

# Schools and Universities

By [Andrew Donson](#)

**The military service of teachers and the mobilization of schoolchildren for voluntary war work deeply disrupted schooling, especially in Central Europe. In continental Europe, war infused curricula in all academic subjects. It also sped the reform of primary and secondary schooling. University students volunteered en masse in 1914. Female students replaced them, and a new sobriety dominated campus life. Humanities professors played a key role in writing war propaganda. Because technology was critical to the military, the war elevated the importance of scientific research at universities.**

## Table of Contents

[1 Introduction](#)

[2 Schools](#)

[2.1 Teachers and Administration](#)

[2.2 Voluntary War Work](#)

[2.3 Wartime Curricula](#)

[2.4 Educational Reform](#)

[3 Universities](#)

[3.1 Students](#)

[3.2 Academics and University Life](#)

[3.3 Scientific Research](#)

[3.4 Professors as Publicists](#)

[4 International Relations](#)

[5 Conclusion](#)

[Notes](#)

[Selected Bibliography](#)

[Citation](#)

## Introduction

Until recently, historians largely neglected the history of schools during the First World War. However, several monographs published in the last decade have begun to fill the void. This scholarship is variable in quality and depth. With one exception, each study focuses on a single national context. But as a whole the scholarship provides a basic outline of how schools operated during the war in the main combatant states, with the exception of [Russia](#). It addresses in particular how and to what extent schools mobilized their pupils, both in the classroom through war lessons, and outside school in voluntary war work.

The scholarship on universities during the war is somewhat larger. However, most of it comprises intellectual histories about the role professors played as publicists supporting the war effort in their countries. The research on the social history of universities is less extensive. Unlike that of schools, the wartime history of universities has been analyzed from a comparative-national

perspective in one outstanding article and one important edited collection of essays.<sup>[1]</sup>

The purpose of this article is to compare the developments in education and suggest the degree to which they varied among the combatant states and why. It covers the administration of schools in an era of mass conscription, the mobilization of schoolchildren for voluntary war work, the implementation of new wartime curricula, and the introduction of teaching reforms. It also discusses how the war affected students, social life, academics, and scientific research at universities. Finally, it details the crucial role professors played as publicists for the war and the degree that the war recast international relations among universities.

## Schools

The war disrupted schooling in almost all the combatant nations, as the armies requisitioned school houses for hospitals, and young male teachers entered the military *en masse*. Schools everywhere also organized their pupils for voluntary war work and brought the war into the classroom as a subject of academic study. But the disruptions, war work, and wartime curricula varied considerably among the combatant states. Schools in Central Europe faced a direr personnel crisis than those in the Allied nations. The war was more integrated into the curricula in [France](#), [Germany](#), and German-speaking [Austria-Hungary](#) than in the English-speaking combatant states. Shortages of food and coal, which weakened teachers and pupils and led to school closings, were most severe in Central Europe due to the [British blockade](#). The silver lining was that, in states where education reform movements were active before 1914, the war tended to speed implementation of progressive changes.

## Teachers and Administration

Like most in the middle class, teachers all over Europe greeted the war with loyalty to their nation. A large proportion of male teachers eligible for military service enlisted in the first weeks and months of the conflict. In [Australia](#) and Germany, the willingness to join was in part due to their educations that instilled [nationalism](#) and veneration for the military.<sup>[2]</sup> In [Great Britain](#), [France](#), and [Canada](#), the enlistments had more to do with a belief in a duty to defend liberal and democratic [government](#), particularly after the stories of German atrocities circulated in the fall 1914. Depending on the country, an estimated one-third to two-thirds of eligible male teachers were serving in the militaries by 1916.<sup>[3]</sup>

This shortage of personnel made it difficult to carry out a normal school regime. Administrators scrambled to find replacements, usually retired teachers or ones in training, neither of whom were as effective as the enlisted men they replaced. Compounding the difficulties, armies used schools as hospitals, barracks, and offices. Some administrators coped with the depleted resources by amalgamating classes. But overcrowded rooms bred indiscipline and sometimes disease among the schoolchildren. Most schools chose instead to institute half and even one-third day sessions and gave instructors heavier teaching duties.<sup>[4]</sup> The situation was particularly bad in Germany, where over 80 percent of the teachers were male, and two-thirds were serving in the army by 1916. The disruption could not be alleviated by hiring female teachers, because in Prussia they were forbidden to teach coed or all-boy classrooms. The rule was lifted by an emergency measure in 1916 but did little to ameliorate the burden. Making matters worse, the severe shortages of food and coal weakened the remaining teachers, almost all of whom were working double shifts. In the last years of the war, the shortages led German schoolchildren to miss weeks and in some cases months of school.<sup>[5]</sup>

By contrast, schools functioned better in Italy, France, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, and the [United States](#). In these countries, female teachers made up between 60 and 80 percent of the profession, so conscription did not deplete their ranks as deeply as in the German-speaking states.<sup>[6]</sup> Teachers and schoolchildren in the Allied states also did not suffer from any serious malnutrition. Nonetheless, in France as in Germany, absences rose to 25 to 50 percent in the last war winters. Some schoolchildren were truant because they cared for siblings at home while their mothers worked. Others stayed away to earn money, to scavenge and beg for food, or to greet fathers, brothers, uncles, and friends when they returned on military leave. In France, Germany, and Great Britain, teachers and administrators complained about a decline in student achievement. The decline had as much to do with the disruptions to schooling as with truancy, the absence of fathers, and the need for many schoolchildren to labor on farms with so many young men gone.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Voluntary War Work

