"WHEN THE WAR IS OVER / WE'LL DAMN WELL MARCH NO MORE": WORKING-CLASS PATRIOTISM IN THE ERA OF THE GREAT WAR

by

Robert Lawrence Nelson

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Name: Robert Lawrence Nelson

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Examining Committee:

Chair: Dr. Jack Little

Dr. Ian Dyck
Senior Supervisor
Associate Professor of History

Dr. Martin Kitchen
Professor of History

Dr. Paul Delany
External Examiner
Professor of English
Simon Fraser University

Date Approved: 23 Sept 97

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"When the war is over / we'll damn well march no more": Working-Class Patriotism in the Era of the Great War

Author:__
(signature)

Robert Nelson
(name)

9-23-97
(date)

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to measure and analyze the degree of patriotism within the British working classes at the beginning of this century, particularly at the time of the outbreak of the Great War. This involves a detailed analysis of patriotic music hall songs as well as of the context within which they were written, performed and received. The influence of patriotism in German working-class culture is then explored (primarily through an investigation into the cultural milieu of both the Army and the Socialist Party) in order to see whether the German example parallels, or in some way helps to explain, the British one. Finally, the songs of the troops on the Western Front in 1914-1918 are analyzed in order to gauge the effect of the trench experience upon the patriotic and national identities of the working-class soldier.

This investigation is intended to add to the growing body of work which encompasses what is sometimes called the "New Military History" or Military Social History -- it is an attempt to write a "history from below" which describes the ordinary soldier, his beliefs, and, most importantly for this thesis, his cultural background. It is in this context that an attempt is made to answer the question that many volunteer soldiers surely asked of themselves: "Why did I join the Army? Why am I here?"

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PREFACE

A bearded man with an English accent, reading from a large important-looking book, in the opening minutes of my weekly adolescent dose of BBC's *World at War*, was my first introduction into what has become a long and deep interest in military history. In the third year of my B.A., Dr. Ian Dyck introduced me to a second, and equal passion – that of social history. I enjoyed both areas, but naively assumed 'never the twain shall meet'. An Epiphany occurred when I stumbled across John Keegan's *A History of Warfare* in the Autumn of 1993 while unambitiously perusing the lower floor of Duthie's Books. I was filled with inexplicable joy to see that someone much more perspicacious than I had decided (years earlier in fact, as I would find out with Keegan's *The Face of Battle* [1976]) to merge military and social history into something called 'The New Military History', and alas, it is here that I have found a resting place. It is somewhat fitting, regarding this personal story, that the two men to supervise this thesis were Dr. Ian Dyck, and that gentleman I used to watch on the Knowledge Network, Professor Martin Kitchen.

In a recent article, military historian Ian Beckett welcomes the recent scholarship which has begun to question the "Popular Image of the Western Front, 1914-1918" as portrayed in the many studies of war poetry and prose, most famously in Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975). The war poets were most often middle-class officers, and while it is recognized that the 'high'-'low' divide in culture is often very blurry, it should not be assumed that the words of these men properly

represent the attitudes of the typical, working-class Tommy.[1] A major step was thus taken with J.G. Fuller's *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (1990), where, through an examination of trench journals, printed by and for soldiers just behind the front lines (and often escaping the eyes of the censor), the continuities and discontinuities between home front and trench are analyzed. Fuller found that one cannot speak of a wholly autonomous 'trench culture', as many codes, languages, and institutions were transported from the homeland to the front where they continued in traditional and popular forms. One institution discussed by Fuller is British music hall, and the singing of many music hall melodies behind the lines by soldiers.[2] Music hall had been an earlier interest of mine, especially through a previous engagement with the work of Penny Summerfield on the presence of patriotism in music hall song prior to 1914.[3] My idea to join these two areas of interest occurred by chance while reading Christopher Pulling's 1952 history of music hall song *They Were Singing: And What They Sang About*, where he alludes to

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[1] I. Beckett, "The Military Historian and the Popular Image of the Western Front, 1914-1918," *The Historian* 53, (Spring 1997): 11-14; P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

[2] J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), chs. 1, 7, 9. Trench journals had first been analyzed in the seminal work of Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau in his *14-18 Les Combattants des tranchées* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1986).

[3] P. Summerfield, "The Effingham Arms and the Empire: Deliberate Selection in the Evolution of Music Hall in London," in *Popular Culture and Class Conflict, 1590-1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure*, eds. E. Yeo and S. Yeo (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1981), 209-240; P. Summerfield, "Patriotism and Empire: Music-Hall Entertainment, 1870-1914," in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. J.M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 17-48.

the known parodying of jingoistic songs by soldiers once they found themselves in the trenches, paying the price of their patriotism.[4]

Thus began the research which has resulted in this thesis, and its observations concerning the nature and manifestations of patriotism among the working classes of Britain, and, for comparative purposes, Germany. It is important to note that, while conducting my research into the songs sung both in the pre-war music hall and by the soldiers on the Western Front, I began to notice patterns which were reflected in another interest of mine, namely the theories of that most famous (and once again popular) Italian, Antonio Gramsci. The reader has thus been forewarned, and will hopefully forgive my periodic lapse into the jargon of 'hegemony'. It seems to me, though, that some of Gramsci's ideas assist us to understand the soldier's world.

Finally, many a 'thank-you', 'merci', and 'vielen Dank' are necessary to acknowledge the many men and women who helped complete this project, as well as maintain my motivation. I cannot imagine that there is a student at Simon Fraser University who receives finer treatment than that which I enjoy from the staff of the History Department: Mary Ann Pope, Joan MacDonald, Maylene Leong, Roxanne Jantzi, and one who has helped from the earliest days of my association with SFU, Joanna Koczwarski. The staffs of the SFU, University of British Columbia, and Vancouver Public Libraries have always been extremely helpful, and in a wonderful example that the material I studied was 'of the people', and not the 'official', 'important' documents found only in the archives of élitist

[4]C. Pulling, *They Were Singing: And What They Sang About* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1952), 77-86.

institutions, I would like to applaud the staff of the Kitsilano Public Library for possessing the only copy in Vancouver (to my knowledge) of a very important collection of music hall songs by Peter Davison.[5]

Ryan Parsons provided innumerable hours of editing, as well as an important sounding board for many ideas. I am sure that having Ian Dyck and Martin Kitchen as a supervisory committee elicits much envy from my fellow graduate students, and it is well-deserved as these two mentors have provided much-needed advice, encouragement, and constructive criticism at every stage of this project. And a most heartfelt thank-you goes out to my city of Vancouver, for providing the perfect setting in which to spend a summer of concentrated writing; a conducive climate (where the sun was hidden often enough to keep me at the computer), several fine cafés (with espressos strong enough to maintain motivation), English Bay Beach (to replenish the Vitamin D sapped by the radiation emitting from the screen of my Macintosh), and a motley crew of friends who constantly (and successfully) endeavoured to keep me happily in contact with the 'real world'.

[5]P. Davison, *Songs of the British Music Hall* (New York: Oak pub., 1971).

CHAPTER ONE

PATRIOTISM

Patriotic songs are a source of great discomfort for many historians. Why would the 'apathetic', yet 'class conscious', and notoriously unmilitaristic, working classes stoop so low as to sing the songs of their rulers? Perhaps they rarely, if ever, sang them and, if they did, they did not really 'believe' what they were singing. According to the evidence presented here, however, this is not the case. From the 1870s to the outbreak of the First World War the working classes of Great Britain sang "By Jingo" and a host of other patriotic ditties with the greatest gusto, and, as evidenced by their August 1914 charge to the recruiting stations, knew and believed exactly what they were singing. Through the analysis of song texts, as well as of the venue and frequency with which they were sung, it is the purpose of this thesis to attempt to further the investigation into the relationship between patriotism and the working classes, especially those working-class men who would go on to fight in the trenches of 1914-18.

This thesis can properly be called a work of the New Military History for it draws upon many historiographical traditions, including the social, cultural, military, and labour histories of Britain and Germany, as well as upon what the Germans refer to as *Alltagsgeschichte*, or the history of everyday life.[1] After some introductory remarks in this chapter I

[1]The relevant British and German historiography will be discussed in the chapters to follow.

will focus in chapter two on the history of the British music hall, with an analysis of the theme of patriotism in popular songs as it developed up to 1914. For comparative purposes, in the third chapter, the cultural milieu of militarism during the Second Empire in Germany will be investigated, with a focus once again on the role of patriotism in working-class songs. Finally, in chapter four, the themes of patriotism, militarism, and antimilitarism in the songs sung by front-line soldiers, both British and German, while on the march or in rest areas behind the trenches of 1914-18, will be studied in order to shed some light on the ways in which direct war experience altered the attitudes of these men who made the transition from the home front to the edge of No Man's Land. In this introductory chapter a brief history of the term 'patriotism' will be given, followed by an explanation of the relationship between the British working classes and patriotism or militarism in the period leading up to the Great War.[2] Theoretical approaches to this problem will also be discussed, followed by an exposition of the theory underlying my approach to the questions involved.

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Patria is Latin for family, closely associated with *pater*, or father, and until the thirteenth century, the term was not much more confusing than that. To speak of *patria* meant to describe a basic loyalty to the tangible aspects of local life, such as father, brother, and the community within which one lived. Augustus was *pater patriae*, and it is only with this direct link to the ultimate ruler of the local lord that 'patriotism' then had any sense of an

[2]German patriotism, as well as the relationship between the German working classes and the military, will be discussed in chapter 3.

impalpable dimension. When compared to our modern notion of the word this is indeed very straightforward. Throughout the Middle Ages a sense of abstraction began to affect the idea of *patria* with the commoner's extremely distant relationship to Rome, and, with the advent of the Crusades, the even more abstruse concept of the Holy Land. In his work *Patriotism*, J.H. Grainger invokes the helpful German term *Fernstenliebe*, or love of the remote, to describe this dimension of patriotism. With the rise of the idea of 'country', or *patria communis*, *Fernstenliebe* began to encompass not merely an obscure King, but far-off borders, as well as diverse ethnic groups and their different languages. With the advent of the state however the élites did not manage, at first, to usurp the term *patria* from its original earthy roots, and turn it into a tool which demanded absolute obedience to the King. On the contrary, in the eighteenth century thinkers such as Voltaire and Thomas Paine saw patriotism as a loyalty to natural rights, to a liberty which must be protected from the state and its absolutism. Just as in a (perhaps idealistically conceived) Roman community where sovereignty lay with the citizens, so too was patriotism conceived in the late eighteenth century, and was thus somewhat republican in character.[3]

It is at this point that Hugh Cunningham, in his seminal essay "The Language of Patriotism", picks up the story and has us begin the nineteenth century with a veritable plethora of political patriotisms. In addition to the above-mentioned 'anti-state' definition, which was of course interpreted in a variety of different ways by different groups according to

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[3]J.H. Grainger, *Patriotisms: Britain, 1900-1939* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), ch. 1.

their own anti-state agenda, the British state itself had managed, by the late 1790s, to adopt its own form of patriotism, namely an anti-French alliance which it was hoped would gloss over the class antagonism apparent in anti-state patriotism. It is due to the confusion of this period, which extended into the 1870s, that led to such historiographical predicaments as that encountered by Edmé Wingfield-Stratford, who when writing his *History of English Patriotism* in 1913, apparently said that he did not know who to leave out![4]

This array of definitions finally began to narrow in the years between the Crimean War and the Russophobia of 1877-78. With the fragmentation and consequent weakening of the internationalist, anti-state 'radical patriots', the Conservative definition of patriotism, namely the cross-class allegiance to the state and its élite rulers, definitely took hold. Patriotism from that date on and right up to the present, no longer involves the alliance of the working classes to a *section* of the state, but rather to the state as a whole. In the words of Cunningham, this "was seen as a way both of reducing class conflict and of facilitating the imposition of greater demands on the citizen by the state. Patriotism, that is, became a key component of the ideological apparatus of the imperialist state."[5]

'Greater demands on the citizen' were a direct result of such disasters as the Crimean War, which forced the British Army constantly to assess the viability and strength of its combat forces, and, more importantly, the increasing demand upon the British Army and Navy

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[4]H. Cunningham, "The Language of Patriotism," in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*: Volume 1: *History and Politics*, ed. R. Samuel (London: Routledge, 1989), 50-76; Grainger, 20.

[5]Cunningham, 75-77.

with the rise of the new imperialism in the 1870s. The need was great for the state to instil such a sense of loyalty in its young men that when the call to arms came there would be no hesitancy among the great masses. But what of these 'young men'? Were the lower classes indeed patriotic, and if so, why were they so, and what led them to go to war and offer their lives for 'King and Country'?

If one were to ignore the 'spirit' and events of 1914 as a pure aberration of working-class behaviour, it might appear *prima facie* that the following blanket statement made by Richard Hoggart was above reproach: "Working-class people are not, we know, particularly patriotic: they have streaks of insularity, of Francophobia and Americaniphobia; but if put to the question they will soon say that working-class people are the same the world over. They remain confirmed anti-militarists."[6] *At times* this is unquestionably true, but not always, for patriotism among the working classes is one of the most tangible examples of 'contradictory consciousness',[7] and it is most interesting that a working-class contemporary of Hoggart's, Robert Roberts, should recall a childhood surrounded by propagandistic school lessons and boys' literature, which were so effective as to lead him to claim that "[o]nce instructed, ... the indigent [undermass] remained staunchly patriotic. 'They didn't know', it was said, 'whether trade was good for the Empire, or the Empire was good for trade, but they knew the Empire was theirs and they were going to

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[6]R. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments* (London: Penguin, 1957), 110.

[7]This concept will be defined below in the discussion of 'hegemony theory'.

support it.'"[8] Furthermore, as will be investigated below, this pro-imperialistic milieu included the jingoistic songs of music hall, which, from the beginnings of the new imperialism in the 1870s to the eve of the Great War, were belted out with vim and vigour by the so-called 'anti-patriotic' working classes.

The working-class attitude toward soldiering, however, was sufficiently negative to provide a modest counterbalance to patriotism in August 1914, or at least to the extent that some qualification is necessary to A.J.P. Taylor's description of this period as having seen "the greatest surge of willing patriotism ever recorded".[9] Becoming a soldier had long been frowned upon by the working classes as the lowest of all occupations, and nothing could be worse for the reputation of lower-class parents than to have their daughter run off with a Tommy. While this prejudice was, for the most part, lifted in the years 1914-18, it was powerful enough to check the enthusiasm of the lower orders to the extent that Roberts can claim, in opposition to the 'Spirit of August' legend, that there was "no great burst of patriotic fervour among us".[10] Denis Winter agrees that "there was no great rush," and that "the patriotic exaggerations of the press, together with the lack of facilities for processing recruits, had made the influx of the first two months seem greater than it was." The recruiting statistics

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[8]R. Roberts, *The Classic Slum* (London: Penguin, 1971), 142-144. See also P.A. Dunae, "Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914," *Victorian Studies* 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1980): 105-121.

[9]Quoted in M. Brown, *Tommy Goes to War* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1978), 17.

[10]Roberts, 186.

released by the government in 1923 indeed support these claims of overexaggeration.[11]

Manifestations of patriotism could nonetheless be seen in other important ways as well, perhaps most significantly with the acceptance of a *Burgfrieden*, the halt to all class conflict while the nation was at war. The four-year period leading up to 1914 saw the most serious labour unrest in Britain since the 1840s, and the feasibility of a paralysing general strike in the summer of 1914 was extremely high. Almost immediately however all anti-industrial activity ceased, trade unions gave their support for the national crusade, industrial truculence was considered traitorous to fellow working-class men fighting in France, and the "collective refusal even to discuss the war was evident at the November 1915 conference of the London Labour Party, where the Chairman refused to allow the following mild resolution to be placed on the Agenda: 'That the Government has no right to demand sacrifices of the people without explaining the object to them, and calls upon the Government to say what are the terms of peace which it would accept.'"[12] What had the working classes to gain from such obeisance?

The tone of this last question indicates some of the biases informing this thesis. In the debate between "Why patriotism?" and "Why not patriotism?", it is here argued that the former question is more legitimate, for the cumulative pros and cons behind a factory worker's marching off to Belgium to be pointlessly mowed down while walking across No Man's

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[11]D. Winter, *Death's Men: Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Allen Lane, 1978), 27. These figures show that the first big numbers did not appear until after the news of the defeats at Ypres and Loos.

[12]B. Waites, *A Class Society at War: England, 1914-18* (New York: Berg, 1987),184-193.

Land are adjudged to be heavily weighted by the cons. If the average working man had been able to escape the pervasive propaganda of his environment, and truly see what it meant to join the army, as well as clearly understand for whom and what he was fighting for, many (and I believe the great majority) would have seen through the lies and opposed the war *en masse*. Yet, as this thesis does not intend to argue from a uniformly economistic, top-down model of society, it is important to develop a theoretical approach which encompasses the 'use' of patriotism by both the ruling élites, as well as of the soldiers who fought. We can begin with Leonard W. Doob's important and influential work of 1964, *Patriotism and Nationalism: Their Psychological Foundations*, where he provides us with the following definition of patriotism: "the more or less conscious conviction of a person that his own welfare and that of the significant group to which he belongs are dependent upon the preservation or expansion (or both) of the power and culture of his society". He describes how one's personal welfare becomes connected with the nation as a whole and that this is accomplished through a lifelong process of 'socialization', involving everything from national holidays to learning about the greatness of one's country, along with the unthinking recitation of the national anthem, while in school. Such a process is inescapable in modern society and results in deeply ingrained psychological 'codes' to which one will automatically turn in times of crisis.[13]

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[13]L.W. Doob, *Patriotism and Nationalism: Their Psychological Foundations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 6-43, 130-148. See especially, 250-261, for Doob's very interesting discussion of the role of the enemy in patriotism. He argues that an 'enemy' is the *sine qua non* of patriotism, for when soldiers realize that the so-called 'enemy' is not really their enemy at all, their sense of patriotism immediately fades. This theme will be explored further in chapter 4.

