Introduction

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The world wars have long been areas of rich historical inquiry, generating stimulating debates on topics as diverse as the totalization of modern warfare, the mobilization of societies, the construction of war cultures, and the dynamics of combat motivation. Yet, even after decades of work, the historiographies dedicated to the European theaters of war rarely engage in dialogue with non-Western ones. It takes considerable effort to draw comparisons and connections between similar phenomena – such as the mobilization of the home front, aerial attacks on cities, or processes of environmental extraction – that were occurring at the same time in different places around the world. Reasons for this include the abundance of bibliographies, linguistic demands, and access to archives, all of which make it challenging for anyone to adequately master the literature on multiple areas. It is also difficult, even in the intellectual context of an increasingly interconnected world, to shift perspectives, to de-Westernize ways of thinking, and to conceive of war more globally, rather than as a juxtaposition of national cases.

Moreover, historians of the two world wars rarely question their shared research themes, despite often pursuing remarkably parallel research agendas, as in the case of their profound reconfiguration of the world wars' chronologies over the past several decades. The First World War has been extended through its connection with both earlier conflicts, such as the Russo-Japanese War and the Balkan Wars, and those civil wars and episodes of paramilitary and colonial violence that immediately succeeded it: Historians now regularly speak of a "Greater War" that ended only in the summer of 1923 with the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne.[1] In the case of the Second World War, a more global approach has entailed identifying the conflict's outbreak as September 1931 with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria or July 1937 with the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War – and its end as 1947.[2] As research into the two world wars has become more nuanced and refined, their chronological boundaries have also grown increasingly blurred and porous – so much so that it becomes difficult to pinpoint the

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precise transition from war to peace. Each national historiography, deeply influenced by its experience and memory of the war, has constructed its own geographical and chronological boundaries, historical markers, and turning points – making international dialogue between historians both essential, complex, and intellectually stimulating.

Connecting the world wars remains an enduring challenge. Researchers are no longer satisfied with the traditional interpretation that portrayed the Second World War as merely a consequence of the failed peace treaties of 1919 and the early 1920s. For several decades now, extensive research has focused on the nature and origins of that conflict's intensifying violence, immense toll on civilian populations, and increasingly genocidal nature. Furthermore, the classic notion of the "interwar period," inherited from diplomatic history, has faded in the face of a deeper analysis of the numerous conflicts that marked the 1920s and 1930s across the world, which are now understood as part of the same historical sequence.[3] Looking beyond well-studied geographies inevitably destabilizes familiar periodizations; as such, thinking more globally about the world wars' impacts across the globe will also unavoidably entail rethinking how their origins and legacies entangled across the first half of the twentieth century.

In sum, globalizing the history of the two world wars appears more an intellectual process than a result, more an ongoing effort than a reality, more a challenge than a given. It requires historians to engage in sustained dialogue with specialists of other historical periods and other geographical areas, and to take a step back from established knowledge – that is, often to think against oneself and against one's intellectual training, familiar field, and primary sources.

These same challenges, insights, and efforts can be found in our edited volume, the product of a long-term dialogue that took place over several years among historians of war violence from across the globe. Even though the co-editors and contributors have strived to offer the broadest possible overview of ongoing research, our volume is based on choices – which we explain in the following pages – and on a general orientation that privileges the social and cultural history of modern warfare. We therefore invite our readers to approach our book not as an exhaustive compendium of knowledge, but rather as a chance to take stock of an ongoing research endeavor and to encourage further work in the years to come. We are also aware that by emphasizing the globalization of the history of the two world wars, there is a risk of overlooking or underestimating historical realities that elude, resist, or stand at the margins of the movement of interconnection that characterized both conflicts. In other words, to globalize the history of the First and Second World Wars is one

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possible perspective – among many – for approaching these cataclysmic events, whose countless consequences continue to shape our world today.

