

University of Brighton

Understanding Conflict: Forms and Legacies of Violence

Research Cluster's project on 'Contesting Britain at War'

Workshop 8-9 June, 2017

Contesting Britain at War:

Britain has been almost continually at war since 1914, including the two World Wars, colonial engagements in Africa, the Middle East and in East Asia, war in the Malvinas/Falklands and in the north of Ireland/Northern Ireland, and further interventions in the Middle East as part of the 'war on terror'.

The Conflict Cluster is proposing a long-term project on 'Contesting Britain at War'. Through an interdisciplinary nexus of historical, political, sociological, philosophical and visual modes of critical inquiry, this project will explore how these wars have been criticised, opposed and contested, both at home and — crucially — abroad by both academics and by activists. These contestations range from large anti-war protest movements and anti-colonial struggles to smaller, everyday acts of resistance and revolt. Contesting Britain at War is also a matter of critical reflection on the injustice of war and of theoretical analyses of, and activist challenges to, the role war plays in legitimising other forms of political action, including the building of nuclear weapons, the building of military bases, the suspension of civil liberties and practices of internment, rendition and torture. Finally, Contesting Britain at War involves direct action and support for those negatively affected by war, including recent cross-border activist support for refugees displaced by war.

Workshop Aims:

1. understanding multi-sited modes of 'contesting Britain at war' and locating solidarities between different sites of contestation;
2. understanding historical & conceptual continuities and discontinuities between different forms/tactics of contestation;
3. developing a cross-disciplinary and transnational network of scholarship and activism.

Day One: Thursday 8 June 2017 M2 Boardroom Grand Parade Campus

09:30 – 10:30 Arrival & coffee

10:00 – 11:00 Welcome and brief introductions by all participants

Break

11:15 – 13:00 Paper Presentations: Resistance to Empire

John Chalcraft, LSE

British Imperialism, Popular Protest and the Middle East:
the importance of a political analysis

Radha D'Souza, University of Westminster

Colonial Peoples in World War II: Interrogating the Hyphen in
Nation-State

David Anderson, University of Warwick

Britain and Kenya's Mau Mau Rebellion, 1952-2012

Sandra Plummer, UCL Slade School

Derry Camerawork: Community Photography's Challenge to Media
Depictions of the Troubles

Chair: **Cathy Bergin**, University of Brighton

13:00 – 14:00 *Lunch / Grand Parade Cafeteria*

14:00 – 15:30 Paper Presentations: Historical Erasure

John Newsinger, Bath Spa University

Imperial silences: developments in the historiography of British
Counterinsurgency

Louis Allday, SOAS

The Imperial War Museum, London: A Lesson in State Propaganda?

Lucy Newby, University of Brighton

Contesting historical erasure: the military targeting of children and
young people in Northern Ireland, 1969-1998

Chair: **Graham Dawson**, University of Brighton

Break

15:45 – 17:15 Paper Presentations: Peace-building and Anti-war Activism

Jonathan Evershed, Queen's University Belfast

'Shared Sacrifice': Necropolitics, peacebuilding and the First World
War centenary in Northern Ireland

Ingrid Sharp, University of Leeds

Gendered resistance to war in Britain and Germany

Aly Renwick, Veterans for Peace UK

Britannia Waives the Rules

Chair: **Eugene Michail**, University of Brighton (TBC)

17:15 – 17:30 End of day reflections

Day Two: Friday 9 June, Room 502, Dorset Place Campus

09:30 – 11:15

Session V: Critique of Militarisation and Securitisation

Mark McGovern, Edge Hill University

“Shuttle off this Mortal Coil you C***”: of Civilians, Barbarians and the Law

Sam Raphael, University of Westminster

Investigating British Torture in the “War on Terror”

Anna Stavrianakis, University of Sussex

“We have not assessed that there has been a breach”: managing contestation over UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia

Nadine Finch, University of Bristol

Whose War Children?

Chair: **Marina Espinoza**, University of Brighton

Break

11:30 – 13:00

Project planning

Ideas for developing the project: networks, collaborations, knowledge dissemination, web/teaching resources, funding schemes.