Two works of recent scholarship, by Peter Simkins and Krisztina Robert, while acknowledging that patriotism was universal, emphasize the use of patriotisms by the working classes. In *Kitchener's Army* (1988), Simkins discusses a patriotism in 1914 which "encompassed many subtle shades and nuances". When describing the various reasons why men would volunteer, including everything from bad working conditions in mining areas to the sense of peer pressure when groups of 'pals' joined up, he emphasizes the important role that patriotism played in each of these varied socio-economic factors, stressing that evidence suggests that the clear majority, despite these varied social determinants, were imbued with a "sense of duty and obligation" to serve their country. A similar argument made with regard to wartime women appears in Robert's article "Gender, Class, and Patriotism: Women's Paramilitary Units in First World War Britain" (1997). Robert attacks the recent trend among feminist historians to deny the existence of patriotism among women working in wartime Britain, showing the fallaciousness of this argument which tries to show that these women were strictly interested in gaining gender equality. Firstly, very few of these women had partaken in the pre-war suffrage movement. Secondly, this explanation does little to answer the question of the notoriously non-suffragette working-class women, and their involvement in munitions factories. A solely economic argument fails as well, as these women made less than they would have from their former or pre-war occupations. Instead, as is evidenced in the extensive testimonies researched by Robert, a very strong sense of "duty and obligation" existed among these women, and although it can be argued that they 'used' patriotism often to further their own ends, they were still operating under

the dominant codes which dictated the ultimate actions undertaken in their society.[14]

As has been hinted this thesis is partly informed by a theoretical approach which seeks to limit the degree of agency functioning in late Victorian and Edwardian England. While recently there has been a shift away from strict determinism in the measurement of popular attitudes and behaviour, there is also a degree of unease with the granting of unlimited agency to the least powerful of history's actors. It seems as though condescension in historical writing is inescapable. For example, if we choose to avoid arguing that the social and economic conditions of Natives in Canada are due to the dominant White/Capitalist ideology, and that instead these people are heroically imbued with unlimited human agency, we are rightfully lambasted for believing that Natives are marginalized because *they want to be*. It is a disgust with such political irresponsibility, an anger with what is perceived to be the post-modern ease with which one can choose to be comfortably apolitical, that has led some authors, John Storey and Terry Eagleton among others, to turn 'back' (albeit with a more critical eye than before) to neo- or post-Marxist 'grand' theory. Of these, neo-Gramscian hegemony theory provides a model which, while making much allowance for a large degree of agency (something which can no longer be dismissed out of hand), nevertheless

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[14]P. Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914-1916* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 165-187; K. Robert, "Gender, Class, and Patriotism: Women's Paramilitary Units in First World War Britain," *The International History Review* 19, no. 1 (February 1997): 52-65. Robert dedicates most of her article to the role of middle-class women. For further discussion of the 'gray middle's use and negotiation of patriotism, see J.M. Osborne, "Defining Their Own Patriotism: British Volunteer Training Corps in the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, no. 1 (January 1988): 59-75; and R.N. Price, "Society, Status and Jingoism: The Social Roots of Lower Middle Class Patriotism, 1870-1900," in *The Lower Middle Class in Britain, 1870-1914*, ed. G. Crossick (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 89-112.

refuses to take the feet of those in control away from the fire. One could argue that there is no longer black and white, just a long continuum of gray, and Gramsci's theory, at least the way in which it is here portrayed, recognizes that there is no 'last instance' at which agency stops and determinism begins. With this destruction of certainty, yet strong allowance for political accountability, the title of a recent monograph seems very fitting: *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism*.[15]

Before moving on to Gramsci a word must be said concerning the three approaches just dismissed: Economism, Culturalism, and Postmodernism, and how each in its own way contributes to our discussion. Economism, 'hard', or 'structural' Marxism, has been in decline since the 1970s with the recognition that the superstructure, hence culture, is of great importance to the study of peoples, and that human agency must be a factor at some point in the development of the proletariat before the grand day of the Revolution. The name Louis Althusser is often related to this form of Marxism, though his theories concerning ideology and the 'site' of class struggle (i.e., in culture) is of great relevance to this thesis.[16] In opposition to the strict 'social control'

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[15]J. Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 118-124; For an interesting discussion, see "Conclusions: Political Criticism," in T. Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 194-217; R. Holub, *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1992). I would like to thank Ryan Parsons for many enlightening discussions concerning this 'long gray continuum'. See his very informative essay, "Disciplining and Punishing History: A Geneology of Poststructuralist History," European History Essay Prize Winner, Department of History, Simon Fraser University (December 1996).

[16]See L. Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, tran. B. Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127-186.

thesis proffered by the 'harder' Marxists of the 1970s, Gareth Stedman Jones put forth his now famous 'culture of consolation' theory, arguing that, as opposed to a late nineteenth-century proletariat which actually *believed* in the conservative, patriotic ideals they were espousing, the lower classes were merely apathetic, apolitical, and going through the proverbial 'motions'. This heroic attempt to dispel the despised 'false consciousness' attributed to the lower classes by 'social controllers' ultimately fails however, for in arguing that the workers acted conservatively merely due to "objective, non-political, social conditions", Stedman Jones' working classes are acting just like the structurally determined automatons he hopes to avoid. 'Passive acquiescence' as opposed to 'false consciousness' has not brought us any closer to the answer as to why, if we allow for a certain level of human agency, the lower classes are patriotic. This stems from Stedman Jones' inability as a socialist to allow agency if that agency is not used *properly*. Such behaviour conforms to what is termed by critics of Stedman Jones as the "conventional socialist adage: that non-socialist politics do not represent the socially given 'interests' of working people, and are therefore misguided if not 'false' responses to social experience". As will be seen from the arguments that follow, it is presented here that the answer lies somewhere between these two contrasting (yet ultimately similar) positions. Human agency is involved in a very real struggle concerning the meaning and use of the term(s) patriotism. To a certain degree patriotic feelings are in the interests of the working classes, such as the psychologically pleasing belief that one is indeed superior to others. But ultimately the highest and most deadly form of patriotism, that of warfare and the slaughter of thousands of working-class troops, is never in the

interests of the workers, and at this level becomes a 'false consciousness' brought about by the manipulations of the dominant ideology.[17]

Finally, postmodernism has and is developing concepts which cannot be ignored in this work. Jacques Derrida's 'instability of meaning', for example, has already been made apparent in our discussion of the word 'patriotism'. Terms and labels are not trans-historical, but one need not go to the Derridian extreme and, much to the chagrin of some poststructuralists, I am guilty of somewhat pinning down the 'meaning' of patriotism as a semi-fixed concept between 1870 and 1914. As I discuss hegemony theory one might be struck with its apparent similarities to discourse theories for both approaches involve discursive determinants, that is, certain limits to the way people use language and thought concerning the society in which they live. And of course the recent developments in Gender History are also extremely relevant with regard to the construction of masculinity and its relation to war.

Any exposition of neo-Gramscian theory inevitably involves use of the slippery term 'class'. An explanation of my use of the term is necessary, especially having just alluded to postmodernism, which has

[17]D. Mayfield and S. Thorne, "Social History and its Discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of Language," *Social History* 17 (1992): 170-173. See also R.N. Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working-Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War, 1899-1902* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), where Price argues that the main reason as to why working-class men signed up to fight in South Africa was due to high unemployment in Great Britain. Firstly, while this argument may be feasible for the numbers involved in 1900, it does not answer the question as to why two and a half million volunteered in 1914-15. Secondly, this argument is subject to the same critique as that given Stedman Jones, namely, that by denying any conscious sense of patriotism to the volunteers, Price is arguing that these men acted in what might be termed a 'patriotic fashion' due simply to economic and social determinants. For a rather unconvincing refutation of the 'facts' put forward by Price, see M.D. Blanch, "British Society and the War," in *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902*, ed. P. Warwick (London: Longman, 1980), 210-238. Additionally, it should be pointed out that this thesis is not arguing from the point of view of extreme pacifism, that it is *always* pointless to die, in *any* war. The focus here is merely on the Great War, and *patriotic* sacrifice.

launched a dizzying array of attacks upon this kind of group identification. One of the 'neo' aspects of neo-Gramscian theory is the recognition that the designation 'working class' is no longer as unproblematic as it was once thought to be. The diversity of the lower classes in society cannot be ignored, especially when gender, ethnicity, occupational and regional divisions are taken into account. For the purposes of this paper, however, one must make allowances for extremely broad categories within society, at least with regard to the idea of patriotism. While there is of course one long continuum (or continua), one finds at either end, with both extending somewhere into the middle, the 'haves', or 'top', and the 'have nots', or 'bottom'. Those at the top espouse, need, and constantly attempt to maintain, their ideology, which according to Gramsci is the 'dominant' one, and is here represented by the ruling classes, for whom it could be argued that patriotism furthered their own interests. The bottom is represented by the working classes who of course pay for patriotism with their blood. Among the grey mass between these two groups we have an entity termed the 'middle classes'. Regarding patriotism, they can truly be said to belong to both sides of this dichotomous equation, for although they could reap many of the benefits of patriotism it cannot be forgotten that they found themselves in the trenches of 1914 alongside the have nots.[18]

The complex relationship between the top and the bottom is clarified by Gramsci's theory of hegemony. Ultimately, the dominant ideology is the 'hegemonic', meaning that all actions and beliefs of the society as a whole

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[18]For an excellent overview of the sorry state of 'class' today, see P. Joyce, ed., *Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3-16. For a rather unsuccessful attempt to offer something in the place of class, an ill-defined 'populism', see P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

must move within, and are thus restricted to, the outer limits of this hegemonic ideology. For example, although the bottom may act unpatriotically in times of peace, namely, when such activity is not terribly insurrectionary or destabilising to the dominant ideology, when the call to arms is sounded in August 1914 such anti-patriotic feelings are quickly forgotten as everyone in society functions in accordance to the needs of the hegemonic ideology. This is not to imply however that there is a simplistic imposition of the will of the top upon the bottom, as cruder theories would attempt to argue. Rather there is an 'active consent' by the bottom, as opposed to the mere 'passive submission' alluded to by both the social controllers as well as the culturalists.[19]

'Hegemony', according to the Gramsci-specialist Roger Simon, "is the organisation of consent". When Gramsci speaks of consent, he refers "to a psychological state, involving some kind of acceptance – not necessarily explicit – of the socio-political order .... His conception of consent is purely descriptive, referring to an empirical, if not directly observable, fact," and in his discussion of Machiavelli's *Prince*, Gramsci likens society, with its dual perspective of force and consent, to the Greek Centaur, half animal and half human. Power is thus diffused throughout society and it is only by way of a constant state of 'negotiation' between top and bottom that the top is able to maintain its position of hegemony. Quite apart from the simple imposition of the dominant ideology upon the bottom, the hegemonic culture must undergo a constant change in order to create a 'universal culture' acceptable to the bottom. "A hegemonic class is one which succeeds in combining the interests of other classes, groups and

[19]R. Simon, *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982), 64.

movements with its own interest so as to create a national-popular collective will." In the case of patriotism in England, the power and prestige of Great Britain abroad was portrayed in such a way as to appeal to the have nots, for it allowed them to feel as though they belonged to something large and powerful, and thus gave them a sense of superiority they would have otherwise lacked. It is in this way that one encounters what Gramsci termed 'contradictory consciousness', namely that on one level a member of the lower classes can recognize that patriotism does not do him or her any good, yet simultaneously see it in a positiv light.[20]

In my investigation into working-class patriotism, I have chosen the area of working-class leisure, and more specifically, the songs sung by the workers, as a focus in order to see what can be learned about this phenomenon. This is attempted through an empirical search into the culture of the lower orders, as well as by the application of hegemony theory as a tool in order to help in understanding the place and impact of these songs in the lives of the workers. Through the use of the extensive secondary literature concerning the British working classes and their chosen venue of entertainment, namely the music hall, the evolution of this institution throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is described, as well as the audience composition and the circumstances under which the songs were written. Then, through an analysis of the actual song texts themselves (available today in many forms),[21] I trace the

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[20]Simon, 21-79; J.V. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 37-45. The role of Gramsci's 'organic intellectuals' will be discussed in chapter 3.

[21]My main sources for British music hall songs were the following: P. Davison, *Songs of the British Music Hall* (New York: Oak Pub., 1971); U. Schneider, *Die Londoner Music Hall und ihre Songs* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1984); C. Pulling, *They Were Singing: And What They Sang About* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1952); and C.

development and form of the patriotic songs sung by the British working classes, as well as study the music hall melodies repeated, or, as was often the case, parodied, along the trenches on the Western Front. An almost identical pattern of research was used in order to discuss the songs sung at home and on the front for the German working classes as well.[22]

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Althusser referred to all institutions as ideological state apparatuses, whether private or public, and it was in the institutions of culture that he observed the most contested 'site' of class struggle.[23] The importance of the effect of culture upon ideology has long been a source of debate, as will be seen in the discussion of British socialists, and even more importantly the debate among Social Democratic intellectuals in chapter three. In the following investigation it is obvious that culture is here accorded a rather high degree of importance as well, for the content of patriotic songs sung by the working classes are deemed to have been a contributing factor to the creation and continuation of an accepted ideology which declared that fighting and dying for one's country was of the highest importance. To make such claims, this study must rely heavily on the primary sources of popular culture – a precarious notion at the best of times. The following

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MacInnes, *'Sweet Saturday Night': Pop Song, 1840-1920* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1967).

[22]Main sources for German songs were: H. Strohbach, *Deutsches Volkslied in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980); I. Lammel, *Arbeitermusikkultur in Deutschland 1844-1945: Bilder und Dokumente* (Leipzig: Deutsche Verlag für Musik, 1984); V.L. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); and R. Olt, *Krieg und Sprache: Untersuchungen zu deutschen Soldatenliedern des Ersten Weltkriegs*, 2 Vols., in *Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie* (Giessen: Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, 1980-81).

[23]Althusser, 147.

'conclusions' can only be considered preliminary, and hesitant, without access to actual British and German archives, but it is hoped that some of the findings can open up new questions in an otherwise neglected field. Finally, I hope to follow Peter Burke in his retort to critics of popular cultural investigations: "all historical sources are indirect, and historians have to allow for this in their methodology."[24]

[24]Quoted in B. Scribner, "Is a History of Popular Culture Possible?" *History of European Ideas* 10, no. 2 (1989): 177.

CHAPTER TWO

BRITAIN

Patriotic music hall songs were an important aspect of the imperial propaganda permeating the world of the English working classes in the two generations leading up to World War One. An overview of nineteenth-century popular song reveals a change in the type of patriotism expounded in these songs, from a pre-1870 defensive nationalism to a later aggressive jingoism which paralleled the 'new imperialism' of the British Empire. We can see how the commercial evolution of the music hall affected the performance and composition of patriotic songs, as well as how this evolution allowed ever-increasing state intervention into the ideological content of the songs being sung. Through a close analysis of the 'New Patriotic Songs' one begins to see a negotiated discourse surrounding imperialism. On the one hand, this patriotism comes with a duty to serve the nation's leaders unquestioningly in time of war – a message reinforced through guilt of cowardice, as well as the threat to male masculinity brought about with the "All the Nice Girls Love a Sailor" genre of song appearing in force at the turn of the century. On the other hand, a situation beneficial to the working classes is created through racism and arrogance which elides inequalities in Great Britain by replacing them with the comfort that, at a world level, all Britons are head and shoulders above Fuzzy-Wuzzys and the Russian Bear. The dominance of this imperial discourse is evidenced by the limits of the many parodies of patriotic and military songs throughout this period. None of these send-

ups could truly be considered anti-patriotic, or in any way attacking the very foundations of jingoism. Instead, they exist as evidence of the ever-present counter-discourse of the lower orders, which, however empowering, is ultimately confined within the hegemonic ideology. Lastly, by placing *fin de siècle* music hall into the larger spectrum which included indoctrinating school lessons and militaristic organisations, it becomes apparent that the pervasiveness of patriotism disallowed even the leaders of the Left, the British socialists, from recognizing the destructive power of music hall ideologies.

Who in fact made the decisions concerning the content of what was sung is the main debate in the historiography of the music hall. One position is that of the culturalists who see a working class largely impervious to middle-class attempts to shape it, and who enjoy patriotic music-hall songs from their own, un-jingoistic 'frame of reference'. In contrast, one finds a school of 'social controllers' who see an emasculated working class completely dominated by the powers that be. All sides agree however that, around the beginning of the 1870s, a shift began to occur which saw the closing of working-class only venues of musical entertainment and, with the move of workers into 'socially-mixed' halls, the end of a somewhat different, more defensive and less jingoistic, patriotic song.

The serious historical and theoretical study of the music hall literally burst onto the academic stage in 1974 as a major aspect of Gareth Stedman Jones' seminal 'culture of consolation' thesis. He was the first to admit that the working classes acquiesced in jingoism and explains this as an apolitical apathy which pervaded the lower classes of the late Victorian

era. With the failure of Chartism and the resulting dearth of any substantive organisation or leadership to excite and channel the potential political power of the working classes, Stedman Jones argues that the workers chose to accept the throne and its accompanying jingoism as "a de facto recognition of the existing social order as the inevitable framework of action". If any political persuasion were to be assigned to this essentially apolitical culture, it would have to be conservatism, for the working classes had by now assumed that "there was no political solution to the class system. It was simply a fact of life. It was certainly not considered to be just, for as Billy Bennett sang, 'it's the rich what gets the pleasure, It's the poor what gets the blame'. But socialism was just a lot of hot air." Stedman Jones continues to use examples of how it was in fact the music hall, reacting to the desire of the working-class audience, that continually reinforced this *self-created*, *self-chosen* working-class position:

> The general music-hall attitude was that if a worker could get a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, that was a good thing, but if the worker could get a fair day's wage without doing a fair day's work, that was even better. The attitude towards the rich was similarly indulgent. The general depiction of the upper class was ... not hostile but comic.[1]

One year later, in 1975, an article by Laurence Senelick (ambiguous and poorly structured but significant for its questions[2]) fired the opening

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[1]G. Stedman Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class," in *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working-Class History, 1832-1982*, ed. G. Stedman Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 179-238. Important works obviously shaping Stedman Jones' approach to the music hall are: H. Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain* (London: MacMillan, 1968); and R.N. Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working-Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War, 1899-1902* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972). See my first chapter for a theoretical critique of Stedman Jones' culturalism.

