War.³¹ George Robb has similarly looked at film amongst other sources such as cartoons and juvenile literature to examine how British society interpreted the war and how it was transformed in response.³² Yet despite the press forming part of the source base of some studies of the conflict,³³ its important role in forming public narratives about gender during the war has not been fully explored. By considering how gendered discourses of resistance were formulated in the press both at the time and in retrospect as part of the construction of the war's memory, this study will show how public dialogue and discussion within the press has played a significant role in establishing gendered frameworks of resistance that have informed the depiction of anti-war men and women during the conflict and in its commemoration.

Landscape and Soldier Poets of the First World War' in J. Meyer (ed.), *British Popular Culture and the First World War* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 21-46; Sanatu Das, *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Samuel Hynes' study of First World War culture also examines literature alongside other public narratives such as journalism, film, and art in *A War Imagined: The First World War in English Culture* (London: Bodley Head, 1990).

³⁰ Emma Hanna, *The Great War on the Small Screen: Representing the First World War in Contemporary Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 12.

³¹ Stephen Badsey, *The British Army and its Image, 1914-1918* (London: Continuum, 2009).

³² George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

³³ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) and N. Gullace, "The Blood of Our Sons" all use the press as one aspect of their source material for example.

Focusing on the wartime press as the main historical source for this study comes with both undoubted benefits and certain methodological challenges. The value of embarking on a sustained analysis of the press for a study of one of the most significant periods of twentieth century British history is evident in the fact that 'newspapers were one of the most successful products of the period.'³⁴ Indeed, as Badsey has pointed out, the changes instituted in the decades before the war, particularly the Education Acts of 1870 and 1880, began to have an impact in the early twentieth century and contributed to the growth of working-class literacy and newspaper reading.³⁵ By focusing on press narratives this thesis contributes to studies about the broader significance of the press as a way of accessing and exploring public opinion such as Adrian Bingham's extensive work on newspapers, gender and sexuality in twentieth-century Britain and Aled Jones' study of the press, power and the public in nineteenth-century England.³⁶

The popularity and proliferation of the press at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the ensuing significance it developed during the First World War, both as an informant and a tool for boosting public morale, makes it surprising that there has been little in-depth analysis of the press during this period. Whilst the 'cultural turn' has ignited renewed scholarly interest in the construction and underlying meanings of language,³⁷ this type of academic attention has only recently begun to make a mark on the topic of war resistance during the First World War. Although some studies draw on

³⁴ Adrian Bingham, 'Ignoring the First Draft of History? Searching for the Popular Press in Studies of Twentieth Century Britain', *Media History*, Vol. 18, No. 3-4, Special Issue: The Historiography of the Media in the United Kingdom (2012) 311-326, (p. 311).

³⁵ S. Badsey, *The British Army*, p. 14.

³⁶ A. Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); A. Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press, 1918-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); A. Bingham and Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the Present* (Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd., 2015), Aled Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1996).

³⁷ A. Bingham, 'Ignoring the First Draft', p. 317.

certain aspects of the press, there has been very little sustained in-depth analysis of how competing, complementary, and dominant themes and narratives are charted through the war years and the years following the Armistice.³⁸

The press is a particularly fruitful source when it comes to examining the discourses surrounding representations of male and female war resistance, especially since the amount of text devoted to the discussion of war resisters during the war was considerable, when compared with the actual numbers of resisters within British society. Both the press that was sympathetic to and allied with war resisters and the press that openly derided them frequently engaged with active representations of war resistance and thus contributed to the development of a set of narrative frameworks surrounding anti-war men and women. Furthermore, this study will show that, whilst newspapers as a space in which the narratives of First World War memory have been constructed has yet to be seriously considered, the press and readers' responses to particular articles have had a significant influence on the way that resistance has been included as an aspect of the commemoration of the Great War.

Newspapers and journals present historians with a number of unique insights into the way past societies understood themselves and made sense of events unfolding around them. As Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy suggest, newspapers 'play a significant role in articulating, reinforcing and challenging political and social identities.'³⁹ Indeed, the depiction of anti-war men and

³⁸ Angela Smith does provide a good comparative analysis of Sylvia and Christabel Pankhurst's respective wartime journals. See Angela K. Smith, 'The Pankhursts and the War: Suffrage Magazines and First World War Propaganda', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2003), 103-118.

³⁹ Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy, 'Introduction: Journalism and History: Dialogues', *Media History*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Special Issue: Journalism and History: Dialogues (2013), 1-2 (p. 2).

women reflected and contributed to discussions and anxieties about national, gendered, and religious identities. In addition, by examining how the language and content of the press alter over a period of time, the press can also ‘help us understand the complex dynamics of past societies.’⁴⁰ This type of understanding is especially significant when considering the representation of male and female war resisters. Particular social and political identities were ascribed to both men and women engaged in resistance and these identities were at different times contested and reinforced by both the sympathetic and non-sympathetic press. Moreover, the complex context of a society engaged in total warfare meant that certain political and social developments and changes in the public mood inevitably had an impact on the language and content of articles relating to those opposing the war. By exploring the representation of resistance chronologically, developments and shifts in discourses of resistance can therefore be effectively traced in the press.

The intertextual nature of the press adds another dimension of analysis to its use as a historical source. Stephen Vella notes that ‘newspapers often engage in elaborate and unfolding debates with one another, playing with one another’s words and consciously turning meanings around in competing narratives.’⁴¹ This interplay between newspapers is particularly interesting when considering the relationship between the anti-war and pro-war press regarding their representations of war resisters. The opposing sides of the press frequently interacted with one another, invoking the same language and taking points from each other to develop detailed counter-arguments. Thus, by examining a selection of the press with opposing opinions on war resistance, valuable insights can be gained into the dominant discourses and

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁴¹ Stephen Vella, ‘Newspapers’ in Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (eds), *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth and Twentieth Century History*, (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 192-208 (p. 200).

competing narratives surrounding this contentious area of First World War Britain.

Yet if the press can offer a wealth of information on the complexities of past societies it also presents historians with a unique set of challenges and limitations. The socio-political and economic contexts as well as the ideological structures that govern a particular newspaper are critical to gaining a complete awareness of newspaper texts.⁴² As such, it is crucial to be conscious of the particular ideological agenda of a newspaper as well as its areas of circulation and the number of people who might read it, as this inevitably has a strong influence on both the content of the paper and the impact on its readership. The role of the readership is another particularly challenging aspect of studying the press, as the readership plays a crucial role in the conception and understanding of newspaper texts and in many ways facilitates the creation of meaning. Yet not only is the reception of articles notoriously difficult to locate, this difficulty is further compounded by the fact that the 'preferred' meaning of a text can be negotiated, resisted or ignored by a reader.⁴³ Whilst it is crucial to bear this in mind when engaging in a critical examination of the press, this challenge can be to some extent circumvented if we take the press to be itself a source of public opinion, particularly by exploring public correspondence to the press. As Jeffrey Verhey contends, 'newspapers provide a rich and representative sample of published public opinion.'⁴⁴ By employing certain frameworks of understanding, the press both reflected and shaped public opinion and can thus offer an oblique method of accessing prevailing attitudes.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 194.

⁴³ Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Interwar Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 11.

⁴⁴ Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914. Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 15.

An additional consideration needs to be made with regard to the specific wartime context and the effect that censorship had on the content of the press. Censorship during the First World War meant that certain state constrictions may have engendered a somewhat distorted or restricted picture of war resistance during 1914-18. The establishment of an official Press Bureau in August 1914 exercised a type of non-statutory censorship on the press and was concerned primarily with taking control of what facts about the war the press was able to publish. However, this became problematic for the government, particularly as the pacifist press did not rely on a steady supply of information about the battlefield but was instead focused on opinion pieces about the war and the organisation of anti-war activity.⁴⁵ Subsequently a more formal form of censorship which gave the government the right to impose a statutory limit on the freedom of the press was brought in under the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA).⁴⁶ Anti-war opinion in the press was dealt with by regulation 27 of DORA, which 'reiterated the intention to prevent the spread of "false reports" likely to cause "disaffection"', whilst regulation 51 enabled authorities to enter premises suspected of being used to distribute anti-war literature.⁴⁷

A further regulation which allowed anti-war literature to be more readily traceable was issued in November 1917. This required all pamphlets to bear the name and address of both the author and printer and to be submitted to the Press Bureau for approval prior to publication.⁴⁸ These regulations and the repeated raids carried out at pacifist publishers undoubtedly had some impact on the content and tone of the anti-war press, but the effectiveness of DORA is questionable. Deian Hopkin and Colin Lovelace have argued that

⁴⁵ Deian Hopkin, 'Domestic Censorship in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1970), 151-169 (p.156).

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 156.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 157.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 163.

the impact of censorship during the war has been overstated both by the contemporary press and ever since,⁴⁹ with Hopkin using the example of the continued publication of the anti-war *Labour Leader* throughout the war as illustrative of censorship's limited impact.⁵⁰ Similarly, Badsey argues that despite the strong range of legal censorship sanctions, the power and influence of the press remained so great that 'in practice it was left to be largely self-regulating.'⁵¹ Thus, whilst the effect of censorship must be considered, the way in which it was represented in the press itself and the continued publication of the pacifist press throughout the war must also be taken into account. Indeed, both the vehemently anti-war publications analysed in this thesis, the *Labour Leader* and the *Daily Herald*, continued to publish throughout the conflict from overtly anti-militarist viewpoints.

Limitations to studying the press during the war period are necessarily established by the fact that only a select number of newspapers and periodicals can be chosen to analyse in detail, thus omitting a number of other publications. With this limitation in mind, the publications under examination in this study have been chosen to represent a spectrum of views on war resistance during the Great War. The anti-war publications that will be analysed are the organ of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), the *Labour Leader*, and the *Daily Herald*, a socialist trade union newspaper which became increasingly antimilitarist during the war under the editorship of the Christian Socialist George Lansbury. As a snapshot of the anti-war press, these two publications provide significant insight into how the anti-war movement represented itself as well as how it engaged with pro-war discourses.

⁴⁹ D. Hopkin, 'Domestic Censorship', pp. 158-159; Colin Lovelace, 'British Censorship During the First World War' in G. Boyce, J. Curran and P. Wingate (eds), *Newspaper History: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (London: Constable, 1978), pp. 307-319 (p. 307).

⁵⁰ D. Hopkin, 'Domestic Censorship', pp. 160-162.

⁵¹ S. Badsey, *The British Army*, p. 18.

In order to gain an understanding of the way in which the anti-war and pro-war press interacted with one another, a variety of publications unsympathetic to the case of war resisters will also be examined. The publications considered in this regard will be the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*, both significant pro-war newspapers which engaged in open derision of war resisters, particularly COs. Like the anti-war papers under consideration, these publications demonstrate the dominant pro-war discourses on war resistance, many of which make specific reference to gender. This will consequently allow for a consideration of the most prominent themes used in relation to war resisters. In addition to the vehemently anti-war and staunchly pro-war newspapers, the *Manchester Guardian* will also be examined as a more balanced publication that whilst in support of the war was generally sympathetic to the anti-war movement and consequently provided a space in which a variety of opinion was expressed.

Limitations were also put on the research by the discontinuation of two of the key publications, the *Labour Leader* and the *Herald*. However, the decision to replace these in the analysis of the centenary period with another Socialist newspaper, the *Morning Star*, which has a critical view on the commemoration of the Great War provided a suitable replacement because it demonstrates how opposition to the war has been translated into critical reflection of the dominant remembrance discourses of the conflict. To address these particular source limitations, future research in this area could examine a number of other press sources particularly smaller more specialist journals or local publications in order to determine the extent to which these reflect wider representations of war resisters.

Memory

By continuing the analysis of gendered press representations of First World War resisters up to the present day through an analysis of important points of commemoration, this thesis will also contribute to the historiography of Great War memory. Historical analysis into the memory of the First World War has generated a substantial historiography that has interrogated, amongst other topics, the cultural impact of the war, memorials, mourning, and acts of official and unofficial commemoration.⁵² Whilst in the period prior to the 1960s and 1970s, the discourse of remembrance and commemoration was dominated by those who had direct experience of the war, in the 1960s and '70s it took on 'new inflections, inspired in part by the passing of veterans in increasing numbers and in part by significant anniversaries' such as the 50th anniversary.⁵³ The study of the memory of the First World War also took on a different dimension during this period through the inclusion of academic inquiry into the field of memory by historians and those working within the cultural study of the war.

Although preceded by Bernard Bergonzi's *Heroes' Twilight*,⁵⁴ Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* was in many ways a seminal study of the cultural legacy of the war, prompting greater academic interest in the remembrance of the Great War.⁵⁵ His study of the literature of the conflict argued that language was significantly changed by the experience of war, with irony emerging as the dominant linguistic and literary legacy. In a similar vein, Jay Winter's seminal work on the manifestations of the memory of the

⁵² Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), P. Fussell, *The Great War*, Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), Mark Connelly, *The Great War, Memory and Ritual: Commemoration in the City and East London, 1916-1939* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2002), Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946* (Oxford, Berg, 1994).

⁵³ Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 178.

⁵⁴ B. Bergonzi, *Heroes' Twilight*.

⁵⁵ P. Fussell, *The Great War*.

First World War in twentieth century cultural history, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, highlights the enduring significance of the war on the subsequent cultural landscape. In contrast to Fussell, Winter argues that there was a different trajectory, with traditional languages, rituals and forms dominating forms of bereavement following the war. He contends that 'traditional modes of seeing the war ... provided a way of remembering which enabled the bereaved to live with their losses, and perhaps to leave them behind.'⁵⁶ Indeed, the overarching argument of Winter's study is that 'the backward gaze of so many writers, artists, politicians, soldiers, and everyday families in this period reflected the universality of grief and mourning in Europe from 1914.'⁵⁷

Winter has continued to expand on his work in the field of memory and war with an underlying contention that remembrance is principally located in the work of civil agents, rather than the state. His analysis of kinship and remembrance in the aftermath of the Great War, for example, argues that remembrance of the war between families and fictive kin, which he defines as groups of people unified by experience, form the basis of official commemoration and suggests that historians need to 'approach the history of war and remembrance of war from the angle of the small-scale, locally rooted social action.'⁵⁸

Whilst Fussell's and Winter's studies look to the cultural legacy and impact of the memory of the First World War, other historians such as Emma Hanna, Alex Danchev, and Dan Todman have considered the impulses behind public interest in the war and the shifting narratives used to interpret the events of

⁵⁶ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, p. 115.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 223.

⁵⁸ J. Winter, 'Forms of Kinship and Remembrance', in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 40-60 (p. 59).

1914-18. Hanna's study of the different ways that the war has been represented in television highlights how interest in the conflict has both fuelled and been sparked by its varied depiction on TV whilst Danchev pays particular attention to the reanimation of public interest in the war in the 1960s, examining how the work of historians, A. J. P. Taylor and John Terraine, the impact of the twenty six part BBC television series *The Great War*, and the stage and film productions of *Oh! What a Lovely War* influenced public interest and understanding of the war.⁵⁹ Danchev argues that despite the disparate trends in all four of these interpretations of the First World War, the public interpretation of the war remained fixated on the perceived horrors of the trench and the futility of war. Furthermore, he highlights how the pictorial image of the First World War, through photographs, film, television and stage, restored the image of war into public consciousness and in turn renewed public interest.⁶⁰

Like Danchev, Todman examines the impact of the 1960s on the memory of the First World War, but situates the '60s within the context of a much longer process of memory formation. By surveying how the war was understood from the 1920s to the present, Todman challenges the perception that the 1960s were a key moment in the formation of the modern myth of the futility of the war. Instead, he argues that this myth was 'not created from scratch in the 1960s' but that 'representations of the war have always been judged in terms of horror, death, generalship and utility, although the conclusions that creators and audiences have come to differed widely.'⁶¹ Todman concludes that ambiguities and contradictions in the British response to war had existed from 1914, but from the 1970s the purely

⁵⁹ E. Hanna, *The Great War on the Small Screen*, Alex Danchev, "“Bunking” and Debunking: The Controversies of the 1960s' in Brian Bond (ed.), *The First World War and British Military History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp. 263-289.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 287-288.

⁶¹ Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon and London), p. 221.

negative myth of futility achieved dominance, although this too varied in its expression.⁶² Todman's analysis of the myth and memory of the First World War demonstrates how the memory of war has been contested from the very outset and points to the changing narratives of interpretation that characterise the understanding of the conflict and influence its commemoration. The analysis done by those such as Winter, Danchev and Todman rightly highlight the cultural legacies of the war, the articulation and role of grief in its memory, the shifting points of interest and changing narratives of interpretation.

Stephen Badsey and Brian Bond have also added to the literature by exploring how the British war experience has been represented in both image and word. Brian Bond's analysis of how Britain's role in the war has been depicted in literature and discussed in history underscores his argument that by taking different approaches, literary analysts and historians have inevitably arrived at different conclusions about the war. Bond contends that the historical, rather than literary, approach is of wider significance because it seeks to 'answer the larger questions about politics, strategy and the effects of war on international relations.'⁶³ Bond's analysis of how 'myths' about the British army's role in the Western Front have become rooted in public understanding of the war through books, memoirs and plays about the British army highlights how certain narratives of remembrance about the war have come to dominate its interpretation. Stephen Badsey's work similarly examines the relationship between cultural representations of the war, particularly television, and their impact on the historical understanding of the war. For example, his essay on *Blackadder Goes Forth* and the so-called 'two western fronts' debate that emerged in the 1990s highlights how the televised portrayal of a particular aspect of the war

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 221-222.

⁶³ Brian Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 40.

significantly influenced both historical debate and public understanding of the conflict.⁶⁴

The role that gender has played in the commemoration of war has also been explored by scholars and will inform the gendered analysis of the remembrance of the conflict in chapter 4. Braybon's examination of women's symbolic role in historical narratives of the war and Deborah Thom's analysis of the function of spectacle in museum representations of the conflict are both significant studies in this regard. Both Braybon and Thom highlight the different ways women have been invoked as symbolic of a particular interpretation of the war. Whilst Braybon argues that the invocation of women is 'frequently to exemplify the concept of the conflict as a "watershed" in social history, particularly with regard to women's engagement with employment and politics,'⁶⁵ Thom highlights how the spectacle of women's wartime work has been used to present an image of war as beneficial to women.⁶⁶ Braybon and Thom's arguments demonstrate how women's inclusion into the memory of the First World War has often been to symbolise the political and social progress the war was perceived to initiate for women. Whilst the view of the war as a watershed moment for women, primarily propagated by Arthur Marwick in his influential *Women at War, 1914-1918*,⁶⁷ has since been questioned by scholars,⁶⁸ this revision has not necessarily been translated into public understanding of the war. As women's symbolism in the war story continues to be a dominant view, this study will demonstrate that anti-war female activists potentially pose a challenge to this narrative because by representing women who openly

⁶⁴ Stephen Badsey, *The British Army in Battle*, see the chapter 'Blackadder goes forth and the "Two Western Fronts" Debate 1914-1918', pp. 37-54.

⁶⁵ Gail Braybon, 'Winners or Losers', p. 89.

⁶⁶ Deborah Thom, 'Making Spectaculars: Museums and how we Remember Gender in Wartime' in G. Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History and the Great War*, pp. 48-66 (p. 52, p. 58).

⁶⁷ Arthur Marwick, *Women at War, 1914-1918* (London: Fontana, 1977).

⁶⁸ Braybon offers an insightful critique of the origins and developments of the watershed 'myth' in 'Winners or Losers.'

opposed the war, questions are raised about the war's effect on women's lives. Indeed, if the conflict was beneficial to women why did some feminist and socialist women actively resist it? Including anti-war women into the narrative of the conflict therefore has the potential to change the purpose of the remembrance of women's experiences of the Great War.

Gabriel Koureas has also analysed the relationship between gender and memory in his study of masculinity and national identity in British visual culture of the post-war period.⁶⁹ Koureas's interrogation of the ways that masculinity and cultural memory impacted upon British society in the years after the Great War reveals the significant role that gender has played in the way that the conflict has been memorialised in visual culture. This study will therefore contribute to the work of Koureas by considering how the gendering of resisters during the war has continued to inflect the way the anti-war movement has been remembered in the conflict's commemoration.

More recent work on the remembrance of the war leading up to and during the current centenary has also offered important insights into contemporary commemorative discourses and the focus and meaning of this particular anniversary period. Helen McCartney's examination of the First World War soldier and his contemporary image demonstrates how the victimised soldier motif has been reinforced in recent years as a result of the growth of family history and its concern with the personalised narrative of war, the increasing public interest in psychological reactions to war, the long-term changes in British attitudes to the use of force, and the experience of recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁷⁰ Catriona Pennell has also explored the remembrance of the war in the present day, highlighting the different ways that the

⁶⁹ Gabriel Koureas, *Memory, Masculinity and National Identity in British Visual Culture, 1914-1930: A Study of 'Unconquerable Manhood'* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

⁷⁰ Helen B. McCartney, 'The First World War Soldier and His Contemporary Image in Britain', *International Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (March, 2014), 299-315.

political and national divisions of the twentieth century have coloured the memory of the war in the British Isles.⁷¹ Pennell has similarly considered how the war is being taught in English secondary schools and how pupils are being drawn into the centenary commemoration.⁷² Like Pennell, Andrew Mycock has considered the impact of political divisions on the centenary, looking specifically at the tensions of race and empire within the remembrance of the Great War and he argues that a national commemoration of the conflict is problematic, politicised and contested.⁷³ All of these studies highlight the tensions and points of contestation within present day remembrance of the conflict as well as the lasting impact of the political, military and cultural events and shifts on the way that the war continues to be remembered.

The varied approaches and sources outlined here have undoubtedly impacted upon the position of resisters within First World War memory, yet resistance is notably absent from these particular analyses as well as in the broader literature of the commemoration of the war. Yet examining the place of resistance in public narratives of remembrance demonstrates how the cultural representation of war resisters during the conflict has significantly shaped the interpretation of the peace movement within the war's commemoration. Through a consideration of how resisters have been incorporated into commemorative narratives, this thesis will contribute to the substantial literature of memory and the Great War and the understanding of how this memory has been shaped. Significantly, it will demonstrate how the gendered construction of the peace movement in the years 1914-18 continues to influence the ways in which First World War

⁷¹ Catriona Pennell, 'A Truly Shared Commemoration? Britain, Ireland and the Centenary of the First World War', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 159, No. 4 (2014), 92-100.

⁷² C. Pennell, 'Learning Lessons from War? Inclusions and Exclusions in Teaching First World War History in English Secondary Schools', *History & Memory*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring/Summer, 2016), 36-70.

⁷³ Andrew Mycock, 'The First World War Centenary in the UK: "A Truly National Commemoration"?'', *The Round Table*, Vol. 103, No. 2 (2014), 153-163.

resistance is remembered and will therefore highlight the continued importance of wartime gendered depictions of peace activism.

The analysis of the remembrance of resistance is necessarily limited because only certain periods of commemoration could be considered and thus a more comprehensive examination of how anti-war men and women have been included into commemorative narratives has yet to be undertaken. Indeed, this is an area which may benefit from more in depth analysis which can incorporate a longer time period in order to assess the nuanced ways in which remembrance narratives of resistance have developed and how. Given the time and space limitations of this thesis however, the focus on particularly significant periods of First World War memory enabled the analysis to highlight how important points of commemoration have either marginalised or incorporated those who opposed the war. This has provided a starting point for understanding the ways in which the press has contributed to commemorative narratives and the place of resistance within these.

Background to the British First World War anti-war movement

The way that different groups organised to oppose the war is significant for the analysis in this thesis because the key anti-war organisations of the Great War which received the most substantial press coverage initially organised along overtly gendered lines. However, the anti-war movement of the war was different to pre-war pacifist organisations. Indeed, with the outbreak of the conflict, the activities of the thriving international and national peace movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century came to a standstill.⁷⁴ Instead, the majority of those who had been active in working for

⁷⁴ For overviews of twentieth century pacifism see, Peter Brock and Nigel Young, *Pacifism in the Twentieth Century* (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1999); Peter Brock and Thomas Paul Socknat (eds), *Challenge to Mars: Essays on Pacifism from 1918 to 1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Harvey L. Dyck (ed.), *The Pacifist Impulse in Historical Perspective* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Guido Grünwald and

international peace turned their efforts to supporting their respective combatant nation and government. As Sandi Cooper has noted, the defensive war that belligerent governments insisted they were fighting was initially accepted by the international pacifist movement on the grounds that it was essential to preserve national independence.⁷⁵ In rallying behind their governments, the majority of those engaged in the two foremost strands of the flourishing international peace movement, liberal internationalism and socialism, abandoned their respective commitments to peace. The first of these strands, liberal internationalism and continental pacifism, had been developed by a diverse middle-class community based on a secular internationalism that was derived from religious and humanistic ideals.⁷⁶ This conceptualisation of peace activism had underpinned the creation of two 'peace internationals' in the years 1889-1891, one of which comprised of members of parliament and the other which was composed of private citizens.⁷⁷ The latter convened annual universal peace congresses and established the Bureau International de la Paix in 1891, which became an organised transnational lobby with headquarters in Switzerland and Belgium.⁷⁸

Alongside liberal internationalist peace activism, the burgeoning socialist movement was also establishing itself as a significant force for peace. Like liberal pacifist thinking, much of the socialist movement's commitment to

Peter van den Dungen (eds), *Twentieth Century Peace Movements: Successes and Failures* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1995); Richard Taylor and Nigel Young (eds), *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1987); Lyn Smith, *Voices Against War: A Century of Protest* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2009) and David Cortwright, *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁷⁴ Martin Caedel, *Pacifism in Britain, 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 9.

⁷⁵ Sandi E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 160.

⁷⁶ Sandi E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism*, p. 4.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

peace stemmed from its loyalty to internationalism or more precisely, a commitment to the international solidarity of the working class. This internationalism was underpinned by an understanding of war as a product of the capitalist system, and therefore another facet of the exploitation of the working classes. Although not necessarily committed to pacifist ideas, socialist internationalism developed a strong anti-war current in the run up to the First World War. This was illustrated by the Socialist International's commitment to the policy of a general strike against war in the years immediately preceding the conflict.⁷⁹ Yet, with the declaration of war in 1914, the once significant number of peace activists of both liberal internationalist and socialist strands dwindled to a small minority as the majority of pre-war peace campaigners moved to support their respective governments.⁸⁰

Within the British national context, a strong and diverse peace movement also existed prior to the war, which was mirrored in the broad affiliation of peace organisations to the National Peace Council. Within the council, support for peace initiatives came from religious groups as well as secular campaigners, women's representatives and labour activists.⁸¹ However, in parallel with its international counterpart, this extensive and diverse peace movement did not, to a great extent, continue to agitate for peace once Britain entered into the war. Indeed, in Britain in particular, the claim of a defensive war was bolstered by a professed moral obligation to fight Prussian militarism following the violation of Belgian neutrality.⁸² Although in the first

⁷⁹ James Hinton, *Protests and Visions: Peace Politics in Twentieth Century Britain* (Hutchinson Radius: London, 1989), p. 39.

⁸⁰ S. E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism*, p. 212.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 70.

⁸² For details on the reasons behind Britain's entry into the war see Adam Hochschild *To End All Wars: How the First World War Divided Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), pp. 93-97; Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), pp. 537-554. Adrian Gregory and Catriona Pennell have both offered insightful reassessments of the British response to the outbreak of war, challenging the notion of jingoism and war enthusiasm. See, C. Pennell, *A Kingdom United* and A. Gregory, 'British

five months of war anti-war agitation was small, relatively unorganised and had little impact, opposition to the conflict did not disappear altogether.⁸³ Instead, the peace movement became focused in a number of newly established organisations which were formed primarily on the basis of feminist, religious, and socialist initiatives. The feminist and socialist strands of anti-war thinking had been gathering momentum in the years before the First World War and had 'brought issues of social equality to the fore and broadened the peace agenda to include problems of economic injustice and patriarchy.'⁸⁴ Consequently, feminist pacifism and socialist anti-militarism had begun to form a significant element of the British anti-war movement, fracturing the traditional dominance of religion.⁸⁵ On the eve of Britain's entry into the war, large demonstrations were initiated by the Labour movement in Trafalgar Square and the international women's suffrage movement at Kingsway Hall, where women speakers from five different countries including Germany and Hungary attended, urging the British government not to enter the war that was unfolding in Europe.⁸⁶ Whilst the majority of those active in these demonstrations subsequently put their efforts behind supporting the war, some members of these two movements would become the most visible and vocal campaigners against the hostilities.

The existence of an international women's movement prior to the First World War undoubtedly helped to facilitate the feminist peace movement, which became a significant force during the war. As Martin Caedel contends

"War Enthusiasm" in 1914: A Reassessment' in G. Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History and the Great War*, pp. 1-29.

⁸³ Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, pp. 83-87.

⁸⁴ D. Cortwright, *Peace*, p. 3.

⁸⁵ As Martin Caedel notes, socialists' active campaigning against militarism 'marked the first challenge to Christianity's near-monopoly of pacifism.' M. Caedel, *Pacifism in Britain*, p. 34.

⁸⁶ For more information about the Trafalgar Square demonstration see J. Hinton, *Protests and Visions*, p. 42.

For details of the Kingsway Hall meeting see Jo Vellacott, 'Anti-War Suffragists', *History*, Vol. 62, No. 206 (October, 1977), 411-425 (pp. 414-416) and J. Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*, pp. 77-79.

‘having cut their organisational teeth on suffragism or social work, the minority of women who opposed the war became indispensable to the peace movement.’⁸⁷ Moreover, the links between the pre-war feminist movement and the women’s peace movement demonstrates how women’s pre-war and wartime activism often ran along an overtly gendered interpretation of the political, cultural, and social position of women and their role and responsibility within society. The gendered narrative of anti-war women and the links to the feminist movement therefore have significant implications for the examination of resistance and femininity in this study. However, the women who came to oppose war were in a minority, as the majority of the women’s movement halted their suffrage activism and instead put their weight behind the war effort. The National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), which moved to support the war, came under particular strain when a number of members including high profile women sitting on its executive broke away from the organisation because they wished to channel their efforts into working for peace.⁸⁸ In doing so, these women could draw on pre-war suffrage networks to establish a national and international feminist pacifist movement. As chapter 1 will demonstrate, the organisation of an international women’s peace congress at The Hague in 1915, which brought together women from eleven other countries, proved to be a significant moment for the development and representation of women’s anti-war activism and for the peace movement more broadly.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Martin Caedel, ‘Pacifism’ in *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume Two*, ed. by Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 576-605 (pp. 595-596).

⁸⁸ The split in the NUWSS has been well-documented by historians. See for example, Jo Vellacott, *Pacifists, Patriots and the Vote: The Erosion of Democratic Suffragism in Britain during the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), especially chapter 5 ‘Disaffection and New Directions.’ Krista Cowman has also documented the different directions taken by members of the militant Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) following the outbreak of war in chapter 7, ‘WSPU Organisers and the War’ of K. Cowman, *Women of the Right Spirit: Paid Organisers of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), 1904-18* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

⁸⁹ J. Vellacott, ‘Anti-War Suffragists’, p. 419.

The most important outcome of the congress was the formation of the International Committee for Permanent Peace, later renamed the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and its British national counterpart, the Women's International League (WIL).⁹⁰ These women-only organisations based their activism on a particular form of opposition to war, which rested on an assumption that women were inherently pacifist. On this basis, it was argued that by promoting women to an equal social status to men and, in particular, granting women a political voice, war could be avoided. WIL became a prominent force in the British anti-war movement with a significant number of national and local branches, and worked not only within its women-only confines but also supported other aspects of war resistance such as conscientious objection. Both the 1915 congress and the formation of WIL are particularly significant to this thesis because of the way that they were represented in the press. The congress attracted significant attention in both pro-war and anti-war publications and the reporting of it was overtly related to conceptions of femininity. Furthermore, the maternalist narratives that WIL employed were central to the representation of anti-war women more broadly. Both the congress and the discourses of motherhood and peace will be explored in detail in chapter 1.

⁹⁰ There is an extensive body of literature on WILPF, WIL, and The Hague Congress of 1915. Jo Vellacott has contributed significantly to this with a number of important articles on this topic: J. Vellacott, 'Anti-War Suffragists'; J. Vellacott, 'A Place for Pacifism and Transnationalism in Feminist Theory: The Early Work of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1993), 23-56; J. Vellacott, 'Feminism as If All People Mattered: Working to Remove the Causes of War, 1919-1929', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 10, No. 3, Theme Issue: Gender and War in Europe c. 1918-1949 (November, 2001), 375-394. Leila J. Rupp discusses the origins, ideology and activities of WILPF as an international organisation in *Worlds of Women*; The Hague Congress, WILPF and WIL are also discussed in J. Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*, pp. 87-120; Johanna Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1989), pp. 52-64 and Lela B. Costin, 'Feminism, Pacifism, Internationalism and the 1915 International Congress of Women', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 5, No. 3/4 (1982), 301-315. An important organisational history of WILPF is offered by Gertrud Bussey and Margaret Tims, *Pioneers for Peace: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1965* (2nd ed., London: WILPF British Section, 1980). More recent work on WILPF's activities in the post-war period has been done by Erika Kuhlman in E. Kuhlman, 'The "Women's International League for Peace and Freedom" and Reconciliation After the Great War' in Alison Fell and Ingrid Sharp (eds), *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914-19* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 227-243.

Socialism also provided significant impetus for war resistance, although the relationship between socialism and pacifism was not necessarily straightforward. This is made particularly evident by the fact that by the end of August 1914, the Labour Party moved to outright support of the war effort, committing to an electoral truce and joining with the other parties to advance the recruiting drive.⁹¹ Subsequently, socialist anti-war activism in Britain could be found for the most part in the ranks of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) as well as in a number of socialist driven peace initiatives which included both men and women. Furthermore, many men and women involved with the socialist movement such as Katherine Bruce Glasier and Clifford Allen wrote about resistance in the anti-war press. The Women's Peace Crusade (WPC) was a significant women only anti-war organisation which was started in Glasgow in 1917 by two socialist women Agnes Dollan and Helen Crawford and was met with an immediate response from local women.⁹² The Crusade spread particularly in the industrial towns and cities of the north of England and by early autumn 1917 there were thirty three WPC groups. Unlike the Women's International League, the Crusade was very much a grassroots mobilisation of women against the war and its focus was the working class woman in her neighbourhood.⁹³ Blending the language of international socialism and maternalism, the WPC galvanised many women around 'a single issue campaign in a short period of energetic and innovative woman-focused action.'⁹⁴ The way that the WPC represented itself with gendered narratives of motherhood and suffering by directly connecting

⁹¹ James Hinton, *Protests and Visions*, p. 42.

⁹² Jill Liddington, 'The Women's Peace Crusade: The History of a Forgotten Campaign' in Dorothy Thompson (ed.), *Over Our Dead Bodies: Women Against the Bomb* (London: Virago, 1983), pp. 180-198 (p. 190). Analysis of the Women's Peace Crusade has also been done by June Hannam and Karen Hunt in *Socialist Women: Britain 1880s to 1920s* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 186-187. Alison Ronan has examined the work of the Crusade within the context of the Manchester anti-war movement, see A. Ronan 'The Women's Peace Crusade in Manchester: June-September, 1917', *North West Labour History Journal*, Issue No. 28 (2003), 56-60.

⁹³ J. Hannam and K. Hunt, *Socialist Women*, p. 186.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 186.

their peace activism to the battlefield signalled a different type of maternalism to that of The Hague Congress and WIL and will be considered in chapter 3.

The No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF), an organisation which was established in late 1914 and was overtly gendered in its focus on men willing to resist military conscription, conscientious objectors, was also driven by socialist initiatives, although it was open to men of all religious and political persuasions.⁹⁵ The NCF had been founded following an advertisement placed in the ILP's newspaper, the *Labour Leader*, by its editor Fenner Brockway and his wife Lila. Having established itself as a leading anti-war organisation from its very beginning, the introduction of conscription at the beginning of 1916 created a context in which the NCF became the organisational touchstone of conscientious objection. Indeed, the NCF provided a broad network of support to its diverse membership, assisting not only conscientious objectors but also their families. Moreover, the development of local branches, affiliated to the head organisation, meant that the NCF often played a central role in establishing a network of supportive and sympathetic anti-war

⁹⁵ There is a substantial literature on conscientious objectors (COs) during the First World War and many of the works can be split into a framework that positions COs as either heroic martyrs or misguided men. Those works which are sympathetic to objectors include the account written by Quaker chaplain John W. Graham who was heavily involved with the CO movement, *Conscription and Conscience: A History, 1916-1919* (London: Allen & Unwin) and David Boulton, *Objection Overruled* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967), Boulton's study was commissioned by Fenner Brockway and Bertrand Russell, both of whom had been integral to the NCF during the war. Studies by John Rae and Thomas Kennedy have challenged the image presented by Graham and Boulton and have been more critical of objectors' position and representation during the war. See John Rae, *Conscience and Politics: The British Government and the Conscientious Objector to Military Service, 1916-1919* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); Thomas C. Kennedy, 'Public Opinion and the Conscientious Objector, 1915-1919', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (1973), 105-119 and Thomas C. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience: A History of the No-Conscription Fellowship, 1914-1919* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas press, 1981). More recent work on COs have consequently attempted to nuance the study of COs by focusing on the individuality of objectors' experiences, contextualising their resistance within their local communities and exploring their cultural representation. See Keith Robbins, 'The British Experience of Conscientious Objectors', in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced*, ed. by Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), pp. 691-706 (p. 698); Cyril Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience: The Story of an English Community's Opposition to the Great War* (London: Francis Bootle, 2001) and L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*.

communities and thereby became a critical player in the landscape of British war resistance. As will be explored, the key focal point of the NCF, the conscientious objector, also became the press's focus on resistance. The CO's stance against conscription positioned him as the direct opposite to the soldier, and his representation was therefore inherently linked to the ideals associated with martial masculinity. His centrality in the portrayal of the anti-war movement impacted significantly on the shifting hierarchy of war resisters and the way that resistance was conceptualised both during the war and in the years after its end. The objector will consequently be central to the analysis from 1916 in particular.

Both conscientious objectors and anti-war women were also members of a number of significant and influential religious organisations, which often worked closely with the NCF. Furthermore, as chapter 2 will highlight, religion became a central narrative in the representation of the anti-war movement more broadly. The Quakers' traditional commitment to peace meant that they played a significant role in resisting the war, both as conscientious objectors and in their participation in a number of anti-war organisations.⁹⁶ The Friends Service Committee (FSC) was established in 1915 following the London Yearly Meeting of Friends and became both a 'forum for all Quakers of enlistment age and the chief anti-conscription arm of the Society of Friends'.⁹⁷ An alternative to joining either the Army or taking an absolutist stance was also available in the form of the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU), which allowed objectors to alleviate some of the damages of war by helping wounded soldiers through non-violent means.⁹⁸ Despite the

⁹⁶See Thomas C. Kennedy, 'The Quaker Renaissance and the Origins of the Modern British Peace Movement, 1895-1920', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1984), 243-272

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 257.

⁹⁸See Meaburn Tatham and James E. Miles (eds), *The Friends Ambulance Unit, 1914-1919: A Record* (London: Swarthmore, 1920)

name, the FAU was not an entirely Quaker organisation in the way that the FSC was, although its funding came primarily from the Society of Friends.⁹⁹

Another important religious anti-war organisation which was formed in December 1914 was the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR), a Christian group, which included all denominations. Although the FoR was not exclusively concerned with pacifism, the ideal of a peaceful society formed an important aspect of its worldview of reconciliation through the Kingdom of God.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, during the war the FoR became a key player in the movement against conscription, forming one third of the Joint Action Committee (JAC) along with the NCF and the FSC, although it shied away from the 'deliberate confrontation' employed by the NCF.¹⁰¹ Internationalist in outlook, members of the FoR worked consistently for the cause of peace throughout the war, frequently holding meetings and working closely with other anti-war organisations.¹⁰²

Another key organisation was the Union of Democratic Control (UDC) which had been established in 1914 with the aim of advocating democratic control of foreign policy, formulating reasonable peace terms and establishing contact with democratic parties and groups on the continent.¹⁰³ Theoretically non-partisan, the UDC membership was made up primarily of Liberal and

⁹⁹ Jessica Meyer, 'Neutral Caregivers or Military Support? The British Red Cross, the Friends' Ambulance Unit and the Problems of Voluntary Medical Aid in Wartime', *War & Society*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (May, 2015), 105-120 (p. 112). The FAU had an ambiguous relationship with the Society of Friends from its beginning. See Meyer's article for a good examination of the relationship between the two.

¹⁰⁰ Bert den Boggende, 'Richard Roberts' Vision and the Founding of the Fellowship of Reconciliation', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Winter, 2004), 608-635 (p. 608)

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 634.

¹⁰² Vera Brittain, *The Rebel Passion: A Short History of Some Pioneer Peacemakers* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964).

¹⁰³ H. Hanak, 'The Union of Democratic Control during the First World War', *Historical Research*, Vol. 36, No. 94 (October, 2007), 168-180 (p. 168).

Labour supporters and included high profile anti-war activists such as Helena Swanwick, chair of the Women's International League, and the philosopher Bertrand Russell. Although the UDC did not agitate for an immediate end to the war, and was not a pacifist organisation, it did call for an open and public discussion of the war aims and an end to secret diplomacy in foreign policy.¹⁰⁴ This was done with the aim of eventually establishing mechanisms for peaceful co-existence between nations.¹⁰⁵

The diverse and varied groups and individuals who voiced criticism and opposition to the war were thus illustrative of the myriad ways that the hostilities were perceived as reflective of a range of issues from deceitful international relations to an unequal gender system. This study will focus on the press depiction of a number of these anti-war organisations as groups which were concerned with resistance as an act: the No-Conscription Fellowship and conscientious objectors as a group more broadly, the Women's International League and particularly the organisation of the peace congress at The Hague, and the Women's Peace Crusade. These organisations and the men and women that were involved with them are particularly significant because they all engaged with open opposition to the conflict and undertook a number of activities intended to halt the waging of war. Moreover, all these groups were inherently gendered in their focus, membership, and expression of opposition and they were all represented within a shifting press portrayal of the anti-war movement as a whole both over the course of the conflict and in the key anniversary periods analysed in this study. Exploring how their resistance was represented therefore enables an analysis of how anti-war acts were influenced by and contributed to constructions of both masculinity and femininity and their relationship to one another.

¹⁰⁴ For a breakdown of the UDC's five points see H. Hanak, 'The Union of Democratic Control', p. 170.

¹⁰⁵ Gerard J. DeGroot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (Essex: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd., 1996), pp. 143-144.

Chapter Outline

The thesis will be structured chronologically with four chapters. The first chapter will explore how the anti-war movement was interpreted in the first year and a half of the war in 1914 and 1915. It will analyse how war resistance was constructed prior to the introduction of conscription and will argue that women were represented as a distinct anti-war group and resistance was, to some extent, characterised as feminine. A significant amount of the analysis will inevitably be focused on the peace congress at The Hague in April 1915 because this was an international act of female peace activity which received considerable press attention. The increasing intensity of debates regarding the possibility of the introduction of compulsory military service in the second half of 1915 and the way that this influenced the representation of the anti-war movement will also be examined in this chapter.

The analysis will then move on to 1916, which was a pivotal year for the depiction of the anti-war movement, particularly in terms of the gendering of the movement, and thus the entire chapter will be dedicated to an analysis of the different ways in which the introduction of conscription reconfigured the representation of anti-war men and women. Much of the analysis will be centered on conscientious objectors and the narratives used to depict them as they became the central focus of the press's attention on war resistance and had a significant impact on the conceptualisation of the anti-war movement as a whole.

The third chapter will explore the final two years of the war, 1917 and 1918, and the effect of increasing death tolls of soldiers, conscientious objectors, war weariness and debates about citizenship on the interpretation of war resisters. It will demonstrate that the discourses used to represent male

resisters in 1916 become complicated by the developments in the final two years of the war. The chapter will also highlight how anti-war women responded to the suffering of war and gained more attention through the establishment of the Women's Peace Crusade, from summer 1917.

The final chapter will explore the five years immediately after the end of the war, the 50th anniversary and the current centenary commemorations in order to look at how resisters have been included as part of the memory of the First World War. It will consider both the ways that remembrance of the war's opponents have reflected wider shifts in how the conflict has been understood as well as how the representation of resisters during the war continues to inform and influence the interpretation of the anti-war movement.

In reconfiguring the analysis of resistance to the First World War to consider men and women, this thesis will demonstrate the integral role that gender has played in the way the representation of the anti-war movement was shaped both at the time and in its remembrance. Beginning with the first year and a half of war, the following chapter will establish the gendered characterisation of war resistance at the outbreak of war up until the introduction of compulsory military service.

Chapter 1: 1914-1915

Towards the end of 1914 and certainly from 1915, Britain adapted to being a society engaged in war.¹⁰⁶ Whilst the government and much of the populace made sense of and defined their position in the conflict, outlining what they were fighting for and who they were fighting against, those engaged in anti-war activity slowly began to organise themselves. In the early months of the war, as the nation was starkly confronted with the definitions and duties of 'Britishness', the majority of the population moved to support the national cause and overt opposition to the war was relatively thin on the ground.¹⁰⁷ Establishing a clear definition of what being British meant during wartime brought with it a need to identify the features of ideal British citizenship and this came to be understood with direct reference to three central characteristics: patriotism, duty, and sacrifice. Throughout the war these three themes would form the basis of many of the discourses that were used to represent the British population, including men and women who opposed the war.

The magnified definition of 'Britishness' was also linked to the development of a stark characterisation of both internal and external enemies, which similarly affected how support and opposition to the conflict was configured within the pages of the press. The first year and a half of the war was thus an important period for establishing definitive parameters of friend and foe and defining Britain's role in the war. This had significant implications for the way that the war's opponents were represented in the press, not least because their opposition to the hostilities was seen not only as a denunciation of the conflict but also as a rejection of Britishness. Discourses of nationhood,

¹⁰⁶ In the beginning months of the war, there was a belief that the war would be over relatively quickly. Indeed this sentiment was so strong that brokers began offering 'peace insurance' - if you paid £80, you would receive £100 if the war hadn't ended by January 1915. See A. Hochschild, *To End All Wars*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁷ C. Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, pp. 90-91.

citizenship, and patriotism thus played a significant role in shaping the representation of the anti-war movement from the beginning of the war, and gender formed an important part of how these were narratives were presented within the pro-war and anti-war press. These were often contextualised or explicitly related to discourses of degeneration and decline that were continued from the pre-war period. Both discourses of Britishness and narratives of degeneration were used with regards to the anti-war movement as a whole, rather than men or women in particular, and the analysis of these two themes will therefore be focused on the gendering of the movement as a collective.

Yet whilst the anti-war movement was often discussed as a whole during 1914-1915, there was also a focus on women as a specific group within the anti-war movement. Indeed, with the increased activity of female war resisters particularly from 1915, a set of overtly gendered narratives were formulated to represent the activities of anti-war women and therefore much of this chapter's analysis will focus on the gendering of female resistance and the construction of femininity and peace. In doing so, it will contextualise the significant change that occurred in 1916. It is the peace activism of women which prompts the first extended reportage of war resistance, with the Women's Peace Congress at The Hague in April 1915. This organisation of anti-war women was both a reflection and driver of a focus on women as a distinct and important group within the anti-war movement during the first year and a half of war. Whilst broader definitions of 'us and them' and discourses of degeneration and mental illness became key to representing the peace movement as a whole, the particular attention that was paid to female war resistance meant that the press to a large extent gendered the anti-war movement as feminine. This had a significant effect on the way that war resistance was interpreted as a gendered act, and had important implications for the representation of male war resisters. As the conscientious objector came to the fore from mid 1915 when the debates

about the possibility of the introduction of conscription intensified, the beginnings of a reconfiguration of both the focus and gendering of the anti-war movement began to take place within the anti-war press.

Us and Them: Pro-Germanism and Patriotism

On December 2nd 1914, the *Daily Express* ran an article which presented an image of anti-war activists that highlighted what would become one of the most significant and enduring discourses used to represent war resisters in the four years of war:

Here in England the pacifists, of whom we have heard little since the beginning of August, are getting busy again, and there is no question that if the Germans are forced to evacuate Belgium, there will immediately be a great outcry for the cessation of hostilities from the men who were notoriously pro-German before the war.¹⁰⁸

Whilst being repeatedly invoked against the anti-war population during the entire period of the war, the charge of pro-Germanism took on particular significance in the early years of the conflict. The need to establish a basis for Britain's involvement in the war against Germany meant that an unambiguous image of who Britain was fighting against and why was defined in the pro-war press. Similarly, conceptions of 'Britishness' came sharply into focus as national identity became central to the identification of Britain's wartime role and values. As both Jay Winter and Linda Colley have pointed out, despite the existence of Welsh, Scottish, and Irish identities, 'Britishness' was invoked as an inclusive national identity in the period leading up to and during the First World War.¹⁰⁹ Winter has argued, for

¹⁰⁸ 'Peacemongers', *The Daily Express*, 2nd December 1914, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Jay Winter, 'British National Identity and the First World War' in S. J. D. Green and R. C. Whiting (eds), *The Boundaries of the State in Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 261-277 (p. 263); Linda Colley offers a good argument on how

instance, that in pre-war Britain there was an absence of any fundamental or divisive discussion about national identity because of the relatively minor role that the national state played in economic and social life, exemplified by the absence of military conscription. However, a number of significant developments in the pre-1914 period did begin to raise questions about what 'Britishness' actually was.¹¹⁰ Chief amongst these were the turn-of-the-century imperial conflicts, such as the Boer War, which brought the question of the fitness of the British 'race' under the spotlight. A decline in middle-class birth rates and increased immigration into Britain similarly raised questions about the 'race.' These three factors consequently contributed to the impression of a 'eugenic nightmare of a nation peopled by the prolific "unfit" ... led by a dwindling middle and upper class.' This sense of decline was further exacerbated by the relative growth of German commercial and military power which added to a fear of British national decadence in the years preceding the war.¹¹¹

With the outbreak of the conflict in 1914, the rather vague conception of 'Britishness' that existed in the pre-war period changed in ways that reflected both the anxieties about the British 'race' and the growth of German power. Colley has argued that national identity is often defined with reference to 'who and what we are not',¹¹² and following Britain's entry into the conflict, anti-German sentiment was crucial to defining British national identity which came to be seen as representing 'everything "Germanness" was not.'¹¹³ National identity during the war was consequently conceptualised, as Winter has outlined, with reference to the central feature

'Britishness' was just one identity amongst multiple others rather than a problematic one in Linda Colley, 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (October, 1992), 309-329.

¹¹⁰ J. Winter, 'British National Identity', p. 263.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 263-264.

¹¹² L. Colley, 'Britishness', p. 311

¹¹³ J. Winter, 'British National Identity', p. 266-268.

of 'masculine "decency" and moral rectitude and martial virtues, expressed above all in the behaviour and comportsment of men who went to war.'¹¹⁴

The definition of war resisters as pro-German in the *Express* demonstrates how discourses of national identity became closely intertwined with the representation of the anti-war movement. As Sonya Rose has noted, national communal identification in wartime is enhanced by war being a contest between only two contestants.¹¹⁵ The representation of peace activists as a pro-German internal enemy not only tapped into pre-war anxieties about the decadence of the British 'race' by suggesting that the anti-war movement was acting against the interest of British power and prestige, but also had significant implications for the symbolic position of war resisters within the nation. By characterising peace activists as pro-German both prior to and during the conflict, the *Express* article identified this group as an element of pre-war British decline and consequently excluded them in the reforming of the British nation along specifically anti-German lines after 1914.¹¹⁶ This type of pro-war representation of the anti-war movement built upon pre-war anxieties about the nation by implicating peace activists in the construction of wartime anti-German British national identity.

The symbolic connection between pacifism and pro-Germanism was further enforced by multiple attempts to lay responsibility for Britain's entry into war on pacifists. This apparently paradoxical argument was explicitly outlined in articles in the *Express* and *Mail* during the first six months of the

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 268.

¹¹⁵ Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 11.

¹¹⁶ This anti-German national identity, within the context of concerns about British decadence and decline, was also prevalent in the literature published during the war more broadly as in the case of 'Sapper's' war stories where the regenerative experience of war was seen as a remedy to British male decadence in particular. See Jessica Meyer, 'The Tuition of Manhood: "Sapper's" War Stories and the Literature of War' in Mary Hammond and Shafquat Towheed (eds), *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 113-128 (p. 120).

conflict, and bolstered the image of pacifists as internal enemies who worked against the national interest. A poem written by Alfred Berlyn in the *Mail* in 1914 clearly invoked this particular narrative:

When patriot voices warned us long ago,
That Britain's testing time was near,
You had no eyes to mark the crouching foe,
No answer but a jeer.

Year in, year out, the deadly menace grew,
From strength to strength moved on the ruthless plan;
You babbled the reign of peace in view,
The 'brotherhood of man!'¹¹⁷

The link between pacifism and an unchecked German military 'menace' also appeared in an *Express* article of early 1915 which argued that pacifism 'has led us into the present war unready and unprepared, it is not dead it is merely changing its tactics.'¹¹⁸ By placing some of the blame for the conflict on the activities of pacifists prior to the war, these articles established and reinforced the idea of a long-term relationship between peace activists, the notion of British decline, and the threat of German militarism.¹¹⁹ As such, they legitimised the repeated accusation of pro-Germanism directed towards the anti-war population, propagating a clear view of both the external and internal enemy. Apportioning accountability for the conflict on pacifists also absolved the British government or wider populace of responsibility for the outbreak of war. This not only suggested that pacifists

¹¹⁷ Alfred Berlyn, 'The Pacifists', *Daily Mail* (London, England), 2nd November 1914, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ 'Pacifism Again', *Daily Express*, 12th January 1915, p. 4.

¹¹⁹ These attacks could be referencing the opposition to increased Naval armaments in both 1908-9 and the winter of 1913-1914 by some parts of the Liberal and Labour Parties. See for example, Howard Weinroth, 'Left-Wing Opposition to Naval Armaments in Britain before 1914', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (October, 1971), 93-120.

and their opposition to war were hypocritical but also implied that anti-war activity was an inherent danger to the nation because it was that ideology which had ultimately led to international conflict.

The construction of the anti-war population as an internal pro-German enemy also fed into the formation of explicit binary distinctions between the majority patriotic British population and the unpatriotic, pro-German anti-war population. These distinctions were most apparent in the pro-war patriotic and nationalistic narratives. Another way of defining the boundaries of the nation was to argue that those who agitated for peace had no loyalty to their country. From the beginning of 1915 as the number of anti-war meetings, organisations and protests increased, the *Daily Express* began to publish details of peace meetings along with an appeal to ‘patriots’:

Every day anti-patriotic meetings are held in London and the provinces ... The *Daily Express* is anxious that as many patriotic people as possible should attend these meetings. They should ... demand the right to be present in order that the national side of any question discussed should be heard as well as the anti-national.¹²⁰

The use of the binary concepts of ‘national’ and ‘anti-national’ as well as ‘patriotic’ and ‘anti-patriotic’ is illustrative of an attempt by the pro-war press to exclude the anti-war minority from wartime conceptions of the nation. These binary representations therefore highlight Catriona Pennell’s assertion that the war intensified the need to sharply define oneself against the enemy, with society’s ‘world-view’ becoming ‘polarised into “us” versus “them”’.¹²¹ Moreover, in the construction of the ‘pro-German’ and ‘anti-

¹²⁰ ‘The Peace Prattlers: How to Checkmate their Mischievous Work’, *Daily Express*, 20th July 1915, p. 5.

¹²¹ C. Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 92.

national' war resisters, the conceptualisation of British wartime national identity is also revealed. As Benjamin Ziemann and Miriam Dobson note, 'the condemnation ... of the 'other' tells us also something about the identity and values of their binary opposite ... even if there is no reference to the dominant group.'¹²² Whilst those organising and attending the peace meetings were identified as 'anti-patriotic', those who were not involved with them were characterised as patriotic. Similarly, whilst the peace meetings were characterised as 'anti-national', the 'patriotic' argument was viewed as 'national.' This narrative is replicated in accounts in the *Daily Mail* of meetings where pro-war and anti-war activists clashed with each other. For example, in a report of anti-war socialists interrupting a pro-war socialist meeting, the anti-war group were identified as 'unpatriotic socialists' whilst those who held the meeting were characterised as 'Britain's patriotic socialists.'¹²³ By outlining distinct oppositional characteristics such as national and anti-national and, significantly, by linking these with patriotism, the pro-war press used binary distinctions to exclude the anti-war population from the wartime conceptualisation of the national body.¹²⁴ In doing so, they not only identified war resistance as incompatible with 'Britishness', but also bolstered the notion that support for the war had become a defining feature of British national identity.

The reconfiguration of nationhood and the centrality of war service and duty to its construction had implications for conceptions of patriotism. Whilst Janet Watson has argued that patriotism during the war was neither monolithic nor an easily definable entity,¹²⁵ the repeated alignment of

¹²² B. Ziemann and M. Dobson, 'Introduction', p. 7.

¹²³ Our Special Representative, 'Queen's Hall Scenes: Pro-Germans Thrown Out', *Daily Mail*, 22nd July 1915, p. 5.

¹²⁴ For a good example of the exclusionary effects of binary distinctions see, Benjamin Ziemann and Miriam Dobson, 'Introduction' in B. Ziemann and M. Dobson (eds), *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth and Twentieth Century History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 1-18 (pp. 7-8).

¹²⁵ J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 8.

patriotism with war service in the pro-war press established an exclusionary framework of patriotism which specifically defined this ideal with relation to active support for the war. This impeded the anti-war movement's attempts to identify their opposition to the conflict as compatible with wartime conceptions of patriotism.¹²⁶ Concerted efforts by the anti-war press to reclaim patriotism did not really begin to appear until 1916 with the introduction of the conscientious objector. However, the effects of the repeated identification of the anti-war population as a marginalised internal enemy manifested themselves in subtle ways in anti-war publications. Most notably, the emphasis on a unified and strong peace movement which encountered little significant opposition can be viewed as a method of countering the claims that it was a marginalised and reviled movement.

The *Labour Leader*, in particular, invoked frequent, detailed representations of the unity and public acceptance of the anti-war movement. In an article appearing in March 1915, its editor Fenner Brockway represented the peace movement as growing in strength and numbers and detailed the rise of diverse anti-war organisations and activities.¹²⁷ Brockway asserted that 'the forces on the side of peace are now not of inconsiderable strength and everyday they grow ... the time has come ... for a united step forward.'¹²⁸ A few months later a similar contention was expressed, which argued that 'the

¹²⁶ A number of studies about the First World War touch upon the different ways in which notions of patriotism were defined. Janet Watson for example offers an examination of how patriotism was understood with relation to war service and work by men and women in *Fighting Different Wars*. Catriona Pennel's study of the outbreak of war, *A Kingdom United* similarly highlights the complex and changing process of engagement with patriotism during the war. Nicoletta Gullace in her analysis of wartime conceptions of citizenship looks at how patriotism and war service came to underpin notions of citizenship. See N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*"; David Monger's study of patriotism and the National War Aims Committee offers a detailed study of how patriotism was defined by the government with relation to negative conceptions of Germany as well as the central role that religion and religious narratives played in defining patriotism. See David Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain: The National War Aims Committee and Civilian Morale* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012).

¹²⁷ Fenner Brockway, 'The Labour Leader and the Coming Peace', *Labour Leader*, 11th March 1915, p. 3.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

time is ripe for the Independent Labour Party ... to bring into existence a great united, national peace movement.¹²⁹ The reiterations of a united and strong movement were further supported in the *Leader* by repeated suggestions of little or no opposition to anti-war meetings. For example, in an article detailing the progress of the ILP member Mr. Bruce Glasier's country-wide anti-war campaign, the meetings were described as 'markedly attentive and sympathetic.'¹³⁰ By portraying the peace movement as growing and united and greeted by a general public 'ready to give friendly consideration to any ... well reasoned case against the madness of war',¹³¹ the *Leader* depicted the movement against war as an accepted and rational response to the conflict. Moreover, by downplaying the opposition anti-war activists faced, the *Leader* also challenged the identification of peace activists as anti-British by highlighting their acceptance by the broader British populace. The employment of narratives of unity and acceptance in the *Leader* consequently disrupted the stark binaries of patriotism and nationhood that were established by the *Mail* and *Express* by depicting war resisters as an integrated and accepted part of British wartime society.