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch / Grand Parade Cafeteria

14:00 – 16:00

Working groups discussions

Break

16:15 – 17:00

Reports on ideas and action plans by groups

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

John Chalcraft, British Imperialism, Popular Protest and the Middle East: the importance of a political analysis

Imperialism, including British imperialism, has been written in progressive circles above all in terms either of capitalism (Amin, Callinicos, Colas, Gunther Frank, Harvey, Lenin, Luxembourg, Marx, Warren) or in terms of discourse (Bhaba, Cooper, Dirks, Hall, Massad, Prakash, Said, Spivak, Stoler, Young). Those emphasizing political dimensions have often been conservative historians (Abernathy, Doyle, Hyam, Lieven, Onley, Robinson and Gallagher). The critical history of the political means by which imperial rule was maintained and resisted has been underwritten. This paper contends that the history of popular protest in the MENA region in the face of British imperialism cannot be understood without a study of imperialism's political mechanisms of hegemonic incorporation. The most dramatic incidents of popular protest against British imperialism in the Middle East and North Africa, periods of quiescence, and occasional collaborations between protest and empire cannot be understood solely through the lens of capitalist development or struggles over representation. The origins, course and consequences of these popular contests against empire are best understood, this paper contends, in political perspective. This paper explores some dimensions of this in the light of my recent book *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*.

JOHN CHALCRAFT is Professor-elect at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). His research focuses on labour, survivalist enterprise, migration and contentious mobilisation in the Middle East. His most recent book is *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (CUP, 2016). His current research focuses on transnational activism.

Radha D'Souza, Colonial Peoples in World War II: Interrogating the Hyphen in Nation-State.

This paper focuses on ways in which Britain, United States, Germany and Russia (four of the five Allies and also empires) responded to the Indian independence movement during the World Wars and how racism and war aims of imperial powers played out.

RADHA D'SOUZA is a Reader in Law at the University of Westminster. Before coming to the University of Westminster, Radha practiced as a barrister in the High Court of Bombay and taught at the Universities of Auckland and Waikato in New Zealand. She is a freelance writer and social justice activist.

David Anderson, Britain and Kenya's Mau Mau Rebellion, 1952-2012

The counter-insurgency campaign fought in Kenya between 1952 and 1960 did more to undermine Britain's national consensus on the righteousness of empire than any other anti-colonial struggle has managed before or since. Over the course of a State of Emergency that lasted more than seven years, parliamentary questions and debates featuring the situation in Kenya took place once every fortnight, culminating in 1959 in opposition efforts to overthrow the fragile Conservative government with a vote of no confidence following the infamous Hola Massacre. Anti-colonial activist movements publicised abuse and atrocity committed in Kenya by British security forces from 1953, while so-called 'rebel sympathizers' smuggled letters out of Detention Camps after 1955 highlighting the misery and suffering of those interned without trial. The British public knew more about the conflict in Kenya in the 1950s than they would about any other imperial war in the modern era. Why then was the conflict so quickly forgotten after 1960? Memory of Mau Mau was suppressed by official denial and deceit in both Kenya and Britain, a sanitized and muted history of the war emerging from the deliberate censorship of evidence. Not until the end of the century, in the late 1990s in Kenya and from 2005 in Britain, would a new public discourse on the Mau Mau rebellion emerge, belatedly taking up the critique of the 1950s that focused on the violence, excess, and torture of a fiercely-fought and bitterly contested anti-colonial struggle. Any effort to understand British attitudes toward the wars of empire must begin by coming to terms with the dynamics of this Kenyan story, charting the role of ideologues, activists, story-tellers and truth-seekers in reconstructing the history of the Mau Mau rebellion.

DAVID ANDERSON is a professor of History at the University of Warwick. He is currently writing up the research findings from a project on 'Empire Loyalists: Histories of Rebellion and Collaboration', and working on a project on the history of insurgencies. His latest book, From Resistance to Rebellion in Colonial Kenya, 1890-1963, is in press.

Sandra Plummer, Derry Camerawork: Community Photography's Challenge to Media Depictions of the Troubles

My research investigates the archive of Derry Camerawork - a community photography project that ran from 1982 to 1992 in the city of Derry~Londonderry. By the early 1980s Derry had become one of the most photographed places in Europe, but media depictions were often dominated by 'decisive moments' of heightened violence. Moreover, coverage of Northern Ireland often demonstrated a consensus that denied the history of colonialism and laid the blame for the Troubles with the nationalist community. Derry Camerawork was initiated by local young people - predominantly working class women- who wished to counter the stereotypical representations of their city in the British mainstream press. Alongside pictures of republican funerals and confrontations with the British Army, are photographs of unionist parades and commemorations. Camerawork also documented community activism including women's liberation marches, anti-nuclear protests, and campaigns for better housing and employment. The archive provides unique insight into the lived reality of working-class communities most impacted by the Troubles, and by socio-

economic decline. Three decades on from when Derry Camerawork began, the recently digitised archive (comprising 30,000 images) is an important historic resource documenting the last decade of the Troubles.

SANDRA PLUMMER is an Honorary Research Associate at the UCL Slade School of Fine Art who has published in journals including *Photographies*, *Rhizomes*, and *Philosophy of Photography*. Her research on photographic representations of the Troubles was most recently presented at the 'Past Matters Research Futures – AHRC Early Career Conference'.