Teachers in all the combatant states organized their schoolchildren to do so-called patriotic war work. This involved schoolchildren volunteering their small but million-fold labor to sell war bonds, collect recyclables, harvest grains, grow vegetables, sew uniforms, knit mittens and sweaters, pick and preserve berries, entertain and care for wounded soldiers, work in offices, send packages to soldiers, and raise money for charities. Some of this war work was done in school during handiwork instruction. Most of it was done outside school, organized but not always supervised by teachers. Whether war work made a significant contribution to war production is a matter of debate. But historians agree that it constituted the main way that schools mobilized pupils in support of the war. Teachers and the public praised schoolchildren for their effort. According to teachers, war work raised the awareness of schoolchildren about scarcity in wartime and filled them with patriotic pride. It also advertised that, given how schoolchildren were helping the war effort, adults should make a contribution too. Particularly noteworthy was that schoolchildren undertook war work regardless of their social class.

The current scholarship suggests that war work was least extensive in France, limited there to collecting money for charity, making clothes for soldiers, and sending them packages. The plan of the French minister of public instruction to cultivate 1,500 hectares in 1917 with schoolchildren's labor failed miserably.<sup>[8]</sup> In Great Britain, schools engaged in war work more actively, particularly in raising money for charity and planting and maintaining school gardens. Handiwork instruction in British schools geared toward making useful items for soldiers: the girls sewed and knit clothing, and the boys made stretchers, hand grenade boxes, and other wooden items. But many parents feared schools exploited their children. Parents in Hertfordshire, England, were indignant, for example, when in August 1917 administrators required schoolchildren to collect nuts and acorns without remuneration.<sup>[9]</sup>

In Australia and English-speaking Canada, war work was less organized by schools than by the schoolchildren themselves. Under the direction of nation-wide umbrella organizations, the schoolchildren took their own initiative in doing extra chores. They then donated the money to war charities. In Australia, independence in war work and the extent and diversity of the activities were particularly pronounced.<sup>[10]</sup> Although more organized around schools and youth organizations, war work was arguably as extensive in Germany and German-speaking Austria-Hungary. There, the high degree of organization of youth into recreational associations before the war played a major role. The early involvement of the ministries of education in mobilizing schoolchildren's labor in Australia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary was also an important factor.<sup>[11]</sup> In Italy, teachers devoted less time to organizing schoolchildren than to writing pro-war propaganda for the ministries and founding welfare associations. They opened preschools, built recreational facilities, and assisted children in families with conscripted fathers.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Wartime Curricula

In addition to mobilizing schoolchildren through voluntary war work outside class, schools drummed up support for the war through new programs and rituals. In all the combatant states, schools erected memorials or plaques for fallen teachers and former students. They also all designated certain days for assemblies where the pupils sang patriotic songs, staged war-related dramas, and listened to patriotic speeches and talks by soldiers. However, the degree that [nationalism](#) and the war infused school curricula varied extensively among the combatant states.

The logs of lesson plans show that teachers in Great Britain aimed to instill patriotism and included war-oriented poems and prose. Teachers also covered the history and geography of the combatant nations. The war was most present in school on commemorative holidays such as Trafalgar Day and Empire Day, which revived the military drill as a form of entertainment. But some teachers were hesitant to make the war too central in the curriculum, lest they upset parents who thought it was distasteful to imitate the nationalism and glorification of war they attributed to the Germans. Indeed, the public was outraged when one teacher solicited essays from pupils describing what they would do if they caught the *Kaiser*. Jingoism clearly repulsed London teachers.<sup>[13]</sup> Likewise, in the United States, the committee appointed by President Wilson to direct propaganda urged teachers to get pupils to support the war but explicitly urged them not to instill nationalism.<sup>[14]</sup>

In the British dominions, schools brought the war into classrooms somewhat more fully than in Great Britain. Patriotic songs and speeches on Empire Day got more emphasis than before the war. In English-speaking Canada, schools incorporated the rifle drill into the commemorations, turning them into a more jingoistic, music-hall like celebration than in Great Britain. They also continued their practice of organizing cadet corps. Final exams had dictations describing soldiers and questions on the geography and history of the war. Libraries stocked their shelves with war-related materials.<sup>[15]</sup> In Australia, the war dominated

as much as 80 percent of the pages of *School Paper*, which all schoolchildren were required to purchase for classroom instruction.<sup>[16]</sup> But commemorations in schools in the British dominions aimed not to glorify the army but to justify participation in the war alleged to be necessary to protect free trade and liberal institutions. Many teachers, although far from most, were ambivalent about the war during its first months. The Australian department of education did not advise discussing the war in school until three months after its outbreak. It did not distribute information on the German atrocities, fearing the stories would incite hatred. In Ontario, teachers certainly accepted an administrative order in late 1914 to teach the war as a subject. But even then, many remained hesitant about teaching it, especially to younger children.<sup>[17]</sup>