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Global history began in the 1990s amid a triumphalist celebration of post-Cold War globalization. As an attempt to acknowledge and recover the interconnections and interdependencies of past worlds, it sought to produce meta-narratives of major historical processes that had been ignored or marginalized within national historiographies. The prolegomenon to the *Journal of Global History*'s inaugural issue identified two main approaches of the then-emerging field. The first involved seeking out webs of connections "across the gamut of political frontiers, spatial units, and geographical boundaries of all kinds," including trade, investment, religion, migrations, knowledge transfers, botanical exchanges, the spread of diseases, and warfare.[4] The second concerned comparisons, and involved investigating similar topics across oceans, continents, cultures, and boundaries of all sorts.[5] Together, both approaches aimed to reorient historical focus to areas of the world long considered peripheral, to recenter historical narratives, and to emphasize the impact that movements and exchanges of ideas, goods, actors, and practices had on social and political entities at every scale.[6]

Since its emergence, global history has progressively become less of a distinct field than a heuristic that has equipped historians with an interpretive toolkit for linking together pivotal periods of world history.[7] As part of that endeavor, historians have embarked on an array of groundbreaking research agendas. Some have increasingly deconstructed the inherited spatial frameworks that govern our perception and study of the world, for instance through oceanic histories, borderlands studies, or the histories of continents.[8] Others have studied the connections between the expansion of global capitalism, diverging models of economic and technological development, and specific commodities, including cotton, vanilla, sugar, oil, tobacco, and chocolate.[9] Meanwhile, attention to environments, ecological conditions, and the transmission of diseases has shown how nonhuman–human interactions have shaped the course of world history.[10] Naturally, one of the key thrusts of global history has also been to show the dynamics of imperial conquest and the expansion of anti-colonial activism, networks, and sovereignty claims.[11] In sum, the field has excavated a host of previously unseen connections, causations, and comparisons.

Military history has not been isolated from these developments. Since its origins, the history of imperial mobilizations in wartime has studied the transfer of individuals, capital, and material resources from the

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peripheries of colonial spaces to the political and economic centers of the various empires, both Western and non-Western.[12] Places distant from the main battlefields provided men for military service and for support behind the lines, laborers working for the war economy, and goods and raw materials essential for the war effort. Imperial mobilization also kindled all sorts of cultural transfers on a global scale, in terms of ideologies, war cultures, languages, skills, and cultural practices. With the development of the social history of war in the 1970s and 1980s, the circulation of "colonial" workers and their interactions with their colonizers became the focus of important work around the questions of race, segregation, and racial violence.[13] Additionally, the imperial turn has also renewed historians' focus on captivities, both civilian and military.[14] More recently, military historians have benefited from the rise of environmental history and studies on ecological transformations and resource extraction, food networks and food shortages, the mobilization of animals, and the spread of epidemics on a global level.[15] Similarly, humanitarianism has progressively become a growing field of scholarly activity, addressing topics as varied as captivity, the displacement of refugees, transnational networks of humanitarian activists and experts, and humanitarian interventions across the world at war.[16] Finally, the influence of global history has also encouraged military historians to reconceptualize how nations, regions, and continents removed from the most commonly studied fronts were both integral to, and thoroughly transformed by, the world wars.[17] Put differently, both the global nature of military history and the dialogue between military and global historians are nothing new.

Despite, or perhaps thanks to, the abundance of approaches and methodologies employed by military historians to embrace the discipline's global turn, there has yet to be a serious or shared reflection on what writing a global history of the world wars entails: specifically, that endeavor's best practices, promises, and pitfalls. In one sense, this may be a symptom of some military scholars' eagerness to capitalize on the discipline's latest trends by uncritically rebranding limited comparative histories or work on the non-Western world as "global." On a larger level, however, the failure of global history and military history to further cross-pollinate has also been due to global historians' own avoidance of the world wars as a topic of study. As Jeremy Adelman has noted, many global histories remain preoccupied with the study of globalization and its multiplying exchanges, migrations, and interconnections.[18] In this view, the disruptions of wartime – severed trade networks, breaches in diplomatic relations, the immobility of many travelers and laborers, economic sanctions, and so on – appear as an inconvenient outlier or

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interruption in the field's conceptual framework. But wartime, too, produced its own set of connections, contacts, networks, emulations, and reroutings: the very topics, in other words, that serve as the bread and butter of global history.

