

of the Study of Sex Psychology (she was its first female member, joining a year after it was formed in 1913), the Women's Social and Political Union, and the Divorce Law Reform Union. Stella Browne took her interest in feminist and sexual questions to progressive leftist groups, too, such as the British Communist Party, the Fabian Society, the Labour Party and the Humanitarian League. In this way, through Stella Browne, Hall reveals the (often ignored) importance of sexual debates within the political landscape of the left in the early twentieth century—themes which were to become central to the configuration of later-twentieth-century progressive politics.

Stella Browne left no papers of her own and Hall's meticulous and exhaustive research brilliantly pieces together the details of her life from her scattered, sometimes anonymous, writings, and through the archival depositories of her correspondents, friends and fellow activists. This is biography, written by an archivist, in which, refreshingly, the documents that inform the analysis are debated and displayed. There are few imaginative reconstructions of events or attempts to fill in the gaps of our knowledge. Every piece of information about Stella Browne's life and thought is clearly linked to particular pieces of evidence, and the information driving the analysis is never hidden from the reader. We are led also through the holes in the archival sources. This is particularly the case with regard to the tantalising glimpses into Stella's unconventional love affairs available in the extant records. Hall is deeply respectful of Stella Browne's own care in concealing the identities of some of her relationships from the archival record, and does not pruriently seek to speculate on potential identities. Although there is thus much we still do not know about Stella Browne, this book places her firmly at the forefront of radical, left-wing politics during the twentieth century.

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*Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany, 1914–1920*, by Heather Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2011; pp. xv + 451. £65).

'To thee my thoughts and my tears forever.' This inscription from a grave of a French prisoner-of-war in Germany stands at the end of Heather Jones's book on violence against prisoners in the First World War. Although the human dimension and personal cost of captivity is not at the centre of her study, these words capture well the way in which those left behind suffered from the experiences that a large number of men (and some women) went through as prisoners-of-war and as forced labourers in the period between 1914 and 1920. This excellent and innovative transnational analysis of the experiences of prisoners-of-war in Britain, France and Germany shows how brutalisation and totalisation in this truly global conflict caused violence towards a category of belligerents that before 1914 had been considered well protected by the Hague regulations of 1907 and the Geneva Convention of 1906.

The author chooses a comparative approach, which she rightly considers highly suitable 'given that prisoners of war experienced the war in a conceptually hybrid, transnational way, located in a liminal cultural space between home state and captor nation' (p. 10). The book is divided into three

main parts dealing with propaganda representations of violence in the first half of the war, the issue of forced labour in 1917 and 1918 and the repatriation and remembrance at the end of the war and into the inter-war period. The author is always careful to differentiate between violence itself and its representation mainly in the form of wartime propaganda and she convincingly shows that, in the majority of cases, the latter was based on real incidents. Violence against prisoners-of-war was widespread and not just a media tale or an exaggeration. In turn the representation of violence had a significant impact on the expectations regarding the treatment of men in captivity, which again influenced the way a given country and its population treated the prisoners in their hands. By 1916, 'the image of the prisoner of war had become firmly associated with atrocity in the cultural representations' of all three countries (p. 123), prisoners-of-war themselves being partially responsible for this escalation by telling grim stories after successful escapes or an exchange.