Degeneration, Lunacy, and Hysteria

The binary discourses which were used to depict war resisters as an internal enemy also fed into depictions of anti-war men and women as degenerates, lunatics, and hysterics which further contributed to their marginalisation within the pro-war press. Theories of degeneration had begun to emerge in the late nineteenth century as a response to the parallel trends of rapid economic, political and industrial progress and an increase in crime rates,

¹²⁹ 'Towards an Early and Enduring Peace: London's Lead for Peace', *Labour Leader*, 10th June 1915, p. 5

¹³⁰ 'Towards an Early and Enduring Peace: Mr. Bruce Glasier's Campaign', *Labour Leader*, 10th June 1915, p. 5.

¹³¹ 'Towards an Early and Enduring Peace: ILP Activity in Yorkshire- Successful Anti-War Meetings', *Labour Leader*, 10th June 1915, p. 5.

insanity, and vagrancy.¹³² In general, the theory of degeneration was underpinned by the argument that a 'host of individual and social pathologies in a fine and infinite network of diseases, disorders and moral habits could be explained by a biologically based affliction.'¹³³ Degeneration was therefore understood as returning to an earlier evolutionary stage and was considered to be heritable and progressive.¹³⁴ Discourses of degeneration played a significant role in the representation of war resisters, and articles and correspondence made specific reference to mental illness, physical weakness and concerns about reproduction. In this way, Lois Bibbings' assertion that conscientious objectors were portrayed in ways that 'echoed ideas about degeneration' can be applied more broadly to the anti-war movement, and to both men and women who agitated for peace.¹³⁵ Yet concerns about degeneration and the British race were not only apparent in texts that opposed anti-war activists but were also expressed by anti-war writers as a means of outlining their opposition to war. These narratives were thus used in different ways and with disparate intentions, yet a concern about the long-term impact on British society of either opposition to the conflict, or the conflict itself, underscored the deployment of these discourses.

Arguments about the degenerating effects of anti-war activists on the British 'race' drew on the turn-of-the-century anxieties about decline and were in many ways directly linked to concerns about the patriarchal gender structure which emphasised masculine dominance. John Tosh has pointed out that the fin-de-siècle was perceived as a period of crisis in masculinity because of the suffrage movement's challenge to public patriarchy, the birth rate decline

¹³² Jarkko Jalava, 'The Modern Degenerate: Nineteenth-century Degeneration Theory and Modern Psychopathy Research', *Theory Psychology* (June, 2006), Vol. 16, No. 3, 416-432 (p. 417).

¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 418.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 418.

¹³⁵ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 114.

and the physical unfitness of men who fought in the imperial wars of the early twentieth century.¹³⁶ The concern about male preparedness for the war, and the effect of this on Britain's position relative to Germany in the conflict, was implicitly outlined in an article in the *Daily Express* written by Arnold White which argued that the anti-war members of the population were 'people who ... look on a bayonet with blood on it with a horror that causes them physical nausea, mental disturbance and a nerve crisis ... it is owing to the pacifists that England could not make up her mind whether she was going to shirk or ... work.'¹³⁷ The discussion of pacifists with relation to bayonets suggests that White was referring to anti-war men because of the explicit connection made with the masculine sphere of combat. The identification of pacifists' inability to physically and mentally cope with combat and the way in which it is connected by White to a perception of British military hesitation, highlights the association between decline, masculinity, and the national body. Tosh has suggested, for instance, that there was a concern in the years leading up to the war that men were growing 'soft' and that as a consequence the body-politic would disintegrate.¹³⁸ White's article therefore not only links an aversion to militarism with mental disturbance, but also draws upon concerns about the broader effects of male war resistance to both masculinity and the nation. Moreover, the association between pacifism and a weak mental state inferred that, in contrast, those who supported the war had a superior and healthy state of mind and suggested that a healthy nation was one that took decisive action to engage in warfare.

The distinction that is made between the healthy pro-war population and the unhealthy anti-war populace consequently added to the symbolic marginalisation of war resisters within the national body that the anti-

¹³⁶ John Tosh, *Manliness*, pp. 105-119.

¹³⁷ Arnold White, 'Looking Round: Pacifist Piffle', *Daily Express*, 22nd March 1915, p. 4.

¹³⁸ J. Tosh, *Manliness*, p. 119.

national and pro-German narratives also contributed to. These discourses intertwined to create an image of the war's opponents as a distinct 'other' within British wartime society by establishing a symbolic link between peace activism and mental illness. As Steven Arata has argued, employing discourses of degeneration constituted an 'effective means of "othering" ... people by marking them as deviant ... psychotic, defective, simple or 'hysterical.'¹³⁹ References to the 'distorted mind of the peace crank',¹⁴⁰ or 'the piffle of the lunatics at large called pacificists'¹⁴¹ occurred frequently in the early years of the war and connected opposition to the war with lunacy. The *Express* even argued that it had evidence to demonstrate the inferior mental state of war resisters in the form of an intentionally misspelt and poorly constructed 'lunatic letter of a peace crank':

'Your son set out to kill some poor mother's son- and so he must expect to be killed ... we English go everywhere and make war on other peopels and their own land. Our boys go for sport to kill men like game ... '

The writing in this letter is in an angular hand. It will be seen that there are errors in spelling and punctuation.¹⁴²

By highlighting the spelling mistakes and jolty phrases of the letter, the *Express* attempts to justify and bolster its claim that the minds of war resisters were inferior. Depicting resisters in this way not only reinforced the marginalisation of those who were opposed to the war but also had a significant effect on how the war itself could be interpreted. In his study of malingering, for example, Roger Cooter argues that concepts of inherited

¹³⁹ Steven Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 16.

¹⁴⁰ 'The Mind of the Peace Crank', *Daily Express*, 29th July 1915, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ 'Pacificists' Piffle: What a Soldier Thinks of the Peace Cranks', *Daily Express*, 27th August 1915, p. 5.

¹⁴² 'Lunatic Letter of a Peace Crank: Pro-German Writes to a Soldier's Mother', *Daily Express*, September 27th 1915, p. 3.

mental illness or inferiority were frequently invoked in debates around malingering and 'might also have served militarists, if not the military: the implication could be that war is not so bad ... and that those who malingered their way out of it were, in effect, mentally subnormal.'¹⁴³ Similarly, by portraying anti-war activists as 'lunatics', the *Express* implied that the war itself was not inherently bad, which consequently cast those who were opposed to it as mentally unsound. The discourse of lunacy therefore reveals how the representation of anti-war men and women in the press could be used as a means of informing ideas about the conflict more broadly.

Fears about the effects of war on the reproduction of the British race, which evoked concerns about the hereditary nature of degeneration, also played a role in press discourses of war resistance. Significantly, both pro-war and anti-war texts that connected a particular aspect of the conflict to fears about degeneration located these anxieties with fathers rather than mothers and thereby associated narratives of degeneration with the anxieties about masculinity which had circulated in the years leading up to the war.¹⁴⁴ For example, a letter from Major General Sir Alfred E. Turner, a prominent nineteenth-century army officer, to the *Express* voiced a specific concern over the reproduction of the 'race' by the men of the No-Conscription Fellowship:

The 'No-Conscription Fellowship' does not hesitate to attempt to encourage the cowards and slackers who remain at home while all that is best and noblest of the youth of the Empire are risking their lives for its defence.

A most serious consequence must be the latter are killed in vast numbers to the irremediable loss of the country, while

¹⁴³ Roger Cooter, 'Malingering in Modernity: Psychological Scripts in Adversarial Encounters during the First World War', in Roger Cooter, Mark Harrison and Steve Sturdy (eds), *War, Medicine and Modernity* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), pp. 125-148 (p. 133).

¹⁴⁴ J. Tosh, *Manliness*, pp. 105-119.

the slackers are left to propagate our race ... we may become decadent.¹⁴⁵

A comparable anxiety is expressed by the anti-war writer Carol Ring who underscored her opposition to the war in the *Labour Leader* by invoking similar arguments about the degeneration of the race:

There is the incalculable crime against the race caused by the actual reduction of suitable fathers ... The cripple, the blind and deaf, the consumptive and paralytic ... the feeble-minded, remain behind, alive, to replenish the home, to father the Imperial races of the future.

The young healthy men who should reproduce their kind will rot on the field and in the trenches.¹⁴⁶

The use of the discourse of degeneration both to express concern of the reproduction of the population by male resisters and to underscore opposition to the war demonstrates how degeneration and its link to masculinity was a widely held concern. The invocation of discourses of degeneration from opposing standpoints on the war is thus illustrative of Samuel Hynes' contention that there was a widespread belief in a national disease in the pre-war and war years. He argues that 'diagnoses of that disease varied depending on what guilts, resentments ... self-interests the diagnostician brought to the case.'¹⁴⁷ Moreover, it is significant that both texts implicitly define volunteer soldiers as the ideal male figure by portraying them as young, healthy, noble and central to the reproduction of a healthy race, and consequently express fears about those men who either could not or would not volunteer. This has important implications for the

¹⁴⁵ Alfred E. Turner, 'Encouraging the Cowards', *Daily Express*, 2nd June 1915, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ Carol Ring, 'War and the Race: Do Armies Protect the Hearth and Home?', *Labour Leader*, 3rd September 1914, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ S. Hynes, *A War Imagined*, p. 57.

way that anti-war men who remained at home were represented, whether explicitly or implicitly. Whilst the letter from Alfred Turner explicitly identified male resisters as mentally and physically inferior men, Carol Ring's text also implicitly included those anti-war non-combatant men as unsuitable, unhealthy men precisely because of her clear identification of volunteer soldiers as the opposite of this. As Bibbings has noted, there was a widespread view from the beginning of the twentieth century that 'the English (or sometimes British) race, and in particular, English manhood were in moral and/or physical decline.'¹⁴⁸ There were concerns, for instance, about the 'sickliness, cleanliness and morality of the working classes and anxieties about the effects of decadence upon the bodies and characters of upper-class men.'¹⁴⁹ Both Turner's and Ring's texts are evocative of these gendered notions of degeneration and demonstrate how an ideal of healthy masculinity associated with the volunteer soldier was perceived as a counter to decadence and decline. In turn, those men who did not volunteer, including male war resisters, were represented as characterising a decadent manhood which had potentially negative consequences for the future of the 'race.'

The gendered concerns about physical degeneration also found parallels in the discourses of mental inferiority and illness which specifically targeted female war resisters. Reports of anti-war meetings in the early years of the war included descriptions of anti-war women, and specifically drew upon the highly gendered imagery of hysteria. In a report about a disrupted ILP meeting for example, the *Daily Mail* commented that 'a woman pacifist at the back of the hall screamed by mistake and was suppressed', going on to

¹⁴⁸ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 111; Jay Winter offers a useful overview of both the evidence of decline and the particular discourses in which this notion of decline was conceptualised in the pre-war period in J. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd ed. 2003), pp. 8-21.

¹⁴⁹ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, pp. 111-112.

comment that 'women made shrill interruptions all the time.'¹⁵⁰ The suggestion of hysterical behaviour by anti-war women tapped into long held assumptions regarding the feminine nature of madness and especially hysteria as 'the classic female malady.'¹⁵¹ Parallels are similarly evident in the ways in which hysteria was invoked in representations of the suffrage movement. As Elaine Showalter notes, an obvious defence against the feminist movement was to label women campaigning for the vote as 'mentally disturbed.'¹⁵² In a similar vein, by representing those women campaigning for peace as hysterical, the business of war could go untouched from criticism in the pro-war press, and the anti-war movement could be portrayed as an expression of a mentally disturbed group of individuals. This implicit negative association between female peace activists and suffrage campaigners became a trope in pro-war representations of anti-war women and was a particularly dominant narrative in the reportage of The Hague Congress by the *Mail* and *Express*.

The comparable way in which hysteria was invoked in representations of suffrage and female anti-war activists, both of which were politically active groups of women, suggests that gendered discourses of mental illness revealed anxieties about women moving to an active political role. As such, narratives of hysteria can be seen as an expression of underlying concern regarding the effects that women's peace activism had on their position within the gender structure, as well as being linked to broader anxieties about degeneration. As Ian Miller has pointed out, in the late nineteenth century the working-class mother and the effect of her apparent susceptibility to nervousness on the rest of her family became a

¹⁵⁰ 'I.L.P Uproar: Pacifists' Outbursts', *Daily Mail*, 11th November 1915, p. 3.

¹⁵¹ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (New York: Virago Press, 1987), p. 18.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p. 145.

predominant concern.¹⁵³ When reports of anti-war women acting hysterically are read in conjunction with Alfred Turner's letter to the *Express* which identified non-combatant male resisters as degenerates, it becomes clear that the narrative framework of mental illness and physical degeneration worked to position war resistance as unnatural and unhealthy for both men and women and was represented as an act that was at odds not only with 'Britishness' but also with contemporary conceptions of masculinity and femininity.

Teapots and Pioneers

Depictions of anti-war women in relation to mental and physical degeneration and negative constructions of femininity also inflected pro-war representations of the British women who attended the congress at The Hague. The organisation of the congress in April 1915 by members of the international suffrage movement provided the press with the first large scale act of organised peace activism of the First World War. The meaning of the congress was magnified because it took place when many in Britain had begun to experience profound personal losses. The battles of Mons in late August 1914 and Neuve Chapelle in March 1915 saw high numbers of British fatalities and the press reports of these battles gave the British public their first taste of the reality of war. As Adam Hochschild evocatively notes, the news of British losses at Mons 'came like lightening flashes in a darkened sky.'¹⁵⁴ The press coverage of the conference was thus situated within a context of grief for many British families.

In their representation of an act of peace activism which was overt in its focus on women's role in the peace process, reports of the congress offer

¹⁵³ Ian Miller, "'A Dangerous Revolutionary Force Amongst Us': Conceptualising Working-Class Tea Drinking in the British Isles, c. 1860-1900', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2013), 419-438 (p. 432).

¹⁵⁴ A. Hochschild, *To End All Wars*, p. 108.

important insights into how female peace activists were gendered in public narratives. Indeed, the reportage of the congress was part and parcel of a focus on women as a distinct, and explicitly gendered, group within the anti-war movement during 1914 and 1915. Whilst both pro-war and anti-war newspapers represented the British women who were due to attend to the conference in different ways, they were connected through their use of heavily gendered language. In anti-war publications, the perception that women were inherently pacifistic underpinned much of the reporting on the congress whilst the pro-war press employed negative feminine stereotypes to depoliticise and criticise The Hague women. The attention paid to women within the anti-war movement points not only to gendered assumptions about the connections between femininity and peace but also suggests that the role of women as non-combatants was relatively fluid compared to that of men. To be sure, anti-war women were subject to ridicule and condemnation by the pro-war press, but the varied representations of female war resisters within anti-war publications also reveal that women's peace activism was considered with a depth that was not necessarily afforded to men's opposition to war at this point in the war.

Moreover, the gendered imagery of the congress in both the anti-war and pro-war press also echoed gendered notions of citizenship that can be viewed within the specific context of women's suffrage agitation in the years leading up to the war. Nicoletta Gullace has argued that the experience of the war reconfigured citizenship in Britain so that sacrifice and service took precedence over sex, 'while patriotism replaced manhood as the fundamental qualification for the parliamentary vote.'¹⁵⁵ This had important implications for anti-war women as well as men, not least because it appeared to underscore war resisters' exclusion from the national body and thereby raised questions about resisters' rights to citizenship. In

¹⁵⁵ N. F. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", p. 9.

representations of female peace activists in particular, however, it is clear that by drawing implicitly upon notions of female citizenship, both the anti-war and pro-war press also evoked a number of pre-war conceptions of the female citizen which were based primarily on gender. This was particularly significant for pro-war depictions of anti-war women in that they suggested that female war resisters should be doubly excluded from citizenship rights, both by virtue of their gender and because of their perceived lack of patriotism. In this regard, it is significant that many of the women who were involved with the congress and the establishment of WILPF's British national section, WIL, such as Catherine Marshall, Helena Swanwick, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence and Kathleen Courtney were also prominent suffrage activists.¹⁵⁶

In the anti-war press, notions of the female citizen were implicitly drawn out in the essentialist rhetoric used to represent British women's involvement with The Hague congress. These women were depicted with specific reference to ideas that both reflected pre-war essentialist constructions of female citizenship outlined by suffrage activists and connected women and peace along three main ideological principles: women's potential to be mothers, women's conditioning in nurturing and caring roles, and women's position outside of major power hierarchies which, it was argued, enabled women to look critically at these political structures.¹⁵⁷ A statement by women who were actively involved with the congress was published in the *Herald* which demonstrates how notions of femininity, peace, and citizenship were drawn upon to represent this group of anti-war women. The statement issued by the British Committee of the International Women's Congress noted that:

¹⁵⁶ For more details about these women and the congress see J. Vellacott, 'Anti-War Suffragists', 411-425 and J. Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage*.

¹⁵⁷ Josephine Eglin, 'Women and Peace: From the Suffragists to the Greenham Women' in R. Taylor and N. Young (eds), *Campaigns for Peace*, pp. 221-259 (p. 228).

Ever since the outbreak of war the question has been repeatedly asked, 'what are the women going to do?' ... It is much more difficult for men to meet up in conference; they are in the silent armies. Women as non-combatants have this right and as guardians of the race they have the duty.¹⁵⁸

This statement not only makes it clear that organising for peace was the duty and responsibility of women but also points to the significant implications that this gendering of peace and war had for men engaged with war resistance. The identification of peace as a duty of women highlights how female war resisters used the language of duty which permeated through wartime British society to represent their peace activism. The centrality of the discourse of duty is illustrated in a statement by Flora Murray, WSPU member and doctor, which noted that 'every woman in the land accepted her duty and her responsibility, and recognised at once that if the war was to be won it must be won by the whole nation, and by the common effort of all her children.'¹⁵⁹ The invocation of duty in the *Herald* article thus subverts this meaning of duty to identify working for peace, rather than war, as a specific responsibility of women. Furthermore, in drawing out the distinctions between women as non-combatants and men as combatants, the *Herald* statement reinforces the gendered division of wartime activity and echoes essentialist suffrage narratives which emphasised the specific attributes of men and women. As Sandra Stanley Holton has shown, a central notion of the female citizen espoused by suffrage campaigners was that because women gave birth and nurtured, and men did not, they could offer skills and understanding of particular relevance to the state.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, suffragists stressed the state's 'functions of nurturance, functions which they

¹⁵⁸ 'International Women's Congress', *Herald*, 3rd April 1915, p. 13.

¹⁵⁹ Flora Drummond quoted in J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 71.

¹⁶⁰ Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 11

insisted could only be adequately filled by women's assistance.¹⁶¹ The specific identification of the duty of women as 'guardians' to agitate for peace can thus be located within a narrative of female citizenship which emphasised the nurturing qualities that women, as citizens, would bring to the state. Furthermore, the clear delineation of the actions and experiences of men and women in wartime in this text not only serves to underscore the association between women and peace activism but, by identifying it as the duty of women to do so, war resistance is portrayed as an aspect of the conflict that women should lead.

The understanding that womanhood entailed an inherent concern for peace was clearly articulated in other anti-war articles which commented upon the congress at The Hague. A *Labour Leader* article from March 1915 noted that 'among women the most remarkable movement of all is proceeding. Across the frontier the cry of a common sisterhood is heard ... It is the cry of an awakened womanhood, determined to bring an early peace, determined that the peace should be lasting.'¹⁶² The contention that the organisation of the congress was an embodiment of awakened womanhood is illustrative of an understanding that women's peace activism was much more than a particular political or social stance but was actually a fulfilment of their role as women. This implied that the actions of anti-war women were based primarily on their gender and was thus a specifically female response to the outbreak of war. The *Herald* also commented on the congress noting not only that 'women have a deep interest in the conditions of peace',¹⁶³ but marked these women out as 'pioneers' in the movement against the war. In suggesting that there was a natural association between women and peace, the anti-war press represented the organisation of the women's peace conference as an instinctive expression of women's inherent characteristics

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 14.

¹⁶² F. Brockway, 'The Labour Leader and the Coming Peace'.

¹⁶³ 'The Women's Conference', *Herald*, 17th April 1915, p. 9.

and interests and explicitly genders women's peace activism. By depicting the congress in this way, both the *Herald* and *Leader* gendered opposition to the war as feminine.

The organisation of the congress at The Hague also provided the anti-war press with the first tangible opportunity to counter the claims of unpatriotic anti-national behaviour that were directed at the anti-war movement as a whole. The *Herald* asserted, for example, that 'the women taking part are animated by truly patriotic motives; with a true ideal of the real needs of their country.'¹⁶⁴ Similarly, another article argued that 'the women in question are not less patriotic ... than other women. They have friends, brothers, husbands, or sons at the front; they are bearing their share of the nation's grief and anxiety no less loyally than others ... they have not chosen the easy or cowardly part.'¹⁶⁵ By highlighting the potentially serving male members of these women's families, the *Herald* evoked the wartime construction of female patriotism that was based on women's connection to men's service in the military. Indeed patriotic women's groups framed the raising of recruits as a form of military service for women,¹⁶⁶ whilst government propaganda frequently invoked the image of women as mothers, sisters and sweethearts encouraging their men to enlist. Thus, as Gullace argues 'gendered conceptions of patriotism ... implicated women in defining the parameters of male citizenship, while endowing women's traditional domestic, maternal and sexual roles with an openly expressed importance to the military state.'¹⁶⁷ Through the invocation of this widely held notion of female patriotism, the *Herald* article also points to the ways that reclaiming patriotism for the anti-war movement through the women's activity may have been less problematic than by focusing on their male

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ 'The Courageous Conference', *Herald*, 1st May 1915, p. 9.

¹⁶⁶ N. F. Gullace, 'White Feathers and Wounded Men', p. 192.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 183.

counterparts.¹⁶⁸ It becomes evident particularly with the introduction of the conscientious objector in 1916, that women's status as non-combatants meant that they were not subject to the same level of vitriol as anti-war men, something which will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter. The identification of women's resistance as patriotic was not only less problematic but could also be used as a means of associating anti-war activity more broadly as an expression of patriotism.

The *Herald's* characterisation of the congress as an example of patriotic war resistance was significant in a context where the nationality and patriotism of the British women involved with the conference was directly challenged within the pro-war press. As Janet Watson has argued, 'all Britons, male and female, were exposed to the ideal of service: representations of patriotism, sacrifice, glory and honour' were all-pervasive.¹⁶⁹ These notions of female service and patriotism were implicitly addressed in a letter published in the *Daily Express*:

Sir,- Can it be possible that there are British women capable of such colossal folly and conceit as to propose discussing peace terms with German women- women responsible for a race of felons and in full sympathy with the atrocities committed by them? ...

What is the nationality of each member of the British contingent?¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ A number of studies explore female patriotism during the First World War. In particular, N. Gullace's article 'White Feathers and Wounded Men' and monograph, "*The Blood of our Sons*" particularly chapter 3 'Redrawing the Boundaries of the Private Sphere: Patriotic Motherhood and the Raising of Kitchener's Armies'. Susan R. Grayzel also offers an examination of female patriotism in *Women's Identities at War*, especially chapter 6 'National Service and National Sacrifice: Civic Participation, Gender and National Identity'. Janet Watson also discusses conceptions of women's patriotism as linked to war work particularly in chapters 1 and 2 of *Fighting Different Wars*.

¹⁶⁹ J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 41.

¹⁷⁰ F. Gow, 'The Women's Peace Conference', *Daily Express*, 8th April 1915, p. 7.

By questioning the nationality of the British women, the author suggests that the peace activism of the women was incompatible with 'Britishness.' This is underscored by the negative portrayal of German women in terms of a perverted motherhood which bred a race of felons, capable of committing and condoning atrocities. This representation clearly identified the German race as a dangerous enemy and therefore highlighted the anti-British character of the women's involvement with the congress. The invocation of narratives of nationhood in this letter is thus evocative of Rogers Brubaker's assertion that those who are identified as outsiders within a nation are 'excluded not because of what they are but because of what they are not.'¹⁷¹ By fraternising with German women, the position of these British women as part of the nation was questioned because of the perception that their behaviour was anti-British.

The representation of German women specifically as mothers is also significant in that it is indicative of the importance placed upon motherhood during the war, particularly with relation to war service. As Susan Grayzel has argued, in Britain, official efforts were made to enforce the image of the 'sacrificing, stoic and patriotic mother.'¹⁷² To send men to war thus 'became the patriotic duty of the women of England.'¹⁷³ By meeting the German women, whose motherhood was defined as barbaric, and by discouraging men from fighting, the British women involved in the peace congress fell short of this ideal of patriotic womanhood. Furthermore, the link that is drawn out in the letter between nationality and motherhood is significant in that it reveals how national identity was constructed during wartime. Sonya Rose has noted that as the external frontiers of the nation are threatened during wartime, so too, are 'the "internal" frontiers of individuals.' Thus

¹⁷¹ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 29.

¹⁷² S. R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*, p. 38.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 192.

when mothers 'sent their sons off to war, they were doing so not because they were mothers but because they were British mothers.'¹⁷⁴ By invoking the discourses of both nationality and motherhood, the letter suggests that the activities of the British women were disturbing because they threatened the intimate and integral relationship between the individual and the nation. The representation of anti-war British women in this letter therefore questions their place within the national body by underscoring national identity with patriotism, motherhood, and service.

The reference to German atrocities in the letter also had another specifically gendered dimension which had implications for how the German and British women were represented. As Gullace has demonstrated, the focus on German atrocities, which was centered primarily on the violation of women and children, publicly invested British foreign policy with a 'series of gendered meanings, shifting attention ... to the brutality of soldiers who raped and mutilated women.'¹⁷⁵ The pervasive representation and reporting on these atrocities in British pro-war publications thus became central to the 'creation of a gendered international language of "just war."¹⁷⁶ The gendering of German atrocities and the incrimination of German women in them has the effect of emphasising the German nationality of the women rather than their femininity. Indeed, by aligning German women with crimes committed against women and children this letter questions the femininity of German women, particularly as mothers. By highlighting the association of British women with German women, the author implies that the femininity of British anti-war women should also be called into question. The implicit challenge to both the femininity and national identity of these anti-war women is brought into focus by the reference to alleged German atrocities

¹⁷⁴ S. Rose, *Which People's War?*, p. 11.

¹⁷⁵ Nicoletta F. Gullace, 'Sexual Violence and Family Honour: British Propaganda and International Law during the First World War', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 102, No. 3 (June, 1997), 714-747 (719).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 715.

because, as Paul Ward has argued, Germany's 'frightfulness' towards women and children was in turn perceived as enhancing the patriotism of British women.¹⁷⁷ The British women are thus characterised as an internal enemy both because of their association to German women and also because this association renders their patriotism, their place within the national body and their gender as dubious. By identifying the anti-war women in this way, this letter points to how gendered discourses of nationhood during the war inflected the representation of war resisters.

The gendering of The Hague women was also central to the reportage of the congress in both the *Mail* and *Express* more broadly. Negative feminine stereotypes and metaphors underpinned representations of the conference and these were often associated with gendered conceptions of citizenship. In contrast to the anti-war narratives of the conference which were evocative of pro-suffrage narratives of the female citizen, the way in which the *Mail* and *Express* invoked derogatory stereotypes of femininity evoked anti-suffrage arguments which positioned women as unsuitable citizens because of the qualities of their gender. By linking female peace activists with anti-suffrage imagery, arguments about the unsuitability of female citizenship were intertwined with negative depictions of their peace activism in a manner which drew on pre-war conceptions of citizenship. As Christine Bolt has pointed out, anti-suffragists argued that 'women lacked the physical, mental and property qualifications for the vote.'¹⁷⁸ Similarly, Sandra Stanley Holton has noted that in a manifesto by female anti-suffragists, it was argued that 'the state could be no business of women because it rested, finally upon the exercise of physical force.'¹⁷⁹ The protection of the state through war

¹⁷⁷ Paul Ward, *Britishness since 1870* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 41.

¹⁷⁸ Christine Bolt, 'The Ideas of British Suffragism' in June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton (eds), *Votes for Women* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 34-56 (p. 49).

¹⁷⁹ S. Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, p. 13.

and military combat were therefore explicitly related to citizenship and women's exclusion from it.

Negative associations between female suffrage campaigners and the female war resisters at The Hague were evident in an analogy between the British anti-war women and the 'Votes for Women' campaign slogan. In both the *Mail* and *Express*, there was a suggestion that the closure of the North Sea passage, which prevented the British contingent from attending the congress, would result in a 'vigorous "Boats for Women" agitation.'¹⁸⁰ Just as the actions of female suffrage campaigners were interpreted as being incompatible with the proper role of women, the female anti-war campaigners were represented as going against their feminine role.¹⁸¹ The ridiculing of the British contingent to The Hague with reference to suffrage activism also demonstrates how the activity of anti-war women raised concerns about women's citizenship. The fact that the pro-war press did not publish any of the resolutions from the congress is significant because the resolutions were overtly political and included the promotion of international arbitration and conciliation, the inclusion of women in the peace process and the establishment of an international organisation promoting these motions, amongst others.¹⁸² The omission of these resolutions, especially when coupled with negative gendered imagery, therefore contributed to the idea that the women were engaged in an apolitical and frivolous meeting that went against the national interest of their country and consequently delegitimised anti-war women's right to citizenship. As such, the ways in which the *Express* and *Mail* framed their reportage of the congress suggested that womanhood and femininity were

¹⁸⁰ 'No Boats for Women', *Daily Mail*, 20th April 1915, p. 3.

¹⁸¹ On anti-suffrage imagery see, Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*. See in particular p. 163 in which Tickner argues that 'nothing was more absurd for some audiences than the spectacle of a woman trying to become like a man, or more defective than a suffragist "unsexed" by her political activities.'

¹⁸² For a full list of the resolutions see L. B. Costin, 'Feminism, Pacifism, Internationalism', pp. 311-312.

incompatible with political anti-war activism and, by implication, with suffrage.

The tea party also became a prominent metaphor to describe the congress in a way which evoked negative connotations of feminine frivolity. An article in the *Mail*, for instance, noted that ‘German and English women will be commingling over the tea-cups, they will be talking of national affairs and babblers may quite thoughtlessly tell a good deal more than our military authorities would deem it discreet to disclose to Germans.’¹⁸³ With striking similarity, the *Express* described the closing of the North Sea passage as ‘standing between a number of misguided Englishwomen and a party of German fraus who are waiting to prattle peace with them over the teapot at The Hague.’¹⁸⁴ Whilst teacups and teapots conjured up connotations of housewifery and the notion of the domestic female sphere, the imagery of the tea party implied that the congress was trivial. This image suggests that whilst the women were attempting to organise an international political conference, they were in fact incapable of doing so by virtue of their gender. Instead, the congress is depoliticised by the *Mail* and *Express* through its depiction as a light-hearted social event. Moreover, as the work of Ian Miller has highlighted, tea-drinking was also linked to fears about degeneration, above all of the working-class, in the late nineteenth century.¹⁸⁵ These anxieties were also very often gendered, specifically with regards to the idea that tea drinking exacerbated women’s nervousness. There was a prominent concern about the mother, in particular, ‘from whose teapot stemmed a range of issues threatening British societal health.’¹⁸⁶ The imagery of the tea party in representations of the congress can therefore be viewed both as a

¹⁸³ ‘Passports to Meet Germans: 100 Englishwomen for Peace Congress’, *Daily Mail*, 12th April 1915, p. 3.

¹⁸⁴ ‘Blow for Peace Prattlers: Women Unable to go to The Hague?’, *Daily Express*, 23rd April 1915, p. 5.

¹⁸⁵ I. Miller, “‘A Dangerous Revolutionary Force’”, p. 421.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 433.

means of depoliticisation but also as a way of drawing out links between these anti-war women, their mental state, and the impact on British society more broadly.

The depoliticisation of the congress was further enforced through the invocation of the terms 'prattle' and 'babble' which infantilised the activities of the women at the conference and presented the women as incapable of understanding the politics of war. The use of a gendered language of infantilisation in these texts is significant because the war was seen by many as a catalyst of maturity, particularly for servicemen.¹⁸⁷ Identifying these female war activists as infantile therefore suggested that anti-war activity was a sign of immaturity. Furthermore, the invocation of negative gendered imagery implied that it was gender that prevented women's peace activism from having any meaningful impact. These representations thus contradicted the anti-war press's representation of the congress as a natural fulfilment of womanhood and a pioneering act of resistance against the war. The employment of ridicule and mockery can also be viewed as a representational device that was mobilised to garner popular support against these peace women. As Lisa Tickner's analysis of ridicule in anti-suffrage imagery has shown, it 'is a potent weapon in the maintenance of hegemony.' Furthermore, the 'ideological import of tendentious jokes is enhanced by their capacity to turn the hearer into a co-hater... and offer comforts of collusion.'¹⁸⁸ The depiction of the congress as a tea party thus affected not only the conceptualisation of women's connection to peace but

¹⁸⁷ Jessica Meyer, 'Separating the Men from the Boys: Masculinity and Maturity in Understandings of Shell Shock in Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2009), 1-22 (p. 2). Distinctions between boys and men, and the centrality of maturity to conceptions of masculinity continued from the pre-war period into the war. See for example, Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 186-187; J. Winter, *The Great War and the British*, pp. 10-18.

¹⁸⁸ Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907-14* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 163.

also had the potential to influence public perception of women's peace activism.

Negative gender imagery also surfaced in reports which depicted the women due to attend the congress as feminine outcasts. One such example is the *Express's* report on the British women waiting for their crossing to Holland at Tilbury, which remarked that the women 'sent out a sorrowful spinster with the official notification that she had no news ... as the movement had been so thoroughly "misunderstood."' ¹⁸⁹ By identifying the female peace campaigner as a spinster, the *Express* suggested that this woman was subversive both because of her wartime activities and her position within the gender structure. ¹⁹⁰ As Joan Chandler argues, 'wifhood is keyed into womanhood to socially stigmatise those who are unmarried.' ¹⁹¹ This stigmatisation of the spinster was also indicative of 'the increasing importance attached to wifhood and motherhood ... which increased in strength after the war.' ¹⁹² Furthermore, the language of pity and derision that was often attached to the spinster in early twentieth-century Britain was also often linked to eugenicist fears about the decline of the race and was representative of the growing significance attached to sexual and maternal fulfilment in marriage. ¹⁹³ That concerns about single women were already evident in 1914 demonstrates how the notion of 'surplus women', as studied by Virginia Nicholson for example, was not necessarily something created by the impact of the war. ¹⁹⁴ The image of the spinster in this

¹⁸⁹ 'Snub for Peace Prattlers: Dismal Micawbers', *Daily Express*, 24th April 1915, p. 6.

¹⁹⁰ Suffragists were also often represented as spinsters; see Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, p. 34, p. 165.

¹⁹¹ Joan Chandler, *Women without Husbands: An Exploration of the Margins of Marriage* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 2.

¹⁹² Katherine Holden, 'Imaginary Widows: Spinsters, Marriage, and the "Lost Generation" in Britain after the Great War', *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (October, 2005), 388-409 (p. 391).

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 391.

¹⁹⁴ Virginia Nicholson, *Singled Out: How Two Million Women Survived without Men after the First World War* (London: Viking, 2007).

particular article also highlights how female anti-war activism was perceived as a rejection of patriotic motherhood and this was, in turn, linked to the question of wartime female authority. Indeed, by portraying the anti-war women as childless and unmarried, the *Express* implied that, as women who did not have sons to sacrifice for the nation, they did not have the authority to speak about the conflict. The emphasis that is placed on the identification of the anti-war woman as a spinster in this article is also significant in that it challenges the anti-war press's depiction of peace activism, and The Hague congress in particular, as an expression of a natural and fulfilled womanhood. By failing to attain both wifedom and motherhood, the imagery of spinsterhood in the *Express* suggests that peace activism was in fact an unnatural expression of womanhood and femininity which harmed the future reproduction of the 'race.' This therefore challenged the maternalist discourses used to depict The Hague women and the organisation of the congress within the anti-war press which represented this organisation of female resisters as a natural expression and fulfilment of womanhood.

The invocation of overtly gendered language by both the pro-war and anti-war press reveals how conceptions of femininity were central to how the representation of anti-war women and their involvement with the peace congress was shaped during 1914 and 1915. By using imagery and language that was overtly connected to femininity, whether positively or negatively, the press characterised The Hague as something that was specific to women. As Watson argues, 'women could only be equal-but-different and their efforts were always perceived as those of women in particular, not just citizens.'¹⁹⁵ The emphasis on gender consequently contributed to a reinforcement of the division in gender social roles and expectations during the war. That the congress was perceived in specifically feminine terms is

¹⁹⁵ J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 7.

further highlighted by the way the pro-war press outlined their opposition to it. In a number of *Daily Express* articles on the British contingent there is a suggestion that 'perhaps the wives and the mothers of Scarborough and Hartlepool and the wives of men of Mons and Neuve Chapelle ... will give them a parting ovation at the quay.'¹⁹⁶ The suggestion that women in particular should go down to address the anti-war women illustrates a perception that female peace activism was only relevant to other women. Just as the image of the spinster looked to question both the femininity of anti-war women and their authority, the *Express's* suggestion connects authority to a sacrificing patriotic motherhood and thus challenges the right of the anti-war women to speak on matters of war and peace. In representing the anti-war women and the opposition to them as distinctly female, the pro-war press confined this act of resistance to the female, non-combatant realm and thus inferred that it was separated from the distinctly masculine sphere of war.

'As Mothers of Humanity'¹⁹⁷: Femininity, Peace and Motherhood

The overt gendering of women's peace activism was also underscored by the central narrative of motherhood which ran through many representations of anti-war women. The emphasis placed upon motherhood was not, however, specific to discourses of resistance but was one facet of a much broader preoccupation with motherhood and femininity during the conflict. As Eileen Yeo has noted, motherhood has always been a 'contested concept and identity',¹⁹⁸ and this came into clear focus in the intense and turbulent atmosphere of the First World War. In contrast to the pro-war press's representation of the female peace activist as a spinster, motherhood and its association with nurturing and care-giving formed a key framework for anti-

¹⁹⁶ 'Snub for Peace Prattlers: Dismal Micawbers', *Daily Express*, 24th April 1915, p. 6

¹⁹⁷ Lucy Thoumaiam, 'Women Should Work for Peace- Arbitration the Aim- Cannot Allow this Madness to Go on', *Daily Herald*, 16th September 1914, p. 4.

¹⁹⁸ Eileen Janes Yeo, 'The Creation of "Motherhood" and Women's Responses in Britain and France, 1750-1915', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1999), 201-218 (p. 202).

war women who outlined their opposition to the war in the press.¹⁹⁹ As Margaret Higonnet has argued, the rhetoric of motherhood was often underscored by a belief that men were 'naturally fierce and warlike' whilst women as mothers had 'an affinity for peace.'²⁰⁰ The associations between the qualities of motherhood and peace were used by women in varied ways and with different intentions, and as such there was no 'distinctive maternalist argument.'²⁰¹ Significantly, whilst drawing upon conventional constructions of a passive and nurturing womanhood could reinforce accepted feminine stereotypes, the manner and purpose in which women linked this to their opposition to war did not necessarily always equate to an entrenchment of an ideal of femininity centered primarily on motherhood. As both pro-war and anti-war women underpinned either their support or opposition to the conflict through their position as mothers or potential mothers, tensions were evident in the way that women invoked the image of the mother. These tensions were not only apparent in the appeals made by the *Express* for mothers of serving men to protest against anti-war women, but also surfaced in readers' letters to the pro-war press that contested anti-war women's mobilisation of the rhetoric of motherhood.

Writing a month after the beginning of the war, Lucy Thoumaian, the founder of the Women's Swiss Union for Peace, drew explicitly on the notion of woman as caregiver and nurturer to outline women's role in working for peace. In this article, Thoumaian argued that women had a responsibility not

¹⁹⁹ A number of works theorise the relationship between femininity, care-giving, and peace. See for example, S. Macdonald 'Drawing the Lines- Gender, Peace and War: An Introduction', pp. 1-26; R. Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz and Susan Stuard, 'Introduction', p. 2; J. Berkman, 'Feminism, War and Peace Politics', pp. 141-160. There are also a number of studies which examine the relationship between femininity, motherhood and peace within the specific context of historical women's peace activism: Susan R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*, specifically the chapter 'Feminism On Trial: Women's Dissent and the Politics of Peace', Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, particularly chapter 4 'The International Bonds of Womanhood'; Jill Liddington explores a number of strands of female anti-militarism, including maternalist peace narratives in *The Long Road to Greenham*.

²⁰⁰ M. R. Higonnet et al., 'Introduction' in Margaret R. Higonnet et al. (eds), *Behind the Lines*, p. 1.

²⁰¹ J. Hannam and K. Hunt, *Socialist Women*, p. 185.

only to care for wounded soldiers but also, more significantly, to work for the halting and prevention of war. Appealing for women to work for peace as ‘mothers of humanity’ and ‘sisters of the whole human race’, Thoumaian asserted that working for peace is a role ‘that is very specifically suited to ... the soothing and loving influence of women.’²⁰² Consequently, she connected women’s responsibility to work for peace directly to what she perceived as women’s natural qualities. Thoumaian thus positioned peace activism as a special task for women because it was linked specifically to women’s unique characteristics. She reinforced this argument by asserting that those women who worked for peace did so ‘as true women’,²⁰³ and thus suggests that women who opposed the war were actually fulfilling their natural feminine role by doing so. The invocation of the relationship between gender and peace in this way can be compared to the identification of warfare as ‘a sphere of masculine attainment’,²⁰⁴ as noted by Jessica Meyer. Whilst war was seen to be inherently linked to masculinity, the argument presented by Thoumaian identified peace as innately associated with femininity and as such, both were based on an understanding that engaging in certain activities during the war had a direct and intrinsic relationship to the gender of the person involved. In outlining her argument in this way, Thoumaian consequently positioned women as the natural leaders of the movement against the war, precisely because of the distinct loving and nurturing virtues of femininity and motherhood that women were seen to possess.

A narrative of motherhood was also central to anti-war women’s critique of the effects of war on society and was thus invoked as a key motivation for women’s opposition to the conflict. The noted socialist Katherine Bruce Glasier, for example, echoed some of the arguments discussed on pages 37-

²⁰² Lucy Thoumaian, ‘Women Should Work for Peace’.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ J. Meyer, *Men of War*, p. 1.

38 about degeneration and the war by raising concerns about the effect of the destruction of potential fathers on women's ability to become mothers. Bruce Glasier utilised the image of mother and child to challenge the notion that war was being waged to protect women and used the effect of war on mothers to highlight a perceived fallacy in the rhetoric of pro-war arguments in which women appeared in recruitment campaigns as the 'objects soldiers fought to defend.'²⁰⁵ In her 1914 article 'Cannon Food: an SOS Signal', Bruce Glasier argued that just as women could not understand the battlefield, men could not understand motherhood.²⁰⁶ She wrote 'of the woe of the tens of thousands of women in Europe who have been robbed of their motherhood already: whose children will never be born to them because the men who should have been their fathers have been "cannon food."²⁰⁷ By suggesting that war prevented women from becoming mothers, Bruce Glasier outlined an opposition to the conflict that was based on the destruction of the family, the denial of women's definitive purpose in life and the broad implications that this would have for society. The narrative of motherhood thereby became a way of positioning women as the natural opponents of war as well as providing a fundamental rationale for the need to resist the conflict.

Motherhood, and women's role as care-giver, was also invoked as a means of mobilising political anti-war activism amongst women. For example, an article by Norah O'Shea, the secretary of the Portsmouth branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, appeared in both the *Herald* and the *Leader* and drew on the image of women as mothers but used it to outline a sense of specifically female political duty.²⁰⁸ O'Shea begins her piece by arguing that the responsibility for working for peace lies firmly on

²⁰⁵ N. Gullace, 'White Feathers', p. 183.

²⁰⁶ Katherine Bruce Glasier, 'Cannon Food: An SOS Signal', *Labour Leader*, 8th October 1914, p. 1.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Norah O'Shea, 'The Duty of Women', *Herald*, 11th September 1914, p. 6. Also in *Labour Leader*, 3rd December 1914, p. 6.

the shoulders of women: 'Upon whom devolves the duty of calling upon the warring nations to 'cease fire' and demanding that this useless sacrifice of life shall stop? To that question I can find one answer: upon the women ... the givers and protectors of life.'²⁰⁹ By highlighting women's role as mothers and care-givers, and suggesting that the duty of establishing peace lies with women, O'Shea placed women in a position of responsibility on account of the qualities of their gender. However, O'Shea also criticised and challenged the traditional role that women played in responding to the effects of war. By highlighting women's particular qualities she questioned why they had not done more to exercise this specifically feminine power:

Has it nothing more to give the world than the old time-honoured methods of soup and blankets up-to-date? Has it, too, like its charitable forebear decided to be content to deal with effects, and is the task of dealing with the causes to be left to others as a task beyond its power? If the women of non-combatants nations want to save the women of other nations from the horrors of war, the waste of life ... then it is for them to move and move quickly and pioneer a 'war against war league.'²¹⁰

O'Shea invokes a conventional construction of femininity to give women a unique and significant role within war; however she pushes this out of the traditional confines of the women's sphere and instead argues that women's unique qualities as mothers and care-givers provided them with the equipment to effectively address and resolve the political and social causes of war. Consequently, O'Shea uses constructions of femininity, motherhood and peace in a complex way and in doing so complicates the gendered connection between femininity and passivity. Instead she urged women to become active agents in the political process, echoing suffrage ideology that

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid*

emphasised the unique qualities that women would bring to the political sphere.²¹¹ O'Shea's plea for action is reinforced by a female reader who subsequently wrote into the *Herald* commenting, 'at the bleakest hour comes a woman speaking on war with a woman's voice. She speaks, not for the sake of speaking, but of doing. In the name of all that is noble, Nora O'Shea get the women doing.'²¹² What is evident in both the article and the response is that invoking a normative construction of femininity, based on motherhood and care-giving, enabled women to challenge the conventional gender structure of society by asserting that specific feminine qualities could have a significant political and social impact if women's political status was elevated. As such, these texts demonstrate how reinforcing traditional constructions of femininity allowed women to complicate the gendered connotations of passive care-giving and peace and thus present a multifaceted interpretation of the connection between gender and women's anti-war activism.

Furthermore, by reinforcing women's role as mothers and the 'givers and protectors of life', O'Shea used a maternalist framework to raise certain concerns about the waging of war and women's role in this. Significantly, in using this type of gendered rhetoric, O'Shea's piece forms part of a longer lineage of the use of the image of mother by radical women. As Michelle de Larrabeiti's study of the political rhetoric of Chartism has shown, Chartist women also represented themselves as wives and mothers but in doing so 'managed to raise their political voices to question not only the oppressions of class and gender but to articulate their own political sense of self.'²¹³ Larrabeiti also points out that women's marginal citizen status meant that

²¹¹ S. Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, pp. 12-14.

²¹² Letter from R. M. Ellis regarding 'The Duty of Women', *Herald*, 14th September 1914, p. 7.

²¹³ Michelle de Larrabeiti, 'Conspicuous before the World: The Political Rhetoric of Chartist Women' in Eileen Janes Yeo (ed.), *Radical Femininity: Women's Self-Representation in the Public Sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 106-126 (p. 111).

they 'had to elevate themselves in political discourse in ways that men did not.'²¹⁴ Invoking the narrative of motherhood and care-giving enabled women to define themselves politically from an accepted and authoritative position. The use of the motherhood rhetoric by O'Shea and its positioning alongside an urge for women to be more politically involved in conflict prevention thus politicised motherhood and the actions of anti-war women.

Underpinning anti-war arguments with maternalist discourses was not without controversy, and was contested by women within the pro-war press. For example, a plea to the 'mothers of Europe' to unite for peace by the wife of the American industrialist Henry Ford was met with hostility from a mother writing in to the *Mail*.²¹⁵ The author, named only as 'an English mother' wrote:

I do not know who or what Mrs Ford is, but I think I can gauge the reception she would meet among 'the mothers of Europe' ... (Unless of course 'Europe' means 'Germany'). As one of the mothers who have given a dearly loved son for King and Empire, I most warmly repudiate any proposals for peace until we are assured that the price which alone can repay us for what we have spent is not only promised but paid.²¹⁶

This letter demonstrates how 'patriotic' women used their relationships to men serving at the front to contest the invocation of motherhood by anti-war women, highlighting in contrast their war service and commitment to King and country. The rhetoric invoked by the mother in this particular letter is also evocative of the controversial 'Little Mother' letter included by Robert

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 111.

²¹⁵ Exchange, 'Mrs. Ford's Peace Telegrams', *Daily Mail*, 24th November 1915, p. 6.

²¹⁶ An English Mother, 'Mothers of Europe', *Daily Mail*, 25th November 1915, p. 4.

Graves' in *Goodbye to All That*.²¹⁷ In this letter, the mother of an only son 'who was early and eager to do his duty' writes that 'there is only one temperature for the women of the British race, and that is white heat. With those who disgrace their sacred trust of motherhood we have nothing in common ... We women pass on the human ammunition of "only sons" to fill up the gaps.'²¹⁸ As Pennell argues, 'enlistment of a man in a familial ... circle ... reflected positively on a woman's commitment to the war effort.'²¹⁹ Thus by framing her opposition to the anti-war mobilisation of the maternalist narrative with discourses of patriotism, nationalism and sacrifice, an 'English mother' attempts to reclaim the authoritative status of mother for the war effort. This was particularly important because as, Grayzel has noted, throughout the war 'a variety of social commentators and activists, as well as politicians, reinforced the centrality of motherhood' and this ubiquitous rhetoric thus 'defined female identity.'²²⁰ This letter consequently reveals the highly contested nature of both the status of mother and the rhetoric of motherhood during the First World War. Moreover, how maternalist narratives were invoked and contested in these examples points to the significant ways that motherhood was used as a means of imbuing women with authority by defining their femininity with relation to either peace or war.

Challenging Maternalism: Redefining Women's Role in War Resistance

The dominance of anti-war maternalist narratives that were based on notions of care-giving and peace were contested not only by pro-war voices but also by a small number of anti-war women. Dorothea Hollins' *Herald*

²¹⁷ Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London: Penguin Books, revised edition, 1960), pp. 188-191. The actual existence of this letter has been questioned by Steven Trout in his chapter 'Telling the Truth-Nearly: Robert Graves, Daniel Defoe, and *Goodbye to All That*' in Patrick J. Quinn (ed.), *New Perspectives on Robert Graves* (London: Associated University Presses, 1999), pp. 175-187 (pp. 184-185).

²¹⁸ R. Graves, *Goodbye*, p. 189.

²¹⁹ C. Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 158.

²²⁰ S. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*, p. 86.

article, for example, represents a particularly strident critique of women's traditional response to war. In her article, Hollins, the secretary of the Fulham and Hammersmith branch of the Women's Labour League, engaged in a deliberate attempt to reconfigure the role of women in war and raised significant questions about gender, sacrifice, and citizenship.²²¹ Couched in militaristic language, Hollins, who wrote under the pseudonym 'X Lyceum Club', urged women to 'band themselves together in a Peace Expeditionary Force; each member of which would be ready to sacrifice her life that peace may prevail ... Let it attempt to cross Europe in the teeth of the guns ready and willing to be shot as spies (or accidentally killed) if necessary.'²²² Hollins positioned women as an active force against the conflict and holds them up as potential martyrs for peace, mirroring the language of sacrifice and martyrdom that was used to represent volunteer soldiers.²²³ This has the effect of placing women out of their traditional non-combatant status and instead propels them directly into the symbolic and physical world of death, sacrifice and warfare. Within this context, Hollins shifted women's role in warfare in a similar manner to O'Shea's text but Hollins also challenges the traditional construct of femininity as passive, nurturing and care-giving in a more overt manner than O'Shea's maternalist narrative does. Moreover, this subversion of gender identity is not only acknowledged within the article but is identified as the reason why a force of this kind would challenge the military action and achieve peace:

The horror with which this proposal will be viewed by all kindly and noble men is in itself a guarantee that it is the only remedy adequate to this stage in the world's progress ... for

²²¹ X Lyceum Club, 'What Should Women Try to Do- Collectively Protest- Need for Women's Peace Expeditionary Force', *Herald*, 12th September 1914, p. 5. Sylvia Pankhurst mentions this article in her account of the First World War, *The Home Front* (London: The Cresset Library, 1987, first published 1932), p. 64.

²²² X Lyceum Club, 'What Should Women Try to Do'.

²²³ On the language of sacrifice see Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 112- 151; J. Meyer, chapter 3 'Remembering the Heroic Dead' in *Men of War*.

why should women, so fearless in the present day in regard to other evils, resign themselves to the iniquity of war as if it were a mysterious visitation, superhuman in its causes?²²⁴

In challenging the gender constructs of women in wartime, Hollins connects a reconstruction of femininity not only to ending the conflict but to political and social progress more broadly. Indeed, by identifying a reinterpretation of women's wartime role as part of a wider and ongoing reconfiguration of the position of women within society, Hollins associates this aspect of female war resistance with the work of the women's movement prior to the war and thereby outlines a clearly feminist anti-war position. Furthermore, Hollins' contention that a marked shift in women's wartime roles was the only adequate remedy to the war implied that the traditionally passive role of women in wartime contributed to the continued waging of war. She explicitly articulates this point, writing 'why should the "men must fight and women must weep" (or at any rate make bed socks) attitude be accepted in regard to war when it has been relegated to the scrap heap in regard to every other crying evil of the day?'²²⁵ Hollins also goes on to criticise the demonstrations that women held against the war and contends that these were 'naturally missing something of its mark because no risk or sacrifice was involved.'²²⁶ In outlining her call to women and in her articulation of the causes of the war, it is clear that Hollins viewed the war as a product of a flawed gender system of which the remedy was a reconsideration of the gendered position and construction of women and femininity.

In addition, by pinpointing sacrifice as a central tenet of achieving progress this text references and contributes to the language of sacrifice that flourished throughout the First World War whilst also highlighting its

²²⁴ X Lyceum Club, 'What Should Women Try to Do'.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

changing relationship to conceptions of citizenship.²²⁷ The implicit connection that is made by Hollins between sacrifice and citizenship is illustrative of Gullace's contention that various cultural variables during the war gave 'resonance to arguments grounding citizenship in personal sacrifice and service to the state.'²²⁸ Hollins' emphasis on sacrifice and the way that she relates this to a reconstruction of the gender system demonstrates how gendered notions of citizenship were also being renegotiated by anti-war women. Hollins not only evokes the centrality of sacrifice to female citizenship but actually subverts the notion of wartime female sacrifice which was based on their connection to the sacrifice of men, and instead emulates the conception of male sacrifice based on the sacrifice or mutilation of the body. In doing so, Hollins' representation of sacrifice also affects the gendering of citizenship because of its implication for male war resisters who have refused to serve in the military. By directly associating anti-war women with sacrifice on the battlefields, Hollins' text not only reconfigures the relationship between femininity and peace but also complicates the relationship between the battlefield and men. Indeed, by positioning anti-war women as a group which should engage in sacrifice, Hollins further excludes anti-war men from the masculine sphere of the battlefield. Consequently, she reinforces the significance of sacrifice to citizenship whilst also carving out a role for anti-war women within this framework.

²²⁷ A number of studies explore the importance of sacrifice during the First World War. See for example, Alexander Watson and Patrick Porter 'Bereaved and Aggrieved: Combat Motivation and the Ideology of Sacrifice in the First World War', *Historical Research*, Vol. 83, No. 219 (February, 2010), 146-164; A. Gregory, *The Last Great War*, particularly chapter 4 'Economies of sacrifice' and chapter 5 'Redemption through war: Religion and the languages of sacrifice'; Jessica Meyer explores sacrifice and the soldier particularly in chapter 3 of *Men of War*; Allen J. Frantzen compares the medieval language of sacrifice with that of the Great War in *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Maternal sacrifice during the First World War is explored by Michael Roper in *The Secret Battle*, particularly pp. 89-90; female sacrifice is also analysed by Susan Grazyel in chapter 6, 'National Service and National Sacrifice' in *Women's Identities at War*; Nicoletta Gullace examines the relationship between sacrifice and citizenship with relation to both men and women in "*The Blood of Our Sons*".

²²⁸ N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", p. 6.

Whilst womanhood and femininity remained a significant theme in the article written by Hollins, their role and construction was questioned and reinterpreted. This article therefore demonstrates how women critiqued and reconfigured traditional gender roles as a mechanism for outlining their resistance to the war. In doing so, Hollins raised significant questions about women's citizenship and its relation to their wartime experience from the perspective of peace activism rather than active war service.

'You are now entering the Sanctuary of Conscience'²²⁹: The Introduction of the Conscientious Objector

From mid-1915 onwards, as debates about conscription come to the fore, the press's focus on women as a specific group within the anti-war movement began to be disrupted by the gradual introduction of the figure of the conscientious objector. It is in these initial representations of the objector that the fault lines upon which many of the press depictions of male resisters in the following years would be contested and negotiated by the pro-war and anti-war press. In contrast to the way in which anti-war women were represented during 1914 and 1915, only a few articles, primarily by anti-war voices, represented male resisters in explicitly gendered terms in the pre-conscription period, although there was an implicit negative masculine gendering of pacifists in some pro-war articles, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Whilst the articles that did depict and discuss the conscientious objector offer some insight into the way that conscription would affect the gendering of resistance following the introduction of the Military Service Acts of 1916, the limited number of texts that do so underscore the extent to which resistance to the conflict was perceived in largely feminine terms in the first year and a half of war.

²²⁹ A Young Man of Military Age, 'Open Letter to Advocates of Conscription', *Labour Leader*, 10th June 1915, p. 7.

Debates about the introduction of conscription in Britain were brought up in the House of Commons as early as late August 1914 following the Battle of Mons, but reached fever pitch after the establishment of the coalition government in May 1915.²³⁰ The change in the government, which now included pro-conscriptionists, prompted the press to take note of conscription debates and the 'conscription controversy became the single major subject' of much the press in this period.²³¹ Significantly, however, the intensification of the discussion about compulsory military service did not, on the whole, include representations of those men who were likely to resist conscription. The centrality of the issue of conscription in this period was reflected by the resumption of activities by the pro-conscription National Service League, a group which had been established in response to the Boer War in 1902.²³² Support for conscription was based upon a variety of reasons including arguments that contended that mandatory military service was an abstract benefit to the nation and its people by virtue of the increased grit and efficiency of trainees.²³³ In addition, national defence and the increased need for manpower during the war were also central to pro-conscription arguments.²³⁴

Matthew Johnson's study of the Liberal Party's support for conscription has also demonstrated how some Liberals, and in particular those who were members of the Liberal War Committee, supported conscription because of their belief in Liberalism, not in spite of it.²³⁵ Liberal support for conscription was based upon a number of arguments including a contention that it was a

²³⁰ R. J. Q. Adams and Philip P. Poirer, *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain 1900-18* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), p. 65, p. 85.

²³¹ *Ibid*, p. 85.

²³² *Ibid*, p. 88.

²³³ *Ibid*, p. 19.

²³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 20 and p. 34.

²³⁵ Matthew Johnson, 'The Liberal War Committee and the Liberal Advocacy of Conscription in Britain, 1914-1916', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (June, 2008), 399-420.

more controlled and efficient system of recruitment than voluntarism. There was also specifically Liberal pro-conscription arguments made that were based on the notion of equality of sacrifice in personal, military, and financial terms. Moreover, the argument was made that the voluntary system actually entailed a form of 'moral compulsion' and thus the idea of free enlistment was in itself illusory.²³⁶ Consequently some Liberals argued that compulsion was not only a practical necessity but also a moral imperative.

Whilst the Independent Labour Party was central in opposing and resisting conscription, the Labour Party's involvement with compulsory military service was more complex. The leader of the Labour Party, Arthur Henderson, and many other Labour MPs were staunchly opposed to conscription because it appeared to be a manifestation of the type of militarism Britain was fighting against. Furthermore, it raised the possibility of industrial conscription and an end to the free market in labour which was important to the trade unions.²³⁷ However, when the government quite clearly moved towards the introduction of compulsory military service, Henderson decided it was better to remain in the cabinet where he would be in a stronger position to oppose industrial conscription. He was supported by the majority of Labour MPs, although a number continued to work with some Liberal rebels to vote against extensions to the conscription acts.²³⁸

Given the centrality of the ILP to the opposition of conscription and the founding of the NCF, it is unsurprising that it was in the *Labour Leader*, that the first detailed CO stance was articulated. The letter written by a 'Young Man of Military Age' in June 1915, is a particularly significant text in that it invoked many aspects of the 'new moral order' that were set in motion in

²³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 417.