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Globalizing the History of the World Wars suggests four key perspectives, the first of which involves a decentering of the study of the First and Second World Wars. This intellectual and epistemological process begins with an acknowledgment of the cultural and spatial presuppositions with which all historians work, depending on their training, their position in the field, their linguistic skills, and the professional networks to which they belong. Equipped with a certain (self-)awareness of the limitations of established paradigms, historians seeking to decenter their perspective have frequently sought another coherence, another narrative, by integrating other historical actors and restoring their voices. "The decentering historian does not tell the story of the past only from the vantage point of a single part of the world or of powerful elites, but rather widens his or her scope, socially and geographically, and introduces plural voices into the account," wrote historian Natalie Zemon Davis, who rightly associated spatial decentering with a more socially diverse historical narrative.[19]

The evolution of the historiography of a global conflict such as the First World War illustrates quite well the successive stages of the decentering process. Intellectual openness to other fronts and conflict zones began, by and large, with the work on the (Western) imaginaries associated with assumedly marginal areas, and the wartime experiences of the Western armies deployed there, before truly considering the experiences and agency of local populations, as well as questions of reciprocity and mutual influence. Long written by Western historians and focused on the Western Front, the histories of the First World War progressively extended first to the Eastern Front, then to other fronts long considered marginal: the Balkans, Mesopotamia, Africa, and Asia.[20] National histories gave way to more comparative accounts and finally to transnational perspectives that put more emphasis on movements and exchanges across borders.[21] Along the way, those actors long marginalized or excluded entirely from historical accounts of the war – women, children, colonial soldiers, laborers, prisoners, racial minorities – assumed a central place in social and cultural histories of the conflict. Globalizing the history of the First and Second World Wars has also encouraged military historians to abandon a narrow definition of war as a confrontation between nation-states, and to extend it to other forms of wartime violence

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involving a broader cast of actors.[22] Moreover, this conceptual evolution would remain incomplete if it were not also accompanied by a thorough interrogation of the contextual validity of common notions such as "captivity," "war veterans," or "home front" for the non-Western world. As Dónal Hassett has recently suggested, there may well need to be a move "towards a new taxonomy of the global Greater War."[23]

Beyond the expansion of the field and the nuances that it brings, the process of decentering also suggests important questions about the various chronologies of wartime. Again, assigning July 1937 and the Japanese invasion of China as one of the many possible "beginnings" of the Second World War – as opposed to, say, the September 1939 invasion of Poland or the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor – changes entirely the nature of the conflict. It restores the Second Sino-Japanese War, often marginalized in Western narratives and considered but a precursor or dress rehearsal to the Second World War, to its full scale and importance in the global context of the war.[24] It also reminds us that atrocities against civilians, above all aerial bombardment and sexual violence, were present from the very outset: an essential feature of the war's social and gendered violence rather than a by-product of its later radicalization.[25]

Of course, the process of decentering has also its limits, risks, and flaws – namely, ignoring the continued influence of national historiographies, uncritically reinscribing Western paradigms, or disproportionately emphasizing certain regions as drivers of history.[26] Decentering, first, is certainly not as simple as "de-Westernizing." Although pushing understudied areas and actors to the heart of the narrative is a crucial part of the process, such a reorientation can still reinforce certain exclusions or nationally specific presuppositions. To return to the foregoing example, for instance, there is clearly a major pitfall of presuming that reperiodizing the outset of the Second World War is automatically global, given that some Japanese museums, despite focusing on 1937 better than many of their Western counterparts, still downplay or ignore the Imperial Army's mass murder of Chinese civilians.[27] To put it differently, decentering runs the risk of simply *recentering*, a pitfall already well identified by the existing scholarship. Global historians have warned of an embedded "conceptual Eurocentrism" in the study of other areas of the world, and shown that even the writing of global history is pursued within the established frameworks of national historiographies.[28] Others have questioned whether Eurocentrism has simply been replaced by predictable comparative axes (Eurasian and northern Atlantic), while still largely marginalizing other areas of the world.[29] Global historians of war, like