John Newsinger, Imperial silences: developments in the historiography of British Counterinsurgency

JOHN NEWSINGER is a professor of history at Bath Spa University. He has written several books including *The Blood That Never Dried: A People's History of the British Empire*

Louis Allday, The Imperial War Museum, London: A Lesson in State Propaganda?

LOUIS ALLDAY is currently a Gulf History and Arabic Language Specialist on a large-scale digitization project of British colonial records at the British Library in London. He is also a doctoral candidate at the Department of History, SOAS. His doctoral research relates to the British Government's presence in the Persian Gulf until 1971, with an emphasis on its cultural propaganda and educational activities. He previously completed both his BA (History) and MA (Near & Middle Eastern Studies) at SOAS.

Lucy Newby, Contesting historical erasure: the military targeting of children and young people in Northern Ireland, 1969-1998

This presentation will explore the ongoing findings of my inter-disciplinary research project, *'Reflecting upon youth experience during the Troubles in Belfast, 1969-1998.'* In particular, I will seek to develop a substantive critique of British military practices of targeting of children and young people during the Northern Irish Troubles, and the ways in which these practices have been subject to processes of 'historical erasure' in the 'post-conflict' present. As part of my project, I have created a database of youthful conflict-related deaths in Belfast, Northern Ireland. This seeks to document the circumstances of youthful killings, their treatment in state inquests and judicial processes, and their subsequent memorial treatment in the 'post-conflict' era. I will reflect upon the utility of this database as a resource for challenging the historical erasure of military practices of youthful targeting in Belfast, and for re-centering such practices in contemporary understandings of the Northern Irish conflict in the 'post-conflict' era.

LUCY NEWBY was granted an AHRC-funded doctoral studentship at the University in Brighton in 2015. Her current research is an oral history project focusing on memories of youthful conflict experience in Belfast, 1969-1998. The project employs an inter-disciplinary framework to explore youthful experiences of the Troubles, whilst examining their emotional, cultural and socio-political legacies for individuals and communities in the present.

Johnathan Evershed, 'Shared Sacrifice': Necropolitics, peacebuilding and the First World War centenary in Northern Ireland

My research has interrogated (and been highly critical of) the way peacebuilding policy has reconstructed the First World War as an anti-political 'shared' history for Unionists and Nationalists in Northern Ireland, in an attempt to mitigate or circumscribe political differences between them in the present. I have examined how this is (deliberately) divorced from broader analysis of Britain's imperial heritage and, thereby, how it reinforces dangerous attempts on the part of Michael Gove and others to (re)frame the First World War as a 'good' war. My central contention is that social memory of the First World War and its ritual enactment have an affective and political authenticity which transcend these 'revisionist' attempts to sanction or discipline it. Perhaps counter-intuitively, even within Ulster Loyalism – a social formation or cultural category which is conventionally viewed as inherently violent – commemoration provides a forum in which a rejection of violence and a re-dedication to peace can be negotiated.

***JONATHAN EVERSLED** lectures in Politics and International Relations at the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) Global Institute in London. He is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast, where he completed his PhD in 2017. He is currently working on his first monograph: *Ghosts of the Somme: Commemoration and Culture War in Northern Ireland*, due to be published by the University of Notre Dame Press in 2018.*

Ingrid Sharp, Gendered resistance to war in Britain and Germany

My paper will focus on the First World War and outline how resistance to the war and its representation was gendered. I will look at the model of feminist pacifism and the gendered understanding of violence and war developed by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom from 1915 and through the interwar years. I will offer case studies from the UK and Germany, looking especially at tensions during the German revolutions of 1918 between the commitment to non-violence within the international women's organisation and the desire to bring about social and gender justice.

***INGRID SHARP** is Professor of German Cultural and Gender History in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies at the University of Leeds. She is currently researching cultures of resistance in Germany during and after the First World War. She leads a project on women's role in the German Revolution of November 1918.*

Aly Renwick, Britannia Waives the Rules

In 1969, a new version of the British Army's secret training manual, Land Operations, was produced. Called Counter-Revolutionary Operations, it drew together all the army had learned during the run down of empire - in places like Malaya, Kenya, Aden and Cyprus. Later that year, in the north of Ireland on 14th August, soldiers of the first Battalion, the Prince of Wales' Own, were ordered out onto the streets of Derry. After a brief 'honeymoon' period, the army, while claiming to be 'peacekeepers,' launched a series of assaults against Nationalist areas. These included 'The Falls Curfew' (July 1970), 'Internment' (August 1971), 'Bloody Sunday' (January 1972) and 'Operation

Motorman' (July 1972). Over that period active membership of an almost defunct IRA rose dramatically - as did the support for its armed struggle. Actions by Western armies, in that or similar situations, raise many questions, including: Are we told the truth about why our armed forces take part in conflicts? Do army actions stop, or create, opposition? Are we told the truth about the actions of our soldiers? Who benefits from army interventions? Is it the opposition or the army who are the 'terrorists'?