The war infused the classroom most fully in France, Germany, and German-speaking Austria-Hungary. Schools in these countries did not stop with staging patriotic commemorations and teaching the history and geography of the war like the schools in Great Britain and the British dominions. French and German schools went so far as to use the war as a topic in every academic subject, from writing to mathematics. For example, to practice arithmetic, German schoolchildren sometimes added up the firepower needed to destroy a French division. To hone their writing skills, French schoolchildren drafted essays about regiments departing for the front and wounded soldiers arriving at the train station. Such a new program of war pedagogy (*Kriegspädagogik*) or war schooling (*scolarité de guerre*) was not universal, but schoolchildren's notebooks and teachers' lesson plans suggest that it was widespread in the first years of the war. Over the course of 1916, the enthusiasm for such curricula waned considerably. But the war still remained an integral part of instruction in writing and reading until the armistice.<sup>[18]</sup>

While the degree to which both French and German-speaking schools embraced the war was comparable, the reasons for the new war curricula diverged, and there was a remarkable difference in tone and emphasis. In France, war schooling arguably had its roots in the Jacobin idea of mobilizing all citizens for the survival of the Republic. War schooling in France accordingly focused on the citizen-soldier and his defense of republican values. French teachers had long criticized jingoistic teaching content. Many were pacifists and socialists, and most were women who did not identify personally with the military. War schooling accordingly did not glorify war itself as a rite of passage into manhood.<sup>[19]</sup> German teachers had, by contrast, little connection to the peace movement. Before the war many were involved in radical right organizations like the Pan-German League. A predominantly male profession with many veterans and reserve officers, they identified strongly with the military. In contrast to France, war pedagogy in German schools accordingly depicted soldiering as a supreme act of manhood and a demonstration of Germany's superiority. Although it is somewhat a matter of interpretation, the content in German war pedagogy regularly glorified combat.<sup>[20]</sup>

## Educational Reform

In addition to bringing about changes in curricula, the war facilitated educational reform. While historians doubt that the war emancipated women in the teaching profession, it did accomplish what the women's movements had long wanted in all the combatant states: better representation of women in the teaching profession. In Germany, it also allowed elementary school teachers to experiment with child-centered teaching practices banned before the war but permitted under war pedagogy. German schools had been notorious for their rote learning and authoritarian teacher-student relationships. But this teaching style was incompatible in classrooms where children had fathers on the front and were making every sacrifice to win the war.<sup>[21]</sup> In Great Britain, the discussion of postwar reconstruction at the highest levels of government boosted the attractiveness of plans for educational reform proposed before the war. The shortages of teachers and the realization of need for better instruction in the scientific and technical fields was a catalyst to pass the Education Act of 1918, which universally raised the school-leaving age to fourteen, reduced class sizes, and raised teacher pay.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Universities

More than half of Europe's university students enlisted in the military in the first months of the war alone. Student life at the universities was accordingly transformed, as young women replaced the male students in classes, and voluntary, patriotic war work replaced recreational sports and drinking. Like schools, European universities suffered from the financial constraints and personnel shortages imposed by the war. Unlike schools, the content of the standard curricula in established courses barely changed. What did change in academics was the creation of new departments and courses of study and the type and intensity of research. Furthermore, in accordance with their nations' military alliances, universities and professors broke off many international relations and forged new ones. While particular academic policies and political alignments varied, the general

§Schools and Universities - 1914-1918-Online

changes in universities during the war were comparable across the combatant states. The exception was American universities and universities in regions under German and Austro-Hungarian occupation. In both these cases, with some notable exceptions, these universities no longer functioned as they had in peacetime.

## Students

As middle-class elites, university students were among the most spirited nationalists in their respective countries. Many gleaned romantic ideas about war from reading works like the *Iliad* during their classical education and listening to stories of older men who had fought in the Boer and Franco-Prussian wars. Others absorbed the myths about the citizen armies of the Napoleonic Wars and the Wars of Liberation. War was cast as a great manly adventure, the very opposite of bourgeois complacency and materialism so many young people despised. Such an outlook was reinforced by the prevalence of dueling among French and German university students and the cult of sports in English public schools and American universities. If a student was not personally moved for these reasons, he had to have a strong personality to resist the peer pressure from his comrades who were volunteering to defend his nation. How enthusiastic students were to go to war has been a matter of some debate and open to interpretation. But people in the combatant states recognized how willing students were to make the ultimate sacrifice for their nation. Such a belief was operative in the legend that, at the Battle of Langemarck in November 1914, hundreds of German university students marched courageously into French **machine guns** singing the future national anthem, "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles."<sup>[23]</sup>

Such nationalism and longing for adventure explains why volunteer rates among university students were so high. Half of the students at Oxford University, 60 percent at Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität (Berlin), and 80 percent at the Sorbonne in Paris volunteered in the first months of the war.<sup>[24]</sup> Mortality rates of university students were also high, exceeding those of regular recruits by as much as half. This was because they mobilized early in the war and saw the bloodiest and longest periods of fighting. Furthermore, as many as two thirds became junior officers. They willingly put themselves in danger in the hopes of achieving their nations' goals. The mortality rate for British university students was just under 17 percent, and the rate for German students was around 20 percent. Those figures were high enough for elites to refer to them after the war as "the lost generation."<sup>[25]</sup>