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all historians, will inevitably write from somewhere: They must remain aware and transparent about their self-positioning and its implications.

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Second, this volume insists that it is crucial for historians to grapple with various sorts of circulation that the world wars both engendered and deepened.[30] Despite throwing up many barriers to exchange, the greatest armed conflicts of the twentieth century also undoubtedly forged and expanded linkages between allies, neutrals, and even enemies. Many of these connections were, of course, nothing new. From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, world history had been marked by an ever greater interconnectedness, as revolutions in transportation and communication technologies had rapidly obliterated long-held notions of distance. Things like ocean travel, railroads, print syndication, telegraphy, and radio had progressively compressed space and time, while increased flows of people, commodities, capital, technologies, and ideas had densified overlapping networks of worldwide reach.[31]

The outbreak of the First World War only accelerated these trends, propelling humans, animals, and materiel across the globe on an unprecedented scale.[32] Memorials near the battlefields of the Western Front, for instance, give a sense of how global currents of soldiers and laborers converged and eventually inscribed themselves into localities and landscapes. Looking specifically at the battlefields of the Somme, the Thiepval Memorial commemorates the more than 72,000 missing British and South African servicemen; the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux lists 10,000 names of combatants with no known grave; and a cemetery at Noyelles-sur-Mer holds the remains of over 800 Chinese laborers recruited to support the Allied war effort.[33] Similarly, a "military ecology" comprising complex systems of resource extraction, production, and supply pulled foodstuffs, munitions, and raw materials from colonial territories to the battlefields of Europe.[34] Nonhuman actors circulated, too. Millions of horses, mules, donkeys, dogs, pigeons, canaries, and camels traveled the world in auxiliary roles. Diseases like rinderpest, cholera, smallpox, malaria, and above all the influenza H1N1 virus, responsible for at least 50 million deaths worldwide, traveled along military routes.[35] Overall, the war was instrumental in further interlinking and shrinking the world through unprecedented death and destruction.

To fully appreciate the (deadly) interconnections of a world at war, historians must also recapture the mobility of ideas and practices.

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Various intellectual models, including those of political philosophy, scientific theory, and strategic thought circulated across national boundaries, inflecting the trajectories of individuals, communities, nations, and empires. We might take as an example the transnational dynamic that emerged around aerial bombardment and civil defense in the first half of the twentieth century. Aerial bombing debuted in Libya in 1911 during the Italo-Turkish War, and began to steadily target civilians as a matter of course in the following years and decades: zeppelins and air balloons in the opening months of the First World War; as a tactic of British colonial control in Iraq in the early 1920s; in Guernica and Madrid at the hands of fascist forces during the Spanish Civil War; Japanese raids on China including Shanghai and Chongqing; the Luftwaffe's campaigns against Polish cities at the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe and then regular targeting of civilian areas of Britain during the Blitz; the Allies' attacks against German cities including Hamburg and Dresden; and eventually the United States' airborne campaign against Japanese cities and their use of the atomic bomb against Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[36] In less than four decades, the invention and spectacular intensification of air power had proceeded from a steady diffusion of the world wars' totalizing logic. Belligerent societies rapidly internalized the belief – buttressed by both military theory and slipping cultural restraints on violence against noncombatants – that military victory in the modern age required targeting enemies at home to undermine their industrial capacity, destabilize their political infrastructure, and break their very morale to continue fighting. Consequently, through the mutual study by military and civilian observers, home fronts developed countervailing strategies of civil defense, such as air defense facilities, shelters, fire brigades, and neighborhood associations.[37] In sum, a transnational circulation of experiences, lessons, expertise, intelligence, and doctrine made more efficient both the implementation of war violence and the collective responses it solicited.

