ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the conceptualisation of 'civilian morale' as a military idea in Germany and the United Kingdom between 1919 and 1939, arguing that the First World War played a major in morale's emergence within military theory. Adopting a hybrid approach to total war theory, the thesis employs the ideal-types of total mobilisation, total control, total aims, and total methods for its basic structure, but also looks at morale in relation to war as it was understood by contemporaries in a its historical context.

Using the ideas of two prominent theorists: Erich Ludendorff and Basil Liddell Hart, this study concludes that morale was conceptualised as a new determinant factor in future warfare. It shows that the key lesson of the Great War had been that nation formed the core of any military effort, and whoever could successfully mobilise the nation possessed the greatest strength. Morale served as the variable that determined the success of this mobilising process. Controlling home front morale was thus essential for avoiding your own military collapse, but the theorised ways for achieving this differed between Liddell Hart and Ludendorff, which this thesis attributes to a dichotomy between Liddell Hart's liberalist views as compared to Ludendorff's totalitarian views. This divide also informed morale's conceptualisation as a war target, with Ludendorff viewing the enemy's morale as one of the elements that needed to be completely annihilated, with Liddell Hart conceptualising it as means for limiting war; the collapse of morale hastening the end of a war. Finally, this thesis examines two major technological innovations to come from the First World War: poison-gas and the airplane, and tracks how their role was theorised for use against morale as a war aim, underwriting civilian morale's emergence as a concept of modern warfare.

FROM PRACTICE TO THEORY

*Military Ideas on Civilian Morale in Germany and the United Kingdom
after the First World War, 1919-1939*

Gijs Ewoud van Gent

26 June 2018, 12:00

Contents

Abbreviations

AWATW   Roger Chickering et al., *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction*, 1937-1945 (Cambridge 2004)

CHFWW   Jay Winter eds., *The Cambridge History of the First World War* (3 volumes) (Cambridge 2014)

CHW   Roger Chickering, Dennis Showalter, and Hans van de Ven, eds. *The Cambridge History of War,* volume IV: War and the Modern World (Cambridge 2012)

GWTW   Roger Chickering and Stig Förster eds., *Great War, Total War* (Cambridge 2000)

OHME   T.C.W. Blanning eds., *The Oxford History of Modern Europe* (Oxford 2000)

STW   Roger Chickering and Stig Förster eds., *The Shadows of Total War: Europe, East-Asia, and the United States, 1919-1939* (Cambridge 2003)

TNW   The Next War (edited by B.H. Liddell Hart)

Introduction

"Keep Calm and Carry on." It is probably one of the more recognizable slogans in history. It has been printed on posters and mugs, and used in more internet memes then can be counted. Its origins lie with British propaganda preparations for World War 2 and was intended to appeal to the British civilian population, to indeed 'keep calm'.[1] Why was this important, was war not primarily a military affair?

After the First World War, this no longer was as obvious as previously might have seemed. For example, on 18 November 1918 Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff, supreme commanders of the German army between 1916 and 1917, declared to a Reichstag committee: "Ein Englischer General sagte mit recht: 'Die deutsche Armee ist von hinten erdolcht worden.'"[2] Their claims, known as the *Dolchstoßlegende,* revolved around the idea that the German army had not lost the war on the battlefield, but had been 'stabbed in the back' by the German civilian population's lack of will to continue the war.[3]

It is this civilian will, the idea of 'civilian morale' that will be at the core of this thesis. It will be argued that the First World War had a major impact on the conceptualisation of civilian (home front) morale within military thought during the interwar years. This thesis will specifically look at military thought within Germany and the United Kingdom, both countries where civilian morale played a role in major war narratives in the twentieth century. If post-World War I Germany had the *Dolchstoßlegende,* Great Britain's civilian morale narrative was more ambiguous,

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[1] Henry Irving, "Keep Calm and Carry On – the Compromise Behind the Slogan", History of Government (blog), National Archives/Prime Minister's Office (27 June 2014). <https://history.blog.gov.uk/2014/06/27/keep-calm-and-carry-on-the-compromise-behind-the-slogan/>24-06-2018; Owen Hatherly, "Keep Calm and Carry On – the sinister message behind the slogan that seduced the nation", *The Guardian* (8 January 2016).
[2] "Erklärung des Generalfeldmarschalls von Hindenburg vor dem Parlamentarischen Untersuchungsausschuß, 18 November 1919". *1000 Schlüsseldokumente zur deutschen Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek) <http://www.1000dokumente.de/index.html?c=dokument_de&dokument=0026_dol&l=de>24-06-2018; Testimony of Hindenburg, 9-11-1919, *Official German Documents Relating to the World War*, volume 2. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (New York 1923) 855.
[3] Wilhelm Deist, "The Military Collapse of the German Empire: The Reality Behind the Stab-in-the-Back Myth", *War in History* 3:2 (1996) 186-207, there 207; Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (London 2003) 61,74-76; Boris Barth, *Dolchstoßlegenden und politische Desintegration: Das Trauma der deutschen Niederlage im Ersten Weltkrieg 1914-1933* (Düsseldorf 2003) 38-75.

with on the one hand the Second World War 'Blitz' spirit: a pride in the courage displayed during the bombings on cities such as London and Coventry, but also a fear for civilian unrest in 'domestic' Ireland with the Easter Rising in 1916 and the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921).[4]

Morale is a hard thing to define. During World War II, an academic contracted by the British Ministry of Information to do so gave up quickly, stating that it was "too complex and variable."[5] In this thesis we will see that its exact meaning varied between theorists, as it was contingent on their own understanding of morale. However, to keep things practical, the basic definition used in this thesis for morale will be 'a willingness to fight' or 'fighting spirit'.[6]

The interwar period seems an ideal timeframe to study the 'lessons learnt' from a previous war to the next. As Gerhard Weinberg rightly argues, the memory of the Great War impacted significantly all layers of society and thought during the 1920s and 1930s, thus including soldiers and military theorists.[7] Hew Strachan labelled the Great War a war of big ideas, that shaped "the war's purpose more immediately and completely than did more definable objectives."[8] I will argue that one of the ideas to rise out of the ashes of the Great War was that on civilian morale. The question at the basis of this thesis therefore is: how was civilian morale conceptualised as a military idea in Germany and the United Kingdom after the First World War, between 1919 and 1939?

Methodology and Approach

Civilian morale implies a vision of war in which civilians and soldiers both have a part to play. It therefore relates to the theory of what is called 'total war.' Although there is a fierce debate on

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[4] See: Susan R. Grayzel, *At Home and under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz* (Cambridge 2012); Mo Moulton, *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar England* (Cambridge 2014) 12, 333; Charles Townsend, *Making the Peace: Public Order and Public Security in Modern Britain* (Oxford 1993) 56-79.
[5] Cited in: Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II* (London 1979) 7-8.
[6] Daniel Ussishkin, *Morale: A Modern British History* (Oxford 2017) 3.
[7] Gerhard L. Weinberg, "The Politics of War and Peace in the 1920s and 1930s", in: *STW*, 23-34, there 23.
[8] Hew Strachan, *The First World War,* volume 1: *To Arms* (Oxford 2001) 1115.

what actually constitutes a total war, one common denominator is an increasingly blurred distinction between soldiers and civilians, with civilians becoming the "backbone of the war effort as well as targets of military violence."[9] Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, the two major authorities on total war, identified two historiographical approaches to total war. The first is to see it as an ideal-type, an abstract model which can be used to describe, and measure the 'totality' of a war. The second is to approach it as a: "[…] concrete phenomenon whose meaning and contours emerged in a specific historical context."[10] Instead of choosing, this thesis will combine them to place civilian morale in a more 'hybrid' version of total war. The ideal-type's four main factors of total mobilisation, total control, total aims, total methods, provide the basic structure for the thesis, with each chapter discussing one in relation to civilian morale. The first two factors discuss civilian participation in warfare in domestic society. The latter two discuss the extent of extreme aims and force in total warfare. Using these factors allows for a clear approach to morale in relation to a specific military context. However, the concept total war itself was coined during the interwar period in response to the Great War. It thus seems relevant to document how interwar theorists, based on their experiences, understood the relation between morale and war, rather than see if their ideas confirmed to the ideal-type.[11]

This thesis will take the ideas of Erich Ludendorff and British theorist Basil Liddell Hart as its central focus. Ludendorff was instrumental in popularising the term total war with his book *Der Totale Krieg*.[12] In his wartime role as supreme commander, and later as a leading figure within the German extreme-right and the early Nazi-movement, he played a major role in the conceptualisation of civilian morale within totalitarian circles. Liddell Hart's experiences as a captain in the war prompted a series of publications on future warfare, in which civilian morale

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[9] Stig Förster and Miriam Gessler, "The Ultimate Horror: Reflections on Total War and Genocide", in: *AWATW*, 53-68, there 56; Also: Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, "Introduction", in: *STW*, 1-16 there 1-7; idem, "Are We There Yet", in: *AWATW*, 1-16, there 2-4; Richard Overy, "Warfare in Europe since 1918", in: *OHME* 214-233, there 215-216.
[10] Chickering and Förster, "There Yet", 8.
[11] Chickering and Förster, "There Yet", 1-14; idem, "Introduction", 14; Förster and Gessler, "Ultimate", 56; Patrick Dassen, *Sprong in het Duister* (Amsterdam 2014) 235-308.
[12] Gen. Erich Ludendorff, *Der Totale Krieg* (Munich 1935); Roger Chickering and Förster, "Introduction", in: *STW*, 1-20, there 6; ibidem, "Are We There Yet?", in: *AWATW*, 1-16, there 9; Richard Overy, "Warfare", 215-216.

played a substantial role. Although not uncontroversial, he is acknowledged as one of the major influences on both British and German military theory from the interwar years onwards.[13] Interestingly, Liddell Hart responded to some of Ludendorff's writings thereby forming a transnational link.[14] In addition, their respective takes on civilian morale form an interesting dichotomy, which is rooted in both their personal political views and wider political culture of their countries. Liddell Hart personally was a committed liberal, coming from one of the major (successful) democratic powers of the interwar period. Although Imperial Germany had a stronger parliamentarian tradition than is often assumed, Ludendorff was as a virtual dictator in the final stages of the world war, and afterwards remained unsympathetic towards the democratic Weimar Republic. Given the historical particulars of each country and case, their opposing views can nonetheless shed a wider light on the understanding of civilian morale in wartime within different political traditions.[15]

The first two chapters focus on the conceptualisation of morale within the factors of total mobilisation and total control, with the latter placing morale in the context of leadership, internal security and propaganda. The third chapter tackles the role of morale as a (total) war aim, whilst the fourth chapter looks at two methods for achieving this aim: poison-gas and strategic bombardments. This thesis thus concerns itself with the role of morale in its strategic meaning for (total) war, and less with its tactical applications. It aims at documenting its overall role as a military idea.