[2]Penny Summerfield comments:

> [a]t one point [Senelick] suggests that music-hall politics grew into a 'creed' which explains 'why the downtrodden British working-class was so

volley in what would quickly become an all-out assault on the 'consolation school', arguing instead that the songs of music hall were deliberately selected by the ruling élites in a clear and conscious attempt to turn the working classes into a patriotic and politically-docile herd.[3] This line of argument was to achieve eloquence and academic weight when Penny Summerfield came on board, with articles in 1981 and 1986, the former focussing on aspects of licensing, the latter more specifically with the evolution of the patriotic song. She sees the songs of the 'new entertainment', beginning in the 1870s, as having been chosen through the intervention of two groups: firstly the licensing authorities and their moral crusade, and secondly the capitalist owners who chose music to appeal to all classes in the new, large, socially-mixed halls. Ultimately however Summerfield admits that, "of course such entertainment could not have been economically viable had it been entirely out of sympathy with the experience and demands of its audience. The selection had to be made from the cultural stock generated by the working class."[4]

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submissive and never rebelled'. At another he argues that music hall's political influence declined because 'it increasingly contributed to the formation of public opinion without drawing on the authentic attitudes of the public itself'. Referring to the nineteenth century, Senelick states that the growth of the 'creed' occurred 'over the course of decades' and that the decline of music hall's political influence happened 'as the century wore on'. But since the two opposite tendencies could not have occurred simultaneously, the argument only makes sense if Senelick is taken to mean that manipulation was successful in an earlier period and failed thereafter. This raises questions which Senelick does not address, concerning the feasibility of periodising music hall's influence and the possible causes of change.

In P. Summerfield, "Patriotism and Empire: Music-Hall Entertainment, 1870-1914," in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. J.M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 19.

[3]L. Senelick, "Politics as Entertainment: Victorian Music Hall Songs," *Victorian Studies* 19, no. 2 (December 1975): 155-156.

[4]P. Summerfield, "The Effingham Arms and the Empire: Deliberate Selection in the Evolution of Music Hall in London," in *Popular Culture and Class Conflict, 1590-1914:*

This contribution from the lower orders is emphasized in the work of John M. MacKenzie and Peter Bailey. Although clearly not culturalists, these authors take a path more akin to the Gramscian model of negotiation.[5] Additionally, MacKenzie does not see such a radical break in the development of the patriotic song, agreeing instead with less theoretical writers, like Peter Davison, that headstrong militarism has a long history among the lower orders.[6]

The influence of all these authors will be seen below as we move from historiography to an overview of the actual history of the music halls. This history involves three parallel developments: licensing, the evolution of capitalism in the entertainment industry, and the rise of the 'new imperialism' on the world stage. The first two aspects will be discussed somewhat separately, and then all three strands will be brought together when the story reaches the 1880s.

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Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure, eds. E. Yeo and S. Yeo (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1981), *passim* (citation, 237); Summerfield, "Patriotism," *passim*.

[5]P. Bailey, "Custom, Capital and Culture in the Victorian Music Hall," in *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. R.D. Storch (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 180-208; idem., "Introduction: Making Sense of Music Hall," in *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure*, ed. P. Bailey (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1986); idem., "Conspiracies of Meaning: Music Hall and the Knowingness of Popular Culture," *Past and Present* 144 (August 1994): 138-170; J.M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). MacKenzie's description of what he calls the 'image-making process' mirrors the 'process' involved in the negotiation between top and bottom in hegemony theory.

[6]P. Davison, "A Briton True? A Short Account of Patriotic Songs and Verse as Popular Entertainment," in *Literary Taste, Culture and Mass Communication*: Volume 8: *Theatre and Song*, eds. P. Davison, et al. (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey Ltd., 1978). For earlier, valuable texts, see C. Pulling, *They Were Singing: And What They Sang About* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1952), and C. MacInnes, *'Sweet Saturday Night': Pop Song, 1840-1920* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1967).

The peculiar legislative history which led to the late nineteenth-century genre known as music hall extends as far back as the 1660 declaration that only the two theatres under the Royal Patent, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, were allowed to perform theatrical plays. This tight control or effective censorship was continued with the Licensing Act of 1737, and it was only with the Theatre Act of 1843 that other theatres, having made a successful application to the Lord Chamberlain, could produce stage plays. In an important example of just how clearly the 'authorities' can manipulate the creation of art, it was during this period that a form of 'dumb' theatre was developed: in melodrama, the actors merely 'acted', avoiding dialogue in order to circumvent the prohibitive legislation. With the Disorderly Houses Act of 1751, a separate licence was required for those pubs which provided entertainment in addition to drink, and thus, by the 1790s, we see the birth of the grandfather of the music hall: the free-and-easy. With its liquor licence, its 'music and dancing' licence, the legal ban on its performing 'good' theatre, and its close rapport between audience and performer, all the elements of the later music hall were in existence.[7]

By the 1830s, the music business in the free-and-easies had become so popular that a separate room was often built beside the pub and used specifically for entertainment. Although the working-class audience did not yet have the available income to pay separately for music and alcohol, these 'song saloons' began to use tickets at the door, paid admittance being exchangeable for alcohol. It is difficult to say exactly how much the authorities feared such working-class establishments, with their average

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[7]Summerfield, "Effingham," 210-212.

seating of 350 and almost complete lack of censorship, but, by the late 1840s, there was a distinct and severe drop in the number of 'music and dancing' licences awarded to both new and previously licensed saloons. This may have had something to do with the 'class fear' surrounding 1848, for the numbers rose again in the 1850s. However, throughout the 1860s, licences for both saloons and pubs were refused in record numbers, and it is well-documented that the magistrates specifically attempted to reduce the concentration of pubs in working-class only areas. Concomitant with this trend was the embrace by the authorities of the socially-mixed music halls, catering to both the working and middle classes. First appearing in 1854 as something akin to a song saloon, the Canterbury Music Hall had a seating capacity of 1,500. 1861 saw the first purpose-built music hall, the Oxford, and the trend was fixed that would lead to the extinction of working-class only saloons.[8] This story of course involves much more than the mere shock troops of government legislation moulding popular culture all on their own. As we shall see, ballad-singing and the exciting intimacy of the song saloon fell victim to the 'profit motive' every bit as much as our latter day examples of Punk and Seattle Grunge.

Bailey is not overstating the case when he surmises that "there is an obvious analogy ... with the capitalist transformation of industrial manufacture: the caterer's conversion of the pub sing-song into modern show business can be likened to the shift from domestic to factory production, with the same organisational imperatives to economies of scale, division of labour and the specialisation of plant."[9] By 1850, the

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[8]Ibid., 212-220.

[9]Bailey, "Introduction," xv.

labouring classes found themselves with more and more spending power, to the degree that for the first time proprietors were able to charge a fee for entertainment alone, selling alcohol separately and in addition to this sum. In a recent article, "Moonlighting in the Music Hall: The Double Life of Charles Rice", Senelick, through a study of the amazingly rich diaries of this early music hall singer, is able to trace the ever-increasing professionalization of the music hall business and the effects this had on both the singer and the audience. Already in 1850, in what was still in many ways the 'pre-history' of the halls, Rice noted that he could no longer easily work in the British Museum by day and moonlight as a saloon singer by night, as the publicans were becoming more demanding of a professional-type of singer. In addition, the audiences were getting larger and the singer/audience interplay was being curtailed. Finally, in a classic example of the alienation of labour (and popular culture) from capital, the increasingly lucrative business of owning a tavern was creating a constant turnover of proprietors to the extent that the special relationship between publican and singer was quickly disappearing, and along with it the special drinks, food, and tips.[10]

These themes of alienation could be seen throughout the music hall world with the increased 'efficiency' of the capitalist proprietors. With the introduction of the 'turns system', where popular artistes would find themselves performing at many different halls throughout an evening, time on stage became ever more restrictive as allowance had to be made for several shows, as well as the matching up of performances with tram

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[10]L. Senelick, "Moonlighting in the Music Hall: The Double Life of Charles Rice," *Theatre Survey* 34, no. 2 (November 1993): 28-42.

schedules! Thus, through the 1860s we see the slow but sure separation of performer from his or her audience, with banter and encores being disapproved of by owners, due once again to their inefficiency. This rapport, so important to the culturalist interpretation that the audience *controlled* the performance, was further hampered by the darkening of the auditorium, leading one artiste to lament that, by the 1890s, singing in a music hall was like, "barking into a chasm".[11] Additionally, this seems to have curtailed an elaborate system of censorship among the working-class portion of music hall audiences. Bailey argues that if, for example, a singer was not conforming to a working-class 'appropriateness' by not singing in a sufficiently tongue-in-cheek manner when listing the great achievements of the upper classes, a group in the audience, the 'claqueurs', would show their disapproval by 'chirruping', or disrupting the act. An often successful attempt was thus made firstly to compel the stars of working-class background to keep in contact with their community, and secondly to remind them that their stardom did not result from mere fortune, but from audience appreciation. This *taxe populaire*, or 'moral economy', began to be defeated in the 1880s when proprietors, worried about 'inappropriate behaviour' and scheduling, had these 'gallery boys' removed from the halls.[12]

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[11]Summerfield, "Effingham," 227; Bailey, "Custom," 191-196; Bailey, "Knowingness," 157.

[12]Bailey, "Custom," 193-195. This could be very dangerous, as was the case in 1890 when a stage manager was beaten up and killed (193). We can see however, as late as 1897, in Marie Lloyd's comments, that there was still a limit to what the audience would put up with:

> You take the pit on a Saturday night or a Bank Holiday. You don't suppose they want Sunday School stuff do you? They want lively stuff with music they can learn quickly. Why, if I was to try and sing highly moral songs they would fire ginger beer bottles and beer mugs at me. They don't pay their sixpences and shillings at a Music Hall to hear the Salvation Army.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly concerning our analysis of patriotic songs, individual halls hired their own, professional, lower-middle-class songwriters, as compositions were copyrighted and belonged solely to whatever singer or music hall proprietor owned them. Earlier in the century, lower-class costers had composed the songs they sang, and thus gave a working-class message to the working-class audience. Now a coven of '*petit bourgeois* hacks', to use a label of Bailey's, were putting the words into the mouths of the largely working-class background 'stars' of the music hall. As a by-product of the copyrighting, all the 'popular' songs were owned and sung only by the biggest and most expensive stars. The inability of the working-class halls to compete with this 'star-system' was just one of many factors leading to their demise – a story to which we shall now turn.[13]

The forty years leading up to the First World War saw the heyday of music hall, and it is with this period we are most concerned. The recruits of 1914, as well as the parents who raised them, grew up surrounded by the songs of music hall, songs which transformed with the 'new' era and evolution of the halls. That 'new' era, beginning in the 1870s, and taking the world right into World War One, saw the 'new imperialism' of the colonial powers. The tone of patriotic songs in the working-class halls had been one of 'defensive nationalism', with the British bringing freedom to the world. Interestingly, this type of song, along with the working-class

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Quoted in Stedman Jones, 225. One can see how such behaviour is akin to the bread-rioting referred to by E.P. Thompson, in which the 'rabble' indicates its disapproval of pricing practices through a form of 'controlled force'. See what is probably the most oft-cited article in the history of historical journalism, E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present* 50 (1971): 76-136.

[13]Bailey, "Custom," 197; Bailey, "Knowingness," 141; Summerfield, "Effingham," 231.

establishments, disappeared, and were replaced by socially-mixed halls singing arrogant 'jingo' songs, with the rise of the new imperialism. The histories of licensing and capital converged in the 1880s to exaggerate this situation.

The Local Government Act of 1888 created the London County Council (LCC), a "'progressive' (liberal-radical)" group, which, according to Summerfield, was "committed to purging London of drink and moral corruption, which it diagnosed as chief causes of the social unrest of the 1880s".[14] This body had control of both the magistrates' licensing powers, as well as the right to administer the Building Regulations Act of 1878. It was this latter piece of legislation that the LCC used to completely purge the city of the remaining working-class song saloons, in the years 1889-91, for these smaller theatres could not afford the structural changes demanded by the council. While removing this strictly working-class voice from the field of mass entertainment, the LCC set up the Theatre and Music Hall Committee in March 1889, and began a vehement campaign to censor the message coming out of music hall songs. The power of this new group can be seen in the words of W.L. Emden, a theatre and music hall architect, while being interviewed by the special committee in 1892; "they practically forced the hand of the proprietor so that he must do what they ask, whether it is right or whether it is wrong, because he is told that if he does not, his licence will be taken away."[15]

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[14]Summerfield, "Effingham," 216. The Fabian Left in Great Britain was as committed to the idea of 'rational recreation' as the typical Liberal.

[15]Ibid., 216-218.

In a mass entertainment business, where investments in individual music halls had become extensive, this threat of losing a licence carried enormous weight. At the same committee meeting, Emden was asked whether, compared to a fine, "the loss of a licence (was) a much more serious thing to the owner of a theatre or a music hall?" He replied:

> Yes, of course, the licence in certain buildings would be worth to an owner anything from £10,000 to £40,000. Take a property like the Empire or the Tivoli, I do not suppose that the freehold without the licence would be worth within £40,000 of what it would be worth with the licence upon it; and of course there are many cases where the licence would certainly be worth £10,000 beyond what is the absolute value of the property.[16]

With such high stakes proprietors were taking no chances and were forced to implement a form of self-censorship. House rules were put in place warning artistes that obscenities, or any lyrics about politics (which weren't pro-Queen and Empire) would lead to personal fines and suspensions. Uniformed officers were hired to patrol the halls, curtailing chorus-singing by the audience, and attempting to uphold the new ban on any direct address of the audience. Patter was now much feared, as the written song lyrics, read over and approved a week in advance by the proprietors, did not contain such improvisational material. Music hall managers were angered by this situation, a sort of aesthetic Limbo: they were not allowed to let their entertainment to slip too 'low', while, simultaneously, due to the technicality that one may hold either a 'music and dancing' licence, or a 'serious theatre' allowance, but never both, the owners were legally banned from putting on anything considered 'high' entertainment.[17] Such a 'middle of the road' offering however perfectly

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[16]Quoted in Summerfield, "Effingham," 223.

[17]Ibid., 224-231; Bailey, "Custom," 196. Susan Pennybacker, while trying to portray a 'kinder, gentler' LCC, mainly by showing how much more extreme some middle-class

matched the large cross-section sitting in the music hall audience by the late nineteenth century, and it is upon this audience we will now focus.

While it can be shown that, prior to 1870, the working classes did have their own halls and their own brand of patriotism, Stedman Jones' argument that there was still a clear enough separation, in the 1890s, between predominantly working-class halls, which were not especially jingoistic, and socially-mixed halls, which catered to rabid bigots, simply does not hold up to the work done on audience composition. The lower orders made up the majority of audience members *everywhere*. While such halls in the West End, such as the Empire and the Alhambra, may have had a larger percentage of non-workers, statistics show that, until the 1890s, their numbers were never of any significance, and were thereafter always proportionally low. *All* the major music halls performed arrogant, jingo songs and, according to contemporary accounts and the sheer popularity of these halls, the working-class audiences loved to sing them.[18] When music hall became the chosen entertainment of the working-men's clubs by the late 1890s,[19] one cannot argue that these men and women sang the defensively nationalistic songs of forty years earlier. The music hall genre by this time was of one, uniform sort. The 'culture of

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zealots, such as Mrs. Ormiston Chant, were, agrees ultimately that this body was very influential when it came to deciding the type of material permitted to be sung. See her, "'It was not what she said, but the way she said it': The London County Council and the Music Halls," in *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure*, ed. P. Bailey (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1986), *passim*.

[18]Stedman Jones, 231-233; D. Höher, "The Composition of Music Hall Audiences, 1850-1900," in *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure*, ed. P. Bailey (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1986), *passim*. This important, and long-needed, article remains the Bible of Music Hall audience composition.

[19]MacKenzie, 61-62. MacKenzie effectively nullifies Price's earlier argument that, in the late 1890s, the working-men's clubs were pro-Boer discussion groups, impervious to jingoism. Price, *Imperial War*, ch. 2.

consolation' could not avoid being overwhelmed by, and participating in, a universal discourse of imperialism. In the words of MacKenzie: "many of these were middle-class interests, but even the majority of the working-class who were not swept up into choirs and bands could scarcely avoid hearing them proclaiming patriotic themes, encouraging military recruitment, and adding to royal and civic pageantry."[20] Having provided a brief history of nineteenth-century music hall, as well as framing the context within which songs were sung and controlled in the period 1870-1914, it is time to analyze the shift in the meaning of patriotic songs, as well as the actual messages found in the lyrics themselves.

According to Summerfield, until the rise of the new imperialism, there existed a specific working-class interpretation of patriotism which was extolled in the then still functioning working-class music halls. This brand of patriotism found its best expression in the form of melodrama, especially the nautical melodrama with its famous hero Jolly Jack Tar, the naval equivalent of Tommy Atkins. In these stories evil in general was attacked, not just a specific nationality. It was the mission of the British sailors to bring freedom and liberation to the people of the world, not simply to expect them, as colonials, to be happy under the hegemony of the Queen.[21]

These themes then lost their prevalance, and, meeting the same fate, honest and clear anti-war ballads, such as "Thirteen Pence-a Day", were not to achieve popularity again after mid-century:

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[20]MacKenzie, 58.

[21]Summerfield, "Patriotism," 31-33.

Come and be a soldier lads, march, march, away.
Don't you hear the fife and drum, march, march, away.
Come to the battlefield make the enemy to yield,
Come and lose your eyes and limbs, for thirteen pence a day.[22]

While MacKenzie agrees that such songs indeed disappeared, he dispels the notion that such thinking monopolized pre-1870 working-class music hall. Arguing that part of the problem encountered by earlier historians of the music hall was their ill-conceived decision to study this phenomenon in a vacuum, MacKenzie provides an impressive sweep of the entire theatrical industry throughout the nineteenth century, revealing a world of entertainment filled with many examples of aggressively patriotic plays and songs, from the 'serious' theatre to the music hall. Thus, while agreeing that there had been a different form of 'defensive' patriotism which disappeared with the new imperialism, he wants this conclusion qualified, as does Davison, with the acknowledgement that arrogantly patriotic tunes had earlier been sung by the working classes as well.[23]

Earlier working-class differences or not, what were the 'new patriotic songs' appearing in the 1870s which *everyone* now sang? A jingoistic sense of possessiveness, mixed in with a healthy dose of rabid anti-Russian sentiment, appeared as early as 1871 with such songs as "We've Swept the Seas before Boys". But it is with the Russo-Turkish crisis of 1878-79 that we see the first, and most famous, of these 'new' songs: "By Jingo", written by G.W. Hunt, performed by 'The Great Macdermott':

The "Dogs of War" are loose, and the rugged Russian Bear,

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[22]Ibid., 39-40.