But circulations are never fully spontaneous or unstructured. People, ideas, and goods all traveled along specific pathways, themselves inscribed in the existing circuitries that had developed across the world in the preceding decades. Of course, the era of multiplying networks and accelerating global interconnectedness had also been marked by countervailing efforts to more closely define and police territorial borders – and what came across them. There was an irresolvable tension between permeability and enclosure.[38] As such, historians must resist the uncritical presumption that diffusions had their own agency; instead, they must clarify how these networks of various sorts expanded, thickened, broke,

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and rerouted as a consequence of wartime, and often under the supervision of more centralized and powerful national states.

The extent and limits of war's circulatory power can be grasped through an example in the history of knowledge, specifically the rapid growth of humanitarianism during and after the First World War, which reached new heights during and after the Second World War. International networks of specialists on social questions certainly existed well before the outbreak of the Great War. By the end of the nineteenth century, scientific exchange had created "epistemic communities," or groups of individuals with shared expertise in subjects such as law, nutritional science, economics, and epidemiology. Wartime and the chaos of the postwar years intensified these collective efforts and contributed to the creation of international organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (April 1919), the International Research Council (July 1919), and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (December 1946). These organizations pursued an increasing scientification of humanitarian aid through internationally legible metrics that made it possible to both assess the extent of humanitarian catastrophes across the world and evaluate the effectiveness of various interventions. However, these epistemic communities were also deeply divided by nationalist tensions, themselves exacerbated by wartime hatred. The International Research Council, for instance, brought scientific standards into accord but excluded the former Central Powers until the mid-1920s. Overall, transnational humanitarian networks suggest the challenge of accurately understanding how wartime circulations were both made possible and circumscribed by existing social conduits.[39]

The circulation of knowledge during wartime, moreover, is a relational and interactive process. Ideas put into motion by the wars are unavoidably transformed, reappropriated, or else rejected entirely by those who encounter them. We might consider, for example, how, during the First World War, American President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, and especially the notion of self-determination, spread across the globe. As Erez Manela has shown, nationalist leaders in Egypt, India, China, and Korea, keen to revise the existing international order, appropriated and adapted this Wilsonian language to their own agendas.[40] The failure of the Wilsonian promise to remedy colonized peoples' grievances left a deep sense of betrayal, encouraging anti-colonial activists around the world to search for alternate, global models of liberation. Ideologies organized around class, race, and gender – such as Bolshevism, Pan-Africanism, and transnational feminism – began to attract global support.[41] The point is this: Any attention to mobility must grapple with the

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unavoidable fact that the people, things, ideas, and practices pushed across borders by the world wars did not survive their journeys unchanged, but rather refashioned according to context. In mapping the extent of wartime circulations, historians must do more than show what moved where: They must also ask the hard questions of what was absorbed, adapted, and abandoned by whom and for what purpose.

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Third, globalizing the history of the world wars also implies paying sustained attention to encounters – spontaneous and sustained, forced and unforced, direct and mediated.[42] Deriving from decades of entangled histories, the First and Second World Wars were a turning point in the global history of contact, as millions of people crisscrossed the globe and confronted populations, cultures, and environments different from their own. These interactions occurred both on a local level and through various networks, circulations, and cultural representations. Battlefronts became extensive zones of contact between combatants of diverse nationalities, while rear areas and home fronts provided opportunities for soldiers and civilians to develop relationships ranging from ephemeral contact to regular coexistence, as well as feelings marked by growing intimacy, attraction or repulsion, vulnerability or violence.