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[13] Brian Bond, *Liddell Hart: A Study of His Military Thought* (2nd edition; London 1997) 1-30; Hew Strachan, "Total War: The Conduct of War 1939-1945", in: *AWATW*, 33-52, there 33.

[14] Basil Liddell Hart, *Reputations* (London 1928) 187-212; idem, *Europe in Arms* (London 1937 284-301.

[15] Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 1-8, 300, 341; Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 126-127; Brian Holden Reid, "The British Way in Warfare", *The RUSI Journal* 156:6 (2011) 70-76; Dassen, *Sprong*, 163-165, 387-397; Stig Förster, "Civil-Military relations", in: *CHFWW*, volume 2: *The State*, 91-125, there 123; Also: Martin Kitchen, *The Silent Dictatorship. The Politics of the German High Command under Hindenburg and Ludendorff, 1916-1917* (London 1976).

Historiography

Förster and Chickering's multi-volume series on total war have been particularly insightful. The same goes for their contributions to the excellent series *The Cambridge History of the First World War*. In understanding civilian morale, articles by Martin Kutz, Pierre Purseigle and Anne Rasmussen were relevant, while Patrick Dassen helpfully links the World War I experiences of German leaders to the concept of total war and the implications it had on post-war German society.[16]

On morale itself, surprisingly little has been written. A notable exception is a recent book by Daniel Ussishkin. He traces the different historical meanings of morale by starting with its military origins in relation to discipline, and shows how morale gradually replaced punishment as the key aspect within military discipline. Ussishkin correctly identifies the emergence of modern warfare as a key aspect in this development, but places the emergence of civilian morale as an important concept during the Second World War – and not the interwar years, as this thesis will argue.[17] Furthermore, Ussishkin quickly moves away from civilian morale within military thought and instead focuses on its wider interpretation in society.

John Horne's research on the role of memory in the effects of the First World War, is exemplary in its use of a transnational perspective that helps in understanding common patterns of violence against civilians. He also tracked the influence of war on society, with the emergence of what Horne calls the 'warfare state'.[18] More specific contributions on Ludendorff came from Manfred Nebelin and Martin Kutz, whilst Ian Kershaw's, Boris Barth's, and Richard Evans' books on Hitler, the *Dolchstoblegende,* and the Third Reich have been invaluable in understanding

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[16] Anne Rasmussen, "Mobilising Minds", in: *CHFWW,* volume 3*: Civil Society*, 390-417; Purseigle, "Home fronts", in: *CHW*, 257-284; Martin Kutz, "Fantasy, Realities and Modes of Perception in Ludendorff's and Goebbels's Concepts of 'Total War'", in: *AWATW,* 189-206; Dassen, *Sprong*, 235-365; For critique on total war: Eugenia C. Kiesling, "'Total War, Total Nonsense' or the 'Military Historian's Fetish'", in: Michael S. Neiberg eds., *Arms and the Man - Military History Essays in Honor of Dennis Showalter* (Leiden 2011) 215-242; Herwig Holger, "Total Rhetoric, Limited War", in: *GWTW,* 189-206.

[17] Daniel Ussishkin, *Morale: A Modern British History* (Oxford 2017) 1-5, 31-49, 71-72.

[18] John Horne, "The Great War at its centenary", in: *CHFWW*, volume 3*,* 618-639, there 624-632.

the link between Ludendorff's ideas and the rise of Hitler.[19] The works of Brian Bond and Brian

Holden Reid were used in coming to grips with Liddell Hart's military thought and life. For

morale and its link to air power and the home front, articles by Richard Overy, Phillip Meilinger,

and Susan Grayzel's work on air raids and the home front have been consulted.[20]

Sources

The primary sources for this thesis are primarily the contemporary publications by Ludendorff

and Liddell Hart. Of Ludendorff's publications, the most important for this thesis are *Der Totale

Krieg, Kriegführung und Politik,* and his war memoirs. Liddell Hart early thoughts on morale were

set out in a little book called *Paris, or the Future of War* (1925) and elaborated on in *Europe at

Arms*.[21] Further sources have been found from other contemporary authors, like Adolf Hitler

whose *Mein Kampf* devotes a few chapters to the importance of propaganda in relation to spirit of

the home front.[22] Both Ludendorff and Hitler were not known for their subtle and nuanced

approach to political and military ideas, quite the opposite. Their polemic antics thus merit

caution, but also makes them interesting from a scholarly perspective. Much care has been given

to their potential agenda's and biases – something that goes for all sources. The influence of

these individuals and the impact of their work are undisputed, especially considering the political

and military apparatus that Hitler later build. Works by Fuller were used because he was both a

major influence on Liddell Hart, but also later formed an ideological counter-point to him in

later in life. Giulio Douhet's 1921 *Command of the Air* on strategic bombardments, and the

memoirs of Arthur Harris, helped in contextualising Liddell Hart's and Ludendorff's view on air

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[19] Manfred Nebelin, *Ludendorff: Diktator im Ersten* Weltkrieg (Pößneck 2010); Kutz, "Fantasy", 189-206; Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris* (London 1998); Evans, *Coming;* Barth, *Dolchstoßlegenden.*
[20] Bond, *Liddell Hart;* Brian Holden Reid, *Studies in British Military Thought: Debates with Fuller & Liddell Hart* (Lincoln, Nebraska 1998); Grayzel, *Home;* Richard Overy, "Allied Bombing and the Destruction of German Cities", in: *AWATW*, 277-295; Phillip S. Meilinger, "Trenchard and 'Morale Bombing': The Evolution of Royal Air Force Doctrine before World War II", *The Journal of Military History* 60:2 (1996) 234-270.
[21] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg;* idem, *Meine Kriegserinnerungen 1914-1918* (Berlin 1919); idem, *Kriegführung und Politik* (1922); Basil Liddell Hart, *Paris or the Future of War* (London 1925); idem, *The Memoirs of Captain Liddell Hart* (2 volumes) (London 1965).
[22] A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf: Eine Kritische Edition* (Munich 2016) 441-486, 487-580, 1469-1511.

power. Two volumes in a series edited by Liddell Hart on 'the next war' fulfilled a similar role for propaganda and gas.[23]

A master thesis is insufficient in scope to truly capture all that can be said about morale in the interwar years. By focusing on Ludendorff and Liddell Hart and placing them in their historical context, it hopefully becomes possible to shed light on the wider phenomenon of morale.

The Vietnam Conflict (1955-1975) proved the importance of home front morale, with its dwindling considered one of the key reasons behind America's defeat. If war is the most drastic course of action a government can ask of its people, the support of those same people seems of vital importance for a state to maintain.[24] Although the nature of warfare has changed since the first half of the twentieth century, popular support still plays a role. The attacks by Syrian government forces on rebel strongholds were predominantly targeted against civilians – even going as far as to employ poison-gas. The recent terrorist attacks in Europe suggest that even in our contemporary society, civilian life is not safe from violence and war. Understanding how the notion of civilian morale was shaped in the past might provide us some insight into our current approaches. Undoubtedly, civilian morale will play its role in the future.

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[23] Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air* (transl. by Dino Ferrari) (New York 1942); Arthur Harris, *Bomber Offensive* (London 1947); J.F.C. Fuller, *On Future Warfare* (London 1928); Henry F. Thuillier, *Gas in the Next War*, TNW (London 1939); Sidney Rogerson, *Propaganda in the next* war, TNW (London 1938).

[24] Andrew S. Hidman & Helmut Norpoth, "Fighting to win: Wartime morale in the American public", *Electoral Studies* 31:2 (June 2012) 330-341, there 330; Eric Larson & Bogdan Savych, *American Public Support for U.S. Military Operations From Mogadishu to Baghdad* (Santa Monica 2005) 2-3, 29-36, 221-222; John Horne, "Public Opinion and Politics", in: idem eds., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford 2010), 279-294.

Linking mobilisation

Total mobilisation is unequivocally linked with civilian participation, and by extension civilian morale. In its full meaning, the ideal-type is a very practical expression of the wartime blurring of lines between civilians and the military in war: civilians get called up under conscription laws to serve in the military, national economies are reorganised to serve the war effort, and civilian life on the 'home front' in general is made subservient to military demands - an example being the origins of the pub licensing hours in England. It was implemented during the Great War, out of fear that extended drinking hours might have an adverse impact on economic productivity.[1]

John Horne however argues that civilian mobilisation in total war assumes a wider meaning then just practicalities.[2] As a more complete concept it can be differentiated into a physical component (the practical economic and military mobilisation), and the mental mobilisation: a state of mind that Susan Grayzel describes as the embracing of 'military' characteristics: steadfastness and the acceptance and willingness to endure the hardships and risks associated with war.[3] Mobilisation in total war can thus be represented as a chain of sorts, where mental and physical mobilisation are intricately linked stages in order to secure the full readiness of the nation. Using Ludendorff's and Liddell Hart's views on mobilisation to establish a baseline, what was the role of morale in this process?[4]

A German's part

Ludendorff considered morale crucial in mobilisation. We must understand that his position after the war was a precarious one. Ludendorff and Hindenburg had been launched as the saviours of the nation, the commanders with whom Germany would win the war. It was a

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[1] Strachan, *First*, 869.
[2] John Horne, *State, Society, and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge 2005) 1-3; Chickering & Förster, "Introduction", 10-11; Hew Strachan, "Essay and Reflection: On Total War and Modern War", *The International History Review* 22:2 (2000) 341-370, there 343, 348.
[3] Grayzel, *Home*, 315.
[4] Rasmussen, "Minds", 390.

destiny he eventually believed himself. According to Ludendorff's biographer Nebelin, this manifested itself in the later stages of the war when Ludendorff still believed in a *Siegfrieden*: a victory through military means, even though all the facts pointed towards the contrary. Despite this capacity for self-delusion, when reality eventually sank I, and suffering a nervous breakdown, Refusing to accept his own (considerable) responsibility in the matter, Ludendorff was desperate to shift blame. He found it in the collapse of morale at home due to betrayal.[5]

The conspiracy of a dagger-in-the-back, was not just for Ludendorff an attractive explanation for the loss of the war. Up to the end newspapers and politicians had assured the population that victory was near. The army also did not consider themselves beaten, since as Patrick Dassen points out: "no Entente soldier had set foot on German soil."[6] Already during the war the idea of the enemy within had been propagated by radical pressure groups such as the *All-Deutsche Verband*. It played on the idea on what Dassen calls the myth of the *Volksgemeinschaft*: the ideal that all Germans would be completely united and committed to cause and nation.[7] In its radical right-wing (and later Nazi) interpretation the defeat could partly be explained through the betrayal of the unity by this enemy within. Their fears that society was collapsing and had been betrayed were further fuelled by events like the soviet-inspired Sailors Mutiny that led to the 1918 November Revolution, and the 1919 Spartacist uprising.[8] The 'enemy' was often identified as Jews and communists, reflecting the strong anti-Semitic tradition of the German interwar far-right. As excellent example was Walther Rathenau, a Jew and wealthy industrial who after the war would become Foreign Secretary, and murdered by right-wing radicals in 1922. Another group blamed however were civilian politicians - a group that never had commanded much