For the European universities themselves, the most consequential effect of such high volunteerism was the need to enroll women as replacements. The influx of women was a radical change. With the exception of the universities in London, even liberal faculty, students, and administrators at European universities long feared that female students would endanger academic rigor and male *esprit de corps*. Female students would also displace men in the professions upon graduation and reject the alleged higher calling of marriage and motherhood. However, universities to varying extents were still dependent on student fees for their operations. Furthermore, professors could not justify seminars without enrollments. Finally, the combatant nations needed female university graduates to replace the male schoolteachers, physicians, and other professionals serving in the military. Whether the influx of women constituted female emancipation during wartime is debatable. On the one hand, student magazines in Great Britain mocked the female students for spending their time knitting and organizing teas. In Germany, male students were in general hostile toward the women and promptly kicked them out when the soldiers whom they replaced were demobilized after the armistice. Russia drafted but never implemented legislation to admit women to university. On the other hand, in Great Britain, many female academics claimed that the war sped reforms already underway. In the years after the war, the absolute number of women in universities in Great Britain remained at its wartime high.<sup>[26]</sup>

## Academics and University Life

The most noticeable change to universities besides the absence of so many young men was a new sobriety. Declining revenue from student fees, cuts in state support, and, in Central Europe, inflation meant that the universities had to stop acquiring new library books and constructing new buildings. The expense and shortages of coal made it impossible to heat the existing buildings to their pre-war warmth. The faculty was grayer: older, full professors were less likely than younger teaching faculty to serve in the military. Reversing the pre-war situation in staffing, the full professors now outnumbered their subordinates at most universities.<sup>[27]</sup>

Adding to the atmosphere of seriousness, the constant thought about colleagues, friends, and loved ones on the front, including

a large portion of the younger teaching faculty as well as students, undermined the pre-war revelry of campus life. Sports, drinking, and club life, which had earlier dominated student culture, came almost to a standstill. Annual celebrations were canceled. Both students and faculty interrupted their regular academic work when they volunteered for the war effort. Professors offered pastoral care and aided [war widows](#) and orphans. Students volunteered in war kitchens and agriculture and organized war-bond drives and book collections. They also put together packages of cigarettes, mittens, sausages, and other desirables to send to soldiers on the front. As the military appropriated university buildings to create hospitals, professors and students alike volunteered in caring for the wounded. Some noted how in the absence of sports and fraternity life, students studied harder than before the war. The new diligence was also due to fear of being stigmatized a lazy shirker at home while others risked their lives at the front.<sup>[28]</sup>

Despite offering less financial support to universities, the combatant states still depended on them to produce teachers, physicians, engineers, and other professionals who were in shorter supply than ever. The military also needed the expertise that universities offered in fields such as translation, geography, medicine, chemistry, physics, and engineering. Officer training programs, such as the one at Oxford University, continued to be essential. Accordingly, the slogan in Great Britain was to maintain "business as usual" in the limited sense of keeping the universities running - the emphases and contributions of universities in wartime in fact became anything but usual. Everywhere in Europe, the universities adapted to function under the new personnel and financial constraints. Professors took on more students. In Germany, they also turned to the military for grants to continue their research.<sup>[29]</sup>

On the whole, the content of European university courses on the books did not change. There was some shift in history courses toward more international subjects in the modern period. Economics lectures often touched on war-related issues such as war bonds, agricultural production, and welfare for war widows and orphans. But these shifts were more the exception than the rule. Questions in course examinations were in general more or less the same as the ones before the war. Likewise, the universities maintained their academic standards. There were some emergency measures to accommodate students who volunteered and to adapt to an era of shortages. In Germany, students did not have to be present to defend their theses, and doctoral candidates no longer had to publish their dissertations. If they passed their written exam but could not take their oral exam due to military service, students in Great Britain and France were given honorary degrees. But the universities were nonetheless steadfast in upholding academic rigor. The military academy *École Polytechnique* in Paris was extreme but not totally out of the ordinary when it refused to admit students who arrived late to a cumulative exam because Germans had bombed their means of [transportation](#).<sup>[30]</sup>

An exception to this scenario was the universities in the United States. Under the [Selective Service Act](#) of Congress in May 1917, all male university students who passed muster became soldiers in the army and entered into the newly created Students' Army Training Corps, the forerunner of today's Reserve Officer Training Corps. The U.S. War Department subsequently took over the physical and intellectual resources of both public and private universities. The students pursued a course of study akin to the curricula at the military academies. Universities effectively lost their independence, and professors lost their academic freedom.<sup>[31]</sup>

For the European universities, however, what did change in the curricula were the offerings and the emphases. To supply the combatant armies with interpreters for intelligence and the civilian government with officials capable of conversing with allied nations, universities greatly expanded their offerings in modern languages. To train experts in international relations, history departments hired faculty to teach the modern history of multiple nations and regions in the world. Most universities aimed to expand their offerings in area studies. Outside Germany, whose universities led the world in science, the war marked a rise in the prestige of curricula in engineering, social science, and natural sciences, at the expense of the humanities. These developments represented a more rapid pace of trends that preceded the war.<sup>[32]</sup>