²³⁷ Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party* (3rd Ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 38.

²³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 38

1914, based on ideas of 'voluntarism, self-sacrifice and equality of sacrifice.'²³⁹ Indeed, sacrifice is a central framework in this outline of male war resistance:

it may be of service to you to understand the point of view of many young men who take no selfish view of their duty, but while ready to face every danger and sacrifice in the cause of their country, their ideals must conscientiously refuse to have any avoidable share in the killing of their fellow men, or in the preparation therefore.²⁴⁰

The language of sacrifice is further invoked with the writer arguing, 'I have always striven to interpret my life in an unselfish way in relation to my fellow men and my country, and I have never shrunk from personal sacrifice for the common good.'²⁴¹ The emphasis placed on sacrifice in this text is instructive in revealing how male war resisters attempted to frame their resistance within the code of sacrifice that had taken on particular significance in the war. Importantly, this discourse was implicitly linked to the objectors' experience precisely because of their rejection of military service. This was because, as Gregory has argued, the economy of sacrifice that was present during the war was measured in the currency of blood. Soldiers were therefore positioned as superior,²⁴² with their sacrifice operating as the 'determinant touchstone of all other sacrifices.'²⁴³

This wartime ideal was not only a discourse which positioned soldiers above all others during the war but was also intertwined with the construction of

²³⁹ C. Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 91.

²⁴⁰ A Young Man, 'Open Letter', *Labour Leader*.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² A. Gregory, *The Last Great War*, pp. 112-113.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

their superior masculinity. As Mosse has argued, heroism, death, and sacrifice on behalf of a higher purpose were the set attributes of manhood.²⁴⁴ The emphasis on sacrifice in the narrative framework of the conscientious objector's resistance to war is therefore indicative of an attempt to position the male resister and his rejection of military service both within the economy of wartime sacrifice and as a legitimate masculine act. Whilst elements of the discourse of sacrifice appeared in representations of female war resisters, the principle focus of articles about women was their gender and their resistance was, with the exception of Dorothea Hollins' piece, rarely framed in this way. The centrality of sacrifice to the way that this male resister configured his opposition to the war therefore signals a shift in the narrative of resistance, which became more pronounced once conscription was introduced in 1916. By foregrounding sacrifice as a central element of the objectors' stand the author positioned his resistance as an act of masculine attainment and thereby made a decisive break with the gendering of peace activism within the anti-war press which positioned opposition to war as a fulfilment of femininity.

The centrality of the conscientious objector to the re-gendering of resistance is further emphasised by the author's tacit alignment of objectors with volunteers through the suggestion that both groups of men were motivated by a principled interpretation of duty that they were both willing to sacrifice for:

I honour those who, feeling that duty called them to this distasteful work, have given up everything to serve their country in this way. I think they are mistaken and misguided in their act,

²⁴⁴ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1996), p. 51.

but entirely right in their motive. Each man must judge in such a serious manner for himself.²⁴⁵

This identification of the CO as a counterpart to the volunteer soldier was not confined to objectors but was also apparent amongst volunteer nurses (VADs) and demonstrates the extent to which non-combatants attempted to emulate the ideals associated with the volunteer soldier. As Watson has pointed out, 'just as soldiering was the best response a young man could make to the country's call, volunteer nursing was portrayed as the ideal war work for socially privileged young women.'²⁴⁶ In a similar vein, by positioning himself on the same moral level as the volunteer, the objector identified himself as the embodiment of war resistance as the volunteer was the embodiment of patriotic spirit. As Bibbings has argued, supporters of objectors contended that 'the brave CO, like the exemplary volunteer, was acting upon his conscience and doing his duty by following his beliefs.'²⁴⁷ This identification of the objector as the anti-war movement's equivalent of the volunteer with specific reference to sacrifice had significant implications for the self-representation of the anti-war movement particularly in the way that the gendering of the movement shifted, which was especially marked from 1916.

The significance of the economy of sacrifice to the way that male resisters were considered is further illustrated in a correspondence exchange in the *Manchester Guardian* in November 1915 on the notion of conscience. Reverend George Shillito wrote for example that 'people would take the preachers of non-resistance more seriously if they would resign the security and charm of their present homes and studies, which are only available at the cost of the blood of enlisted men ... Non-resistance is easy to proclaim in

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 87.

²⁴⁷ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 211.

England- guarded as we are by the sacrifice of heroes ...'²⁴⁸ The Reverend Leyton Richards, a member of the No-Conscription Fellowship National Committee, subsequently responded that 'compulsory militarism is not a matter of political expediency, but of profoundest principle: ... whatever may be the penalties, these thousands [of conscientious objectors] will unflinchingly make the higher choice.'²⁴⁹ Shillito's characterisation of the soldiers' heroic sacrifices and Richards' suggestion that objectors were willing to sacrifice for their ideals, whatever 'penalties' they faced, highlights both how the blood sacrifice of the soldier was positioned as superior and how the act of objecting began to be represented with specific reference to this central discourse of wartime masculinity.

Whilst conscientious objectors and male resisters were not discussed in explicit terms in the pro-war press prior to the introduction of conscription, the themes of sacrifice and duty were reiterated in a number of other articles in the anti-war press that reported on the activities of the No-Conscription Fellowship and its members in late 1915. For example, in a report of the NCF conference in December 1915, these themes came to the fore. The chairman of the NCF, Clifford Allen, noted that 'thousands of young men are willing to suffer for the cause of peace, so will they have the great joy of knowing that they are advancing in the most powerful way possible the prospects of peace.'²⁵⁰ Allen went on to state that 'when history is written, I believe the witness of the young men of this Fellowship ... will have proved the most potent factor in stirring the conscience of the nation towards peace.'²⁵¹ Consequently, the ideal of sacrifice for male resisters was linked to a cause

²⁴⁸ Rev. George Shillito, 'Correspondence: The Clergy and Enlistment', *Manchester Guardian*, 6th November 1915, p. 4.

²⁴⁹ Leyton Richards, 'Correspondence: The Clergy and Enlistment', *Manchester Guardian*, 10th November 1915, p. 4.

²⁵⁰ 'Thousands of Young Men Will Resist Conscription: Impressive Convention of the No-Conscription Fellowship in London', *Labour Leader*, 2nd December 1915, p. 4.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

much larger than the war itself. Whilst male war resistance was couched in unmarked but nonetheless gendered terms of heroic ideals of sacrifice and duty, women's war resistance was primarily articulated as an expression of their inherent characteristics as women. Unlike women whose love for peace was perceived as innate, men's desire for peace was not considered to be an inherent expression of masculinity. Men actively worked to express their war resistance as a significant act and were therefore portrayed as having a special status within both the anti-war movement and society as a whole.

The final section of the report on the conference is also telling of the shift that appeared towards the end of 1915. This small section, entitled 'The Women's Blessing', detailed the support given to the NCF by the Women's International League. In a short account of the speech given by the WIL's delegate Catherine Marshall, it was noted that she remarked 'you are rendering a service to your country and posterity which is not appreciated by all men, but for which we women bless you.'²⁵² This short text suggests that women had moved into a supporting role, whilst objectors had taken on the primary struggle for peace. Moreover, the use of 'blessing' implies that women had not been involved with this process of resistance and had instead offered only passive approval. The framing of the relationship between anti-war men and women in this way mirrored the role of patriotic women as the 'direct voice of conscience' for male military recruitment and service.²⁵³ This stands in contrast to the diverse articles about and by anti-war women earlier in the war and is illustrative of the broader change in representations of war resisters that became more pronounced following the introduction of conscription in January 1916.

Conclusion

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ N. Gullace, 'White Feathers', p. 183.

As British society came to terms with the war, the press played a crucial role in outlining what it was Britain was fighting for and who its enemies were. Consequently, in the early years of the conflict the pro-war press established distinct definitions of enemy and ally and placed particular emphasis on patriotism, duty and sacrifice. The way that the anti-war population were represented by both anti-war and pro-war publications was subsequently framed by these ideas, revealing how discourses of patriotism and sacrifice were both contested and fluid, acquiring different meanings for different sections of society. On the one hand, these narratives informed a broader negative depiction of war resisters as outcasts, internal enemies, and national dangers in ways that drew on ideas of nationhood and citizenship, gender, and degeneration. On the other hand, war resisters and those who supported them engaged with, challenged, and reconfigured these discourses to establish a more positive representation of the anti-war movement as integrated and accepted within British wartime society.²⁵⁴

Whilst discourses of patriotism, national identity, and degeneration were used to depict the anti-war movement as a whole, there was also a specific focus on anti-war women in particular, during 1914 and 1915. The ways in which the press used constructions of femininity to represent anti-war women in the first year and a half of war reveals the significant disparities between how pro-war and anti-war publications used gender to interpret female opposition to war. Whilst the articles within the anti-war press represented motherhood and femininity as a driver of opposition to the conflict, the pro-war press invoked feminine stereotypes and characteristics as a means of highlighting the perceived weakness of the movement against war. The articles and letters that were published in the *Herald* and *Leader* presented the characteristics of womanhood as something which gave

²⁵⁴ L. Bibbings, also discusses these themes extensively in *Telling Tales*, particularly chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.

intrinsic strength to the peace movement and were perceived as qualities that should be elevated into a reconfigured gender structure to achieve and maintain peace. In contrast, the *Mail* and *Express* deployed femininity in purely negative terms in order to highlight the weakness and folly of opposition to the war and thereby used gender to undermine women's resistance. Nonetheless, the pervasive use of both positive and negative constructions of womanhood in anti-war and pro-war publications not only highlights the integral role that conceptions of femininity played in press representations of anti-war women but also reveals how, to a large extent, peace and war resistance were configured as feminine. This characterisation of resistance served to reinforce the idea, explicitly expressed in the pro-war press from 1916, that to resist war was not compatible with the wartime configuration of martial masculinity. Furthermore, the centrality of conceptions of femininity to the gendering of peace meant that a new language had to be established in the anti-war press to represent men engaged in opposition to the war which reflected ideals of masculinity such as sacrifice, honour, and patriotism. The anti-war press's early attempts to frame conscientious objectors in this way highlight the significance of reconfiguring war resistance as masculine in response to debates about conscription. The ways in which constructions of femininity were mobilised in depictions of war resistance therefore had significant implications for how both women and men in the anti-war movement were represented during the first year and a half of war. The gendered shifts that begun to take place from mid-1915 came into sharp focus with the legal introduction of conscription and the conscientious objector from the beginning of 1916, as will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: 1916

1916 marked a turning point in the war in many ways. The huge losses in the Battles of Verdun and the Somme, political upheaval in Ireland, and the introduction of conscription for single men in January and married men in May, all contributed to a turbulent and important year in the conflict.²⁵⁵ For the anti-war movement specifically, the introduction of compulsory military service played an integral role in shaping the way that male and female war resisters were represented both for the remainder of the conflict and in the years after the Armistice. Whilst objecting to military service on conscientious grounds was one possible exemption amongst others such as work of national importance, financial or domestic hardship, and ill-health, the introduction of conscientious objectors into British society was particularly controversial.²⁵⁶ Against a backdrop of growing unrest and increasing criticism of the government's conduct of the war,²⁵⁷ the allowance for exemption on the grounds of conscience generated great hostility towards objectors and the public mood became 'more harsh and bellicose.'²⁵⁸ A vociferous and often vicious public campaign against war resisters, and conscientious objectors in particular, conducted in part by the pro-war press gained momentum.²⁵⁹ Yet the introduction of conscription and

²⁵⁵ The Military Service Act, 1916 first introduced conscription within Britain but not Ireland. The legislation applied to single able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 41 and childless widowers. There were 5 acts in total, with the last 4 adding to and/or varying the terms of the first. The Military Service (No. 2) Act, 1916 extended conscription to married men and clarified the nature of the exemption available to objectors. The Military Service (Review of Exemptions) Act, 1917 was concerned with exceptions to the operation of conscription. The Military Service Act, 1918 provided for the cancellation of certificates of exemption granted under occupational grounds. The final Military Service (No. 2) Act of 1918 allowed for the extension of the upper age limit to those who had not yet reached 51, and to those under 56 if necessary and included other emergency powers. See, L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 44.

²⁵⁶ See, L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, pp. 28-29 for more detailed discussion of the different grounds for exemption.

²⁵⁷ Cate Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning: Propaganda and the First World War* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), p. 141.

²⁵⁸ T. C. Kennedy, 'Public Opinion and the Conscientious Objector, 1915-1919', p. 108.

²⁵⁹ See Bibbings' chapter 'Despised and Rejected' for an insightful overview of the negative public opinion of objectors in *Telling Tales*, pp. 60-88.

the subsequent publicity it gave to the anti-war community also worked to the advantage of the peace movement. Martin Caedel has pointed out, for instance, that conscription dramatised the anti-war movement's views for the public mind by bringing pacifists into sharp confrontation with the state.²⁶⁰ Certainly, the public attention given to COs provided the peace movement with a renewed focus and a constant stream of news.

Whilst Nigel Young has argued that war resistance first became a 'political act with the first refusal of compulsory military service in 1916,'²⁶¹ men who chose to become objectors did so for a variety of reasons which included politics but was not restricted to it. Indeed, the discussion about conscientious objectors in the wartime press highlighted the significance of concepts of liberty, freedom, and national identity, as well as morality and religion. Objecting to military service and its implications for both the anti-war movement and wider society were therefore understood and depicted in a number of ways. Yet the varied representational discourses used to depict COs were all linked by their implicit or explicit connection to gender. Indeed, as Bibbings' work has shown, as men who openly rejected military service, the configuration of conscientious objectors was directly associated with, and often explicitly represented in relation to wartime conceptions of militarist masculinity which emphasised the ideals of sacrifice, duty, and courage.²⁶²

²⁶⁰ M. Caedel, *Pacifism in Britain*, p. 38.

²⁶¹ Nigel Young, 'War Resistance and the British Peace Movement Since 1914' in Richard Taylor and N. Young (eds), *Campaigns for Peace*, pp. 23-48 (p. 23).

²⁶² See L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*. The particular hallmarks of military masculinities have been examined by a number of historians. Graham Dawson in *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994) notes that military virtues such as 'aggression, strength, courage and endurance have been repeatedly been defined as the natural and inherent qualities of manhood', p. 1. John Horne also explores masculine prestige, sacrifice, valour and martyrdom in the context of war and politics in J. Horne, 'Masculinity in Politics and War in the Age of Nation-States and World Wars, 1850-1950' in S. Dudnik, K. Hagemann and J. Tosh (eds), *Masculinities in Politics and War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 22-40. Robert Nye in his historiographical survey of recent literature on masculinities in war and peace has also noted that a dominant theme in scholarly work is the observation that historically societies have

The gendering of objectors had significant ramifications for the representation of the peace movement as a whole, and for anti-war women in particular. The depiction of COs with specific reference to wartime masculinity, in both positive and negative ways, meant that the gendered representation of women as natural resisters of the conflict began to be mediated through the objector and thereby mirrored the contemporary gender hierarchy whereby male activity took precedence.²⁶³ Yet this was not necessarily a reflection of a decline in women's war resistance. As Jill Liddington has noted, by 1916 women's peace groups such as the Women's International League 'had become a recognisable part of the British anti-war culture.'²⁶⁴ Moreover, conscription 'thrust the tentacles of state compulsion deep into every home, into the private family sphere and so directly into many women's lives.'²⁶⁵ Indeed, women came to play a crucial role in the CO movement, with notable female organisers such as Catherine Marshall, Lydia Smith, and Joan Beauchamp all playing integral roles in the organisation of the No-Conscription Fellowship.²⁶⁶ In this way, the representational shifts

valued military masculinities and 'the personal characteristics of manliness that it comprises more highly than civic virtue and its masculinities,' in R. A. Nye, 'Western Masculinities in War and Peace', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 2 (April, 2007), 417-438 (p. 418).

²⁶³ There was a prevalent discourse during the war that soldiers were risking their lives to protect 'woman-kind' which was underpinned by notions of the passive female and the active male defender. See S. R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*, p. 194. M and P. Higonnet also emphasise unequal gender relations of domination and subordination between men and women during the war in M. R. Higonnet et. al., 'Introduction' in M. R. Higonnet et. al., *Behind the Lines*, p. 6. Janet Watson has challenged the idea that parity was not given to male and female war experiences during the war itself, arguing for example that 'women doing full-time volunteer work in hospitals were popularly equated with soldiers in the trenches' however she does emphasise that this was underlined by essential ideas about gender difference: 'women could only be equal-but-different.' J. K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 7.

²⁶⁴ J. Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*, p. 106.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 107.

²⁶⁶ Detailed information on some of these female anti-war campaigners can be found in Jo Vellacott's biography of Catherine Marshall, *From Liberal to Labour with Women's Suffrage: The Story of Catherine Marshall* (Montreal: McGill Queens University Press, 1993); biographies of Kate Courtney and Maude Royden both of whom were involved with WIL and associated with the CO movement can be found in Sybil Oldfield, *Women Against the Iron Fist: Alternatives to Militarism, 1900-1989* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989), pp. 21-66.

that were directly concerned with the position of men and women within the peace movement shed light on the considerable role that gender played in re-shaping the depiction of the anti-war movement following the introduction of conscription.

Given the press focus on conscientious objectors from 1916, it is necessary to gain some understanding of who the men that claimed exemption on conscientious grounds were. Yet as Cyril Pearce and Helen Durham have noted, accessing detailed and accurate information about conscientious objectors is masked under 'layers of difficulty,' particularly as the government systems for recording such things at the time were incomplete.²⁶⁷ Nonetheless, some information regarding the number of COs, their motivations, age, and origin can be gleaned.²⁶⁸ A number of estimates of the number of COs have been attempted by various historians with the total figure being placed at somewhere between 16,000 and 20,000.²⁶⁹ Similarly, approximations have been made about the different motivations that underpinned a conscientious objection. These motivations can be very broadly categorised as political, primarily socialist, and religious, mainly nonconformist Christianity. However, it is important to note that these categorisations do not offer a complete picture. As Keith Robbins has pointed out, religion and politics were often intertwined and there was, in some cases, a refusal to distinguish between the two.²⁷⁰ Moreover, Pearce's study of the Huddersfield anti-war community points to the existence of a sizeable

²⁶⁷ Cyril Pearce & Helen Durham, 'Patterns of Dissent in Britain during the First World War', *War & Society*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2015), 140-159 (p. 141).

²⁶⁸ With the developing *Pearce Register of British Conscientious Objectors* more accurate information will undoubtedly aid future research.

²⁶⁹ J. W. Graham's estimate in *Conscription and Conscience* is 16,100 p. 349, whilst David Boulton in *Objection Overruled*, p. 139 and Cyril Pearce in *Comrades*, pp. 175-176 have both proposed a figure closer to 20,000.

²⁷⁰ K. Robbins, 'The British Experience of Conscientious Objection', p. 612.

number (25.62% of those objectors attesting at the Huddersfield Tribunal) of ‘unspecified moral or ethical’ conscientious objectors.²⁷¹

Given the age ranges of the exemption clause in 1916 (18-41 years of age), COs were a relatively young group of men. Indeed, two of the most prominent leaders of the CO movement, Fenner Brockway and Clifford Allen, were both under the age of 30 when they became objectors.²⁷² The class of objectors is more challenging to uncover. Robbins has suggested that there was a predominance of COs who were either skilled, lower middle-class clerical, or professional workers.²⁷³ The work of Pearce and Durham has shown that urban areas with an organised and politically engaged working class also created a context that was ripe for opposition, as in the East and North of London and Huddersfield.²⁷⁴ Similarly, the regional composition of COs is still largely unclear, although Pearce and Durham’s work on mapping areas of dissent have shown that areas with strong roots in Labour, trade union and Socialist movements, and a significant presence of nonconformist Christianity, were likely to be key areas of war resistance.²⁷⁵

This chapter will first explore two of the most widely discussed motivating ideas underpinning conscientious objection in the pro-war and anti-war press during 1916, religion and liberty. It will consider the way that religion was used as a means of both debating objectors’ claims to Christian identity and constructing CO masculinity. The analysis will also demonstrate the extent to which arguments about the connections between COs and liberty were both inflected with ideas about gender and were underscored by arguments which made a clear distinction between individual liberties and national

²⁷¹ C. Pearce, *Comrades*, p. 182.

²⁷² K. Robbins, ‘The British Experience of Conscientious Objection’, p. 612.

²⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 610.

²⁷⁴ C. Pearce and H. Durham, ‘Patterns of Dissent’, p. 151.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 141-142.

values. The analysis will then move on to discuss representations which touched directly upon the act of objecting and will consider how the central ideals which informed these depictions, were invoked in a variety of ways to configure objectors' masculinity and were often linked to the reasons underpinning an objection. As George Mosse has noted, heroism, death, and sacrifice on behalf of a higher purpose 'became set attributes of manliness' and 'death and sacrifice were joined to the idea of freedom, whether it was liberty, equality, or fraternity.'²⁷⁶ Sacrifice, duty, and courage and the central role these played in the depiction of soldiers' masculinity had a significant impact upon the way that gendered constructions of COs were depicted during 1916. R. W. Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity maintains that it is 'always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women.'²⁷⁷ Therefore the analysis of the act of objecting will also look at the way that the key binary of the soldier and the objector informed the representation of COs.

The significance of looking at the construction of the masculinity of the objector with reference to the ideals directly connected to the soldier lies not only in its importance for understanding the gendering of male war resisters but also the way that it impacted upon the depiction of anti-war women. Indeed, the introduction of high profile male war resisters into the feminised representation of the anti-war movement can reveal not only the relationship between peace and gender but also the state of flux between masculinity and femininity in wartime, and how they interacted with one another. Considering how the representation of female resistance changed during 1916 will therefore form the final part of this chapter's analysis. This section will look at both how maternalist discourses shifted in response to depictions of COs and the way that the language of conscience, which became central to anti-war narratives of resistance during 1916, impacted

²⁷⁶ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man*, p. 51.

²⁷⁷ R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power*, p. 183.

upon the way female resisters were talked about in the press, focusing specifically on Nellie Best's relatively well-publicised trial for charges of prejudicing recruiting. Whilst some of the themes discussed in this chapter are the same as those discussed in the previous one, the chronological analysis demonstrates how these themes shifted in response to conscription and consequently highlight how the representation of the anti-war movement as a whole altered during 1916.

Motivating Ideas

Religion

That religion was a key motivation for conscientious objection was reflected in the centrality of religious narratives to the representation of objectors. The emphasis on Christianity, primarily nonconformist denominations such as Quakerism and Methodism, as a driving factor was, however, controversial in a wartime society where the majority of churches supported the war effort and the 'relationship between Christian rhetoric and wartime values was an intimate one.'²⁷⁸ As Sue Morgan points out, the 'quasi-militaristic youth culture of the Edwardian churches', with organisations such as the Boys' Brigade and the Church Lads' Brigade, created a context in which 'religious support for the war was almost unanimous.'²⁷⁹

The importance of nonconformist Christianity to conscientious objection can, to some extent, be traced back to the nonconformist church's historical position outside the established church. This exclusion engendered a religious environment in which these denominations were free to create a

²⁷⁸ A. Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 112.

²⁷⁹ Sue Morgan, "'Iron strength and infinite tenderness': Herbert Gray and the making of Christian masculinities at war and at home, 1900-40" in Lucy Delap and Sue Morgan (eds), *Men, Masculinities and Religious Change in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 173.

‘distinctive culture and contribute in particular ways to British culture as a whole.’²⁸⁰ An important element of this was dissent, which often included opposition to war.²⁸¹ Pacifist values had become increasingly important to the Quakers in particular in the early twentieth century as part of the Quaker Renaissance and their response to the Boer War.²⁸² Indeed, as a result of younger Quakers’ relief work during this conflict many of them began to experience opposition to armed conflict as a deeply personal struggle for peace and a test of conscience.²⁸³ The nonconformist association with peace activism was reflected in the fact that this group accounted for a significant amount of the opposition to the First World War.²⁸⁴ John Rae’s examination of a group of COs, for example, found that ninety-five per cent were nonconformists or came from a nonconformist background.²⁸⁵

Religion was also linked to the political standpoints of many objectors. For instance, the persecution of nonconformists by the established church meant that Liberalism, with its support for civil and religious liberty, was politically attractive to nonconformists.²⁸⁶ Consequently, religious opposition to both conscription specifically, and the war more generally, had significant links to ideologies of liberty and the representation of both these themes

²⁸⁰ Jane Shaw, ‘Introduction: Why “culture and the Nonconformist tradition”?’ in Jane Shaw and Alan Kreider (eds), *Culture and the Nonconformist Tradition* (Cardiff, 1999), p. 2.

²⁸¹ Hugh McLeod, for example, has pointed out that nonconformists played a key part in the campaign against the Boer War, ‘Dissent and the peculiarities of the English, c. 1870-1914’ in J. Shaw and A. Kreider (eds), *Culture and the Nonconformist Tradition*, pp. 117-141 (p. 132).

²⁸² Thomas Kennedy explores the influence of the Quaker Renaissance on the peace movement in more detail in T. C. Kennedy, ‘The Quaker Renaissance’.

²⁸³ Rebecca Gill, *Calculating Compassion: Humanity and Relief in War, Britain 1870-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 157.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p.133.

²⁸⁵ John Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, p. 250.

²⁸⁶ David W. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914* (London, 2009), p. 8. Although the ‘Nonconformist revolt’ with the Liberal Party over the perceived lack of religious equality in the Education Act of 1870 played a large part in the Liberal defeat in the 1874 general election, this nonetheless meant that Nonconformists became more integrated in the party after 1874 as the Conservative victory had shown the futility of weakening the Liberal Party. See, p. 11 and chapter 7 ‘The Education of the People’ for a more detailed discussion of this ‘revolt.’

had important parallels in the way they were invoked to construct particular objector identities.

Religious rhetoric was invoked by both pro-war and anti-war voices throughout the conflict.²⁸⁷ Religious imagery played a central role in both the war more broadly and the representation of male war resisters specifically, not least because whilst not all COs were motivated by religion, religious narratives also inflected secular discourses of conscientious objection. As Brock Millman suggests, 'among dissenters whose formal religious belief had atrophied, it was generally replaced by a secular humanism which in most of its particulars was virtually indistinguishable from the nonconformist Christian social ethic.'²⁸⁸ The invocation of religious imagery was multifaceted and its uses ranged from the conjuring up of connections between objectors and Jesus through to the clarification and justification of objectors' motivations. Discussions in the press regarding conscientious objectors also took on a religious tone in the charge made by some that the treatment of religiously motivated COs amounted to religious persecution.

The invocation of religious symbolism in anti-war narratives was at its most explicit in representations that compared conscientious objectors with Jesus

²⁸⁷ There are a number of studies which have examined religious practices and discourses during the Great War. Adrian Gregory has looked at this topic in a number of publications including, A. Gregory, 'Beliefs and Religion' in J. Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War. Vol. 3: Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 805-855; Gregory also examines religious discourses of sacrifice in both pro-war and anti-war narratives in chapter 5, 'Redemption through war: religion and the languages of sacrifice' in *The Last Great War*. Michael Snape has examined religion and the soldier in *God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars* (London: Routledge, 2005); Army Chaplains in the Great War have also been a significant topic of analysis for religion during the war. See Michael Snape and Edward Madigan's edited collection, *The Clergy in Khaki: New Perspectives on British Army Chaplaincy in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2013) and Edward Madigan, *Faith under Fire: Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); the Anglican Church and its opposition to the war has also been examined by Clive Barrett in *Subversive Peacemakers: War Resistance 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2014).

²⁸⁸ Brock Millman, *Managing Domestic Dissent in First World War Britain* (London, 2000), p. 19.

Christ. These representations took the form of either direct associations between Jesus and COs, or more subtle assertions that, by acting upon Christ's teachings, objectors were following in his footsteps. Comparisons between objectors and Jesus served a number of purposes, and highlight how ideas about gender, sacrifice, and morality inflected the configuration of conscientious objector and his religious and masculine identity. Christianity, in particular, had formed a key aspect of Victorian manliness in the years preceding the outbreak of war, and wartime masculinity was therefore constructed within a context where religion was an important feature of masculinity.²⁸⁹ Whilst in the early Victorian period, the image of manliness represented a concern with a successful transition from 'Christian immaturity to maturity, demonstrated by earnestness, selflessness and integrity; to the late Victorian it stood for the neo-Spartan virility as exemplified by stoicism, hardiness and endurance,' all of which were apparent in the concept of 'muscular Christianity.'²⁹⁰ Elements of both the early and late Victorian conceptualisations of Christian manliness were present in anti-war depictions of objectors which invoked Christ. For instance, drawing out comparisons between COs and Jesus was one of the ways in which the anti-war press refuted claims that, by refusing to participate in the war, men who voiced a conscientious objection to military service were cowards. Invoking selflessness, endurance, and stoic sacrifice, a *Herald* article from March argued that:

we desire to protest emphatically against the assumption that men who for conscientious reasons refuse to fight are cowards ... it is not a question of giving one's own small life, but taking other people's lives which is objected to. Our Lord gave His own life, but in the moment of supreme trial refused either to take life or allow others to take life on his behalf. In this connection

²⁸⁹ J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, 'Introduction' in J. A. Mangan and James Walvin (eds), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), pp. 1-6 (pp. 1-3).

²⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 1, 3.

no one would dream of accusing Him of moral cowardice and we most earnestly hope that an end will be put to this daily taunting of the conscientious objector.²⁹¹

By comparing COs and Jesus in this way, the *Herald* represented objectors as mirroring the self-sacrifice of Christ. Self-sacrifice was also underpinned by the suggestion that in taking this standpoint both Jesus and objectors demonstrated moral courage. In addition, the way that the *Herald* text links self-sacrifice and moral courage to refute the claim of COs' cowardice also points to the relationship between masculinity, sacrifice, and Christianity which had been the subject of significant discussion in the century preceding the First World War.

The feminisation of religion and piety had become a particular feature of Christianity from the beginning of the nineteenth century. As Callum Brown suggests, evangelism feminised piety and 'pietised' femininity as women's religiosity became privileged in Christian discourse from 1800.²⁹² In contrast to this, men's piety was perceived as 'in constant inner turbulence and its depiction was subject to increasing discursive instability.'²⁹³ As a consequence, there was experimentation in the construction of a moral and religious masculinity which came to be known as 'muscular Christianity' in the mid-1880s.²⁹⁴ A central aspect of Christian masculinity was a focus on the figure of Christ, and his bodily self-sacrifice in particular became a key

²⁹¹ 'The Way of the World', *Herald*, 4th March 1916, p. 1.

²⁹² Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800-2000* (London, 2001), p. 59. On the relationship between religion and masculinity in this period see also Lucy Delap and Sue Morgan's edited study, *Men, Masculinities and Religious Change in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke, 2013).

²⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 88.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 88. On 'Muscular Christianity' see F. Knight, "'Male and female He created them", men, women and the question of gender' in John Wolffe (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain: Vol. V. Culture and Empire* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 34-35; Morgan, "'Iron strength and infinite tenderness'" and John Springhall, 'Building character in the British boy: the attempt to extend Christian manliness to working class adolescents, 1880-1914' in *Manliness and Morality*, pp. 52-74.

component in the definition of manliness, as outlined in Thomas Hughes' book *The Manliness of Christ*. In his study of Hughes' book, Peter Gay argues that 'manliness incorporated nothing less than the desire for self-sacrifice. As a brave soldier in his and all mankind's cause, Christ, Hughes insisted, displayed manliness through all of his life.'²⁹⁵ Thus, the emphasis on Christ's self-sacrifice and the associations that were drawn out between Christ and COs in the *Herald* article can be viewed as an attempt to represent the objectors' stance as compatible with the contemporary construction of religious manliness. As John Springhall has noted, sermons and articles in the popular contemporary juvenile magazine *Boys' Own Paper*, 'identified Jesus as a physically strong individual, a carpenter, a courageous and manly leader of men.'²⁹⁶

The nineteenth century social and cultural context of manliness is also significant to the conceptualisation of manly religious objectors. Scouting in particular played an important role in giving manliness a popular dimension amongst boys and young men by instilling the 'manly character' that was also central to the concept of 'muscular Christianity.'²⁹⁷ In a similar vein, masculinity was a significant aspect of domestic religious life as patriarchal conceptions informed the construction of the Christian family with the husband reflecting the authority of the Father in Heaven.²⁹⁸ The comparison of objectors with the self-sacrificing manly figure of Christ in the *Herald* article therefore drew on a specifically gendered religious context and can consequently be seen as an explicit attempt to gender the act of conscientious objection as masculine.

²⁹⁵ Peter Gay, 'The manliness of Christ' in R. W. Davis and R. J. Hemstadter (eds), *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society: Essays in Honour of R. K. Webb* (London, 1992), p. 106.

²⁹⁶ J. Springhall, 'Building Character in the British Boy', p. 66.

²⁹⁷ See Allen Warren, 'Popular Manliness: Baden-Powell, Scouting, and the Development of Manly Character' in *Manliness and Morality*, pp. 199-219.

²⁹⁸ J. Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 73.

The comparisons that were made between conscientious objectors and Christ that represented COs as intensely spiritual and moral men, provoked criticism from Christians who saw their faith as compelling them to support the war effort. Correspondence to the *Guardian* by Quaker chaplain and key figure in the CO movement, John W. Graham, acted as a catalyst for a discussion about this type of representation of religious COs. Graham wrote that 'the conscientious objector is a man who goes through the world with eyes fixed on souls and on the beauty and ugliness of actions. Whatever professionals may think, he is a religious expert, he is an artist in souls.'²⁹⁹ J. E. Roberts, a Christian who was in support of the war, responded:

Principal Graham has been a loyal and skilful champion of the conscientious objector, but I think if I were a conscientious objector I should recognise my champion had a bad fall when I read his letter in this morning's *Manchester Guardian*. Most of us know well a number of conscientious objectors. We honour them for their loyalty to conscience. But we must admit that Mr. Graham's picture of them is, frankly, unrecognisable. I have told my friends amongst them many times that one of their bad mistakes is to hoist themselves on to a pedestal of moral and spiritual superiority ... Principal Graham's fanciful account of the conscientious objector does, however, touch one of the real issues between him and people like myself, who, whilst hating war are convinced that it is our duty as Christians to prosecute this war to a successful issue ... the glorification of the conscientious objector as a person of spiritual instincts and insight is precisely one of the causes of a good deal of that popular misunderstanding.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ John W. Graham, 'Correspondence: The Conscientious Objector's Position', *Manchester Guardian*, 20th May 1916, p. 5.

³⁰⁰ J. E. Roberts, 'Correspondence: Duty of the Conscientious Objector', *Manchester Guardian*, 22nd May 1916, p. 7.

The suggestion that the portrayal of COs as spiritually superior men was alienating to Christians who believed that war was necessary demonstrates the complex nature of religious discourse during the war. The attempt to define Christian identity as the exclusive domain of the conscientious objector inevitably posed a challenge for how other Christians saw the relationship between their faith and their view of the conflict. Indeed, Roberts' argument is underpinned by the exclusion that was inherent in the explicit conflation of Christian and objector identities in representations of COs.

Religion also inflected discussion in the press over how conscientious objectors were being treated by the government and military authorities. The treatment of conscientious objectors was frequently identified as religious persecution and was often contextualised with reference to the persecution of early Christians. For instance Edward Garnett, the writer and literary critic whose son David was a CO, sent a letter to the *Guardian* which lamented the treatment of Christian objectors in particular:

I have noticed myself that it is the men who are the most Christian and have the greatest aversion from bloodshed that excite the deepest hostility in the heart of ordinary members of tribunals. We seem therefore, to be in for a regular religious persecution, as well as a minor persecution of socialists and pacifists of military age.³⁰¹

The identification of the poor treatment of objectors as religious persecution points to the way in which this particular experience of COs is seen within a framework of religious identity. The strong links between objectors and

³⁰¹ Edward Garnett, 'Correspondence: The Fruits of Compulsion', *Manchester Guardian*, 11th May 1916, p. 7.

nonconformist Christianity could explain the emphasis on religious persecution because of the discrimination directed towards nonconformists during the eighteenth and nineteenth century.³⁰² The narrative of religious persecution specifically identified the treatment of COs as an attack on a collective religious identity.

A poem by S. Gertrude Ford published in the *Herald* similarly suggested that objectors were being persecuted because of their faith but also echoed the comparisons that were made between objectors and Christ to assert that their willingness to die in the name of Jesus would make them leaders of faith in the future:

His crime is that he loved Peace; followed her
For Christ's sake, in His name, even to the death ...
Messenger of truth, and hearing what the spirit saith ...

They bound him, mocked, maltreated, wounded sore ...
Few then his followers; now, the wide world o'er,
Behold them as stars for the multitude.³⁰³

Persecution in this case is used to represent a complex interplay of religion, sacrifice and courage and takes all of these elements to consider the future position of objectors. Ford's depiction of religious persecution was thus not a straightforward lamentation of the way COs were being treated, but was also a means of demonstrating the courage and self-sacrifice of objectors

³⁰² See for example David Bebbington's chapter on Nonconformist attempts to disestablish the Church of England and gain religious equality in D. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience*, pp. 18-36.

³⁰³ S. Gertrude Ford, 'A Conscientious Objector Founded on Fact', *Herald*, 16th September 1916, p. 8.

and consequently position their wartime experience as something that would bolster their position as leaders of peace and faith.

Bibbings has noted that 'in terms of mainstream Christian thinking during the war, the CO was conceived in a negative light or incomprehensible.'³⁰⁴ The pro-war press certainly took issue with objectors who based their objection on Christian grounds, asserting that their invocation and understanding of their faith was a perversion of Christianity. A letter sent to the *Daily Mail* by E. Nesbit stated for example: 'The enclosed [pacifist leaflets] have been sent to me by way of Christmas greeting from a youngish man who has somehow got exemption ... Will you not use your influence to induce the authorities to punish, and to punish heavily, the dissemination of the mischievous perversions of religious truths?'³⁰⁵ In a similar manner, another letter argued that the conscientious objector 'besmirches the good name of One who, with a scourge, drove the defilers from the Temple.'³⁰⁶ The suggestion that those COs who were motivated by religion perverted Christianity, or tarnished the name of Jesus, appears to complicate Gregory's claim that religious arguments for a conscientious objection, 'no matter how bizarre, were often treated with great respect.'³⁰⁷ On the contrary, the representation of religiously motivated objectors in the pro-war press, as highlighted in these examples of correspondence, cast COs as religious deviants whose objections to the war were not compatible with Christianity and were therefore not only unworthy of respect, but were also damaging to the faith as a whole. As such, Christianity is presented as solely compatible

³⁰⁴ Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 62.

³⁰⁵ E. Nesbit, 'Peace Mischief-Makers', *Daily Mail*, 26th December 1916, p. 4.

³⁰⁶ Harry E. Granger, 'A Word to the Tribunals', *Daily Mail*, 28th November 1916, p. 4.

³⁰⁷ A. Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 154.

with support for the war in a manner which excludes opposition to the conflict based on religion.³⁰⁸

By basing their claim to exemption on their Christian convictions, religious objectors were also seen to be especially pernicious and manipulative. A *Daily Express* article written by George Makgill, the secretary of the Anti-German Union, stated that ‘of all the breed the most dangerous is the pseudo-pious crank- the most dangerous because his appeal is to the higher instincts of simple men.’³⁰⁹ The suggestion that Christian COs emphasised their religion to trick other men into objecting reinforced arguments about objectors’ religious perversion by implying that objectors were both insincere and used faith to manipulate others. Pro-war anxieties about the invocation of religious discourses by war resisters illustrate Gregory’s point that ‘the validity of a highly personal reading of Scripture was the common ground between some of the war’s strongest advocates and conscientious objectors.’³¹⁰ Arguments that emphasised the perversion and insincerity of objectors’ faith were therefore underscored by the inherent tension of using the same Christian discourse to justify distinctly different positions on the war.

This sentiment was echoed in a correspondence exchange between two readers in the *Herald* which demonstrates how Scripture was not only linked to the justification of a particular standpoint on war but was also concerned with the construction of Christian identity, brought into focus by the war, more broadly. Beatrice H. Derry’s letter heavily criticised the *Herald*’s reportage of objectors by invoking dehumanising discourses of illness and

³⁰⁸ As Gregory has noted, there was a widespread view in the established Church that the war ‘represented an unparalleled opportunity... An altruistic willingness to sacrifice oneself for the cause of righteousness... was a clear indication that people were ready to receive God into their hearts.’ *The Last Great War*, p. 161.

³⁰⁹ Sir George Makgill, Bt, ‘Crusade of the Cranks’, *Daily Express*, 13th March 1916, p. 4.

³¹⁰ A. Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 154.

contagion, stating that ‘since military service has brought out the plague spot called the conscientious objector, its defences of these creatures makes painful reading, as all that is said in the various Labour papers is clear evidence of entire ignorance of the spiritual and, therefore, of the real.’³¹¹ In response to her letter, another reader wrote:

She did not state that she was not a Christian, and therefore, as she quoted Scripture, I may be allowed to assume that she is, or at least supposes herself to be, a follower of Christ. I say “supposes herself to be” because whatever she professes to be, she is not a Christian because she evidently believes in killing and Christ preached “Thou shalt not kill.”³¹²

As Callum Brown argues in relation to religion and the support of war, it was important that ‘God be on the side of Britain and her allies, and it was judged that victory would only be assured through the higher moral status of the British people.’³¹³ The relationship between God, morality, and the war was therefore central to the tension that the use of religious justification in pro-war and anti-war narratives engendered. Indeed, both those who supported the war and the COs who opposed it were claiming an explicitly moral position on the conflict. Consequently, there was an inference that those who disagreed with their respective standpoint were somehow immoral. Furthermore, the symbolic importance of God’s support for Britain’s war effort shows how religious motivations for conscientious objection had the potential to undermine a central justification for the war. The discussions over the representation of religious objectors were therefore intimately linked to how the war and Britain’s role in it was interpreted and religious

³¹¹ ‘What our Readers are Thinking: The Other View’, *Herald*, 13th May 1916, p. 10.

³¹² ‘What our Readers are Thinking: Soldiers and COs’, *Herald*, 27th May 1916, p. 10.

³¹³ Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2006), p. 88.

discourses became a symbolic battleground for the moral justification of either war resistance or support for the conflict.

Liberty

The inclusion of the 'conscience clause' in the Military Service Acts generated significant debate over what the implications of conscription were for conceptions of liberty and its association to British national identity. The introduction of compulsion and the subsequent end to the voluntary military enlistment generated for some a 'fear that the rhetoric of sacrifice was being used to push through infringements of liberty.'³¹⁴ The association between liberty and conscription consequently influenced the representation of objectors which was often underpinned with ideas about individual and collective liberties and their place within British national identity. Discourses of liberty, like religious narratives, were also inflected with a tone of morality. Indeed, the similarity in the construction and contestation of both narratives demonstrates how the identification of conscientious objection as a moral position was central to discussions about the position of COs in British society. The similarities between religion and liberty were multifaceted. For example, the comparison between Jesus and objectors found parallels with the association of objection with historical movements for liberties, whilst the treatment of COs was discussed with relation to liberty in a similar manner to the representations of religious persecution. The resemblance between the ways in which the two discourses were represented in the press highlights how both were used to either reinforce or refute the connection between conscientious objectors and ideals which played a significant role in the justification of the conflict.

For those who supported the right to conscientious objection, the relationship between conscience, liberty, and British identity provided an

³¹⁴ A. Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p.109.

important means of reclaiming patriotism and incorporating war resisters within the national body. Yet those who disapproved of COs could continue to exclude anti-war activists from the nation by asserting that Britain's war effort in itself represented a struggle for liberty. In this way, the discourses of patriotism and nationhood that circulated within the press during 1914 and 1915 became embroiled in debates about conscription, conscience, and liberty during 1916. These narratives and their invocation in relation to COs were complex, a notion that is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that they were used by some who supported the war but defended the right to conscientious objection because of its inherent association to conceptions of liberty and its perceived relationship to national identity. Although Liberty has historically been gendered female, most notably in the female allegories of Marianne and the 'Goddess Liberty',³¹⁵ representations of conscience, liberty, and nationhood were invoked in the British wartime press with explicit reference to two groups of men, conscientious objectors and soldiers. The way that the connection between liberty and national identity was invoked in anti-war representations of COs was therefore significant because it in some senses attempted to echo the image of the soldier as the protector of the nation. As Meyer has noted, one of the most common reasons that men gave for enlisting was the defence of the home.³¹⁶ Press discussion about the relationship between objectors and liberty consequently highlights how the gendering of war resistance permeated broader questions about liberty and national identity.

When identifying objectors in relation to liberty, certain aspects of Britain's political history provided an important context. Radical groups, like the Levellers, who had demanded liberty from religious, political and social

³¹⁵ William Kidd, 'Marianne: From Medusa to Messalina. Psycho-sexual Imagery and Political Propaganda in France 1789-1945', *Journal of European Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2004), 333-348 (pp. 334-335).

³¹⁶ J. Meyer, *Men of War*, p. 34.

oppression,³¹⁷ were invoked to locate objectors within a longer lineage of defenders of liberty. The Levellers' programme of the First Agreement of the People, which included the significant principles of freedom of conscience and the banning of conscription,³¹⁸ had important overlaps for the anti-conscription and CO movement. Although these movements were rarely explicitly acknowledged in discussions of objectors and liberty, the way that texts drew on Britain's traditions and history established a link between the CO movement and the national political past as a way of legitimising the stance taken by objectors.

Another movement which provided an important political context for the depiction of objectors was the Chartists. As D. G. Paz has demonstrated, the Chartists were instrumental in creating a particular strand of 'people's history' which positioned Chartism as the site of a people's struggle for liberty that had begun with the Norman Conquest and included the American and French Revolutions.³¹⁹ In this way, Chartists were positioned as 'heirs to a great tradition' and England was viewed as 'the beacon of freedom to the rest of Europe.'³²⁰ The articles and letters within the wartime press which linked liberty and national identity to conscientious objectors thus did so within a context where past political movements played an important role, not only for the ideas that these movements had promoted, but also the way in which they had used history to legitimise their stance.

Press depictions of objectors as either direct descendants of those who had fought for freedom in the past, or arguments that suggested the poor treatment of COs was incompatible with English tradition were frequently

³¹⁷ Jonathan Scott, 'From England to British liberty, 1550-1800', *European Review of History*, 21. 1 (2014), p. 59.

³¹⁸ David Wootten, 'Leveller democracy and the Puritan Revolution' in J. H. Burns with Mark Goldie (eds), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 412.

³¹⁹ D. G. Paz, 'The Chartists and the English Reformation', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 90. 1 (Spring, 2014), p. 25.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

invoked throughout 1916. Both these elements were present in an article written by John Scurr in the *Herald*:

The spiritual existence of Britain has been endangered every day and thus our national existence is at stake ... it is the soul of Britain that our rulers are attempting to destroy ... the British democracy has been defeated by the contempt for conscientious opinions which now exists. The foundation of all liberty is the liberty of conscience ... the conscientious objector of today is in true lineal descent from those who have made British liberties possible ... He stands for democratic Britain.³²¹

The association between objectors and the 'soul' of Britain is significant in that it not only allowed supporters of objectors to identify COs as distinctly British but also drew upon the symbolism of radical precedents in order to reconfigure patriotism. As Hugh Cunningham has shown, eighteenth century radical patriotism which was used to legitimate opposition to the state invoked a powerful secular version of the notion that the 'English were an Elect Nation, that "God is English."' ³²² As part of this, 'England was seen to be the birthplace of liberty,' ³²³ and the patriotism mobilised by radicals therefore 'derived from a sense that Englishmen had rights, rooted both in nature and in history, which were being violated.' ³²⁴ The radical patriotism identified by Cunningham is clearly evoked in Scurr's text, demonstrating how objectors and their supporters attempted to redefine patriotism in a manner that excluded explicit references to the war effort and instead looked to a broader historical context of English rights and liberties. Moreover, in linking democracy, liberty and conscience, the article invoked a

³²¹ John Scurr, 'The Defeat of Democracy', *Herald*, 15th April 1916, p. 4.

³²² Hugh Cunningham, 'The language of patriotism, 1750-1914', *History Workshop*, 12 (Autumn, 1981), p. 10.

³²³ *Ibid*, p. 10.

³²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 13.

language of constitutionality which ‘shaded into a language of patriotism’,³²⁵ whilst also demonstrating objectors’ right to disobey the state order of compulsion. Within this context, constitutionalism was invoked specifically with regard to the political rights given to citizens of a democracy. As Eileen Yeo has noted, ‘constitutionalism not only conferred political rights and powers but also a right to rebellion.’³²⁶ Consequently, linking liberty with national identity and conscientious objectors meant that anti-war voices could broaden the boundaries of patriotism. Significantly, this was a patriotism that was explicitly linked to conscientious objectors and was therefore a distinctly male conceptualisation of this important wartime ideal.

This depiction of objectors was reinforced by the explicit identification of COs as part of a longer lineage of martyrs who had fought and died for the freedoms and liberties of British people. The positioning of objectors in this way enabled the anti-war press to demonstrate that the stance taken by these men was not an aberration but was in fact an established facet of national heritage. As Cunningham argues, for particular radicals ‘to invoke the “martyred patriots” of the past was both to legitimate and to reinforce the sense of the rightness of those activities.’³²⁷ For example, it was asserted in a *Herald* article that, although conscientious objectors ‘may appear vexatious and unreasonable, we should all realise that they are following in the footsteps of all those men and women who have made freedom possible.’³²⁸ Another *Herald* article similarly contended that objectors were the descendants of all those ‘who fought and died for the cause of liberty and freedom of conscience’ and that, as ‘a nation we dare not allow it to go forth that Britain, champion of freedom, in the hour of trial and difficulty

³²⁵ Eileen Janes Yeo ‘Introduction: some paradoxes of empowerment’ in *Radical Femininity*, p. 9.

³²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 9.

³²⁷ H. Cunningham, ‘The Language of Patriotism’, p. 13.

³²⁸ ‘The Conscientious Objector’, *Herald*, 7th October 1916, p. 8.

went back on her past and martyred men for conscience' sake.'³²⁹

Foregrounding the link between freedom, liberty and national identity, this article used a particular conception of British identity and heritage to position objectors as a specifically British phenomenon. In doing so, it challenged the pro-war narratives of nationalism and patriotism that identified war resisters as unpatriotic and anti-national that were prominent from the beginning of the conflict.

Along with depictions of objectors as part of an English tradition, liberal political ideology also played a significant role in opposition to conscription, and was most apparent in the articles and letters in the *Manchester Guardian*. Liberal anti-war groups of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as the 'Friends of Peace', had based their opposition to war on the individual's free inquiry into religious faith, the promotion of political power for the 'general good', and the idea of social progress.³³⁰ Similarly, the connection between nonconformists and the Liberal Party was also a key factor in explaining the importance of liberty to representations of conscientious objectors. As Michael Freeden's study of liberal political thought has demonstrated, anti-conscription liberals like Leonard Hobhouse, who frequently wrote for the *Guardian*, supported conscientious objectors as the 'test case' for the protection of fundamental liberties.³³¹ They argued that compulsion struck at the 'authority of conscience and the moral autonomy of the individual' that formed 'the kernel of the *modern* principle of liberty.'³³² Conscientious objection was thus an important facet of liberal political ideology and its centrality was reflected in the wartime press where

³²⁹ 'The Price of Conscience: 34 COs Sentenced to Death', *Herald*, 1st July 1916, p. 1.

³³⁰ J. E. Cookson, *The Friends of Peace: Anti-War Liberalism in England, 1793-1815* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 2.

³³¹ Michael Freeden, *Liberalism Divided: A Study in British Political Thought, 1914-1939* (Oxford, 1986), p. 22.

³³² *Ibid*, p. 23.

the relationship between conscientious objection and the protection of liberty became a significant matter of discussion.

Like religious narratives, one of the prominent ways in which the connections between liberty and conscientious objection were discussed was in relation to the government's treatment of conscientious objectors as this was seen to clearly illustrate the state's abandonment of the principle of liberty. The main points of contention in discussions of liberty and this facet of conscientious objectors' experience is illustrated by a correspondence exchange in the *Manchester Guardian* between a J. Cauthery and John Graham, the Quaker chaplain who worked particularly in the Manchester area and was a regular correspondent to the newspaper. The exchange begins with Graham outlining the fate of a number of objectors who were being kept under poor conditions in Felixstowe. He wrote:

How can this come about in England after two centuries of religious freedom and eager humanity? ... the inherent vice is in conscription itself. The evil fruit comes from an evil tree ... the people can think of only one thing at a time, victory in the war, and so are allowing their elementary liberties to be lost in their preoccupation and their fear.³³³

In his response to Graham, Cauthery contended that the fight for liberty did not rest with the conscientious objectors but was instead located on the battlefields. He directly compared the experience of soldiers and COs, stating that:

tens of thousands [of soldiers] ... have given their lives to liberty's cause. In the face of all this Principal Graham ... invites

³³³ J. W. Graham, 'Correspondence: The Fruits of Compulsion', *Manchester Guardian*, 5th May 1916, p.10.

your readers to shed their tears on behalf of a few conscientious objectors to war who have got dark cells, bread and water ...³³⁴

Graham then reinforced the connection between liberty and conscientious objection in a reply to Cauthery which asserted that:

It is our country that is going wrong, and it is for her sake mainly, not for that of individuals, that we must maintain our elementary liberties. In this case an Act of Parliament relieving conscience is being overridden.³³⁵

Establishing a contrast between an English tradition of liberty and the poor treatment of conscientious objectors, Graham's letter suggested that the treatment of COs was morally detrimental to the country. He therefore implied that the morality of the nation rested upon the protection of individual liberties. As such, objectors were presented as representatives of a particularly English conception of liberty and freedom. Graham reinforced this contention by arguing that by defending individual liberties at home, through the upholding of the conscience clause in the Military Service Acts, the very existence of COs was of benefit to England because they were symbolic of its values.

In contrast, Cauthery's direct association of liberty with male combatants not only sharply disconnected liberty from the home front but also implicitly excluded COs from this understanding of national liberty. Indeed, anti-CO narratives which invoked ideas of liberty identified objectors' insistence on their individual liberty as having a pernicious effect on the larger and more

³³⁴ J. Cauthery, 'Correspondence: The Fruits of Compulsion', *Manchester Guardian*, 6th May 1916, p. 5.

³³⁵ John W. Graham, 'Correspondence: The Fruits of Compulsion', *Manchester Guardian*, 8th May 1916, p. 6.

important war for liberty which Britain was fighting. Letters to the *Daily Express* talk about the 'shameful anti-British campaign' of anti-war campaigners,³³⁶ or that those who opposed the war were 'resuming their pro-German campaign ... of a nauseating anti-British character.'³³⁷ The charge of pro-Germanism was a continuation of pre-conscription pro-war rhetoric towards the anti-war movement, and the way in which the anti-war press used conscientious objection to establish a link between war resistance and national identity illustrates how the introduction of conscription allowed anti-war voices to assert and justify their place within the national body in a more concrete way.

The exchange between Graham and Cauthery is therefore significant in that both men construct national identity with specific reference to conscientious objectors. Whilst Cauthery's conception of national liberty was based on the successful conduct of war and national collective action even at the temporary expense of the individual, Graham positioned COs and the protection of individual liberties as central to the protection of national values. The connections that were made between liberty and national identity by both Cauthery and Graham thus illustrate how the understanding of liberty had a significant impact upon how the position of COs was understood.

The issues of liberty and freedom were not however confined to the black and white boundaries of strongly pro-war or anti-war arguments, but were also invoked in more nuanced arguments about collective and individual liberties and their link to conscientious objection and war. Writing to the *Manchester Guardian*, the political theorist Leonard Hobhouse, the brother

³³⁶ 'Police, Pasty Faces and Patriots', *Daily Express*, 18th April 1916, p. 5

³³⁷ 'Pasty Face Activity: Notorious Crank to Speak on "The King's Uniform"', *Daily Express*, 10th May 1916, p. 5.

of anti-war campaigner Emily Hobhouse and second cousin of CO Stephen Hobhouse, outlined a defence of the rights of objectors based on the principle of liberty, whilst making it clear that he did not agree with their stance:

It is time for some of those who profoundly disagree with them [COs] to plead their cause ... In England, in particular, liberty of conscience has fought a long and uphill fight, and to have secured it is one of our greatest national achievements. To lose this liberty, then, in our view, is to suffer a moral defeat. It is to throw away one of the objects for which we are fighting ... It may be said that they [COs] are wrong. Personally I am convinced that they are. But what are the rights of conscience worth if they hold only while we all agree?³³⁸

By supporting both the right to freedom of conscience and the war, Hobhouse argued that both of these aspects were important expressions of liberty within British society. By constructing his argument through the incorporation of elements of both Graham and Cauthery's assertions on liberty, Hobhouse outlined a defence of conscientious objection that was based upon a view of liberty that was reliant on the protection of both national and individual liberty. Indeed, his argument presented both these manifestations of liberty as inherently connected and dependent on one another. Moreover, Hobhouse argued that both the existence and acceptance of conscientious objection and the waging of war were central to the construction of English identity and thus offered a more inclusive vision of the place of liberty and national identity than either Graham or Cauthery. The arguments presented by Graham, Cauthery and Hobhouse, although different, all demonstrate how the discourse of liberty was significant because it spoke to how society viewed itself. The central position of

³³⁸ L.T. Hobhouse, 'Correspondence: The Mishandling of Conscience Claims', *Manchester Guardian*, 18th May 1916, p. 10.

conscientious objectors in the formation of these arguments thus highlights how the association between liberty and freedom of conscience came to be implicated in debates about national identity during wartime.

The links between conscientious objection, liberty, and British identity were also drawn out in correspondence and articles in the anti-war press that positioned objectors as leaders of a great movement for liberty. As Bibbings argues 'for some, who objected compulsion itself, conscientious objectors were defending a very English tradition by refusing to be enlisted.'³³⁹ This idea is clearly illustrated in a 'tribute to the young men' by a correspondent to the *Labour Leader*:

... right is stronger than brute might, and the men who are going through with this job will win ... God dwells in these champions of a country's freedom, these custodians of a nation's soul ... generations to come will have cause to bless you for bravely defending the shrine of freedom when our rulers would destroy her ... I congratulate you, I lift my hat to you.³⁴⁰

By suggesting that objectors were actively defending the soul of the country in their act of resistance, this letter evoked gendered conceptions of male experience. As Renate Bridenthal et. al. suggest, men are labelled as active, intellectual and 'naturally' ambitious.³⁴¹ By representing COs as the 'champions' of a nation's freedom, this letter placed objectors in the ambitious position of protectors of the nation and in doing so suggested that their stance represented an active defence of the values central to English national identity. Furthermore, this characterisation of COs also has significance with regards to the gendered language of war. It not only

³³⁹ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 195.

³⁴⁰ 'Views of our Readers: a Tribute to the Young Men', *Labour Leader*, 23rd March 1916, p. 4.

³⁴¹ R. Bridenthal, C. Koonz and S. Stuard, 'Introduction' in *Becoming Visible*, p. 2.

mirrored the image of the soldier as the male protector of the nation but, in doing so, it attempted to shift the feminised associations of the objector. As Gullace has noted, 'within the wartime vocabulary of gender definitions, men were those who protected; women were those who required protection. Unenlisted men, existing among those who were being protected, were ineluctably feminised by virtue of their place behind the lines.'³⁴² Representing objectors as champions of the nation through their expression of individual liberty therefore allowed objectors' supporters to position them as protectors of the nation in a way that echoed the relationship between soldiers and the nation.