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[5] Nebelin, *Ludendorff*, 421-423, 446; also: Ludendorff, *Kriegserinnerungen*, v, 1-18; Roger Chickering, "Sore Loser: Ludendorff's Total War", in: *STW*, 151-178; Deist, "reality", 203.
[6] Dassen, *Sprong*, 368.
[7] Dassen, *Sprong*, 133-134, 394-395.
[8] Evans, *Coming*, 72-75; Dassen, *Sprong*, 325-326, 346-357; Barth, *Dolchstoßlegnden*, 359-361, 371.

respect from army officers that made up a significant part of these radicals. Ludendorff, who was considered as one of their foremost leaders until the rise of Hitler, was no different.[9]

His disdain was minutely expressed in his 1922 book *Kriegführung und Politik* (*Military Leadership and Politics*). In the book, Ludendorff identified what Roger Chickering describes as: "a brutal, Darwinist view of international relations."[10] In short, international relations were revolved around by war and the more committed the nation, the more it was likely to achieve victory. This was a zero-sum game: either you win or you lose.[11] Ludendorff argued that the betrayal by leaders such as Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg in the Great War had been the exposure of the people to weaknesses such as democracy, malicious influences within German society, and ideas of a 'peace through negotiation' which lowered their belief in victory. It undermined what Ludendorff called the *Volksgeist*: the morale of the German people.[12] His early writings thus not only reflected the particulars of the *Dolchstoßlegende* but also addressed the wider role of morale as he saw it.

When morale forms part of the mobilization chain, it assumes a very particular meaning. Daniel Ussishkin describes it as a linking mechanism between the nation's call to war and the response of the civilian masses.[13] For Ludendorff, the participation of the home front was essential "because it was from them that the army and navy drew their strength."[14] It reflected his belief that for a successful war, the nation and armed forces had to present a fully united front, with the people working and living only in service to the war effort.[15] A high morale signalled a high willingness of the people to commit to his desired unity. Ludendorff's views were rooted in his failed wartime attempt to enhance economic production through forced labour with the so-called Hindenburg Programme. He blamed a lack of political will for its

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[9] Ludendorff, *Kriegserinnerungen*, 4; Dassen, *Sprong*, 319-320, 345-97; Deist, "reality", 206-208; Barth, *Dolchstoßlegenden*, 359-361, 371.
[10] Chickering, "Loser", 161.
[11] Chickering, "Loser", 161.
[12] Ludendorff, *Kriegführung*, 101, 126-127, 130-136, 138-139; idem, *Kriegserinnerungen*, 618-622.
[13] Ussishkin, *Morale*, 74.
[14] Ludendorff, *Kriegserinnerungen*, 3-4.
[15] Ludendorff, *Kriegserinnerungen*, 3-4, 355-356; Ludendorff, *Kriegführung*, 100-101; see also: Purseigle, "Home Fronts", 257-258.

failure, claiming that civilian leaders had failed to convince the people that their sacrifice was necessary.[16] In *Kriegführung* and *Der Totale Krieg* it was presented as one of the 'lessons learnt', and a new way forward for the German military. Ludendorff purposefully positioned himself against the old master of German military strategy Carl von Clausewitz, known for his edict that war is a continuation of politics.[17] Ludendorff made no such distinction. Politics to him was what Chickering translated as "the fulfilment of necessity", the role it had to play was to ensure the proper mobilisation of the people. Its main role: ensuring spirits remained high.[18]

Der Totale Krieg (1935) restated this point but also built upon the role of morale in relation to mobilisation. Ludendorff argued that to achieve victory a military dictator needed to be appointed, who would be capable of waging war with maximum destructiveness and no interference. The difficulty perceived by Ludendorff in doing so, would not be the quantity of artillery shells or other equipment, but mobilising the morale of the people. Army and leader could only be properly supported if this was high enough to ensure maximum civilian physical mobilisation. Ludendorff saw war as a fight to the total end between entire nations, instead of a Clausewitzian battle between armies. Victory required everything a nation could muster. A German's part for Ludendorff was thus simple: whether a soldier or at home, he needed to be fully committed to the cause; not breaking under the stress of war.[19] Civilian attitudes as expressed by morale thus had, according to Ludendorff, the role of determining success in the mobilisation process. It was the rock on which any future preparation for war would have been founded.

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[16] On the Hindenburg Programme: Gerald D. Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany 1914-1918* (Princeton 1966); and Barry Supple, "War Economies", in: *CHFWW*, volume 2, 295-324.

[17] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 3-10; Also: Hugh Smith, *On Clausewitz: A Study of Military and Political* Ideas (Basingstoke 2004) 111-112, 237-243; Stig Förster, "Civil-Military relations", in: *CHFWW*, volume 2, 91-125, there 91-92; Chickering, "Loser", 161-162, 173; Strachan, "Essay", 348.

[18] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 7; Chickering, "Loser", 161-163, 173-178.

[19] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 11, 20-21, 23-24, 114-115; Ludendorff, *Kriegführung*, 337 et seq; Ludendorff, *The Nation at War* (London 1936) 144-145, 163; Kutz, "Fantasy", 191-192, 195.

A different view

Liddell Hart's experience of the war could not have been more different than Ludendorff's. Firstly, he was a junior officer in the trenches, ending up in the hospital after being gassed. Secondly, initially full of praise for British military leaders, he later abhorred the waste of life that came with their strategy of attrition in the Great War, an attitude that he would express throughout the rest of his life.[20] It was a strategy that he called the 'Napoleonic Fallacy' and it resembled Ludendorff, in the sense that it was a criticism of Clausewitz. According to Liddell Hart, generals in the war had over-relied on a Clausewitzian idea that victory could be achieved through the destruction of enemy forces in a decisive battle. Instead Liddell Hart argued that the only true measure of war was the 'will of the nation'. Victory could be achieved by cracking the enemies' will, and defeat could be avoided by maintaining the strength of the morale of the nation's own people.[21] He first expressed this view in 1925 with a article in the magazine *Empire Review*, quickly followed by his book *Paris, or the Future of War*. According to him, all source of human activity lay in the human will, including (and especially) its capacity to engage in economic activity.[22] Since in modern warfare, nations were dependent on their industrial resources for mobilising their strength, this theoretically meant that any disturbance in the civilian population's capacity to pursue their daily lives, i.e. going to work or eat, would lower the spirits and thus would severely limit their use in war.[23]

Part of his reasoning came from his observance of the effects of the allied naval blockade during the Great War. As he pointed out in a 1931 lecture delivered to a military audience:

> If anyone was in any doubt that it was the blockade which made a continuation of the [German] struggle impossible, they might profitably make personal enquiry on the spot as to the […] hunger that the people at home suffered, the effect of that

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[20] Liddell Hart, *Memoirs*, volume 2, 235; Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 68, 104-105.
[21] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 10, 15; Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 22, 216-217.
[22] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 20, 33; Also: Liddell Hart, "The Napoleonic Fallacy: The Moral Objective in War", *Empire Review* (March 1925) 510-520.
[23] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 29, 33; Ussishkin, *Morale*, 83.

suffering on the spirit of the people, and its inevitable reaction on the will of the men who were fighting.[24]

However for him this did not translate to Ludendorff's requirement of absolute unity between the people and the armed forces. Even though Liddell Hart acknowledged the role civilian involvement, their 'active interest', played in mobilising the nation for warfare, he took issue with the concept of a fully mobilised nation itself. He observed in the 1937 book *Europe in Arms* that care had to be taken not to overstretch the nation in a war effort, lest it would endanger its future.[25]

This observation was rooted in his wartime experience, where he had seen the cost of war in the trenches. For Liddell Hart, utilising civilian morale was a means to shorten a war – to 'limit it.' *Europe in Arms'* chapter on Ludendorff's *Der Totale Krieg* thus severely criticised the German's view of the perpetual mobilisation of the people for the war effort. Unlike Ludendorff, Liddell Hart considered war not as the end-goal for the nation, but as a possible reality for which the preparedness of the people was important. It was on this basis that he also objected to military mobilisation: compulsory conscription of the British population.[26] It had only been introduced in 1916, but at the end of the war nearly twenty-two percent - both volunteers and conscripts - of the entire British male population had served in the armed forces. It truly meant that every community in the United Kingdom had been involved with Great War.[27]

Liddell Hart argued that this move had been an aberration in the 'British way of warfare', that had traditionally relied on a powerful navy and a small volunteer army. He argued that in future warfare, Britain should refrain from committing troops to the continent, instead using the navy for strategies such as a blockade to pursue Britain's interests. Mobilisation in this regard

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[24] B.H. Liddell Hart, "Economic Pressure or Continental Victory", (lecture) *The RUSI Journal* 76 (1931) 486-509, there 501; Also: Purseigle, "Home Fronts", 270.
[25] Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 220; Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 18.
[26] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 19; Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 216, 219-220, 284-292; Liddell Hart, *Memoirs*, volume 1, 138-142; Bond, *Study*, 50, 68.
[27] Ussishkin, *Morale*, 75; Brian Holden Reid, *Studies,* 172.

thus would be necessarily limited, and not on a compulsory basis.[28] Instead, proper physical mobilisation was founded on patriotism, instilled by 'education and understanding.' A committed liberal, he saw personal freedom as the basis on which young men could be moved to wage war for their country, and not authoritarianism.[29]

Now, Liddell Hart was not always an original thinker. Most of his early ideas can be linked back to his mentor J.F.C. Fuller, who would be, together with Liddell Hart, acknowledged as one of the founders of mobile (tank) warfare. Fuller too regarded morale as the essence of warfare, and argued that when it came to initial mobilisation for war, it was essential that Britain was not demoralized before it began. Yet, Liddell Hart's emerged as one of the senior military advisors to the government in the years leading up to the Second World War, socializing with the likes of Winston Churchill, Lord Halifax and Neville Chamberlain, while Fuller was ostracized on account of his penchant for mysticism, and more to the point: his membership of the British Union of Fascists.[30] Liddell Harts concept of mobilisation and its relationship is less explicit than Ludendorff's and resembles the the ideal-type of total mobilisation the least. Nevertheless, a few observations can been made. His use of words such as spirit, patriotism and the will of the nation, in combination with the capacity to wage war, reveals the importance that he attached to it. Where with Ludendorff the notion of morale was intricately linked with the notion of sacrifice for the unity of the nation, for Liddell Hart it was more of an intangible force based upon patriotism that would influence the mobilisation process, informed military capacity but was not critical to the nation's survival – instead arguing for Britain's 'traditional strategy'.[31]

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28 Ussishkin, *Morale*, 75; Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 71, 104-105; Reid, *Studies,* 171-172, 175, 179-180.
29 Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 1-8, 300, 341; Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 126-127; Brian Holden Reid, "The British Way in Warfare", *The RUSI Journal* 156:6 (2011) 70-76.
30 Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 111; Reid, *Studies*, 183-205; Strachan, "Essay", 349.
31 Ussishkin, *Morale*, 83-84, 98.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Ludendorff and Liddell Hart both conceptualised morale as a force of attitude within the mental mobilisation process. Morale was an active variable in determining the commitment and will of the civilian population to mobilise for war. Ludendorff considered it an essential part in achieving the unity that was a prerequisite for successful total physical and mental mobilisation. Liddell Hart felt quite the opposite. Although acknowledging the role of civilian morale in the nation's preparation for warfare, he instead argued for limited version of war, which would avoid overstretching the nation. If we take the ideal-type as the basis, Liddell Hart thus falls short of any notion of 'total mobilisation', something he would have wholeheartedly agreed with. However, what becomes clear from both Liddell Hart's and Ludendorff understanding of the morale-mobilisation relationship is that whatever your vision of future warfare, civilian morale would play a key role.