### **Scientific Research**

Scientific research at universities and affiliated institutes flourished as it proved instrumental to the war effort. Faculty realized that never before in history had science played such a critical role in the security of their nation. Government officials in Berlin immediately recognized that Germany owed its security to [Fritz Haber \(1868-1934\)](#) for discovering how to fix nitrogen industrially when he served as director of the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute. The process permitted Germany to make fertilizer and explosives despite the blockade of saltpeter by Great Britain. Following Germany, the combatant nations poured money into research on



science relevant to the military. The most notorious of this research became the foundation for [gas warfare](#). The more lasting legacy was the great advances in kinetics, optics, and [wireless telegraphy](#). As important was the new relationship forged between states and universities. The military and civilian government in the combatant state now drove more of the direction of scientific research by offering grants and, as important, releases of staff from military service for projects relevant to developing weapons. The Russian minister of education went so far as to prepare legislation making the main task of universities not training professionals and state officials but creating experts in science.<sup>[33]</sup>

### Professors as Publicists

Despite the growing importance of university science in wartime, humanities professors played a key role in shaping the meaning of the war in their respective countries. Like the students they taught, university professors were, with some exceptions, ardent supporters of the war and leaned heavily toward the nationalist milieu. Even professors skeptical of imperialist and nationalist movements before the war believed it was now their duty to help mobilize their fellow citizens patriotically. Humanities professors regularly published popular books and articles that aimed to mobilize their compatriots. These writings were technically not [propaganda](#); the publications were voluntary, without direction from the militaries or the civilian governments, at least until the last year of the war. They were nonetheless indispensable to the combatant nations in getting their citizens to embrace the war effort and challenging representations of their nation's image abroad. The "Appeal to the Civilized World," signed in September 1914 by ninety-three prominent German intellectuals, including dozens of full professors and affiliated professors, challenged the alleged plot abroad "to stain the honor of Germany" through "lies" about the army's conduct in Belgium. This "Manifest of the Ninety-Three", as it became known abroad, motivated professors at Allied universities to retaliate with their own propaganda that highlighted Germany's [militarism](#) and imperialist ambitions. For the rest of the war, Allied and Entente professors combatted each other through their propaganda. Some British professors distinguished between the Germany of [Immanuel Kant \(1724-1804\)](#) and [Albert Einstein \(1879-1955\)](#) and the Germany of [Otto von Bismarck \(1815-1898\)](#) and [Wilhelm II, German Emperor \(1859-1941\)](#), and few intellectuals in any of the combatant states rejected the culture of their enemies entirely. However, most throughout Europe had little nice to say about their enemies, whom they lambasted while exalting the war efforts of their own citizens.<sup>[34]</sup>

Professors and administrators engaged in an intellectual war against their enemies also within their universities. Russian universities stripped Germans from honorary membership in their academies, while German and French universities outright expelled dozens of professors and thousands of foreign enemy students. The foreign student population in Germany decreased by somewhere between 65 and 85 percent.<sup>[35]</sup> The universities in the United States regularly dismissed not only professors of German origin but also ones deemed to be sympathizers of Germany.<sup>[36]</sup>

### International Relations

Nevertheless, the war also led universities to forge new international connections. In being cut off from Western Europe and North America, German universities founded new exchange programs with universities in Eastern Europe and Turkey. Furthermore, the German universities allowed students to remain who were British or French colonial subjects. In addition, they offered these colonial subjects financial support. Likewise, Russian professors embraced new exchange programs with universities in France and Great Britain, in part because they thought doing so would speed democratization of the state. French universities courted ties with universities in Dublin and Bucharest and gave particular effort to winning the good will of the United States. The Sorbonne actively recruited American students by sending the renowned sociologist [Émile Durkheim \(1858-1917\)](#) as a representative. British universities were more tolerant in permitting enemy nationals to remain, although most left voluntarily, and those who remained faced considerable hostility. British universities welcomed French and Belgian [refugees](#) and also expanded exchanges with universities in the United States.<sup>[37]</sup>

Universities in the regions [occupied](#) by the German and Austro-Hungarian armies had wholly different developments. In a few cases, the occupying authorities had a positive influence. For example, the German civilian government financed the opening of a new, Polish-language university in occupied Warsaw, fulfilling a decades-long aspiration of Poles.<sup>[38]</sup> However, such politically motivated noblesse oblige was the exception. The arguably willful destruction by the German army of the library at Louvain University, which had one of the world's largest collections of antiquarian books and manuscripts, was the most visible violence done to institutions of higher learning under the occupations. The German occupiers re-Germanized the Dorpat University and

removed Walloon professors from [Ghent University](#), aiming to make it primarily Flemish. After its initial attack on Lille, the German army occupied many of the university's buildings. It also pillaged its laboratories and deported much of its faculty. Lille University managed to operate for most of the war, but just barely.<sup>[39]</sup>