The conflation of liberty with the actions of either COs or soldiers not only spoke to concepts of national identity but were also implicitly gendered in the way that they were exclusively associated with male activity. Although liberty was conceptualised by both pro-war and anti-war voices in distinct ways, they crucially rested upon two distinct groups of men, although as will be discussed later, objectors' gender was much more problematic than that of soldiers. Nonetheless the construction of conscientious objection and its link to liberty as masculine is illustrated in a *Herald* article which compared the violation of conscience to the violation of women's bodies: 'Our deepest objection ... is based on the dignity of the human soul and the sacred privilege of individual liberty. To *force* one man to kill, blind, mutilate or disembowel another is an outrage strictly comparable, as we have always maintained, to the violation of a woman.'³⁴³ The comparison between freedom of conscience, which is implicitly male, and women's bodies is particularly insightful in its suggestion that whilst men's dignity was articulated through their intellectual autonomy, women's dignity was located in their bodies. In outlining this comparison, the *Herald* article is evocative of Tosh's observation that 'women were "carriers" of gender

³⁴² N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", p. 43.

³⁴³ 'Conscription Outrage', *Herald*, 1st January 1916, p. 9.

because their reproductive role was held to define their place in society and their character', whilst, 'masculinity remained largely out of sight since men as a sex were not confined in this or any other way.'³⁴⁴ When considering the conceptualisation of conscience as male in this text, the re-gendering of war resistance that the introduction of conscription prompted comes into focus. Whilst the pre-conscription anti-war press gendered resistance primarily with regards to motherhood, the focus on conscience which the conscription acts established was used as a way of reconceptualising peace activism in a manner that was removed from overt conceptions of gender and, crucially, from femininity.

The gendering of resistance as a movement for liberty that was framed around COs was also central to the way that conscientious objectors presented their stance. For example, in a speech made to the No-Conscription Fellowship convention in April 1916, the secretary Clifford Allen stated that 'this movement is a young men's movement, you cannot dissociate it from the great struggle for liberty.'³⁴⁵ The explicit identification of the movement of conscientious objectors as a 'young men's movement', and the assertion that this could not be thought of as distinct from previous movements, highlights how Allen constructs conscientious objection as a male identity rooted within a specific heritage. In highlighting their connection to liberty and freedom, COs could separate themselves from rhetoric which was entirely centred on the war, and was problematic for them, and could generate support based not on their anti-war stance but rather through their status as a symbol of British liberty. The focus on objectors' motivations therefore became a significant means through which anti-war voices began to re-gender war resistance from feminine to masculine following the introduction of conscription.

³⁴⁴ John Tosh, 'What should historians do with masculinity? Reflections on nineteenth-century Britain', *History Workshop*, 38 (1994), 179-202 (p. 180).

³⁴⁵ 'Anti-Militarists in Council: National Convention of the No-Conscription Fellowship', *Labour Leader*, Supplement to the *Labour Leader*, 13th April 1916, p. 2.

The Act of Objecting

Sacrifice and Duty

Whilst resistance was gendered in often subtle ways in the narratives of religion and liberty, conscientious objectors' masculinity was more explicitly formulated with reference to the ideals of martial masculinity, such as sacrifice, duty, and courage. Sacrifice formed a key component of the construction of wartime masculinity and was an integral aspect of masculine national duty. Indeed, 'sacrifice became the most widely used trope to express the cost of obeying the norm of militarised masculinity on the battlefield.'³⁴⁶ Those men who refused to sacrifice on the battlefield because of a conscientious objection to war, consequently rendered their masculinity vulnerable to challenges and derision.

Representations of volunteers and soldiering were central to the promotion of enlistment as the embodiment of the ultimate sacrifice and played a significant role in creating both a specific depiction of the soldier and a distinctly negative image of men who did not enlist. As Gullace notes, 'not only did recruiting propaganda celebrate the common soldier as a national saviour ... it castigated those men who chose not to volunteer, claiming that their reluctance to serve was a national disgrace.'³⁴⁷ The close association between men's sacrifice and the nation also fed into a reconceptualisation of citizenship which became centered on the soldier's sacrifice. Heather Jones has pointed out that the citizen-soldier 'became a wartime citizen *primus inter pares*' because 'by offering his life as a blood sacrifice', he was 'not

³⁴⁶ J. Horne, 'Masculinity in Politics and War' in *Masculinities in Politics and War*, p. 32.

³⁴⁷ N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", p. 8.

merely the defender but also the redeemer of his nation.³⁴⁸ The centrality of the soldier's sacrifice to the construction of hegemonic wartime masculinity and conceptions of citizenship had a significant influence on how male war resisters were considered. Indeed, in a discursive environment in which sacrifice and duty were unmistakably portrayed as being connected to active war service, men who made a public refusal to take part in the conflict were castigated in terms that made specific reference to these ideals.

The *Daily Express* and *Daily Mail's* representations of sacrifice, duty, and the conscientious objector clearly demonstrate how these ideals were linked to both masculinity and citizenship. A poem which appeared in the *Express* shortly after the beginning of 1916 reveals how the discourse of sacrifice was used to reinforce the heroism of the soldier as a means of undermining the objector's masculinity:

Really I cannot kill the so-called Hun:
My conscience bids me conflict rude to shun.
What though he bayonets children, poison wells,
And tramples peaceful cities into hells?-
He is my brother ...

When Fritz is beaten, I shall take my share
Of all the fruits of victory (fair is fair)-
Freedom and thriving peace, terribly bought
With countless lives of those who faced and fought
My "frightful" brother.

Heroic fighters! Forward, then, to save

³⁴⁸ Heather Jones, 'The Great War: How 1914-18 Changed the Relationship between War and Civilians', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 159, No. 4 (2014), 84-91 (p. 89).

Britain- and me. I kneel to all the brave
(Some miles behind them). Should the Hun land here
I confidently trust the volunteer
Who's got no conscience.³⁴⁹

In this poem, the pro-German narrative used to castigate war resisters in 1914 and 1915 was focused specifically on the conscientious objector and his masculinity. The use of the language of heroism, bravery, and protection to describe the volunteer soldier and construct his exemplary masculinity serves to illuminate the inferiority of the CO's masculinity because of the portrayal of him as selfishly reliant and dependent on the soldier's courageous act. Furthermore, the association that is formed between the anti-national, pro-German attitude of the objector and his willingness to selfishly reap the rewards of British soldiers' sacrifice portrays the CO as a hypocritical, insincere, and amoral masculine figure. As Bibbings has argued, objectors' refusal to fight was often taken 'as evidence of evil motives or laziness, rather than of deeply held conviction.'³⁵⁰ Parallels can therefore be drawn with the manner in which the female war resisters at The Hague had their peace activism depoliticised by the pro-war press, although the way gender is invoked with regards to women and men is slightly different. As the inferior gendered status of femininity was used to depoliticise anti-war women, this poem explicitly draws upon the objectors' failure to obey the wartime masculine ideals of sacrifice and duty to construct the male resisters' inferior masculinity. Whilst gender was used to undermine The Hague women's anti-war stance, the *Express* poem invoked the stance of the objector to undermine his gender. In both instances, it is clear that particular gendered constructions and hierarchies were used to link peace activism to

³⁴⁹ E. C., 'A Conscientious Shirker', *Daily Express*, 12th January 1916, p. 4.

³⁵⁰ Lois Bibbings, 'Images of Manliness: The Portrayal of Soldiers and Conscientious Objectors in the Great War', *Social & Legal Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2003), 335-358 (p. 344).

inferior constructions of gender and thereby cast war resistance as a subversive gendered act.

Portraying objectors in this way on the one hand undermined both the masculinity of the objector and the moral association between conscience, liberty and religion, and on the other hand emphasised the morality of the soldier's sacrifice for the nation. This had direct implications for how both men were understood with relation to citizenship. The repositioning of soldiers as 'redeemers of the nation'³⁵¹ demonstrates how the sacrifice of soldiers was perceived as a moral act which elevated them as 'heroic fighters' within the national body. The clear binary that was established in the *Express* poem between the heroic and moral soldier and the selfish and unprincipled objector therefore depicted the stance of conscientious objectors as both amoral and anti-national and consequently positioned these male resisters as unworthy citizens. In this way, the discourse of sacrifice underpinned the anti-national narrative as a way of undermining the traditional link between manhood and citizenship.³⁵²

The significance of sacrifice to the formulation of citizenship is similarly illustrated by J. Cauthery's correspondence to the *Manchester Guardian*:

Coming down Market Street on Wednesday I met three soldier-convalescents. One of the three was going on two crutches and was also being helped along by his two companions. I saw the reason. The soldier's feet were gone. They were his sacrifice for the cause he believed to be right. And the footless soldier is, as we know, but one of many thousands who have made similar or bigger sacrifices. But they do not fill the newspapers with complaints ... I have no sympathy to waste upon those who make such relatively trifling

³⁵¹ H. Jones, 'The Great War', p. 89.

³⁵² N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", p. 9.

sacrifices for the cause they believe in ... Respect and sympathy must be in proportion to sacrifice and unless those who believe in the doctrine of non-resistance to evil ... are prepared to go down, like the soldiers, to mutilation and death for their cause, and, like the soldier, without complaint, they cannot be found worthy.³⁵³

This text sheds further light on how sacrifice was constituted with relation to masculinity and citizenship by highlighting the close connection between sacrifice, courage, and men's bodies. It reveals that the problematic masculine identity of the objector was due, in part, to the fact that his stance was not physically linked to his body in the overt way that soldiering was. Although objectors attempted to overcome this by gendering their resistance with reference to their individual liberty of conscience, discussed earlier, the centrality of bodily sacrifice to the construction of wartime masculinity could not be effectively circumvented in this way. Sacrifice brought into sharp focus just how integral the body was to the gendered depiction of both soldiers and objectors. Indeed, the male body was also significant because it was intimately tied into conceptions of citizenship and men's place within the body-politic. The centrality of physical sacrifice to the conceptualisation of the soldier as a worthy masculine figure and citizen, is clearly outlined through the emphasis on the footless soldier and on the mutilation and deaths of serving men. The integral role that sacrifice played in the construction of masculinity and men's citizenship is underscored by Cauthery's suggestion that if objectors supported their resistance with physical sacrifice then they would too be 'worthy.' As Joanna Bourke has argued, 'at the centre of ideologies of masculinity was an acknowledgement that the male body could be rendered unsightly ... Men who refused to, or were incapable of fighting were not deemed to be worthy of active membership in the wider body-politic.'³⁵⁴

³⁵³ F. Cauthery, 'The Fruits of Compulsion.'

³⁵⁴ Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1999), p. 77.

The significance of corporeal sacrifice to men's wartime status also reveals the different roles that men and women's bodies played in the representation of resistance. The body played an important role in the depiction of both men and women who opposed the war; yet whilst the invocation of women's bodies was primarily as a symbol of reproduction and nurturing, the destruction and sacrifice of men's bodies underscored the gendering of male resisters. It was this notion of bodily sacrifice that created a particular challenge to the conceptualisation of objectors' masculinity. Pro-war and anti-war women, who as non-combatants were removed from the battlefields, invoked their status as mother to underpin their respective arguments with authority in a manner that did not undermine or challenge their gender in a negative way and was instead represented as a source of strength. In contrast, anti-war men who became non-combatants because of their stance deliberately isolated their bodies from the site of mutilation and death. In doing so, these men also removed themselves from a central formulation of masculinity and their status as men was consequently weakened. Because a man's wartime experience was deemed as masculine through physical sacrifice, the refusal of military service and the subsequent removal of the male body from the site of potential mutilation or death complicated the construction of male resisters' masculinity during the war.

Cauthery's assertion that objectors should be 'prepared to go down, like the soldiers, to mutilation and death ... without complaint' is also evocative of another key marker of masculinity: self-control. As Meyer has indicated, emotional self-control was important to masculine ideals.³⁵⁵ Cauthery's lamentation that objectors had filled the newspapers with their grievances demonstrates how the perceived lack of emotional self-restraint of objectors

³⁵⁵ Jessica Meyer, "'Gladder to be going out than afraid": Shellshock and Heroic Masculinity in Britain, 1914-1919' in Jenny Macleod and Pierre Purseigle (eds), *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 195-210 (p. 196).

was also seen as part of their failure to conform to the normative conception of masculinity. Moreover, as Stefan Collini has noted, the masculine quality of self-restraint was dependent on a 'prior notion of duty,' a duty which could be owed above all to the state.³⁵⁶ The conflation of sacrifice and duty was evident in a *Daily Mail* article from March 1916, which described the conscientious objector as 'all for his own comfort and whole skin. He will accept the sacrifice of others and resolutely decline to lift a hand in return ... [he has] made up his mind to wriggle out of the obligation, which every man should be proud to fulfil ...'³⁵⁷ The way in which sacrifice is identified as a male duty in this article highlights how objectors' failure to offer their bodies for the nation was inherently intertwined with their masculinity. Consequently, 'men who failed to come forward, including COs, were generally viewed as un-masculine ... and they were seen as having failed to demonstrate the sense of duty and patriotism expected of their gender.'³⁵⁸ Sacrifice was therefore a duty that men were obligated to undertake in order to maintain their superior status within both the contemporary gender structure and the body-politic.

The precarious position of male resisters within the body-politic that resulted from their perceived lack of self-restraint and sacrifice also manifested itself in the identification of COs as a contagious body of men. Ultimately underpinning this type of representation were anxieties about the effect of the objectors' stance on the national body which was gendered masculine, both through its privileging of men and the role that men's bodies played in its protection. Representations that invoked narratives of contagion and illness therefore demonstrate how discourses of masculinity,

³⁵⁶ S. Collini quoted in J. Meyer, "'Gladder to be going out'", p. 197.

³⁵⁷ An Englishman, 'The Letters of an Englishman: Shirkers and Hypocrites', *Daily Mail*, 4th March 1916, p. 4.

³⁵⁸ Lois Bibbings, 'Men Refusing to be Violent: Manliness and Military Conscientious Objection, 1914 to the Present Day' in Ana Carden-Coyne (ed.), *Gender and Conflict since 1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 41-54 (p. 44).

the body, and degeneration, discussed in detail in the previous chapter, continued to inform depictions of objectors in particular. The connected themes of contagion and segregation underscored depictions of war resistance as an illness. As Gerard DeGroot notes, the cataclysm of war meant that the body-politic was placed under strain to become 'conventional, loyal and harmonious.'³⁵⁹ The presence of men who publicly went against the majority of the population thus prompted concerns that objectors' unwillingness to sacrifice would spread and lead to Britain's defeat. The focus on men's bodies more broadly, and the COs' lack of bodily sacrifice in particular, fed into the representation of objectors as physically harmful and pernicious. This type of depiction highlighted the fear that conscientious objectors and their inferior masculinity would spread, therefore demonstrating the integral role that the wartime gender structure played in the conduct of war. In a society where to be masculine was to fight, men who directly challenged this association threatened the construction of masculinity which ensured that Britain's men would go to war.

As Bibbings has pointed out 'a pervasive thread in the way in which COs were dealt with was the fear that if the anti-war movement, along with objectors and their supporters, were not treated and managed very carefully its ideas might flourish.'³⁶⁰ This fear was then viewed as a justification for the harsh treatment of objectors as a means of preventing the 'conscience clause' from becoming a 'shirkers' charter.'³⁶¹ Articles and correspondence in the press that called for the overt marking out of COs from the rest of society looked not only to isolate a particular stance but also a particular type of man. Both the *Express* and *Mail* took the containment of conscientious objectors' anti-war ideas so seriously that they called for their segregation from the rest of society. The *Express*, for instance, suggested that objectors'

³⁵⁹ Gerard J. Degroot, *Blighty*, p. 140.

³⁶⁰ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 142.

³⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 143.

physical presence away from the battlefield should be visibly marked out from the rest of the populace with a crownless armlet that should be worn by the “CO”ward who is “BACK”ward in coming “FOR”ward.³⁶² The idea of a segregating armlet for COs was also put forward in a letter written to the *Express*, which proposed that objectors should be ‘provided with an armlet, a white armlet, with the initials C.O., the proud badge of the most important Order of the Cranks’³⁶³ and the *Daily Mail’s* columnist the ‘Englishman’ who asserted that objectors should wear ‘a white armlet of shame.’³⁶⁴ The separation of objectors from the national body is further reinforced in a letter sent to the *Express* which asserted that objectors should be removed from British society altogether:

How are the ‘slimy things’, the conscienceless ‘conscientious objectors’ to be recognised now and after the war? ... Are they to be allowed to be absorbed again into the body politic, to poison it and batten on it? Or are they, for our future’s sake, to be distinguished so that their doctrines may not insidiously permeate our young men?

Will somebody not form a league for their segregation, filing their names and addresses and, where possible, photographs? Not to their personal hurt, but as a protection to the community.³⁶⁵

These proposals highlight how objectors’ failure to adhere to wartime martial masculinity rendered their position outside the national body so destructive to both the war effort and the nation more broadly that it

³⁶² ‘For Conscientious Objectors’, *Daily Express*, 10th January 1916, p. 5.

³⁶³ G. Makgill, ‘Crusade of the Cranks’, p. 4.

³⁶⁴ An Englishman, ‘Shirkers and Hypocrites’, p. 4. The use of khaki armbands had also been advocated by a campaign which sought to prompt the government into offering an outward sign to those who had been denied the right to serve on medical grounds from those who had not volunteered at all, like those who would become COs. As Gullace has argued, these armbands were ‘meant to protect the medically unfit from civilian harassment’ but ‘their more ominous purpose was to place ever more pressure on those who wilfully refused to go.’ See N. Gullace, “*The Blood of our Sons*”, pp. 104-105.

³⁶⁵ B. L. ‘Segregate Them! Protection from the Freaks of Conscience’, *Daily Express*, 4th March 1916, p. 3.

necessitated their physical marking out from the rest of the population. Evoking the concerns about degeneration, specifically with regards to masculinity, that were discussed in the previous chapter, the *Express* letter in particular sheds light on how wartime masculinity was intimately intertwined with conceptions of nationhood. Indeed, objectors' open rejection of wartime masculinity was identified as particularly harmful to the body-politic because of its potentially pernicious effect on the reproduction of men and manhood for future generations through the contagion of younger men.

The anti-war press attempted to counter these negative representations of objectors' (lack of) sacrifice in a number of ways. To be sure, anti-war voices did, on occasion, acknowledge that objectors could ultimately not sacrifice to the same extent that soldiers did, yet supporters of COs did not avoid representing male resistance with specific reference to sacrifice. In fact, it was central to the way in which objection was considered and was a key factor in the re-shaping of the hierarchy of the anti-war movement during 1916. The ways in which anti-war voices reinforced sacrifice as a marker of masculinity are particularly significant because, whilst it was clear that male sacrifice was integral to the continued waging of war, anti-war representations of COs did not overtly challenge the central role of sacrifice in the construction of masculinity. Indeed, objectors and their sympathisers frequently connected their sacrifice to that of the soldier and in doing so attempted to position COs within the wartime hierarchy that was predicated upon this ideal. Consequently, the way that the sacrifice of male resisters was emphasised as a response to suggestions that objectors were both un-masculine and selfish highlights the gendered limitations that were placed on the configuration of objectors' masculinity by the gendered construction of the soldier.

The imprisonment and often harsh conditions that objectors faced played the most consistent role in substantiating sacrificial narratives of resistance. As Caedel has noted, objectors' 'suffering gave unprecedented publicity to the pacifist cause.'³⁶⁶ A letter from John Clifford to the *Manchester Guardian* illustrates the way that the sacrifice and suffering of objectors were invoked as a means of highlighting the enthusiasm and sincerity that underpinned COs' war resistance:

Now these men are prepared to suffer. They expect it. They do not whine ... They have 'character.' They know they are in daily peril of their lives, but they do not fear death. They elect to be shot, because they cannot and dare not kill others. They are strong and ready to pay the price of their loyalty to God and man.³⁶⁷

Clifford shows how objectors had taken their position in the knowledge that they would suffer and possibly die, and thereby explicitly framed the act of objecting around the discourse of sacrifice. The emphasis on the 'character' of objectors is significant in evoking the basic core qualities of self-restraint, perseverance, and courage in the face of adversity that Stefan Collini has shown to be central to this concept.³⁶⁸ 'Character' was also underpinned by notions of morality and was used to refer to the possession of 'certain highly-valued moral qualities.'³⁶⁹ The intertwining of objectors' willingness to sacrifice with the qualities associated with 'character' therefore not only attempted to refute the claim that objectors were unwilling to sacrifice but also, importantly, endeavoured to present the objector as a legitimate and moral masculine figure.

³⁶⁶ Martin Caedel, 'The Quaker Peace Testimony and its Contribution to the British Peace Movement: An Overview', *Quaker Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2002), 9-29 (p. 22).

³⁶⁷ John Clifford, 'Correspondence: The Fruits of Compulsion', *Manchester Guardian*, 15th May 1916, p. 10.

³⁶⁸ Stefan Collini, 'The Idea of "Character" in Victorian Political Thought', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 35 (1985), 29-50 (p. 36)

³⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 33.

The sacrifice of objectors was frequently constructed in a manner which suggests that they were directly responding to the challenges made against their masculinity by pro-war voices. For example, the issue of self-restraint and complaint outlined by J. Cauthery in his correspondence to the *Guardian*, is invoked in a special article written by CO Clifford Allen for the *Leader* on the 'history of the no-conscription fellowship.' In it, Allen noted that, 'it is to the men who have submitted to persecution without complaint to whom the whole pacifist movement must turn as the hope of all future agitation against war and against militarism.'³⁷⁰ It is significant that objectors' leadership within the movement is underscored and legitimated by Allen through the identification of two central aspects of masculinity: sacrifice and self-restraint. As Meyer has shown, for some servicemen physical adaptation to harsh conditions was a symbol of appropriate martial masculinity.³⁷¹ This aspect of wartime masculinity is clearly echoed in Allen's emphasis on objectors' submission to persecution and highlights how objectors configured their masculinity with reference to sacrifice in a way that had striking parallels to the construction of soldiers' masculine identity. This similarity is further enforced by Allen's implicit suggestion that objectors were the leaders of the anti-war movement because of their sacrifice, an assertion which had significant implications for the representation of anti-war women, which will be discussed later. As Gregory has argued, an economy of sacrifice operated during the war in which the soldier's sacrifice became the 'determinant touchstone of all other sacrifices.'³⁷² By representing the CO as superior within the peace movement specifically because of their sacrifice, Allen's text mirrors the wartime economy of sacrifice for the anti-war movement and consequently highlights the

³⁷⁰ Clifford Allen, 'The Conscientious Objectors' Struggle. A History of the No-Conscription Fellowship', *Labour Leader*, 20th July 1916, p. 7.

³⁷¹ J. Meyer, *Men of War*, p. 64.

³⁷² A. Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 294.

significant role that sacrifice, and its centrality to masculinity, played in reconfiguring the hierarchy of war resistance in 1916.

Objectors not only suggested that their sacrifice impacted upon the hierarchy within the anti-war movement, but also presented their resistance as disrupting the wartime economy of sacrifice. Sacrificing for their stance was not only presented as something that COs were willing to do but was also portrayed as a privilege endowed specifically upon the objector, echoing the claim discussed earlier that sacrificing was an obligation every man should be proud to fulfil. In a letter to the *Herald*, for example, an objector named E. A. Oliver wrote that, as a CO, he 'counts it as a privilege to suffer for his convictions if by so doing he can rid the world of what the soldiers themselves describe as hell.'³⁷³ The suggestion that objectors' sacrifice would prevent the suffering of soldiers disrupts the soldiers' superior position with the economy of sacrifice in favour of the objectors' sacrifice. This demonstrates how objectors constructed their physical suffering in direct relation to the soldier's sacrifice and positioned themselves in the hierarchy within wartime society that was predicated on sacrifice. The identification of suffering as a privilege reveals how the connection between sacrifice and masculinity worked to position male resisters as a superior group both within the anti-war movement specifically and in wartime society more broadly.

This suggestion is also echoed in a supplement to the *Labour Leader* which reported on the national convention of the NCF. This report noted that the spirit which animated objectors 'will one day conquer the world' and the 'suffering they may have to undergo will hasten that day.'³⁷⁴ The way that this sacrifice was framed around COs in terms of privilege, purpose, and

³⁷³ 'What Our Readers Are Thinking: Conscience and Conflict', *Herald*, 27th May 1916, p. 10.

³⁷⁴ Supplement: 'Anti-Militarists in Council. National Convention of the No-Conscription Fellowship', *Labour Leader*, 13th April 1916, p. 2.

impact, meant that objectors were represented at the top of the hierarchy of resistance precisely because their position enabled them to make some sort of physical sacrifice, just as the soldier did. The significance of the body and its suffering to masculinity is therefore clearly evoked in the way that objectors' gender and position within the anti-war movement is constructed. This in turn demonstrates how the interplay of masculinity and sacrifice was as relevant for how the anti-war movement in 1916 conceptualised male war resistance as it was for the interpretation of male combat.

In September 1916, the willingness to die for the stance of the CO became a concrete reality with the death of the objector Walter Roberts, which 'gave the CO movement its first authentic martyr',³⁷⁵ and reinforced the connection between male resistance and sacrifice. The anti-war press acted accordingly, framing the death of Roberts as evidence that COs had proven their willingness to act on their scruples, and die for their cause. The *Labour Leader* ran an article stating, 'On Friday the first conscientious objector to meet his death in the struggle against Militarism passed away at Dyce ... as surely as any soldier ever gave his life for the honour of his country, Walter Roberts has given his life for the peace of the world.'³⁷⁶ This sentiment was echoed by an article in the *Herald* which reported on the death of Roberts:

He is the first of the COs to go under, and has literally died for England as any other man in the war. We must all learn that the path of duty leads all of us in diverse ways along different roads to the same end and that is the service of God and humanity; and the C.O.s who give up freedom and even life itself, and the men who go out to the war in search of the Holy Grail, are all members

³⁷⁵ T. C. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*, p. 170.

³⁷⁶ 'The Death of Walter Roberts: Scandalous Conditions at Dyce', *Labour Leader*, 14th September 1916, p. 4.

of the one great army which will redeem the world by proving that it is service, not selfishness, which exalteth a nation.³⁷⁷

What is particularly significant in both these pieces is that they reinforce the connection between objectors, soldiers, and sacrifice with the assertion that the death of Roberts placed COs on a par with soldiers and must consequently be seen as having made an equal sacrifice for their country. In doing so, the texts construct the death of Roberts with specific reference to both duty and nationhood, thereby highlighting the objector's sacrifice as a means of reincorporating male resisters within the national body. In the *Herald* article in particular it is evident that Roberts' death was used to justify a broader argument that COs as a group were acting out of a sense of national duty. Furthermore, by connecting the sacrifices of objectors and soldiers, these articles tapped into the associations of bravery, heroism, and patriotism that were central to the representation of soldiers' sacrifices. As Ilana R. Bet-El argues, the image of Great War soldiers originated 'in accordance with a particular public construction of masculinity that was based upon a series of equations: a real man= patriot= a volunteer= a soldier.'³⁷⁸ Importantly, both these texts adhere to this conceptualisation of wartime hegemonic masculinity by framing the sacrifice of the soldier as an aspect of male experience which objectors attained through Roberts' death. In doing so, the way that the discourse of sacrifice was used as a means of establishing the CO as an acceptable masculine figure that mirrored the masculinity of the soldier is highlighted.

The way that objectors' gender was explicitly configured through sacrifice and the martial masculinity of the soldier demonstrates how the Great War

³⁷⁷ 'The Way of the World: Conscientious Objectors', *Herald*, 23rd September 1916, p. 1.

³⁷⁸ Ilana R. Bet-El, 'Men and Soldiers: British Conscripts, Concepts of Masculinity and the Great War' in Billie Melman (ed), *Borderlines: Genders and Identities in War and Peace, 1870-1930* (Routledge: New York, 1998), pp. 73-94 (p.74).

in many ways reinforced rather than disrupted the cultural construction of masculinity. Whilst Eric Leed's argument that men's experience of the First World War created identities that were distinct from those created in peace time may be true for those men disabled by the war, the way that objectors were represented points to a continued emphasis on heroic martial masculinity.³⁷⁹ Indeed, as Meyer has pointed out, the nineteenth-century figure of the imperial soldier hero and adventurer remained potent and iconic both during the war and after it,³⁸⁰ illustrating Dawson's assertion that the soldier hero is one of the most 'durable and powerful forms of idealised masculinity in the Western cultural tradition.'³⁸¹ That this masculine ideal was one that objectors clearly wished to emulate highlights how this pre-war gendered construction was bolstered not only by recruitment propaganda but also by male resisters' gendered self-representation with relation to the soldier.

The construction of objector masculinity with reference to sacrifice was, however, inevitably problematic. In so clearly adhering to a formulation of resistance that positioned physical sacrifice as central to male resisters' masculinity, the anti-war press exposed the underlying tensions of invoking sacrifice with direct comparison to servicemen. The isolated case of Roberts in 1916 stood in stark contrast to the thousands of young men who daily lost their lives on the battlefields. In this way, comparisons can be made with Laura Ugolini's analysis of another group of non-combatant men and the construction of their masculinity. Ugolini's work demonstrates how middle-class civilian males also attempted to counter their 'threatened relegation to

³⁷⁹ Eric Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 4. Deborah Cohen and Seth Koven explore the disruption of pre-war masculine identities for men disabled by the war. See Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany 1914-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Seth Koven, 'Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers and the Great War in Britain', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (1994), 1167-1202.

³⁸⁰ J. Meyer, *Men of War*, pp. 5-6.

³⁸¹ G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 1.

the subordinate status of non-military, potentially unmanly, “other.”³⁸² Her analysis highlights the challenges of comparing the suffering of non-combatant men and soldiers, and she argues that ‘in a context where sacrifice was the ultimate virtue, civilian suffering was hardly comparable to that of combatants.’³⁸³ Furthermore, Ugolini suggests that by comparing civilian and combatant suffering, middle-class civilian men exposed weaknesses in their claims to wartime manliness.³⁸⁴ Indeed, there was some acknowledgement of frustration in objectors’ inability to fully adhere to this construction of wartime male identity. An article in the *Herald* noted that:

the fact that the fighting soldier does suffer ... *that* is the dilemma for the conscientious objector ... none so far as we have been informed, have had inflicted upon them any physical misery comparable to that of the mutilated soldier. *That* is the tragedy for the objector- the knowledge that he is in a sense safe (though he has never asked for such safety), while his brothers who he cannot assist are making such unimaginable sacrifices.³⁸⁵

Despite the acknowledgement of this limitation, the anti-war press repeatedly framed the experience of objectors around the discourse of sacrifice. In doing so, they not only adhered to the formulation of wartime masculinity which held sacrifice as an integral ideal, but to some extent reinforced it. Like middle-class civilian men, objectors’ masculinity was exposed by the anti-war press’s explicit comparisons between objectors’ and soldiers’ sacrifice. Consequently, the relatively static position of sacrifice within the construction of wartime masculinity created significant limitations on the configuration of male war resistance as a masculine act and experience. Whilst the associations between conscience, liberty, and

³⁸² L. Ugolini, *Civvies*, p. 4.

³⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 307.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 307.

³⁸⁵ ‘The Cleft Stick’, *Herald*, 15th April 1916, p. 9.

national identity created the potential for objectors and their supporters to redefine patriotism so that it was compatible with war resistance, the inability to effectively challenge or adhere to the wartime masculine construction of sacrifice demonstrates how concrete this particular discourse was during the war.

Courage, Manhood and Masculinity

Unlike sacrifice, the discourse of courage and how it was mobilised to shape the masculinity of the CO was more fluid and could be formulated with regards to physical sacrifice or in terms of moral and principled bravery in going against the grain. However, it was in the consideration of this particular theme that configurations of masculinity were often most explicitly invoked by the press. As Graham Dawson argues, 'military virtues such as strength, courage and endurance have repeatedly been defined as the natural and inherent qualities of manhood', with the soldier taking position as the 'quintessential figure of masculinity.'³⁸⁶ The explicitly gendered formulation of the soldier had significant implications for the way that men who did not take part in combatant activity were considered. As masculine identity became a tool with which society induced men to fight,³⁸⁷ those men who made a public refusal to do so were seen as unmanly cowards and this view was expressed frequently by pro-war voices throughout 1916. The anti-war press also drew upon courage as a means of countering claims of cowardice and emphasised the moral courage required of men who went against mainstream opinion and expectation. Yet significantly, however courage was defined, its centrality to masculinity was both highlighted and reinforced through its repeated invocation in representations of objectors. Nonetheless, the ability to highlight moral courage and thereby sever the tie between physical sacrifice and courage

³⁸⁶ G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 1.

³⁸⁷ Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 252.

created a space in which anti-war voices could construct COs as a parallel masculine figure to the soldier.

Both the *Express* and *Mail* explicitly related the perceived cowardice of COs to their masculine identity. Whilst Harry Granger, a Military Service Tribunal member, wrote into the *Mail* describing conscientious objectors as ‘that modern blend of cant, cowardice, and parish-pumping ignorance,’³⁸⁸ the regular *Mail* opinion piece by ‘an Englishman’ asserted that conscientious objectors were ‘devoid of manhood,’ and that ‘men are what we want and men we must find.’³⁸⁹ Similarly, the *Express* questioned the masculinity of the objector by addressing the question of COs’ moral courage:

And yet- let us give him his due- the ‘objector’ must possess in no small measure a species of moral (or should we say immoral?) courage- a devotion to his warped ideas of duty, or else an unfathomable conceit which enables him to face his fellowmen and complacently to blazon his own shame. At best the ‘conscientious objector’ is the prig militant in arms against militancy: at worst he is a cur too emasculate to understand that he is a cur.³⁹⁰

Just as the discourse of sacrifice was invoked to undermine objectors’ masculinity in the pro-war press, both these texts demonstrate how the conscientious objector’s refusal to adhere to the ‘most appropriate role for men in wartime’³⁹¹ was directly linked to objectors’ inferior masculinity. By configuring the masculinity of objectors in this way, the articles highlight John Horne’s assertion that ‘positive attributes of national masculine ideals were matched by the negative figures of the internal and external enemy,

³⁸⁸ Harry E. Granger, ‘A Word to the Tribunals’, *Daily Mail*, 28th November 1916, p. 4.

³⁸⁹ An Englishman, ‘The Letters of an Englishman’, *Daily Mail*, 4th March 1916, p. 4.

³⁹⁰ G. Makgill, ‘Crusade of the Cranks’, *Daily Express*, 13th March 1916, p. 4.

³⁹¹ Jessica Meyer, ‘Neutral Caregivers or Military Support?’, p. 107.

who might be pictured as ... a derided or feared type of masculinity.³⁹² The distinction between 'men' and COs in the *Mail* article illustrates how there was an understanding that those who served were fulfilling both their duty and their role as men. By rejecting military service, the act of objecting was therefore identified as incompatible with the qualities and duties of manhood. Establishing a clear definition of serving males as 'men' based upon the negative construction of the objector, the *Mail* article highlights how the hegemonic masculinity of the combatant man was explicitly configured with relation to the subordinate masculinity of male resisters.

This negative formulation of CO masculinity was also reinforced through representations of objectors and their status vis-à-vis women. A report on the NCF convention in the *Express*, for example, noted that 'there were a good many women present, though what they should have to do with a no-conscription organisation is difficult to guess, unless it was to put a little pluck into other members.'³⁹³ By commenting on the presence of women in this way, the *Express* undermined the masculinity of the objectors by suggesting that the women's purpose was to provoke the men's courage. This echoed the way that recruiting campaigns and propaganda invoked women as the 'direct voice of conscience' and the objects soldiers fought to defend.³⁹⁴ Within the context of the NCF convention, the depiction of both the subordinate masculine figure of the objector and women does not serve to effeminise the COs but rather highlights male resisters' 'otherness' as men. As Heather Ellis and Jessica Meyer have noted, the over-concentration on the male-female binary in analysis of the male 'other' can 'unnecessarily limit the usefulness of the concept of "otherness"'.³⁹⁵ Indeed, by

³⁹² John Horne, 'Masculinity in Politics and War', p. 29.

³⁹³ 'Peace Cranks and Traitors', *Daily Express*, 10th April 1916, p. 1.

³⁹⁴ N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", p. 82.

³⁹⁵ Heather Ellis and Jessica Meyer, 'Introduction' in Heather Ellis and Jessica Meyer (eds), *Masculinity and the Other: Historical Perspectives* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), pp. 1-19 (pp. 3-5).

representing the women as instilling courage in the men, the women are portrayed as playing a supporting role and thus their subordinate status in relation to the men is maintained. Yet the implication that the men were uncourageous questions one of the key formulations of wartime masculinity and thereby underscores their position as a masculine 'other.'

This identification of objectors as neither feminine nor masculine but as a gendered 'other' was also evident in a *Mail* article which considered the introduction of conscription for women and tacitly positioned the objector as beneath women in the wartime gender hierarchy:

A correspondent suggests that the Government should resuscitate the recruiting poster appeals and adapt them to women. 'No idle girl,' he says, 'would be able to pass without twinges of conscience the picture of a grey-haired woman confronted by a pertinacious daughter demanding of her, 'Mother what did you do in the Great War?' ... Even the conscientious objector might be turned into a recruiter by reproach. 'Is your best girl in an overall?'³⁹⁶

The suggestion that objectors would become recruiters if women, rather than men, were conscripted, demonstrates how the inferior masculinity of objectors was constructed by subverting wartime gender relations which positioned men as the protectors of women.³⁹⁷ Bibbings has argued that the objector was cast as 'an unnatural man, a pointless man' but a man who was 'also less than a woman.'³⁹⁸ By failing to conform to what was expected of their gender during wartime, this text represents objectors as the protected rather than the protectors and thus depicted COs as subordinate to women.

³⁹⁶ 'Single Girls First: "Mother What did you do in the Great War?"', *Daily Mail*, 12th June 1916, p. 3.

³⁹⁷ N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", p. 43.

³⁹⁸ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 116.

Whilst the charges of cowardice that were made in the pro-war press hinged primarily on the link to physical sacrifice, the anti-war press reconfigured courage to emphasise moral rather than physical bravery. The *Herald* frequently addressed discourses of cowardice and courage through its weekly summary of events and developments, 'The Way of the World.' One piece stated for instance that:

it is easy enough to sneer at the conscientious objector. To call people with whom you do not agree 'cowards' and 'shirkers' ... As a matter of fact, especially in time of war, it requires considerable courage to differ from the mass of the people. To face persecution, imprisonment and contumely for a principle is not the way which cowards and shirkers choose.³⁹⁹

By highlighting moral courage, the *Herald* subverts the definition of bravery that was predicated on physical sacrifice and experience. In doing so, the article emphasised the morality of the motivations of objectors whilst using the fact that COs were going against public opinion and thus suffering for their views to demonstrate the sincerity of their convictions and their courage in taking such a stance.

The emphasis on moral courage was particularly significant because it also enabled supporters of objectors to suggest that they were in fact more courageous than soldiers. As one reader of the *Manchester Guardian* suggested, the idea that the conscientious objector 'must be a coward is a grotesque delusion, seeing that the moral courage demanded of him in confessing to so unpopular an eccentricity must, in the present state of public opinion, be far greater than that required for even voluntary

³⁹⁹ 'The Way of the World: Cowards!', *Herald*, 6th May 1916, p. 1.

enlistment for the dangers of the front.⁴⁰⁰ A similar argument was put forward in the *Herald* which asserted that 'to go into the army is a far easier matter for a young man than to stop out. The moral courage required of a man to take such a stand is enormous in face of all the pressure.'⁴⁰¹ The comparisons made between the moral courage of soldiers and objectors demonstrates how the reconfiguration of courage to a concept based on a sincere commitment to a moral principle permitted objectors' masculinity to be constructed as not only acceptable but superior to soldiers'. David Morgan has pointed out that the association between masculinity and male combat activity has been and continues to be a particularly entrenched gender construction.⁴⁰² In this way, the emphasis on moral courage in the anti-war press represented a challenge to militarised forms of masculinity which emphasised the male body, and its sacrifice, as the main site for the display of courage. Formulating courage in this manner also reinforced the identification of the objector as a moral figure as constructed through the CO's association to conceptions of liberty, freedom, and religious faith. Establishing a connection between these discourses of morality and courage meant that the limitations that supporters of objectors faced by positioning COs' masculinity with reference to their bodies, as in the invocation of discourses of sacrifice, could to some extent be circumvented.

Yet the complexity of constructing objectors' masculinity with specific reference to moral courage alone was evident in texts that intertwined moral courage with explicitly militaristic language. A poem by Carol Ring published in the *Labour Leader* in July 1916, for example, evoked moral courage within the context of a battle:

⁴⁰⁰ C. B. Young, 'Correspondence: The Fruits of Compulsion', *Manchester Guardian*, 16th May 1916, p. 7.

⁴⁰¹ 'The Way of the World: Chaos of Tribunals', *Herald*, 8th April 1916, p. 1.

⁴⁰² David H. J. Morgan, 'Theater of War', p. 165.

'They have gone out to battle, uncommended,
No ringing cheers;
And women's proud tears.
For them cold disapproval, friends offended,
And the world's sneers.'⁴⁰³

The framing of objectors with reference to battle and war was also evident in another poem from *The Herald* which asserted that:

'Peace is but a coward's quest;
We must war incessantly
Though our hearts may long for rest;
We dare not dally, who are men;
Come! Back to the old fight again!'⁴⁰⁴

The use of overt military imagery illuminates how pervasive the connection between courage, masculinity, and combat was. Consequently, complex discourses in which seemingly contradictory layers of masculinity which highlighted the moral courage, principle, and integrity of resisting war as well as narratives of physical warfare and battle emerged. This type of representation underscored the tension in portraying objectors as both manly and opposed to war. In turn it reveals the dilemma that the anti-war press faced: either to engage with the discourse of militarism and manliness or to attempt to reformulate masculinity by subverting or redefining the qualities so closely connected to soldiering. The combination of both

⁴⁰³ Carol Ring, 'The Conscientious Objectors', *Labour Leader*, 6th July 1916, p. 8.

⁴⁰⁴ W. N. Ewer, 'A Dream of Peace', *Herald*, 2nd December 1916, p. 8.

demonstrates how the anti-war press positioned the gender of the objector as a parallel masculinity to that of the soldier by legitimating their masculinity through the imagery of a moral battle for peace.

By emphasising both sacrifice and courage, those who supported objectors attempted to construct a parallel masculine identity to the soldier, invoking the same ideals whilst adapting them to the experience of male resistance. Although this at times exposed tensions and weaknesses in the construction of objector masculinity it did, to some extent, tacitly challenge the hegemonic masculinity of the soldier. Whilst the gendered superiority of the soldier and the persistent derision of COs in the pro-war press demonstrate that this challenge was ultimately unsuccessful, by presenting a confrontation to the construction of military masculinity in both their act and their representation, the figure of the CO illustrates Ana Carden-Coyne's assertion that 'gender in wartime is not secured or fixed- it is often unstable, flexible, anxious and uncertain.'⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, the explicit undermining of objectors' masculinity as well as the implicit attempts to redefine the masculinity of objectors as a legitimate equivalent to the soldier highlights the instability of gender constructions during the war. Furthermore, as Angela Woollacott suggests, on the one hand 'when the hegemonic systems are most powerful they are least visible because their power has been internalised. On the other hand, when challenged, hegemonic power needs to be visibly exercised.'⁴⁰⁶ The pervasiveness of military masculinity and its central role in the ridiculing of COs therefore reveals how the presence of men who openly challenged the connection between combat and manliness had a destabilising effect on the hegemonic gender order.

⁴⁰⁵ Ana Carden-Coyne, 'Introduction: Gender and Conflict since 1914: Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives' in A. Carden-Coyne (ed.), *Gender and Conflict*, pp. 1-13 (p. 4).

⁴⁰⁶ Angela Woollacott, "'Khaki Fever' and its Control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (April, 1994), 325-347 (p. 337).

Soldiers and COs

The attempts to portray objectors as having a parallel masculinity to the soldier and the challenges to this representation of COs were particularly clear in press representations that explicitly explored the relationship between objectors and soldiers. Bibbings has noted that the military man versus the conscientious objector became the 'pivotal binary' in the stark dichotomies of wartime Britain and certainly this binary played a central role in pro-war narratives which looked to undermine the masculinity of the CO.⁴⁰⁷ Yet, as has been discussed in the previous sections, this binary was tacitly challenged in the anti-war press where the distinctions between objectors and soldiers were muddled with specific reference to the ideals of duty, sacrifice, and courage. The way in which the relationship between the soldier, often the volunteer rather than conscript,⁴⁰⁸ and objector was invoked in depictions of male resisters sheds significant light on the interplay and constructions of wartime masculinities. Exploring these comparative narratives is thus illustrative of Joan Scott's suggestion that 'fixed oppositions conceal ... the extent to which the terms presented as oppositional are interdependent.'⁴⁰⁹

Representations of soldiers' opinions of COs became a means of communicating a particular view of objectors, and was used by pro-war and anti-war voices to express either open derision and hostility or respect and admiration. Descriptions of soldiers' negative and even violent attitudes towards COs were, on occasion, voiced within the pro-war press. A *Daily*

⁴⁰⁷ Lois Bibbings, 'Conscientious Objectors in the Great War: The Consequences of Rejecting Military Masculinities' in Paul Higate (ed.), *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), pp. 125-141 (p. 125).

⁴⁰⁸ I. Bet-El discusses the differences between volunteers and conscripts in detail in *Conscripts*.

⁴⁰⁹ Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 7.

Express article, for example, recounted how injured soldiers recovering in a military hospital would treat COs if they were to come across them:

These are a few of the crimes that wounded Tommies here would commit against the conscientious objectors:-

Myself: 'If I was out on crutches I would fall down in front of one and if he would not help me to rise I would get up and hit him right across the jaw with my crutch ... '

Bed 11 (A Bruiser): 'I would knock their two eyes into one and then mix their nose up with their hair.' I believe he means it too ...

Bed 21 (He is about 6ft tall and weighs 14 stone): 'I would get them down and jump on them, to find out where the objection comes from.'

The others are too numerous to mention.⁴¹⁰

The context of the military hospital and the injuries of the soldiers are significant in that they serve to highlight both the physical sacrifices made by the soldiers and, somewhat paradoxically, their physical strength. In the repeated suggestions that these injured soldiers could, and would, attack COs, there is an underlying contention that even wounded soldiers were stronger than healthy objectors. Consequently, the centrality of strength and endurance to the construction of masculinity⁴¹¹ is highlighted to imply that the soldier, having fulfilled his duty and sacrificed for his nation, could overtly and physically exercise his gendered claim to power upon the inferior masculinity of the CO. The physical injuries of the soldier and the violence directed toward the bodies of the objectors are central in this expression of masculinity. Connell has noted, 'true masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies, to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body.'⁴¹² Although, as Jeffrey Reznick has pointed

⁴¹⁰ 'Conscience Tests', *Daily Express*, 3rd March 1916, p. 5.

⁴¹¹ Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 1.

⁴¹² R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 45.

out, the shattering of men's bodies and minds as a result of war destabilised male authority at home,⁴¹³ the soldier's body, within the context of the hospital in this specific text symbolised his superior masculinity and physical strength as a result of his sacrifice. As Bourke has noted, 'the absent parts of men's bodies came to exert a special patriotic power.'⁴¹⁴ This power is in turn both constructed and enacted upon the physical weakness of the objector, which stems from his failure to serve and sacrifice.

This gendered representation of the relationship between soldiers and objectors stood in stark contrast to the way in which it was constructed in anti-war narratives. A letter from J. Percival Davies to the *Guardian* stated that he had 'received letters from the trenches ... expressing the warmest admiration for the conscientious objectors ... Can these men do any other than ... cheer on the conscientious objector?'⁴¹⁵ In a similar vein, a letter purported to be written by a soldier to a CO appeared in the *Labour Leader* espousing the utmost admiration for objectors, going so far as to suggest that soldiers were inferior to COs. The author asserted that 'you are the fighter, not we. You wrestle with the invisible Devil of compromise and the Demon of the Path-of-Least-Resistance, and, what's more, you seem to have conquered. We have given in long ago, and drug our souls with talk of knightly deeds. We have not reached you yet ...'⁴¹⁶ The invocation of the image of the 'knight' is significant in that it demonstrates how objectors' masculinity was configured through the soldier's admiration of the CO by using language that was itself associated with the soldier.⁴¹⁷ Consequently,

⁴¹³ Jeffrey S. Reznick, *Healing the Nation: Soldiers and the Culture of Caregiving in Britain during the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 10.

⁴¹⁴ J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 59.

⁴¹⁵ J. Percival Davies, 'Correspondence: The Mishandling of Conscience Claims', *Manchester Guardian*, 18th May 1916, p. 10.

⁴¹⁶ 'Brutality Practised on Antimilitarists: A Soldier to a Conscientious Objector', *Labour Leader*, 22nd June 1916, p. 5.

⁴¹⁷ As Stefan Goebel has shown, memorials to soldiers often included the figure of the knight which represented courage and dutiful and selfless service to the community. See S. Goebel,

the respect given to COs by soldiers in these letters, demonstrates how anti-war narratives engaged with the hegemonic construction of the soldier in order to elevate the masculine status of the objector and thereby subvert the narrative that objectors were inferior. By focusing on the objectors' principled stance, these texts demonstrate how the hegemonic masculine structure and its construction with relation to different masculinities was mobilised to the advantage of the male resister. In doing so, they are evocative of Simon Yarrow's argument regarding the construction of masculinities within the colonial context. Yarrow has suggested that the 'different configurations of masculinities might present opportunities for interpretive licence, choice and agency among subordinated and marginalised groups.'⁴¹⁸ In a similar vein, by asserting that the soldier, the exemplary masculine figure, is in support of the conscientious objector, these representations promote the CO as a laudable masculine wartime figure by engaging directly with the masculine ideals of the soldier as a means of elevating objectors' gendered status.

Whilst highlighting soldiers' support for objectors was one way of repositioning the subordinate masculinity of COs, another method employed by the anti-war press was to argue that objectors and soldiers were motivated by the same principles but had taken different paths. As Bibbings has argued, by focusing on motivation the CO, like the volunteer, could be portrayed as acting upon his conscience and 'doing his duty by following his beliefs.'⁴¹⁹ One way that opponents of the war constructed similarities

The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 196.

⁴¹⁸ Simon Yarrow, 'Masculinity as a World Historical Category of Analysis' in John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (eds), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 114-138 (p. 121).

⁴¹⁹ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 211. This focus on duty and service also has echoes in the way that objectors who chose to engage with non-combatant service also conceptualised their experience. As Meyer has argued the prioritisation and valorisation of ideals of service, rather than militarism, within the Friends' Ambulance Unit (FAU) enabled those with a conscientious objection to war to reconcile their participation in war service with their principles of conscience. See J. Meyer, 'Neutral Caregivers or Military Support?', p. 120.

between COs and soldiers was by referring to both groups as leaders of different armies who fought for different, but connected, causes. Whilst the volunteer soldier was not explicitly identified in these texts, the way in which the comparison was framed certainly implied that it was those soldiers who had chosen to fight who were compared with objectors. For example, a letter by Dr John Clifford published in the *Manchester Guardian* asserted that there were two armies and 'both are conscientious ... Many thousands of young men ... have found a sense of vocation for the first time in taking up arms for this country, a few thousand have found it in resisting the attempt made to force them to take up arms against their convictions.'⁴²⁰ Ramsay MacDonald, in an 'Open Letter to a Conscientious Objector', similarly represented objectors and soldiers in this way. He stated that 'to some the soul said "fight" and they have died; to others the soul said "keep from the battle", and they have been persecuted.'⁴²¹ Despite the fact that from 1916 all those who were recruited into the army would have been conscripts, the suggestion that the volunteer was comparable to the objector is significant. Bet-El has argued that unlike volunteers, conscripts were excluded from prevailing 'imagery of both masculinity and soldiering.'⁴²² Therefore, the identification of COs with volunteers was significant in constructing resisters' masculinity. Moreover, the comparison made between objectors and volunteers, with the emphasis being on actively choosing a path of duty and service and following one's conscience, highlights how the masculinity that was represented in the anti-war press was not specifically related to soldiering but was configured through a willingness to sacrifice for sincere convictions and the following of one's conscience. Thus sacrifice was given meaning through its underlying personal motive.

⁴²⁰ 'Death of a Conscientious Objector: Dr. Clifford on the Issue it Raises', *Manchester Guardian*, 15th September 1916, p. 6.

⁴²¹ Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., 'Open Letter to a Conscientious Objector', *Labour Leader*, 29th June 1916, p. 5.

⁴²² I. R. Bet-El, 'Men and Soldiers', p. 74.

Bibbings has argued that the framing of COs as soldiers in this way reinforced the notion that heroism was a vital component of 'true manliness.'⁴²³ To be sure, the adherence to the masculine qualities that were associated with the soldier did in many ways underscore their position as markers of masculinity. Yet the way in which the anti-war press invoked discourses of duty, sacrifice, and courage, and compared soldiers and objectors, was more complex than a straightforward reinforcement of this formulation of masculinity. Just as the masculinity of the soldier was multifaceted and servicemen constructed their masculinity in multiple ways, ranging from the heroic to the domestic, the conscientious objector was also configured in a complex manner.⁴²⁴ Whilst, as Meyer's work has shown, soldiers' perceptions of their own identity and the way in which they were expressed was contingent upon a number of factors and the audience that was being addressed, the 'emphasis on service and sacrifice as defining qualities of martial courage' form common threads in the way anti-war men constructed their wartime masculinities.⁴²⁵ Objectors too evoked the narratives of martial courage and sacrifice and used direct comparisons with soldiers to construct a parallel masculine figure to the soldier. However, by invoking these gendered discourses in explicit reference to male resistance anti-war voices also tacitly challenged the connection between these ideals and militarism. In doing so, they questioned the notion that courage and sacrifice had to be connected to male combat activity in order for that masculinity to be acceptable and highlighted conscience and duty, rather than fighting or war itself, as a marker of masculine identity. Although this strategy was challenged and, at times, exposed tensions and weaknesses in male resisters' claims to masculinity, it nonetheless highlights how anti-war texts complicated and subverted normative gender constructions in nuanced and subtle ways.

⁴²³ L. Bibbings, 'Images of Manliness', p. 355

⁴²⁴ J. Meyer, *Men of War*, p. 2.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 161-162.

Women

The construction of the conscientious objector, either positively or negatively, with reference to the masculine ideals of duty, sacrifice, and courage had the effect of configuring war resistance as a male act. As harsh treatment and imprisonment became a way of outlining the courage and sacrifice of objectors, the representation of women who, in general, did not experience this because of their status as non-combatants, shifted so that they were linked to male sacrifice through their connection to objectors. In particular, the development of maternalist narratives offers significant insights into how the reshaping of the anti-war movement affected representations of resistance in 1916. Indeed, whilst representations of anti-war women by no means disappeared, the depth of articles by and about women opposed to the conflict reduced as a consequence of the focus on conscientious objectors. This was particularly true within pro-war publications where almost no articles regarding the activities of anti-war women appeared throughout 1916, suggesting that the gendered implications of male resistance were of greater concern than female resisters. To be sure, the war resistance of Nellie Best and her trial for prejudicing recruiting in March 1916 captured the attention of the press, and reports on this reveal how anti-war women's activism was considered by a press landscape that centered almost entirely on men. However, this reportage was limited in comparison with the attention devoted to The Hague Congress in 1915, for example, and therefore highlights the changing focus of resistance following the introduction of conscription.

Mothers of Sons, Mothers of Conscientious Objectors

Motherhood remained a prominent theme throughout 1916 in representations of anti-war women highlighting the continued centrality of motherhood and the family in the articulation of female opposition to war. However, this narrative also underwent a revealing shift in response to the

conscientious objector and the gendered discourses used to depict him. The invocation of motherhood as a means of identifying women as the natural opponents of conflict, developed into an expression of motherhood that was based directly on women's connection to conscientious objectors. By examining how these representations were constructed, the changing relationship between femininity, masculinity, and peace is revealed. In this way, parallels can be drawn with Angela John's and Claire Eustance's study of masculinity and men's support for the suffrage movement. As they have argued, 'by looking at men's relationship to a movement essentially defined and operated by women, but in a society saturated with structural inequality, we can ponder ... the connections between the exercise of power and the construction of masculinities.'⁴²⁶ Whilst the anti-war movement was not a movement defined and operated by women, it is evident that in 1914 and 1915, resisting the conflict was seen as women's duty, and peace and femininity were inextricably intertwined.

The mother of the CO was first introduced by the *Herald* in a poignant image titled 'Mother of the First Conscientious Objector', following the implementation of the Military Service Act in March (fig. 1).⁴²⁷ The image, which depicted the Virgin Mary at the foot of Jesus' cross, emphasised not only the connections that were repeatedly made between objectors and Jesus but also highlights the shift in the maternalist narrative. The image of Mary was also invoked in a letter sent to the *Labour Leader* from a mother of a CO sent to France under the threat of the death penalty. She wrote:

I am well nigh broken-hearted, but in my grief I am proud to be the mother of such a man, having in my mind Mary, the mother

⁴²⁶ Angela V. John and Claire Eustance, 'Shared Histories- Differing Identities: Introducing Masculinities, Male Support and Women's Suffrage' in Angela V. John and Claire Eustance (eds), *The Men's Share? Masculinities, Male Support and Women's Suffrage in Britain, 1890-1920* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1-37 (p. 2).

⁴²⁷ 'The Mother of the First Conscientious Objector', *Herald*, 25th March 1916, p. 12.

of the first conscientious objector ... Christ remained true to His mission “on earth, peace”; my son has been true to his Principles also. Though faced with death and imprisonment he has never wavered, following in the footsteps of the ‘lowly carpenter’...⁴²⁸

Michael Roper has noted that the strong identification of mothers with their sons’ experience of war was reflected in public rhetoric that portrayed



Fig. 1

enlistment of sons ‘as a maternal sacrifice.’⁴²⁹ The way in which the mother is portrayed in both the image and the letter, highlights how a parallel image of anti-war maternal sacrifice came into play once the focus of the anti-war movement had shifted onto the sacrifice of the objector. Whilst the focus of motherhood in earlier years of the war was based on an association with the qualities of peace and love, the introduction of the CO engendered a shift towards motherhood as proxy-sacrifice. The ultimate sacrifice for peace made by the objector, a sacrifice that could not be made by women by virtue of their non-combatant status, thus altered women’s perceived inherent

connection to peace so that their relationship with resistance became regulated through the action and experience of their sons.

⁴²⁸ ‘Ten Years Penal Servitude for Conscience Sake: Letter from a Mother’, *Labour Leader*, 29th June 1916, p. 4.

⁴²⁹ M. Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p. 90.

Gullace has noted that ‘female patriotism, particularly in its most sacrificial guise, gave women a powerful language with which to lay claim to the war.’⁴³⁰ However, unlike pro-war female voices that mobilised sacrificial maternalist rhetoric, anti-war women had previously used motherhood to highlight women’s innate interest in peace. Yet as sacrifice and its centrality to wartime masculinity became a central means of representing objectors, the way in which motherhood was framed altered so that it was based upon the sacrifice of her objector son. Consequently, a renegotiation of the relationship between peace and gender was evident from 1916. The shifts in the representation of the anti-war movement which were linked directly to the positioning of men and women, highlights the significant role that gender played in the way that war resisters responded to the introduction of conscription. The mediation of women’s war resistance through the CO demonstrates how the anti-war press attempted to disrupt the association between women and peace activism that they themselves had, to some extent, propagated in the years before conscription, as a way of refocusing the anti-war movement around the conscientious objector.

Female resistance was also mediated through the objector by a focus on another central female family relation: the wife. The second Military Service Act extended only a few months after the first to include married men, meant that conscription had been focused on both unmarried and married men from early 1916.⁴³¹ A number of poems and articles published in the *Herald* urged both mothers and wives to support their men. For example, one poem titled ‘Compulsion or Love?’ calls on mothers to ‘trust thy sons and never doubt ... Believe in thy true lovers, and speak out!’⁴³² In a similar vein, a poem by Monica Ewer, the *Herald*’s drama and film critic and novelist,

⁴³⁰ N. F. Gullace, “*The Blood of our Sons*”, p. 3.

⁴³¹ A more detailed discussion of the debates around the conscription of married men is offered by Laura Ugolini in *Civvies*, pp. 141-147.