Yet how representative were their views? This is obviously difficult to surmise from just their writings, which have their own challenges. As an influential figure within the post-war German conservative right, an ardent anti-Semite and conspiracy theorist, Ludendorff's writings cannot be taken at face value.[32] Liddell Hart is less controversial on the political front, and while regarded within the historiography as a highly influential British military theorist of the interwar period, he had his share of critics particularly on the points of authorship and accuracy of his theories.[33] Representative or not – this chapter tried to establish a baseline understanding on the role of morale within mobilisation using their views. The next chapter focuses on the consequences this had for society and starts with placing Ludendorff's and Liddell Hart within a wider context .

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[32] E.g.: Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 11-13, 103-105; Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg droht auf Deutschem Boden* (Munich 1930) 1-9; Dassen, *Sprong*, 360-365; See also: Azar Gat, *Fascist and Liberal Visions of War: Fuller, Liddell Hart, Douhet, and other modernists* (Oxford 1998) 128.

[33] Ussishkin, *Morale*, 74; see also: Strachan, *First*, 1137 et seq.; Chickering and Förster, "There Yet", 9-11.

Controlling domestic morale

By identifying morale as a factor in the nation's mobilisation during World War I, both Ludendorff and Liddell Hart designated morale a resource that needed to be defended; its collapse prevented. It is here that the ideal-type of 'total control' comes into play. Förster and Gessler described total control as the "centralized organization and purposeful guidance of all aspects of public and private life within the context of warfare."[1] In relation to morale, this has historiographically been understood as the organisation of propaganda measures and other intellectual efforts that could shape the mood of the nation.[2] However, arguably control's implications on morale are wider. It also implies a vision on how the nation should be led in such a way to keep up morale, and how one dealt with elements of society that were deemed disruptive to the national mood.[3] It is therefore seems possible to identify two more factors crucial to control of morale: leadership and internal security.

Leading the nation?

Ludendorff's approach to leadership was not subtle. In understanding his view, we should keep in mind that – as Roger Chickering writes: "Ludendorff's total war was the Great War done right."[4] From late 1916 up to the end of the war, the third *Oberste Heeresleitung* (Supreme Army Command; OHL) as run by Ludendorff and Hindenburg, enjoyed virtually undisputed power, and as such has been described as a silent dictatorship.[5] Even with all his power Ludendorff still felt thwarted. Civilian politicians had not only interfered with the (domestic) Hindenburg Programme, but in his *Kriegserinnerungen* he also complained about the limits they had put on his

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[1] Förster and Gessler, "Ultimate Horror", 56.
[2] Dassen, *Sprong*, 251-259; Förster and Gessler, "Ultimate Horror", 56, 61.
[3] E.g.: Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 7.
[4] Chickering, "Sore Loser", 174.
[5] See: Kitchen, *Dictatorship*; Dassen, *Sprong* 163-165; Förster, "Civil-Military", 123.

strategic choices, notably with the strategy of unlimited submarine warfare.[6] Since the Great War done right meant the subservience of the entire nation to the war effort, the only authority in the nation could be the war leader. He was the only one who could completely conceive of all that was necessary for victory.[7] Ludendorff's leader was idealised as being a genius, who had to 'radiate the will to victory' in order to inspire the rest of the population towards greater sacrifice. It was once again a restatement of his point that in matters of war only a soldier could be trusted to achieve victory, the role of civilian politicians being marginalised of carrying out the tasks assigned to them by the dictator.[8]

From a present western European perspective - and with the benefit of hindsight, Ludendorff's views seems excessive and notoriously undemocratic. Yet, like the *Dolchstoßlegende*, its attractiveness for the German right was understandable. Their world had collapsed after 1919; the Versailles treaty had (in their eyes) humiliated them. The subsequent Ruhr occupation by the French army after Germany had defaulted on its war reparations, and the onset of the economic depression in the earlier thirties only compounded this feeling. The political chaos and violence during the Weimar Republic added to their sense that democracy was weak and simply had less to offer than a more autocratic regime under an inspiring and strong leader.[9] These sentiments also contributed significantly to the rise of the Nazi-regime. Ludendorff's version of autocratic leadership thus fits the historical context, with a similar approach described by historian Robert Paxton as one of the principles behind fascist ideology.[10]

At the time of *Der Totale Krieg's* publication in 1935, Hitler had been chancellor for over two years. It is tempting to see in him the fulfilment of Ludendorff's ideal. Although this pushes things too far, there are some elements worth exploring. Ludendorff and Hitler met for the first

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[6] Ludendorff, *Own Story,* volume 1, 6, 10, 370; idem, volume 2, 53; Ludendorff, *Kriegserinnerungen*, 258-318, 349, 355, 361, 369; Kutz, "Fantasy", 192.

[7] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 114-115.

[8] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 114-115; Ludendorff, *Kriegführung*, 341-342; Ludendorff, *Kriegserinnerungen*, 349; Chickering, "Sore Loser", 163.

[9] See: Mark Mazower, *Dark Contintent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London 1999) 9; Chickering, "Sore Loser", 164; Evans, *Third Reich*, 77-139.

[10] Robert O. Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism", *The Journal of Modern History* 70:1 (1998) 1-23, there 6.

time in 1921, and hit it off. Ludendorff was impressed by Hitler, attributing to him the qualities necessary for keeping up popular morale.[11] Still, as Hitler's biographer Ian Kershaw argues, Hitler initially considered himself 'the drummer' of a movement that would see Ludendorff crowned dictator. This changed after their mutual involvement with the Beer Hall Putsch (1923) and the subsequent trial that led to Hitler's imprisonment in Landsberg where he would write *Mein Kampf*. During his imprisonment, Hitler distanced himself from the former general, something Chickering relates to his unwillingness to subordinate himself to anyone – even as a civilian to military leaders, and Ludendorff's attempt to take over as leader of the *völkisch* right.[12] Hitler's eventual rise as undisputed dictator, having complete control over both civilian *and* military affairs certainly fits Ludendorff's model, although the civil-military relationship under Hitler would be the reverse of that propagated by the general.[13] Kershaw's famous concept of *working towards the Führer* also seems viable in linking Ludendorff's idea of leadership with Hitler. Kershaw argued that Hitler's form of personal rule led to his subordinates anticipating what he would want: "taking initiatives to promote what were presumed to be Hitler's aims and wishes."[14] Within Ludendorff's vision of the perfect national unity, the notion of a strong charismatic (war) leader projecting the (perceived) necessities which enabled the army and people to work towards each other seems applicable.[15] This does not mean that Ludendorff's views automatically equated to Hitler's autocracy. By 1935, they no longer had a working relationship, and Hitler had not read *Der Totale Krieg*. Yet, they moved in the same circles, and Hitler was certainly exposed to the older man's ideas and influence within the far-right. As Chickering notes: "Hitler and Ludendorff were kindred spirits, products of the same catastrohopic defeat and […] ideological radicalization."[16]

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[11] Kutz, "Fantasy", 165.
[12] Kershaw, *Hubris*, 200-206, 223-224, 232; Chickering, "Sore Loser", 165.
[13] Kershaw, *Hubris*, 497 et seq.
[14] Kershaw, *Hubris*, 530.
[15] Ludendorff, *Der Totale Krieg*; Kutz, "Fantasy", 192.
[16] Chickering, "Sore Loser", 177.

Ludendorff's final chapter in *Der Totale Krieg* met with disapproval from Liddell Hart. He equated totalitarianism with emotionalism, and concluded on the book: "happily for Ludendorff he is not troubled by historical facts when they present obstacles to his faith."[17] Liddell Hart regarded limitless war as possibly instinctive for a 'hate-maddened mob, but that this on the whole ignored sound leadership.[18] So what was his view then on the proper relationship between leadership and civilian morale? Two things come to mind. The first was Liddell Hart's evaluation of leadership within the Great War. Although initially laudatory of British generals , he expressed in his memoirs his incredulity at 'his original naivety'.[19] As such Reid notes his admiration for T.E. Lawrence, the famous 'Lawrence of Arabia', who with his guerrilla campaigns in the Ottoman Empire avoided static trench warfare and thus avoided the slaughter which had made such an impression on Liddell Hart.[20] The second is Liddell Hart's relationship with his mentor J.F.C. Fuller. Historian Azar Gat notes that up to the early 1920's Liddell Hart's had been decisively influenced by Fuller. But in the 1930s, Liddell Hart increasingly distanced himself from Fuller, largely due to Fuller's attraction to fascism and advocacy of autocratic leadership. Reid concludes that this was simply inconceivable for Liddell Hart. For Liddell Hart the backbone of a successful morale was the independent thinking that came with liberal parliamentarian democracy.[21]

Fuller's view was fullest expressed in his account of the Italian-Abyssinian War (1935-1936). He argued that autocratic regimes were better prepared for the onslaught of future warfare, a war that would be waged with ever more scientific methods. When it came to nations of equal military strength it was the will and discipline that was decisive, writing: "today politics have become the instrument of war, and will remain so until in their totality European nations

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[17] Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 286.
[18] Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 285.
[19] Liddell Hart, *Memoirs*, volume 1, 26; Also: Liddell Hart, Paris, 1-5; Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 15-21; idem, *From Liddell Hart to Joan Littlewood: Studies in British Military Thought* (Solihull 2015) 21-22, 31-32.
[20] Reid, *Studies*, 150-167.
[21] Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 1-8,300; Gat, *Facist,* 145; Reid, *Studies*, 191-198.

cultivate a new discipline."[22] This new discipline would prevent a collapse in morale and was to be installed through rigorous instruction and commitment by the political authority. Emulating Ludendorff in views and opinion, Fuller saw in Hitler a man who by his leadership was creating the totalitarian conditions under which this discipline and consequently high morale would be possible.[23]

Early in 1931, Liddell Hart remarked that the strain of the Great War had caused 'an exhaustion of the [British] spirit'.[24] To address it, Liddell Hart's argued that war needed to be limited in its scope through national policy that set out military goals. Where Ludendorff argued that the total war itself was to the focus of national policy, Liddell Hart wrote that this policy should aim for "an honourable, prosperous and secure existence" because "no normal citizen of a democracy would willingly impair this by a resort to war."[25] The role of leadership in keeping up morale thus resembles a more Clausewitzian assumption (despite Liddell Hart's criticisms): namely that political leadership curtailed the military. With this he unequivocally distanced himself from the autocratic style favoured by Ludendorff and Fuller, considering Ludendorff a "robot Napoleon."[26] It was not meant as a compliment.