[23]MacKenzie, 6-7, 39-66, 253-258. Davison points out that there are few traces of antimilitarism in early nineteenth-century folk songs. Davison, "Briton," 277.

Full bent on blood and robbery, has crawled out of his lair.
It seems a thrashing now and then will never help to tame
That brute, and so he's bent upon the "same old game."
The Lion did his best to find him some excuse
To crawl back to his den again; all efforts were no use.
He hunger'd for his victim, he's pleas'd when blood is shed,
But let us hope his crimes may all recoil on his own head.

We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men,
And got the money too.We've fought the Bear before, and while we're Britons true,
The Russians shall not have Constantinople.[24]

George Robey described the performance: "In evening dress with a vast expanse of white dickey and a de rigueur red silk handerkerchief, Macdermott would proceed to the footlights 'by a series of little hops, each hop emphasizing an expression of bulldog determination, [and] end with a threatening gesture on "Shall not have Constantinople."'"[25] The popularity was so great that patriotic song writers, such as Clement Scott, immediately borrowed its famous exclamation: his 1880 "True Blues, Stand to your Guns!" ends with the lines, "But in spite of deserters – on ocean and dry land / By Jingo! old England has stood to her guns."[26] There is no reason to dismiss the reports by middle-class commentators, such as Max Beerbohm and J.A. Hobson, that the working-class audience members, rather than stop their ears to such imperial rubbish, sang at the tops of their lungs with fire in their eyes. The fact is that Macdermott and his brand of song were explicitly used to attract an audience that we know was almost completely working-class.[27]

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[24]Pulling, 77. Due to its enormous popularity, lasting fame, and contribution to the English language of a new term, it is without question the most analyzed of jingo songs.

[25]Quoted in Senelick, "Politics," 169.

[26]P. Davison, *Songs of the British Music Hall* (New York: Oak Pub., 1971), 67.

[27]Senelick, "Politics," 171; Summerfield, "Patriotism," 17, 30-31.

It has been argued that one of the reasons the audience could afford to be so militaristic was the non-existence of universal conscription (hence there was no danger of actually being forced to fight the Russians), but this had been the case earlier as well.[28] More likely is an ever quicker transmission of news from abroad, resulting in more topical songs, as well as the recognition by the lower orders that Jolly Jack Tar and the defensive nationalism of an avuncular England simply no longer existed. Throughout the '80s and '90s, English arrogance in song waxed deeper, with favourites including "Soldiers of the Queen" (1881), "The Deathless Army" (1891), and reaching a zenith (or, perhaps, nadir) with 1897's "Sons of the Sea":

> Have you heard the talk of foreign pow'rs
> Building ships increasingly?
> Do you know they watch this isle of ours?
> Watch their chance unceasingly?
> Have you heard the millions they will spend
> Strengthening their fleets and why?
> They imagine they can break or bend
> The nation that has often made them fly.
> But one thing we possess, they forget, they forget
> The lads in blue they've met, often met, often met.
> Sons of the Sea! All British born!
> Sailing in ev'ry ocean. Laughing foes to scorn.
> They may build their ships, my lads,
> And they think they know the game,
> But they can't build boys of the bulldog breed
> Who made old England's name.[29]

After 20 years in ascendancy, this 'might is right' type patriotism, with its abstract notions of nation and 'breed', adopted aspects of the 'personal' stories, previously so popular in the working-class halls, as it

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[28]Senelick, "Politics," 172.

[29]Summerfield, "Patriotism," 36.

entered the period encompassing the Boer War to World War One. The first important example of this new and coercive admixture can be found in Kipling's "Absent-minded Beggar":

> When you've shouted "Rule Britannia" – when you've sung
> "God Save the Queen" –
> When you've finished killing Kruger with your mouth –
> Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine
> For a gentleman in kharki ordered South?
> He's an absent-minded beggar and his weaknesses are great –
> But we and Paul must take him as we find him –
> He is out on active service, wiping something off a slate –
> And he's left a lot o' little things behind him!
>
> Duke's son – cook's son – son of a hundred kings – –
> (Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay!)
> Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after their things?)
> Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay – pay – pay![30]

This song, which was intended to raise money for troops and their families, involves a stanza which pulls the heartstrings with its personal story of a poor 'beggar/bugger' who is forgotten by his compatriots, and frames it with a chorus pleading a type of *Burgfrieden*, with the implicit understanding that we all have a duty to perform in the name of the Queen. Notice the wording of a popular variant of the chorus:

> Cook's son – Duke's son – son of a belted Earl –
> Son of a Lambeth publican – it's all the same today!
> Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after the girl?)
> Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and – pay! pay! pay![31]

But perhaps the most important theme in this period, with its mixing of personal attributes and broader national aims, were those songs emphasizing the masculinity of the soldierly life. George Mosse has

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[30]U. Schneider, *Die Londoner Music Hall und ihre Songs 1850-1920* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1984), 214.

[31]Ibid., 215.

written extensively on the 'construction of masculinity' and its close association with nationalism and patriotism, as well as one of its most pure forms, that of the 'warrior'.[32] Society's expectations concerning the male warrior, and his role in the military, is discussed more extensively in its German context in chapter three, but its important manifestations in English song are clear as well. For it is both alarming and fascinating to find that in these last years leading up to the slaughter of 1914 there seemed to be an almost determined effort by music hall song to shatter the working-class notion that to be a soldier was the lowest of the low. The fascination stems from the manner in which this was attempted through, for lack of a better term, 'gender-pressure'. An early example dates from 1890, with "Tommy Atkins you're alright":

> Tommy Tommy with your heart so big and warm
> Don't he look a picture in his dandy uniform,
> Tommy Atkins all the girls are on your track,
> Tommy, Tommy you're the pride of Union Jack.[33]

This soldierly sex appeal, by the opening of the next century, was combined with the guarantee that "All the Nice Girls Love a Sailor" (sung by Hetty King). There was no subtlety whatsoever in Marie Lloyd's "Now You've Got the Khaki on":

> I do feel so proud of you, I do honour bright,
> I'm going to give you an extra cuddle to-night.
> I didn't think much of you, till you joined the army, John,
> But I do like you, cocky, now you've got your khaki on.[34]

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[32]See both G.L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); and, idem., *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[33]Summerfield, "Patriotism," 37.

[34]Senelick, "Politics," 176.

And a few months before August 1914, Gwendoline Brogden was singing, "But on Saturday I'm willing / If you'll only take the shilling / To make a man of every one of you".[35]

While making it clear that the music of the music hall enforced the ideas of patriotism and deference (note the line from the popular play *El Hyder*, "Next to my captain's life, my country's liberty shall be my trust"), MacKenzie makes a large allowance for the audience's personal 'use' of patriotism. A perfect example of this 'negotiation' occurs in the rampant racism which permeated the theatrical environment in the age of Empire. On the one hand, the provision of a common enemy, or 'other', provided a socially stabilizing cross-class sense of unity which pleased the ruling classes. On the other hand, the lower classes were overjoyed to have a 'nigger', someone to look down upon, which seems to be a psychological necessity universal among mankind.[36] This sentiment is best summed up in "It's the English-Speaking Race against the World":

> We're brothers of the self-same race
> Speakers of the self-same tongue,
> With the same brave hearts that feel no fears
> From fighting sires of a thousand years;
> Folks say, 'What will Britain do?
> Will she rest with banners furled?'
> No! No!! No!!!
> When we go to meet the foe,
> It's the English-speaking race against the world.[37]

In his article of 1994, "Conspiracies of Meaning: Music-Hall and the Knowingness of Popular Culture", Peter Bailey's concept of 'knowingness',

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[35]Pulling, 81.

[36]MacKenzie, ch. 2.

[37]Summerfield, "Patriotism," 29-30.

defined simply as "what everybody knows, but some know better than others," involves a 'conspiracy of meaning' evident in social interaction, which develops the idea of human agency within the larger hegemonic paradigm. In his discussion of comic singers in the music hall, Bailey argues that there exists a discourse, which he terms 'knowing', where the performer allows a certain portion of the audience, namely, those in the 'know', access to a deeper meaning which lies somewhere beneath the straightforward King's English which is being sung. One such method involves the use of 'catch phrases', the 'extra-textual', 'free-floating' sayings familiar only to those operating daily within the working-class milieu. Thus the lower-class members of an audience could understand a vague, unspecified irony behind a working-class singer's rendition of a strongly patriotic song. They were involved in a 'collusion' of sorts, and such inclusion flattered those participating, for it proved their cultural and social competence. In the ceaseless struggle for hegemony this hidden language provided a counterpoint to the 'language of respectability', namely that of the dominant classes. As regards our theory of hegemony, Bailey clearly points out that:

> Knowingness ... is not a direct refutation of these languages, to which it remains inescapably subordinate in the larger systems of society; it is rather a countervailing dialogue that sets experience against prescription, and lays claim to an independent competence in the business and enjoyment of living. There is a strong sense of self-deception ... [for] ... the counter-discourse of music-hall knowingness was limited to the infraction rather than the negation of the dominant power relationships and, as its echo of official idioms demonstrated, it was compromised between challenge and collaboration.[38]

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[38]Bailey, "Knowingness," 145-168. At the end of this long quote, Bailey notes, "(At times it comes close to Gramsci's disabling 'common sense'.)" (168). Roger Simon defines Gramsci's idea of 'common sense' as "the uncritical and largely unconscious way in which a person perceives the world, often confused and contradictory, and compounded of folklore, myths and popular experience". R. Simon, *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982), 25. Gramsci's 'good sense' is much closer to what is

The same is true of the important phenomenon of parody. The number of patriotic music hall parodies was legion, and they were very popular. While at first glance this seems to confirm the culturalist stance of an impervious working class laughing undaunted in the face of the dominant powers, a closer examination of the lyrics reveals a genre which, by the late nineteenth century, was clearly operating within a dominant discourse which did not allow for truly anti-war, anti-patriotic songs along the lines of the above-quoted "Thirteen Pence a Day". Davison points out that it is the very old English tradition of 'muticonsciousness',[39] the singing side by side of comic and pathetic, or in this case, serious and unserious, songs, which should tell us in the first place that there was nothing deemed abnormal by the audience when, after some burst of jingoism, Herbert Campbell should stumble onto the stage singing his famous parody of "By Jingo":

> Newspapers talk of Russian hate
> Of its ambition tell,
> Of course they want a war because
> It makes the papers sell.
> Let all the politicians
> Who desire to help the Turk
> Put on the uniform themselves
> And go and do the work.
>
> I don't want to fight
> I'll be slaughtered if I do,
> I'll change my togs, I'll sell my kit,
> I'll pop my rifle too,
> I don't like the war, I ain't a Briton true
> And I'll let the Russians have Constantinople.[40]

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typically referred to in English as 'common sense'. This is the ability of the common person to sometimes see through the illusions of the dominant ideology, which, concerning patriotism, is something that seems to occur more often to working-class men once they find themselves in the trenches. See chapter 4, below.

[39]Davison, "Briton," 272, 277.

[40]Summerfield, "Patriotism," 19.

If Campbell's song had continued with the anti-propaganda message we see in the opening stanza, we could justifiably label this song 'anti-patriotic'. But the tone of the chorus, with its obvious mocking of cowardice, serves to shame any audience member that accidentally took the stanza too seriously. As MacKenzie argues, songs were not parodied:

> in such a way as to strike an ideological blow at the originals, more to send up the characters they described and the performers who sang them. The parodies simply involved squeezing further entertainment value out of the songs, and were themselves a tribute to the fame of their lines and their sentiments. Parodies, after all, only work when the original is well known.[41]

We see the same happening in the other two most oft-cited 'anti-patriotic' songs: Wilkie Bard's "When the Bugle Calls", with its "I don't care how soon the bugle calls / So long as I don't hear it", and Alfred Lester's stunning contrast in "Concientious Objector's Lament":

> Call out the Boys of the Old Brigade,
> Who made old England free.
> Call out my mother, my sister and my brother
> But for God's sake don't send me.[42]

There is no denial in this last song that soldiers are in fact heroes, making "old England free". In fact, it is rather explicit in stating the disrespectability involved in not fighting for one's country.

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It is the idea of 'respectability' and music hall which was at the heart of yet another important factor limiting the discursive possibilities of working-class song. In his brilliant study of leftist, middle-class ideology,

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[41]MacKenzie, 60.

[42]Summerfield, "Patriotism," 40.

British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture (1990), Chris Waters details the extent to which the so-called leaders of the anti-establishment were themselves trapped in the rhetoric of 'rational recreation', the theory that workers should spend their leisure time not developing their own, distinctive culture in opposition to the dominant ideas, but instead learning and enjoying exactly the same 'high' culture that the bourgeoisie had created and propagated. Thus, it is shown that while originally the socialist Clarion Vocal Union would set radical lyrics to well-known melodies, it became apparent by the late 1890s that new songs were less and less political as concentration on the proper singing of the songs was deemed more respectable, and such discipline more important to the 'struggle', than the actual words being sung. Such focus on 'form', as opposed to 'content', led to a rather naive stance where "the main question facing [socialists] was not – as it has been for recent historians – whether or not dominant ideologies were disseminated through music-hall songs but whether or not respectability and decorum were encouraged in the halls themselves."[43] Waters is of course correct when he asserts that these reformers should not be blamed for not having "read their Frankfurt School reader before the advent of the Frankfurt School",[44] but it is nevertheless important to point out their 'short-comings' as further evidence of the pervasiveness of the dominant ideology. This theme, the role of the 'organic intellectuals', is taken up more extensively in the discussion of the SPD and its opinions on culture in chapter three.

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[43]C. Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture, 1884-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 3-5, 30-31, 116-123.

[44]Ibid., 42.

Finally, when the popular 'new patriotic songs' of this era are placed within the wider context of militarism in the late-Victorian and Edwardian period, the lyrics are seen to reflect an ever-increasingly jingoistic working-class society. Ann Summers points out that, while never approaching the situation in Germany, the extent to which British working-class males took part in militaristic activity cannot be ignored. Helped by such 'popular' militarism as the Volunteer Force, in addition to the professional military, by 1914, 8% of all British males had received military training, 70% of those originating in the working classes.[45] Michael Blanch, in his study of pre-war youth culture, further elucidates the extent to which the lower orders were subject to militarism when he describes the 'drill' practised in school, the teachers' attempts to wean working-class kids away from their own class sense of membership to one of national belonging, and the propagandizing of Empire seen through the popularity of Empire Day at school, as well as the introduction of Seeley's *Expansion of England* (1883) as the main history textbook.[46] MacKenzie sums up this cultural milieu well, pointing out:

> State schools were now urged to take the public schools as their model, and the successful aping of militarist ideology and training became the leading imitative norm. Cadet corps proliferated in both types of school from the 1880s. Drilling was adopted as a crucial source of discipline in working-class State schools. Military activities became an important source of recreation for the working classes, through the highly successful Volunteer forces, rifle clubs, ceremonial and drill units in factories, and brigades of shoeblacks and other youthful street arabs and industrial apprentices. In all these

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[45]A. Summers, "Edwardian Militarism," in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*: Volume 1: *History and Politics*, ed. R. Samuel (New York: Routledge, 1989), 236-238.

[46]M.D. Blanch, "Imperialism, Nationalism and Organized Youth," in *Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, eds. J. Clarke, et al. (London: Hutchinson, 1979), 105-117.

> ways a very large proportion of the population came to have some connection with military and paramilitary organisations.[47]

The population's connection with militarism and arrogant patriotism, or, more properly, jingoism, has been amply demonstrated. Music hall songs between 1870 and 1914 were permeated with the message that Britain had the right to conquer the lesser nations of the world (that is, *all* other nations), that the British race was the greatest, that being a soldier was the only truly manly activity (and came with the guarantee of winning the affections of women), and finally that those against imperialism were silly cowards worthy only of scorn. It would seem that, before the new imperialism arose in the 1870s, a different, less virulent, more personal category of patriotic songs had existed, alongside the more militaristic variety, in the working-class only halls. Through a long process involving both the legislative authorities, the prerogatives of commercial expansion, and to some extent the desires of the working classes in a changing world, the working-class halls and their sometimes 'anti-patriotic' message, ceased to exist. Left unchallenged, the dominant ideology's imperialist propaganda permeated the song industry, and added further weight to the messages being propagated in England's schools and military organisations. This imperial discourse limited the options available to the generation coming of age in 1914, and Blanch, after listing several statistics concerning the prevalance of militarism in the different institutions surrounding the life of the typical working-class youth in a large English city, provides what is the most significant statistic of all: "within one month of war being declared on Germany, 21.6 per cent of the

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[47]MacKenzie, 6.

entire available male population of Greater Birmingham had gone to war."[48]

[48]Blanch, 120.

CHAPTER THREE

GERMANY

The study of patriotism among the pre-1914 British working classes invites comparison with the nation against which those nationalistic feelings would be directed: Germany. One of the defining characteristics of the German *Sonderweg*, or 'special path', that of a highly militarized society backed by a powerful Prussian monarchy, with its polarized institutions of an Army in opposition to the 'alternative culture' of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), resulted in very different approaches to the singing of patriotic songs among German workers. In Great Britain jingoistic songs, along with their parodies, were presented to the working classes *en masse* in their chosen place of entertainment, the socially-mixed music hall. In Germany, roughly 50% of working-class men spent two years singing rabidly nationalistic songs during their time in the military, while during the rest of their lives, workers were exposed to the anti-militaristic songs of organized resistance provided by the counter-culture of the SPD's cultural institutions. Such confrontation seems to have caused so much tension in society that ordinary, unpolitical, working-class entertainment was exactly that, void of both jingoism and socialism. Due to the enormous difference between societies protected by a volunteer army (Great Britain) and those with a long tradition of conscription (Germany), I will begin with a discussion of the effect of organized militarism upon Germany's youth. This section will be framed mainly by the work of Thomas Rohkrämer, with his seminal monograph *Der*

Militarismus der 'kleinen Leute' (The Militarism of the 'Common People' [1990]) in which he discusses nationalism, gender, the attraction and influence of military life, as well as Lawrence Kohlberg's psychology of soldiers, with an analysis of *Kriegervereine* (veterans' associations) in Germany between 1870 and 1914. I will then discuss the SPD's stance on militarism, as well as its attitudes toward the role of culture. The influence of patriotism in workers' songs will be analyzed, followed finally by a brief discussion of the development of non-political working-class entertainment throughout this period.