⁴³² Adrian Clarke, ‘Compulsion or Love?’, *Herald*, 15th April 1916, p. 2.

described the hardships faced by objectors and their families, and encouraged wives to support their CO husbands and remain strong:

'You can hope ...
We can only promise you,
Don't get blue,
That there's one thing we will do,
Straight and true;
Though we seem so helpless, quite,
Yet we won't give up the fight,
But we'll keep your faith alight,
And we'll teach your kiddies right.
So, see it through.'⁴³³

This text bore striking resemblance to a poem appealing to 'women at home' to support their serving family members, published in the *Daily Express* in May, which underscores the gendered reconfiguration of resistance that had occurred in the anti-war press in 1916.

'The future looks stormy and rough ...
It's up to you women to stifle your sighs,
And gallantly take up your part,
To face what may come with a smile in your eyes
And courage and hope in your heart ...

⁴³³ Monica Ewer, 'The CO's Wife', *Herald*, 29th April 1916, p. 5.

Though that load may be heavy,
You're going to win through ...⁴³⁴

The appearance of these poems within six days of one another suggests that both were responding to the extension of the Military Service Act to include married men. The similar language used to describe the positive role that wives played in supporting their husbands in their respective experiences, highlights how a narrative of deferential and stoic femininity came to permeate both pro-war and anti-war publications. The *Express* poem is clearly evocative of what Gregory has termed 'the volunteer ethos,'⁴³⁵ which was based on an appeal to the male volunteer to protect women and children, and an appeal to women to show solidarity with their menfolk.⁴³⁶ Whilst this rhetoric was fundamental to those who were engaged with the war effort, the invocation of an anti-war version of this ethos, based around the experience of the conscientious objector and his relationship to women, was a new theme in 1916. To be sure, the objector's act was not framed with direct reference to the protection of women but was connected to the broader impact that his position would have on society. Yet the call for mothers' and wives' solidarity and support in these anti-war texts reveals that a reciprocal relationship between COs and their female relations had been established which mirrored the 'volunteer ethos' in significant ways.

This narrative was also evident in a letter sent to the *Labour Leader* from Rose Fox, a woman speaking as a 'representative of women who are the wives and mothers of men who are conscientious objectors.'⁴³⁷ In this letter, Fox stated that 'we heartily and resolutely support our men in their

⁴³⁴ Jessie Pope, 'To the Woman at Home', *Daily Express*, 4th May 1916, p. 4.

⁴³⁵ A. Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 99.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 99.

⁴³⁷ Rose Fox, 'The Views of our Readers: Women and the Antimilitarists', *Labour Leader*, 18th May 1916, p. 8.

determination to refuse to take part in ... wholesale slaughter, although it will probably mean the breaking up of our homes and the deprivation of ourselves and children of our breadwinners.'⁴³⁸ This letter not only highlighted female solidarity for objectors, but also outlined the sacrifices that women made in order to support their husbands and sons. In doing so, the letter shows how the female anti-war narratives from 1914 and 1915 that are discussed in chapter 1, which foregrounded the destruction of the family, underwent changes in response to the objector. Indeed, this particular letter conversely contends that in order for the objectors' resistance to be successfully carried out, women were prepared to sacrifice the harmony and happiness of their families, further signalling the clear change that representations of anti-war women underwent following conscription.

The representation of the relationship between women and objectors, and the different manner in which anti-war women expressed their opposition to the conflict in these examples, demonstrates the marked impact that the introduction of the CO in 1916 had on the representation of resistance. The Higonnet's metaphor of the double helix can provide insight into the gendered implications of this reconfiguration of women's resistance.⁴³⁹ The double helix highlights women's subordinate position to men in any given situation. Thus, whilst peace activism was represented primarily as feminine in 1914-15, a change occurred when men began to publicly resist from 1916. Women were consequently relegated, becoming subordinate to male opponents of the war and their opposition was framed with direct reference to the male resister.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁹ M. R Higonnet and P. L.-R. Higonnet, 'The Double Helix', pp. 31-47.

Yet whilst this shift was significant, there were also a limited number of examples where the reconfiguration of resistance around the conscientious objector was used by anti-war women to outline a feminist argument against the conflict. For example, Dorothy Matthews' correspondence to the *Herald* in August 1916 lamented the fact that there 'seems to be a prevalent idea that all women consider men cowardly if they refuse to embrace methods of violence to protect what is generally known as the "weaker sex".'⁴⁴⁰ She argued instead that women 'are just as capable of protecting themselves as men, for, apart from the use of violence, they have the same means at their command as men.'⁴⁴¹ The identification of violence as being a specifically male characteristic evokes contemporary ideas concerning the gendering of violence. The singling out of this quality as specifically male in a text which attempted to highlight the equality of men and women demonstrates the significance of violence for conceptions of male and female identity. As studies on gender and violence by Shani D'Cruze and Anne-Marie Kilday have shown, violence and criminality were perceived as consistent with 'accepted, if not wholly acceptable male characteristics.'⁴⁴² Whilst men were expected to be physically strong and brave, women who were violent were seen to be breaching 'strongly held beliefs about the nature of femininity,' which were based on the perception that women held specific moral qualities that men did not.⁴⁴³

Matthews highlights these gendered conceptions of violence explicitly in an attempt to deconstruct the argument that the war needed to be waged for the protection of women and that women were objects that 'soldiers fought

⁴⁴⁰ Dorothy Matthews, 'Woman her Own Protector' in 'What Our Readers Are Thinking', *Herald*, 26th August 1916, p. 10.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴² Anne-Marie Kilday, *Women and Violent Crime in Enlightenment Scotland* (Suffolk: the Boydell Press, 2007), p. 19. See also Shani D'Cruze, *Crimes of Outrage: Sex, Violence and Victorian Working Women* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998).

⁴⁴³ A. Kilday, *Women and Violent Crime*, p. 19.

to defend.⁴⁴⁴ Indeed, Matthews challenged the notion that the use of violence was necessary for the protection of women. In so doing, she subverts the gender hierarchy that framed violence as an integral aspect of men's protection of women and thereby questioned the means by which women were positioned as subordinate to men. By contending that women did not require the protection of men, the letter disrupts the narrative that placed men as superior through their status as the protector and women as the protected. Consequently, Matthews challenged not only a central justification of male violence but also the wartime gender hierarchy and consequently suggested that a reinterpretation of the contemporary gender structure would bring about an end to the conflict.

Another significant, albeit singular, example of a representation of conscientious objectors which did not rely on the positioning of women into a supportive or sacrificial role came from a letter written to the *Labour Leader* by the well-known anti-war campaigner, Emily Hobhouse. Indeed, this letter actively subverts this type of representation of women by contending that there was a direct relationship between the women who organised the congress at The Hague and conscientious objectors. Hobhouse wrote: 'To the women who first exhibited this spirit- earning thereby a glorious ridicule- to the men who are now so nobly actuated by it- thus earning the freedom of imprisonment.'⁴⁴⁵ By suggesting that COs were motivated by the spirit of the women at The Hague, Hobhouse's letter echoed the anti-war language of 1915 which identified these women as pioneers. Connecting objectors to anti-war women in this way is significant precisely because of the overt gendering of The Hague women's activism. Relating COs explicitly to the 'spirit' of these women therefore complicated not only the identification of objectors as the pioneers of war resistance but also resurrected the connection between women and peace to establish

⁴⁴⁴ N. Gullace, 'White Feathers', p. 183.

⁴⁴⁵ Emily Hobhouse, 'A Message from Rome', *Labour Leader*, 27th April 1916, p. 9.

them as the initial leaders of the anti-war movement. However, it is significant that this is the only overt example of a connection being made between women's earlier peace activism and the CO movement within the anti-war press, underscoring how representations of the anti-war movement had shifted in 1916 to emphasise the exceptional figure of the male objector.

Conscientious objectors and their representation in the anti-war press also impacted upon the depiction of female resisters in a more subtle manner. For example, the anti-war reportage of the trial of Nellie Best, the secretary of the Women's Anti-Conscription League who was imprisoned for prejudicing recruiting, was imbued with the language of courage and sincerity associated with conscientious objection. Under the title 'A Courageous Woman,' one *Labour Leader* article on the trial devoted much of the text to her trial statement:

I have done my utmost to prejudice recruiting, since the object of recruiting is to enlist men in the trade of murder expressly forbidden by Jesus Christ in whom I believe ... I have prayed to God that He might lead me to press on lads the wrongness of war from the Christian standpoint or, if they did not accept Christianity, from the Socialist standpoint.⁴⁴⁶

By identifying Best as courageous, the *Leader* overtly associated her anti-recruitment activities with bravery. Furthermore, in an account of the behaviour of Best in court by the lawyer, Mr. Scott Duckers, who himself was a conscientious objector, it was noted that Mrs. Best 'gave a most courageous testimony to her faith and her demeanour was at once so brave and so sincere that some of her friends in the court were moved to tears.'⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ 'A Courageous Woman: A Sentence of Six Months', *Labour Leader*, 2nd March 1916, p. 10.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The narratives of bravery and sincerity and the way they mirror the language used to describe COs was similarly evident in a *Herald* article on Best which noted that 'she is following the highest she knows without any material reward, only the satisfaction which comes to all who follow their own conscience.'⁴⁴⁸ The way in which the anti-war press represented Nellie Best and her resistance to the conflict echoed key CO narratives and demonstrates how the discourses of war resistance more broadly adapted to a language of conscience, sincerity, and bravery. The more subtle shifts in the representation of resistance in the anti-war press points to a reshaping of what opposition to the conflict actually meant following the introduction of conscription. In this way, the emphasis on conscience, sincerity, and moral courage in the representation of conscientious objectors' resistance reformed the narratives of peace activism.

The trial of Nellie Best, with its focus on anti-conscription and anti-recruitment activities, also attracted attention from the pro-war press. In their coverage of the trial, the *Daily Express* invoked many of the tropes utilised in their reportage of The Hague Congress in 1915, demonstrating how the derogatory gendered vocabulary of female war resistance that was used to depict the congress continued to be invoked as a way of representing anti-war women:

A scene of disorder that recalled the days of suffragette demonstrations marked the opening of the case. Mrs. Best did not respond when her name was called, but women's voices were heard in the hall outside the court shouting 'you have the right to have your friends in' ... there was some scuffling outside and women shrieked ...⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁸ 'Mrs Nellie Best', *Herald*, 4th March 1916, p. 9.

⁴⁴⁹ 'Proud to Stop Recruiting: Woman Peace Crank sent to Prison for Six Months', *Daily Express*, 28th February 1916, p. 2.

The comparison made between the suffragettes and Best's trial has similar implications to the way that negative imagery of suffrage activists was used to portray The Hague women. Indeed, the invocation of this imagery can be seen as an attempt to represent the disruption of military recruitment by women as an encroachment on the masculine arena of military service. The references to shrieking women also evoke the identification of suffragettes as the 'shrieking sisterhood'⁴⁵⁰ and suggest that the perceived hysteria of women made them unsuitable for participating in both military and political affairs. Similarly, the association between female war resisters and suffrage campaigners again illustrates how women's opposition to the war was connected to their citizenship by pro-war publications. As Gullace has argued, women's patriotism and service to the state, of which supporting recruitment was a significant part, became central to the conception of citizenship during the war.⁴⁵¹ In this way, Best's deliberate attempt to impede recruitment was a particularly pernicious act of resistance and one which was consequently represented as having undermined her right to citizenship, demonstrating how pro-war representations of anti-war women continued to use both gender and wartime conceptions of patriotism to disrupt the potential configuration of female resisters as citizens.

Conclusion

1916 was a pivotal year for the representation of war resisters in the press with the focus of resistance shifting in a manner that would continue to have implications both for the remaining war years and the conflict's commemoration. The focus on objectors engendered a significant reconfiguration of how resistance was represented. Indeed, the press attention on conscientious objectors and the ways in which their motivations and experience were depicted was overtly linked to constructions of

⁴⁵⁰ Eileen Janes Yeo, 'Introduction: Some Paradoxes of Empowerment', p. 5.

⁴⁵¹ N. Gullace, "*The Blood of Our Sons*", p. 6.

masculinity. Both the focus on COs and the emphasis on how their stance was related to their status as men meant that, following the introduction of conscription, resistance was in many ways reconfigured as masculine. Indeed, whilst pro-war publications repeatedly attempted to undermine the masculinity of objectors through the construction of their gender as inferior, anti-war voices sought to configure objectors' masculinity as a different but parallel one to that of servicemen and also reshaped the languages of resistance around narratives of conscience, liberty, and moral courage. This inevitably had implications for the representation of female opposition to the war. In contrast to 1914 and 1915, and in a move that clearly highlights the impact and significance of gender on representations of war resisters, depictions of women generally retreated to show anti-war women in relation to the CO. Consequently, the previously direct relationship between women and peace activism became mediated through the male war resister and maternalist discourses became focused on the relationship between mothers and their objector sons.

Yet the dominance of representations of objectors and the engagement with narratives of masculinity demonstrate how hard anti-war voices in particular had to work to stake a claim for war resistance within the masculine sphere. This struggle was not only because of the pro-war press's persistent ridiculing of objectors but was also partly down to the focus on representations of peace activism as a naturally feminine task in earlier years of the war. In order to overcome the association between women and peace, anti-war newspapers generally disregarded this type of representation in 1916, evidenced by the absence of this gendered association in the anti-war reportage of Nellie Best's trial. Instead they positioned COs as leaders of the peace movement and thereby gendered the peace movement along the same gender hierarchy as those actively engaged in the war by focusing on the ideals of sacrifice, duty, and courage. The emphasis on the objector and the themes outlined in 1916 would continue

to dominate and evolve in response to the changing circumstances of the next two years of the war.

Chapter 3: 1917-1918

Whilst the events of 1916 triggered the introduction of new discourses of resistance and significant shifts in the representation of anti-war men and women, during 1917 and 1918 these narratives were complicated by developments within the anti-war movement and the conflict more broadly. The bloodshed continued throughout these years, with battles such as Passchendaele claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands of British and Commonwealth soldiers.⁴⁵² Furthermore, the military stalemate at the beginning of 1917 prompted the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare by the German navy which not only increased British losses but also disrupted the food supply to Britain, exacerbating food shortages and prompting the introduction of rationing for certain food items.⁴⁵³ The grief, anger and war-weariness that was felt by many as a result of these losses and wartime limitations contributed to public discussion over the suffering of those on both the battle fronts and home front which had direct implications for the way war resisters were represented in the final two years of the war.

1917 also saw significant international developments with the entry of the United States into the conflict and the overthrow of the Tsarist regime in Russia. The Russian Revolution in February was initially welcomed on all sides in Britain, with the most whole-hearted welcome coming from workers, pacifists, and a considerable section of liberal opinion.⁴⁵⁴ The anti-war movement, and particularly the leadership of the No-Conscription Fellowship, were instrumental in organising a mass meeting in favour of the revolution in March. They also drew up a British 'Charter of Freedom' which paralleled the new Russian liberties and called for the release of imprisoned COs, something which became a major topic in the anti-war press during

⁴⁵² A. Hochschild, *To End All Wars*, p. 291.

⁴⁵³ Deborah Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls: Women Workers in World War One* (London: IB Taurus, 1998), p. 167.

⁴⁵⁴ Jo Vellacott, *Conscientious Objection: Bertrand Russell and the Pacifists in the First World War* (Nottingham: Spokesman books, 2nd edition, 2015), p. 152.

1917 and 1918.⁴⁵⁵ In addition, the changing conditions of wartime government prompted the issue of franchise reform to come once again into view. The delay of the general election in 1915, and the problems inherent in a franchise system which was predicated upon a variety of residence and property qualifications which would have disenfranchised many soldiers, meant that the government was obliged to make changes.⁴⁵⁶ From the beginning of 1917 debates intensified not only about the prospect of enfranchising women but also the possibility of disenfranchising conscientious objectors. These discussions signalled a reconfiguration of the basis of citizenship along the lines of war service and inevitably had a significant impact upon press depictions of those who had agitated against the war from its very beginning.

Representations of COs and their citizenship rights in particular were often tied into debates about their treatment by the state, their suffering, and the broader impact of this on the British nation. Two groups of objectors in particular were the focus of press attention during the final two years of the war, COs on the Home Office (HO) Scheme and imprisoned absolutist objectors, who refused any form of alternative service.

Pro-war publications were concerned primarily with men on the HO scheme. The scheme had been developed, in part, as a response to complaints about the treatment of objectors. As part of the scheme objectors had the opportunity to be 'reviewed' by the Central Tribunal and be placed in work centres or camps around the country undertaking work which was meant to be sufficiently difficult to discourage others from conscientiously objecting.⁴⁵⁷ The camps saw a large influx of men at the beginning of 1917,

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 153-154.

⁴⁵⁶ J. Vellacott, *Pacifists, Patriots and the Vote*, p. 132.

⁴⁵⁷ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 33.

particularly at Dartmoor (or Princetown) where nearly 1000 men were sent in the last two weeks of March.⁴⁵⁸ The relative freedom that objectors were perceived to have had generated hostility within the local communities and a number of attacks on COs took place throughout 1917 and 1918 in Dartmoor, Knutsford and elsewhere.⁴⁵⁹ Local and national antagonism towards objectors was both reflected in and fuelled by the pro-war press which frequently lamented the waste of national resources on men who refused to fight and their relative comfort, especially in comparison to serving men. The focus on their treatment, therefore, provided a context for the reinforcement of the narratives of selfishness and cowardice that had been dominant during 1916.

Whilst the pro-war press focused on the men employed on the HO scheme, imprisoned absolutist objectors became the focal point of the anti-war press. The specific context of conscientious objection from 1917 was significant in this regard. Whilst in 1916 much of the evidence used to prove that a man held a sincere and absolute conscientious objection to the war was based on his statement at his tribunal, in 1917 many of the men in prison had been through at least two tribunal processes with their objection being recognised as genuine.⁴⁶⁰ Having first been granted a form of exemption that was unacceptable to them and then having subsequently turned down work on the Home Office (HO) scheme, these men returned to prison.⁴⁶¹ The effects of these repeated prison sentences on COs and the recognition of their

⁴⁵⁸ T. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*, p. 175.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 173. Kennedy notes that the COs on the Home Office scheme caused outrage and a series of clashes among the COs themselves and ‘off-duty “schemers” and local residents’ occurred and were widely reported on in the press.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 191.

⁴⁶¹ Although the exact number of COs in prison is unclear, Cyril Pearce’s ongoing research has suggested that the figure is close to 1400 men. See C. Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience*, p. 155. A 1917 article from the *Manchester Guardian* puts the number of men engaged on work at the Home Office scheme at just over 2000. See ‘Conscientious Objectors: Over 2,000 Working under the Home Office Scheme’, *Manchester Guardian*, 10th March 1917, p. 8.

objection as genuine had a significant influence on anti-war narratives of male resistance during the final two years of the conflict.

The increase in CO deaths and reports of ill health during 1917 and 1918 prompted a considerable amount of public, government and press attention upon the treatment of objectors.⁴⁶² This attention was fuelled, in part, by the publication of a high profile pamphlet in 1917 by Margaret Hobhouse, the well-connected mother of CO Stephen Hobhouse. 'I Appeal Unto Caesar' was ghost-written by Bertrand Russell and was published in July 1917 by George Allen & Unwin whose director, Stanley Unwin, was one of 'the few publishers who openly questioned the necessity of the war and did so in print by publishing radical and unpopular opinions.'⁴⁶³ The pamphlet was centred on the 'horrors of repeated imprisonment' for conscientious objectors, between 800 and 1000 of whom were imprisoned at the time of its publication.⁴⁶⁴ Whilst the pamphlet was endorsed by prominent men such as Stanley Webb (Lord Parmoor), the Earl of Selbourne, Lord Hugh Cecil MP, and Lord Henry Bentinck MP, it caused uproar because of its call for the release of absolutist objectors.⁴⁶⁵ 'I Appeal Unto Caesar' consequently brought a significant amount of attention to the plight of the absolutist objectors and was a particular focus within the anti-war press.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶² The Peace Pledge Union has estimated that at least 73 COs died during the war. http://www.ppu.org.uk/learn/infodocs/cos/st_co_wwone2.html [accessed 21/04/2017].

Thomas Kennedy details the increase of private and public campaigns on behalf of absolutists in 1917, and notes that the NCF felt that these campaigns were going 'extraordinarily well' in *The Hound of Conscience*, pp. 189-194. Lois Bibbings documents the harsh treatment of objectors in *Telling Tales*, pp. 118-129.

⁴⁶³ Jane Potter, *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print: Women's Literary Responses to the Great War 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 58.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 61,

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 61.

⁴⁶⁶ T. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*, pp. 191-192.

Yet, as Angela Smith's work on British war widows has shown, texts can often be sites of struggle which show traces of differing discourses and ideologies.⁴⁶⁷ Indeed, the emphasis on suffering also led to the invocation of narratives of both victimhood and martyrdom within anti-war publications which, in turn, complicated some of the discourses that the anti-war press had established for objectors during 1916. More specifically, the ways in which the suffering of male objectors was represented created a tension between the image of the heroic objector willing to sacrifice and suffer for his cause and the underlying, and sometimes explicit, image of the objector as a victim that emerged from 1917.

The focus on conscientious objectors as the principle figure of war resistance was also, to some extent, disrupted in 1917 by the introduction of a new women's peace movement, although this only occurred within the anti-war press. Indeed, anti-war women continued to be largely absent from the pro-war press for the remainder of the conflict. The Women's Peace Crusade (WPC) which began in Glasgow and spread to other cities, particularly in the north of England, organised frequent grassroots demonstrations focusing on working class women in their communities, printed substantial peace literature and had a weekly column in the *Labour Leader*. The representation of the WPC picked up on the maternalist discourses that had been dominant prior to conscription and had a particular focus on the suffering of women with male relations serving at the front. This new movement meant that the anti-war press once again turned at least some of its attention to women's particular interest in bringing about an end to the conflict.

The specific context of the final two years of the conflict, therefore, created significant shifts in the portrayal of war resistance. Debates about the nation,

⁴⁶⁷ Angela Smith, *Discourses Surrounding British Widows of the First World War* (Bloomsbury: London, 2013), p. 22.

citizenship, and suffering combined to complicate the gendered narratives that had been established during 1916, particularly in the anti-war press, and highlighted the strains that wartime experience put on the gendered constructions of male and female opponents of the war. In doing so, the way in which discourses of suffering, citizenship, and resistance were navigated by both pro-war and anti-war voices during 1917 and 1918 reveal the central, but often complex, role that masculinity and femininity played in how these three narratives were formed.

The Treatment of COs

With much of the pro-war press's attention on war resisters being devoted to the men on the HO camps, articles that contended that these men were 'coddled' and given an unacceptable amount of freedom proliferated, particularly in the *Daily Mail*. The repeated argument that these objectors were being treated too softly substantiated the central pro-war discourses of objectors from 1916. Indeed, the representation of their treatment was often explicitly tied to an idea that objectors were cowardly, selfish, and weak, both in body and mind. There was a particular concern with the men on the Princetown work camp as a wave of hostile public feeling towards the men sprang up locally in a spontaneous fashion and was then perpetuated by the publicity given to the men in the national press.⁴⁶⁸ A *Daily Mail* article from April 1917, for instance, used the example of a football match at Dartmoor to suggest that the pacifist convictions of the COs were insincere.

Princetown smiles. It has found a 'conscientious objector' who will strike a blow- not for his country nor for his mother or sister, but for his football ... While Princetown boys were enjoying a game of football ... some 300 'conscientious' objectors came on the scene. They kicked the youngsters' ball away ... and started a match among themselves.

⁴⁶⁸ J. Vellacott, *Conscientious Objection*, p. 177.

But the boys spoiled it. They labelled one side 'the slackers' and the other 'the shirkers' ... An indignant 'objector' with supreme courage, captured a boy who had so interfered and slapped his ears ... Older boys are still astonished that a football should have aroused something of a spirit of warfare in a 'conscientious objector.'⁴⁶⁹

The portrayal of COs attacking younger boys, and the comparison of this with their unwillingness to fight for their country, mothers and sisters, overtly challenges the masculine status of the objectors by highlighting their failure to ascribe to the exemplary maleness of the patriotic and chivalric sportsmanship of the soldier.⁴⁷⁰ Furthermore, the younger boys' use of the dominant anti-CO narratives of 'slacker' and 'shirker' is significant in demonstrating how the construction of masculine identity and superior and inferior masculinities was built through social interactions and peer approval. The affirmation of the inferior masculinity of the objector by the young boys is central in this regard. Masculinity in this period was often constructed with regards to maturity and the transition from boy to man. Collini has noted, for example, that Victorian 'manliness' was shaped less in contrast with the 'feminine' and more with the "'bestial", non-human, childlike, or immature.'⁴⁷¹ The young boys' disapproval of the older military-age objectors therefore serves to both construct the COs masculinity as inferior whilst also acting as a marker of the young boys transition into manhood through their recognition of the proper masculine wartime role. Moreover, this transition to maturity is also confirmed through peer approval. As Tosh has pointed out, masculine identity is to a significant degree a social identity because it is inseparable from peer recognition, 'which in turn depends on performance in the social sphere.'⁴⁷² The *Mail* article therefore affirmed the

⁴⁶⁹ Our Own Correspondent, 'Conscience Men', *Daily Mail*, 23rd April 1917, p. 3.

⁴⁷⁰ Lois Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, pp. 90-95 for a discussion on manliness and the soldier.

⁴⁷¹ Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 186-187.

⁴⁷² John Tosh, 'What Should Historians do With Masculinity?' , p. 198.

inferior masculinity of objectors through the boys' implicit public acknowledgment of the superior masculinity of the soldier's selfless act of duty. The identification and acceptance of this wartime hierarchy of masculinities by the young boys shows how the *Mail* used the freedom of objectors on the HO scheme to provide a social context in which the inferior masculinity of COs could be publicly acknowledged and reinforced.

Indeed, the presence of objectors in public spaces became a central means of constructing COs' masculinity throughout 1917. Whilst the football pitch was the site of discord in the *Mail*, in a *Daily Express* article the negative configuration of male resistance was centred on the roads around Plymouth:

The greatest indignation prevails among the inhabitants of Plymouth because of the astonishing freedom given to conscientious objectors at Dartmoor ... It will surprise people to learn that conscientious objectors ... are actually driven about Plymouth and district for joy rides in motorcars ... C.H. Norman, the notorious peace crank, and one of the pillars of the No-Conscription Fellowship ... was recently seen in a motorcar in the streets of Plymouth and other members of the anti-British organisation have likewise been taking motorcar trips throughout the county of Devon and dining at the best hotels.⁴⁷³

Unlike absolutist objectors, who were physically absent from the public sphere as a result of their imprisonment, the HO men were often situated within local communities. The portrayal of objectors in outdoor public spaces engaged in activities far removed from the war was used by the pro-war press to undermine not only the claim, made by objectors and their supporters, that their objection was upheld with a moral and sincere

⁴⁷³ 'Happy Holidays for C.O.s: Dartmoor Joy Rides while Brave Men Die: A Crying Shame!', *Daily Express*, 20th April 1917, p. 3.

conviction but also to underscore their absence from the space of wartime masculine attainment, the battlefield. Contextualising the representation of COs in this way therefore accentuated the opposing experiences of the soldier and the objector.

The significance of public space as a context in which the masculinity of the objector could be tested and the soldier/CO binary could be underscored is further demonstrated by a letter written by a mother of servicemen to the *Mail* which complained about the lenient treatment of objectors:

I have read of football matches, concerts, and other amusements in the camps of the 'conscientious' objectors ... As the mother of one dear boy lying in a grave in France, while his brother is daily risking his life on the Passchendaele Ridge, I deem myself rich indeed to have so much to give my country, but oh, I passionately protest against the 'conscientious' canker in our midst!⁴⁷⁴

The contrast between the spaces of the grave and the battlefield of Passchendaele with football matches and concerts highlights the divergent masculinities of servicemen and COs and demonstrates the extent to which wartime masculinity was constructed not only with reference to the bodies of men but also the spaces in which these bodies occupied. This is arguably why the pro-war press focused so intensely on the Home Office camps. In contrast to the mother's soldier sons, the objector was absent from the spaces of conflict, both in the military sphere and the home front, through his inhabitation of spaces of enjoyment and amusement. As such, the perceived freedoms that COs were seen to benefit from within the HO Camps contextualised and reinforced the anti-CO narratives of selfishness, cowardice, and insincerity by representing them within spaces entirely removed from the conflict.

⁴⁷⁴ J. C. H., 'Well-Fed "Conchies"', *Daily Mail*, 15th November 1917, p. 2.

The home front was also closely linked to female suffering and there was a perception that grief and loss contributed to the 'image of the home front as a feminine space.'⁴⁷⁵ Significantly then, female suffering became another way of criticising the treatment of objectors. A letter written into the *Observer* by Mary Gaunt, for example, compared the suffering of women and the suffering of objectors, noting that 'there are thousands of women mourning their sons; wives their husbands; children their fathers, maids their lovers ... What is the suffering of the conscientious objector beside such unspeakable woe?'⁴⁷⁶ The hierarchy of suffering represented in the letter demonstrates how wartime suffering and grief had significant implications for way that the treatment of objectors was interpreted.⁴⁷⁷ Indeed, the relationship between women and the battlefield outlined in the letter further emphasised the problematic status of conscientious objectors who occupied an uneasy position within both the representation of masculine warfare and an increasingly feminised portrayal of suffering on the home front.

The way that texts within the *Express* and *Mail* used the HO camps to underpin the anti-CO narratives that had been established in 1916 was mirrored in the anti-war press which reinforced the discourses of selfless sacrifice and heroic endurance through the context of imprisonment. The treatment of COs by the state, particularly in prisons, became an important way of emphasising the endurance, sincerity and impact of the objectors' stand in the face of suffering. In a *Labour Leader* article, marking the anniversary of the first arrests of conscientious objectors by the military

⁴⁷⁵ Laura Ugolini, *Civvies*, p. 6.

⁴⁷⁶ Mary Gaunt, "'I Appeal unto Caesar": Some Replies to Mr. Galsworthy', *The Observer*, 2nd September 1918, p. 5.

⁴⁷⁷ See A. Gregory, *The Last Great War*, chapter 4 on the 'Economies of sacrifice' during the war.

authorities, it was noted that in facing ‘an ordeal which required no small amount of strength of purpose,’ the objectors’ stance has meant that ‘militarism, although it triumphs at present, has met its match in a spirit of opposition to its evils.’⁴⁷⁸ The impact of the objectors’ stand was further elaborated upon in another *Leader* article which suggested that suffering imbued the COs’ stance with meaning and the potential for great hope in the future:

History does not prove us with a single case of liberty won without suffering. We cannot forget this now ... In these days, when the old cry of slacker and shirker is being raised against the conscientious objector, we should remember that there are still over 1,000 young men in gaol because they will not burn a grain of incense to militarism, and because they believe that in this steadfast refusal, whatever be the consequences, lies a great hope for the world ... We have the certainty that on our night of suffering ... will arise the Sun of Victory.⁴⁷⁹

The continued suffering of the COs in both these texts is highlighted as central to the experience of war resistance. The length of time that objectors had faced hardship was seen to bolster the strength of their conviction and it was therefore argued that their suffering would lead to the ultimate triumph of peace over militarism. The framing of suffering in this way, and the language used to represent the objector, invokes what Patrick Joyce has identified as ‘romanticism’ in the radical political language of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Joyce contends that the imagery of suffering evoked the struggles of ‘liberty against tyranny, light against darkness or freedom against slavery’ that supplied radicals with both an ideology and

⁴⁷⁸ ‘A Year of C.O. Arrests: An Anniversary Record’, *Labour Leader*, 12th April 1917, p. 11.

⁴⁷⁹ J. D., ‘A May Day Tribute to C.O.’s: Over a Thousand Still in Prison!’, *Labour Leader*, 10th May 1917, p. 5.

'language of feeling.'⁴⁸⁰ Elements of this are clearly evident in the *Leader* articles, in particular the image of the 'Sun of Victory' and the opposition to the evil of militarism. The emphasis on the suffering of objectors coupled with this imagery therefore contributes to an evocative portrayal of the experience and ideology of conscientious objection as part of a larger struggle.

The endowment of objectors' suffering with broader purpose and meaning was similarly evident in the explicit connections that were outlined between their poor treatment and their heroism. In an article written by Margaret Hobhouse a few months following the publication of 'I Appeal Unto Caesar', the poor treatment of the absolutists was explicitly framed in terms of heroism. She wrote that COs were 'herded together with criminals, cut off from all human intercourse ... yet this silent crowd of men remain steadfast to their convictions braving all this ... conscience has made heroes of the men who are suffering so cruelly, rather than bow the neck to a yoke they abhor.'⁴⁸¹ As Bibbings has pointed out, depictions of objectors as heroes were a common part of their supporters' propaganda, as well as being integral to the defence of their manliness.⁴⁸² The identification of these men as heroic demonstrates how the poor treatment of COs provided a context in which the anti-war press conflated male resistance with heroism through the narrative of sacrifice, echoing the construction of wartime heroism more broadly. Meyer has argued that the civil communities of dead soldiers ascribed their deaths as heroic through the consolation that they had nobly sacrificed for a worthy cause.⁴⁸³ In a similar way the narratives of sacrifice

⁴⁸⁰ Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 34.

⁴⁸¹ Mrs M. Hobhouse, 'Conscience', *Herald*, 1st December 1917, p. 8.

⁴⁸² L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales about Men*, p. 204.

⁴⁸³ J. Meyer, *Men of War*, p. 75.

that had been evident in representations of objectors in 1916 came to be identified as heroic through COs' continued suffering for the cause of peace.

The representation of COs as heroes was also underpinned by the singling out of a number of objectors who were seen to be representative of the movement as a whole. Stephen Hobhouse, Clifford Allen and Fenner Brockway were frequently commented upon throughout 1917 and, as Caedel argues, these three objectors were 'atypically attractive figures.'⁴⁸⁴ Hobhouse and Allen, in particular, were set aside for admiration not only because of their relative prominence as COs but also because of their fragile health during 1917 and 1918. Indeed, in late 1917, following his mother's campaign and pamphlet, Hobhouse was released from prison on the grounds of ill-health. The veneration of these men therefore served not only to demonstrate the sincerity of objectors' convictions but also shed light on the poor treatment of men who were sincere in their beliefs.

The representation of Clifford Allen is particularly evocative of how these two elements intersected and were used as a way of criticising the treatment of objectors more generally. An article in the *Manchester Guardian*, for example, stated that:

Mr. Allen's offence is that he really and truly is the man whom the authors of the Military Service Act meant to hold harmless. He has a deep-rooted conviction, a conviction for which he is evidently prepared to die ... the more deeply a man feels, the more fully and truly he is the conscientious objector whom the Act meant to liberate, the more certainly he suffers.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁴ Martin Caedel, 'Pacifism', p. 589.

⁴⁸⁵ 'The Case Against Persecution', *Manchester Guardian*, 12th June 1917, p. 4.

This sentiment was echoed in correspondence to the *Guardian* which responded to this article and asserted that the case of Clifford Allen was evidence of the cruelty of the conscription acts. F. E. Green asserted that Allen had shown 'such grit and determination ... to uphold his principles under ceaseless persecution that ... we can but be proud of him as a good fighter, though he is a pacifist.'⁴⁸⁶ In a similarly admiring tone, Thomas Oakmeads wrote in the *Herald* that Allen had 'stood before the world, hated, derided, tormented. Before you loomed the shades of the prison house ... Before you, the path of suffering ... Yourself a hero, you have recognised heroism in others.'⁴⁸⁷ These texts highlight how the individual exemplary objector fed into the representation of male resistance as a heroic act. This construction of heroism can be situated within a broader tradition of ideal masculine figures, particularly soldier heroes. Dawson's exploration of Major General Sir Henry Havelock in mid-Victorian England for example, has illustrated how the forging of an image of Havelock as a 'soldier-saint' fused military adventure with the evangelical genre of the 'exemplary life.'⁴⁸⁸ The identification of Allen as an exemplar of conscientious objection is portrayed in much the same way as Havelock. That the heroism of Allen is constructed through the press is also significant because as Dawson has pointed out, new forms of public media of communication were central to constructing Havelock as a public hero and a composite figure of ideal and exemplary manhood.⁴⁸⁹ As Mike Donaldson has suggested, 'to be culturally exalted, masculinity must have exemplars who are celebrated as heroes.'⁴⁹⁰ The depiction of exemplary objectors in the anti-war press demonstrates how the endurance of suffering by particular COs was used to bolster the construction of male war resistance as an admirable masculine experience in

⁴⁸⁶ F. E. Green, 'Correspondence: The Case Against Persecution: The Case of Mr. Clifford Allen', *Manchester Guardian*, 2nd July 1917, p. 8.

⁴⁸⁷ Thomas Oakmeads, 'Salute to Clifford Allen', *Herald*, 16th June 1917, p. 11.

⁴⁸⁸ G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 82, pp. 80-150.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 83.

⁴⁹⁰ Mike Donaldson, 'What is Hegemonic Masculinity?', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 22, No. 5, Special Issue: Masculinities (October, 1993), 643-657 (p. 647).

the final two years of the war. Indeed, the emphasis on Allen's treatment in prison reveals the centrality of suffering to the construction of the heroic masculine objector.

The depictions of heroic individual suffering were part of a broader increase in the self-representation of objectors within the anti-war press, particularly in the *Labour Leader*. Letters from COs in prison began to be published regularly throughout 1917 and detailed the effect of prison life on their stance, body, and mind. Through their descriptions of the impact of imprisonment these letters offer insight into how objectors represented their masculinity as well as the connection between masculinity and the body. The centrality of the body and mind in objectors' prison letters reveal how objectors understood their resistance to war and incarceration as part of an embodied experience of masculinity, illustrating Tosh's assertion that masculinity is more than a social construction, it is also a subjective identity, 'usually the most deeply experienced that men have.'⁴⁹¹ Yet the embodied experience of imprisonment that was expressed in these letters also exposed a tension between the representation of the suffering and victimhood of objectors and their heroic endurance of imprisonment. Moreover, the balance that objectors and their supporters attempted to strike in texts about imprisonment were illustrative of wider concerns in the anti-war movement about how to approach this aspect of COs' experience. As Vellacott has pointed out, the NCF executive found the publicising of the conditions of objectors' imprisonment, whilst avoiding the appearance of complaining at hardships, increasingly difficult.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹¹ J. Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?', p. 194.

⁴⁹² J. Vellacott, *Conscientious Objection*, p. 195.

For some objectors the prison experience, although fraught with difficulties such as isolation, a restricted diet and enforced silence amongst prisoners,⁴⁹³ also had elements that were interpreted as positive and fulfilling. One of the prison letters published in the *Leader*, from Fenner Brockway in early 1917, for example, placed specific emphasis on the spiritual impact of imprisonment and the comradeship between COs:

I am thoroughly well, and I am happy. I do not seem to be in prison. You know how contentedly I entered; that feeling has remained all through ...

When I first entered Scrubbs I had the impression of entering the precincts of a church rather than a prison ...

I cannot describe to you the wonderful sense of comradeship there is among C.O.'s in prison. We are not allowed to speak to each other, but the unity we feel does not need expression in speech ... You cannot conceive the sense of spiritual exaltation and expansion received from the sight of those two hundred C.O.'s marching in step around the prison yard! It gave me new hope for the future. And when Sunday came, and I went to the chapel, the joy of being one of the eight hundred C.O.'s there was almost intoxicating.⁴⁹⁴

Brockway's comparison of the prison with a church and his description of spiritual exaltation demonstrates how he viewed his time in prison as both a testament to his convictions and an experience which enabled him to develop and affirm his commitment to peace. The way in which he conveyed his imprisonment as an experience beyond words reinforces the prison as a spiritual site of resistance that could only be understood by those who experienced it. In this way, the physical and mental separation of the COs from the rest of society is represented as a central part of this transformative spiritual process and consequently underscores the unique

⁴⁹³ T. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*, pp. 182-186.

⁴⁹⁴ 'Within Prison Walls: Letters from our Editor and James Maxton, M. A.', *Labour Leader*, 8th February 1917, p. 6.

experience of absolutist male resisters. This sense of authority, derived from 'being there', can be compared to Samuel Hynes' contention that only those men who have witnessed war have absolute authority to tell the stories of war.⁴⁹⁵ Hynes argues that the isolation felt by soldiers in war is not simply a condition of combat but is 'common to the whole state of being in a war.'⁴⁹⁶ Brockway depicts objectors' imprisonment as a source of authority to tell the story of war resistance. The isolation of the prison is significant in this regard because it explicitly excludes those resisters who had not been imprisoned for their opposition to the war, particularly women. In this way, Brockway reinforces COs' authoritative position within the anti-war movement in a way that is implicitly gendered.

Parallels between the self-representation of COs and the experience of soldiering can also be drawn with regards to Brockway's portrayal of comradeship as a fundamental element of objectors' experience. As Anthony Fletcher's examination of patriotism and identity has shown, many soldiers viewed comradeship as a process of 'self-subordination, the sacrifice of personal needs and preferences to a cause that is far greater.'⁴⁹⁷ Furthermore, Meyer has identified comradeship as a key component of First World War masculinity: comradeship achieved through shared suffering defined men as heroes through their willingness to endure.⁴⁹⁸ Although Brockway does not explicitly outline any suffering in this letter, the hardships of silence and repetitive work are implied. The centrality of comradeship in his letter therefore evokes many of the factors identified by both Fletcher

⁴⁹⁵ Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), pp. 1-2.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 8.

⁴⁹⁷ Anthony Fletcher, 'Patriotism, Identity and Commemoration: New Light on the Great War from the Papers of Major Reggie Chevenix Trench', *History: The Journal of the Historical Association*, Vol. 90, No. 300 (October, 2005), 532-549 (p. 545).

⁴⁹⁸ Jessica Meyer, 'The Miraculous Survival of Tommy Atkins: Continuity and Discontinuity in British Understandings of Masculinity After the First World War', *Bridges*, Vol. 12, No. 1/2, (Spring/ Summer 2005), 61-78.

and Meyer, particularly the sacrifice of personal needs for a cause greater than oneself. By placing emphasis on the positive experience of comradeship within prison and alluding to the suffering and purpose through which it came about, Brockway defines himself and the other COs within the narrative of heroic endurance that had been established in anti-war representations of objectors during 1916.

These narratives were evident in a more explicit manner in the writing of Clifford Allen. In a text published in the *Herald* in June 1917, Allen specifically outlined the effect of persecution and imprisonment on the stand of COs. Speaking on behalf of the absolutist objectors, he wrote that:

The persecution of those who are genuine, will ultimately achieve the ruin of the very ideals for which you are fighting ...

The longer you persecute us the stronger and more sincere you render us. The more you attempt to break our spirits the more you assure our opportunity of infusing inspiration amongst other groups of men and women ... You can isolate us for a time from the joys of an active free life of service, but in so doing you will only bring us into truer harmony with all that is most fearless and enduring and vital in the life of the world.⁴⁹⁹

Allen positions the persecution faced by COs at the centre of their experience of resistance and much like Brockway asserts that the effect of imprisonment, and isolation in particular, widened the impact and crystallised the objectors' stand. Indeed, suffering and persecution are portrayed as integral to the impact of the objectors' resistance and, as in Brockway's text, suffering is defined in primarily positive terms, as a source of strength and renewal.

⁴⁹⁹ Clifford Allen, 'Why I Still Refuse', *Herald*, 2nd June 1917, p. 13.

Whilst this affirmative representation of the prison experience was an important way for some COs to portray their imprisonment, in other texts an acknowledgement of the mental and physical degradation of a number of objectors also emerged. Consequently, a tension between suffering and spiritual and ideological fulfilment surfaced. This tension complicated the narrative of heroic endurance and strength and exposed the problems that male resisters and their supporters faced by highlighting the suffering of COs. This is brought into particularly sharp focus from 1918.

Later correspondence from Brockway to the *Leader* represented a complex and somewhat contradictory portrayal of both the heroic endurance of objectors and their physical and mental deterioration. He wrote for instance that conscientious objectors were 'far more concerned about the coming peace than about the coming of liberty for themselves', and stated that he is 'quite sure there is not a single C.O. who would not be prepared to remain in prison for the rest of his life, if by so doing he could save the lives of the soldiers in every belligerent country by bringing peace nearer.'⁵⁰⁰ However, he went on to note that while the spirit of the men in prison is 'unbreakable', he was aware that some of them had suffered and how 'their health is broken, how they cannot sleep at nights', that 'worse than the physical effects is the mental and spiritual deterioration which confinement often causes ... In a few cases ... absolute mental derangement has occurred.'⁵⁰¹ In concluding, Brockway clearly showed his conflicting views on the experience of imprisonment stating that 'we do not want those who are working for peace to relax their efforts in order to work for our release. We shall stand by our principles, whatever the term we have to serve. But it would be hypocrisy to suggest that we do not long for freedom ... '⁵⁰² The initial statement that COs were willing to stay in prison for the rest of their lives for

⁵⁰⁰ 'Correspondence: Mr. Brockway on Prison Life', *Labour Leader*, 22nd March 1917, p. 2.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*

the cause of peace reinforced the narratives of endurance evident in both Brockway's previous letter and Allen's text. Moreover, in suggesting that their imprisonment was saving the lives of soldiers, Brockway, to some extent, attempted to eclipse the sacrifice of the soldier with the suffering of the CO, a narrative that had also been evident in 1916. Yet the second half of the letter disrupts this and instead portrays some objectors as victims of their incarceration. Rather than actively turning the effects of prison into a positive experience, the men who suffered 'mental derangement' are represented as damaged by their imprisonment. Furthermore, the admission that COs longed for freedom challenged the assertion in Brockway's previous letter that prison was a positive experience that was integral to the stance of objectors.

Concerns about the focus on the negative effects of imprisonment on objectors in the anti-war press even raised anxieties for the objector and NCF National Committee member, Walter Ayles. In a letter to the *Leader* he noted that:

A good deal has been written about the C.O.s in prison, giving an impression- either in direct words or in hints- of unpleasantness, privation and unhappiness. This may result in a policy which I fear will bring moral disaster not only to the men in prison and camps, but to the great cause for which we stand.⁵⁰³

Whilst acknowledging that some men were suffering in prison, Ayles also argued for what he called the 'other side' of imprisonment:

It is the common experience of our men that the mind becomes wonderfully clear and active, memory improves, and the

⁵⁰³ Walter H. Ayles, 'Prison, Liberty, and Peace', *Labour Leader*, 8th March 1917, p. 7.

imagination develops. Life, prevented from being extensive, becomes intensive. Personal character is developed, ideas clarified, and spiritual experiences realised that would never, and probably could never, have been realised if we had not had our “forty days and nights” in the wilderness ... In thinking out one’s ideals again one is insensibly merged into the life of humanity ... Prison brings new emphases ... These experiences will be remembered by some of the C.O.s as amongst the greatest and most profound of their lives. But not only in the preparation of body and character do we find joy, but also in the obvious determination of the men to improve their minds.⁵⁰⁴

Ayles’ portrayal of the effect of prison on mind, character and body is evocative of Graham Dawson’s contention that masculinities ‘are lived out in the flesh, but fashioned in the imagination.’⁵⁰⁵ The way Ayles described the impact of prison on the CO and his resistance is both intensely personal and related to the objectors’ position within wider society. As Catherine Feely has argued in her study of the prison reading of COs, for some conscientious objectors ‘incarceration had given them the space and time to think and read deeply for the first time.’⁵⁰⁶ In addition, despite some of the difficulties in accessing reading materials, Feely asserts that, by reading and writing in difficult conditions, conscientious objectors could reassert ‘their existence in the face of their exclusion from civil society.’⁵⁰⁷

This emphasis on the development of personal character and the clarification of the mind that imprisonment was seen to facilitate was also linked to the body and the perception that objectors were the physical and

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁵ G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 1.

⁵⁰⁶ Catherine Feely, “‘Only a Scrap of Paper’: The Prison Reading of British Conscientious Objectors, 1916-1919’ in Shafquat Towheed and Edmund G. C. King (eds), *Reading and the First World War: Readers, Texts, Archives* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2015), pp. 190-205 (p. 192)

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

spiritual embodiment of the resistance against the war which was evocative of constructions of heroic masculinity. George Mosse has argued, for example, that physical health expressed 'in an obvious manner ... the linkage of body and soul, of morality and bodily structure.'⁵⁰⁸ Indeed, as the previous chapter demonstrated, the body was an important site of resistance for COs. As Seth Koven has pointed out, many conscientious objectors kept 'vigilant tabs' on themselves and wrote detailed accounts of the effect of imprisonment upon their bodies during their periods of incarceration.⁵⁰⁹ In this sense, the centrality of the harsh environment of the prison as a space in which objectors could configure their masculinity demonstrates how the prison became an overtly gendered anti-war space. Moreover, the body was significant because it could be invoked in various ways to demonstrate the sincerity of COs' objection. On the one hand, some objectors could use the fact that they had adapted to the 'scant diet and harsh conditions of prison life' to demonstrate the efficacy of their ethics and their 'manly fortitude.'⁵¹⁰ On the other hand, 'objectors' bodily disablement in the name of conscience functioned as a de facto rebuttal of those who frequently contrasted conscientious objectors' selfish desire for comfort with their soldier-hero brothers' unspeakable hardships and deprivations.⁵¹¹ As Ayles' text demonstrates, however, the disparities between how objectors wished to portray themselves within the anti-war community and the way they represented themselves to others meant that the male resisters' body was a potential site of conflict and tension for the construction of objectors' masculinity.

⁵⁰⁸ G. Mosse, *The Image of Man*, pp. 25-27.

⁵⁰⁹ Seth Koven, *The Match Girl and the Heiress* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 223.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 223.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 224.

The anxieties professed by Ayles were not only evocative of this tension but reveal how the portrayal of the prison experience as damaging to COs in both body and mind was intimately tied into both their stand and their position within the anti-war movement. To depict the negative impact of suffering on objectors as a direct result of their resistance was to effectively undermine their position as the heroes of the anti-war movement, a position which was based, in large part, on their physical and emotional endurance of persecution. CO suffering was also particularly problematic because it was steeped in the competing ideologies of heroic masculinity that were at play within both the anti-war movement and wider society. The suffering of the objector inevitably competed with that of the soldier. Consequently, the representation of the negative impact of objectors' experience exposed tensions and contradictions not only within the anti-war movement but in wartime society more widely.

Victims and Martyrs

Whilst the focus on the treatment of objectors declined in the pro-war press in 1918, the dual narratives of heroic endurance and victimhood in the anti-war press shifted so that heroism gave way to victimhood. Whilst there were still glimpses of narratives of heroic endurance, the major concern in 1918 was the agitation for the release of absolutist objectors and an improvement in conditions for others. In the *Herald* for instance, a consistent stream of reports on the deaths or illness of objectors made scant reference to their heroic endurance. One article asserted that 'these men are still in prison, still being tortured and persecuted, every day some fresh horror is brought to light,'⁵¹² whilst another stated that 'the Government continues to drive conscientious objectors out of their minds by sentences of imprisonment of a length and severity which it is admitted no human being can stand.'⁵¹³ To

⁵¹² 'The Conscientious Objectors', *Herald*, 2nd February 1918, p. 2.

⁵¹³ 'The Labour Push', *Herald*, 6th July 1918, p. 5.

be sure, there were still elements of heroic discourses as illustrated by the *Herald's* editor George Lansbury's assertion that 'the conscientious objectors in our prisons, who by their heroic sufferings, have proved and demonstrated their faith.'⁵¹⁴ Yet what is particularly significant is not the departure of this narrative in much of the reporting from 1918 but the introduction of new ways of talking about objectors. A *Herald* article which remarked on the death of a CO, for instance, contended that the socialist movement 'will be judged according to how far it was willing to fight for the weak and oppressed.'⁵¹⁵ The suggestion that objectors were both weak and oppressed marked a significant disjuncture with the representation of COs as heroic and self-sacrificing. Whilst the image of heroic endurance and prison as a positive experience in some ways suggested that objectors were in active control of their experience, the image of COs as weak and oppressed conjured up notions of passivity and victimhood.

This representational shift is also illustrated by John W. Graham's correspondence to the *Guardian* which argued that 'there is now widespread collapse of health among the victims of the tribunals and it will grow worse every week.'⁵¹⁶ Articles in the *Leader* echoed this sentiment through the assertion that 'men are being driven mad and are dying in prison almost every week as the result of the inhuman treatment they receive,'⁵¹⁷ and that '*such barbarous sentences simply cannot be served* [original emphasis]. Death is already beginning to release the prisoners.'⁵¹⁸ The depiction of the CO as victim challenged the representations of resistance in the anti-war movement itself and can also be contextualised within a broader change in the imagery of men during the final year of the conflict. Samuel Hynes has

⁵¹⁴ George Lansbury, 'For All Prisoners and Captives', *Herald*, 16th March 1918, p. 3.

⁵¹⁵ 'The Way of the World: the Conscientious Objectors', *Herald*, 16th February 1918, p. 2.

⁵¹⁶ John W. Graham, 'The Punishment of Conscience', *Manchester Guardian*, 16th March 1918, p. 5.

⁵¹⁷ 'Conscientious Objectors', *Labour Leader*, 7th March 1918, p. 1.

⁵¹⁸ 'Demand for C.O.'s Release', *Labour Leader*, 21st March 1918, p. 2.

argued that in the last year of the war there was a proliferation of images and texts that depicted the soldier as a martyr victim, and this had the effect of making the idea of a hero become unimaginable.⁵¹⁹ The anti-war press's invocation of narratives that positioned objectors as victims of a brutal government system can therefore be seen as reflective of the changing discourses of male heroism in the last two years of the war.

The changes in the discourses of male heroism also contributed to the increased representation of objectors as martyrs. As Hynes has argued, the reconfiguration of soldiers as martyrs meant that victory faded from the story and the war became 'only a long catastrophe, with neither significant action nor direction, a violence that was neither fought nor won, but only endured.'⁵²⁰ The framing of the CO as martyr fitted into this understanding of war by identifying the deaths of objectors as evidence that the catastrophic effects of the conflict extended to the home front in a variety of ways. The positioning of conscientious objectors as martyrs for peace and anti-militarism also served to amplify the repeated contentions of the anti-war press that the war had been futile from the beginning. By invoking narratives of martyrdom, the suffering and deaths of objectors were imbued with a poignant meaning because it was perceived that they had died in a noble attempt to halt the catastrophic violence of war and had therefore sacrificed for a cause greater than themselves. In this way, the tensions that were inherent in the depiction of objectors' suffering could to some extent be resolved.

The desire to assign broader significance to the deaths of objectors was particularly evident in the *Labour Leader's* invocation of discourses of martyrdom. For example, in one article on the death of the CO, Mr. Bennett

⁵¹⁹ S. Hynes, *A War Imagined*, pp. 212-215.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 215.

Wallis, from October 1917, the *Leader* commented on the fact that it was strange that an inquiry was being demanded into the death of one objector whilst thousands of deaths went ‘unheeded’ on the battlefields of Europe. The text goes on to suggest that this was because of ‘the martyr’s power to uplift by his death the cause for which he stands.’⁵²¹ The proof of the power of the martyr’s death was then shown by drawing a direct comparison between the COs and the deaths of Irish nationalists killed in the Easter Rising:

This is borne out by the recent experiences of the fighters for Irish freedom. Many brave and true young men fell fighting in the Easter rebellion, but none of them in their dying shook the hearts of their fellows like James Connolly and Thomas Ashes, who met their death while unarmed and helpless in the hands of their captors.⁵²²

The parallels between the Irish nationalist martyrs and the COs are particularly interesting in terms of both the portrayal of the men and the implications that both had for the consideration of the British state. Jonathan Githens-Mazer, in his study of the myths of the Easter Rising, has pointed out that one of the key elements underpinning the transformation of the men of the Rising into martyrs was the depiction of them as morally upstanding through ‘their love of the Catholic faith, and their “Gaelic” bravery.’⁵²³ This bears similarities to the configuration of the conscientious objector within the anti-war press, specifically the emphasis on the morality and bravery of his stance and the commitment to his cause. By drawing a comparison with the Irish martyrs, this text works to assign the deaths of the objectors with a significance and meaning that was comparable to the way

⁵²¹ ‘The Mystery of Martyrdom’, *Labour Leader*, 11th October 1917, p. 2.

⁵²² *Ibid.*

⁵²³ Jonathan Githens-Mazer, *Myths and Memories of the Easter Rising: Cultural and Political Nationalism in Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), p. 142.

that the men of the Easter Rising were conceptualised by their supporters following the uprising.

The relationship of both these groups of men with the British state also illuminates how the construction of martyrdom emphasised a negative portrayal of the government. Githens-Mazer argues that the flipside to the process of 'popular beatification' of the men of the Easter Rising was the demonization of British actions and the perception that 'British reactions to the Rising were inherently unjust and retributive.'⁵²⁴ Whilst aligning objectors with the overtly anti-British martyrs of the Rising could be problematic for a group that had been repeatedly castigated as anti-national, the way in which similarities were drawn out between the two groups of men suggested that the COs' deaths had also been at the hands of an unjust British state. This contributed to an argument that the treatment of objectors was harmful to the nation as a whole. This association of martyrdoms thus enabled the anti-war press to reinforce the image of the courageous and principled objector whose death had a wider significance, whilst simultaneously placing the blame for objector deaths squarely in the hands of the British state.

Indeed, the image of the CO martyr against the state became a key way of underpinning objectors' deaths with a poignant meaning during 1918:

Even in the midst of the incalculable carnage on the Somme the deaths of two more C.O.s in prison has attracted widespread attention and protest ... Once again "unarmed resistance" to Prussianism has proved its mystic power. Faced with the deaths of men like W. E. Burns (under forcible feedings) and Paul Gillan, to whose unconquerable spirit his many gaolers, as well as his fellow-prisoners, will bear witness, the British public is compelled to dimly

⁵²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 145.

glimpse what is the nature of the militarist slavery to which it has surrendered its soul ... our comrades were men who will never make peace with oppression, in their death they are more than conquerors.⁵²⁵

Echoing the significance of objectors' physical and mental isolation expressed in their letters to the press, it is clear from this article that it was precisely objectors' separation from weaponry and combat that had a particular importance and power. In this way, the narrative of martyrdom inverted the pro-war press's negative gendered construction of the objector within spaces that were divorced from the militarised spaces of conflict. Instead, it was suggested that their unarmed resistance made their death more powerful than that of the soldier. In drawing out this contrast, the text implied that the resistance demonstrated by the CO had a broader impact on the British public than the militarism of war. The suggestion that the COs' deaths compelled the public to look at 'the militarist slavery to which it has surrendered' is illustrative of Andrew Chandler and Anthony Harvey's point that narratives of martyrdom often emphasise, among other things, the power of martyrs to convert even those who had been opposed to them.⁵²⁶ Consequently, the deaths of the men resisting war were represented as an important catalyst for the enactment of objectors' ideals and the end of militarism itself.

Given the centrality of religion to conceptions of martyrdom, it is unsurprising that the martyrdom of objectors was often embedded in overtly religious language. In an article in the *Herald* written by its editor, George Lansbury, the martyrdom of COs was linked to that of St. Francis of Assisi and other Christian saints. After recounting the tale of St. Francis who declined to

⁵²⁵ "'Dead' in Prison", *Labour Leader*, 28th March 1918, p. 2.

⁵²⁶ Andrew Chandler and Anthony Harvey, 'Introduction' in Andrew Chandler (ed.), *The Terrible Alternative: Christian Martyrdom in the Twentieth Century* (London: Cassell, 1998), pp. 1-12, (p. 8).

follow the life of a soldier, Lansbury wrote that 'since that day there have been countless martyrs and saints who, enduring the cross, despising the same, have passed out into the unknown, many of them unhonoured and unsung ... In this noble army of martyrs I include all those creeds, of all sects.'⁵²⁷ He goes on to explicitly connect these martyrs to the absolutist objectors by asserting that

the men who at this moment are enduring the tortures of prison, who day by day are refused the privilege of serving their fellow-men in the ordinary way of service, are demonstrating to the whole world that the thing called conscience, the thing called religion, is as great a power over the lives of those who truly follow the light as ever it was.⁵²⁸

Within this text there are two central elements of Christian martyrdom. The first is the notion that a 'martyr's death was one defined by faithful adherence to the Christian profession in the face of insult, calumny and active persecution.'⁵²⁹ The second is the idea that in order to become a martyr an 'important moment of decision arises, and it is resolved when the prospective martyr takes, not the road to safety, but its alternative.'⁵³⁰ Although death was not specifically mentioned, the linking of past Christian martyrs to the COs' endurance of persecution demonstrates how objector martyrdom was underpinned by the adherence to their faith in the face of suffering. This demonstrates how, despite the range of motivations of a conscientious objection, religion and religious language and imagery were consistently dominant themes in the representation of objectors because they added potency to the ideals and suffering of COs and imbued their stance with meaning and morality. In addition, by suggesting that military

⁵²⁷ George Lansbury, 'Triumph of Conscience', *Herald*, 1st June 1918, p. 3.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁹ A. Chandler and A. Harvey, 'Introduction', p. 7.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

service was a privilege in comparison to the ‘tortures’ of prison, the text builds on the narratives of moral courage that were established in 1916 and alludes to the objector’s decision to take the alternative path in the knowledge that there would be persecution.