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[22] J.F.C. Fuller, *The First of the League Wars, its Lessons and Omens* (London 1936) 171.
[23] J.F.C. Fuller, *Towards Armageddon: The Defence Problem and its Solutions* (London 1937) 8, 50-53, 60-67, 238; Strachan "Essay", 349.
[24] Liddell Hart, "Economic Pressure", 487.
[25] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 18-23; see: Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 10; idem, *Nation*, 24.
[26] Liddell Hart, *Reputations*, 211-212.

Internal Security

Still this does not mean that Liddell Hart can be conceived of as a pacifist of any sort: for him war was simply a reality in human affairs.[27] And when the nation was at stake, he was willing to go quite far. In his memoirs he recalls that events such as the British coal strikes of 1920-1921, fuelled rumours of the army being employed in a policing effort out of fear that it signalled revolution. During the general strike of 1926, the army was actually mobilised – with Liddell Hart fearing that too many people were ready to treat it as a war situation.[28] He consequently advocated the use of tear gas as an excellent alternative to bullets: "in the sphere of internal security gas gives forces of law and order an instrument as helpful as it is humane."[29] Liddell Hart's advice on policing the domestic front reflected the tumultuous early twenties in Britain. Although Liddell Hart was not involved nor did he write about it, the Irish War of Independence, beginning with the uprising in 1916 represented a considerable 'internal' danger from a British perspective. Whether seen as a decolonization war or an Anglo-Irish Civil War, the conflict saw British forces engaging in violent repressions and 'reprisals' in their attempt to 'restore order' in Ireland.[30] This use of the army triggered fears in Britain itself that Ireland served "as a training ground for a "strike breaking army" that could operate effectively against the civil population in Britain next."[31]

This was then a more 'negative' approach to securing morale, that showed morale's origins as an alternative to discipline. If you could not win over the loyalty of certain elements within society that apparently threatened morale, you attacked or removed them.[32] It is not hard to find equivalent elements in German interwar society. After the rise of Hitler, The Night of the Long Knifes (1934), the *Kristallnacht* (1938) and in the end the Holocaust serve as excellent examples of eliminating perceived potential threats from society. The unbelievably brutal and vicious

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[27] Reid, *Studies*, 172.
[28] Liddell Hart, *Memoirs*, volume 1, 62, 143.
[29] Liddell Hart, *The remaking of modern armies* (London 1927) 86.
[30] Mo Moulton, *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar England* (Cambridge 2014) 12, 83, 333; Charles Townsend, *Making the Peace: Public and Public Security in Modern Britain* (Oxford 1993) 56-79.
[31] Moulton, *Ireland*, 83.
[32] Ussishkin, *Morale*, 2.

character of these events were of course not seen in Britain (although suspected Nazi-sympathisers were incarcerated during World War II), nor was the racial and anti-Semitic elements of the ideology that drove it, but in its underlying principles they were not dissimilar. Ludendorff legitimised the elimination of what he called: "the scurrilous effects of the malcontents", on the grounds that they formed a vital danger to his desired spiritual unity of the population.[33]

Domestic Propaganda

Propaganda's relation to morale was already noted in the First World War with both the British government and the OHL under Ludendorff enacting various programmes and laws designed to foster its potential power.[34] Although these varied in their rates of success, both nations were convinced of its importance. Ludendorff in particular stressed the point, complaining both of the success of the enemies' propaganda in lowering the fighting spirit in Germany and the lack of their own success, once again attributed to the Jews and a failure of civilian leaders to acquiesce to his demands for a dedicated 'ministry of propaganda.[35]

Ludendorff concluded in *Der Totale Krieg* that the psychical strength of the nation cannot be kept up through mechanical means, but these means should 'employ a spiritual character', as expressed through propaganda measures.[36] Both Kershaw and Evans have written in their respective studies of Hitler and the Third Reich on the role of propaganda in Hitler's reign. It was essential to Hitler, with Kershaw remarking that Hitler saw himself foremost as a propagandist, propaganda being his principal means of mobilising the masses.[37] *Mein Kampf* devotes two chapters to the role of propaganda, one describing propaganda during the First

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[33] Ludendorff, *Nation at War*, 24, 27-31, 34, 163; Reid, *Studies*, 203-205.

[34] Trey Paddock, "Introduction", in: Troy R.E. Paddock eds., *World War I and Propaganda* (Leiden/Boston 2014) 1-20, there 8-9; Dassen, *Sprong*, 251-252; Chickering and Förster, "Introduction", 13.

[35] Ludendorff, *Own Story*, volume 1, 43, 143-146, 280, 352-354, 431; idem, volume 2, 72-73, 149; Chickering, "Sore Loser", 156-157.

[36] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 13, 15, 26, 104-105; Kutz, "Fantasy", 192; Ludendorff, *Nation at War*, 166-167.

[37] Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (transl. by James Murphy) (London/New York 1939) 107-108; Kershaw, *Hubris*, 126-128, 133, 156

World War and the second the intended future organisation of propaganda.[38] The propaganda apparatus that was eventually built under the Third Reich and as led by Jospeh Goebbels has rarely been equalled since. It combined a variety of methods, such as censure (the infamous book burnings), and modern techniques of cinema. All were aimed at appealing to the emotions and ensuring total commitment of the population.[39]

In analysing propaganda from Ludendorff to Hitler, Dassen rightfully remarks: "it hardly needs arguing that Goebbels was much more successful in the exercise of propaganda then Ludendorff."[40] And, as Kutz notes: both Goebbels' and Ludendorff's analysis of the necessity of propaganda was based on a faulty assessment of the reasons behind the defeat in the First World War.[41] At the same time, this seems less relevant in tracking how the First World War impacted thoughts on sustaining the morale of society in future warfare. Both in Ludendorff's conceptualisation and in the Nazi approach, propaganda acted in multiple roles, not the least of which was serving as a carrier for their anti-Semitic and racial ideology. Propaganda thus also contributed to a process of 'Othering', and with it the social exclusion of his perceived malcontents from German society to lessen their 'malicious' effect on the *Volksgeist*.[42] However, what seems essential is that Hitler's view on propaganda must be seen as reaction against what he deemed to be Ludendorff's failure in the Great War to successfully use propaganda to bolster the *Volkgeist*.[43]

How was propaganda associated with morale in Great Britain? Here too, the memory of the First World War played its part. To start with Liddell Hart, he considered propaganda, as a key elements in the victorious Entente strategy, with "every indication that it will fill a still bigger role in any future 'great war'."[44] In a volume on propaganda, edited by Liddell Hart, Sidney Rogerson put forward the need for a British 'constructive propaganda' policy because a future

[38] Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (transl), 106-110.
[39] Evans, *Third Reich*, 168, 229, 263, 395-396; Kutz, "Fantasy", 201-202.
[40] Dassen, *Sprong*, 252; see: Ludendorff, *Nation at War*, 48-49.
[41] Kutz, "Fantasy", 201.
[42] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 35-36, 104-105
[43] Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (transl.), 193-204; Dassen, *Sprong*, 253; Chickering, "Sore Loser", 165.
[44] Rogerson, *Propaganda*, vii; Liddell Hart, "Economic Pressures", 487; Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 20; idem, *Memoirs*, 139.

enemy would be watching for "the cracks in British morale."[45] Already during the war, the British government had enacted the Defence of the Realm Act, which regulated information distribution and set up the Department of Information, tasked with the propaganda effort.[46] With the disarmament the department was subsequently abolished, only to be revived as the Minstry of Information in 1938 when the threat of Germany became more apparent.[47] Susan Grayzel, tracking the emergence of the 'Blitz Spirit', also points towards the Committee of Imperial Defence's Sub-Committee on Air Raid Precautions (CID ARP), established as early as 1924, who advocated the use of propaganda in preserving civilian morale.[48] Yet, it never acquired the importance that it had under Nazi-rule. Implicit in a free democratic society is freedom of thought, and not the subservice of the people to a single cause, with a single ideology. Propaganda measures thus raised the question if they were a form of totalitarian control. But the importance of morale during an 'emergency' was such that Rogerson countered in 1938:

> […] it *should* not be unreasonable to expect an intelligent public to acquiesce in a measure of emergency control. After all, the issue which the opponents of Government propaganda reiterate so loudly […] is between Democracy and Dictatorship. It *should* therefore not be unreasonable to ask the citizen to give […] all the assistance in his power to resist the abhorred dictators.[49]

Conclusion

Securing and controlling domestic morale was important because it factored into mobilisation, a lesson that both Ludendorff and Liddell Hart drew from their First World War experiences. It was on this basis that their views on the means for securing morale were formed. Using violence

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[45] Rogerson, *Propaganda*, 166.
[46] Townsend, *Peace*, 69-79; McLaine, *Ministry,* 1-8; Ussishkin, *Morale*, 77.
[47] Marion Yass, *This is Your War: Home Front Propaganda in the Second World War* (London 1983) 3-5.
[48] Grayzel, *At Home*, 124-126; also: Ussishkin, *Morale*, 98.
[49] Rogerson, *Propaganda*, 167.

to eliminate dissent was used to secure morale negatively; in effect when securing morale in a domestic group did not seem possible (revolution in Ireland) or was ideologically undesirable (Jews in German society). This was thus an underlying notion that was present in both British and German societies. A 'positive' means of securing domestic morale translated itself primarily to propaganda, with both sides agreeing on the necessity of propaganda measures to bolster civilian morale, considered essential for avoiding defeat in a future war effort - and for Ludendorff to leadership, whose conceptualised leader could inspire unity and sacrifice but in turn demanded total commitment. Liddell Hart identified personal freedom and genuine patriotism as the basis for genuine commitment to any war effort. It is with the latter that we see the biggest difference between liberal Britain of Liddell Hart and the totalitarian Germany of Hitler and Ludendorff. This if of course in itself not shocking. A democracy would quickly cease to be democratic if it completely subordinated its citizens to a single leader. In a way, Ludendorff and Liddell Hart themselves personified this political dichotomy.