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The meaning of patriotism in Germany can be seen to have developed along a similar line with that of Great Britian, sharing an early association with the French Revolution. For the Germans patriotism consisted of aspects such as equality and the *levée en masse*, as well as the idea of the German nation coming together to repel the forces of Napoleon. Most importantly, before the wars of unification, patriotism involved liberal notions of progress *within* the state. Concerning war, it merely consisted of 'reactive nationalism': the understanding that all members of the nation would rally together to *defend* the Fatherland against attack.[1]

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[1]Arrogant pride in one's nation was however perfectly acceptable. Note this entry in Wilhelm Liebknecht's *Karl Marx* (1904), referring to one day in London as he sat in a pub:

> ... together with [his] two companions 'without a country.' ... Edgar Bauer, hurt by some chance remark, turned the tables and ridiculed the English snobs. Marx launched an enthusiastic eulogy on German science and music – no other country, he said, would have been capable of producing masters of music such as Beethoven, Mozart, Händel and Haydn, and the Englishmen, who had no music, were in reality far below the Germans, who had been hitherto prevented only by the miserable political and economic conditions from accomplishing any great practical work, but who would yet outclass all other nations. I had never heard him speaking English so fluently. For my part, I demonstrated in drastic words that the political conditions in England were not a bit better than those in Germany ... the

The idea of coming together to fight a war of conquest only came into ascendancy during the 1860s.[2] Aspects of the 'old' patriotism could however still be seen in 1870 when most socialists vehemently opposed the 'conquest' character of the Franco-Prussian War.[3] In the main, however, the meaning of patriotism had changed. As Rohkrämer writes, "in its original phase it encompassed liberal and democratic notions and bound the particular will toward nationhood with a universal tolerance for other nations. Only after the founding of the Reich did the change toward integral nationalism occur, with its being used as a safety valve for inner problems."[4] This shift away from the liberal notion of the 'individual' to that of the 'group' or nation as a whole was used by both socialists and conservatives in very different ways. To the Left, this 'group patriotism' was translated into the desire for socio-economic equality within the Empire. To the Right, it meant the recognition of hierarchy, with everyone working 'together' to maintain the status quo. It is Rohkrämer's argument

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> only difference being that we Germans knew our public affairs were miserable while the Englishmen did not know it, whence it was apparent that we surpassed the Englishmen in political intelligence.

Marx and co. then left the pub, smashed several street-lamps, and ran from the police. There is no date given for this event. Quoted in G. Roth, *The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany: A Study in Working-Class Isolation and National Integration* (Totowa: The Bedminster Press, 1963), 100.

[2]Ibid., 16-17, 25.

[3]J.W. Mishark, *The Road to Revolution: German Marxism and World War One, 1914-1919* (Detroit: Moira Books, 1967), 59-60. Both Bebel and Liebknecht abstained in the original vote for war credits. Bebel, in these earlier years, even went so far as to note the 'good' effects of defeat in war. For example, Napoleon's conquering armies had created a nationalist sentiment in Prussia in the first place.

[4]T. Rohkrämer, *Der Militarismus der "kleinen Leute": Die Kriegervereine im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1871-1914* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1990), 16. (All translations of Rohkrämer are mine). 'Tolerance' should not however be overstressed, for xenophobia was already associated with German nationalism by the time of the Wars of Unification.

that, due to their experience in the Wars of Unification, for the 'kleine Leute', the latter definition of patriotism took hold.

The post-1871 feeling of being a 'Part of the Nation', of having played an integral role in an otherwise 'experienceless life', is only the beginning of Rohkrämer's explanation as to why the 'kleine Leute' had such deep militaristic leanings.[5] In his study of the actual 1871 veterans and their societies, as well as of the following pre-1914 generations they influenced, Rohkrämer desires to go beyond a straightforward study of their actions, for he believes that these actions can only truly be understood if some attempt to bring to light the convictions (Überzeugungen) of the veterans and reservists is undertaken. While humbly stating that "the science of history offers little in the way of theoretically 'sure' new land (gesichichertes Neuland) when it comes to an investigation of individual patterns of meaning, world outlooks, and identities", he proceeds, through a close analysis of autobiographical accounts, to shed much light on the mental processes of the lower-class members of the *Vereine*, while at points integrating helpful theory from psychology.[6]

The psychological environment first begins to inform one's personality in childhood, and, as is well-known, few boys revel in pacifism. Growing up with *Sedantage* (Sedan celebrations) and military parades set the tone early for the soldiers of 1914: "children were excited to see marching soldiers and all the associated symbols of masculine power and

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[5]Ibid., 77.

[6]Ibid., 15-26. While ever-present in the background, theory never becomes suffocating in this work. Although unquestionably involved, the word 'Geschlecht' (Gender) is never seen, and after the 'Introduction' we never again have to deal with the word 'Habermas'.

adventure."[7] It is with this word 'masculine' that Rohkrämer moves beyond the typical 'outward' manifestations of Wilhelmine militarism in order to explore society's expectations concerning the 'construction of masculinity'. In a clear example that 'Gender History' now involves much more than 'Women's History', Rohkrämer discusses the 'warrior/protector' role within which men find themselves cast early on, and how service in the military becomes extremely important for both the young men as well as their families and peers: "military service belonged to the *curriculum vitae* of men, it marked the threshold to adulthood. The young boy went to the military, and as a marriageable man he returned."[8] In their discussion of 'Arbeiter, Militär und Militarismus', Gerhard Ritter and Klaus Tenfelde are in agreement, describing how *Militärdienst* created "a real man", and quoting the memoirs of a contemporary: "every man continued to wear his reserve hat in the mines for a long time, acting arrogantly toward the younger boys."[9]

In addition to this social 'need', Rohkrämer posits the paradoxical need of young men for both freedom *and* authority. Concerning the former, their sense of adventure is extremely strong and, in the words of Rudolf Haubl, "many young people (of both sexes) conceive of soldierly existence as a 'destruction of the civilized norms' and therefore as an attractive possibility for breaking out of the everyday experience and for finding adventure. The possession of weapons impresses the notion of personal

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[7]Ibid., 148.

[8]Ibid., 20, 147-149.

[9]G. Ritter and K. Tenfelde, *Arbeiter im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1871 bis 1914* (Bonn: Verlag J.H. Nietz Nachf., 1992), 742-743. (My translation).

power and self-worth."[10] Because of this sense of 'escape' (Ausbruch), argues Rohkrämer, young men enter the army expecting some sort of freedom (Moratorium), an expectation which is, upon recruitment, "destroyed quickly and thoroughly".[11] This destruction and replacement of freedom by authority, ironically, explains Rohkrämer, is equally, if not more, welcome by these new soldiers. In the following quote from Rohkrämer's conclusion, he sums up what he sees as the 'Chaos' of Modernity, and how it affected young men:

> The undermining of traditional convictions, social structures and ties, appeared less as a liberation, and created fear among the 'kleine Leute' who experienced their helplessness through economic depression and unemployment, and were forced to move about and adapt to entirely new societal formations, due to structural economic changes. To others, the liberal principle that every man was 'the architect of his own happiness' led to a narcissistic sickness among the unsuccessful. According to the powers that were, poverty was no longer fate, but rather the consequences of personal failings.
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> Out of a sense of helplessness, meaninglessness, and isolation, the members of the *Kriegervereine* longed for a sense of order. Identification with idealized authorities freed one from answering for one's fate, provided a stable ego, and allowed the individual to participate at the same societal level as those authorities. As well, their common political belief created a feeling of belonging among the believers. For citizens who found societal change confusing and unsettling, a strong state and military order provided an ideal range of identification.[12]

Rohkrämer does not here refer to the majority of recruits who were not industrial workers. To these men, often happy to escape the monotonous rural lifestyle they had known to that point, the sense of adventure must

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[10]Quoted in Rohkrämer, 171.

[11]Ibid., 170.

[12]Ibid., 264-265.

have been great. But while the need for authority and direction once away from familiar surroundings would have been equally high, this 'welcoming' of authority should not overshadow what was almost always a very unpleasant two years which often resulted in a dramatic decline in self-esteem. At the same time, while Rohkrämer's statements are open to the criticism that life has always been confusing (and not just in Imperial Germany!), it does point out the very real sanctuary provided by the military. And such an explanation is by no means élitist in the sense that it was only the 'weak-minded', uneducated working classes who needed baby-sitting. No less an intellect than Ernst Jünger made the very same claim, for in "November 1921 he confessed to his brother that he felt out of place in the service and continued in it only because it was a haven from 'the confused state of things.'"[13]

Such 'confusion', and the resulting contradictions, leads Rohkrämer to Lawrence Kohlberg's 'psychology of moral development', which arose out of the latter's study of Vietnam war veterans. Kohlberg found that the soldiers he studied could be placed roughly into three categories concerning their moral outlook on their place in the army. The first is labelled the 'preconventional', and at this stage a soldier acts in a 'hedonistic' manner, caring only for himself and his own well-being, and doing whatever is necessary to preserve those two things. At the next level, and where the huge majority of soldiers are placed, is the 'conventional', where the individual "understands the worth of a social system, even when, in the short run, it does not necessarily speak to his

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[13]T. Nevin, *Ernst Jünger and Germany: Into the Abyss, 1914-1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 78.

needs". Here one begins to act from a 'group perspective', develops "a 'good boy orientation' and wants to please his fellow soldiers. For him, moral action entails respecting the expectations and interests of others, as well as cultivating social relationships."[14] With such an explanation, it is easy to see why soldiers often have contradictory convictions, as will be seen below. It is only in the final stage, the 'postconventional', that a soldier "can weigh the rights of an individual versus those of society. [He] understands that the moral code of a society is a social convention, and can also be 'immoral'."[15]

It was ultimately the group orientation among the 'conventional' working-class soldiers which predominated over a specific allegiance to the Kaiser, argues Rohkrämer. For although SPD members were specifically barred from the *Kriegervereine*, and despite all the attendant anti-socialist propaganda espoused by the latter's executives, the majority of members always voted for Social Democracy. Rohkrämer claims that it was pervasive propaganda, and the accompanying cult of the monarchy, which prevented the great majority of soldiers from advancing to the 'postconventional' level. As the myriad of contradictions remained at a subconscious level, invisible to the soldiers, they could not see the irony of their obeying orders to march against Social Democrats when the state deemed such action to be necessary.[16]

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[14]Rohkrämer, 79-80. In a line reminiscent of John F. Kennedy, Rohkrämer remarks, "[i]m diesem gemeinschaftsorientierten Denken ist der Staat nicht für seine Bürger da, sondern die Bürger für den Staat." (191).

[15]Ibid., 80.

[16]Ibid., 41-52.

The anti-socialist paranoia of the military, and its resultant attempts to expunge the slightest tinge of pink from the thoughts of its recruits, is well-detailed in Martin Kitchen's *The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914*. At different times, the Kaiser, the Chancellor, and the War minister attempted to force German soldiers to cut all association with the SPD, from posting recruits far from urban centres to forbidding soldiers to patronize inns which were frequented by known socialists.[17] In order to counter the pre-conscription, anti-Imperial *Arbeiterjugend* organizations being set up by Karl Liebknecht and the SPD, General von der Goltz created the *Jungdeutschlandbund* which, as an umbrella organization, brought most non-socialist youth groups under its influence to the extent that, by 1914, its membership had grown to 750,000. In his attempt to make the army the 'school of the nation', William II had mandatory patriotic history lessons introduced into the military in order to strengthen troop faith, and in what seems to be the only sustained exposure of the working classes to truly jingoistic, ultra-nationalistic singing, the "soldiers were called upon to bawl in unison songs such as 'Als die Preussen marschierten vor Prag' [As the Prussians March before Prague], 'O Strasburg, O Strasburg', and 'Das Volk steht auf, ein Sturm bricht los' [The Volk arises, a Storm breaks]."[18]

Lastly, before moving from the military milieu into the cultural situation of the SPD and the civilian lives of the lower orders, the numerical extent to which military life was a part of Germany as a whole

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[17]M. Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), ch. 7. Kitchen relates the tragi-comic story of the severe punishment of recruits returning from leave with sandwiches wrapped by their unwary mothers in Social Democratic newspapers (158).

[18]Ibid., 180.

must be briefly outlined. Universal conscription applied to all men between the ages of seventeen and forty-five. Most would complete one or two years of active service and then remain on the reserve list. Around forty-five percent of the population were exempted for health reasons, as well as some who had to take care of relatives, or had important positions in business or agriculture. Roughly half of the male population, then, had lived and operated in a military environment, and this should be kept in mind as we now turn to an examination of the civilian, working-class world of pre-1914 Germany.[19]

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The working classes had, as their intellectual leaders, the principal figures of the Social Democratic Party. The 'high' politics of the Left must first be analysed, as the working classes voted for these thinkers, and therefore presumably found their own views promoted by the party. In what is still considered by many to be the finest narrative of prewar Social Democratic politics, *German Social Democracy, 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism*, Carl Schorske provides much evidence for the thesis that, "to one who has followed the evolution of Social Democracy through the prewar decade, the vote for the war credits on 4 August 1914 is but the logical end of a clear line of development."[20] With the poor election results of 1907, Kautsky and other members of the SPD

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[19]Ritter, 732-734. V.G. Kiernan points out, "in Prussia [conscription] was much older than socialism, older than the working class itself, which was born inside its prison; and the longer it went on anywhere the more mechanically it came to be identified with patriotism and civic duty", in his, "Conscription and Society in Europe before the War of 1914-18," in *War and Society: Historical Essays in Honour and Memory of J.R. Western, 1928-1971*, ed. M.R.D. Foot (London: Paul Elek, 1973), 154.

[20]C.E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1955), 285.

recognized that election success and anti-militarism did not go hand-in-hand. To the extent that the working classes even cared about the danger of an arms buildup, it was difficult, ever since the Franco-Russian Alliance, to convince them that it was correct to be both anti-Kaiser *and* anti-Tsar.[21] At the International held in Stuttgart that year, by opposing the idea of a mass strike in the event of war, the Germans showed themselves to be the most conservative force in that otherwise very 'left-wing' body.

Thus was made apparent the destructive struggle within the party between patriotism and internationalism. As William Maehl points out, in his still-cited article of 1952, "The Triumph of Nationalism in the German Socialist Party on the Eve of the First World War", "the SPD would not make the fatal choice between Germany and the brotherhood of European workers, because the fear prevailed that either decision would wreck the party."[22] Maehl goes on to describe the massive influence upon the SPD wielded by the right-leaning trade unions. Many union bosses were also high-ranking members of the party and used their power to encourage a move toward 'reformism' and away from the more ardent aspects of Marxism, such as the idea of revolution and, more importantly for us, the ideal of pacifism. The trade unions would of course have to agree to the idea of a general strike, but, to most, such an occurrence at the outset of a war would simply allow the Russians to march in and rule Germany in the same autocratic manner Russia was controlled. The Russophobia

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[21] Ibid., 63, 67, 86.

[22] W. Maehl, "The Triumph of Nationalism in the German Socialist Party on the Eve of the First World War," *Journal of Modern History* 24 (1952): 32.

among the masses is colourfully detailed by Maehl; "Regarded by the German worker as a horde of black reaction, a barbaric empire where the splendor of the tsars eclipsed the suffering of a people, despotic Russia was seen as the archfoe of the world proletariat."[23]

The leaders of the German proletariat were, by 1912, to use Maehl's famous phrase, "bitten by the bug of nationalism".[24] In that year, Schorske relates to us with an exclamation mark, "the party introduced resolutions to improve pre-military youth training in the public schools, and to procure for the Social Democratic coöperatives a share in the supply contracts for the army!"[25] The clearest signal was to come during the Social Democratic conference at Jena in 1913. The defense bill of that year included a heavy burden of taxes upon the rich, and it was decided at the conference to support this legislation as it furthered the struggle to alleviate the poor of Germany. Acquiescence however simultaneously supported the raising of money for the defense industry and signalled a clear sacrifice of the SPD's alleged pacifism in favour of socio-economic goals. The old SPD slogan, "This system isn't worth a single man or one penny" was rejected by a party leadership which wanted to be accepted into the dominant system.[26] 'Revolution' was replaced by 'integration' and effected an increased sense of nationalism, something clearly welcomed by

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[23]Ibid., 40. A long and traditional fear of Russia is typically given as one of the main reasons why the German working classes supported the war effort. See V. Berghahn, *Modern Germany: Society, Economy, and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, 2 ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 41. While Russophobia is of course here acknowledged, it is only part of a wider theme being explored.

[24]Maehl, 30.

[25]Schorske, 245.

[26]Ibid., 285.

many party members at the outbreak of war. As Guenther Roth explains, "most important ... was the frenzied enthusiasm and the urge of fraternization which overcame many a Social Democratic functionary and masses of workers .... To many members the cleavage between the labor movement and the nation seemed to have vanished. They experienced a feeling of liberation; the class barriers seemed to have fallen and the working class to be recognized as part of the nation."[27]

Complete and total pacifism had rarely in fact surfaced among the Left. As John Mishark oberves, "[n]either Marx, Engels, nor Lassalle had ever advocated a Socialist refusal to fight when war came. They had invariably supported the side whose victory would most benefit the proletariat."[28] There existed in the SPD leadership a sense of helplessness against the war machine, should events ever come to such a catastrophe. Bebel, at the Mannheim congress in 1906, argued that "when war came the military would take over law and order, and any resistance would be folly. He described the conditions which would prevail on the outbreak of war: the chauvinistic atmosphere, 'the fever which will grip the masses,' the workers called to the colors, the powerlessness of the party, the ruthlessness of military courts, etc."[29] Although Kautsky warned those who were resigned to fight a war of defense that, through the manipulation of the media, any war could be made to seem defensive, Bebel's words proved prophetic in the summer of 1914.

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[27]Roth, 288.

[28]Mishark, 57.

[29]Schorske, 73.