The invocation of martyrdom in anti-war representations of objectors did not go unnoticed in the pro-war press and indeed both the *Express* and the *Mail* commented upon the martyrdom of COs. For instance, an article on the tribunal of an objector in the *Express* noted that ‘his [the COs] supporters titter and nudge one another, apparently much taken with the martyr-like expression which their “brother” wears.’⁵³¹ Similarly, the *Mail* contended that the objector ‘will never be happy until he is a martyr.’⁵³² The representation of COs as martyrs was clearly a source of frustration for those who disagreed with their position, as evidenced by a letter written to the *Mail* by the Conservative MP Ronald McNeill in which he criticised Clifford Allen in particular: ‘His impudent attempt to pose as a persecuted martyr, because he is very rightly punished for repudiating both law and public duty, is an affront to every bereaved heart in the country and to every man who has cheerfully obeyed his country’s call without thought of self.’⁵³³ In the same way that the treatment and suffering of objectors was perceived as incomparable to soldiers’ experiences, the discourse of CO martyrdom was seen as offensive both to serving men and those who had lost loved ones and therefore demonstrates how contentious the treatment of objectors, and its representation, was. The portrayal of objectors as martyrs was seen to challenge the meaning behind the deaths and suffering of soldiers and therefore touched directly upon the grief that was felt by so many.

⁵³¹ John Blunt, ‘The Stain on the ‘Scutcheon: Scenes at the Trial of a “C.O.”’, *Daily Express*, 17th May 1917, p. 2.

⁵³² ‘Work for Objectors’, *Daily Mail*, 24th September 1917, p. 7.

⁵³³ Ronald McNeill, MP, ‘A Non-Conscientious Objector’, *Daily Mail*, 10th July 1917, p. 2.

COs and the Nation

Just as the state's treatment of objectors was implicated in debates about COs' suffering or comfort, the state also became connected to concerns about the relationship between objectors and the nation in ways that echoed discussions about conscientious objection, liberty, and national identity during 1916. On the one hand, the pro-war press's contention that objectors were being treated with a leniency that was inappropriate for a society at war translated into a suggestion that the existence and treatment of objectors was a national shame and embarrassment. On the other hand, the sympathetic press considered COs' persecution to be detrimental to the nation. As Robbins has pointed out, whilst for some, 'conscientious objectors had been treated with excessive concern, in parliament and elsewhere, at a time when the fate of the nation was at stake,' others believed they had been 'unnecessarily and inappropriately pilloried for their convictions.'⁵³⁴

The link between the treatment of objectors and the nation was underscored by the intimate relationship between war and national protection and honour, as well as the idea that soldiering was intimately related to nationhood and nation-building. The nation played a central part in constituting preferred forms of masculinity, particularly the soldier hero, and therefore the existence of masculinities that countered this masculine ideal were considered in explicitly national terms.⁵³⁵ Furthermore, as Horne has argued, there was a 'furnished conception of the nation in which the militarisation of the male population was the ultimate recourse for national defence and hence survival.'⁵³⁶ By allowing the legal existence of men who refused to defend the nation and then treating them with what was perceived as relative leniency, the nation had brought shame upon itself, according to the pro-war press. An *Express* article noted, for example, that

⁵³⁴ K. Robbins, 'The British Experience of Conscientious Objection', p. 616.

⁵³⁵ G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, pp 1-2.

⁵³⁶ J. Horne, 'Masculinity in Politics and War', p.31.

No nation has ever sustained a war without some stain left on its reputation. Britain is no exception. The conscientious objector has left his mark on our honour, and it is not a nice mark. While our Tommies and our great seamen are doing their duties in the trenches and on the seas, these cowards who bear the names of Englishmen are undergoing trial by court-martial day after day.⁵³⁷

In a similar vein, in his regular *Mail* opinion piece, 'an Englishman' asserted that 'the conscientious objector, as he is seen at Dartmoor, is the exclusive, individual shame of England ... Not elsewhere could he turn what is constructively a crime of parricide into a kind of stuffy virtue.'⁵³⁸ In both these texts the effect of the objector on the nation is explained in terms specifically related to the masculinity of the soldier, the duty to defend one's nation. Through their actions, objectors subverted this relationship between masculinity and the nation and they were therefore castigated in a way that was both explicitly gendered and overtly national. As Bibbings has argued, 'the notion of the objector as ... an unman signified that he was a threat to the race, the nation, and indeed, the Empire.'⁵³⁹ By opposing the war, such men 'were often assumed to be plotting to bring down the state.'⁵⁴⁰

Conversely, the nation also became a central narrative for those who were critical of the government's treatment of COs. Texts in the *Leader*, *Herald*, and *Guardian* all invoked the nation when criticising the handling of objectors, frequently comparing the government's argument that Britain was fighting for liberty with its treatment of objectors. Indeed, these arguments

⁵³⁷ John Blunt, 'The Stain on the 'Scutcheon: Scenes at the Trial of a "C.O."', *Daily Express*, 17th May 1917, p. 2.

⁵³⁸ An Englishman, 'The Letters of an Englishman: "Conscientious" Shirkers', *Daily Mail*, 28th April 1917, p. 2.

⁵³⁹ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 141.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 141-142.

consolidated the link between objectors and liberty that were prevalent during 1916. The contention that the government's handling of COs went against Britain's political culture and traditions had roots in the debates about military conscription in earlier years of the war. As Gullace has noted, in the years prior to conscription, Britain distinguished its own political culture from that of Germany, where a conscripted army symbolised a 'lack of freedom.'⁵⁴¹ The intertwining of Prussianism, the British nation, and conscientious objection is illustrated in an article written in response to the publication of "I Appeal unto Caesar":

We are fighting a Bully ... Anything which seems to show that under the pressure of the war we are developing the bully's spirit in ourselves is an insidious and dangerous devitaliser of that war spirit. We cannot afford to play the bully. We want a clear-cut issue, clean hands and all our strength to fight for it ... Harshness is not our strength; nor are we Prussians. The [Military Service] Act is there; its spirit ought to be observed.⁵⁴²

A similar warning was issued by a Mr. L. S. Smith writing in to the *Guardian* that 'the worst effect of persecution is not on the persecuted but on the persecutors. The nation that permits it suffers by lowering of its ideals, the deadening of its sensibilities- in short it becomes brutalised and irresponsible to the best in life.'⁵⁴³ The emphasis on the effect of persecution on the nation in both these texts demonstrates how the narratives of liberty and conscientious objection, evident in 1916, became explicitly focused on the relationship between the treatment of objectors and the nation. In suggesting that the poor treatment of objectors damaged the nation which administered it, both these texts highlight how the treatment of war

⁵⁴¹ N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", p. 104.

⁵⁴² John Galsworthy, 'Books of the Day: "I Appeal unto Caesar"', *The Observer*, 26th August 1917, p. 4.

⁵⁴³ L. S. Smith, 'Case Against Persecution', *Manchester Guardian*, 19th June 1917, p. 3.

resisters came to be interpreted by some as an overt marker of national identity.

The negative national effect of objectors' treatment of objectors was also, at times, specifically connected to its potential impact on the war effort. For example, in an article by John W. Graham in the *Labour Leader* it was noted that 'these are incidents in a war waged by the Empire for liberty. They actually hinder the success of the war.'⁵⁴⁴ Similarly a *Guardian* article argued that any doubt or criticism about the war effort amongst the population was being fanned by the poor treatment of COs: 'of one thing the Government may be sure ... If there is anywhere the beginning of a doubt which might undermine that faith of which we have spoken as the basis of all our endurance, that doubt is being nourished by nothing so much as the treatment of the conscientious objectors.'⁵⁴⁵ These texts demonstrate how, by associating objectors' poor treatment with the broader concerns of the nation and war, supporters of COs could argue that it was government's failure to uphold its own ideals of freedom and liberty that hindered the war effort. Thus the arguments made in the pro-war press that the existence of objectors and their lenient treatment were detrimental to the nation could be subverted, and the importance of upholding the principles of liberty and freedom could be asserted.

Citizenship and Objection

The links between objectors and the nation also extended into debates over objectors' citizenship rights. Renewed discussion over the franchise throughout 1917 prompted questions about the citizenship of both objectors and women as suffrage became specifically connected to wartime service. With the passing of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, whilst some

⁵⁴⁴ John W. Graham, 'The Way of the Tribunals', *Labour Leader*, 27th September 1917, p. 8.

⁵⁴⁵ 'The Case Against Persecution', *Manchester Guardian*, 19th July 1917, p. 4.

women were given the vote for the first time, objectors were disenfranchised for five years. As Gullace has argued, ‘sacrifice, service and British blood began to take precedence over sex, property, and legal majority, while patriotism replaced manhood as the fundamental qualification for the parliamentary vote.’⁵⁴⁶ The failure of COs to perform their national and masculine duty contributed to a re-conceptualisation of the franchise. Anna Clark has noted that ‘the manhood of citizenship always had to be earned rather than claimed as an inherent human right,’⁵⁴⁷ and by rejecting their national duty as men, objectors were considered to be unworthy of citizenship.

From early 1917 articles and letters published in the *Daily Mail* drew on ideals of duty, sacrifice, and service in their calls for the disenfranchisement of conscientious objectors. Edgar Wallace wrote in to the *Mail* asking if there is ‘any reason in the world why men who have refused to bear their share of the national burden and who have pleaded their conscientious objection to defending their women and children from the Germans, should enjoy the same privileges that the soldier will enjoy?’⁵⁴⁸ His solution to this question was ‘a short act to disenfranchise the “conscientious objector”’, which would ‘have the support of ninety-nine out of every hundred people in these islands.’⁵⁴⁹ In a similar tone, another *Mail* article suggested that the disenfranchisement of COs was ‘urgently required’ because ‘men who will not fight for the state cannot be allowed to settle its destinies by their votes.’⁵⁵⁰ Male citizenship, in both these texts, is configured specifically in

⁵⁴⁶ N. Gullace, “*The Blood of our Sons*”, p. 9.

⁵⁴⁷ Anna Clark, ‘Gender, Class, and the Nation: Franchise Reform in England, 1832-1928’ in James Vernon (ed.), *Re-reading the Constitution: New Narratives in the Political History of England’s Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp 230—253 (p. 230).

⁵⁴⁸ Edgar Wallace, ‘No Votes for “Conscientious” Objectors’, *Daily Mail*, 12th April 1917, p. 4.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁰ ““Cushy” Jobs for Unworthy Creatures’, *Daily Mail*, 16th April 1917, p. 4.

terms of sacrifice and national duty and therefore demonstrates how the overtly gendered anti-CO narratives converged into questions about their citizenship.

As Robert Nye has pointed out, 'political rights were at least latent in the body of the male conscript or volunteer whose actual or potential sacrifice' earned him 'his nation's gratitude.'⁵⁵¹ Because the objector had refused to sacrifice his body for the protection of his nation, he actively disrupted the connection between masculinity and political rights. Gullace's contention that 'the conscientious objector, more than any other category of male subject, undermined the masculine nature of the franchise'⁵⁵² is clearly illustrated in these texts. In emphasising the protection of the nation, women and children through military service, the letter and article from the *Mail* demonstrate how the enshrinement of the masculine ideals associated with soldiering underpinned arguments to disenfranchise objectors.

Another argument for the disenfranchisement of objectors that invoked anti-CO narratives of sacrifice and selfishness was that COs only adhered to the principles of citizenship that benefited them personally. It was suggested that by refusing to serve in the military, objectors had demonstrated that they disregarded the more demanding and selfless aspects of citizenship. A chairman of an appeal tribunal, for instance, wrote in to the *Observer* arguing that 'it is a grave danger to the State if its citizens be allowed with impunity to pick and choose the laws which they will obey.'⁵⁵³ He then went on to suggest that imprisonment may not have necessarily been the 'best way to treat these self-imposed martyrs' but rather that it would be better 'to deprive them of the franchise and certain civil rights.' This argument is

⁵⁵¹ R. Nye, 'Western Masculinities in War and Peace', p. 418.

⁵⁵² N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", p. 181.

⁵⁵³ "'I Appeal Unto Caesar': Some Replies to Mr. Galsworthy", *Observer*, 2nd September 1917, p. 5.

expanded upon in a lengthy letter written in to the *Guardian* by the Dean of Manchester Cathedral, J. E. C. Welldon:

A civilised State affords its citizens some conspicuous advantages, such as the security of person and property, political freedom, the opportunity of making a living, all or nearly all the comforts, facilities and recreations which invest life with pleasure and happiness. But in return for these advantages it demands corresponding service and among these services, since armies have become nations in arms, is and apparently must be military service. It cannot be right that any class of citizens should enjoy the benefits without discharging the responsibilities of citizenship ...

The conscientious objectors live, in fact, out of touch with the State whose citizens they are ... when citizens feel themselves conscientiously impelled to decline the office of citizenship, it follows, I think, that they cannot justly claim the civic rights which are inseparable from civic duties.⁵⁵⁴

Welldon's suggestion that COs had not fulfilled their civic duties in return for the benefits of citizenship is illustrative of Derek Heater's assertion that citizenship was viewed as a type of social contract because of the 'basic principle of a balance of rights and duties in the relationship between citizen and state.'⁵⁵⁵ By refusing to take up arms in the defence of the state, the CO had therefore broken the contract of citizenship according to Welldon. By breaking his contract with the state, it was argued that the CO had lost the right to participate in the political future of the nation which he had failed to defend.

⁵⁵⁴ J. E. C. Welldon, 'The "Sanctity" of Conscience', *Manchester Guardian*, 23rd March 1918, p. 6.

⁵⁵⁵ Derek Heater, *Citizenship: The Civic Ideal in World History, Politics and Education* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, 3rd ed.), p. 170.

Whilst the narratives which underpinned the reconfiguration of citizenship to exclude conscientious objectors has been insightfully explored by Gullace,⁵⁵⁶ the ways in which COs and their supporters challenged this is less well covered. Although ultimately unsuccessful, male resisters and their defenders developed a counter-argument which emphasised COs' different interpretation of civic service and duty, and demonstrates how discourses of citizenship and the contractual relationship between the state and its citizens were interpreted and contested within an anti-war context. A text by Clifford Allen published in the *Herald*, for example, argued that it was not that he was unwilling to undertake the duties of citizenship but rather that the state prevented him from doing so. He writes, 'we fully recognise the duties of citizenship ... it is not the act of service we refuse, but service imposed in such a way as to make us condone conscription. If granted absolute exemption tomorrow, we should feel the obligation of citizenship more insistently than ever.'⁵⁵⁷ By suggesting that the failure of the state to grant absolute exemption to objectors prohibited their fulfilment of the obligations of citizenship, Allen challenged the argument that objectors broke the citizenship contract. In contrast, he suggests that it was the state, not COs, that was ultimately responsible for the breaking down of the mutual contract. Allen therefore tacitly challenged the military defence of the state as a citizenship duty.

This contention was also invoked in a letter written to the *Manchester Guardian* by a group of COs at Wandsworth Prison, in which they argued that the government had 'deliberately withdrawn us from useful services in which we were engaged and has put us to prison, not because we refused to serve our fellow-citizens, but because as free men we insisted on doing so to

⁵⁵⁶ N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", particularly chapter 4 'The Order of the White Feather' and chapter 5 'Conscription, Conscience, and the Travails of Male Citizenship'.

⁵⁵⁷ Clifford Allen, 'Why I Still Refuse', *Herald*, 2nd June 1917, p. 13.

the utmost of our power. Set us free and we will promptly serve again.’⁵⁵⁸ In a strikingly similar tone to the text written by Allen, the letter emphasised the desire of the COs to serve as citizens and evoked the connection between liberty, national identity, and conscientious objection. In doing so, the letter emphasises Bibbings’ argument that objectors believed that by resisting conscription they had served their fellow citizens in the most valuable way possible.⁵⁵⁹

The argument that conscientious objectors were worthy of their citizenship because of, not in spite of, their resistance was expanded upon in an article in the *Herald* which outlined its opposition to the disenfranchisement of objectors. The article suggested that it would not be the shirkers who would be punished by disenfranchisement but the genuine objector because

such men care intensely for civil rights; it is, as they believe, on behalf of the people that they are now resisting the blind coercion of the State ... The doctrine that the well-being of the people is the supreme law is just the doctrine to which conscientious objectors are trying, according to their lights, to live up.⁵⁶⁰

The article subsequently used the disenfranchisement of conscientious objectors to question the reason behind the British involvement in the war: ‘It is our Government’s open acceptance of the Prussian doctrine of State supremacy over individual liberty of conscience that has made men doubt whether this country did really honestly take up arms against Prussianism ... if the ideal of freedom is contemptible, for what are our men dying?’⁵⁶¹ By identifying the disenfranchisement of COs as an attack on the freedom

⁵⁵⁸ ‘Correspondence: Treatment of C.O.s’, *Manchester Guardian*, 12th September 1918, p. 2.

⁵⁵⁹ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, pp. 200-201.

⁵⁶⁰ ‘Christmas and Conscience’, *Herald*, 1st December 1917, p. 21.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*

soldiers were dying for, the *Herald* article challenged the idea that in serving the state, soldiers would be rewarded with freedom by the government. Consequently, it implied that the idea of a mutually beneficial concept of citizenship, one which benefited both state and citizen, was undermined by the disenfranchisement of men who acted on behalf of their fellow citizens and symbolised, in their act, liberty and freedom.

The language of service which was used in anti-war representations of objectors' citizenship highlights how central conceptions of service were to discussions of wartime experience and its connection to citizenship. As Watson has pointed out, the ideal of service which was tied into representations of patriotism, sacrifice, glory and honour gave soldiers' military service a 'popular stamp of approval.'⁵⁶² The interconnectedness of civic service and military duty also points to the often blurred distinction between wartime and civilian identities. For men engaged in active military service, far from acquiring a new identity as a soldier, Helen McCartney has argued that their civilian identities remained intact.⁵⁶³ Many soldiers 'remained stubbornly civilian in outlook for the duration of their service,' with their hopes and aspirations 'firmly located in the civilian sphere.'⁵⁶⁴ Similarly, in texts that represented conscientious objectors and their service, the pre-war activities and work of COs was often emphasised. For example, a *Guardian* article noted that 'many of these objectors are men of education who were doing responsible and valuable work.'⁵⁶⁵ Other texts also emphasised the knowledge and work of particular objectors such as Stephen Hobhouse, who was identified as a man 'with a proved and unmistakable

⁵⁶² J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, pp. 41-44.

⁵⁶³ Helen B. McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 8.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 242.

⁵⁶⁵ 'The Law and the Objector', *Manchester Guardian*, 25th May 1917, p. 4.

vocation for the Samaritan life',⁵⁶⁶ and Clifford Allen, who was regarded by one *Guardian* correspondent as an 'intellectual' with a 'great knowledge of industrial questions' who would be 'invaluable to the nation after the war.'⁵⁶⁷ Another letter to the *Guardian* presented a similar argument, suggesting that objectors had devoted their services to the peacetime nation. The correspondent noted that 'amongst the ranks of the C.O.s are to be found men who have given years of disinterested and devoted service to humanity,' devoting themselves 'to the needs of a nation at peace- to education and improve housing, for example.'⁵⁶⁸ Conscientious objectors and their sympathisers thus blended their pre-war identities with their stand against the war to portray their commitment, as citizens, to the nation. By broadening the idea of service to include war and peacetime, these texts attempted to undermine the link that had been established between wartime service and citizenship.

Duty, Service, and Female Citizenship

The significance of service to the configuration of citizenship during the war lay not only in its reshaping of male citizenship, but also in the role it played in reigniting discussions about women's enfranchisement. The move to a justification of enfranchisement on the basis of service bolstered the women's case for the vote by undercutting its gendered basis.⁵⁶⁹ Both anti-war and pro-war women represented their wartime activities in the guise of duty and service, echoing the key narratives of male citizenship and the franchise debate more broadly. The fact that women had actively contributed to the war effort as mothers of soldiers, through munitions

⁵⁶⁶ G. Bernard Shaw, 'C.O.'s and Perpetual Hard Labour', *Manchester Guardian*, 12th June 1917, p. 4.

⁵⁶⁷ F. E. Green, 'Correspondence: The Case of Mr Clifford Allen', *Manchester Guardian*, 2nd July 1917, p. 8

⁵⁶⁸ E. Lindsay, 'Correspondence: The Case against Persecution', *Manchester Guardian*, 26th June 1917, p. 3.

⁵⁶⁹ N. Gullace, "*The Blood of Our Sons*", pp. 8-9.

work, nursing and ambulance driving, demonstrated that women had risked their lives for the state.⁵⁷⁰ Significantly, pacifism and war resistance also played a role in the discussions about female enfranchisement. Not only did anti-war women position the ending of war and the protection of their sons as a duty that was a central part of their war service, but the denouncement of pacifism and war resisters also became implicated in arguments for women's enfranchisement.

As Gullace has pointed out, the language of motherhood was 'appropriated by patriotic women who used the idea of women's stake in the bodies of their sons to claim recognition for their own vicarious service on the battlefield', which led to mothers increasingly regarding themselves 'as a sort of parallel army.'⁵⁷¹ Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurses also attempted to claim that their wartime service had parity with soldiers.⁵⁷² The association between mothering and service was not confined to pro-war women but was also evident in representations of anti-war women in the Women's Peace Crusade from 1917. Whilst the language of duty and responsibility had been used by anti-war women from the outset of the war, the invocation of this in the WPC was very explicitly focused on the relationship between mothers and their serving sons. This shift was significant because it not only imbued anti-war women with authority but also explicitly connected narratives of duty with women's proxy service on the battlefield. An appeal by the WPC printed in the *Leader*, for example, alerted women to 'their responsibility for all that another winter of war will mean of suffering and death. It is the solemn duty of women to rise to the defence and protection of their boys, and the sons of women everywhere.'⁵⁷³ The inversion of the narrative which positioned soldiers as

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid*, pp. 56-57.

⁵⁷² J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 94.

⁵⁷³ 'Women's Peace Crusade', *Labour Leader*, 25th October 1917, p. 2.

defending the vulnerable consequently facilitated the portrayal of women with a connection to the battlefield as serving and protecting the soldiers at the front through their opposition to the conflict. Presenting motherhood as a service in this way framed mothering as a type of citizenship 'function.'⁵⁷⁴ By inflecting the text with a discourse of responsibility, duty, and protection in connection to the battlefield, the WPC identified female resistance as a service to soldiers and, by extension, the state.

The emphasis on suffering in the text also had particular resonance in debates about citizenship because opponents of women's suffrage suggested that because it was men who had served at the front they had an 'indescribably greater share in the sufferings of war.' As a result, it was argued by some that changes to suffrage law should be restricted to servicemen.⁵⁷⁵ Grayzel has noted that in both legislative and wider cultural debates, 'certain qualities exhibited by women during wartime were seen as central to their claims for patriotism and, potentially, for citizenship and the vote.'⁵⁷⁶ These qualities focused on 'women's contributions, their duties and responsibilities as workers for the national good, as sufferers from the tragic costs of war, and as mothers of the nation's sons.'⁵⁷⁷ The WPC's intertwining of suffering, service, and motherhood highlighted female qualities that were explicitly related to the way that women's citizenship was being discussed during this period.

However, the links between motherhood, service, and citizenship that were drawn out by anti-war women were also fiercely contested by pro-war

⁵⁷⁴ Susan Pedersen makes this argument in reference to feminist arguments for independent social rights for mothers in S. Pedersen, 'Gender, Welfare and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (October, 1990), 983-1006 (p. 1004).

⁵⁷⁵ S. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*, p. 212.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 233.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 223.

women who underpinned their very different conceptualisation of maternal service with an overt anti-pacifism as a way of reinforcing their own integral wartime role. Correspondence to the *Daily Mail* by a woman named Helen Primrose, for example, noted that ‘all down the centuries British mothers have known that their sons’ first duty was defence of their native land. The doctrine of pacifism ... can only be the result of degenerate nerves.’⁵⁷⁸ Similarly, another letter to the *Mail* by Flora Drummond, a pro-war suffragette, argued that there ‘is no more important work for women than that of resisting pacifist and pro-German intrigue ... It is patriotic women who can best challenge and overcome the disloyalty of those troublemakers. Indeed, this moral munition making, as we may call it, is essentially women’s work.’⁵⁷⁹ Both these texts used narratives directly associated with women’s citizenship during this particular period. Whilst Drummond evoked the working woman, Primrose highlighted the duty of both mothers and their sons to serve the nation. Yet underscoring both arguments was an emphasis on interpretations of duty and service which were explicitly divorced from war resistance. The inclusion of vehement anti-pacifism in these narratives of female wartime service not only undermined the link between opposition to the conflict and discourses of citizenship made by anti-war men and women but also bolstered women’s claims to war service by demonstrating their loyalty to the nation, serving men, and the war effort.

Suffering Women

Insight into the strident anti-pacifism in these texts can be gleaned through the consideration of the debates about female enfranchisement, and specifically the anxieties about female voting habits as a result of the war. Female suffering in particular was seen as problematic in relation to citizenship. There was a belief held by some politicians, such as the Lord

⁵⁷⁸ Helen Primrose, ‘Lord Northcliffe’s Warning’, *Daily Mail*, 17th November 1917, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁹ Flora Drummond, ‘Women’s Fight Against Pacifism’, *Daily Mail*, 16th October 1917, p. 2.

Chancellor Baron Finlay,⁵⁸⁰ that women's grief and war-weariness made them especially susceptible to pacifism and there was a concern that women, if enfranchised, would vote for pacifist candidates. This anxiety was addressed specifically by Mrs. Humphry Ward, the novelist and founding president of the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League. Writing in the *Mail* in response to a debate in the House of Lords in which this anxiety had been raised, she noted:

What will the effect of war-weariness be upon them- of the loss of husbands, sons, and brothers? Will they be more easily ensnared than men by delusive pleas for a peace which would be no peace at all? ... It is for those women, those multitudes of women, whose whole heart and soul is with the cause of the Allies ... to strengthen those who are weak, to say to them, 'you have suffered indeed, you have lost dear ones, you have endured privation and discomfort, though nothing compared with what your husbands and sons have endured in hope' ... Will you compel them to go through this furnace of horror again, a few years hence? ... There is no way out but endurance and victory.⁵⁸¹

This article demonstrates how suffering complicated the arguments that connected women's sacrifices during the war to their enfranchisement. There was a perception that suffering had made women weak and vulnerable to pacifism in a way that echoed the representation of objectors as weak and suffering during 1918. The association between pacifism and weakness further underscores why the representation of COs' suffering in the anti-war press was problematic. The acknowledgement in Humphry Ward's text that suffering had made women vulnerable demonstrates that

⁵⁸⁰ The *Daily Express*'s reporting of the passage of the Suffrage Bill notes that 'The Lord Chancellor's strongest point against the clause was that the women over thirty who alone were to be enfranchised were liable to suffer from war weariness and might fall victim to the specious arguments of the pacifists.' See 'Six Million Women Electors: Women and Pacifists', *Daily Express*, 11th January 1918, p. 1.

⁵⁸¹ Mrs. Humphry Ward, 'A Word to the Women', *Daily Mail*, 5th August 1918, p. 2.

suffering, when connected to women's citizenship, could also be problematic for pro-war women. Whilst women who opposed war, such as those involved with the Women's Peace Crusade, could present their resistance as a service to suffering men at the front, for women who emphasised their service to the war effort, suffering had the potential to be a problematic narrative upon which to base calls for citizenship because of its perceived link to pacifism, both for men and women.

Whilst suffering was perceived as a problematic influence on women's potential citizenship, it was central to anti-war women's self-representation in the final years of the war and was often depicted as both a source of strength and integral to the mobilisation of anti-war women. The image of the suffering woman that was repeatedly invoked by anti-war women ran alongside the depiction of the victimised CO, yet there were significant gendered distinctions. Whilst the source of men's suffering came from the state, women's was centered on their male family members with a particular focus on the relationship between the mother and her soldier sons. Indeed, in some ways the isolation of male suffering within the space of the prison actually underscored the complexity of invoking this discourse as a means of constructing objectors' heroic wartime masculinity. Whilst the isolation of the prison removed their suffering from the war, anti-war women could directly connect their suffering to the battlefield through their link to male relations. Furthermore, women's particular experiences of the war were invoked in ways that not only imbued them with authority but were also linked to their agitation against the war throughout 1917 and 1918.

The defence of the family had been an important trope from the beginning of the conflict. As Bourke has pointed out, the declaration of war provided men 'with an opportunity to probe the depth of their commitment to domesticity: quite literally, it was an ideal for which they might risk their

lives',⁵⁸² and both married and unmarried men declared that 'they were fighting for their families.'⁵⁸³ In reality, however, enlistment calls that focused on men as the protectors of the domestic were complex because for some married men with children, enlisting meant that they would have been unable to adequately support their family financially.⁵⁸⁴ Indeed, the focus on younger married and unmarried men in the conscription acts of 1916 might have related to assumptions about their possible domestic and workplace responsibilities, as well as the need for young and fit men for the military. When the need for more men became acute, provision was made in the Military Service Act (No. 2) 1918 to extend the upper age limits to 51 and allowed for it to be extended to 56 if necessary.⁵⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the protection of the home was an important aspect of wartime rhetoric for both men and women. The protection of the family became an important trope for women who openly called for an end to the war, and particularly among the women of the Women's Peace Crusade.

The centrality of female familial ties to the war in the WPC's image of suffering womanhood is clearly outlined in a *Leader* article which introduced the Crusade:

At last there is a stir among the women of Britain ... For nearly three years the war has gone on, and we women have been afraid, afraid to trust our own judgement, afraid to speak, afraid to act. The ghastly slaughter of our sons, our husbands, our brothers has gone on and the spirit of fear has paralysed us ... The Women's Peace Crusade has started because the women believe that peace can only be secured when the peoples refuse any longer to be the dupes and tools of the heartless scheming of their capitalist imperialist rulers. As Mrs. Crawford, the secretary says: 'The

⁵⁸² J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 163.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid*, pp. 163-164.

⁵⁸⁴ L. Ugolini, *Civvies*, p. 136.

⁵⁸⁵ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 28, p. 44.

Women's Crusade is not for the empty sepulchre of the Christ, but for the living bodies and souls of our men, who are being crucified in their millions.'⁵⁸⁶

The article then emphasised the relationship between the suffering women at home and their male family members at the front by noting that in many 'imaginative, sympathetic and courageous ways [women] are working to give voice to the dumb anguish of the women whose men have been taken from them for the evil work of war.'⁵⁸⁷ The image of the grieving and agonised woman was central to the narrative deployed by the WPC and, by asserting that the Crusade would give a voice to women who were 'dumb' in their anguish, the text explicitly positioned the WPC as a mobilising force for suffering women. Moreover, the spectre of male suffering in this text meant that female and male suffering was intertwined to provide a strength and purpose to the movement, with the women acting on behalf of their men. The use of this type of imagery had precedents in radical working-class politics. Eileen Yeo has noted that Chartist women 'presented themselves as militant family members, as concerned wives, mothers and sisters suffering severe family disruption.'⁵⁸⁸ In the Crusade too, the women were presented as being mobilised to act on behalf of their male relations, because of the disruption that the war had caused to their family.

The relationship between the family, particularly the mother, and the battlefield was another important aspect of the self-representation of the WPC, reflecting its significance for the war experience of families more broadly. As Roper has argued, 'the home and battlefronts were linked through families, and it was mothers who often managed the networks

⁵⁸⁶ 'Women's Peace Crusade', *Labour Leader*, 21st June 1917, p. 2.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁸ E. J. Yeo, 'Introduction: Some Paradoxes of Empowerment', p. 12.

between them' so that 'the "maternal" and the "military" were allied.'⁵⁸⁹ Within the context of the Crusade, the link between the maternal and the military was highlighted through the association between the men 'being crucified' and the women acting on their behalf to prevent further bloodshed. Crucially, the women of the Crusade presented their role as one that disrupted the military link in order to reform and strengthen the familial network. By positioning themselves specifically as family members, the women emphasised their relationship to the battlefield and highlighted their right to disrupt the military network for the sake of their family. This configuration of female resistance to war signalled a shift in the role that the family played in the representation of women's anti-war activism. Whilst the maternalist narratives of the pre-conscription period represented peace as an innate and natural concern of women, the Crusade depicted women's resistance to the war as an act of mobilisation prompted by suffering and was therefore based more upon women's actual lived experience of the conflict rather than the qualities and ideals associated with femininity per se. Furthermore, the position of female family members as protectors of the domestic is particularly significant with regards to the working classes who the Crusade targeted and attracted. Jane Lewis has contended that working-class wives saw the home and children as their primary responsibility and were thus resistant to any intervention that threatened their management of the family or their domestic authority.⁵⁹⁰ The focus on the effect of war on the family in WPC texts can therefore be understood as an extension of women's domestic responsibility. In this way, the Crusade subverted the image of the soldier as the protector of the domestic.⁵⁹¹ Instead, women's anti-war activism was positioned as saving and protecting the home from further destruction as a result of the conflict. The renewed focus on the

⁵⁸⁹ M. Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p. 6.

⁵⁹⁰ Jane Lewis, 'The Working Class Wife and Mother and State Intervention, 1870-1918' in Jane Lewis (ed.), *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family, 1850-1940* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 99-120 (pp. 102-103).

⁵⁹¹ J. Meyer, *Men of War*, p. 34.

relationship between anti-war women and men at the front, rather than on conscientious objectors at home, signalled another shift in the way that women positioned their war resistance as a responsibility underpinned by personal and collective suffering.

When considered in comparison to representations of the suffering CO, it becomes clear that anti-war male anguish and victimhood were problematic and in some ways undermined their position as heroes of the movement for peace. In contrast, suffering was represented as a source of strength for anti-war women. As Carol Acton has argued in her study of grief, in public discourse there are different responses and behaviour for men and women, with such 'gendering' privileging women, particularly as mothers.⁵⁹² The tensions that were evident in the anti-war press's portrayal of CO suffering suggests that, whilst male suffering was perceived as a problematic distraction in resisting the war, female anguish could actually underpin and mobilise women's opposition. The differences in the representation of gendered suffering also highlights the role that the particular contexts in which both male and female war resisters operated played in the way that suffering could be depicted. The feminine associations of grief and suffering meant that the gendered conception of the home front was reinforced as a feminine space.⁵⁹³ Thus whilst the WPC's representation of suffering operated within a context of femininity, the suffering of COs on the home front had the potential to destabilise the representation and construction of their masculinity as resisters. That these two different conceptions of male and female suffering were presented within the same anti-war publications further complicated the invocation of discourses of suffering in the representation of male resisters. Moreover, the focus on suffering in relation to anti-war women directly connected them to combatant men and the war

⁵⁹² Carol Acton, *Grief in Wartime: Private Pain, Public Discourse* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 7.

⁵⁹³ L. Ugolini, *Civvies*, p. 6.

through the emphasis on their relationships to serving men, in a way that the suffering of male war resisters did not. Whilst anti-war women's authority was in some ways derived from their connection to the battlefield, the authority of objectors was linked to their isolated experience of imprisonment. By examining how suffering was invoked by anti-war women it becomes clear that the suffering of COs was a complicated topic to address not only because it challenged narratives of heroism but also because it further emphasised objectors' isolation from the war itself.

The connections between women and combatants were also drawn out to suggest that soldiers were looking to the women of the Crusade to work for peace. Another *Leader* article on the WPC noted, for example, that:

We have reason to know that all over Europe the poor soldiers in the trenches are looking to their women to break the awful silence that holds them there. Shall we condemn them by our inaction to still another year of unspeakable tortures? Must the sorrow of bereavement, the long agony of fear for loved ones, not to speak of the cold and hunger, spread still wider ruin in our homes?⁵⁹⁴

By suggesting that the soldiers themselves looked to the women to bring about peace, this article implied that the women were acting on behalf of their men. The notion of women acting as a proxy for men, particularly in relation to sacrifice had been a significant theme in the gendered representations of war. With regards specifically to the anti-war movement, the image of the mother engaged in a proxy sacrifice for the conscientious objector had been particularly notable from 1916. However, in the representation of women and soldiers in this text, women were portrayed as authoritative. The sense of responsibility that is expressed demonstrates

⁵⁹⁴ 'Women's Peace Campaign: A Call to the Women of the Party', *Labour Leader*, 5th July 1917, p. 6.

how the anti-war women of the Crusade viewed peace as their duty to fulfil and, in doing so, the text highlights how the gendered hierarchy of war resistance established in 1916 was in some ways complicated by the WPC's self-representation during the final two years of the conflict.

The positioning of women as responsible for peace was bolstered by the way that the WPC mirrored the representations of soldiers' admiration for COs that were evident in the anti-war press in 1916. In introducing a letter purported to be sent to the Crusade by a soldier on leave, it was noted by the WPC that 'scores of letters come to our workers from soldiers who must not, or men who cannot, speak for themselves.'⁵⁹⁵ The letter itself is a whole-hearted endorsement of the women's campaign which stated that:

You seemed to symbolise the world's suffering motherhood, and made articulate their acute and long silent suffering and yearning desire ... I am a poor man, just a rank-and-file man, a stranger to you, but I wanted to tell you what I felt, hoping that in the great fight it may at least hearten you to be assured of your power to move and influence ... We felt that it is *the* movement, and pray that it may spread as quickly as a prairie fire.⁵⁹⁶

Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott have noted that 'each war story confronts the dilemma of how to describe events and emotions for which no language seems sufficient. Who has the right to speak? And for whom?'⁵⁹⁷ The dialogue between the women and the soldiers in representations of the Crusade arguably addressed this question of authority and language head on. Whilst the suggestion that the soldiers endorsed the WPC gave the

⁵⁹⁵ 'The Women's Peace Crusade', *Labour Leader*, 30th August 1917, p. 2.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁷ Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott, 'Introduction' in M. Cooke and A. Woollacott (eds), *Gendering War Talk* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. ix-xii (p. xi).

movement authority to speak on behalf of the men, the focus on motherhood, as the authoritative position for women, similarly provided the Crusade with the right to speak on behalf of women.

The Crusade's emphasis on female suffering was not uncontroversial, as the arguments about suffering and female enfranchisement discussed earlier demonstrate. In its minimal reporting of the activities of the Women's Peace Crusade, the *Daily Mail* portrayed it as a pacifist, pro-German movement which exploited the suffering of working women. An article from December 1917, for instance, asserted that 'pacifist speakers are now trying to organise a movement in favour of a German peace by playing on the fears of working women in villages and small towns.'⁵⁹⁸ The article took particular issue with Eva Gore-Booth, a prominent anti-war campaigner and member of the Crusade, contending that Gore-Booth gathered her audience with the skill of an educated woman and a practised speaker on the horrors of war.⁵⁹⁹ She consequently wrote as a result that: "The thoughts of their sons' and their husbands' sufferings seem to haunt these women."⁶⁰⁰ The argument that 'educated' women played on the fears and grief of working women demonstrates how suffering, when invoked by women in the support of peace, was contested by the pro-war press because it was a source of anxiety. Indeed, the way that female suffering was emphasised by anti-war women and the concerns it raised for those in support of the war demonstrates how wartime discourses were not only split along highly gendered lines but also along the lines of pro-war and anti-war. Therefore

⁵⁹⁸ 'Pacifists in Villages: Working on the Feelings of the Women', *Daily Mail*, 14th December 1917, p. 5.

⁵⁹⁹ Sonja Tiernan offers a detailed account of Gore-Booth's involvement with a variety of different campaigns, including those against the war and conscription in S. Tiernan, *Eva Gore-Booth: an Image of Such Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), particularly chapter 7, 'World War One: from trade unionism to peace movements' and chapter 8, 'Conscientious objectors and revolution: world war and an Irish rebellion'.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

whilst suffering could be invoked as a source of strength for anti-war women, it was problematic both for anti-war men and pro-war women.

Conclusion

The years 1917 and 1918 saw both a reinforcement and complication of the discourses that dominated the representation of war resisters in 1916. The pro-war press's preoccupation with the treatment of objectors, particularly in the Home Office work camps, and the increasing numbers of CO deaths meant that much of the representation of male war resisters was focused on their treatment. This emphasis enabled the pro-war press to reinforce the anti-objector discourses of shirking and selfishness that had been established in previous years. For the anti-war press, however, fitting the representation of the experience of COs in prison and on the HO schemes within the anti-war objector narratives was more complex. Whilst the portrayal of objectors that emphasised their heroic endurance and sincerity of their convictions bolstered the image of objectors as heroes and leaders of the resistance against the war, the increasing emphasis on COs as passive suffering victims complicated this narrative. Underpinning both pro-war and anti-war representations of objectors in the final two years of the conflict was a focus on the space which COs inhabited. The Home Office camp, public space, and the prison all became important contexts in which the narratives used to either deride or admire objectors were invoked to reinforce particular constructions of CO masculinity.

The gendering of space was also significant for women, particularly with regards to the way that suffering and grief configured the home front as feminine. In a broader sense too, the more complex representation of male war resisters in 1917 and 1918 and the resurfacing of a specifically female anti-war movement had important implications for the depiction of anti-war women. What is evident in these years, in contrast to 1916, is that anti-war

women moved away from an association primarily based on COs and became identified as a distinct group within the anti-war movement once again, through their connection to the battlefield. The representation of anti-war women in 1917 and 1918 in some ways reflected the main discourses used in the portrayal of male war resisters, namely suffering and citizenship, but these were presented in a specifically female guise. Women who looked for ways to end the conflict invoked their suffering as mothers, sisters, wives and sweethearts of men serving on the battlefields. This female suffering enabled women to claim authority on matters of peace and war and was portrayed as a mobilising strength which women could use to effectively work for peace on behalf of their male family members. Yet suffering was also contested not only because it was perceived by some to be a means of exploitation, but also because of the implications that it might have had for female voters. Whilst women echoed the language of citizenship in their emphasis on duty, service, and sacrifice, their potential grief and war-weariness was viewed as problematic in relation to their position as citizens.

All the discourses that were evident throughout 1917 and 1918, heroism, endurance, selfishness, shirking, duty and suffering, dovetailed into the debates about citizenship for both men and women. By engaging with discussions about male citizenship, the representation of objectors within the press demonstrates how the relationship between citizenship, gender, and war was constructed by both COs themselves and those who either agreed or disagreed with their position during the war. In this way, the press provided a space in which a public dialogue about the meaning and duties of citizenship took place. As citizenship came to be understood in terms of patriotism and service, women emphasised their own sacrifices and services to the state, and men who had clearly refused both service and sacrifice were deemed unworthy of the vote. In arguing against the disenfranchisement of objectors, the anti-war press emphasised their own interpretation of duty, civic responsibility, and sacrifice. Women too

emphasised their own services to the state in the context of citizenship debates, invoking narratives of duty, suffering, and sacrifice in a variety of ways.

When examining the final two years of war it becomes clear that the changing contexts and experience of resistance impacted upon the representation of war resisters in complicated and significant ways. For the representation of both anti-war men and anti-war women, 1917 and 1918 saw both a complication and an entrenchment of the discourses that had been established in the press in previous years. Whilst the complexities of some of these narratives have not necessarily been acknowledged in the remembrance of war resisters in the years after the conflict, they have nonetheless continued to shape the way that war resistance during the First World War has been commemorated. The question of authority has remained pertinent in the remembrance of war and the discourses of bravery, cowardice, suffering, martyrdom, and above all else, gender have all continued to play an important role in the inclusion of the anti-war movement into the commemoration of the Great War and these will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Remembering Resistance

As the First World War has moved beyond living memory there has been a consideration of the place of anti-war activists within the evolving commemoration of the conflict. Whilst resistance has taken on a more prominent position within remembrance narratives, particularly during the current centenary, it is clear that the wartime representation of the anti-war movement has had a considerable impact on how Great War resisters have been included. The reconfiguration of the peace movement around the conscientious objector following conscription has translated into an understanding of war resistance primarily as conscientious objection. Examining press portrayals of resisters in the immediate post-war period, the 50th anniversary and the centenary consequently demonstrates the extent to which the remembrance of war resisters has been characterised by an inherently limited understanding of opposition to the war. Resistance has become, in some respects, a self-limiting discourse, one which has marginalised the stories of anti-war women and therefore the varied ways that opposition to the conflict was mobilised and represented in the press. The significance of the press to understanding the conflict's commemoration consequently lies, in large part, in the press's ability to highlight the continued implications of the wartime gendering of resistance. The enduring emphasis on COs and the way that their wartime experience has been discussed has meant that an inherently masculine discourse of anti-war activism dominates resisters' inclusion in the commemoration of the First World War.

The analysis of how the resisters of the First World War have been represented and discussed in the years after the war will focus on three key points of memory: the five immediate post-war years when commemorative practices were initially formed, the 50th anniversary of the war during the 1960s when there was renewed interest in the conflict, and the current

centenary commemorations up to 2017. Although not a comprehensive analysis, the focus on these three important periods of remembrance will add another dimension to the broader historiographical discussion of First World War memory, outlined in the introduction, which has neglected when and how resistance has been included in the commemoration of the conflict. A significant amount of historical analysis has been devoted to the formation of the war's memory during both the immediate aftermath of the conflict and in its 50th anniversary and my analysis of these two significant periods will therefore be combined and situated within this substantial historiography. However, the other key date considered in this chapter, the centenary, is yet to be explored in detail, specifically in relation to resistance. By considering how the dominant themes of the post-war and 50th anniversary periods have endured or shifted in the centenary commemorations, this chapter will contribute new knowledge to the remembrance of the Great War.

One of the overarching themes that bridges all of the periods under consideration is that of authority. Central to this are the questions of who has the authority to remember? And who has the authority to be remembered? Hynes has argued that only men who experienced war can make an absolute claim for authority because war 'cannot be comprehended at second-hand.'⁶⁰¹ He argues that the contradiction between 'the man-who-was-there' asserting his authority as the only true witness of war and the compromising of his truth through the very nature of language and memory can be resolved by thinking of the 'truth of war experience as being the ... collective tale that soldiers tell.'⁶⁰² How war narratives are privileged is integral to the way that the remembrance of the First World War has been discussed and constructed in the post-war period and the 50th and 100th anniversaries. To be sure, the soldier and his authority have been present in

⁶⁰¹ S. Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale*, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁰² *Ibid*, p. 25.

all these periods, but this authority has also been broader than the soldier himself. It has been conferred from the soldier through his family members who have been positioned as authoritative voices on the memory of the war, particularly in the immediate post-war period and current centenary. The family has played an important role not only for those related to soldiers but also for descendants of conscientious objectors and the privileging of the soldier's voice is being challenged, to some extent, by the greater inclusion of stories of resistance, particularly COs. Whilst limitations of claims to authority continue to affect the way the war is commemorated, especially with regards to gender, the wider discussion over authority, memory, and the Great War highlights a broader understanding of this theme than that proposed by Hynes.

This chapter will also demonstrate the role that the press has played as a space in which the exclusion and inclusion of war resistance has been shaped. As Adrian Bingham has argued, the print media has played a key role not only in producing narratives about the war but also in 'reporting and framing the commemorations' that have become 'a major part of the war's legacy.'⁶⁰³ Yet as the media landscape has changed substantially over the hundred years since the Armistice, there has also been a shift in the way that the public consume news and narratives about the war. The dominance of print during the war and immediate post-war period was gradually diminished by the proliferation of first radio and then television. Greater media pluralism has meant that the First World War has been represented and discussed through a much larger variety of media than during the war. In this way, there can not be complete continuity from the analysis of the wartime press through until the present day. Nonetheless, by focusing on newspapers, both in print and online, this chapter will offer an analytical

⁶⁰³ Adrian Bingham, 'Introduction: Writing the First World War after 1918: Journalism, History and Commemoration', *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (2016), 392-392 (pp. 393-394).

continuity to demonstrate how this particular medium represented First World War resisters in the years after the conflict's end.

Reflecting the changing media landscape, some of the wartime titles have since folded. Whilst this chapter will continue to use the *Guardian*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* as part of its source material, it will look at the *Morning Star* in place of the now defunct anti-war socialist papers, the *Herald* and *Labour Leader*, for the analysis of the centenary. The *Morning Star* is a suitable replacement for the *Herald* and *Leader* because it not only comes from an explicitly socialist standpoint but it also contains substantial critical coverage of the First World War and its commemoration during the centenary years. In addition, the evolving nature of press consumption has meant that in recent years online publications have become a key way that the public engage with newspapers. For this reason, for the centenary period the online versions of the newspapers have been examined. Using the online versions of the papers also has the benefit of being able to access readers' comments on specific articles. These comments act as a comparable source to the readers' letters that were present in a much more substantial manner in earlier periods, although there are certainly differences between them, including the greater anonymity and speed of online comments in comparison to letters. However, both letters and online comments demonstrate how the public continues to play an active role in responding to and shaping discourses of resistance.

There is, in the different time periods under consideration, often an imbalance in the publications that are being analysed. This is due to the absence of any material regarding the remembrance of war resisters in particular newspapers during certain periods. This has necessarily meant that the analysis has focused on the material that is present. This discrepancy is most clearly illustrated by the near-absence of coverage on war resisters in the pro-war publications, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*, in the

immediate post-war period and the 50th anniversary, as well as the dominance of content from the *Guardian* in both these periods. This inevitably places limitations on the analysis; however, by continuing to use the same, or similar, sources for the examination of remembrance it also flags up where there have been silences about First World War resistance. By considering these silences within the context of the dominant interpretations of the war in particular periods of remembrance, the reasons why resistance has been absent or limited can be illuminated and the way that remembrance of the war more broadly has changed over one hundred years can be revealed.

The position of anti-war activism within the remembrance of the conflict takes on a particular poignancy as the centenary commemorations have passed into their third year. It has become clear that, even as the war recedes further into the past, it continues to play a significant role in the British national imagination. As Catriona Pennell has pointed out, the First World War has a 'lingering and vivid presence in British popular culture.'⁶⁰⁴ The impulses behind the flourishing of commemorative activity during both this current anniversary as well as previous ones reflect both personal and national concerns as well as the desire to both understand and learn from events in the national past. For example, in the years immediately after 1918 in the aftermath of the conflict, remembrance provided those who were in mourning with a way to live with the effects of the war and it consequently played a central role in the grieving process.⁶⁰⁵ The relationship between grief and remembrance in the immediate post-war period was significant not only in establishing commemorative practices which continue to resonate in the present but also in the way that these practices focused on particular

⁶⁰⁴ Catriona Pennell, 'Learning Lessons from War? Inclusions and Exclusions in Teaching First World War History in English Secondary Schools', *History & Memory*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016), 36-70 (p. 37).

⁶⁰⁵ J. Winter, 'Forms of Kinship and Remembrance', p. 44.

groups as central to the remembrance of the war, namely those who had died and those who had lost close family members during the hostilities.

As the conflict has receded further into the past it has developed from the narrative of personal loss that characterised the immediate post-war period and has become embedded in national commemorative practices during the 50th and 100th anniversaries. Its remembrance has therefore been infused with national meaning, both in terms of national identity and which members of the national community have been remembered.⁶⁰⁶ The shifting meaning and impetus behind commemoration and the context in which acts of remembrance have taken place have had a significant impact upon the representation of resistance. The five immediate post-war years, and the 50th and 100th anniversaries of the conflict all provide insights into the effects of changing meanings and contexts on the inclusion of resisters within commemorative discourses.

Given both the personal and national motivations underpinning remembrance and the different understandings of the meaning of commemoration, it is unsurprising that the memory of the First World War has found itself open to significant debate, particularly in the current centenary. This was clearly illustrated by a discussion in the press prior to the beginning of the centenary which was provoked by the then Conservative education secretary Michael Gove asserting that Britain had been right to enter the conflict and lamenting the ‘belittling of Britain’s heroes’ by left wing academics.⁶⁰⁷ The ensuing media reaction from journalists such as Seamus Milne in the *Guardian*⁶⁰⁸ prompted the historian Heather Jones to

⁶⁰⁶ C. Pennell, ‘Learning Lessons from War?’, p. 37.

⁶⁰⁷ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2532923/Michael-Gove-blasts-Blackadder-myths-First-World-War-spread-television-sit-coms-left-wing-academics.html> [accessed 31/08/2016]

⁶⁰⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/08/first-world-war-imperial-bloodbath-warning-noble-cause> [accessed 31/08/16]

argue that the debate highlighted how the legacy of the war often serves as a 'proxy for current identity politics.'⁶⁰⁹ The association of many First World War anti-war activists with the political left, has in some respects, played into the connections between commemoration and identity, most clearly illustrated by the *Morning Star's* discussions about the centenary commemorations. Questions of personal, national, and gender identity have also underpinned the way that the inclusion of war resisters has been discussed more broadly in the press, particularly in the centenary period. This is true not only terms of debates of who it is that should be remembered but also who it is that has the authority to remember.

The Post-War Period and the 50th Anniversary

While many conscientious objectors were imprisoned up until the summer of 1919 and suffered post-war discrimination such as disenfranchisement and barring from the civil service, Thomas Kennedy's assertion that the story of the conscientious objectors of the First World War ended with a 'small whimper'⁶¹⁰ finds echoes in the dearth of press representations of the anti-war movement in the years immediately following the Armistice. As both Kennedy and Caedel have shown, in the years immediately after the war the removal of military discipline did not 'release any surge of pent-up pacifism.'⁶¹¹ The decline and limited impact of absolutist pacifism in particular during the early 1920s is best illustrated by the question posed by one Christian Socialist group named the 'Crusader', which asked in January 1921, 'where is the CO movement?'⁶¹² Whilst the dissolved NCF found a successor in the No More War Movement, which was formed in February 1921 and associated with the War Resisters International, this organisation

⁶⁰⁹ Heather Jones, 'Goodbye To All That? Memory and Commemoration of the First World War', *Juncture*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2014), 287-291 (p. 287).

⁶¹⁰ T. Kennedy, 'Public Opinion and the Conscientious Objector', p. 118.

⁶¹¹ M. Caedel, *Pacifism in Britain*, p. 59.

⁶¹² Quoted in M. Caedel, *Pacifism in Britain*, p. 71.

remained small in both numbers and influence.⁶¹³ As Kennedy has argued, 'one might venture to devise a rule of thumb for peace groups during the twenties: the more explicit their pacifist doctrines, the smaller their membership.'⁶¹⁴

The dwindling of depictions of resisters in the immediate post-war years was not only a reflection of limited overt pacifist opinion and organisations but also a consequence of the way that the war was beginning to be memorialised. The sharp decline in depictions of COs after their release in 1919, and the disappearance of representations of female resisters altogether, suggests that resistance did not fit comfortably within the context of grief that characterised the immediate post-war period. As Todman's study of memory and the Great War has shown, the basic elements of public remembrance were constructed relatively quickly, with the key points of national commemoration, mass participation on 11 November, a focus on the Unknown Warrior and the Cenotaph, becoming fixed by the early 1920s.⁶¹⁵ There was a stress on soldiers' valour, on the value of national solidarity, and on the redemption of death through sacrifice. Furthermore, there was a social taboo on offending bereaved parents by questioning the validity of their sons' deaths.⁶¹⁶ Female mourners, particularly widows and mothers, became an especially central part of ritualised mourning.⁶¹⁷ Within this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that there was little consideration of those who had openly questioned the war's meaning and conduct. Despite the prominence of discussions over objectors' disenfranchisement in the final years of the conflict, this topic did not endure

⁶¹³ T. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*, p. 286.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 286.

⁶¹⁵ D. Todman, *The Great War*, p. 18.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 18.

⁶¹⁷ C. Acton, *Grief in Wartime*, p. 7; see Claudia Siebrecht, 'The Female Mourner: Gender and the Moral Economy of Grief during the First World War' for a discussion of female mourners in the German context and S. Grayzel, chapter 7 'Public Space and Private Grief Assessing the Legacy of War' in *Women's Identities at War*.

into the immediate post-war period. The focus on the relatives of dead servicemen in the commemorative narratives in these years also affected the muting of resistance. Adrian Gregory has pointed out in his study of Armistice Day in the interwar period that in the conflict's aftermath the belligerent nations had to decide 'how the war would be remembered and whose sacrifices would be enshrined as central' and the British 'chose to put the sacrifices of families first.'⁶¹⁸ The authority to remember was therefore conferred upon families who had lost sons during the conflict and this focus inevitably excluded the experiences of those who had openly rejected and opposed military service.

Yet as grief and loss to some extent focused on the negative effects of the war, the suffering of objectors at the hands of the government and military continued to be emphasised by anti-war voices in the press. A report in the *Herald's* survey of weekly events, 'The Way of the World', for example, described the system of imprisonment for objectors 'as ghastly a system as could be devised' and appealed to 'every decent person, whatever his views on conscientious objectors, to demand the ending of this ingenious torture.'⁶¹⁹ In a later article reporting on the release of many COs, it is similarly noted that 'the persecution of the men while under detention ... touched the depths of brutality.'⁶²⁰ Objectors and their families also voiced their suffering within the press. The conscientious objector Guy Aldred, editor of the anarchist periodical *The Spur* who had been imprisoned for two and a half years and was undertaking a hunger strike with other objectors, wrote to the *Guardian* as part of the campaign for COs' release:

⁶¹⁸ Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), pp. 225-226.

⁶¹⁹ 'The Way of the World: Release the Prisoners', *Herald*, 22nd February 1919, p. 2.

⁶²⁰ 'Opening the Prison Doors: Many C.O.'s Released and Others to Follow', *Daily Herald*, 9th April 1919, p. 2.

I am one of the many who have endured some two years and eight months persecution ... With several other comrades I have been denied four months exercise, letters, visits, books; I have had only 24 hours' open-air exercise in four months! The last two months of that time I have spent in a cell in a cold basement, under disgusting conditions of filth ... Let me add that I am dictating this letter with great effort from a sick bed, not on my behalf so much as on behalf of men whose constitutions are being destroyed in gaol at present moment, and many of whom are physical and mental wrecks.⁶²¹

Aldred's wife, Rose, also highlighted the suffering of objectors, particularly those on hunger strike, in correspondence to the *Guardian*, asking, 'may I through you urge upon the House of Commons the cruelty and futility of forcibly feeding men who have suffered so much already at the hands of the law.'⁶²² These texts demonstrate how the continued incarceration of objectors following the declaration of peace meant that the representation of suffering endured into the immediate post-war period.

Objectors' suffering continued to be associated with heroism and courage in a couple of *Herald* texts. A special editorial marking the resumption of the *Herald's* daily circulation in March 1919 noted that 'to stand alone to endure obloquy and ridicule, social ostracism and loss, as the C.O.'s have done, requires courage of a very high and noble order.'⁶²³ Another *Herald* article also described the prisoners' experience of suffering as 'heroic endurance.'⁶²⁴ Although there were few texts which represented objectors' suffering in this way in the post-war period, the endurance of narratives of

⁶²¹ Guy A. Aldred, 'Correspondence: The Imprisoned C.O.s', *Manchester Guardian*, 14th January 1919, p. 3.

⁶²² Rose Witcop Aldred, 'Correspondence: Continued Imprisonment of C.O.s', *Manchester Guardian*, 11th March 1919, p. 4.

⁶²³ George Lansbury, 'Day of Resurrection: The "Daily Herald", Past and Future: The Men in Prison', *Herald*, 29th March 1919, p. 8.

⁶²⁴ 'Amnesty For All!', *Daily Herald*, 2nd April 1919, p. 4.

heroism and courage, and the way in which they were intimately associated with suffering, reveals how the wartime construction of the objector persisted once the war had finished. This is significant because the continued prominence of discourses of suffering, heroism, and courage in the immediate post-war period reinforced their role as a means of including resisters in both the 50th and 100th commemorations.