## Conclusion

The main legacy of the war for schooling was that it speeded the implementation of education reform advocated by progressives before 1914. To varying degrees, the European states now had more comprehensive schooling. Schools used softer, child-centered teaching methods and admitted more women into the profession. By contrast, the patriotic mobilization of schoolchildren through war lessons and war work did not have any permanent effects on schools in the period immediately following the war. In all the combatant states, curricula returned more or less to its pre-war content soon after the armistice. Schoolchildren no longer volunteered their labor for their nation. However, the experience of mass mobilization produced a war youth generation that played a disproportionately large role in bringing about fascist regimes. Furthermore, when fascist regimes came into power in Italy and Germany, schools again revamped curricula and mobilized schoolchildren for nationalist purposes. They adapted the past practices of wartime to their new, radical priorities.<sup>[40]</sup>

The war had a more lasting effect on universities in Europe. While students did not sustain the level of wartime sobriety at universities after 1918, after such high mortality among their peers, and with so many wounded, many could not brook the frivolity so common on campuses before 1914. The war also opened universities to courses of study that were now more international in scope. Many of the exchange programs established during the war, such as the French ones with the United States, played a major role in future international relations. The number of women at universities in most of the combatant states remained much higher than before the war. The most important change brought about by the war and maintained into peacetime was that the European universities gave less emphasis in their mission to teaching and more to research, particularly in the sciences. Thus, while military service eviscerated universities of their students and faculty, and impoverished scholars, and researchers in Germany began to lose their preeminence relative to ones in the Allied states, one might argue that the war nonetheless invigorated them.

Andrew Donson, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Section Editor: [Pierre Purseigle](#)

## Notes

1. ↑ Fordham, Elizabeth: *Universities*, in: Winter, Jay/Robert, Jean-Louis (eds.): *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, vol. 2, New York 2007; and Maurer, Trude (ed.): *Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer: Europäische Universitäten im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Stuttgart 2006.
2. ↑ Triolo, Rosalie: *Our Schools and the War*, North Melbourne 2012, p. 112; and Donson, Andrew: *Youth in the Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority in Germany 1914-1918*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2010, pp. 24-25, 47.
3. ↑ Nunn, David: *Britannia Calls: Nottingham Schools and the Push for Great War Victory*, Nottingham 2010, p. 39; Healy, Maureen: *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I*, New York 2004, p. 246; and Donson, *Fatherless Land* 2010, p. 129.
4. ↑ Goebel, *Schools* 2007, p. 194; Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*, Ithaca 2008, p. 89; and Nunn, *Nottingham Schools* 2010, pp. 105-6.
5. ↑ Albisetti, James: *The Feminization of Teaching in the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective*, in: *History of Education* 22 (1993), p. 255; and Donson, *Fatherless Land* 2010, pp. 123-36.
6. ↑ Albisetti, *Feminization of Teaching* 1993, pp. 255-57.
7. ↑ Audoin-Rouzeau, Stéphane: *La guerre des enfants 1914-1918: Essai d'histoire culturelle*, Paris 1993, pp. 162-64, 170; Audoin-Rouzeau, Stéphane: *Children and the Primary Schools of France*, in: Horne, John (ed.): *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, Cambridge 1997, p. 52; Triolo, *Our Schools* 2012, p. 45 and passim; Goebel, *Schools* 2007, pp. 194-96, 199; Nunn, *Schools* 2010, pp. 105-11; Healy, *Vienna* 2004, pp. 246; and Donson, *Fatherless Land* 2010, p. 132-35.
8. ↑ Pignot, Manon: *Allons Enfants de la Patrie: Génération Grande Guerre*, Paris 2012, pp. 74-78; Audoin-Rouzeau, *La guerre des enfants* 1993, pp. 157, 162-65; and Goebel, *Schools* 2007, p. 214.