Aiming for Morale

'War aims' seem strange, considering that most people are likely to aim for the achievement of some sort of victory when embarking on the war path. Yet if we understand them as strategic goals, as the conditions necessary for achieving victory they become more clear. In the typology of total war, victory is only achieved when the enemy is completely subjugated and defeated, hence the 'totality' in total aims. Having identified morale's importance to mobilisation and in avoiding defeat, how did Ludendorff and Liddell Hart subsequently conceptualise it as an aim?

Pre-modern conflicts between nations were, from a military point of view, more or less contained to the battlefield. The purpose of war was to defeat another one's army and then victory over the nation or particular dynasty would follow. Civilian involvement thus limited itself in the sense that they were not seen as active war participants, although this not necessarily safeguarded them from violence from, for example raiders and looters. As we have seen, the onset of modernity in warfare with the industrialisation of society went hand in hand with the (conscripted) nation in arms, thus incorporating the civilian section of the nation within the military sphere.[1] To contemporary eyes, 1914-1918 formed the apex of this development: a full-blown industrial war that had pitted nation against nation. An contemporary appreciation of the enormity of the 'Great War' lay at the heart of the idea of 'total war', with the French coining the phrase *guerre totale*.[2] This theoretical development took on a more serious note during the interwar years, with the Great War serving as the reference point in any debate on future warfare, including that on the nature of victory.

This was reflected in the interwar debate on war aims. Because the mobilisation of the 'warfare state' was so intimately connected with the notion of civilian morale, World War I

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[1] Hew Strachan, "Military Modernization, 1789-1918", in: *OHME*, 76-100; John Horne, "centenary", 624-632; also: Basil Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare* (London 1932) 13-41.
[2] Strachan, "Essay", 347 et seq.; Chickering and Förster, "There Yet", 9; Ludendorff, *Nation,* 14-16.

strategies like the hunger blockade by the British, and the German strategy of unlimited submarine attacks had the explicit intention of harming the civilian population and thereby affecting its morale.[3] Political scientist Alexander Downes calls this a form of coercion through punishment designed to break the "adversary's will to fight"[4], specifically noting that these strategies were developed as a response to the stalemate of the trenches. The motivation behind these coercive strategies was that they served the purpose of achieving victory, either out of a 'desperation to win' or a 'desperation to save lives.'[5]

Ludendorff's and Liddell Hart's views on war aims have been briefly addressed, most importantly the 'Darwinistic fight to the end' for the former, and the latter's Napoleonic Fallacy. Yet, their understanding of what victory actually meant, helps to further elaborate on their conceptualisation of the relationship between morale and victory.

The Cost of Victory

In January 1931, Liddell Hart gave a lecture at the Royal United Services Institute. About halfway through he expressed his sentiments on the acceptable costs of war in a single sentence: "victory, in the true sense, surely implies that one is better off after the war than if one had not made war."[6] Liddell Hart considered the First World War, where victory had been measured by defeating the enemy's army, an example that had left all sides worse off, something to be avoided in future wars. In his memoirs he thus approved of David Lloyd George's advice to Winston Churchill, on the eve of World War II, to avoid any commitment to an unlimited victory.[7] Liddell Hart instead developed a set of alternative points that he believed were the key lessons learnt

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[3] See: Testimony Hindenburg and Ludendorff d.d. 18-11-1919, *German Documents*, volume 2, 855-859, 864-865; Herwig, "Total Rhetoric", 189-206; Dirk Steffen, "The Holtzendorff Memorandum of 22 December 1916 and Germany's Declaration of Unrestricted U-boat Warfare", *The Journal of Military History* 68:1 (2004) 215-224, there 219-223; Horne, "centenary", 624-632.
[4] Alexander B. Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca, N.Y./London 2008) 30.
[5] Downes, *Targeting*, 31-32; 83-114; also: Avner Offer, "The Blockade of Germany and the Strategy of Starvation, 1914-1918, in: *GWTW*, 169-88.
[6] Liddell Hart, "Economic", 503.
[7] Liddell Hart, *Memoirs*, volume 1, 320, 373, 375; idem, volume 2, 197; Bond, *Studies*, 124; Also: Hew Strachan, "War and Society in the 1920s and 1930s", in: *STW*, 35-54, there 37.

from the Great War, and that should form the basis for any future strategies towards victory. These were first fully expressed in his 1925 book *Paris*, and built on the *general* aim for a nation that it should guarantee its citizens a prosperous and secure existence, and thus generally refrain from waging war.[8] If this secure existence was threatened, then war was an acceptable option. In the advent of its outbreak the general aim of the nation translated itself to a strategy that would ensure "the shortest and least costly interruption of the normal life of the country."[9] It is here that Liddell Hart presented his case for the nation's aim in war: "subdue the enemy's will to resist, with the least possible human and economic loss to itself."[10] In this he once again posited himself against those who saw battle as an end in itself.[11]

Now why the enemy's will, why morale? Setting aside any humanitarian concerns: the technological developments since the Great War ensured that any large scale war would cause high casualties, but Liddell Hart also recognized that total extermination of any kind was both impossible and pointless, dryly observing that "the living alone retain the power to admit defeat."[12] Instead he proposed to strike at what he identified as the weak spot of a nation: its morale. Through an historical review of the morale objective spanning the ages from antiquity to Napoleon, Liddell Hart argued that nations were mainly composed of 'normal' people, that would ultimately recognize an inferior or hopeless position. Thus the practical aim behind the moral objective was simple. Make life so miserable for your enemy that it becomes inevitable that he loses hope, and recognises his defeat. This could be achieved by targeting their economic infrastructure. In this way you avoided any mass commitment, a fight to the end. Instead, victory lay in the despair of the enemy and limiting your own effort.[13]

He further developed the theory as 'the strategy of indirect approach' that advocated a highly mobile approach to warfare. It combined elements of attacking where there was least

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[8] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 18.
[9] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 19; idem, *remaking*, v-vi, 211.
[10] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 19.
[11] David Lord, "Liddell Hart and the Napoleonic Fallacy", *The RUSI Journal* 142:2 (1997) 57-63, there 59; Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 50, 68.
[12] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 31.
[13] Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 278-279, 282; idem, *Paris*, 21-31; idem, *Way*, 97; Chickering and Förster, "There Yet", 11.

resistance, and of utilising surprise with quick strikes against the rear-guard. In an evolution from *Paris,* this was no longer to be achieved through the direct targeting of civilians, but by striking against the infrastructure on which civilians depended. This, he considered, provided the biggest psychological shock to the civilian population with the least amount of costs.[14] Liddell Hart viewed the American Civil War General William Sherman's campaign in the South as the perfect example. Liddell Hart credited Sherman's attacks on railways and cities behind the rear-guard of the Confederate armies with causing high desertion rates of Confederate soldiers, and an overall loss in Southern fighting capacity and willingness to wage war. The title he gave the chapter on Sherman in itself was telling of Liddell Hart's appraisal of First World War strategy: "the signpost that was missed."[15]

It was a theory he was subsequently severely (and often rightfully) criticised for, since it depends on a view of the civilian population as being less resilient then soldiers and less inclined to accept hardship.[16] It turned out that people were not so easily convinced of hopelessness - the British response to the Blitz achieving almost mythical proportions in this regard. Liddell Hart also ignored a lot of the complexities of policy- and strategy-making, giving too much weight to individuals and grand theories.[17] What he wrote was therefore not necessarily true or an accurate representation of cause and effect. Yet it was plausible enough that in the early 1930s, Liddell Hart found willing ears in several key British statesmen – amongst others Leslie Hore-Belisha (Secretary of War between 1937 and 1940), and Neville Chamberlain, who chaired British re-armament and appeasement strategies at the onset of the next great war.[18] The definite end for their hope for limited involvement has probably never been more eloquently announced then in

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[14] Liddell Hart, *British*, 113-114; Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 43, 122-123, 144-146.
[15] Liddell Hart, *British*, 87-91.
[16] Chickering and Förster, "There Yet", 11.
[17] Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 39-43, 71; Ussishkin, *Morale*, 101.
[18] Bond, *Military Policy*, 244-286, 337-340; Bond, *Studies*, 93-112; Gat, *Fascist*, 137-138, 146-177.

Winston Churchill's inaugural prime minister's speech in May 1940. Offering nothing but 'blood, toil, tears and sweat' it spelt out the new aim: "victory at all costs".[19]

Death or Victory

That last aim was something Ludendorff could get behind. The trauma of defeat in the Great War defined most of his post-war actions. He fled to Sweden for fear of reprisals from those who opposed him, and worked on his *Kriegserinnerungen,* returning to Germany in 1919.[20] Germany's defeat gave life to several of Ludendorff's thoughts, e.g. the *Dolchstoßlegende*, but most importantly it fuelled a sense of radical paranoia that shaped his view of the world. It was one that was dominated by conflict, wherein nations constantly struggled which each other, striving towards only one goal: the downfall of the enemy.[21]

Since the German defeat according to Ludendorff was primarily due to a loss in morale, his take on victory reflected it. In linking the two, Ludendorff harked back to an interpretation of Clausewitz in his 1922 book *Kriegführung und Politik*, As summarised by Patrick Dassen, Ludendorff's conditions for victory were that even when the enemy's nation was occupied and its army defeated, the war was not over as long as its will had not been broken.[22] Thus as long as Germany had not subjugated the enemy there was still a chance that they themselves would be subjugated.[23] How did Ludendorff propose to avoid this? The 1936 English version of *Der Totale Krieg* translated the way for achieving victory as follows: "For a morally strong people, the war decision lies solely in the victory on the battlefield and in the annihilation of the enemy Army [sic] and of the enemy nation."[24] And while translator did an admirable job in catching the gist of Ludendorff's meaning, here he mistranslated the word *gegenüber* as 'for', instead of 'in the face

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[19] Prime Minister's Speech. *Hansard* HC Deb, 13 May 1940, vol 360, cols 1501-25.
[20] Nebelin, *Ludendorff*, 506-508, 518-519.
[21] Ludendorff, *Kriegführung*, 4, 333.
[22] Ludendorff, *Kriegführung*, 4; Dassen, *Sprong*, 260.
[23] Ludendorff, *Kriegführung*, 12.
[24] Ludendorff, *Nation*, 168.

of.'[25] The sentence shows that Ludendorff regarded morale a fundamental part of the nation's being. The only way to win when your enemies' morale was strong, was to commit yourself to all-out attack and annihilation of its armies and infrastructure.[26] Morale's role in victory was thus not the 'weak point' that Liddell Hart made of it, a way of avoiding direct attacks against armies, but instead it was a direct war target, which together with the military and infrastructure needed to be destroyed.