The suffering of conscientious objectors also took on a new dimension following the Armistice in 1918, with some discussion focusing on the stigma that they would continue to face upon their release from prison. John Graham, the Quaker chaplain who had been a staunch advocate of the conscientious objectors throughout the war, outlined what COs might face upon their release from prison: 'they will find themselves unpopular, they will be turned away by numerous employers, and shunned by many workmen. No preferential treatment would come to them through release.'⁶²⁵ A later article, also written within the context of an argument for the release of COs, similarly pointed to the ways in which the status of conscientious objector would have implications in the post-war years:

All [COs] alike will receive the same stigma of discharge for misconduct. The position of the conscientious objector ... will be in any case so unenviable that he will not probably quarrel over much at the method of his release ... conscientious objectors will have to struggle against the almost universal condemnation of their views, and in most cases against their own bodily ill-health. Even if successful they will not swamp the labour market. If unsuccessful they may yet have years ahead of them in which to pay for the obstinacy of their convictions. Release, to them alone, is not an end of suffering nor the beginning of a new hope.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁵ John W. Graham, 'Correspondence: The Imprisoned C.O.s', *Manchester Guardian*, 24th January 1919, p. 10.

⁶²⁶ 'The Release of the C.O.s', *Manchester Guardian*, 4th April 1919, p. 6.

The contention that the implications of being a conscientious objector would be carried over into the post-war years suggests that there was a view that wartime behaviour would continue to affect resisters' lives once peace was declared. To be sure, some objectors did face continued stigma, hostility, unemployment, economic hardship, and isolation,⁶²⁷ but this discrimination was clearly not highlighted in the press in the years after 1919. Of significance too is the fact the disenfranchisement of objectors seems to play little explicit part in Graham's description of the stigma that objectors faced, despite the fact that this had been an important point of contention during the war. The absence of concerns about disenfranchisement can perhaps be accounted for by the difficulty in enforcing this legislation effectively.⁶²⁸

The suffering and continued imprisonment of conscientious objectors similarly raised concerns about the nation, as it had done during the war. For example, an opinion piece by Artifex, the *Guardian's* religious commentator, asserted that:

what moves me most is not the injustice which is being done to the individual but the harm done to the whole body politic. At a time when the influence of vital religion in the nation is at once most needed and apparently at its lowest ebb, thoughtful men see grave injustice being done to men who are fighting for conscience.⁶²⁹

The failure to release objectors following the Armistice was viewed as a concern both with regards to its effect on people's faith in the nation but also because of its potential to ignite unrest. Baron Parmoor, who had

⁶²⁷ T. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*, pp. 282-283. COs were disenfranchised for 5 years following the Armistice, COs who had been civil servants were temporarily barred from reappointment and absolutists were permanently excluded for example.

⁶²⁸ See J. Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, pp. 234-235.

⁶²⁹ Artifex, 'The Continued Imprisonment of C.O.s', *Manchester Guardian*, 6th February 1919, p. 10.

opposed conscription and had been sympathetic towards COs during the war, expressed this concern in a letter which noted that 'in the continuance of this treatment may be found an illustration of the harsh spirit which is not without its influence in the creation of industrial unrest.'⁶³⁰ Anxieties about the war's negative effect on the nation which had been expressed with regards to conscientious objectors during the conflict were thus translated into concern about the rebuilding of the post-war nation. Jon Lawrence has argued that the riots and unrest during 1919, in which soldiers and ex-servicemen appeared to play a prominent part, raised fears of brutalisation and made the idea of 'peaceableness' attractive.⁶³¹ Lawrence contends that in the post-war period it became 'commonplace to argue that the use of violence, both at home and in the empire, was somehow uniquely "un-British"' and a long pedigree of myths of British 'peaceableness' were greatly amplified in the aftermath of the First World War.⁶³² The concerns raised by both Artifex and Parmoor and the way that they were underpinned by a sense that the release of objectors would be part of the nation's post-war healing evoked these fears of unrest and a desire for the forging of a 'peaceable' nation.

Following the release of objectors there was very little press attention devoted to them. However, in April 1921, conscientious objectors and their wartime experience were discussed in a *Leader* report on a reunion of Great War COs. The way that Fenner Brockway framed his message to the objectors at this gathering has a parallel with the way that ex-servicemen remembered their wartime experience. Brockway notes that 'however much we may differ, we all recognise each other's sincerity and single-minded

⁶³⁰ Parmoor, 'Correspondence: Continued Imprisonment of C.O.s', *Manchester Guardian*, 25th February 1919, p. 10.

⁶³¹ Jon Lawrence, 'Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (September, 2003), 557-589 (pp. 557-559).

⁶³² *Ibid*, p. 559.

purpose to bring happiness and peace to the world. We have occupied prison cells side by side. We have tramped the ring together. The fraternity of that experience can never be lost.’⁶³³ Meyer has shown how for many ex-servicemen who wrote memoirs about their war experience ‘comradeship was recalled as a general feeling that existed throughout whatever unit they belonged to, including, for some, the entire army.’⁶³⁴ Moreover, the duty to endure, cast in the language of comradeship ‘imposed itself on memoirists as a remembered arbiter of their masculinity as defined by the experience of war.’⁶³⁵ In Brockway’s statement there was, too, a sense that the duty that objectors felt they had to resist war, and the hardships they faced as a result, reinforced the feeling of comradeship. Furthermore, evoking the ex-servicemen’s memoir, the way that Brockway expressed the experience of objecting within a framework of comradeship similarly acted as an affirmation of CO masculinity, as defined by their wartime experience. The construction of objectors’ masculinity in this way demonstrates how the anti-war press adapted the central features of wartime masculinity to fit the depiction of objectors both during the war and in the immediate post-war period.

The diminished press discussion of war resisters was also reflected in the fact that publications such as the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*, which had been vociferous in their condemnation of conscientious objectors during the war, fell almost silent on the subject after the declaration of peace. To be sure, there was one noteworthy *Mail* article on a CO whose wife left him for a Canadian serviceman. The article noted that, the objector had ‘noticed that his wife had cooled towards him’ and that she ‘refused marital relations.’⁶³⁶ The publication of this story is significant because its representation of the

⁶³³ ‘N. C. F. Day’, *Labour Leader*, 14th April 1921, p. 6.

⁶³⁴ J. Meyer, *Men of War*, p. 146.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 148.

⁶³⁶ ‘Wife’s Cooled Love: Conscientious Objector Deserted’, *Daily Mail*, 27th June 1922, p. 13.

CO, his wife, and the serviceman was used as a means of confirming the gendered implications of refusing to serve. As Gullace has argued, during the war popular singers, writers, and artists 'represented the soldier-hero as a romantic ideal worthy of a woman's love and hopeful of her body.'⁶³⁷ The break-down of the objector's marriage is suggested to be a consequence of his refusal to serve and the article therefore clearly links female desire with a masculinity that was associated with military service. This text suggests that the COs' inferior masculinity had continued ramifications in the post-war period, in the same way that the anti-war press linked objectors' wartime and post-war masculine construction.

The absence of resistance in the *Express* and the *Mail* in the post-war period continued in the 50th anniversary. However, the discourse of suffering that dominated the last two years of war and the immediate post-war period proved to be an enduring narrative of opposition to the war and played a central role in the limited depiction of war resisters during the 50th anniversary. Whilst historians such as Alex Danchev have explored the various reasons behind the reanimation of public interest in the war during the 1960s,⁶³⁸ this did not translate into curiosity about those who had opposed the war. Interest was both reflected and prompted by two hugely successful cultural productions about the conflict, the BBC's 1964 20 part television series *The Great War* and Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop 1963 play *Oh, What a Lovely War!* In 1963, as the play began to be performed and the BBC series went into production, Britain's public discourse about the war was being revived. The conflict had just been put on to school history syllabuses and the Imperial War Museum opened their extensive archive to the BBC at a reduced rate in order to raise the museum's declining profile.⁶³⁹ Both *The Great War* and *Oh, What a Lovely*

⁶³⁷ N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*", p. 88.

⁶³⁸ A. Danchev, "'Bunking' and Debunking", pp. 263-289.

⁶³⁹ E. Hanna, *The Great War on the Small Screen*, pp. 33-34.

War! reinforced the prevailing sense that the war had been futile and emphasised the story of the ordinary volunteer soldier. Both make only a brief reference to the anti-war movement. In the *Great War*, episode 14, 'all this it is our duty to bear', discussed the introduction of conscription but noted that 'only a noisy minority protested', whilst *Oh, What a Lovely War!* featured an anti-war woman publicly denouncing the war amongst hostile crowds. Emma Hanna has argued that the cultural climate in which the *Great War* was shown buttressed a certain view of the war as futile and murderous and the conflict was explained in terms of sacrifice and disillusion.⁶⁴⁰ Despite the TV series' revisionist script, the powerful imagery that flooded the programme only served to reinforce 'the received view of the war as a bloody and worthless event.'⁶⁴¹ This view was also put forward by *Oh, What a Lovely War!* which focused on the common soldier and his torment during the conflict.⁶⁴²

Whilst the post-war period was focused on the grieving family, the 50th anniversary was permeated by a general public understanding of the conflict as futile and a perception that the ordinary soldier had been misled by the officer class.⁶⁴³ This interpretation of the war was illustrated by the anti-officer and anti-authority narrative of *Oh! What a Lovely War*.⁶⁴⁴ Whereas in the post-war period objectors' suffering was connected to the need to forge a peaceful post-war nation, the focus on the harsh treatment and suffering of COs at the hands of the wartime authorities fit into the dominant interpretation of war in the 1960s. This narrative provided a context of remembrance in which some stories of resistance could be included.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 52.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 52.

⁶⁴² Derek Paget, 'Remembrance Play: "Oh What a Lovely War" and History' in Tony Howard and John Stokes (eds), *Acts of War: The Representation of Military Conflict on the British Stage and Television since 1945* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996), pp. 82-97 (p. 85).

⁶⁴³ A. Danchev, "'Bunking" and Debunking', p. 281.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 2831.

However, the representations of war resisters in the press during the 50th anniversary were limited, even in those publications which had championed anti-war activists during the conflict. In fact, newspapers like the *Daily Herald* and particularly the *Labour Leader's* successor the *Socialist Leader* were more preoccupied with the anti-war movement and politics of the day.

Whilst Todman points out that the anti-establishment and anti-war attitudes expressed in *Oh, What a Lovely War!* reflected the politics of the 1960s only to a limited extent, the focus of the left-wing press during this period did chime with the political viewpoint of the play.⁶⁴⁵ In 1962, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), which was formed in 1958, organised its anti-nuclear weapons Aldermaston marches which were in part 'a crusade against the moral bankruptcy of an older generation.'⁶⁴⁶ More significant still was the Vietnam War. Indeed, this issue was a central focus of the *Socialist Leader* in particular during the years 1964-68, not only because there was a significant movement against the war in Britain but also because it became the left's main indictment against a Labour government whose consistent diplomatic support for American policy left many feeling betrayed.⁶⁴⁷ The tensions and divisions within the British anti-Vietnam War movement became a prominent point of discussion within the socialist and left-wing press during this time and this focus left little room for the consideration of the peace movement of earlier periods.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁵ Todman offers a detailed examination of how *Oh, What a Lovely War!* can be situated within the political and social context of the 1960s in *The Great War*, pp. 105-108.

⁶⁴⁶ Mark Donnelly, *Sixties Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2005), p. 40.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 109.

⁶⁴⁸ The divisions within the anti-Vietnam War movement in Britain are detailed by Nick Thomas in 'Protests against the Vietnam War in 1960s Britain: the Relationship between Protesters and the Press', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (September, 2008), 335-354 (pp. 340-341).

The press discussion which did focus on war resisters during the anniversary was primarily generated through the press coverage of the publication of David Boulton's history of Great War COs, *Objection Overruled*.⁶⁴⁹ The book was commissioned by Bertrand Russell and Fenner Brockway, the two surviving leaders of the No-Conscription Fellowship, and they jointly signed a letter to *The Observer* which invited COs to send stories and memorabilia to the author.⁶⁵⁰ The central role that Great War objectors played in the book's genesis and narrative and the ensuing press discussion demonstrates how the authority to remember the war was broadened during the 50th anniversary, albeit in a limited way. The influence of the focus on the story of the ordinary soldier that was evident in both *Oh, What a Lovely War!* and *The Great War* TV series can be seen in the way that objectors' voices were beginning to be heard and discussed in the press during this period. The book not only sparked a dialogue regarding the wartime experience and post-war legacy of objectors, but it also, importantly, defined the representational parameters for objectors during the anniversary, focusing specifically on the suffering of objectors at the hands of the government and military, just as the post-war period did. This focus is perhaps most clearly illustrated by Boulton's contention that many objectors were 'brutally and systematically tortured,'⁶⁵¹ and his description of one of the Home Office work camps as a 'prototype concentration camp.'⁶⁵²

Boulton's focus on CO suffering was reinforced by his writing in the press as part of the book's promotion. In an article he wrote for *The Observer* in August 1966, for example, Boulton placed greatest emphasis on events such as the first CO death, the bread and water diets of imprisoned objectors, and

⁶⁴⁹ David Boulton, *Objection Overruled* (London: MacGibbon and Kee Ltd., 1967).

⁶⁵⁰ Bertrand Russell and Fenner Brockway, 'Letters to the Editor', *Observer*, 2nd August 1964, p. 11.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 11.

⁶⁵² *Ibid*, p. 211.

the incident in which a number of objectors were taken to France under the threat of the death penalty.⁶⁵³ Boulton pointed out that ‘as a direct result of the treatment they [COs] were accorded in military and civil prison, 39 were driven insane and 71 objectors died’, and asserted that there was ‘systematic brutality’ towards COs from the army with ‘physical ill-treatment, bullying and threats of execution.’⁶⁵⁴ The contention throughout the article that objectors were treated particularly harshly by the military and government authorities can be viewed as partially compatible with and reflective of the prevailing cultural view of the war during this period, and perhaps goes some way in explaining why this particular narrative of resistance re-emerged during this period.

Indeed, even those who disagreed with Boulton’s emphasis on the authorities believed that objectors’ suffering should in some way be included in the memory of the war. John Rae, a historian who would also go on to write a book about Great War conscientious objectors, noted in a letter to the *Observer* that ‘while Mr. Boulton is surely right to commemorate the difficulties faced by conscientious objectors ... [Boulton] is uniformly unfair to the military authorities.’⁶⁵⁵ That the ‘difficulties faced’ by objectors should be the focal point of commemoration of these resisters demonstrates how central objectors’ suffering was to their inclusion in the war’s commemoration during the 50th anniversary period. The continuation and dominance of this narrative reveals how the inclusion of resistance had the potential to either reinforce or echo particular interpretations about the war itself, something which also characterises the centenary commemorations. In this period, the inclusion of stories of conscientious objectors’ suffering evoked the anti-authority narrative of the war through an emphasis on the

⁶⁵³ David Boulton, ‘Rebels in Uniform’, *Observer*, 7th August 1966, p. 17.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁵ John Rae, ‘Letters to the Editor: Rebels in Uniform’, *Observer*, 14th August 1966, p. 9.

harshness of the government and military and also reinforced the popular conception of the war as futile.

Objectors' suffering was also portrayed as being instrumental to their legacy, an interpretation which mirrored the wartime narrative of COs as martyrs. As one reviewer of the book argued, 'their suffering certainly contributed to that general humanising of English society which has continued from their day to ours.'⁶⁵⁶ This argument was also present in the description of the COs as 'martyrs' in a number of reviews of *Objection Overruled*.⁶⁵⁷ The review in the *Socialist Leader* also connected the contemporary anti-war stance of the paper in the 1960s to the First World War objectors, noting that 'they were the martyrs to our cause.'⁶⁵⁸ In the endurance of the narratives of suffering and martyrdom, it is evident that the inclusion of resisters in the remembrance narratives of the war hinged in large part on the emphasis on their suffering. This focus is significant because it highlights how the authority to both remember and be remembered in the 50th anniversary of the Great War was conferred on those who had suffered at the hands of the wartime authorities. This construction of commemoration also had gendered implications. The wartime anti-war reconfiguration of the peace movement around the conscientious objector with specific reference to his suffering, and the continuation of this representation during the 50th anniversary, marginalised the experience of female resisters, whose suffering was mediated through either soldiers or COs, as shown in the previous chapter. Similarly, the depiction of objectors' stand and suffering as anti-authority could reflect this interpretation of the war, exemplified by *Oh, What a Lovely War!*, in a way that female resistance could not.

⁶⁵⁶ Philip Toynbee, 'A Matter of Conscience', *Observer*, 25th June 1967, p. 27.

⁶⁵⁷ For example, P. Toynbee repeatedly refers to the objectors as martyrs in his review of the book, P. Toynbee, 'A Matter of Conscience' and the review of the book in the *Socialist Leader* similarly uses the language of martyrdom to frame the actions of COs. See Alf Norris, 'Forgotten Martyrs', *Socialist Leader*, 8th July 1967, p. 7.

⁶⁵⁸ A. Norris, 'Forgotten Martyrs'.

These gendered implications of remembrance were also reinforced by representations that identified objectors as heroic and courageous precisely because their stance went against the wartime authorities. In his review of *Objection Overruled*, Philip Toynbee refers to the 'heroic gesture' of the conscientious objectors who refused 'to fight for capitalism.'⁶⁵⁹ Fenner Brockway and Bertrand Russell also point to the 'heroism' of the objectors' stand, 'not in the face of the enemy of the foreign fields, but in the face of established authority at home.'⁶⁶⁰ Both Toynbee's link between heroism and a political refusal to fight and Brockway and Russell's connection between heroism and standing against authority clearly fit within the anti-authority narrative of the First World War that was present during the 50th anniversary. Moreover, this depiction of objectors' heroism and courage demonstrates how the wartime anti-war narrative of moral courage was translated into the anti-authority narrative of remembrance. It is also significant that the complexities and tensions that the suffering of objectors engendered during the final two years of the war, were absent in the depiction of suffering, heroism, and courage during the 1960s. This demonstrates that as suffering became an accepted and central part of the war's memory and key to the interpretation of the war as futile, the invocation of male suffering, and even victimhood, could be identified as heroic and courageous in a way that did not necessarily raise questions about gender. This highlights how changing contexts and different interpretations of the war affected the meaning and purpose of discourses of resistance.

The representation of male resisters' actions as heroic also illustrates a gendered understanding of this discourse. Indeed, the heroism ascribed to

⁶⁵⁹ P. Toynbee, 'A Matter of Conscience'.

⁶⁶⁰ Bertrand Russell and Fenner Brockway, 'Letters to the Editor'.

male peace activists was absent in the depiction of their female counterparts. In the single article that was published during the 50th anniversary about the women who convened at The Hague Peace Congress in 1915, moral courage played a significant role in their representation. Mary Stott, writing in the *Guardian*, noted that 'I am thinking of the courage that fifty years ago, started the oldest women's peace movement, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.' She goes on to note that for the women who organised and attended the congress, 'the moral courage was, of course, greater than the physical.'⁶⁶¹ Whilst the emphasis on moral courage allowed women's resistance to be identified as courageous, the absence of an association with heroism points to an implicit understanding of heroism as connected to men. This discrepancy is illustrative of Ashplant, Dawson and Roper's contention that within narratives of war memory different social groups have differential access to power and this power can be marked particularly in relation to gender.⁶⁶² The physical and mental endurance that objectors' suffering evoked remained central to conceptions of heroic masculinity and continued to define the depiction of COs and influence their prominent position within the remembrance of resistance.

The gendered distinction of war resisters in this commemorative press report was also reinforced by the fact that the formation of WILPF and The Hague Congress were situated within a broader discussion about the relationship between women and peace. This discussion can be contextualised within the contemporaneous gender politics of the women's liberation movement (WLM). Although the WLM didn't properly emerge until the late 1960s, the movement's concern with a fundamental analysis of contemporary femininity can be identified in Mary Stott's discussion of

⁶⁶¹ Mary Stott, 'Women Talking- About Peace', *Guardian*, 14th June 1965, p. 6.

⁶⁶² Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures and Dynamics' in T.G. Ashplant, G. Dawson and M. Roper (eds), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 3-85 (p. 21).

gender and peace.⁶⁶³ Stott wrote that 'though the leaders of the Hague gathering were very conscious of acting as women ... you can't really say that men are the aggressive sex and make wars, and women, the child-bearers, are the peaceable sex and try to prevent them.'⁶⁶⁴ She goes on to argue that not all women, and specifically not all mothers, are inclined towards pacifism and suggests that this association is restrictive for contemporary peace movements, arguing that 'if international peace is ever to be secured we need all kinds of effort, all kinds of concern.'⁶⁶⁵ Despite Stott's challenge to the link between women and peace, the presence of an explicit discussion of the association between gender and resistance to war in the commemoration of an act of female resistance demonstrates the continued explicit presence of gender in the representation of female peace activism which stands in contrast to the more implicit gendering of COs. This reflects the centrality of conceptions of femininity to the way that female activists, including WILPF and WIL, were represented in the press during the war. Whilst objectors' identification with the wartime ideals of courage, heroism, and sacrifice also enabled their inclusion into commemorative narratives these discourses also became markers of commemoration; the discussion of anti-war women in terms of gender meant that their experiences were represented as specific to women rather than the war experience more broadly, and the absence of sacrifice and heroism in their representation rendered their inclusion into the war's memory limited. This gendered conceptualisation of remembrance also continues into the centenary commemorations.

The few articles which do appear in the immediate post-war period and 50th anniversary shed significant light on how resistance was conceptualised as

⁶⁶³ M. Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*, p. 158

⁶⁶⁴ M. Stott, 'Women Talking'.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

part of the war's memory, with specific reference to key gendered wartime narratives.

Suffering in particular was a central defining narrative of resistance in both periods and was explicitly linked to the experience of conscientious objectors. In the same way, courage and heroism also continued to underpin the way that male resisters were included into the war's commemoration. As in the war, these discourses carried gendered implications and have reinforced a story of resistance that in general excluded the experiences of anti-war women. In the immediate post-war period the absence of anti-war women may be explained by the way that female suffering and its relationship to war resistance was defined in the final two years of the conflict. Whilst conscientious objectors were represented as encountering direct suffering and hardship, anti-war female suffering in the Women's Peace Crusade during 1917 and 1918 was framed in direct reference to soldiers serving on the front. Consequently, their suffering became subsumed in the broader context of grief and loss that characterised the immediate post-war period. The fact that objectors were set apart from the conflict in a way that anti-war women were not, impacted upon the focus of resistance in the war's memory. The way that suffering was conceptualised during the 50th anniversary was also problematic for anti-war women. Whereas objectors' stand and suffering could be clearly positioned within the anti-authority narrative that was characterised in *Oh, What a Lovely War!*, female suffering, particularly because of its links to men on the battlefield, could not be overtly portrayed in this way. In this sense, the way that anti-war suffering was conceptualised in the final two years of the war had a significant impact on the way that resistance fit into the commemorative narratives of the post-war and 50th anniversary periods.

The Centenary

Who should be remembered?

In contrast to the limited press representations of war resisters in the immediate post-war period and 50th anniversary, resistance has been a considerable theme during the centenary commemorations thus far. In many ways this shift can be accounted for by the prominence of the questions of who should be remembered and in what way, which specifically address the question of authority. In this regard, two elements of the post-war and 50th anniversary periods have broadened significantly: the voice of the family and the inclusion of resisters' stories. As Andrew Mycock noted at the beginning of the centenary, there have been considerable schisms about whether or not the commemorations should have a more critical and pluralistic approach than the commemorations of the past.⁶⁶⁶ The Britain of today is significantly different, politically and socially, from the one of both the immediate post-war and the 50th anniversary periods. Mycock has pointed out that the dying out of the First World War generation, a series of significant conflict anniversaries and the United Kingdom's engagement in a series of other conflicts have encouraged greater public recognition of, and participation in, war commemoration.⁶⁶⁷

The political, social and cultural developments of the past one hundred years have similarly fed into interpretations of the conflict. Debates about the Great War in recent years have demonstrated the extent to which current political ideology is an instrumental factor in framing the commemoration of the conflict. For example, some British right-wing eurosceptic commentators have identified the genesis of the European Union as a political 'deception' by elites who fought in the Great War and then sought to build a 'United States of Europe' in the aftermath of the Second World War. In contrast, some left-wing commentators have argued that the lessons of the 'savage

⁶⁶⁶ Andrew Mycock, 'The First World War Centenary in the UK: "A Truly National Commemoration"?'', *The Round Table*, Vol. 103, No. 2 (2014), 153-163 (p. 155).

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 155.

industrial slaughter' pursued by 'predatory imperial powers' have not been learnt.⁶⁶⁸ The multinational make-up of the UK has also highlighted the complicated notion of a national commemoration, particularly with regards to Ireland and Scotland,⁶⁶⁹ while the legacies of Empire and the role that colonial soldiers and communities played in the conflict have contributed to tensions within national narratives and collective memories. Yet these discussions have also broadened the dimensions of First World War remembrance.⁶⁷⁰

These political, social and cultural developments and concerns have raised questions about the pluralism of the commemoration, and have been an important point of discussion in the press during this anniversary. These debates have had a significant impact on the way that the inclusion of resistance in to the remembrance of the Great War has been explored in the press. The presence of war resisters in debates about the role and meaning of remembrance today demonstrates a willingness to consider what contribution resistance can make to our understanding of the Great War. Yet, as in both the periods already examined, the discourses that the inclusion of resistance has been based upon has meant that limitations continue to permeate the remembrance of the anti-war movement.

The intertwining of resistance and critical reflection on the meaning of commemoration is illustrated by a contention in a number of *Morning Star* and *Guardian* articles and readers' comments that the inclusion of resistance in the centenary commemoration represents a challenge to the official

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 157.

⁶⁶⁹ See C. Pennell, 'A Truly Shared Commemoration? Britain, Ireland and the Centenary of the First World War' *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 159, No. 4 (2014), 92-100 for a good discussion of the place of Ireland within the commemoration. Mycock also provides an insightful analysis of the sub-state national forms of remembrance in Ireland, Scotland and Wales in 'The First World War Centenary in the UK', pp. 157-159.

⁶⁷⁰ A. Mycock, 'The First World War Centenary in the UK', pp. 159-160.

narratives of the war. As such, representations of resisters that explicitly consider the effect of the addition of anti-war activists in the commemoration of the war are illustrative of Mycock's assertion that the politics of commemoration is underpinned by tensions between official and unofficial narratives.⁶⁷¹ Although the government have not expressed an opinion on the rights and wrongs of the conflict in their official commemoration of the conflict,⁶⁷² and have indirectly funded a number of projects looking particularly at conscientious objectors through the Heritage Lottery Fund,⁶⁷³ the then Prime Minister David Cameron's 2012 comments about the centenary sparked criticism. In a speech at the Imperial War Museum to announce a £50 million fund for the commemorations, Cameron remarked that the ambitious aim was a commemoration, like the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, that 'captures our national spirit in every corner of the country, something that says something about who we are as a people.'⁶⁷⁴ This comparison was seen by some as identifying the commemoration of the conflict as a celebration,⁶⁷⁵ and this interpretation of the official narrative of commemoration is present in a number of critical press articles during the centenary. This view is especially prevalent in the *Morning Star*, which has been keen to emphasise the role of resistance as a way of challenging what

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 161.

⁶⁷² The government's statement on how it will commemorate the war does not take an opinion on the conflict for example. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/about-the-first-world-war-centenary> [accessed 08/05/2017].

⁶⁷³ The HLF is a non-departmental public body accountable to Parliament via the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) but their decisions about individual applications and policies are entirely independent of the Government. For a full list of the Heritage Lottery funded (HLF) First World War projects see <https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/news-features/understanding-first-world-war/be-inspired-centenary-projects> [accessed 08/05/2017]. The HLF have funded a number of projects on the anti-war movement including an award to a Peace Pledge Union project about conscientious objection and an exhibition and performance at the Working Class Movement Library which focused on conscientious objectors.

⁶⁷⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/oct/11/david-cameron-fund-world-war-one-commemorations> [accessed 08/05/2017].

⁶⁷⁵ Jeremy Paxman criticised the PM for his remarks for example, stating that the 'commemorations should have almost nothing in common with the diamond jubilee, which was an excuse for a knees-up in the rain.'
<https://www.theguardian.com/global/2013/oct/08/jeremy-paxman-david-cameron-first-world-war> [accessed 08/05/2017].

they see as the official celebratory narrative of the war. An article written by John Ellison at the beginning of 2014 clearly highlights this by asserting that ‘the Establishment expects that we remember the Great War of 1914-18 with great patriotic pride ... while remembering the soldiers and civilians of all countries whose lives were lost or blighted, we must also remember the raw fact that the war was a monstrous crime against humanity.’⁶⁷⁶

Ellison goes on to describe the work of both the socialist pacifist editor of the *Herald*, George Lansbury, and the *Labour Leader’s* editor and CO Fenner Brockway, to illustrate his point that ‘the working-class movement in Britain ... was not quiescent’ during the war. He concludes that these anti-war campaigners were ‘voices of reason in a dark time, defending humanity’s corner’ and that ‘if they could, they would join with us today in condemning Cameron’s centenary commemoration gimmickry as nationalist cover-up nonsense, served up among other objectives to recapture the lost support for British participation in today’s smaller, yet equally criminal, imperial military adventures. Down with the 1914-18 war!’⁶⁷⁷ The addition of war resisters in this text operates as a way of critiquing the official commemorative narrative. The article suggests that by including the story of those actively opposed the war the narrative of commemoration can be altered so that it becomes both more complex and more critical about the war and people’s experiences of it. The addition of anti-war activists to the memory of the conflict is therefore seen to engender a symbolic change in the discourse of commemoration itself.

This view is echoed in a *Guardian* opinion piece by Priyamvada Gopal a month later, in February 2014, which challenges the notion that the

⁶⁷⁶John Ellison, ‘No Cause to Celebrate’, *Morning Star*, 3rd January 2014. <http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-e3a1-No-cause-to-celebrate#.V86JY62c-So> [accessed 06/09/16].

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

commemorations are inclusive by using the example of resisters: 'The commemorations of the First World War now under way ... are, we are given to understand, intended to be inclusive ... but ... there seems to be a curious exclusion ... what about the courage of those who took the path of most resistance and dissented from the status quo by challenging the war itself?'⁶⁷⁸ She goes on to assert that 'as the commemorative drums of national unity start to beat again to rally us behind dominant narratives, it is time to remember that more than 20, 000 men ... refused conscription.'⁶⁷⁹ Like Ellison, Gopal suggests that by including resisters into the official narrative, the use of the war's commemoration as a means of creating national unity can be questioned and complicated. Todman has argued that, in the past, wartime victories have played an important role in bolstering Britain's national identity as a 'Top-Nation.'⁶⁸⁰ Both Gopal's and Ellison's articles show how the invocation of the First World War as a means of bolstering a conception of a unified national identity is being challenged in the press during the centenary. That the inclusion of resisters is positioned as being fundamental to this challenge demonstrates how the memory of the anti-war movement is playing a role in shaping the press narratives of commemoration. Furthermore, it highlights how the implication of objectors in questions of national identity that was demonstrated in chapter 2 has continued in the way that they are being positioned in commemorative discourses.

The potential of stories of resistance to alter the meaning of remembrance is similarly expressed in a number of assertions in the press that the inclusion of conscientious objectors in the commemoration challenges what is perceived as the glorification of the war. The *Star*, for example, published an

⁶⁷⁸ Priyamvada Gopal, 'First World War Bravery was not Confined to the Soldiers', *The Guardian*, 27th February 2014 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/feb/27/first-world-war-bravery-fight-for-peace> [accessed 06/09/16].

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁰ D. Todman, *The Great War*, p. 144.

article for International Conscientious Objectors Day 2014 with an interview with a granddaughter of a CO, in which she notes that the commemoration of COs is 'very important to remind people that there is another side to war.'⁶⁸¹ She goes on to say that 'we shouldn't glorify war. The stance taken by the COs was making a statement, about a refusal to fight. If everyone had taken that stance, war couldn't happen.'⁶⁸² This sentiment is also invoked by a reader commenting on a *Guardian* article detailing the online publication of the Pearce Database of conscientious objectors in which they assert that 'recognising the value of such men helps to mitigate a little the glorification of war.'⁶⁸³

The suggestion that resistance can reshape commemoration is predicated upon a belief that the previous marginalisation of the peace movement in the memory of the conflict has been a consequence of the dominant narrative's exclusion of this topic in the remembrance on the war. As Ashplant et. al argue, if experiences have been marginalised or excluded, 'the social actors mobilising around such a sectional narrative may be compelled to challenge or undermine the official narrative by claiming a (more prominent) place within it.'⁶⁸⁴ Just as representations of the war in the 1960s, such as *Oh, What a Lovely War!*, claimed to draw on soldiers' narratives to tell the bottom-up social history of the war, the texts discussed above all seek to establish a more prominent position for resistance within the war's remembrance as a way of challenging the purpose and meaning of commemoration.

⁶⁸¹ Paul Donovan, 'Anti-War Activism: Blessed Be the Peacemakers', *Morning Star*, 14th May 2014 <https://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-f9ff-Anti-war-activism-Blessed-be-the-peacemakers#.V86b9a2c-So> [accessed 06/09/16].

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*

⁶⁸³ Maev Kennedy, 'Poignant Stories of First World War's Conscientious Objectors Go Online', *The Guardian*, 15th May 2015: Comment from 'Janette B' <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/15/poignant-stories-of-first-world-wars-conscientious-objectors-go-online> [accessed 06/09/16].

⁶⁸⁴ T. Ashplant, G. Dawson and M. Roper, 'The Politics of Memory and Commemoration', p. 21.

The potential of resistance to change the meaning of commemoration is not only invoked by those who argue for the inclusion of resisters but also by those who are resistant to their addition in the centenary commemorations. Within many of the readers' comments in both the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*, there is a feeling that resisters do not deserve to be commemorated alongside soldiers because this would change the meaning and focus of commemoration. An article in the *Mail* which details a memorial ceremony for the COs of the Great War, for instance, provoked a number of comments expressing disdain for the memorialisation of objectors. One reader notes, 'ridiculous- they hardly deserve a memorial for doing nothing',⁶⁸⁵ whilst another asserts that 'the memorial to men, who were in fact cowards, is an embarrassment.'⁶⁸⁶ The argument that those who had not contributed to the war effort do not deserve to be a part of the commemoration is echoed in readers' reactions to an article written in the *Guardian* by the Second World War veteran, Harry Leslie Smith. Published on Remembrance Sunday 2014, Smith argues that those who opposed the war should be incorporated into acts of remembrance.⁶⁸⁷ In response one reader comments that 'those who refused to fight for their country deserve nothing whatsoever, they aren't fit to clean the boots of those who did!'⁶⁸⁸ Another reader asserts that they are 'glad they will never be remembered like our brave soldiers, who were dying

⁶⁸⁵ Kieran Corcoran, 'Brave in their Own Way: Memorial Ceremony Held in Heart of London to Remember Conscientious Objectors of the First World War', *Daily Mail*, 15th May 2014
Comment from 'Noggin the Nog' <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2629753/Brave-way-Memorial-ceremony-held-heart-London-remember-conscientious-objectors-First-World-War.html> [accessed 06/09/16].

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid* Comment from 'Harry Faversham'.

⁶⁸⁷ Harry Leslie Smith, 'Remembrance isn't Only About Those Who Fought, but Also Those Who Refused', *The Guardian*, 9th November 2014
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/09/remembrance-sunday-fought-war> [accessed 06/09/16].

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid* Comment from 'johnnytwesticks'.

to protect our freedom, so [conscientious objectors] could do things like this.⁶⁸⁹

Underpinning these assertions is a clear association between who should be commemorated and notions of sacrifice, duty, and courage. The connection between the ideal wartime masculinity of the soldier and commemoration highlights how this gendered construction has influenced commemoration. This is a point that has been raised by Gabriel Koureas in his study of memory, masculinity, and national identity in British visual culture of the First World War in the interwar period. He suggests that discussions over who should be remembered often raises questions about what kind of masculinities the commemoration of the war is projecting.⁶⁹⁰ Whilst Koureas is referring specifically to the exclusion of homosexual veterans, the continued dominance of the idealised masculine figure of the soldier as a way of understanding who should be commemorated clearly has implications for the place of conscientious objectors within remembrance practices. Readers' arguments which assert that objectors should not be included in the centenary commemorations reveal how male resisters' position within the memory of the conflict is seen to be problematic because of a continued uneasiness at their rejection of the proper masculine wartime role of soldiering. The expressed desire that objectors should not be remembered alongside soldiers implicitly seeks to construct a masculinity which resembles the wartime heroic masculine identity of the soldier that was based upon the ideals of courage, duty, and sacrifice. Just as during the war the gendered anti-CO narratives in the pro-war press were underscored by anxieties regarding the destabilisation of the wartime gender order, so too does the inclusion of objectors in the commemoration of the conflict have the potential to destabilise a specifically gendered remembrance, one

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid* Comment from 'INFORMED-VOTER'.

⁶⁹⁰ Gabriel Koureas, *Memory, Masculinity and National Identity in British Visual Culture, 1914-1930: A Study of 'Unconquerable Manhood'* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), p. 1.

which makes significant assumptions about masculinity as a historical category. Although multiple soldier masculinities existed,⁶⁹¹ the one which informs the parameters within which objectors have been considered within the commemoration of war, as well as the one which dominated COs' representation during the conflict, is the soldier masculinity which focuses directly on the martial and heroic qualities associated with the battlefield.

The comparison between the soldier and the CO comes into particularly sharp focus when it is argued that remembrance should be centered on those men who lost their lives fighting in the First World War. A number of readers commenting on the Harry Smith article invoke this understanding of remembrance: 'why would we need to remember people who didn't do anything and didn't die?',⁶⁹² 'I had always understood that remembrance was about the people we had lost'⁶⁹³ or that remembrance is 'about those who fought- and especially those who died.'⁶⁹⁴ As discussed earlier in the chapter, the focus on the war dead as a central part of commemorations had been established in the immediate aftermath of the war. As Bob Bushaway has noted, the dead took on a sacred character in remembrance rituals.⁶⁹⁵ Moreover, the privileging of the dead was also tied into conceptions of heroism and masculinity. As Meyer has argued, through their deaths soldiers were seen to have proved themselves to be superior to all other men and were a source of both pride and inspiration for those left behind.⁶⁹⁶ Men who refused to serve, and thus did not put themselves at risk of being killed in the course of military service, do not therefore fit into narratives of

⁶⁹¹ See for example, J. Meyer, *Men of War* and G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes* who both explore multiple soldier masculinities in their studies.

⁶⁹² Harry Leslie Smith, 'Remembrance isn't Only About Those Who Fought', Comment from 'Pbil Doodles'.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid*, Comment from 'Chickpea'.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid*, Comment from 'RedLenin'.

⁶⁹⁵ Bob Bushaway, 'Name upon Name: The Great War and Remembrance' in Roy Porter (ed.), *Myths of the English* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 136-167 (p. 138).

⁶⁹⁶ J. Meyer, *Men of War*, p. 83.

commemoration that focus on dead servicemen. In fact, this understanding of commemoration explicitly excludes resisters from remembrance of the First World War. In this way, arguments within the press which contend that objectors cannot be commemorated because of their failure to sacrifice in the war demonstrate the continued emphasis on sacrifice as a central tenet of understanding male wartime experience.

Despite the fact that there has been discussion about whether or not resisters should be included in the commemoration these have, significantly, been focused almost exclusively on the conscientious objector. As in the immediate post-war and 50th anniversary periods, female war resisters are absent from narratives of commemoration and broader dialogues about who should be remembered. That men are the focal point of questions regarding the remembrance of the war highlights how commemorative practices are gendered not only in the way they have, at times, mirrored and reinforced the wartime hierarchy of masculinity, but also along the more distinct gendered division between men and women. These gendered limitations demonstrate the importance of considering both men and women together because whilst the inclusion of COs into remembrance narratives points to a more open and inclusive understanding of the centenary commemoration, the absence of anti-war women highlights how this inclusion has occurred on a clearly gendered basis. This limitation may be explained by the fact that commemoration has focused on servicemen, and therefore objectors offer the most obvious divergent wartime experience of opposition to the conflict. Yet by focusing on male resisters the discussion to some extent emphasises and reinforces war as an exclusively masculine experience.

Legacies of Resistance: Linking the Past to the Present

The inclusion of resisters into the commemoration of the war has also been based on the impact and relevance that anti-war activism has had on the

present day. As Mycock has noted, the events and experience of the First World War have created a debate about how it has shaped contemporary society.⁶⁹⁷ Two relatives of COs argue in a *Morning Star* article for example that they believe that ‘the COs’ legacy is that it is now much more difficult for governments to contemplate going to war.’⁶⁹⁸ Other articles and comments also consider what it is that contemporary activists and campaigners can learn from those who opposed the war of 1914-18. The *Morning Star* asserts that ‘we need to learn from them [peace campaigners]. We need peace movements that are international and effective, uniting socialists and other radicals, the religious and non-religious in resistance to capitalism and the wars that it brings in its wake.’⁶⁹⁹ Gopal’s *Guardian* article has a similar tone and contends that:

Many of the issues that they [anti-war campaigners] faced remain pressing today. They were on the front lines of the criminalisation of dissent, the erosion of civil liberties and press freedom in the name of national security, and crackdowns on industrial action and popular unrest at a time of economic privation. Then, as now, the poor were requisitioned to fight the wars which enrich the few, dying and suffering disproportionately ... it is this spirit of principled dissent that we must seek to channel and honour.⁷⁰⁰

The contention that the resistance of the Great War has had a lasting impact upon both the conduct of later wars and present day activism demonstrates how the inclusion of resisters is seen not only as a way of changing the narrative of commemoration but also as providing valuable lessons for the present. It is suggested that those who campaigned against the First World

⁶⁹⁷ A. Mycock ‘The First World War Centenary in the UK’, p. 157.

⁶⁹⁸ P. Donovan, ‘Anti-War Activism’ https://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-f9ff-Anti-war-activism-Blessed-be-the-peacemakers#.V9_wKa2c-So [accessed 19/09/2016].

⁶⁹⁹ Symon Hill, ‘Support for the War was Far from Universal’ *Morning Star*, Souvenir Edition: WW1, August 2014, p. 5..

⁷⁰⁰ P. Gopal, ‘First World War Bravery’.

War deserve to be included in the centenary commemoration because their experience relates directly to the present. The inclusion of objectors as a result of their perceived legacy and impact on the present has therefore been a trope in the conflict's commemoration during both its 50th and 100th anniversaries. Although suffering was more prominent in arguments about COs' legacy during the 50th anniversary than it has been during the centenary, what links the two is a connection between the political stance of objectors' resistance and its impact both on contemporary political campaigns and political culture more broadly. This reveals that who is remembered in the conflict's commemoration is also connected to a perception that their wartime experience has a tangible link to, or impact on, the present day.

Family

The link between past and present is also integral to the role that the family plays in the war's commemoration. Central to remembrance is not only who should be remembered but also who is remembering, and the family is fundamental to both of these questions. As Winter has noted, the war inflicted a profound shock on family life and was therefore remembered initially and overwhelmingly as an event in family history.⁷⁰¹ Just as during the immediate aftermath of the conflict bereaved family members were the locus of memory, the family has taken on an important role during the centenary in recounting their ancestors' wartime experiences.⁷⁰² In his study of the ninetieth anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, for example, Todman notes that family members began to retell the memories that had been rehearsed to them by someone with a direct experience of the war. As the latter died, families came to be included in the rhetoric of personal

⁷⁰¹ J. Winter, 'Forms of Kinship', pp. 41-42.

⁷⁰² The BBC have, for example, included family memory as an explicit part of their First World War commemorations under the section 'Your World War One Story.' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zwpvx6sg> [accessed 04/07/2017].

remembrance in their place.⁷⁰³ Helen McCartney has pointed out that there are limitations to an understanding of the war based on family experience and memories, principally in the individualised nature of family history and the encouragement of empathy without the tools or knowledge to guide it.⁷⁰⁴ However, it is clear that family memories play a significant part in the way that the public engages with the commemoration of war. For those who invoke a family member to explore the position of resisters within the commemoration, the family offers them both a personal connection and a sense of authority. The way relatives are invoked therefore offers an insight both into the way remembrance of the anti-war movement in the press is being constructed by those with a familial tie to the conflict and the manner in which authority is exercised.

A number of articles discussing conscientious objectors are focused on a relative of a CO. The *Morning Star*, for example, centres one of its articles on interviews with two descendants of objectors,⁷⁰⁵ whilst a number of *Guardian* articles are based on the relatives of those who opposed the war. One article asks the descendants of three conscientious objectors how they view the position taken by their relative.⁷⁰⁶ Underlying all three responses is a sense of how the stance taken by their father, grandfather or great-grandfather during the First World War has influenced their own opinions and lives: the granddaughter of CO Tom Attlee notes that the anti-war feeling has filtered down through the generations. To demonstrate this, she

⁷⁰³ Dan Todman, 'The Ninetieth Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme' in Michael Keren and Holger H. Herwig (eds), *War Memory and Popular Culture: Essays on Modes of Remembrance and Commemoration* (London: Macfarland and Company, 2009), pp. 23-40 (p. 30).

⁷⁰⁴ Helen B. McCartney, 'The First World War Soldier and His Contemporary Image in Britain', *International Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (March 2014), 299-315 (pp. 305-306).

⁷⁰⁵ P. Donovan, 'Anti-war Activism: Blessed Be the Peacemakers'.

⁷⁰⁶ Joanna Moorhead, 'Conscientious Objectors: Men who Fought a Different kind of Battle', *The Guardian*, 25th April 2014 <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/apr/25/conscientious-objectors-men-fought-different-battle> [accessed 08/09/16].

points out that she was ‘one of a very small number of people who marched against the Falklands war in 1982’, and that she also ‘marched again, with [her] three children, against the Iraq war.’⁷⁰⁷ Emma Anthony, the great-granddaughter of the objector John Rickman, works at the pacifist organisation the Fellowship of Reconciliation and attributes this in part to the influence of her great-grandfather.⁷⁰⁸ The son of objector Sydney Silverman also talks about the impact of his father on him noting that ‘he was my role model: I decided I wanted to dedicate my life, as he had done, to good causes.’⁷⁰⁹

The connection between the lives and peace activism of the objector and his descendent is also highlighted in another *Guardian* article. Writing about how both his father and uncle stood up ‘for their moral position’ and went ‘against the tide when they refused conscription’, Chris Lawson links his own decision to become a conscientious objector in the 1950s with his father’s choice, and points to it as a shared sense of personal morality:

I, too, was a conscientious objector, and though in the 1950s it was straightforward for me as a Quaker, I know it is in many ways an idealistic position, but it gave my father and I a sense of personal integrity and helps keep alive the question of why military action is accepted as the solution to conflicts when so often it just adds to the problems.⁷¹⁰

These articles demonstrate how the experience and memories of those who were alive during the war continue to reverberate through subsequent

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁰ Chris Lawson, ‘My Father and Uncle Stood Against the Tide when they Refused Conscription’, *The Guardian*, 15th May 2014 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/15/conscription-wounded-soldiers-first-world-war-conscientious-objection> [accessed 08/09/16].

generations and informs not only how people remember the conflict but also establishes a personal link between the war and the present day. The consideration of conscientious objectors through the lens of the family highlights how the inclusion of resisters is being constructed as both a personal narrative and as part of a longer trajectory of peace and social activism. Just as objectors were positioned as part of a tradition of those who fought for liberty and freedom, the relationship between the stance of objectors and the activism of their descendants is frequently drawn out in family narratives of commemoration. COs are included as part of the remembrance of the conflict not only for their wartime experiences but also because their activism is perceived as having a continued personal legacy.

Another way in which a family association is invoked in discussions about the commemoration of conscientious objectors is by readers who use their personal connection to servicemen in order to outline and substantiate their opinion on objectors. For instance, two readers comment on a *Daily Mail* article that tells the story of Peter Mandelson's grandfather, who conscientiously objected to the war. One reader notes:

my father and millions like him did not want to go to war either, but they did their duty to defend their country and many did not return. Those that did were affected for the rest of their lives by what they had experienced. And we are supposed to feel sympathy for those who did not go. Well sorry, I don't feel any sympathy for them at all.⁷¹¹

⁷¹¹ Tom Rawstorne, 'The Men who Wouldn't go to War: The Intriguing Story behind this Newly Unearthed Picture of Peter Mandelson's Grandfather with Fellow Conscientious Objectors', *Daily Mail*, 22nd July 2016 Comment from 'Spainy 12' <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2832443/The-men-wouldn-t-war-intriguing-story-newly-unearthed-picture-Peter-Mandelson-s-grandfather-fellow-conscientious-objectors.html> [accessed 09/09/16].

Another reader also comments that it was ‘a good job he [Mandelson’s grandfather] had the likes of my Great Uncle, who died at Ypres a week after his 19th birthday, to fight for the freedom he went on to enjoy.’⁷¹²

Invoking a family connection is not however confined to those who disapprove of the stance of objectors. Indeed, a number of readers express understanding or respect for COs by discussing those relatives who had served. One reader commenting on a *Guardian* article notes that:

My great uncle died in the Great War. Still in his teens, he was recruited and subsequently trained as a signaller ... [He] was dead within a week, shot by a sniper ... I am proud to be associated with the family of that young man ... The conscientious objectors wanted to save the lives of these young men, needlessly used as cannon fodder, and their principled stand was met with derision and worse.⁷¹³

In a similar tone, a reader commenting on a *Guardian* article about the restoration of objectors’ graffiti at Richmond Castle writes, ‘my father and his brother added a couple of years to their age and my grandfather’s brother subtracted 15 so they could fight. After the wars were done they all would have agreed with these brave men [COs].’⁷¹⁴ Foregrounding a family tie to servicemen, whether to lambast the position of COs or express respect for it, highlights how readers claim authority to either include or exclude resisters within commemorative narratives through their connection to a soldier. The invocation of a serving male family member is significant in that it demonstrates how the figure of the soldier continues to be used as a

⁷¹² *Ibid* Comment from ‘Saghia’.

⁷¹³ J. Moorhead, ‘Conscientious Objectors’, Comment from ‘Langewapper’.

⁷¹⁴ Maev Kennedy, ‘War Objectors’ Graffiti Must be Saved, Says English Heritage’, *The Guardian*, 13th May 2016, Comment from ‘Scott B’
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/13/first-world-war-objectors-graffiti-project-richmond-castle> [accessed 09/09/16].

means of exercising authority to speak about the war. Just as mothers of serving men frequently framed their opinion on objectors by highlighting their sons' service, descendants of soldiers express their opinion on the position of resisters in the war's memory by invoking their serving relative. This not only demonstrates, as Todman has pointed out, that many people feel a strong emotional relationship to the war even though they have not experienced it,⁷¹⁵ but also reveals how the experience of the soldier plays a central role in how the remembrance of the war, and the inclusion of resisters within this, is being constructed.

Courage

The centrality of the soldier to the configuration of resisters' inclusion within the remembrance of the war is further highlighted by the continued potency of the ideals so closely connected to the soldiers' gendered wartime construction. Courage, heroism, and sacrifice have all endured into the centenary as important markers for the representation of resisters and have inevitably had implications for what type of resistance has been the focal point of discussion. The emphasis on these masculine ideals demonstrates how the wartime formulation of both conscientious objectors, and the anti-war movement more broadly, continues to inform a limited remembrance of resistance, both in terms of the absence of women but also with regards to how the memory of the CO is configured.

Of all the discourses used to represent resisters, courage has been the most prominent. It is clear that the inclusion or exclusion of resisters within commemorative narratives hinges, in large part, on whether their stance can be interpreted as courageous or cowardly. The continued significance of courage to the understanding of those who resisted the war, and particularly conscientious objectors, demonstrates how the ideals related to the First

⁷¹⁵ D. Todman, 'The Ninetieth Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme', p. 27.

World War soldier continue to influence the representation of resisters. As Goebel has argued, the British 'knight of the Great War' is remembered as a man and civilian who had shown great courage by 'doing his bit.'⁷¹⁶ The configuration of the memory of the soldier in this way has had a significant effect on how men who did not 'do their bit' have been considered during the centenary.

A number of press articles have referred to the bravery of those who opposed the war. Both the *Morning Star* and the *Guardian*, for example, have published articles on war resisters with bravery as the central narrative. Whilst John Ellison's article in the *Star* focuses on the bravery of anti-war campaigners to highlight the perceived righteousness of a minority who stood apart from others,⁷¹⁷ Priyamvada Gopals' opinion piece in the *Guardian* emphasises different types of courage in order to argue for the inclusion of resistance in the centenary commemorations.⁷¹⁸ The intention behind Ellison's invocation of bravery is clear from the article's subheading which states that 'by Christmas 1914 the horrific nature of the war in Europe was clear but only a few brave voices resisted the patriotic fervour on both sides.'⁷¹⁹

Ellison's article highlights the 'brave activism' of three campaigners, the socialist activist John Maclean, who was imprisoned during the war for anti-war speeches, Fenner Brockway, and the socialist anti-war campaigner Sylvia Pankhurst. Ellison subsequently contrasts their actions to a Britain that 'was swallowed up by patriotic fervour.' In doing so, he suggests that unlike the rest of the British population, these resisters saw the reality of war and were

⁷¹⁶ S. Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, p. 196.

⁷¹⁷ John Ellison, 'Plunderers Against Plunderers', *Morning Star*, 23rd December 2014 <https://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-b882-Plunderers-against-plunderers#.V9aJJq2c-So> [accessed 12/09/16].

⁷¹⁸ P. Gopal, 'First World War Bravery' <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/feb/27/first-world-war-bravery-fight-for-peace> [accessed 12/09/16].

⁷¹⁹ J. Ellison, 'Plunderers'.

brave enough to speak out. This interpretation is illustrative of Gregory's contention that the continuing popularity of an 'image of mass bellicosity' reinforces 'a sense of superiority to our forbears. We know that war is horrible and futile, but *they* were naïve.'⁷²⁰ Gregory points to pacifists in particular as having an interest in promulgating an image of war enthusiasm, arguing that 'it flattered the self-proclaimed heroic image of the pacifists to perceive themselves as isolated and far-sighted individuals who were "above the melee."⁷²¹ In Ellison's representation of anti-war courage there is a distinct dichotomy between those who supported the war and those who opposed it, and this is framed with explicit reference to courage. Ellison emphasises war enthusiasm in order to portray these particular socialist anti-war campaigners as a visionary minority whose ideas about the war chime with present day interpretations of the war as futile.

Like Ellison's article, Gopal focuses on the moral courage that resisters displayed in going against the majority and, in doing so, echoes that way that objectors' courage was represented in the anti-war press during the war. Indeed, by suggesting that courage and bravery are broader than the soldier's sacrifice, Gopal removes the male body from the construction of courage, in the same way that the anti-war press attempted to do during the conflict. However, Gopal uses this formulation of courage to argue for the inclusion of anti-war activists in the war's commemoration. She writes that 'in an atmosphere of "courage" and "sacrifice" ... the bravery of those who rallied behind the powerful banner of nationalism will be honoured, but what about the courage of those who ... dissented from the status quo by challenging war itself?'⁷²² Implicit in this question, and also in the title of the article that 'First World War bravery was not confined to the soldiers', is the

⁷²⁰ A. Gregory, 'British "War Enthusiasm" in 1914', p. 68.

⁷²¹ *Ibid*, p. 68.

⁷²² P. Gopal, 'First World War Bravery'.

suggestion that the purpose of commemoration is to remember all those who were courageous during the war.

Whilst the anti-war narrative of moral courage appears to have gained more prominence in the centenary, the press which was vociferously pro-war has altered significantly in their representation of resisters' courage. The most striking example of this shift is the way in which the *Daily Mail* represents conscientious objectors. In contrast to its wartime derision of objectors as cowards, there has been a more sympathetic consideration of COs in its limited reportage during the centenary thus far. This is best illustrated by the title of an article about the memorial service held for First World War conscientious objectors in 2014. The title contends that the COs were 'brave in their own way.'⁷²³ Although the way in which they were brave is not explicitly spelled out in the text, there is an implication that it was based on the contempt they faced as a result of the stand they took. It is noted for instance that 'they were mocked- and sometimes imprisoned- during their lifetimes, but today men who refused to fight in the First World War for moral reasons were honoured in a ceremony.'⁷²⁴ The implicit acceptance of resisters' moral courage within the *Mail* highlights how the wartime definitions of courage which circulated within the pro-war press have been broadened during the centenary in a way that allows for the inclusion of resisters. This, to some extent, contradicts Gopal's suggestion in the *Guardian* that other types of courage have been marginalised in the remembrance of the war, and highlights how, by emphasising resisters' marginalisation in the memory of the Great War, their prominence in discussions about the commemoration is raised.

⁷²³ K. Corcoran, 'Brave in their Own Way', <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2629753/Brave-way-Memorial-ceremony-held-heart-London-remember-conscientious-objectors-First-World-War.html> [accessed 12/09/16].

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*

Despite the broader acceptance of moral courage, there are other aspects related to this discourse that continue to be limited during the centenary. The gendered link between moral courage and heroism that was evident both during the war and in its 50th anniversary has persisted so that, whilst both male and female resisters' experiences are identified as courageous, it is only male courage that is represented as heroic. Indeed, articles that specifically focus on conscientious objectors, rather than anti-war men and women, generate a number of comments that link COs' courage with heroism. For example, one reader reflects on Chris Lawson's article that his CO father was 'a true hero and a brave man ... it's truly brave to go against the majority in the middle of a war.'⁷²⁵ Likewise, a reader commenting on a different *Guardian* article argues that objecting was 'true heroism. Not like all those sheep who get "remembered" each November,'⁷²⁶ whilst another reader writes that COs are 'the real heroes.'⁷²⁷ This sentiment is echoed in another comment that 'the conscientious objectors were the true heroes of the First World War. It takes far more bravery to stand up to your own government than it is to any foreign army.'⁷²⁸ The opinions presented by these readers demonstrate how moral courage is, on the whole, only identified as heroic in relation to men. Significantly, the identification of COs as heroic demonstrates that, whilst heroism has come to encompass non-combatant masculinities, the endurance of the association between heroism and the discourses of courage and sacrifice, also underscore how objectors' masculinity continues to be framed along the lines of First World War gender ideals. Whilst there is a broader acceptance of what can be defined as heroic

⁷²⁵ C. Lawson, 'My Father and Uncle' Comment from 'mrkfm' <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/15/conscription-wounded-soldiers-first-world-war-conscientious-objection> [accessed 13/09/16].

⁷²⁶ J. Moorhead, 'Conscientious Objectors', Comment from 'timo123' <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/apr/25/conscientious-objectors-men-fought-different-battle> [accessed 13/09/16].

⁷²⁷ *Ibid*, Comment from 'jackscht' <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/apr/25/conscientious-objectors-men-fought-different-battle> [accessed 13/09/16].

⁷²⁸ M. Kennedy, 'Poignant Stories', Comment from 'Richard Hunter' <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/15/poignant-stories-of-first-world-wars-conscientious-objectors-go-online> [accessed 13/09/16].

this has not necessarily meant that there has been an acceptance of different types of wartime masculinities. This highlights how the discussion about the anti-war movement as part of the war's commemoration is inherently limited by the endurance of specific wartime discourses that privilege the ideals closely associated to men's experience of the conflict.

As courage and heroism are most closely associated with conscientious objectors in discussions over the inclusion of resisters in the commemoration, COs are also the principal target of accusations of cowardice. Significantly, whilst cowardice is absent from press articles discussing objectors, it is a dominant theme in readers' comments. This reveals a discrepancy between how the press have presented courage and resistance and how some readers have responded to this, revealing that whilst wartime anti-CO narratives are not being represented by the press itself, they have continued to inform the way some members of the public interpret resisters' place within the commemoration. This highlights how the press offers a space in which public opinion can be accessed and the way that the public interpret, respond, and shape commemorative narratives of resistance can be revealed. Comments on both *Guardian* and *Daily Mail* articles such as 'they [COs] were cowards pure and simple',⁷²⁹ and 'cowards through and through. Let someone else go out and die and I will stay and live to get a pension',⁷³⁰ appear frequently in articles written about objectors and demonstrate how the failure to serve and sacrifice in the military continues to be interpreted as cowardice. Edward Madigan's assertion that there was a

⁷²⁹ Jake Polden, 'The Graffiti "Tags" of the WW1 Objectors: Incredible Drawings Etched onto the Walls of the 19th Century Prison Cells by Men who Refused to Fight for Religious and Political Reasons', 14th May 2016, Comment from 'Total Cynic' <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3587658/The-graffiti-tags-WWI-objectors-Incredible-drawings-etched-walls-19th-century-prison-cells-men-refused-fight-religious-political-reasons.html> [accessed 13/09/16].