ALY RENWICK joined the British Army at sixteen years of age in 1960. After purchased his discharge in 1968 he became an anti-war campaigner and writer. He was a founding member and a national organiser of the Troops Out Movement and is now a member of Veterans For Peace UK.

Mark McGovern, "Shuttle off this Mortal Coil you C*": of Civilians and Barbarians and the Law**

MARK McGOVERN is a professor of Social Sciences at Edgehill University. Mark's primary areas of research include the study of conflict and the politics of transition in post-conflict societies, human rights and transitional justice and the critical analysis of 'terrorism' and political violence. He is currently undertaking research, working in collaboration with human rights NGOs and community organisations, on state violence, collusion and truth recovery and exploring comparative experiences of policing and social exclusion within Irish, Black and Muslim communities.

Sam Raphael, Investigating British Torture in the "War on Terror" Abstract

SAM RAPHAEL is a Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster. Mark works on state violence and state terrorism, with a particular focus on how the contemporary use of force by the US and its allies is used to underpin the global order and sustain imperial relations. He is also interested in the intersection between human rights and national security, and in developing new investigative research methodologies in this field in order to shed light on the contours of those covert programmes (such as torture, mass surveillance, counterterrorism cooperation) which operate at the heart of the national security apparatus of liberal democratic states. Mark runs the Rendition Project, which works with NGOs and human rights investigators to uncover and understand human rights violations in the "War on Terror".

Anna Stavrianakis, "We have not assessed that there has been a breach": managing contestation over UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia

The decades-long UK arms relationship with Saudi Arabia has become increasingly controversial since the onset of the Saudi-led coalition's intervention in the war in Yemen in October 2015. The government is caught on the petard of its dual commitments to the maintenance of good relations with the Saudi regime, especially in the context of counter-terrorism fears,

and the promotion of international humanitarian law, the rule of law, and human rights. This paper examines the ways in which the government attempts to manage criticism and contestation over its arms exports to Saudi Arabia. It identifies the main strategies of justification, and examines the boomerang effects at home and abroad.

ANNA STAVRIANAKIS is a Senior Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Sussex. Her main research interests are the arms trade, arms transfer control and militarism. Her first book, *Taking Aim at the Arms Trade. NGOs, Global Civil Society and the World Military Order* (Zed Books, 2010), analysed the way that NGOs such as Amnesty International, Oxfam, Saferworld and Campaign Against Arms Trade work for tighter controls on the arms trade. More recently, she has written about the UN Arms Trade Treaty, which sets common international standards for the regulation of arms transfers.

She is the co-editor (with Jan Selby) of *Militarism and International Relations: Political Economy, Security, Theory*, published by Routledge (August 2012). She is also an Associate Editor at *Security Dialogue*, which is publishing a special issue on "Militarism and Security: dialogue, possibilities, limits".

Nadine Finch, Whose War Children?

Photographs of children rendered homeless and destitute, as the result of war, are regularly used in fund-raising campaigns within the United Kingdom and abroad. Specific programmes have also been established to "protect" children at risk from impending hostilities or the aftermath of conflicts. These include organisation of Kindertransport, the Children's Overseas Reception Board, the reception of Vietnamese boat people and, more recently, section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016. However, little attention has been given to the experiences of individual children who have been forced to flee from war or have been trafficked as the result of war and conflict. Often their need for protection has been viewed as merely temporary and few steps have been taken to ensure that they are provided with a durable solution. Their basic welfare needs may be met but they are not viewed as rights-bearers in the wider sense, as required by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. They may also be given little protection from the racism and discrimination they increasingly face. These children are usually encouraged to apply for asylum, even though they may be unlikely to be granted international protection under the Refugee Convention. In addition, few professionals are taking pro-active steps to identify the many children who are likely to be hidden in the current large migration flows from Africa and the Middle East and who continue to suffer the consequences of war and conflict even after arriving in the United Kingdom.

NADINE FINCH is Honorary Research Fellow at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol. She has been a human rights barrister since 1999, her particular area of expertise is now the right of child migrants and she has published widely on this issue. She is the author of *Seeking Asylum Alone in the United Kingdom* (2006) and *Always Migrants: Sometimes Children* (2014).

List of participants

Waleed Bazoon, University of Chichester

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