The sense of resignation in Bebel's words was reflective of the passivity often seen at many levels of the SPD. The doctrine of historical inevitability led to such vulgar Marxism as informing the workers that they "need only pay [their] party dues and at election time deliver [their] Social Democratic ballot. The rest will be taken care of by the 'development.'"[30] While Kautsky theorized that parliamentarianism could lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat, thus making a virtue out of political passivity, an even more quiescent thinking dictated the role of 'culture' within the working-class movement. In this famous passage from *The German Ideology*, Marx clearly states:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling class, therefore the ideas of its dominance.[31]

Many radical Social Democrats took this literally to mean that nineteenth-century bourgeois culture was rotten to the core and could only serve, when dished out to the toiling masses, to instil non-revolutionary, militaristic, bourgeois ideas. However, as can be seen with a brief look at the controversy surrounding naturalism in the 1890s, the majority of Socialist leaders were vehemently against such an indictment of the aesthetic wonders of the past.

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[30]Robert Michels, quoted in Roth, 199.

[31]Quoted in D. Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979), 15.

These 'wonders', such as the works of Goethe and Schiller, could often be seen, along with somewhat more 'politically progressive' pieces, at the *Freie Volksbühne* in Berlin and elsewhere. By the 1890s, these SPD-supported People's Theatres were being criticized for their increasing '*embourgeoisement*', and a break-away group, the *Jungen*, founded the *Neue Freie Volksbühne* in 1892. In its attempt to provide the workers with a new, post-bourgeois theatre, this group produced the works of Gerhard Hauptmann and the other leading artists of the movement known as naturalism. This genre's plays involved "the realistic representation of ordinary men and women with all their failings and their often crude attitudes; it made its characters speak the language of everyday lives. In as much as the themes of naturalist drama ... were frequently taken from the working-class milieu and were uncovering its social problems it was considered to be of special relevance to a working-class audience."[32] Naturalism was a break from traditional theatre; it was not bourgeois, it was not happy and uplifting, and one can understand the uproar it caused in intellectual socialist circles.

When Edgar Steiger, the newly appointed editor of the SPD weekly *Neue Welt* (New World), decided to introduce some naturalist writing into his magazine, the reaction was quick and sharp. The aging Wilhelm Liebknecht described the writing of Hauptmann as "flat, tactless and ugly ... and above all not revolutionary, but rather petty-bourgeois-reactionary".[33] Franz Mehring argued that while naturalist plays listed

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[32]W.L. Guttsman, *The German Social Democratic Party, 1875-1933: From Ghetto to Government* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), 205.

[33]Roth, 225-226.

the grievances of capitalist exploitation, it did nothing in the way of offering any solutions.[34] The rationale behind such seemingly conservative attitudes in men otherwise quite radical was the belief, as outlined in the Party's Gotha programme of 1896, that art and politics should be separated and that attention must not be diverted from the main struggle (namely, that of politics), to the much less pertinent problem of bourgeois culture.[35] At another level, as Vernon Lidtke explains in his important work *The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (1985):

> There were theoretical reasons for the indifference of Marxists. They assumed that conditions under capitalism militated against genuine artistic creativity, that a free and authentic human culture could emerge only when socialism had overcome the existing system. Within capitalism artistic work would be treated like any other product of the marketplace. Clara Zetkin explained in 1911, that the foundation of capitalist production 'is the enslavement of human labor, both manual and intellectual. As long as labor remained enslaved by capitalism, science and art could have no freedom.' In one way or another this basic principle found its way into essays and speeches that touched on the arts and education. In this view the culture of everyday life, the values that workers expressed in behavior and casual attitudes, could have no significance for socialist culture.[36]

In the meantime however Zetkin argued that the future culture of the Utopia could not be created *ex nihilo* and it was thus necessary to master

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[34]Guttsman, 205. And, at the extreme end, "Molkenbuhr, one of the rising administrators in the party, ... [asserted] that workers who live in misery cannot be expected to enjoy descriptions of more misery and might be driven into a suicidal mood." Roth, 225.

[35]R.J. Evans, *Proletarians and Politics: Socialism, Protest, and the Working Class in Germany before the First World War* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 78; D. Dowe, "The Workingmen's Choral Movement in Germany before the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 13 (1978): 273.

[36]V.L. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 197.

bourgeois aesthetics first, and then, following the revolution, to build upon them.[37]

It was within such an intellectual environment that the songs of the workers' movement were sung, and likewise 'limited'. Workers' choral groups had been important since at least the 1860s, and by 1914, with a membership of 200,000, they were "the largest and arguably the most important workers' cultural organization in Germany before the first world war".[38] Patriotism, in its jingoistic form, was of course never glorified in socialist choirs, and anti-militarism was an important theme, at least in the earlier years. Throughout the nineteenth century, "O Torgau, O Torgau", from 1844, with its critique of the soldierly life, remained popular:

> Und wenn nun Friede wird, wo wenden wir uns hin?
> Die Gesundheit ist verloren, die Kräfte sind dahin.
> Da heißt es dann zuletzt: ein Vogel und kein Nest,
> Herr Bruder nimm den Bettelsack, Soldat bis du gewest.
>
> And if peace should arrive, where will we go?
> Our health is lost, as is our strength.
> In the end this means one thing: a bird without a nest,
> My brother, grab the hobo-sack, for a soldier you were.[39]

"Ich bin Soldat", written directly before the outbreak of the 1870-71 war, expresses the then still important sentiment of internationalism:

> Und gehts ins Feld, so muß ich Brüder morden,
> Von denen keiner mir zu Leid was tat,
> Dafür als Krüppel trag ich Band und Orden,
> Und hungernd ruf ich dann: "Ich bin Soldat!"

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[37]Lidtke, 197. Kautsky was in agreement, claiming that "the masses shall have at their disposal all of culture that has been created up to now. To conquer all of this culture for themselves [is their task]." Quoted in Roth, 228.

[38]Dowe, 269.

[39]H. Strohbach, *Deutsches Volkslied in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980), 96. (Translations of Strohbach are mine.)

And going into the field, my brothers I must murder,
Of whom none have caused me harm,
For this, crippled, I carry ribbons and medals,
And hungrily I cry: "I am a soldier!"[40]

Songs such as this, in the vain of "Six Pence a Day", while limited in number, continued to be sung long after the British variant had fallen out of favour in the mid-nineteenth century.

In Lidtke's analysis of workers' songs, he finds that ten of the twenty-one most popular *Lieder* throughout the *Kaiserzeit* were set to the melodies of patriotic songs. In the first place, bourgeois music was considered far superior to anything composed by the proletariat, so it was deemed best to simply change the lyrics and create a new association for these songs, away from the Right and toward the Left. Additionally, these songs would often come from an earlier, liberal-patriotism deemed acceptable to the SPD, and the entire composition, lyrics and melody, would be accepted into the fold. Schenkendorff's 1813 "Freiheit die ich meine" is a famous example of this:

Freiheit, die ich meine,
Die mein Herz erfüllt,
Komm' mit deinem Scheine,
Süsses Engelsbild!
Magst du nie dich zeigen
Der bedrängten Welt?
Führest deinen Reigen
Nur am Sternenzelt?

Freedom, that I love,
That fills my heart to flowing,
Come now with all your brilliance,
Sweet angelic image!
Do you wish never to reveal yourself
In this world oppressed?
Are your rounds limited

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[40]Ibid., 99.

To the starry heavens?[41]

The popularity of patriotic melodies was well-recognized, and while completely new socialist texts would be injected, it was rare that the original meaning of the song would be attacked and parodied. The following twist on "Die Wacht am Rhein" (The Watch on the Rhine) was one of only a few to gain popularity:

Es tönet nicht wie Donnerhall,
Wie Schwertgeklirr und Wogenprall;
Es ächzt wie schriller Todesklang
Die Leyer und der heis're Sang:
Dort draussen über'm deutschen Rhein,
Da blieb mein Glück, da ruht mein Bein.

It does not sound like thunderbolts,
Or like swords clashing and waves crashing;
It groans like the shrill noise of death
The harp and the coarse singing:
There, on the other side of the German Rhine,
There remains my joy, there lie my bones.[42]

And when the attempt was made to ease the transition of the traditionally ultra-nationalistic *Turnervereine* (Gymnasts' associations) into the workers' movement, pathetically little was done to alter older *Turnerlieder* in order to make them more acceptable to SPDers. Notice the marginal socialist modification of the refrain in "Turnerlust" below under B:

A

Was zieht dort unten das Thal entlang?
Eine Schaar in weissem Gewand!
Wie muthig brauset der volle Gesang!
Die Töne sind mir bekannt.
Sie singen von Freiheit und Vaterland,

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[41]Lidtke, 111-112.

[42]Ibid., 125.

Ich kenne die Schaar im weissen Gewand:

Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!
Die Turner ziehen aus.

B

[Verse is identical with version A. The refrain is:]

Frei Heil! Frei Heil! Frei Heil!
Die Turner ziehen aus.

A

What moves down there along the valley?
A troop in white uniform!
How courageous sounds their vigorous song!
Those tones are known to me.
They sing of Freedom and the Fatherland.
I know this troop in their white uniform.

Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!
The gymnasts are moving out.

B

[The verse is identical with version A. The refrain is:]

Freedom Hail! Freedom Hail! Freedom Hail!
The gymnasts are moving out.[43]

This is a good example of the failure to break clearly away from the dominant ideology, for it is hard to believe that the *Turner* would not have continued to 'think' in their old, nationalistic ways while singing this 'new' version in the workers' clubs. Ultimately, few songs came to be wholly associated with the supposed anti-state stance of the SPD.

With the end of truly revolutionary goals, and the advent of reformism, beginning in the 1890s, the increasingly pro-state nationalism seen in the élite of the SPD began to percolate down into the songs of the

[43]Ibid., 107-108.

workers. Fiery hymns such as "Wir sind die Petroleure" (We are the Fire Bombers) came to be replaced by the self-explanatorily less violent "Eight-hour Marseillaise". Additionally, after the 1896 Gotha programme declaration that art and politics should not be mixed, and with the resulting emphasis on the 'singing' aspects of choir, and lack of focus on 'ideology', it is not difficult to see why many workers felt no contradiction in joining bourgeois *Sängerbunde* (singing associations), while maintaining their membership in workers' choirs.[44] Here they were unquestionably exposed to middle-class versions of jingoism, but such danger was largely ignored in the trend toward de-politicization in workers' culture. Dieter Dowe sums up the emasculation of workers' songs, and the resulting greater imposition of hegemonic values, in the following:

> steady numerical growth and qualitative improvement [in the workers' choral movement] involved an interrelated series of factors which, as a whole, all pointed in the direction it was in fact already taking. These factors were: (1) The acceptance into its rank of petty-bourgeois defectors and other non-social democrats as the association grew into a mass organization; (2) the admission (on both ideological and musical grounds) of women, with the accompanying changes in social activity and musical forms; (3) higher standards of performance achieved through more intensive choral work; which in turn led to (4) loftier artistic ambitions; these again contributing to (5) the need to merge unviable small choirs to form bigger choirs capable of competing artistically with their larger bourgeois counterparts (which, however, meant that in order to achieve the higher ambitions they had set themselves the whole of their energies had to be devoted to things artistic, to learning and rehearsing progressively more difficult choral works); hand in hand with which went (6) a preoccupation with advanced artistic and aesthetic problems; (7) a huge increase in the proportion of non-active members; and, last but not

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[44]G.L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars Through the Third Reich* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1975), 164. Mosse points out that 60% of the *Sängerbunde* membership came from the working classes.

least, (8) a degree of bureaucratization inseparable from expansion into a mass organization.[45]

While this was occurring, many Socialist intellectuals maintained the belief that, "what is aesthetically superior is often politically reprehensible,"[46] and Mehring was probably in the minority with his belief that revolutionary guidance could be found in the bourgeois emancipation described in the works of the young Schiller. A majority point of view is more likely summed up with a phrase from Hermann Müller, "education for the class struggle is indeed the major task, [but] we do not always engage in the class struggle ... we also want to enjoy life."[47] While the 'morally reprehensible' texts of 'aesthetically superior' nineteenth-century patriotic songs were altered to propound more revolutionary themes, the familiar melodies represented no significant break from the past, and with the trend toward reformism and passivity in the party, the lyrics to these songs tended more and more to reflect a sense of "belonging ... [and] lost their function of communicating ideology".[48] At the same time, while forbidding so-called *Schundliteratur* (trashy literature) from workers' libraries, the only really popular form of 'socialist' prose was *Zukunftsliteratur*, which toed the passive line by merely describing the wonderful socialist future that was bound to come sooner or later. Alongside this weak gathering of 'socialist' word and song,

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[45]Dowe, 282-283.

[46]Lidtke, 196.

[47]Roth, 230; Guttsman, 205.

[48]Evans, 78.

the proletariat was encouraged to take in a full diet of "the best which has been thought and said in the world".[49]

Max Horkheimer attacks such sentiments when he writes that "the history of German Social Democracy should be a warning against such a love of culture. Instead of a critical attitude toward the dominant culture ... the endeavor often prevailed to wear as a showpiece the bourgeois wisdom of bygone days, just as the peasants put on the outmoded fashions of their overlords."[50] Lidtke makes the additional, legitimate criticism that, "forthright denial of any connection between social conditions and artistic production and judgements, in addition to being blatantly anti-Marxist, rested on the idealist assumption that artistic values are absolute."[51] But it is perhaps unfair and anachronistic to attack those Socialist leaders of close to a century ago for failing to anatomize 'culture' with the apparent ease of the present generation's 'deconstructors'. For some, indeed a very small minority, a totally materialist conception of culture meant exactly that: there is nothing *essential* about art, nothing *transcendent*. For most, the first step toward a materialist position, atheism, was difficult enough. But even today, in a largely secular world, one hesitates to suggest, for example, that there is nothing magical or ethereal occurring in the work of a Michaelangelo or a Da Vinci.

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[49]M. Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 6; Roth, 238; Guttsman, 210.

[50]Quoted in Roth, 228.

[51]Lidtke, 143.

What the history of song in SPD culture bespeaks is a much deeper, underlying and powerful determinant upon social action and thinking. Whether one chooses the linguistic path, resulting in some sort of all-encompassing discursive arena, or that of the Marxian variants, such as Gramsci's hegemony, it can be argued that at any given historical moment, a dominant discourse does seem to restrict, sometimes severely, the options open to historical actors. The acceptance of militarism at every level of German pre-1914 society is akin to Roland Barthes' "rhetoric of common sense", "the normally hidden set of rules, codes and conventions through which meanings particular to specific social groups (i.e. those in power) are rendered universal and 'given' for the whole of society."[52] Rohkrämer agrees when he argues that "the [soldierly] world view exhibited contradictions that contemporaries were unable to see."[53] Further to the limitations of the time, he adds, "the social demand to recognize the role of the 'masculine warrior' made it almost impossible at the time to render a critical judgement."[54] One indeed wonders about the nature of such an environment in which the Kaiser is able to get away

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[52]Hebdige, 9. This parallels Althusser's notion of ideology:

> [It] has very little to do with 'consciousness' .... It is profoundly *unconscious* .... Ideology is indeed a system of representation, but in the majority of cases the representations have nothing to do with 'consciousness': they are usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above all as *structures* that they impose on the vast majority of men, not via their 'consciousness'. They are perceived-accepted-suffered cultural objects and they act functionally on men via a process that escapes them.

Quoted in Hebdige, 12. See also L. Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. B. Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127-186. See also R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. A. Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), 109-148.

[53]Rohkrämer, 22.

[54]Ibid., 263.

with such speeches as that given in 1891, when he was unsure of SPD intentions, informing recruits that, were he to issue such an order, they must "shoot down their own relatives, brothers, and parents".[55]

In Roth's famous discussion of the SPD, *The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany* (1963), he points out that his use of the term 'subculture' is indicative of both "the separateness of the labor movement from the dominant system and also their inherent connection".[56] Roth illustrates this dualism by quoting a prominent SPD leader as he lists the portraits on the wall of his socialist parents' living room: "several saints, William I, Field Marshall Moltke, Bismarck, Bebel, Liebknecht, Marx and Lassalle".[57] In Werner Blessing's description of the hegemonic effects of monarchist propaganda, from the prayers for the monarchy regularly included in Protestant church services, to the barrage of propaganda in the daily classroom, he demonstrates how the SPD's efforts to form a 'counter-tradition' were ultimately ineffective, "for the stage-props it had borrowed, indirectly and unconsciously, tied workers once again to the

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[55]Quoted in Ritter, 734. Geoff Eley and Keith Nield have warned against being too critical of the role of the SPD. Gramsci discusses the role of the 'organic intellectuals', those leaders who arise directly out of a class and perform the functions of a Leninist-style vanguard, articulating the needs of their class and countering the ideology of the class they oppose. The leaders of the SPD, although often of middle-class origin, clearly represent the organic intellectuals of the German proletariat, and when compared to their fellow socialist organisers in Great Britain, were quite successful in representing the working classes, argue Eley and Nield. I agree, and my critique of the SPD's role in cultural production merely qualifies, and far from invalidates, the many gains of the socialists' courageous leaders. See G. Eley and K. Nield, "Why Does Social History Ignore Politics?" *Social History* 5, no. 2 (May 1980): 249-269.

[56]Roth, 159.

[57]Ibid., 217.

petty-bourgeois milieu whence they had been taken".[58] Ultimately, as Roth sums up:

> the influence of the political and cultural norms of the dominant system remained strong and pervasive, especially through the agencies of elementary school, army service and newspapers. A dual loyalty was typical of the Social Democratic workers. The cultural exertions of the Social Democrats were extraordinary, but many cultural activities actually reinforced the workers' adherence to significant components of the dominant culture.[59]

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Between the conflicting cultures of the military and the socialists there existed a third, and largely neutral, ground explored in *Alltagsgeschichte*, or the history of everyday life, which includes the largely ignored culture of the working classes away from workers' organizations[60]. In her recent monograph, *Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (1992), Lynn Abrams tracks the development of working-class entertainment prior to 1914. Due to later industrialization, the time-frame for the development of music hall was roughly fifty years later than in Britain. *Tingel-Tangels* and *Singspielhallen*, which were the equivalent of the British song saloons, saw their heyday in the 1880s and 1890s. In an interesting reversal of what occurred in Britain, Abrams argues that public entertainment transformed from a 'classless', or socially-mixed, audience found with street performers, to a thoroughly working-class form adopted when

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[58]W.K. Blessing, "The Cult of Monarchy, Political Loyalty and the Workers' Movement in Imperial Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History* 13 (1978): 371.