9. ↑ Parker, David: Hertfordshire Children in War and Peace, 1914-1939, Hatfield 2007, pp. 85-95; Nunn, Schools 2010, pp. 44-45, 49-50; and Goebel, Schools 2007, p. 215.
10. ↑ Fisher, Susan: Boys and Girls in No Man's Land: Canadian Children and the First World War, Toronto 2011, pp. 31-50; and Triolo, Our Schools 2012, pp. 76-90.
11. ↑ Hämmerle, Christa (ed.): Kindheit im Ersten Weltkrieg: Damit es nicht verlorengelht, Wien 1993, pp. 273-94; Zahra, Kidnapped Souls 2008, p. 82; Healy, Vienna 2004, pp. 241-44; and Donson, Fatherless Land 2010, pp. 33-34, 108-24.
12. ↑ Fava, Andrea: War, "National Education" and the Italian Primary School, in: Horne, Mobilization in Europe 1997, pp. 53-59.<
13. ↑ Parker, Children in War 2007, pp. 72-83; Nunn, Schools 2010, pp. 60-62; and Goebel, Schools 2007, p. 202.
14. ↑ Spring, Joel: Images of American Life: A History of Ideological Management in Schools, Albany, New York 1992, p. 25.
15. ↑ Fisher, Canadian Children 2011, pp. 51-103.
16. ↑ Triolo, Our Schools 2012, p. 6.
17. ↑ Fischer, Canadian Children 2011, pp. 54-55, 58, 83-88; and Triolo, Our Schools 2012, pp. 14, 16, 27. On New Zealand schools, see Graham, Jeanine: Young New Zealanders and the Great War: Exploring the Impact and Legacy of the First World War, 1914-2014, in: Paedagogica Historica 44 (2008), pp. 429-44.
18. ↑ Siegel, Mona: The Moral Disarmament of France: Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1914-1940, New York 2004, pp. 28-48; Harp, Stephen: War's Eclipse of Primary Education in Alsace-Lorraine, 1914-1918, in: The Historian 57 (1995), pp. 489-503; Pignot, Allons enfants 2012, pp. 69-74; Audoin, La guerre des enfants 1993, pp. 24-37; Zahra, Kidnapped Souls 2008, p. 83; Healy, Vienna 2004, p. 245; and Donson, Fatherless Land 2010, pp. 67-70, 75-87, 181-88.
19. ↑ Audoin-Rouzeau, Stéphane: French Children as Target for Propaganda, in: Cecil Hugh / Liddle, Peter (eds.): Facing Armageddon, London 1998, p. 768; Siegel, Moral Disarmament 2004, pp. 29-30, 43.
20. ↑ Donson, Fatherless Land 2010, pp. 47, 67-70, 75-87.
21. ↑ Ibid., pp. 71-75, 226-27.
22. ↑ Sherington, George: English Education, Social Change, and War 1911-1920, Manchester 1981, pp. 126-54.
23. ↑ Jarausch, Konrad: German Students in the First World War, in: Central European History 17 (1984), pp. 310-18; and Thwing, Charles: The American Colleges and Universities in the Great War, 1914-1919, New York 1920, pp. 1-13.
24. ↑ Wettmann, Andrea: Beharrungsvermögen und Ansätze zur Modernisierung: Deutsche Universitäten im Ersten Weltkrieg, in: Maurer (ed.), Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer 2006, p. 30; Weber, Thomas: British Universities in the First World War, in: Maurer (ed.), Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer 2006, p. 75; Jarausch, German Students 1984, p. 318; and Fordham, Universities 2007, p. 241.
25. ↑ Jarausch, German Students 1984, p. 318; and Weber, British Universities 2006, p. 89.
26. ↑ Dmitriev, Alexandr: The State, the Universities, and the Reform of Higher Education in Russia during the First World War, in: Maurer (ed.), Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer 2006, p. 151; Fordham, Universities 2007, pp. 260-62; Wettmann, Beharrungsvermögen und Ansätze 2006, pp. 36-37; and Weber, British Universities 2006, pp. 87-89.
27. ↑ Fordham, Universities 2007, pp. 251-52; and Wettmann, Beharrungsvermögen und Ansätze 2006, pp. 32-33, 36.
28. ↑ Fordham, Universities 2007, pp. 245-50, 253; Jarausch, German Students 1984, pp. 323-24; Weber, British Universities 2006, pp. 80, 83; Wettmann, Beharrungsvermögen und Ansätze 2006, p. 37; and Thwing, American Colleges 1920, p. 81.
29. ↑ Busse, Detlef: Forschung im Krieg—Forschung durch den Krieg: Von der Instrumentalisierung militärischer Interessen für die Errichtung der Göttinger Modellversuchanstalt, in: Maurer (ed.), Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer 2006, pp. 283-96; Fordham, Universities 2007, pp. 252, 257; and Weber, British Universities 2006, p. 82.
30. ↑ Rostovcev, Evgenij: The Capital University in a Time of War: Saint Petersburg/Petrograd 1914-1917, in: Maurer (ed.), Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer 2006, p. 183; Fordham, Universities 2007, pp. 257-58; and Jarausch, Students 1984, p. 322.
31. ↑ Gruber, Carol: World War I and the Uses of Higher Learning in America, Baton Rouge, 1975, pp. 95-102, 212-52; and Thwing, American Colleges 1920, pp. 55-84.
32. ↑ Wang, Zuoyue: The First World War, Academic Science, and the Two Cultures: Educational Reforms at the University of Cambridge, in: Minerva 33 (1995), pp. 107-27; Fordham, Universities 2007, pp. 270; Wettmann, Beharrungsvermögen und Ansätze 2006, 33; and Weber, British Universities 2007, 86-87.
33. ↑ Andreev, Andrej: Die gespaltene Universität: Die Moskauer Gelehrten 1911-1917, in: Maurer (ed.), Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer 2006, p. 173; Fordham, Universities, 2006, 270-75; Busse, Forschung im Krieg 2006; Dmitriev, Higher Education in Russia 2006, p. 150; and Thwing, American Colleges 1920, pp. 115-39; Wang, Zuoyue: The First World War, Academic Science, and the Two Cultures. Educational Reforms at the University of Cambridge, Minerva 33 (1995), pp. 107-27.
34. ↑ Schwabe, Klaus: Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral: Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des ersten Weltkrieges, Göttingen 1969; Wallace, Stuart: War and the Image of Germany: British Academics, 1914-1918, Edinburgh 1988; Rostovcev, The Capital University 2006, pp. 179-83; Weber, British Universities 2006, pp. 80-82, 84; and Gruber, Higher Learning 1975, pp. 118-62; and the following papers, (all in: Maurer (ed.), Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer 2006): Demm, Eberhard: Rußland im Visier deutscher Gelehrtenpolitik des Ersten Weltkriegs, pp. 297-310; Dmitriev, Aleksandr: Changes in the International Outlook of the Russian Academic Community during and after World War I, pp. 341-349; Maurer, Trude: Universitäts militans: Von der Militarisierung der deutschen Universität im späten Kaiserreich zur Rechtfertigung des Militarismus im Ersten Weltkrieg, pp. 67-73; and Andreev, Die gespaltene Universität, pp. 170-72.