This harsh view reflected Ludendorff's strong racist and social-Darwinist notions, far from uncommon within German conservative society. For them, a struggle for survival was a central element to life itself and merited harsh measures. The terms of the Versailles Treaty too, must have played some part in considering harshness as a logical consequence of defeat. The war itself had legitimised the use of violence to an unprecedented degree, violent groups appearing both on the left and right (e.g. the *Freikorps*). In 1920 Ludendorff moved to Bavaria, where he found himself in the great nexus of right-wing radical society. Here he also married his second wife Mathilde von Kemmitz, who would be a major influence in the further development of the conspiracy-theories that would be rife in *Der Totale Krieg*.[27] Ironically enough, it were these theories that ultimately caused a rift between him and other right-wing radicals, being to eccentric even for them. His influenced waned after Hitler purposefully entered him as the Nazi candidate for *Reichspräsident,* knowing that the election would turn out into Ludendorff's humiliation at the polls.[28]

Conclusion

Morale's meaning as an aim, depended on the interpretation of what constituted victory Ludendorff was certainly much more 'total' in this than Liddell Hart was, only accepting the complete subjugation of the enemy as a victory. If Ludendorff use of morale came from a

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[25] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 106.
[26] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 106; Ussishkin, *Morale*, 74.
[27] Chickering, "Sore Loser", 160-178, Dassen, *Sprong*, 314-365.
[28] Dassen, *Sprong*, 363-365.

desperation for victory because this equaled the survival of the nation, Liddell Hart represented the other end of the spectrum, agreeing with winning but not at all costs. Morale as a war aim provided a way to limit war, and consequently save lives because it did not put army against army. Ludendorff's take on morale was far more direct. Breaking the morale was one of the prerequisites for destroying an enemy.

- 4 -
Modern methods for the modern war

Last January, *The Economist* devoted a series of articles to the nature of future warfare. A prominent place was reserved for new technologies that will likely affect the ways in which nations try to achieve their future strategic aims.[1] The aftermath of the First World War too was rife with new possibilities for future warfare. The introduction of morale as a war aim signalled a further step in the process of totalisation but also necessitated thinking on the means of how to achieve the objective. If today's new weapons such as drones, and artificial intelligence play a part in envisioning future warfare, their World War I equivalents fulfilled a similar role. Two innovations in particular where mentioned in regards to morale: poison-gas and the airplane.[2]

Gas…, Gas…, Gas…

In 1939, Henry Thuillier, responsible for British chemical warfare operations during the war, concluded in The Next War Series (edited by Liddell Hart): "we may hope that gas may not be employed in the next war, but must be absolutely prepared for the probable contingency that it will."[3] Gas was first used by the Germans in 1915 and quickly adopted by all belligerent nations. Gas warfare is popularly defined by Marion Girard as the use of all chemical weapons "against human targets during a war by an enemy power."[4] Its usefulness against morale, she argues, stems from the fact that it was a 'tool of total war', and as much a psychological weapon as a physical one. It was for this reason that Liddell Hart and Ludendorff embraced it, albeit for different reasons.[5]

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[1] Matthew Symonds, "The New Battlegrounds", *The Economist* 436:9076 (2018) 3-4.
[2] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 36-37; Dassen, *Sprong,* 276-278; Overy, "Warfare", 216-217.
[3] Thuillier, *Gas,* 176; see: idem, x.
[4] Marion Girard, *A Strange and Formidable Weapon: British Responses to World War I Poison Gas* (Lincoln/London 2008) 18.
[5] Girard, *Strange*, 6, 22; Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 44-45; Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 67.

Liddell Hart's view was grounded in his interpretation of the war's casualty statistics. He calculated that a British soldier was ten times more likely to recover from a gas attack than from wounds inflicted by kinetic weaponry, a fact that led him to deduce that:

> […] 'poison gas' is from ten to twelve times as humane a weapon as bullets or high explosive. This would be so even with acutely painful forms of gas. For what man would not prefer an interval of suffering so long as life and not death lay at the end.[6]

As Brian Bond notes, Liddell Hart himself was the living embodiment of this fact, still able to enjoy a normal life after being gassed – something which might not have been possible if he had been 'shelled'.[7] But Liddell Hart's argument for 'the humanity of gas' went further. He and his mentor Fuller sought ways to reduce the devastation of warfare. Gas lent itself for this purpose for two vital reasons: it directly attacked morale, and it caused relatively low amounts of economic damage. In *Paris* Liddell Hart accepted that the world had become so interdependent that the economic destruction of an enemy could "recoil on the head of the victor."[8] Accordingly, the benefit of gas was that it left economic infrastructure relatively untouched.[9] Gas's psychological strength came from the frightening nature of its effects and the fact that its use was often hard to detect. Mustard gas, for example, caused severe blistering and agonizing pain; those inhaling chlorine gas felt they were being choked to death, terrifying for those who witnessed it.[10] Gas's psychological effect thus fitted the bill as a potential means to achieve Liddell Hart's vision of a quick and less deadly war through breaking morale, particularly since, as Reid notes, Liddell Hart hoped that the development of chemical weapons would focus on non-lethal gases.[11]

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[6] Liddell Hart, *remaking*, 83.
[7] Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 204; also: Liddell Hart, *Real War*, 145-146.
[8] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 43.
[9] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 44-45, 48; idem, *remaking*, 86-87; Reid, *Studies*, 119-120.
[10] Edgar Jones, "Terror Weapons: The British Experience of Gas and its treatment in the First World War", *War in History* 21:3 (2014) 355-375, there 358-364; Girard, *Strange*, 138.
[11] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 32-35; see: Girard, *Strange*, 158; Reid, *Studies*, 125.

Ludendorff too, saw a use for poison-gas. In 1930 he wrote a book entitled *Weltkrieg droht auf Deutschem Boden*, translated into English as *The Coming War*.[12] It can best be described as a fictional, horrible, scenario for the 'next great war.'[13] The book reflected Ludendorff's appetite for racial conspiracies, detailing how the German people would be destroyed by the combined influence of 'supernationals' such as the Jews, the Freemasons, and the Pope, but also went into the weaponry used in this fictional future struggle.[14] He thought modern weapons, including gas, would particularly be effective as direct methods for breaking resistance and directly target morale.[15] In *Der Totale Krieg* he remarked on gas's physical potency: the *Vergiftigung der Schleimhäute und Lungen* (poisoning of membranes and lungs).[16]

Gas's potential further came to apparent light when the Italians employed it during their invasion of Ethiopia in the Italian-Abyssinian War (193501936). As well as a colonial war, the conflict was essentially a conventional mass war between two vastly disparate participants.[17] Girard argues that gas was employment, partly due to an Italian's colonial attitude and as revenge for an earlier defeat in 1896. Gas was a means, she writes, to "best Ethiopia with finality", to utterly defeat an 'inferior' country.[18] Liddell Hart was impressed by the Italian's actions because they seemed to confirm his ideas on the morale shattering potential of the weapon. Despite historical consensus that mustard gas was mostly used against the Ethiopian's armed forces, and not the civilian population, Liddell Hart praised its "effective employment in demoralizing the enemy's reserves and his people behind the front.[19] Yet he stumbled upon a few caveats. The first was that in this case the Ethiopians had little to no protection, which accounted for its greater cause of 'nerve-shock.' Secondly, Liddell Hart theorised that the "vulnerability of the target

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[12] Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg*; idem, *The Coming War* (London 1931).
[13] See: James S. Corum, *The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War, 1918-1940* (Lawrence 1997) 145.
[14] Ludendorff, *Coming*, 9-13, 19-21.
[15] Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg*, 37, 51-56, 65.
[16] Ludendorf, *Totale Krieg*, 69.
[17] Giulia Brogini Künxi, "Total Colonial Warfare", in: *STW*, 313-326, there 315-316.
[18] Girard, *Strange*, 184.
[19] Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 314; see also: Künxi, "Colonial", 323-325.

counts for a at least as much as the power of the weapon.”[20] Since the Ethiopians were a 'primitive people', mustard gas's psychological effect had been greater.[21]

In any case, rarely will a new innovation have elicited so much debate. Poison-Gas was discussed in several multilateral disarmament conferences, including the Washington Conference in 1921, Geneva Convention of 1925 and the World Disarmament Conference of 1932, which Liddell Hart attended.[22] Marion Girard divides the debaters into two sides, practically titled pro-gas and anti-gas.[23] The former's reasoning was based on two arguments, the first being quite similar to Liddell Hart's humanity argument. Summarised it was that all weapons were beastly in nature, that gas caused fewer casualties and that most of the gas-fear stemmed from ignorance about both its nature and the existence of adequate protection measures. The second was scepticism about the possibility of limiting weaponry through multilateral treaties, arguing that these would broken if victory depended on it.[24] Unsurprisingly, considering his view on war as a struggle of life-and-death for nation and *Volksgemeinschaft*, Ludendorff endorsed the second argument.[25]

Anti-gas arguments were predominantly based on moral reasons, with the argument that it was uncivilised, a notion compounded by gas's appearance as the personification of industrial warfare (i.e., not a gentlemanly weapon) and the difficulty with which it could be detected.[26] Although the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibited the use of gas, limitation and disarmament were largely seen as a failure. Partly this was due to the fact that there were no enforcement mechanism for the prohibition in place, partly because states simply did not trust their equivalents to abstain from its use. Italy certainly did not adhere to it in 1935-1936, even though

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[20] Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 315-323.
[21] Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 314.
[22] Edward M. Spiers, "Gas disarmament in the 1920s: Hopes confounded", *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29:2 (2006) 281-300, there 289, 294, 297; Liddell Hart, *Memoirs* 2, 206-208.
[23] Girard, *Strange*, 158, 161.
[24] Girard, *Strange*, 158-163, 191-199; Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 45-46; Thuillier, *Gas,* 176.
[25] Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg*, 51-52; idem, *Coming War*, 14-15; Klaus A. Meier, "The Condor Legion: An Instrument of Total War?", in: *STW*, 285-294, there 285.
[26] Girard, *Strange*, 176-182-185, 191-199; also: Kai Evers, "Risking Gas Warfare: Imperceptible Death and the Future of War in Weimar Culture and Literature", *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 89:3 (2014) 269-284.

it had signed the protocols. What the disarmament movements did help, was the creation of a taboo against gas.[27] Still, taboo or not – there was a genuine and not unreasonable fear that gas would be used to attack the civilian population. Especially if it were to be combined with the other major technological weapon coming from the war: the airplane.

"Bombs away…"

> It was as natural as breathing for me to perceive that airpower would revolutionise war.[28]
>
> <div align="right">– Liddell Hart</div>

The Great War saw the first systematic use of airplanes for the explicit purposes of war. Aviators such as the famous Manfred von Richthofen became heroes of war; legends in their own right. Initially used for reconnaissance purposes, the possibilities grew with the emergence of dedicated fighter aircraft and bombers. Although the latter were also useful for attacking military targets, in 1917 the Germans used zeppelin and long-range bombers to bombard London, the British replying in kind with bombardments on the Rhineland.[29] The attacks came forth, Richard Overy argues, out of the belief that an attack on economic objectives would *ipso facto* "generate a morale crisis" in the bombed areas.[30] Interwar debates on the use of aircraft and in particular bombings subsequently revolved around this line of reasoning.