⁷³⁰ *Ibid*, Comment from 'Thunderball.'

close association during the war between duty, courage and self-sacrifice,⁷³¹ has clearly endured to the present day. This is illustrated by a comment on a *Daily Mail* article which asserts that objectors were ‘flippin’ cowards’ because ‘in times of emergency or war everyone is expected to do their bit.’⁷³²

Whilst the explicit link between cowardice and masculinity is generally not represented, there is one reader’s comment which overtly questions the masculinity of objectors. It is contended that objectors ‘were weak and useless men Men like this really need to get a bloody grip of themselves and man up.’⁷³³ The phrase ‘man up’ is widely used in the present day and is intended to prompt someone to act with more bravery. Although it is used with reference to both men and women, the use of the word ‘man’ quite clearly links bravery to masculinity. This comment, whilst not representative of the general perception of COs during the centenary, reveals how gendered conceptions of courage continue to influence the interpretation of objectors’ actions, 100 years later. Whilst other comments are not explicitly gendered, the connection made between courage, service, and sacrifice, all of which are linked to the soldier, point to the continued presence of notions of wartime martial masculinity in how the remembrance of COs is being constructed during the centenary.

The focus on the conscientious objector and his courage and heroism as a point of discussion has also, as in the 50th anniversary, highlighted the continued gendering of the discourse of heroism. The one example where

⁷³¹ Edward Madigan, ‘Sticking to a Hateful Task: Resilience, Humour and British Understanding of Combatant Courage, 1914-1918,’ *War in History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (January, 2013), 76-98 (p. 79).

⁷³² K. Corcoran, ‘Brave in Their Own Way’, Comment from ‘Paul on the Fylde’ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2629753/Brave-way-Memorial-ceremony-held-heart-London-remember-conscientious-objectors-First-World-War.html> [accessed 16/09/16].

⁷³³ J. Polden, ‘The Graffiti “Tags”’, Comment from ‘A Dangerous Man.’

heroism is explicitly associated with a female anti-war campaigner is a *Morning Star* article on the anti-war socialist Margaret Bondfield, titled 'A real hero of World War I', with a subheading which notes that she 'bravely campaigned for peace in the First World War.'⁷³⁴ In a strikingly similar manner to the portrayal of objectors' heroism, Bondfield is identified as a brave hero because she went against her fellow suffragettes to oppose the war: 'suffragettes had fought hard for votes for women in the decades leading up to the first world war but, when war was actually declared, some leaders of the movement suspended the votes campaign to join in the jingoism of the war.'⁷³⁵ The article goes on to say that 'not all suffragettes were taken in by the warmongering propaganda. One, Margaret Bondfield, disagreed with this new policy.'⁷³⁶ Like articles and comments which interpret the actions of objectors as courageous and heroic, this article positions Bondfield's activism as heroic because she bravely went against the actions and opinions of her fellow women. The invocation of heroism in this article thus demonstrates how an emphasis on moral courage enables women's actions to also be identified as courageous. Yet the way that Bondfield's heroism is described reveals how female heroism is constructed. In contrast to conscientious objectors, whose heroism and courage are associated with their stance against the government and public opinion in general, Bondfield's heroism is specifically related to her stand within a group of women. Anti-war female heroism is thus positioned as specifically female whilst male resistance is identified as heroic in a much broader manner. This demonstrates how Watson's contention that during the war 'women could only be equal-but-different and their efforts were always

⁷³⁴ Peter Frost, 'A Real Hero of World War I', *Morning Star*, 7th August 2014 <https://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-ecb4-A-real-hero-of-World-War-I#.V9fY6K2c-So> [accessed 13/09/16].

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*

perceived as those of women in particular,⁷³⁷ continues to inform the representation of women during the centenary.

Sacrifice

Like courage, sacrifice has also persisted as a narrative by which the inclusion of resisters in the commemoration of the war has been judged. Sacrifice continues to be instrumental to the interpretation of the commemoration of the conflict, and this emphasis undoubtedly positions the fallen soldier at the foreground of remembrance. Comparisons between the sacrifices made by soldiers and the experience of conscientious objectors are present in a number of readers' comments. For example, one reader responds specifically to the point made by Gopal in her *Guardian* article that 'many campaigners suffered nervous breakdowns and ill health,'⁷³⁸ by contending (sarcastically) that this:

of course, is *much* worse than: being blown to bits by a shell for your body, or what remains of it never to be found, or raked up by a Belgian farmer in later decades, mown down by machine gun fire at knee level leaving you to slowly bleed to death in a shell hole ...

Ooh diddums, he's feeling a bit stressed, poor lamb.

To have any kind of memorial for those who shirked due to their own conscience is an insult to those who perished.⁷³⁹

The specific comparison of the bodily suffering of trench soldiers with that of conscientious objectors highlights how the soldier's experience informs the parameters upon which resisters are included in the commemoration. This is clearly evident in the assertion that objectors should not only be absent from

⁷³⁷ J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, p. 7.

⁷³⁸ P. Gopal, 'First World War Bravery' <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/feb/27/first-world-war-bravery-fight-for-peace> [accessed 15/09/16].

⁷³⁹ *Ibid*, Comment from 'NobbyMcSlacker'.

the remembrance of the war but also that their inclusion would be an affront to the conflict's dead servicemen. This reader constructs commemoration explicitly with relation to the sacrifice of the soldier.

This comparison demonstrates how the configuration of remembrance is implicitly gendered. Robert Nye has argued that the memorialisation of masculine heroic sacrifice after the world wars has perpetuated the hegemony of military masculinity over all other kinds.⁷⁴⁰ The use of infantilising language, such as 'diddums' and 'poor lamb', coupled with the argument that COs should not be remembered alongside soldiers reveals how the masculinity of objectors continues to be measured against that of the soldier. It demonstrates how wartime hierarchies of masculinity, which positioned the CO as 'the antithesis of the iconic figure of the soldier,'⁷⁴¹ has permeated discussion about the commemoration of resisters, revealing the extent to which wartime gender hierarchies impact upon public understanding about the remembrance of war. Moreover, the infantilising of the conscientious objector also contributes to the construction of him as an inferior masculine figure, as maturity was seen as central to the transformation from boy to man in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁷⁴² The continued invocation of this configuration of masculinity further demonstrates the significance of wartime gender constructions and hierarchies to the way that objectors are included or excluded in the conflict's commemoration. This hierarchy has also been, in some regards, reinforced by the way that servicemen have been remembered. Todman has argued, for example, that with the increasing acceptance of the idea that the First World War was a particularly futile and meaningless conflict, the veterans of the war have been 'ever further sanctified.' He contends that 'all

⁷⁴⁰ Robert Nye, 'Western Masculinities in War and Peace', p. 432.

⁷⁴¹ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, p. 96.

⁷⁴² S. Collini, *Public Moralists*, pp. 186-187.

those who served are deemed to have been heroes by definition of their service.’⁷⁴³

The way that service and sacrifice have been memorialised in a manner that both mirrors and reinforces their privileged wartime representation has significantly affected how objectors are discussed. For example, one reader comments on a *Mail* article that ‘regardless of whether they objected or not they allowed their neighbours and relatives to go and fight and die for their freedom while they stayed at home whinging!’⁷⁴⁴ This is mirrored in another reader’s comment that contends that ‘these men [COs] enjoyed the peace that others fought and died to establish.’⁷⁴⁵ The emphasis on the self-sacrifice of the soldiers for a cause that was bigger than themselves is evocative of Alex King’s suggestion that the memorialisation of the Great War emphasised the moral achievement of the self-sacrifice of the dead. This achievement was their triumph over war by securing the nation’s freedom.⁷⁴⁶ This commemoration of soldiers’ sacrifices clearly has implications for male war resisters. Whilst during the conflict the anti-war press framed objectors’ sacrifice in the same way as soldiers’, emphasising their suffering for peace, a cause larger than themselves, this representation has not filtered through into the memory of the war. That soldiers’ sacrifices have been directly linked to peace and freedom through victory evidently obscures the inclusion of objectors in commemorative narratives in this way. This demonstrates how victory in the war has served to reinforce the moral

⁷⁴³ Dan Todman, ‘How We Remember Them: The 1914-18 War Today’, *Open Democracy*, 11th November 2011 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/article/how-we-remember-them-the-1914-18-war-today> [accessed 16/09/16].

⁷⁴⁴ T. Rawstone, ‘The Men Who Wouldn’t go to War’ Comment from ‘Milz’ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2832443/The-men-wouldn-t-war-intriguing-story-newly-unearthed-picture-Peter-Mandelson-s-grandfather-fellow-conscientious-objectors.html> [accessed 15/09/16].

⁷⁴⁵ K. Corcoran, ‘Brave in their own Way’, Comment from ‘Harry Faversham’ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2629753/Brave-way-Memorial-ceremony-held-heart-London-remember-conscientious-objectors-First-World-War.html> [accessed 15/09/16].

⁷⁴⁶ Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), p. 175.

undertones of the soldier's sacrifice and consequently prevent the wartime image of the objector sacrificing for peace from translating into the memory of the war.

The emphasis on sacrifice as a central discourse in defining the parameters of commemoration continues to place limitations on the way that narratives that are sympathetic to objectors can represent their experience of war. Whilst the definition of courage has to some extent broadened during the centenary, the limitations that were placed on the gendered representation of objectors' bodies and particularly their physical sacrifice are implicit in Gopal's text in the *Guardian*, for example.⁷⁴⁷ While she refers to the central role of sacrifice in the commemoration, her opinion piece only explores the moral courage and not the physical sacrifice of war resisters. This absence reveals how the limitations of these wartime discourses of masculinity influence the way that resisters are included in remembrance narratives. Just as during the war when the discourse of courage allowed the anti-war community to identify their resistance as morally courageous, in the centenary too different definitions of courage are being invoked as the basis upon which resisters are included in the memory of the war. In contrast, the relatively static conceptualisation of sacrifice, although acknowledged, is not elaborated upon.

As the limitations that existed during the conflict to some extent continue to affect the representation of resistance, the way that those who are sympathetic to COs attempt to counter arguments about objectors' sacrifice are remarkably similar to 1914-18. However, whilst objectors' suffering is invoked by readers as a means of rebutting arguments about COs' lack of sacrifice, unlike during the war the link between their suffering and the cause of peace is absent. For example, one reader directly responds to those

⁷⁴⁷ P. Gopal, 'First World War Bravery'.

arguing that objectors did not sacrifice or suffer hardship because of their position. Writing on Gopal's *Guardian* article, they ask:

What about:

Dying due to medical incompetence and neglect due to being a CO

Dying due to force feeding tubes filling your lungs with soup and gruel while the administering doctor laughs

Being beaten half to death and then left on a hillside to die ...

All these things happened to COs during WW1. 87 would die in custody as a direct result of all the Government's treatment of them.⁷⁴⁸

A reader also responds to another suggestion that COs had made a 'non-sacrifice',⁷⁴⁹ by contending that 'if you think that those who refused to fight made no sacrifice, you are clearly and simply wrong. Conchies were imprisoned, shot for cowardice, ostracised and often persecuted for the rest of their lives.' The way that these readers frame the suffering of objectors with an emphasis, particularly in the first text, on the role of the wartime authorities, demonstrates how this theme has endured from both the immediate post-war period and the 50th anniversary to form an important remembrance narrative for resistance. Yet the wartime limitations of invoking sacrifice as a means of constructing objectors' masculinity have translated into limitations on the way that objectors are included in the remembrance of the conflict. Unlike soldiers', their suffering has in some ways lost its meaning in the centenary. Their claim to sacrifice for peace has been usurped by an understanding that it was soldiers' deaths that ultimately achieved peace. This demonstrates how the representational

⁷⁴⁸ P. Gopal, 'First World War Bravery', Comment from 'ID2464378'.

⁷⁴⁹ Richard Norton-Taylor, 'Ignore the Propaganda, Conscription was not so Popular', *The Guardian*, 14th May 2014, Comment from 'SackTheJuggler'
<https://www.theguardian.com/news/defence-and-security-blog/2014/may/14/first-world-war-conscription-conscientious-objectors> [accessed 15/09/16].

limitations placed upon objectors during the war have, in some ways, been reinforced in the memorialisation of the conflict.

The Limits of Remembrance: Anti-War Women

Whilst there have been limitations placed on the inclusion of conscientious objectors in commemorative narratives, they have nonetheless been a central focus of the centenary dialogue about resistance and remembrance. Indeed, the implicitly gendered narratives used to discuss resistance demonstrate how the wartime configuration of the anti-war movement following conscription has meant that female anti-war activists have been marginalised in the commemoration. Although women do feature in some of the articles in both the *Morning Star* and the *Guardian*, when compared to the relatively in-depth discussions over the meaning and implications of conscientious objectors' resistance to the war, anti-war women occupy a marginal position. In Adam Hochschild's *Guardian* article on the inclusion of 'peacemakers' into the centenary commemorations, an article which does not specifically focus on conscientious objectors or on the British context, only two women are named: Rosa Luxemburg and Emily Hobhouse.⁷⁵⁰ The absence of other female peace activists is picked up on by a reader who comments: 'Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, anyone? Hobhouse wasn't the only one travelling across Europe during wartime on a peace mission.'⁷⁵¹

Anti-war women do get a more prominent role in Gopal's *Guardian* article which, like Hochschild, represents a variety of peace campaigns and initiatives. Gopal points out that 'Britain's dissenters included Liberals,

⁷⁵⁰ Adam Hochschild, 'First World War- A Centenary On, Time to Hail the Peacemakers', *The Guardian*, 28th July 2014 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/28/first-world-war-century-anniversary-peacemakers> [accessed 19/09/2016].

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid*, Comment from 'hileycathy'.

Labour supporters and socialists; a striking number were women.⁷⁵² She goes on to name Alice Wheeldon, Catherine Marshall, Sylvia Pankhurst and the Women's International League as those who had engaged in resistance, but details about how they did this are absent. The dearth of information about how women resisted the war can be accounted for by the discourses used to talk about commemoration in the press more broadly. As has been discussed, the emphasis on the ideals related to the soldier, courage, heroism, and sacrifice, have been fundamental to the way that resistance has been included in narratives of remembrance. The masculine associations of these discourses have marginalised the ways that women resisted the war. Furthermore, the central narrative of anti-war women, maternalism, is also absent from any discussion of female resistance. This may reflect the current gendered context in which the innate nurturing and caring qualities of women have been questioned by various waves of feminism,⁷⁵³ but it also means that a key defining discourse of female resistance has been lost. In this sense, while conceptions of femininity and their connections to both peace and war have shifted, it is clear that the continued invocation of wartime masculine ideals reveals that understandings of masculinity in war have not necessarily altered to the same extent.

The complexities of including women's war experiences as part of the commemoration are further highlighted by some readers' responses to Gopal's argument that many of those who opposed the war were women. One reader notes, for instance, that 'I sense a slight feminist undercurrent here. If I am right I must ask you to remember just who it was who handed out white feathers.'⁷⁵⁴ Another reader adds to this asserting that 'of course

⁷⁵² P. Gopal, 'First World War' <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/feb/27/first-world-war-bravery-fight-for-peace> [accessed 19/09/2016].

⁷⁵³ This was particularly evident from the period of the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1970s, see M. Donnelly, *Sixties Britain*, p. 158.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid*, Comment from 'Rattel'.

the poetry of Jessie Pope completely negates the fact that other women opposed the war.⁷⁵⁵ The implication in both these comments is that by highlighting women's resistance to the war the article implies that all women acted in a morally superior manner to men, a point which these readers see as invalid given the jingoistic behaviour of other women. This argument is challenged by another reader who writes sarcastically, 'yep, all women are responsible for some women who handed out white feathers. And those women who handed out white feathers are definitely more to blame than the men who locked up, beat up, and oppressed conscientious objectors.'⁷⁵⁶

This discussion in this article is revealing in that it highlights how the experience of the war is perceived by some as being uniform for all women. The two comments highlighting the jingoistic activity of some women suggests that by pointing out that there were a significant number of anti-war women, the article is contending that all women were opposed to war. In addition, by suggesting that the pro-war writing of one women 'negates' the anti-war activity of other women, it is implied that all women should be understood as pro-war. The idea that one female experience of the war should negate another points to a broader question over how women's wartime role and experience should be characterised. As Alison Fell and Ingrid Sharp have noted, there was no clear consensus about the proper 'womanly' response to the war.⁷⁵⁷ The clearer definition of the proper manly response to the war has meant that much of the discussion of commemoration has focused on whether or not COs, by failing to conform to this, can still be identified as courageous and heroic. In contrast, the relative ambiguity of women's response has contributed to their marginalisation in remembrance discussions. Whilst men's resistance continues to be viewed

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid*, Comment from 'Alexito'

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid*, Comment from 'Covenant'.

⁷⁵⁷ Alison Fell and Ingrid Sharp, 'Introduction: The Women's Movement and the First World War' in A. Fell and I. Sharp (eds), *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914-19* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 1-17 (p. 13).

as problematic because it challenged the very clear way in which men were supposed to experience war, women's resistance is problematic because it contributes to the ambiguities over how to interpret women's wartime experiences as part of the commemoration of the First World War.

In addition, whilst academics have considered the legacies and impact of The Hague Peace Congress in 1915 on feminist and transnational activism and human rights up until the present day, the congress has been marginalised in public debate.⁷⁵⁸ Indeed, the negligible position of anti-war women within press centenary narratives is perhaps best exemplified by the near absence of writing about the women's congress. This example of specifically female peace activism is significant because it was not only widely discussed in the wartime press but because it also represented the only case of an international organisation of female peace activists, including those from belligerent nations, and ushered in one of the most influential women's peace organisations, WILPF. Yet despite the significance of the congress and the centenary of it being marked by the present-day WILPF, there is only one press article which discusses the congress. The article, which appears in the *Guardian* in April 2015, offers scant information about the 1915 congress and concentrates more on a broader history of WILPF and the objectives of the 2015 conference.⁷⁵⁹ When compared with the number of centenary articles and comments which focus on conscientious objectors, the relative exclusion of women demonstrates how the commemorative narratives that explore resistance have revealed a perception that resistance means

⁷⁵⁸ Helen McCarthy, Ingrid Sharp, Laura Beers, Glenda Sluga, Celia Donert and Helen Pankhurst, 'Women, peace and transnational activism, a century on', *History and Policy*, 30th March 2015 <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/dialogues/discussions/women-peace-and-transnational-activism-a-century-on> [accessed 16/06/2017].

⁷⁵⁹ Liz Ford, 'Centenary Stand: Female Activists head for The Hague to set a New Peace Agenda', *The Guardian*, 27th April 2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/apr/27/female-activists-hague-new-peace-agenda-1915-congress-of-women> [accessed 19/09/2016].

conscientious objection. Thus, whilst resistance is gaining some traction within the memory of the First World War, its inclusion is limited.

Conclusion

The remembrance of resistance at key points of commemoration over the last one hundred years has gradually broadened, with the current centenary offering significant reflection on how resistance should be included in remembrance of the First World War. The greater discussion about opposition to the war in the present day demonstrates the extent to which the centenary has so far been a broader and more inclusive period of commemoration than the immediate post-war and 50th anniversary periods, in terms of the greater inclusion of the war's opponents. During this current anniversary, the online press has become an important space of discussion and point of navigation for considering how and why resistance should be included in the commemoration of the war. Arguments that seek to include resisters as a means of shifting remembrance so that it is more critical of war and violence more broadly reveal how the addition of resisters is perceived to significantly alter and reshape the narrative of First World War memory. This is a notion which has also generated a significant amount of concern for those who see commemoration as hinging explicitly on servicemen, particularly those that died whilst serving. What both sides of this dialogue demonstrate is that there is an understanding that the inclusion of war resistance has the potential to significantly alter the way that the war is remembered.

The notion of authority has also shifted and broadened over the hundred years since the war's end. The questions of who has the authority to remember and whose story has the authority to be included in the conflict's commemoration play an important role in the conceptualisation and focus of remembrance. Whereas in the immediate post-war period the authority of

families of servicemen excluded the voices of resisters, the 50th anniversary and its focus on the ordinary soldier began to open up the possibility of the voice of the conscientious objector, although this was limited. During the centenary the authority of the CO as the defining voice of Great War resistance has been central to discussions about the inclusion of the anti-war movement within commemorative narratives. It is his story, his descendents, and his legacy which have underscored press representations of resisters during the centenary thus far.

Yet whilst the broadening of commemorative narratives and the conceptualisation of authority has allowed for a greater discussion about the place of resistance in our knowledge and interpretation of the war, the way that the war's opponents have been included has been inherently limited by the basis upon which these discussions have taken place. The continued emphasis on the idealised masculine discourses of the soldier has meant that there has also been a focus on his male resister counterpart, the CO. The centrality of courage, heroism, and sacrifice to debates about the commemoration of the war reveals how the gendered wartime configuration of both the anti-war movement and wider society have had a significant influence on the way that the war is being remembered. The focus on these discourses has not only, to some extent, limited the ways that conscientious objectors have been remembered but has also contributed to the marginalisation of anti-war women in the commemoration. Whilst the position of resistance within remembrance narratives of the First World War has developed in a significant number of ways, the remembrance of resistance continues to be incomplete, particularly with regard to gender. As such, our understanding of the nuances and complexities of how men and women resisted the Great War and how this was represented also remains limited.

Conclusion

Through an examination of press representations of those who resisted the First World War in Britain both during the conflict and its key anniversaries, this thesis has explored two central research questions. First, it has examined what dominant discourses were invoked to represent war resisters and how these discourses evolved over time. Secondly, it has considered how narratives of resistance were gendered and the implications of this for the way in which male and female war resisters were portrayed during the war and remembered following its end. By addressing these research questions and revealing the changing representation, key press discourses, and commemorative narratives of the First World War peace movement, this thesis contributes to existing understanding along three key themes: resistance, the press, and gender, each of which will be explored in detail in this conclusion.

The analysis throughout the thesis has demonstrated that by examining both men and women together, the significant and multifaceted role that gender has played in the representation of the anti-war movement can be better understood. It has shown that the construction of gender and resistance during the war has implications for understanding the relationship between gender and the Great War more broadly. By foregrounding gender as an analytical tool, this study has highlighted the clear connections between the depiction of masculinity and femininity during the conflict and the way that anti-war men and women have been included in commemorative narratives. Uncovering this connection has underscored the importance of considering the role that gender plays in commemoration and the endurance of particular wartime gendered constructions in the interpretation of the war in the present day.

These findings have been made visible by using the press as the central source of analysis and this study has also contributed knowledge to the way that public narratives shape understanding about war, gender, and remembrance. The centrality of the press as a space in which the discourses used to depict and debate war resisters have been formed, reinforced and contested has been consistently supported by the examination that I have undertaken. In particular, this study has shown that discourses that came to dominate the depiction of war resistance were constructed as a public dialogue through readers' letters and online comments, both of which are unique to the way that newspapers contribute to the public sphere.

Combining a study of gender and the press through a focus on the anti-war movement has also meant that this thesis has added to the work on resistance to the First World War in three key ways. First, by looking at the representation of both men and women who opposed the war, it has demonstrated the importance of considering the gendering of resistance as one that was informed by constructions of femininity and masculinity, both specifically in relation to peace but also in relation to the construction of gender during war in a much broader sense. Secondly, it has shown the centrality of the press in formulating public narratives about resistance. Finally, by extending the analysis of resistance to also include an exploration of the way that resisters have been included in key commemorative periods, this thesis has contributed knowledge to the ways that resistance has been remembered since the war's end.

Gender

By considering men, women, and their shifting gendered position throughout the war and during important periods of commemoration within the context of both pro-war and anti-war narratives, this study has contributed

significant understanding to the relationship between war and gender. More specifically, this thesis has shown how the gendered constructions of anti-war men and women were influenced by pre-war and wartime configurations of masculinity and femininity, as well as how particular gendered discourses of resistance also attempted to shape and nuance the way that masculinity and femininity could be defined during war. By looking at the gendered representation of the anti-war movement in this way, and exploring conceptions of patriotism, duty, service and citizenship for both men and women who resisted the war, this study has contributed to the literature which examines these themes and their relationship to wartime gender structures, such as Janet Watson's analysis of men and women's different experiences and memories of the First World War and Nicoletta Gullace's study of gender and citizenship.⁷⁶⁰ My analysis has demonstrated the importance of looking at how both femininity and masculinity are represented during wartime because of the ways they are constructed in relation to one another, and how their configuration shifts in response to wartime developments and events. As such it supports the Higonnet's theory of the 'double helix' for understanding gender relations.⁷⁶¹ As is shown most clearly by the analysis in chapters 2 and 4, the primacy of male experience and the subsequent subordination of women's relationship to peace highlights how hierarchical gender structures have governed the representation of the anti-war movement both during the war and in its commemoration.

Women

As has been demonstrated throughout the chapters in this thesis, the representation of anti-war women changed markedly over the course of the war, but a common factor was that the way that women were discussed and

⁷⁶⁰ J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*".

⁷⁶¹ M. and P. Higonnet, 'The Double Helix' in *Behind the Lines*, pp. 31-47.

depicted was consistently and overtly gendered. The discourses that were used to depict anti-war women were explicitly related to their social, cultural and political position, in both the pro-war and anti-war press. Over the course of the conflict, the gendering of the relationship between women and opposition to the war shifted so that, whilst in the years prior to conscription women were focused on as a specific and important group within the anti-war movement, after 1916 their position was marginalised. Examining the representation of female resisters therefore reveals a shifting and multifaceted understanding of the role of women in war and the relationship between femininity and peace.

Maternalist narratives played a central role in the depiction of anti-war women throughout the conflict. As I have shown in chapter 1, during 1914 and 1915, the years prior to conscription, the anti-war press repeatedly drew on a perception that women, as potential mothers, had an innate concern for peace, echoing suffrage arguments about the nurturing and pacifistic qualities that the female citizen would bring to the political sphere. Maternalist anti-war discourses were consequently used to position women as responsible for opposing the war, which in turn framed them as the pioneers and leaders of the movement against the conflict. The narratives of femininity, motherhood, and peace were intertwined to depict anti-war activism as the duty of women and thus characterised opposition to war as distinctly feminine. Yet maternalist narratives were neither a single narrative nor the sole way in which female resisters were represented in the anti-war press. Motherhood was invoked by anti-war women in different ways and for different purposes whilst some texts written by anti-war women explicitly challenged the passive responses that the traditional narratives of motherhood, caring, and nurturing implied. Although these challenges were few, they demonstrate how the relationship between femininity and peace was being negotiated by different groups of anti-war women. Discussions about the role women played in opposing the war, as well as the

representations of women as leading the resistance against the conflict, meant that up until the introduction of conscription there was a focus on women as a distinct group of resisters and peace activism was, to a large extent, gendered feminine.

Whilst the anti-war press espoused feminine qualities as a positive force for peace activism, the pro-war press invoked gender to negatively stereotype anti-war women as unsuited to intervene on discussions about war and peace. Maternalist narratives became a point of contention for those who saw the role of mothers as supporting the war effort through the recruitment and sacrifice of their sons but other gendered discourses were also used to mock women who actively opposed the war. For example, the pro-war press drew on the derogatory imagery of women which had been used to represent suffrage activists, in particular the image of a hysterical and shrieking womanhood. This suggested that women could not comprehend and engage with important national and international political and military situations and, in its reflection of anti-suffrage rhetoric, was underscored by the notion that citizenship, with its specific connection to politics, should not be granted to women. Consequently, in the first year and a half of war gender played an important role in either elevating women as leaders of the movement against the war or de-politicising and marginalising their ability to understand or alter the war's course. Crucially, however, femininity and conceptions of womanhood were overt in both the pro-war and anti-war discussion of female peace campaigners.

By demonstrating the central role that maternalism played in narratives of female war resistance and the varied ways that motherhood was invoked, this study has added to Susan Grayzel's work on the multifaceted maternalist narratives in wartime. It has done so by demonstrating how anti-war women invoked the theme of motherhood in a variety of ways, highlighting the manner in which the pro-war press contested anti-war maternalist

discourses and by pointing to the limited but nonetheless significant attempts by some female resisters to both broaden and challenge the link between femininity, motherhood, and peace.⁷⁶² This exploration of the gendered discourses used to represent anti-war women has also added to Jill Liddington's study of feminist anti-militarists from the early nineteenth century up until Greenham Common by demonstrating the varied, nuanced and shifting ways that anti-war women were represented over the course of the First World War.⁷⁶³

The analysis in chapter 2 has demonstrated how, following the introduction of conscription in 1916, the depiction of anti-war women shifted as part of a gendered reconfiguration of the anti-war movement as a whole. As conscientious objectors came to dominate press representations of resistance, women were either absent or repositioned into a supporting role. Whilst the pro-war press focused on anti-CO sentiment, anti-war women were marginalised to near silence. In the anti-war press, maternalism continued to be invoked as a central narrative through which female resistance was depicted but this narrative underwent a revealing shift during 1916. In contrast to the way that motherhood was used as a means of outlining women's leading role in opposing the war in 1914 and 1915, maternalist discourses came to be invoked as a way of repositioning women into a supporting role within the anti-war movement. The image of the supporting and sacrificing mother and wife of the objector became a central representation of anti-war women during 1916 and was used as a way of disrupting the link between peace and femininity that had been invoked by the anti-war press throughout 1914-15 in order to refocus resistance around the male resister. This finding adds to Nicoletta Gullace's work by demonstrating the ways in which conceptions of female patriotism influenced the depiction of women who opposed the war not only by pro-

⁷⁶² S. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*.

⁷⁶³ J. Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*.

war voices who denigrated anti-war women's (lack of) patriotism but also, importantly, in the way anti-war women represented themselves particularly in relation to their male relatives.⁷⁶⁴ The subordination of female acts of war resistance in the press as conscientious objectors became the focus of the anti-war movement underscores how the representation of the anti-war movement was altered by invoking traditional gender hierarchies that privileged male experience.

Whilst the marginalisation of anti-war women did continue for the duration of the conflict, there was a limited resurgence of the narratives of duty, responsibility and womanhood during 1917 and 1918 in the anti-war press as a result of the Women's Peace Crusade, as explored in chapter 3. The Crusade drew on the suffering and grief that had been caused by the prolonged conflict as a way of mobilising women with serving male relatives to agitate for an end to war. Combining a language of suffering and duty, the women of the WPC drew not only on the feminine associations of grief as a form of strength, but also evoked the language of citizenship that had become prominent during the final two years of the war as changes to the franchise made their way through parliament. The Peace Crusade related women's connection to the battlefield with a duty to end the suffering of their male relatives in a manner that presented women as citizens with a particular stake in the war and its end. By showing how the rhetoric of citizenship inflected the representation of female resisters, both in terms of the language of duty and service that anti-war women invoked and how pre-war suffrage imagery influenced the representation of female resisters more broadly, this analysis has contributed to understanding of the relationship between gender and citizenship, and Gullace's work in particular.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶⁴ N. Gullace, 'White Feathers and Wounded Men'; "*The Blood of our Sons*".

⁷⁶⁵ N. Gullace, "*The Blood of our Sons*".

Yet the representation of the Women's Peace Crusade was an anomaly amongst the general absence of the female resister in the press from 1916 until the end of the war. The analysis in chapter 4 has demonstrated that this marginalisation has endured in the memory of the war, including in the current centenary commemorations. As the focus on conscientious objectors during the war has meant that resistance has come to be equated with conscientious objection, the different ways that women's resistance was interpreted with reference to femininity, motherhood, suffering and citizenship has been largely neglected. The gendered reconfiguration of the anti-war movement following conscription has consequently impacted upon the limited inclusion of female resisters within commemorative narratives. By showing how wartime gendered constructions of the anti-war movement have significantly impacted on the representation of anti-war women specifically in the conflict's memory, this analysis has added another dimension to Gail Braybon and Deborah Thom's studies of the limited ways that women have been included within the commemoration and history of the Great War.⁷⁶⁶ Significantly, the analysis of the war's commemoration has highlighted how these limitations are intimately connected to gender and the way that the relationship between femininity, masculinity, and resistance was conceptualised during the war.

Overall, it is clear that over the course of the war, and in the years following its end, the way that anti-war women have been represented as part of the anti-war movement as either a prominent, supporting, or absent group has been based on overtly gendered imagery and rhetoric. By portraying women's resistance as either inherently linked to their qualities as women or by ridiculing women's opposition to the war on the basis of perceived feminine characteristics, the construction of anti-war women within the press did not raise questions about the gender structure of society, national

⁷⁶⁶ Gail Braybon, 'Winners or Losers', D. Thom, 'Making Spectaculars'.

identity, or the understanding of religion in the same ways that men's resistance did. Whilst anti-war women at times challenged the link between maternalism and peace, the consistent emphasis on gender in the configuration of women's peace activism to some extent reinforced the idea that women's experience of resistance was specific to women, whilst men's opposition to war was an act which impacted upon and was relevant to all.

Men

Whereas the invocation of gender in the representation of anti-war women was always overt, male resisters' masculinity was constructed in a more varied and implicit manner. However, as has been shown throughout this thesis, whilst the presence of gender was not always explicit, the discourses used to depict anti-war men were nonetheless inherently connected to conceptions of masculinity. In a manner which directly invoked and reflected the ideals connected to the hegemonic masculinity of the soldier, courage, sacrifice, patriotism, and duty became integral to how conscientious objectors were discussed and reflected upon in the press throughout the course of the war and in its commemoration. That the construction of objectors' masculinity responded to and was reliant on the gendering of soldiers demonstrates how male war resistance was interpreted within a very clearly delineated conception of masculinity. Whilst the distinct parameters of martial masculinity enabled the pro-war press to develop an unambiguous image of the inferior masculinity of COs, the constraints that these parameters placed on the anti-war representations of objectors often engendered tensions and contradictions in the way that COs' masculinity was represented.

Lois Bibbings' analysis of masculinity and conscientious objectors has inevitably provided a significant contextual and theoretical underpinning to

the examination undertaken in this study.⁷⁶⁷ Indeed, many of the primary discourses that are identified by Bibbings are also highlighted in the press publications analysed in this thesis. However, by examining the representation of anti-war women alongside conscientious objectors in a chronological fashion, this study builds on Bibbings' analysis by demonstrating that the gendered construction of male resisters changed the representation of the anti-war movement as a whole and significantly affected the depiction of anti-war women. This study has therefore underscored the importance of looking at conceptualisations of masculinity and femininity in tandem. This type of gendered analysis is significant because it highlights how the gendering of conscientious objectors did not occur in a vacuum of masculinity but also responded to and influenced the construction of femininity and resistance. Looking at the representation of anti-war women therefore deepens our understanding of the gendered construction of male resisters.

As has been explored in chapter 1, the implicit presence of gender in the representation of male resisters was clearly evident in the first year and a half of war. Whilst female resistance was the specific focus of the anti-war movement, men as a distinct group were largely absent from press discussions, underscoring the extent to which peace and opposition to war was regarded as feminine. As the debates about the introduction of conscription intensified during 1915, the figure of the conscientious objector and the ideals that would come to dominate his representation in both positive and negative ways were introduced into British wartime society. The ideals of duty, selflessness, sacrifice, and courage were established as central to the depiction of the male resister and confirmed that the objector would be depicted in relation to the ideals of martial masculinity.

⁷⁶⁷ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*.

Once conscription was introduced in 1916, the conscientious objector came to the fore in both the pro-war and anti-war press and he was discussed and represented in ways that drew explicitly upon discourses that had been established as emblematic of the ideal masculine figure of the soldier. In this way, my analysis adds to the work on masculinity and the Great War soldier by those such as Jessica Meyer and Michael Roper by demonstrating how the gendering of the soldier during the First World War played a central role in dictating the discourses used to represent male war resisters.⁷⁶⁸ Whilst these masculine ideals of sacrifice, duty, patriotism, and courage were invoked to castigate objectors and construct their masculinity as inferior by those writing in the pro-war press, my analysis has also demonstrated the ways that objectors and their sympathisers adapted these ideals to the experience of male resistance and in doing so attempted to construct a parallel masculinity to the soldier. Significantly, the way that hegemonic masculine discourses dictated the representation of objectors meant that COs came to the fore of the anti-war movement because resistance came to be represented as an inherently male experience. This was particularly true for depictions of COs in the anti-war press, where objectors came to be constructed as the masculine exemplars of resistance, precisely because their portrayal rested upon wartime hegemonic ideals of heroic masculinity. As a consequence, female resisters were repositioned into a supporting role rather than a position of leadership and responsibility, a move that was clearly a gendered response to a redefinition of resistance as a masculine act.

As the analysis in chapter 2 has illustrated, the gendering of resistance took place alongside a gendering of the motivations behind conscientious objection, particularly in terms of religion. The way that a connection was drawn out between objectors and Christ by COs and their supporters highlights how religious motivations for resistance were used as a way of

⁷⁶⁸ J. Meyer, *Men of War*; M. Roper, *The Secret Battle*.

demonstrating the morality of objectors, their willingness to sacrifice for a cause greater than themselves, and their moral courage in taking an unpopular stand for their principles. Bibbings' work has shown that Christian objectors couched their heroism, martyrdom, and suffering in religious terms.⁷⁶⁹ My analysis of Christianity and objectors has contributed to this by revealing that the invocation of Christianity was not always, or only, a way for objectors to express their faith. Religious discourses in the anti-war press drew on pre-war Victorian notions of manliness such as maturity, earnestness and integrity as well as the heroic and stoic endurance associated with 'Muscular Christianity' to represent conscientious objection as not just a religious but also a masculine act.⁷⁷⁰

Yet the religious configuration of COs was contentious in a wartime society where Christian Scripture was used to support the war effort. Indeed, the pervasive use of religious discourses by both pro-war and anti-war voices meant that the depiction of COs in religious terms also generated discussion about Christian identity and specifically what it meant to be a Christian in wartime. Religious discourses and imagery within the press therefore touched upon questions of both Christian and masculine identity.

Similarly, the way that liberty and freedom were invoked as a motivation for conscientious objection was intertwined with questions about identity. The tension between national and individual liberty became a significant point of contention in the discussion about conscientious objection and, as with many of the debates about COs, it was also linked to soldiers. Whilst it was argued by some that soldiers were defending national liberty, others contended that objectors were exercising and protecting individual liberty. This tension was clearly linked to national identity and the perception that Britain had a tradition of defending individual freedom. The identification of either

⁷⁶⁹ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, pp. 208-211.

⁷⁷⁰ J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, 'Introduction', p. 1, p. 3.

soldiers or objectors as champions and defenders of a nation's liberty gendered this discourse through an explicit alignment with male wartime experience and action. In the anti-war press in particular, the narrative of liberty became an important means of moving opposition to war away from the feminine associations that had been emphasised in 1914 and 1915. By presenting conscientious objection as a men's movement for liberty, COs writing in the press attempted to re-gender resistance. Consequently, the invocation of narratives of liberty highlights how male war resistance was regarded in a manner that had broad implications for how British society saw itself, not only in terms of gender but also in terms of national identity and values.

Whilst the discourses of courage, duty, and sacrifice remained central to the representation of male war resisters throughout the war, there were some shifts in how they were discussed in the press during the conflict's final two years, as I have shown in chapter 3. These shifts were primarily based on the focus of conscientious objectors' treatment which became the dominant theme in press coverage of COs during 1917 and 1918. The emphasis on the treatment of objectors was also intimately tied into the spaces that COs inhabited, whether that was public spaces on the Home Office Scheme or the closed off space of the prison. The pro-war press focused on the men who were employed on the Home Office Scheme and argued their treatment was both lenient and inappropriate when compared to the horrors and hardships experienced by soldiers.

In contrast, the anti-war press homed in on absolutist objectors and their heroic endurance of the harsh prison system. However, as more objectors began to suffer both physically and mentally from their imprisonment, and the number of CO deaths increased, a narrative of suffering, victimhood, and martyrdom complicated the construction of heroic and courageous masculinity that had been employed by objectors and their supporters during

1916 and early 1917. The tensions that suffering provoked in the configuration of objectors' masculinity not only highlighted the gendered connotations of suffering but also pointed to the complexities and contradictions that were inherent in the way that male resisters constructed their masculinity. The focus on the suffering of male resisters removed from the space of combat in the feminised space of the home front highlighted the problematic nature of ascribing to the CO the ideals connected to the hegemonic masculine ideals of the soldier. By showing how male resisters' suffering at home complicated their claims to a masculinity that was directly associated with the heroic ideals of the battlefield, the analysis of male suffering in chapter 3 demonstrates the often problematic implications of the anti-war representation of COs in the same way that Ugolini's work has shown this for middle-class male civilians on the home front.⁷⁷¹ In this way, this thesis has developed understanding of the construction of non-combatant civilian masculinities during wartime.

During 1917, as the political debates about the extension of the franchise intensified, the narratives of sacrifice, duty, and patriotism all contributed to press debates about male war resisters' rights to citizenship. As the five-year disenfranchisement of objectors passed through parliamentary legislature throughout 1917, before its confirmation in 1918, the reconfiguration of citizenship based on wartime service permeated press discussion about whether or not the rejection of military service also entailed a rejection of citizenship rights.⁷⁷² Whilst Gullace's study of citizenship and gender has shown how pro-war voices argued that by failing to defend their country conscientious objectors had broken the mutual contract between citizen and state, my analysis of the anti-war press in chapter 3 has demonstrated how objectors countered these arguments by contending that it was the state

⁷⁷¹ L. Ugolini, *Civvies*.

⁷⁷² This reconfiguration of citizenship during the war is clearly demonstrated by Nicoletta Gullace in "*The Blood of our Sons*".

that had broken the citizenship contract by preventing them from undertaking their duties as citizens. Both these arguments were infused with a language of duty and patriotism and reveal how the conscientious objector was central to the reconceptualisation of citizenship based on wartime values, not only because of his exclusion from the franchise but also because of the way those who supported his citizenship rights framed the CO as a citizen. The citizenship of the conscientious objector was therefore constructed not only by those who wished to disenfranchise them, but as a dialogue between pro-war and anti-war voices that was predicated upon notions of duty, service, and patriotism. The way that the press created a space for this type of dialogue and intertextual discussion therefore highlights the significance of looking at newspapers as a source which contributed to the formation of emerging dominant discourses.

As chapter 4 has demonstrated, the dialogues of male war resistance and the discourses that represented the CO's privileged position within the anti-war movement have been instrumental in influencing the way that resistance has been included in the commemoration of the First World War. This demonstrates the important relationship between wartime representations and present day understanding of the conflict. Whilst resistance was almost entirely absent in the immediate post-war period of memory formation and the 50th anniversary of the conflict, the limited ways that it was included established important precedents for the inclusion of the anti-war movement into the war's memory in later years. The focus on conscientious objectors and their suffering and martyrdom continued to be invoked up until their release in 1919 and in the 50th anniversary period. The raw emotions of grief and loss in the years immediately following the end of the war meant that the experience of anti-war activists did not fit easily into a remembrance narrative that focused on those who had lost their lives fighting for their country. However, the story of conscientious objectors could in some ways fit with the dominant interpretation of the war during

the 50th anniversary. The anti-officer and anti-authority narratives espoused in the cultural products of the 1960s, and the widespread public interpretation of the conflict as futile, meant that by emphasising the harsh treatment of objectors by state and military authorities, the conscientious objectors' story could be included in a partial way within the commemorative narratives of the period. By demonstrating how objectors have been included in the war's commemoration in both these important periods, the analysis in this chapter shows the way that resistance has fit into dominant discourses of memory and therefore makes a contribution to the substantial literature on the war's memory by those such as Dan Todman and Alex Danchev.⁷⁷³

The limited inclusion of objectors into the remembrance of the conflict has broadened significantly during the current centenary. Yet, as this thesis has shown, courage, heroism, and sacrifice all continue to inform discussion of conscientious objectors, demonstrating the extent to which the wartime representation of the anti-war movement influences present day understanding of war resistance. As such, the analysis of the centenary in chapter 4 contributes to the growing body of literature on this current period of commemoration, such as Helen McCartney's analysis of the First World War soldier and Catriona Pennell and Andrew Mycock's respective studies of national identity, race, and colonialism in the centenary commemorations.⁷⁷⁴ One hundred years on from the war, it is evident that the way that moral courage was formulated by objectors and their supporters has had a particularly significant impact on the broader acceptance of COs within the memory of the war. Indeed, the emphasis on COs is significant not only

⁷⁷³ D. Todman, *The Great War*, A. Danchev "“Bunking” and Debunking”, B. Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front*, S. Badsey, *The British Army in Battle*, J. Winter, *Sites of Memory*.

⁷⁷⁴ H. McCartney, 'The First World War Soldier and His Contemporary Image in Britain', C. Pennell, 'A Truly Shared Commemoration? Britain, Ireland and the Centenary of the First World War', A. Mycock, 'The First World War Centenary in the UK: “A Truly National Commemoration”?’.

because it points to the endurance of gender hierarchies but also because it shows how, in the present day, objectors are perceived as exceptional men who went against the grain, an interpretation that is linked to the anti-war press's wartime configuration of objectors' moral courage.

The broader definition of heroism in wartime that a wider acceptance of moral courage has encouraged over the one hundred years since the Great War demonstrates how a wider understanding of masculine identity over this period has in some ways created a space in which male resisters can be included to a greater extent in the war's commemoration. Yet whilst there has been a broader acceptance of the moral courage of objectors, readers' comments clearly highlight that there is an existing perception of objectors as selfish cowards because of their refusal to fight. This demonstrates the endurance of the wartime ideals and conceptualisation of the martial masculinity of the soldier and reveals that the representational constraints placed on male resisters during the war continue to influence the way that COs are included into dialogues about its commemoration. Furthermore, the continued focus on wartime masculine ideals not only dictates the ways in which objectors are included into commemorative narratives but has also marginalised women's role as resisters and the different ways their resistance was conceptualised.

However, discussions about male resisters' inclusion in commemorative narratives have not only been based upon the ideals connected to the soldier but are also connected to interpretations about the meaning and purpose of the conflict's commemoration. There is a perception that the addition of objectors into the remembrance of war significantly alters the meaning and focus of commemoration. The dialogue about the inclusion of resistance is not only based upon an entrenchment of the ideals of wartime masculinity but is also connected to broader questions about commemoration itself. In

this way, objectors have also been interpreted as playing a symbolic role in the remembrance of the war.

By examining the representation of male war resisters in the pro-war and anti-war press over the course of the war and during important periods of commemoration, it becomes clear that the press responded to significant developments in the war in an explicitly gendered manner. The introduction of conscription and the way that the anti-war press attempted to disrupt the connection between peace and femininity that it had lauded during 1914 and 1915 in order to position resistance as masculine offers the most obvious illustration of this. Indeed, the gendered repositioning of the anti-war movement following conscription was so significant that it reconceptualised resistance as conscientious objection, a move which continues to influence understanding of First World War resistance in the present day.

The Press

Examining how discourses of resistance were constructed, the role of gender in their configuration, and how narratives changed over time by using the press as a source garners significant insights because of the way that the press has operated as a key conduit through which anti-war campaigners have been discussed by journalists and the public. Although newspapers have been used in some studies of the war,⁷⁷⁵ there has been no extensive investigation into how it contributed to the construction of discourses that came to dominate the representation of both female and male resisters. Yet as this study has shown, the press offered a space in which the public configured and contested gendered depictions of anti-war women and men and their position within both the anti-war movement and wider society.

⁷⁷⁵ For example, Lois Bibbings uses the press as one of her sources in *Telling Tales* and Catriona Pennell has drawn extensively on the press in her study of popular responses to the outbreak of war in *A Kingdom United*.

My analysis of the gendered narratives, structures, and hierarchies throughout this thesis has shown the centrality of the press in employing explicitly and implicitly gendered frameworks for the public to understand and engage with war resisters. As Stephen Vella has argued, newspapers are ‘gatekeepers and filterers of ideas’,⁷⁷⁶ and this study has revealed how these ideas contributed to a shifting depiction of resistance to the First World War as a gendered act. The way that the press has framed particular issues has influenced public discussion not only by emphasising and invoking specific ideas and themes but also in the way that it has enabled certain types of people to dominate discussion, while marginalising others.⁷⁷⁷ Throughout this thesis, the ways that both pro-war and anti-war publications have given prominence to the conscientious objector, often at the expense of marginalising female opposition to the war, has been highlighted. The enduring impact of this pattern of gendered dominance has also been made clear in the examination of the war’s commemoration.

This study has shown that the importance of the press as a source rests not only upon the ways in which it presents particular ideas, events, and people to the public but also in the way that the public can actively engage with and contribute to the forming of press representations and discourses. The way newspapers enable individuals to participate in public debate means that the press adds to the public sphere in a unique way.⁷⁷⁸ The extensive analysis of readers’ letters and online comments within both print and online press formats within this thesis has demonstrated how the public has been influenced by and contributed to the gendered discourses and frameworks through which anti-war men and women have been represented during

⁷⁷⁶ S. Vella, ‘Newspapers’, p. 193.

⁷⁷⁷ A. Bingham and M. Conboy, *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the Present* (Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd, 2015), p. 21.

⁷⁷⁸ A. Bingham, ‘Ignoring the First Draft of History?’, p. 312.

1914-1918 and included into commemorative narratives in the years after the Armistice. This examination of the press has highlighted how central discourses of resistance were often configured through a public dialogue between pro-war and anti-war voices. This is particularly evident in the analysis of the narrative of courage in chapter 2, where a dialogue over the place of the body and the difference between moral and physical courage took place within the pages of pro-war and anti-war publications. Similarly, the discussions over the citizenship of war resisters that are explored in chapter 3 also demonstrate how both anti-war and pro-war voices constructed the citizenship of both male and female resisters through press debates and representations that invoked differing notions of duty and service. This thesis has therefore underscored how the unique format of the press and the space that it offers for both public engagement and inter-textual discussion played a significant role in shaping the narratives that informed understanding about war resistance.

By highlighting how the specific medium of the press has constructed discourses about the Great War, this study has added to a broader literature on public narratives and the conflict such as Bernard Bergonzi and Paul Fussell's seminal works on the impact of war on literature, Claire Tylee's study of women's wartime writing, as well as more recent studies on the topic of the body and emotion in First World War literature by Sanatu Das.⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷⁹ Studies of literature and the Great War include Bernard Bergonzi, *Heroes' Twilight: A Study of the Literature of the Great War* (London: Constable, 1965); Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); Rosa Maria Bracco, *Merchants of Hope: British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War, 1919-1939* (Providence: Berg, 1993); Claire M. Tylee, *The Great War and Women's Consciousness: Images of Militarism and Feminism in Women's Writings, 1914-1964* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990); Keith Grieves, 'The Propinquity of Place: Home Landscape and Soldier Poets of the First World War' in J. Meyer (ed.), *British Popular Culture and the First World War* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 21-46; Sanatu Das, *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Samuel Hynes' study of First World War culture also examines literature alongside other public narratives such as journalism, film, and art in *A War Imagined*. Studies that examine a variety of cultural representations including the press include George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, C. Pennell, *A Kingdom United* and N. Gullace, "*The Blood of Our Sons*".

Whilst the varied and extensive studies of literature in particular have highlighted the multifaceted ways that the war has been creatively represented by various authors, this study has shown how the less explored medium of the press has created a space in which the public has actively contributed to the formation of public narratives and dialogues about resistance, war, gender and commemoration.

By extending the timeframe of analysis to consider important periods of commemoration in chapter 4, this study has also demonstrated how public engagement with the press has changed since the First World War ended. The examination of readers' below-the-line comments on online versions of press articles during the centenary has demonstrated how the public continues to play a significant role in shaping the representation of resistance. More specifically, this analysis has shown that readers' responses to ideas and opinions within the press contribute not only to the inclusion of war resistance within commemorative narratives, but also determine the discourses and basis upon which this inclusion takes place. The immediacy and plethora of online comments enable readers to not only engage with the text but also with each other in message-style texts. Whilst the way that the public consumes and engages with the press has changed over time, the fact that press articles and opinion pieces about Great War resisters continue to generate a multitude of public responses and dialogues demonstrates how the press continues to provide a public space in which the representation of resistance during 1914-1918 is constructed. In this way, this thesis has contributed knowledge to the way that public narratives about the war have been configured in the years after the Armistice. In doing so, it has added to Emma Hanna's work on the representation of the Great War on the small screen, Stephen Badsey's study of the different ways the British Army has been represented to the British people through mass media, as well as Dan Todman's extensive analysis of how the memory of the Great War has been

constructed in British culture in a variety of public mediums.⁷⁸⁰ Exploring the ways in which the press has operated as a space in which discourses of resistance have been discussed and contested has consequently shed light on the important and enduring role of newspapers in the formation of public dialogues of war resistance.

Resistance

By examining the press representation of the First World War anti-war movement through the lens of gender, this study has also highlighted the significance of considering resistance as an important aspect of conflict. Whilst those who actively opposed the Great War were numerically a relatively small group, their significance is illustrated by the amount of attention that they received in the wartime press. Exploring their representation is therefore important because the ways in which resisters were discussed and depicted helps to uncover the reasons why they became so contentious, how their position within British society was understood, and the central role that wartime conceptions of masculinity and femininity played in the representation of their opposition to the conflict. By considering resistance in this way, this study has highlighted how a relatively marginal experience of the First World War was understood in a manner that touched upon wider questions of gender, citizenship, and national identity. This thesis has therefore demonstrated how analysing opposition to war not only illustrates the diverse experiences of conflict, but also raises important questions about both how society is gendered and how it sees itself more broadly.

Through an analysis of the press representation of resistance during both the war and important periods of commemoration, this thesis has contributed to

⁷⁸⁰ E. Hanna, *The Great War on the Small Screen*, S. Badsey, *The British Army and its Image, 1914-1918*, D. Todman, *The Great War*.

knowledge of the Great War's peace movement in a number of ways. First, it has demonstrated the integral role of the press to the formation of public discourses of resistance, and has shown how resisters' wartime identity and subsequent commemoration has been constructed in many ways through public dialogue. In doing so, it has added an in-depth study of the press to Lois Bibbings' analysis of a variety of cultural representations.⁷⁸¹

Secondly, the analysis throughout this study has highlighted how, by looking at the ways resistance has been interpreted, we can also explore how dominant constructions of gender impact on the way that the acts of marginal wartime groups are gendered, both by themselves and by others. By foregrounding gender as an analytical tool, this study's analysis of war resistance has illustrated how groups that, in their stance and acts, opposed prevalent narratives and opinion in a number of ways engaged with and often mirrored dominant constructions of both masculinity and femininity and gender hierarchies. This thesis has therefore highlighted the importance of looking at both men and women in studies of resistance. The division of analysis of war resisters into men and women has meant that studies have either looked at conscientious objectors, such as *Telling Tales* by Lois Bibbings, *Objection Overruled* by David Boulton and John Rae's *Conscience and Politics*,⁷⁸² or female pacifists, such as the extensive work on the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom by Jo Vellacott, Leila J. Rupp and others.⁷⁸³ Whilst these studies have undoubtedly offered

⁷⁸¹ L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*.

⁷⁸² Studies of COs during the Great War include L. Bibbings, *Telling Tales*, D. Boulton, *Objection Overruled*, J. Rae, *Conscience and Politics*, J. W. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience*, T. Kennedy, 'Public Opinion and the Conscientious Objector, 1915-1919', T. C. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience*, K. Robbins, 'The British Experience of Conscientious Objectors', C. Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience*.

⁷⁸³ J. Vellacott, 'Anti-War Suffragists'; J. Vellacott, 'A Place for Pacifism and Transnationalism in Feminist Theory: The Early Work of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1993), 23-56; J. Vellacott, 'Feminism as If All People Mattered: Working to Remove the Causes of War, 1919-1929', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 10, No. 3, Theme Issue: Gender and War in Europe c. 1918-1949 (November, 2001), 375-394. Leila J. Rupp discusses the origins, ideology and

important insights into the role that gender has played in men and women's organised opposition to the war, this gendered division has meant that there is limited understanding of the ways in which both these groups were discussed and represented in a way that contributed to a shifting gendered depiction of the anti-war movement as a whole. By examining male and female war resisters together this study has shown how gendered representations of resisters responded to one another and to wartime developments, particularly the introduction of conscription.

Furthermore, whilst studies such as Cyril Pearce's *Comrades in Conscience* have revealed significant insights into how opposition to the war was mobilised and organised during the war,⁷⁸⁴ there has been little consideration of when and how the anti-war movement has been included in the commemoration of the First World War. Indeed, analysis of the position that resistance occupies with the memory of the conflict has also not been undertaken in any of the numerous and multifaceted studies into the myriad ways that memory has been constructed in the years following the Armistice.⁷⁸⁵ Consequently, this study has gone some way in revealing when

activities of WILPF as an international organisation in *Worlds of Women*; The Hague Congress, WILPF and WIL are also discussed in J. Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*, pp. 87-120; Johanna Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1989), pp. 52-64 and Lela B. Costin, 'Feminism, Pacifism, Internationalism and the 1915 International Congress of Women', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 5, No. 3/4 (1982), 301-315. An important organisational history of WILPF is offered by Gertrud Bussey and Margaret Tims, *Pioneers for Peace: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1965* (2nd ed., London: WILPF British Section, 1980). More recent work on WILPF's activities in the post-war period has been done by Erika Kuhlman in E. Kuhlman, 'The "Women's International League for Peace and Freedom" and Reconciliation After the Great War' in Alison Fell and Ingrid Sharp (eds), *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914-19* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 227-243.

⁷⁸⁴ C. Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience*.

⁷⁸⁵ There is substantial literature on the First World War and its memory including P. Fussell, *The Great War*, Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, Alex Danchev, "'Bunking" and Debunking: The Controversies of the 1960s' in Brian Bond (ed.), *The First World War and British Military History*, Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory*, Brian Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History*.

and how resistance has been included in the remembrance of the conflict and the significant role that gender has played in defining the parameters of this inclusion. It has also demonstrated the significant links between how resisters were represented during the war and the way that they continue to be interpreted in the present day and consequently highlights the contemporary significance of understanding the wartime representation of the anti-war movement.

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Taken together, the findings of this thesis can influence further understanding in a number of ways. By focusing on a marginalised and generally unpopular wartime group of men and women and considering how they were interpreted in a specifically gendered manner, the study sheds further light on how constructions of masculinity, femininity, and the gender structure operated during wartime. Furthermore, by focusing on resistance, this analysis can influence understanding of how social and protest movements during different periods and for different causes engaged with hegemonic gender structures and were represented and shaped by constructions of both masculinity and femininity. In addition, it contributes knowledge to the way that the press provides a space which both reflects and shapes the shifting public discussion and understanding about gender. Using the press as a source to examine the different ways that gender is configured would be beneficial to a variety of topics which focus on public narratives of masculinity and femininity. Finally, by demonstrating both the link between wartime representation and remembrance narratives and the discourses through which resisters have been included in the commemoration of the conflict, this thesis may influence further

understanding of the way that opponents of war have been remembered and the way that the memory of conflicts is gendered.

By bringing together an analysis of male and female war resisters through a chronological exploration of the press, this thesis has consequently demonstrated the integral role that conceptions of gender played in the discussion and interpretation of the anti-war movement. The study has highlighted the myriad and often conflicting ways that masculinity and femininity have been constructed and contested in the representation of the First World War peace movement. Moreover, by considering gender and resistance through a chronological survey of the war and key points of remembrance, this thesis has demonstrated how gendered conceptions of peace activism underwent significant changes in response to shifting wartime events as well as changes in the context of remembrance. In doing so, this thesis has underscored the significant ways that masculinity, femininity and the gender system influenced the portrayal of the resisters of the Great War, the importance of exploring both masculinity and femininity in order to gain a deeper understanding of the varied ways that gender is constructed, and how this gendering has continued to resonate in the present day.

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