[59]Roth, 309-310.

[60]*Alltagsgeschichte* has only received much-needed attention since the early 1980s.

government policy forced entertainers off the streets and into the new *Tingel-Tangels* in the 1860s.[61] While the first music halls appeared at the turn of the century, and (re-)introduced the concept of socially-mixed entertainment, they did not achieve much popularity before the war, and the working-class clientele went directly from their working-class only *Tingel-Tangels* to the overwhelmingly working-class cinema after 1905.[62]

Hence, the pre-1870 British style of largely working-class inspired entertainment seems to have held sway in Germany right through to 1914, as far as neutral mass entertainment is concerned. And it is indeed the Stedman Jones' style of culturalism which is most appealing to Abrams as can be seen throughout her work. As in the song saloons of 1840s Britain, there was no sign of rabid jingoism, and equally, due to the constant presence of police censors, socialism was nowhere to be seen. Elaine Glovka Spencer has done much work on social control in Imperial Germany, and her findings support the concept that, in such a politically polarized society, the Prussian police were happy with the exclusion of *all* politics from these stages.[63] In fact, it is the *Singspielhallen* of 1880s Germany, and not Britain, that Stedman Jones seems to be talking about when he refers to an apathetic working class which only sung about its day to day existence.

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[61]L. Abrams, *Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (London: Routledge, 1992), 93.

[62]G.D. Stark, "Cinema, Society, and the State: Policing the Film Industry in Imperial Germany," in *Essays on Culture and Society in Modern Germany*, eds. D.B. King, et al. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982), 125.

[63]E.G. Spencer, "Policing Popular Amusements in German Cities: The Case of Prussia's Rhine Province, 1815-1914," *Journal of Urban History* 16, no. 4 (August 1990): 373. See also idem., *Police and the Social Order in German Cities: The Düsseldorf District, 1848-1914* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1992).

Thus, Rohkrämer's study, as well as my analysis of SPD politics and culture, are not intended to suggest that the working-class soldiers who joined up in 1914 were merely automatons. In a fascinating study of undercover policemen's recordings of working-class pub conversations between 1892 and 1914, Richard J. Evans has uncovered the way many of these men at least 'spoke' about the issues of foreign policy and militarism. Russophobia was clearly a part of everyone's thinking, but other 'hegemonic' issues, such as *Weltpolitik*, were not bought hook, line, and sinker: "scarcely a single worker whose views were recorded in the pub conversation reports had a good word to say about the German colonies." And according to another worker in 1903:

> If Germany carries on its foreign policy like this it will make itself ever more hated among the other nations, and it's not impossible any more that there will be a break with another nation some day. Germany lacks proper good sense everywhere it gets involved, and so it's a fact that Germany makes a fool of herself in most cases.[64]

In addition to the expression of such sentiments among friends in a pub, between 26 and 30 July 1914, several anti-war demonstrations were held throughout Germany. Nevertheless, by 4 August, those same demonstrators were beginning to line up outside the recruiting offices, and the hopes of the pacifists were dashed. As Schorske relates, "what the Leftists failed to see was that the 'masses,' upon whom they pinned all their hopes, would not and *could not* react to the outbreak of war as they expected."[65]

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[64]Evans, 175-176.

[65]Schorske, 264, emphasis mine.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WESTERN FRONT

Having analyzed the presence or absence of patriotism in the songs sung by the working classes of Britain and Germany in the years before the First World War, it is time to assess what these men sang once they were acting in a truly patriotic fashion, fighting day to day along the battlefronts in France and Belgium. Not far behind the British lines, in the rest areas, existed a form of troop entertainment modelled closely upon music hall, with a certain amount of changes in song content to make it palatable to soldiers freshly returned from the trenches. A distinct lack of jingoism, a hatred of the home front, apathetic grousing, and parody characterized the songs as well as the attitudes of many of these men. Coming from a much more militarized society, the songs sung by German soldiers lacked the self-mocking tone of the British, although the ban on 'fatuous jingoism' was equally upheld. Also reflected in German song was a complex portrayal of the enemy, as well as a deeper anti-war tradition.

From the opening of the war, with its hit "Tipperary", music hall was the entertainment of choice among the Poor Bloody Infantry of Great Britain, and this enormously popular social institution was transported almost up to the trenches themselves. By early-1915, it was recognized that some form of semi-permanant entertainment was needed for the soldiers, and thus certain men were relieved of all extra duties and formed singing troupes to perform music hall songs and skits in divisional concert

parties held in the rest areas often only a few miles behind the lines. Typical theatres held 400 to 800 people and were tremendously well-received.[1] The singing of music hall songs along the British lines was ubiquitous, and although it was too dangerous to sing while in the trenches, as this would give one's position away, there are accounts of "music hall tunes [being] hammered out on innumerable machine guns".[2] The presence and popularity of music hall, as well as the fact that, despite its rabid jingoism, going to the music hall was still extremely popular with troops on leave, goes against the argument that there existed some wholly autonomous 'trench culture'. Although, as will be seen below, the war experience did alter to some degree what was and was not acceptable to the soldiers, they were ultimately unable to view their predicament "totally outside traditional frames of reference".[3]

The clearest example of a 'break' from tradition occurred in the complete absence of the jingoistic songs which had been so popular in the music hall of 1870 to 1914. In what seems to have been a recognition by frontline soldiers that, to a certain degree, they had been hoodwinked, any song, regardless of the actual text, that was associated with the 'patriotic fervour' which swept the nation in 1914 was categorically dismissed, as exampled by any singing of "Tipperary" being quickly whistled down by the troops in France before the end of that year.[4] This is not to say that the

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[1]J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 94-98.

[2]J. Brophy and E. Partridge, eds., *The Long Trail: What the British Soldier Sang and Said in the Great War of 1914-1918* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1965), 23; Fuller, 122.

[3]Fuller, 176.

[4]Brophy, 213.

soldiers abstained from all forms of arrogance, but merely that it was redirected from that of a questionable national patriotism into that of pride in one's own group of comrades. Hence the popularity of such 'divisional songs' as this one from the 29th:

> With a roll of drum, the division came
> Hotfoot to the battle's blast;
> When the good Red Sign swings into the line,
> Oh! There they'll fight to the last.[5]

The question raised by the dismissal of aggressive patriotism is: What did the British soldier believe he was fighting for? Straightforward protection of the homeland could refer only to the French. Thus it would seem, and as will be argued below, the maintenance of the status quo, or, put more positively, the preservation of a 'way of life',[6] was the main impetus behind the actions of the soldiers. J.G. Fuller goes into great detail describing how football, which had a ubiquity beyond that of even music hall, served constantly to remind soldiers of the lifestyle they had had at home, and which, presumably, they believed was somehow being threatened by the German invasion of their 'ally of the moment', France. With the inclusion of officers on the pitch, and the egalitarianism arising out of their acceptance of being called by their Christian names, as well as a host of other names that would surely lead to court-martial if uttered under 'normal' circumstances, a mini-*Burgfrieden* existed, again reminding the soldiers of a common cultural heritage.[7] The greatest example of this mixture of tradition in absurd circumstances is the much

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[5]Fuller, 103.

[6]Ibid., 89.

[7]Ibid., 85-94.

documented practice of kicking footballs ahead of a charge toward the 'Bosche'.[8]

It is the portrayal of the 'Bosche', or German soldier, however, where once again an important break occurs between the view of the traditional home front music hall, and the opinion of the British soldiers. Glaring examples of the reluctance to exterminate the enemy occurred up and down the front lines with the famous 'live and let live' system, which allowed for specific days of the week to repair trenches and retrieve the wounded.[9] The most famous rebuttal of the myth of bloodthirsty enemies of course occurred during the unofficial exchange of gifts on Christmas Day, 1914. The feelings expressed in Sapper Garfield Powell's following letter were common:

> I was shocked to hear that Tom had been wounded. One thinks that I would feel anger, burning anger, against the Germans. Not so! The whole damned show is so impersonal that one cannot (at least I cannot) feel any personal emotion (except, perhaps, fear) when in the thick of things. Hope, revenge, anger, contempt – any of these would be a sustaining emotion in action; but very few experience them, I believe.[10]

And finally, the refusal of Tommy to see the German opposite as anything more than a fellow victim, is clearly shown in his preference for calling him 'Johnny', 'the Allemand' (or 'Alleyman'), 'Old Fritz', or 'Old Jerry'. 'Hun' was contemptibly defined as "a popular word with the pulpit and with part of the press".[11]

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[8]Ibid., 137.

[9]See T. Ashworth, *Trench Warfare, 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System* (New York: Macmillan, 1980), *passim*.

[10]M. Brown, *Tommy Goes to War* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1978), 104.

[11]Fuller, 39; Denis Winter has several amusing anecdotes concerning how long it took the home front to catch on that they were now supposed to *hate* the Germans; "The *Sphere* on 8 August advertised a trip to Hamburg at 45S. return and a week later was still

'Hatred' is not too strong a word to describe how many soldiers felt about the press, and the resulting misconceptions espoused by the home front. London newspapers would be referred to as 'The Daily Liar', and the following poem appeared in a troop journal in September 1918:

> You write about the 'fray',
> From some place miles away,
> You're giving us what Tommy calls the 'dirts'!
> With your 'majesty of war',
> And our 'eagerness for more' –
> Remember that this rubbish sort of hurts.[12]

Among the invaluable information collected by John Brophy and Eric Partridge in their *Songs and Slang of the British Soldier: 1914-1918* (1930), are a collection of ironic meanings attached to many of the mindlessly repeated propagandistic sayings of the home front:

> 'Kitchener Wants You' – became a method of telling a man he had been selected for some especially disgusting, arduous or dangerous duty ... 'Remember Belgium' – was heard with ironic and bitter intonations in the muddy wastes of the Ypres Salient. Another 'slogan' from recruiting posters repeated scathingly in times of distress and misery was: 'What Did You Do in the Great War, Daddy?'[13]

This resentment spilled over into song, with the refrain of the popular recruiting ditty, "Your King and Country Need You":

> Oh! We don't want to lose you
> But we think you ought to go,

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advertising German cameras." (23). And "the Swindon *Advertiser* carried an advertisement from the Dresden Conservatoire after a week of fighting. This announced the fifty-ninth year of Dresden's courses in music and the start of a new season on 1 April 1915. Prospectuses were available from the Directorium 'on the expectation of a speedy return to normal'," D. Winter, *Death's Men: Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Allen Lane, 1978), 24.

[12]Fuller, 151.

[13]Brophy, 222-223. All references are to the 1965 edition already cited. The original is J. Brophy and E. Partridge, eds., *Songs and Slang of the British Soldier: 1914-1918* (London: Eric Partridge Press, 1930). UBC library contains a signed copy from the first printing of 1,000.

For your king and country
Both need you so;
We shall want you and miss you
But with all our might and main
We shall cheer you, thank you, kiss you
When you come back again.

being bitterly parodied and often sung in the trenches in the following way:

Oh! We don't want your loving,
And it's time for you to go,
For your songs and your speeches
They bore us so.
We don't like your sing-songs,
And we loathe your refrain,
And we'll hate you, boo you, hiss you,
If you sing it again![14]

These same sentiments appear in what was, importantly, the only 'anti-shirker' song to achieve popularity during the war. "I Wore a Tunic" was set to the melody of a popular sentimental ballad of the time, "I Wore a Tulip":

I wore a tunic,
A dirty khaki-tunic,
And you wore civilian clothes.
We fought and bled at Loos
While you were on the booze,
The booze that no one here knows.

Oh, you were with the wenches
While we were in the trenches
Facing the German foe.
Oh, you were a-slacking
While we were attacking
Down the Menin Road.[15]

While this is the only popular song expressing disdain for those who avoided military service, the record of hatred for the 'fatuous jingoism' of

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[14]R. Baker, introduction to *Great Songs of the Great War* (London: VT Cassette Production, 1989), [Song sheets and recordings of First World War soldiers' songs].

[15]Brophy, 47.

the home front is long. However, as the following soldiers' songs will show, a form of apathetic acceptance of their lot is often in evidence.

Before proceeding, however, it should be said that my use of the word 'apathy' describes a genre of song which in turn speaks to an ever-present aspect of the struggle for hegemony: the belief by many members of the subordinate classes that the status quo is something that needs to be accepted and, in terms of the war experience, 'muddled through'. A 'culturalist' notion of apathy has often been applied to the trench-soldiers of World War One, sometimes to an absurd extreme: "[m]any of the rank-and-file were in fact better off in the trenches than at home. The troops themselves therefore were cheerful and stoical rather than outraged and introspective, a fact which deeply puzzled the war writers."[16] An acceptance of 'the way things are' is however often in evidence among soldiers' songs, such as this very popular tune set to the air of "Auld Lang Syne":

> We're here
> Because
> We're here
> Because
> We're here
> Because we're here.[17]

To this theme belongs the famous soldier's pastime: 'grousing'. The understanding that it was a good idea to let a soldier complain endlessly

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[16]Corelli Barnett, quoted in D. Englander and J. Osborne, "Jack, Tommy, and Henry Dubb: The Armed Forces and the Working Class," *The Historical Journal* 21, no. 3 (1978): 595. It would seem that Barnett has read a little too much on the 'pessimist' side of industrialisation, and not enough about the true horrors of war. Englander has written about the 'indiscipline' among wartime British soldiers in his attempt to disprove the 'apathy' thesis. Unfortunately, the '100 year-rule' on court-martial records has prevented a truly in depth investigation into this phenomenon.

[17]Brophy, 37.

about his duty, knowing that he ultimately *would* do it, seemed to exist at all levels of the army. A troop journal of July 1916 makes this abundantly clear:

> Grouse do I? Well, why grudge a soul its salve,
> Engines would burst without a safety valve.[18]

An example in song is "Raining":

> Raining, raining, raining,
> Always bloodywell raining.
> Raining all the morning,
> And raining all the night.
>
> Grousing, grousing, grousing,
> Always bloodywell grousing.
> Grousing at the rations,
> And grousing at the pay.
>
> Marching, marching, marching,
> Always bloodywell marching.
> Marching all the morning,
> And marching all the night.
>
> Marching, marching, marching,
> Always bloodywell marching;
> When the war is over
> We'll damn well march no more.[19]

This sentiment, that soldiering is abhorrent but simply must be accepted 'for the duration', at which time these 'civilian' recruits can return to 'normal', is again expressed in the popular song "When this Ruddy War is Over", sung to the air of "What a Friend We have in Jesus":

> When this ruddy war is over
> Oh, how happy I shall be!
> When I get my civvy clothes on,
> No more soldiering for me.
> No more standing-to in trenches,
> Only one more church parade,
> No more shiv'ring on the fire step,

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[18]Fuller, 131.

[19]Brophy, 45.

No more Tickler's marmalade.[20]

And this was indeed the case, when, in 1918-19 British troops mutinied, so impatient were they to get home. These men were 'civilians in uniform', and "there was nothing to compare with the great national myths of 1793 in France and 1813 in Germany, which associated these armies with popular liberty and defence of the homeland."[21] The army had never enjoyed popularity in Britain, and thus a major difference existed between the British on the one hand, and the French and Germans on the other. Unlike their continental counterparts, the common British soldier had no problem levelling a derisory amount of fire upon the institution of the army, a tradition already very popular prior to 1914 with many parodies of the Volunteers.[22] There are many examples in soldiers' songs reflecting how the average 'civilian soldier' considered his stint in the army:

> We are the boys who fear no noise
> When the thundering cannons roar.
> We are the heroes of the night
> And we'd sooner —— than fight,
> We're the heroes of the Skin-back Fusiliers.[23]

or:

> What did you join the Army for?
> Why did you join the Army?
> What did you join the Army for?
> You must have been bloodywell barmy.[24]

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[20]Baker, "Great Songs".

[21]Fuller, 32-33.

[22]Ibid., 144, 159.

[23]Brophy, 56. It is easy to imagine what the elided word is, as Brophy and Partridge explain that the only words they deem unfit for print are 'fuck' and 'cunt'.

[24]Ibid., 45.

and:

> Left! Left! I had a good job when I left.
> Left! Left! I had a good home when I left.
> Left! Left! Oh, what a pity I left!
> Left! Left![25]

This same theme, the recognition that the army is not at all what it's cracked up to be and that one should have stayed at home, appears in this parody of the popular hit "Ragtime Lover":

> He's a ragtime soldier,
> Ragtime soldier.
> Early on parade every morning,
> Standing to attention with his rifle in his hand.
> He's a ragtime soldier,
> As happy as the flowers in May
> (I don't think!),
> Fighting for his King and his Country,
> All for a shilling a day.[26]

Brophy and Partridge argue that parody and mockery "subtract from [the] victory" of the Juggernaut of war. In times of emotional stress these songs served to diminish fear, and Fuller agrees, explaining how humour served to "take the sting out of serious grievances". For example, "[t]he *5th Glo'ster Gazette* pictured two men meeting chest-deep in a flooded trench: 'Bong jour Alf! Have you changed your socks today? If not, why not?'"[27] Divisional concert party programmes were replete with such requests as: "[d]uring the remainder of the War no person will be admitted to this

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[25]C. Pulling, *They Were Singing: And What They Sang About* (London: George G. Harrap, 1952), 83.

[26]Brophy, 58.

[27]Fuller, 127. Another example is the story "of a man finding a service cap lying on the surface of the mud. Picking it up, he found a man immersed up to his neck underneath. The finder earnestly enquired of the man thus buried whether he was all right, and received the reply that he was indeed fine, but a little concerned about the driver of the motor bus on which he was riding," (101-102).

theatre in Evening Dress",[28] and the performers were only too happy when the home front music hall produced a satire good enough to be delivered, unadulterated, in the form it had arrived, such as the famous "Oh! Oh! Oh! It's a Lovely War" of 1916:

> Up to your waist in water,
> Up to your eyes in slush;
> Using the kind of language
> That makes the sergeant blush,
> Who wouldn't join the Army?
> That's what we all enquire,
> Don't we pity the poor civilians
> Sitting beside the fire?
>
> Oh! Oh! Oh! It's a lovely war
> Who wouldn't be a soldier, eh?
> Oh! It's a shame to take the pay.
> As soon as reveille has gone,
> We feel just as heavy as lead
> But we never get up till the sergeant
> Brings our breakfast up to bed.
> Oh! Oh! Oh! It's a lovely war,
> What do we want with eggs and ham
> When we've got plum and apple jam?
> Form fours! Right turn!
> How we shall spend the money we earn,
> Oh! Oh! Oh! It's a lovely war.[29]

The sergeant appearing above was often subject to parody, as in:

> The Sergeant-Major's having a time
> Parley-vous!
> The Sergeant-Major's having a time
> Parley-vous!
> The Sergeant-Major's having a time
> —— the girls behind the line,
> Inky-pinky parley-vous![30]

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[28]Brown, 132.

