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Part 3, Introduction

Non-Combatants

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In total war, it is not only soldiers who are faced with linguistic challenges and a need for a new vocabulary to define their experiences. Non-combatants on what may loosely be called 'the home front' as well as those confined to prisoner-of-war (POW) camps also found themselves engaging with language in new ways and/or creating a vocabulary that would fit their day-to-day experiences. The chapters in this section take us to a POW camp on the outskirts of Berlin, to the streets of Russia, to the corridors of power and philanthropy in the United Kingdom. Each demonstrates a distinct experience, but all are linked by language, revealed in what Emily Hayman calls 'multilingual fragments' (Hayman 2014: 2) in hitherto neglected printed texts, contemporary memoirs and civic records. The scholars featured in the following pages draw our attention to charity books published and sold in Britain for the benefit of Belgian refugees, reminiscences of former internees at Ruhleben Camp, and the database of the Russian National Corpus.

In 'Translating charity for allied aliens: Belgian charity books in Britain', Christophe Declercq demonstrates how Victorian and Edwardian philanthropy informed the response to the waves of Belgian refugees who sought protection in Britain from the outset of the war in

August 1914. Numbering in their tens of thousands, these often-traumatized exiles became a tool of propaganda, used not only to justify Britain's involvement in the conflict, but to reinforce ongoing support for the war effort. Charity gift books were produced to raise money for relief funds and a whole host of popular writers (some now forgotten) rallied to the effort, notably Hall Caine. Publishers such as Hodder and Stoughton, in funding the production and distribution of such gift books, made the book trade complicit in government propaganda, responding to both their own sense of duty to country and to the advantages that such worthy publicity would bring to their firms. Declercq focuses on six publications, which went to market between 1914 and 1916, and traces the trend in their linguistic and translational aspects: *Poems of the Great War* (Chatto and Windus, 1914); *Special Belgian Relief Number* (Everyman/JM Dent, 1914); *King Albert's Book* (*The Daily Telegraph*, 1914); *Princess Mary's Gift Book* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1914); *The Glory of Belgium* (Erskine MacDonald, 1915); and *A Book of Belgium's Gratitude* (John Lane, The Bodley Head, circa 1915/16). The 'cross-cultural, multilingual, transnational and translational aspects' of the charity books makes them one of the most fascinating outputs of the British cultural home front.

While non-combatants such as publishers and authors found a ready market for their wares among the home fronts, POWs were literally a captive audience. Not only were they the recipients of vast consignments of books, periodicals and other reading material sent to them by well-wishing citizens at home, but they were truly immersed in a multilingual environment. Jamie Calladine, in '"Berlitz Krieg": The development of a modern language pedagogy at Ruhleben civilian internment camp', highlights how prisoners devoted 'rigorous and passionate study' to what amounted to over ten modern languages. This was supported

by the camp school and 'delivered by a diverse cohort of teachers, approximately a third of which had occupied positions as tutors in Britain and across Europe', especially with innovative schools such as Berlitz and Institut Tilly. Calladine 'uncovers how language impacted on the lived experience of internment and provided the relief and stimulation that comforted civilian internees through an unprecedented state of enforced inactivity'.

Lived experience also impacts on language, a fact that is borne out by Golubinov in his chapter entitled, '*Khvosty*, *meshochniki* and "internal Germans": The transformation of everyday life language in Russia during the First World War'. Here Golubinov hones in on 'practices of surviving' on the home front and how these were reflected, in addition to the Russian language, as 'old and rare terms became ubiquitous and found new significance'. Specifically, Iaroslav Golubinov concentrates on the practice of the queue *khvosty* (tails) for consumer goods, something which even today resonates as a feature of the Soviet system. In fact, the queue had a much longer history but found new meaning during 1914–18, and adjunct words were attached to it. Gradually, 'new elements of everyday life in the language (and, consequently, in the space of social practices)' emerged: *khvostetsy* Moscow 'line people'; *meshochnichestvo* ('literally, bagging, from word *meshok* – bag') denoted a 'type of public organisation intended for the food supply of the urban population' with its own *meshochniki* (bag men); and *vnutrennie nemtsy*, 'internal Germans', profiteers who were thus both external and domestic enemies. Golubinov demonstrates how wartime brought out a particular resilience in the Russian language, 'an unprecedented adaptability' to invent new words to describe non-combatants' acute, everyday need for food.

The global war, which touched all aspects of day-to-day life, was by its very nature multilingual; the violence of 1914–-18 had not only physical and mental consequences but

cultural ones, a good of deal which was expressed – or tried to be expressed – through language. The three chapters that follow demonstrate just how varied that adaptation was amongst non-combatants and the degrees to which multilinguism was crucial to emotional and cultural, if not physical, survival.

References

1. Hayman, E. (2014), *Inimical Languages: Conflicts of Multilingualism in British Modernist Literature*, Columbia University: Unpublished doctoral dissertation.