The second part of the book concentrates on a field that has so far been neglected. After 1916, Britain and France, as well as Germany, all set up prisoner-of-war labour companies. Such units were established close to the front line with the purpose of strengthening the military capabilities of the powers concerned—although the Hague regulations, while allowing the use of labour by other-rank prisoners-of-war, forbade the use of prisoner-of-war labour for military purposes. An excellent example of this is given in the case of the battle of Verdun, the 'moral boulevard of France' as Philippe Pétain called it. There, under enemy fire, German prisoners were forced to build a track at Douaumont and Vaux in order to provide French soldiers with the necessary material and food to fight (pp. 144–50). The violence against prisoners-of-war close to the front line also changed cultural perceptions of what constituted acceptable forms of violence against prisoners-of-war who were, most of the time, considered expendable. The form of violence differed, however, from country to country and there was no linear process of continued escalation in this context (pp. 161–6). 1918 saw a massive deterioration on the German side not least due to fact that the Reich's drained resources made it seem all the more necessary to use the labour of prisoners-of-war as efficiently as possible for the war effort, while it was less and less possible to feed them according to their needs. Violence became ever more common to force the prisoners to do the work they were assigned. On the side of the *Entente*, things were not as bad—not least due to the fact that they did not take as many prisoners as did the Germans and did not suffer in the same way from a drain of resources. Nevertheless, food rations were curtailed due to the Berne accord of 1918. At the end of the war, retribution became the major catchword for the *Entente*, with calls being made to punish German perpetrators as war criminals. A few cases were finally tried at Leipzig, but the punishment meted out was considered too light by the majority of the population in France and Britain.

The last part of the book is concerned with the post-war repatriation problems and remembrance in the inter-war period. Jones shows how the victorious *Entente* powers kept many German prisoners-of-war in order to clean up the battlefields and to reconstruct parts of the country ravaged by the war. The German public reacted angrily, not least because it was not informed about the violence used against *Entente* prisoners in Germany in the last year of the war. The repatriation of *Entente* prisoners-of-war in Germany was not well organised and many suffered from lack of food. This was partially also

due to the fact that the delivery of parcels almost broke down as a consequence of the revolution in Germany itself. In her last chapter Jones shows how the idea of reconciliation, which dominated the second half of the 1920s, finally brought the call for retribution to an end, but also made the remembrance of the violence against prisoners-of-war disappear almost completely from public memory. In Germany, violence against prisoners-of-war was remembered for much longer than in France or Britain because it was instrumentalised in order to combat the post-war order. Finally, in the Second World War the experience of 1914–18 served primarily as a logistical model rather than an ideological one. Hopefully Jones's study of the First World War will stimulate more research in this field, too.

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*Caught in the Middle: Neutrals, Neutrality and the First World War*, ed. Johan den Hertog and Samuël Kruizinga (Amsterdam: Amsterdam U.P., 2011; pp. 175. \$32.50).

It is a reflection of the apparent dearth of scholarship on the history of neutrality in the First World War that this fine collection of essays—and the 2009 conference which gave rise to them—take as their point of departure a thesis developed nearly half a century ago. Nils Ørvik's *The Decline of Neutrality 1914–1941*, published in 1953 and updated in 1971, has certainly weathered the test of time. Its central proposition—that the law-based neutrality regime embodied in the Hague conventions of 1899 and 1907 was progressively eroded over the first half of the twentieth century—has a powerful logic. With war ever more 'total', and national economies increasingly interdependent, belligerents were progressively less willing to respect traditional neutral rights, especially the requirement that neutrals be allowed to trade with all parties to a conflict. Post-war internationalism—whether of a Wilsonian or Soviet hue—cast doubt on the continued relevance of neutrality, long before Hitler and Mussolini entered the stage and plunged Europe into a second war in thirty years.

The basic contours of Ørvik's thesis are difficult to refute, and while this book's editors, Johan den Hertog and Samuël Kruizinga, stress the need to take a multifaceted and multinational approach to the subject, some of their papers add nuance to Ørvik's argument, rather than contradict it. Louis Clerc's study of French attitudes towards the northern neutrals before 1940 shows French policy-makers little moved by legal notions of neutrality. Kruizinga's essay on the Netherlands Overseas Trust Company (NOT), Philip Dehne's paper on Argentine resistance to British 'black-listing' operations and den Hertog's exploration of Dutch neutrality, all give ample evidence of the economic pressures operating on neutral states during the war.

Nevertheless, the picture that emerges from the collection is not one of a precipitous 'decline' in law-based conceptions of neutrality. Rather, the papers show how 'decline' was frequently interrupted, slowed or even reversed. The Netherlands' use of a private trust company to mediate between the interests of the state and the demands of the belligerents was, on the whole, remarkably