[29]Baker, "Great Songs".

[30]Brophy, 51.

Importantly, those being mocked would sit among the audience, implicitly giving their acceptance to this, another example of 'blowing off steam'.[31] The need to let the 'boys' have their fun extended even to the level of allowing the portrayal of cowardice by non-commisioned officers:

> We've got a sergeant-major,
> Who's never seen a gun;
> He's mentioned in despatches
> For drinking privates' rum,
> And when he sees old Jerry
> You should see the bugger run
> Miles and miles and miles behind the lines![32]

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When discussing the so-called 'anti-war' songs of the pre-1914 music hall, it was pointed out that these were in fact merely mocking the cowardice of the singer, such as Alfred Lester's lines "Call out my mother, my sister and my brother / But for God's sake don't send me".[33] Lester's, as well as several others of this genre, enjoyed considerable popularity among the troops as well. For example, "I Don't Want to Die":

> I want to go home,
> I want to go home,
> I don't want to go in the trenches no more,
> Where whizz-bangs and shrapnel they whistle and roar.
> Take me over the sea
> Where the Alleyman can't get at me.
> Oh my,
> I don't want to die,
> I want to go home.[34]

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[31]Fuller, 102.

[32]Brophy, 40.

[33]See ch. 2, 41-42, above.

[34]Brophy, 55.

These songs fail to criticize war in any way serious enough to label them truly 'anti-war', and often completely mock the idea of turning against the system:

> I don't want to be a soldier,
> I don't want to go to war.
> I'd rather stay at home,
> Around the streets to roam,
> And live on the earnings of a well-paid whore.
> I don't want a bayonet up my arse-hole,
> I don't want my ballocks shot away.
> I'd rather stay in England,
> In merry, merry England,
> And —— my bloody life away.[35]

For such a popular song to equate the avoidance of war with "fucking one's bloody life away" indicates that the hegemonic ideology so influencing popular culture during the period 1870-1914 seems to have held sway even when its victims were presented daily with the absurdity of killing fellow working-class Germans they often regarded as equal sufferers. However, in the last section of British soldiers' songs to be investigated there is evidence of 'cracks' in the system, small but powerful indications that these soldiers realized, at least to some degree, the injustice of their position.

Solid examples of dissent, such as some soldiers' refusal to sing the anthem in 1918, are few, but there are some songs, often sung privately among the rank-and-file, and rather uncomfortably, if ever, in front of officers at concert parties, which go beyond Brophy and Partridge's explanation (regarding all songs that were not straightforwardly pro-military) that "these songs satirized more than war: they poked fun at the soldier's own desire for peace and rest, and so prevented it from

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[35]Ibid., 67.

overwhelming his will to go on doing his duty. They were not symptoms of defeatism, but strong bulwarks against it."[36] There seems to be something beyond 'poking fun' occurring in the sentiments expressed in the following two songs:

> Old soldiers never die,
> Never die,
> Never die,
> Old soldiers never die –
> They simply fade away.
>
> Old soldiers never die,
> Never die,
> Never die,
> Old soldiers never die –
> Young ones with they would.[37]

and:

> If you want to find the C.O.,
> I know where he is, I know where he is.
> If you want to find the C.O.,
> I know where he is,
> He's down in the deep dug-outs.
> I've seen him, I've seen him,
> Down in the deep dug-outs,
> I've seen him,
> Down in the deep dug-outs.
>
> If you want to find the old battalion,
> I know where they are, I know where they are.
> If you want to find the old battalion,
> I know where they are,
> They're hanging on the old barbed wire.
> I've seen 'em, I've seen 'em,
> Hanging on the old barbed wire,
> I've seen 'em,
> Hanging on the old barbed wire.[38]

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[36]Ibid., 18.

[37]Ibid., 59.

[38]Ibid., 62.

The 'joking', 'fun' style of parody concerning officers could take a very bitter, and treasonous, turn when there were too many incidents such as the one described by a soldier at the Somme: "a group of staff officers appeared and we stood to attention. One of them asked our corp., 'Why haven't these men shaved?' I could have shot him without compunction."[39] In fact, murder is the theme of the following two pieces:

> Oh, we haven't seen the sergeant for a hell of a time,
> Perhaps he's gone up with a mine.
> He's a sergeant in the Rifle Brigade,
> Well, strafe him, he's no cousin of mine.[40]

and the following chant, entitled "Greeting to the Sergeant":

> You've got a kind face, you old bastard,
> You ought to be bloodywell shot:
> You ought to be tied to a gun-wheel,
> And left there to bloodywell rot.[41]

Finally, many soldiers seemed to mix the grousing acceptance noted above with a sometimes clear recognition of the power structures in place. Hence the popularity at the front of a famous pre-war working-class tune, "It was Christmas Day in the Workhouse":

> It was Christmas Day in the workhouse,
> That season of good cheer.
> The paupers' hearts were merry,
> Their bellies full of beer.
> The pompous workhouse master,
> As he strode about the halls,
> Wished them a Merry Christmas,
> But the paupers answered 'Balls!'
> This angered the workhouse master,
> Who swore by all the gods
> That he'd stop their Christmas pudden,

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[39]Fuller, 61.

[40]Brophy, 47.

[41]Ibid., 67.

The dirty rotten sods.
Then up spake a bald-headed pauper,
His face as bold as brass,
'You can keep your Christmas pudden
And stick it up your arse!'[42]

It is important to note that the wildly popular "Pack Up Your Troubles" of 1915, sung fervently both at home and at the front, repeats the word 'smile' seven times in its refrain, as if, only one year into the war, everyone needed convincing:

Pack up your troubles
In your old kit bag
And smile, smile, smile;
While you've a Lucifer to light your fag
Smile boys, that's the style.
What's the use of worrying?
It never was worth while,
So – Pack up your troubles
In your old kit bag
And smile, smile, smile.[43]

* * * * * *

Unfortunately, there are no German equivalents for John Brophy and Eric Partridge, and such a vast, uncensored array of soldiers' songs known unquestioningly to have been sung by the rank-and-file at the front, does not exist for Germany. However, there is one fascinating source which brings us close enough to 'what really happened' that one may hazard some cursory observations concerning what and why German soldiers sang what they did. Beginning at the end of 1914, and for the remainder of the war, a folk-song specialist named John Meier was allowed by the Army to send out questionnaires to soldiers of all ranks, asking them to list the

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[42]Ibid., 64.

[43]Baker, "Great Songs".

songs they sang, and to include the lyrics. The response was enthusiastic and many rank-and-file troops contributed to the collection, giving the researcher of today the right to assume that these songs indeed reflect, at least to some degree, the attitudes of the working-class soldiers. Concerning censorship, needless to say, the soldiers who wrote were careful about submitting treasonous lyrics to a body they knew little about, but from other sources we have evidence of virulently anti-war songs, as will be noted below. With regard to the absence of parody, which will also be discussed below, it is somewhat doubtful that harmless parody, if it existed, would have been disallowed, as there are many examples of uncensored ribaldry.[44] Thus, in the words of Reinhard Olt, the modern day Brophy/Partridge who, in 1981 gathered together all of Meier's work into two volumes with his own extensive analysis, as *Krieg und Sprache: Untersuchungen zu deutschen Soldatenliedern des Ersten Weltkriegs* (War and Language: Investigations into German Soldiers' Songs of the First World War), concludes that the songs can be considered at least 'quasi-representative' of the attitudes of the typical German soldier.[45]

It is one of the oldest stereotypes to say that Germans have no sense of humour, and while this is of course absolutely false, a comparison of British and German soldiers' songs would definitely point in that direction. The clearest explanation for this lack of self-mockery in the German army, as already alluded to above, was the deeper and more

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[44]R. Olt, *Krieg und Sprache: Untersuchungen zu deutschen Soldatenliedern des Ersten Weltkriegs*, 2 Vols., in *Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie* (Giessen: Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, 1980-81), 2-3. For example: "Sie war das Mädchen von der Artillerie / Die ließ sich ficken von der Infanterie", 210.

[45]Ibid., 236.

respectable army tradition in Germany.[46] These men were not the straightforward 'citizens in uniform' of the British army. They were reservists, having most often spent two years previously in the military. Due in some ways to how difficult those years in the army must have been for most, this institution was something to be accepted or despised, but not glibly mocked in the manner of the British. Some level of humour existed, such as songs about prostitution, but the parody of war was definitely light by British standards:

> Dann saßen wir vier Wochen lang
> Im schönen Dorf Fricourt.
> Zum Frühstück gab's Granaten dort
> Und mittags Schrapnells nur.
>
> Then we sat for four weeks long
> In the beautiful village of Fricourt.
> For breakfast there were Grenades
> And midday only schrapnel.[47]

Importantly, the great majority of these soldiers' songs existed before 1914, and as recruits often sang during their pre-war, two years service, many of the songs were easily accepted as part of a culture with which they were already familiar.

Although some of the songs submitted are patriotic, it seems that the same hatred for jingoistic songs seen among British working-class soldiers held true on the German side of the front as well. Weiss Ferdl, a famous Munich singer who was a full-time front-line troop entertainer "found that soldiers who had seen action in battle knew the war too well to

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[46]See S. Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War, 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War* (Providence, RI: Berg, 1992). Both continental traditions are discussed in this book.

[47]Olt, 141. (All translations of Olt are mine).

enjoy this glib patriotism".[48] The Germans again mirror their British counterparts by instead channelling arrogance into divisional/regimental songs, for the examples of these are many:

> Das stolze Jägerbataillon
> Mit seinen scharfen Schützen:
> Sie schießen eins, zwei, drei,
> Nie an dem Feind vorbei.
>
> The proud Jägerbattaillon
> With its sharp marksmen:
> They shoot one, two, three,
> Never past the enemy.[49]

In such songs, Olt finds an ever-increasing emphasis on the *Wir* (We/Us) orientation of soldiers, so emphasized by Rohkrämer in his discussion of the psychology of German recruits. As the war progressed, it would seem, the German soldiers felt a stronger need to identify with their fellow comrades, perhaps realizing, as did the Tommies, that not only were the troops across No Man's Land the enemy, but the leaders and civilians of the home front as well.

The portrayal of the enemy (Feindbild) is indeed where Olt focuses much of his analysis. The songs address the enemy as both the typical soldier as well as an abstract political figure, much like the British with 'Old Fritz' and 'The Kaiser'. Two examples of the first form, importantly employing the informal manner of address, speak to the most common enemy on the Western Front, the French soldier:

> O Franzmann schlau,
> Wie kannst du hurtig springen,
> Wenn Grenadier' und Pionier'

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[48]R.E. Sackett, *Popular Entertainment, Class, and Politics in Munich, 1900-1923* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 71.

[49]Olt, 141.

Mit Handgrant' begegnen Dir.

Oh wiley Franzmann,
How quickly you can jump,
When Grenadiers and Sappers
With grenades into you bump.[50]

And the following, with its thick Bavarian accent:

Na, grüss di Gott, Mei Franzl schön,
Was schön'res kann's doch gar net geb'n.

Well, good day to you, my beautiful Franzl,
There surely is nothing more beautiful.[51]

And in a startling example of laying blame not on fellow soldiers, but on the abstract leaders of the enemy:

Wenn Kanonen und Haubitzen
Auf uns Deutsche niederblitzen,
Infanterie kennt kein Pardon,
Wenn es heißt Poincaré.

When cannons and howitzers
Blast down onto us Germans,
The Infantry knows no pardon,
If the name is Poincaré.[52]

Finally, the polarized society of pre-1914 Germany provided a still viable anti-war tradition with the SPD, and, unlike the British, it is known that many truly anti-war songs were sung by these soldiers, many of whom were of course members of the SPD. They gained in popularity with the onset of *Kriegsmüdigkeit* (war-weariness) in 1915, and probably

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[50]Ibid., 121.

[51]Ibid., 122.

[52]Ibid., 123. It is Olt's opinion that such sentiments, attempting to elevate the conflict to one between evil politicians, occur often in German First World War One songs, as an attempt by the soldiers to somehow alleviate the sense of war guilt they might have had on the Western Front, seeing as they were clearly the aggressors, and had dug their defensive positions into obviously French and Belgian soil (129). The fact that the British did the same, with songs about 'the Kaiser', while defending the French on French soil, would seem to diminish the strength of such an argument.

the most famous was set to the melody of "Hinaus in die Ferne" (Out into the Distance):

> Wir kämpfen nicht für Vaterland,
> Wir kämpfen nicht für Gott,
> Wir kämpfen für die Reichen,
> Die Armen gehn kapott.
>
> We aren't fighting for the Fatherland,
> We aren't fighting for God,
> We're fighting for the rich,
> The poor are being broken.[53]

And the same Weiss Ferdl, who began the war so full of patriotism, was by 1918 writing clearly anti-war material. One song, after describing how the ordinary soldier Sepp Huber has realized, after a visit to his loving wife, that going home is a lot more important to him than killing French and Englishmen, concludes with the following stanza:

> The people of Europe are following the lesson
> Of Sepp – it isn't dumb.
> Sell the cannons and the rifles,
> And kill each other no more.[54]

* * * * * *

At first glance, the total absence of jingoism, along with a neutral, almost positive, portrayal of the enemy, in the soldiers' songs of 1914-18, indicate a sense of discontinuity with the traditions of the home front. Closer analysis, however, reveals deeply entrenched ideologies being reflected by these working-class soldiers, from the mocking of cowardice and those who refuse to fight, to a grousing acceptance of the war, paralleled by a deeply held belief that fighting the enemy truly encompassed the protection of an

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[53]H. Strohbach, *Deutsches Volkslied in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980), 101.

[54]Sackett, 72.

entire 'way of life'. While the British and German songs differ due to the distinct military traditions of each nation, they mirror each other in important ways. The soldiers on each side of No Man's Land were engaged in an activity they found repulsive, and while both sides sometimes sang songs which began to reach a level of dissent rarely found back at home, ultimately an acceptance of the status quo, and thus the reigning belief system which deemed this war justified, was grudgingly accepted by both Tommy and Old Fritz.

EPILOGUE

In his remarkable recent work, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (1995), Jay Winter adds considerable weight to the 'anti-modernist' debate that there was far more continuity throughout the period of the First World War than has been traditionally argued. He believes that we have been misled by those studies of 'high' art where the analysts only see 'breaks' with the past, only rejection. His study of the process and ritual of bereavement among French, British, and German survivors of the war, both during and after the cataclysm, provides numerous examples of what he terms 'traditional' modes of mourning, through the use of nineteenth-century symbolism and language, at both the 'high' and 'low' levels of culture.[1] The argument for 'continuities' in the so-called 'autonomous' trench culture of World War One had gained considerable momentum with Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau's 1986 study *14-18 Les Combattants des tranchées* (translated in 1992 as *Men at War, 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War*), and, concerning the British, it was Winter's student, J.G. Fuller, who discovered the same transference of tradition occurring in his study of trench journals and 'life behind the lines'.[2]

It is toward this new school of thought that the very tentative findings of this thesis seem to lead. Winter does not deny that there were changes in cultural codes, only that they occurred alongside, and often in subordination to, 'traditional' modes

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[1]J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Winter argues that it is with the Second World War that a major break occurs, our language being insufficient to tackle such incredible concepts as Hitler, Hiroshima, and the Holocaust.

[2]S. Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War, 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War*, trans. H. McPhail (Providence, RI: Berg, 1992); originally published as *14-18 Les Combattants des tranchées* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1986); J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

of communication, and this study of patriotism in song, both before and during the Great War, reinforces this idéa. Straightforward jingoistic songs were no longer sung in the trenches by late 1914, but the acceptance of patriotic duty, fighting and dying for the maintenance of the status quo, continued to appear in song throughout the conflict, and was rarely questioned. Winter's 'traditional mode' is here likened to Gramsci's 'hegemonic ideology', and the numerous examples of parody, and sometimes clearly anti-patriotic tunes, which represent a (modernist) break from tradition, are seen to be 'sites of struggle', manifestations of the incessant 'negotiation' occurring between those giving the orders, and those grudgingly carrying them out.

The persistence of this 'struggle', discussed from a Foucauldian perspective, is apparent in a well-received recent work by Leonard W. Smith. In his *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War One* (1994), Smith discusses the gray area which must have existed between 'the order' and the 'following of the order', for many commands of the French Army demanded that certain objectives be taken *coûte que coûte* (at whatever cost). That, upon the failure to attain these goals, one hundred percent casualties never occurred means that these orders were never completely fulfilled, and Smith argues that, as the war continued on relentlessly, the sense of 'power from below' (an aspect of Foucault's 'biopolitics') increased, until finally, mutinies on a massive scale began to occur in 1917.[3]

While examples of growing dissent can be seen in the British and German armies, from the scattered refusals to sing "God Save the King" in 1918, to the growing prominence of group solidarity in German soldiers' songs as the war

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[3]L.V. Smith, *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War One* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3-19.

progressed, it is highly significant that neither of these nationalities mutinied on the scale of the French. On the British side, the idea of the 'civilian in uniform' seems to hold many clues as to why this was the case. What did the 'new patriotic songs' mean to a people who had little traditional respect for the army, and no history of universal conscription? What is the connection between Tommy's ceaseless mocking of the army and his refusal to truly challenge it? While attempting to answer these questions, this thesis has perhaps only served to make these problems more apparent. On the German side, the amount of work yet to be done is staggering. Reference has already been made to the relative lack of information on soldiers' songs, but in an even more glaring gap, the trench journals of the German Army, their French and British equivalents having already been analyzed to the momentous gain of their respective national histories, collect dust in the *Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte* in Stuttgart. Only when these documents find their historian will we be able to attempt a truly comparative study of the culture of the Tommies, *Lanzer*, and *poilus* of the First World War.

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