Its most famous proponent was the Italian general and aviator Giulio Douhet. His book *The Command of the Air*, was one of the first to outline theories on strategic bombing. His views were predicated on a belief that any future war would be a world war and that victory goes to the side that first breaks both material and morale resistance.[31] The fastest way to do that was strike

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[27] Spiers, "disarmament", 294-299; Girard, *Strange*, 184, 191-199.

[28] Liddell Hart, *Memoirs* 1, 137.

[29] Richard Overy, "Allied Bombing and the Destruction of German Cities", in: *AWATW*, 277-295, there 279; Williamson Murray, "Strategic Bombing: The British, American, and German experiences", in: idem and Allan R. Millet eds., *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge 1996) 96-143, there 96-98; Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 37-40.

[30] Overy, "Allied", 279-281.

[31] Douhet, *Command,* 142-144.

against vital centres of productivity and defenceless cities.[32] According to Brian Bond, Liddell

Hart had not read Douhet's work when he wrote *Paris*. Yet, his argumentation showed a striking

similarity.[33] Liddell Hart argued that the main benefits of the aircraft were two-fold: its "ability to

jump over the [enemy's] army" and thus the ability with bombs to "strike direct and immediately

at the seat of the opposing will."[34] In short, the airplane enabled a quick and direct strike against

the enemy's morale. For Liddell Hart airpower's attractiveness was further enhanced by the fact

that airplanes would reduce the necessity of sending ground troops overseas, potentially a major

benefit for limiting casualties.[35]

A man who took it to heart was Air Chief Marshal Hugh Trenchard. The first

commander of the British Royal Air Force (RAF), he was instrumental in developing British air

doctrine. Personally acquainted with Liddell Hart, he had read both Douhet and *Paris*, acquired a

number of copies of *Paris* for use at the RAF staff college.[36] The *AP-1300 RAF War Manual*

(1928) articulately spelt the relation behind bombing and morale:

> Moral effect – Although the bombardment of suitable objectives should result in
> considerable material damage and loss, the most important and far-reaching effect
> of air bombardment is its moral effect.[37]

Air Marshal Arthur 'Bomber' Harris, responsible for British strategic bombardments in

the Second World War, called them 'morale bombings.'[38] Meilinger notes that the

bombing targets in this doctrine*,* though never precisely defined, were industrial centres

that employed the workers - calling the expectation that resulting unemployment would

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[32] Douhet, *Command*, 220-222; Thomas Hippler, *Bombing the People: Giulio Douhet and the Foundations of Air-Power Strategy, 1884-1939* (Cambridge 2013) 251-258.
[33] Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 43; Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 40-42.
[34] Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 37.
[35] E.g.: Liddell Hart, *Paris,* 36.
[36] Liddell Hart, *Memoirs,* 1, 142-143, 155; Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 43; Meilinger, "Trenchard", 248-250, 255, 257-259; Overy, "Allied", 281; Hippler, *Bombing*, 251; Fore a full study: Malcom Smith, *British Air Strategy Between the Wars* (Oxford 1984).
[37] Cited in: Overy, "Allied", 282.
[38] Harris, *Bomber Offensive,* 79.

break morale a questionable logic.[39] Yet, it is here where Trenchard and Liddell Hart differed from Douhet, who did designate the population itself a target. Liddell Hart opposed the strategic bombardments of Harris, that did target major population centres, but an opposition that led to Liddell Hart's loss of influence early in the Second World War.[40]

Here too, contemporary developments allowed for the testing of post-Great War theories. In 1936 Hitler promised aid to Spanish dictator General Fransisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). A *Luftwaffe* unit, the Condor Legion was sent. Although predominantly used for close-air support to ground troops, the legion acquired notoriety with a serious of bombings on cities, including Madrid and Guernica. Especially the attack on Guernica, a city of about 5,000 inhabitants, became infamous since Guernica looked like an unprovoked 'terror' attack on the civilian population – although James Corum argues that this was a myth, with no evidence of it being an deliberate attack on morale but rather an attack for tactical reasons. Overy agrees, but points out that regardless, the perception of its nature in the subsequent press coverage reinforced the assumptions on the totality of 'terror' or morale bombings.[41]

Whilst Guernica might not have been deliberate, strategic bombing had been under consideration in the *Luftwaffe*. Klaus Maier documents various key figures within the force who, influenced by Douhet, argued for attack on the *Widerstandswillen* of the people. He argues that the Guernica and Madrid attacks crossed the border into total war territory, and connects attacking the 'national consciousness' with the Nazi's belief in the pre-eminence of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.[42] Corum too acknowledges the link between the Nazi-hierarchy and *Luftwaffe* commanders, but contends that they held radically different

[39] Meilinger, "Trenchard", 259.
[40] Meilinger, "Trenchard", 250, 259, 269; Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 144-146.
[41] Corum, *Luftwaffe*, 145, 198-200; Overy, "Allied", 285; also: Smith, *Air*, 47; Klaus A. Maier, "Condor Legion: An Instrument of Total War?", in: *STW*, 285-294, there 285-289.
[42] Maier, "Condor", 285, 291; see also: Corum, *Luftwaffe*, 74, 82, 90-91, 98-101, 238-241.

views on the objectives of warfare. In the end, *Luftwaffe* interwar operational doctrines regulations show an emphasis and preference for military targets. Interestingly though, is the reference that Corum makes to Ludendorff's *The Coming War*'s vision of war in relation to civil defence.[43]

Like Liddell Hart, Ludendorff appreciated the airplane's capacity for direct strikes against the civilian population, with the expectation that bombs filled with poison-gas could increase its efficiency even more. Yet, he also fully expected that the enemy would do the same. It was thus necessary to provide a defence, with at the very least gasmasks being necessary.[44] The fear of aerial bombardments in combination with gas played both in Germany and Britain. Theorists looked at the measured effects of gas against soldiers and posited that the effect on civilian morale would be even greater, with panic spreading quickly and crippling society – noting that the airplanes had been used to spread gas in the Abyssinian War.[45] An aircraft's capability to cross vast distances quickly over any terrain, meant that any nation could be a proper target, even an island. Pro-gassers advocated training in the use of gas-masks and education in order to diminish possible panic effects, and especially in the late 1930s air-raid shelters were constructed. Regardless of all the measures taken, both offensively and defensively – airpower was predicted to have a tremendous effect on civilian morale in the future.[46]

Conclusion

It would take up too much space to reflect on all possible methods of breaking morale. Both Liddell Hart and Ludendorff discussed the use of naval blockades and submarines, with the latter also addressing the role of guerrilla's for defence.[47] But as Ludendorff

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[43] Corum, *Luftwaffe*, 145-147.
[44] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 67, 83; Kutz, "Fantasy", 194.
[45] E.g., Thuillier, *Gas*, 79-89; Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 314-322.
[46] See: Bond, *Liddell* Hart, 109-110; Grayzel, *Home*, 1-6, 315-321; Girard, *Strange*, 191-199; Hippler, *Bombing*, 258.
[47] Ludendorff, *Nation*, 84, 140-141; Liddell Hart, *Paris*, 32.

argues these were 'old methods of warfare', and their effects, although proven during the war, were not a new lesson out of World War I practice.[48] The technological capabilities offered by gas and especially the airplane, seemingly provided new methods for achieving the theoretical war aim of breaking civilian morale. Both weapons found their origins on the battlefield – yet also represented the means through which the battlefield could encompass all of society. Even if gas was in the end not used in World War 2, there was no reason to assume so during the interwar years.[49]

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[48] Ludendorff, *Totale Krieg*, 84.
[49] see also: Hippler, *Bombing*, 257-258;

Conclusion

The end for our actors was very different. Ludendorff died in 1937, two years before the next war was unleashed on the European continent. Liddell Hart lived through the Second World War and became a fulltime military historian. He was given a knighthood in 1966, dying four years later in 1970.[50]

Their ideas on morale showed the influence the First World War had as a reference point on European military thought in general. In the title "From Practice to Theory", the practice thus refers to the world war. Theorising on future warfare with World War I in mind produced a vision of war that would be total in its scope, whether someone sought to prevent another slaughter or was convinced that it needed to be even more total. Both Liddell Hart and Ludendorff drew the lesson from the Great War, that at its core, it was the nation that was the determinant of military success. Whoever could successfully mobilise the nation possessed the greatest strength. Morale was the variable that determined the success of this mobilising process. Controlling home front morale was thus essential in avoiding your own military collapse but the ways to achieve this differed greatly between Liddell Hart and Ludendorff views, partly due to their political backgrounds. With morale essential in defence, it was also a target for offense actions. Morale was thus conceptualised as a war aim that (partly) determined victory. However, the reasoning behind morale's validity as an aim lay deeper. Ludendorff's reasoning came from a desperation for victory due to his view that nations were locked in an eternal struggle for survival. Destroying morale ensured a higher chance of victory. Liddell Hart's argument for targeting the nation's morale, was that it shortened war because it prevented pitched attrition battles between mass armies. Both agreed that the key to morale's success as a strategic goal was by inflicting hardship on the enemy's civilian population. Two innovations to come from World

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[50] Dassen, *Sprong,* 159-159, 360-365; Chickering, "Sore Loser", 159; Bond, *Liddell Hart*, 1-10.

War I: poison-gas and the airplane, were considered to possess the necessary technological qualities and characteristics that made this objective attainable.

The value of their ideas lies perhaps less in its representativeness than the influence of the individuals themselves. This is not to say they were not representative at all. Liddell Hart's views on morale as a determinant of war were shared by people such as Trenchard, and Fuller. Ludendorff too is representative, in that he personified the German far-right in a time before Hitler, although his take on morale and future war was a very particular one, reflecting his personal conspiracy beliefs to a far greater extent then even the German far-right could ultimately tolerate. Our subjects' expectation of a 'future war' that would once again involve the full nation was also widely shared by a wide variety of people, not the least of which were Churchill and even Hitler. It did not necessarily mean that war was inevitable, but reflected more a belief that war itself was part of the human condition. However, through his writings Liddell Hart became immensely influential during the interwar years as a military theorist, especially in the 1930s. His connections to leading politicians and military leaders lends a certain weight to his views. Ludendorff's status as a wartime general and far-right leader, in a sense paving the way for Hitler, makes him no less impactful.

In conclusion, we can state that morale after the First World War in Germany and Britain was conceptualised as the new determinant of war, an idea that subsequently influenced the direction to take both domestically and militarily when it came to war. Whether or not this assessment was correct is less relevant. Then and now, predicting the future is an uncertain art, with no-one possessing the means to look into it. It thus reflects what Liddell Hart himself wrote on Ludendorff:

> It is worthwhile to approach the problem of future warfare along Ludendorff's path, not because his idea of the result is likely to prove real, but because it shows what is likely to be attempted.[51]

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[51] Liddell Hart, *Europe*, 295.

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