35. ↑ Siebe, Daniela: "Nattern am Busen der Alma mater": Ausländische Studierende an deutsche Universitäten 1914-1918, in: Maurer (ed.), *Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer* 2006, pp. 46; Andreev, *Die Moskauer Gelehrten* 2006; p. 170; Rostovcev, *The Capital University* 2006, p. 180; and Fordham, *Universities* 2007, pp. 262, 269.
36. ↑ Cain, Timothy Reese: "Silence and Cowardice" at the University of Michigan. *World War I and the Pursuit of Un-American Faculty*, in: *History of Education Quarterly* 51 (2011), pp. 296-329; and Gruber, *Higher Learning* 1975, pp. 163-212.
37. ↑ Fordham, *Universities* 2007, 262-69; Siebe, *Ausländische Studierende* 2006, pp. 41-42, 46-47; Dmitriev, *Russian Academic Community* 2006, pp. 344-46; Weber, *British Universities* 2006, p. 84; and Rostovcev, *The Capital University* 2006, p. 182.
38. ↑ Stempin, Arkadisz: *Die Wiedererrichtung einer polnischen Universität: Warschau unter deutscher Besatzung*, in: Maurer (ed.), *Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer* 2006, pp. 147-58.
39. ↑ Condetto, François: "In deutscher Hand:" *Die Universität Lille unter deutscher Besatzung*, in: Maurer (ed.), *Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer* 2006, pp. 107-26; and Fordham, *Universities* 2007, pp. 265-66.
40. ↑ Koon, Tracy: *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943*, Chapel Hill 1985; Petersen, Jens: *Jugend und Jugendprotest im faschistischen Italien*, in: Dieter Dowe (ed.): *Jugendprotest und Generationskonflikt in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert*, Bonn 1986; and Donson, *Fatherless Land* 2010, pp. 226, 236-41.

## Selected Bibliography

- Audoin-Rouzeau, Stéphane: **La guerre des enfants 1914-1918. Essai d'histoire culturelle**, Paris 1993: A. Colin.
- Donson, Andrew: **Youth in the fatherless land. War pedagogy, nationalism, and authority in Germany, 1914-1918** Cambridge 2010: Harvard University Press.
- Fava, Andrea: **'National education' and the Italian primary school**, in: Horne, John (ed.): *State, society, and mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, Cambridge; New York 1997: Cambridge University Press.
- Fisher, Susan: **Boys and girls in no man's land. English-Canadian children and the First World War** Toronto; Buffalo 2011: University of Toronto Press.
- Fordham, Elizabeth: **Universities**, in: Robert, Jean-Louis / Winter, Jay (eds.): *Capital cities at war. Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, volume 2, Cambridge 2007: Cambridge University Press, pp. 235–279.
- Goebel, Stefan: **Schools**, in: Winter, Jay / Robert, Jean-Louis (eds.): *Capital cities at war. Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919*, volume 2, Cambridge; New York 1997: Cambridge University Press.
- Gruber, Carol S.: **Mars and Minerva. World War I and the uses of the higher learning in America** Baton Rouge 1975: Louisiana State University Press.
- Healy, Maureen: **Vienna and the fall of the Habsburg Empire. Total war and everyday life in World War I** Cambridge 2004: Cambridge University Press.
- Jarausch, Konrad H.: **German students in the First World War**, in: *Central European History* 17/4, 1984, pp. 310-329.
- Maurer, Trude (ed.): **Kollegen, Kommilitonen, Kämpfer. Europäische Universitäten im Ersten Weltkrieg** Stuttgart 2006: Steiner.
- Nunn, David: **Britannia calls. Nottingham schools and the push for Great War victory** Nottingham 2010: Knowle Hill Publishers.
- Parker, David: **Hertfordshire children in war and peace, 1914-1939**, Hatfield 2007: Hertfordshire Publications.
- Schwabe, Klaus: **Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral. Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des Ersten Weltkrieges**, Göttingen 1969: Musterschmidt-Verlag.
- Siegel, Mona L.: **The moral disarmament of France. Education, pacifism, and patriotism, 1914-1940**, Cambridge; New York 2004: Cambridge University Press.
- Thwing, Charles Franklin: **The American colleges and universities in the great war, 1914-1919. A history** New York 1920: The Macmillan Company.
- Triolo, Rosalie: **Our schools and the war**, North Melbourne 2012: Australian Scholarly Publishing.
- Wallace, Stuart: **War and the image of Germany. British academics, 1914-1918** Edinburgh 1988: J. Donald Publishers.
- Wettmann, Andrea: **Heimatfront Universität. Preussische Hochschulpolitik und die Universität Marburg im Ersten Weltkrieg**, Cologne 2000: SH-Verlag.

## Citation

Donson, Andrew: *Schools and Universities*, in: 1914-1918-online. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08. DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.10346.

## License

This text is licensed under: [CC by-NC-ND 3.0 Germany - Attribution, Non-commercial, No Derivative Works](#).