Conflicts – thanks to their transformative experiences, cross-cultural engagement, and linguistic challenges – are deeply intertwined with the recalibration of individual identities and the reassessment of worldviews and values. Due to their unprecedented scale and their duration, the two world wars intensified and radicalized these transformations. Colonial soldiers and laborers, displaced populations and refugees, prisoners of war, medical professionals, and providers of humanitarian aid – all of various countries, backgrounds, and generations – experienced the war as a radical confrontation with otherness. The result was different forms of personal and collective reconfiguration, from emerging cosmopolitanism to cross-racial intimacy, from anti-colonial activism to intensifying expressions of racial nationalism.

Rethinking the question of encounters and identities in wartime may also contribute to a better understanding of the impact of war on a local level, specifically how various social spaces (front lines, hospitals, army installments, prisoner camps, urban environments, and many others) both hosted and were themselves transformed by wartime encounters. One could think of how cities like Salonika or Athens increasingly became global cities during and after the First World War, due to the presence of a large multinational force deployed on the Balkan front and

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the influx of refugees, especially after the forced population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923 that drastically changed both cities' demographic compositions.[43] Similarly, during the Second World War and its aftermath, allied countries like France and China, along with defeated ones like Japan and Germany, also became global spaces, where American GIs behaved like liberators, tourists, and, occasionally, sexual predators in their encounters with civilians.[44] Crucially, social and sexual relations between GIs and women in these zones of occupation and liberation not only reflected but also actively steered the course of America's foreign policy in the postwar world. "Postwar transnational relations," writes Mary Louise Roberts, "far from being confined to diplomatic and political circles, were shaped at every level of society, and often emerged through specific cultures of gender and sexuality."[45] Placing encounters at the heart of global histories of warfare, that is, challenges historians to conceptualize how complex forms of social contact across lines of nationality, race, gender, class, age, and combatant status transformed at once those involved, the sites of contact themselves, and political relations at all levels.

However, prioritizing encounters also carries the risk of ignoring those who were not mobile or directly brought into connection with the outside world. As Jeremy Adelman so aptly put it: "The story of the globalists illuminates some at the expense of others, the left behind, the ones who cannot move, and those who become immobilised because the light no longer shines on them."[46] Actors already marginalized by military histories risk falling further out of view in the globalized historical narrative. Historians must resist idealized narratives of globalization in wartime where all people had the potential of cosmopolitan contact with one another. It was not as if mobility was a prerequisite for changing identities in wartime. Even places apparently isolated from war could still see the irruption or reinforcement of regulations, bureaucratization, and diverse forms of surveillance and repression, all of which had the power to profoundly disrupt everyday lives. More importantly still, some individuals and communities could – and did – ignore or resist the impulses of globalization.[47] Historians of the world wars must carefully evaluate the scale of encounters and changes produced by conflict, while still considering the lives of those who remained untouched, at least apparently, by faraway events. Global approaches to warfare, that is, must grapple with how to theorize and write about the persistence of the ordinary – the tenacious banality of everyday life – even amid an "age of extremes."

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Fourth and finally, this volume pays attention to global languages, that is, the shared systems of conceptualization and communication which increasingly cohered throughout the first half of twentieth century on account of the world wars' extreme violence. These languages involved things like a diffusion of shared commemorative practices and rituals of bereavement; the creation, expansion, and advancement of legal mechanisms to regulate armed conflicts and pursue justice in their aftermaths; and the production and consumption of a global vernacular of memory through iconic representations in museums and sites of memory. These were, in other words, the common tools that individuals and societies created to cope with collective catastrophe.

One of the most readily apparent global languages to originate in the aftermath of the First World War, and to remain with us since, was the successive burial ceremonies of the unknown soldier. That commemorative ritual, which involved entombing an anonymous warrior amid a national funeral, repeated itself across much of the world in the years immediately following the conflict in victorious and defeated nations alike.[48] Since 1945, memorials to unknown combatants of the First World War and later conflicts have proliferated, reaching from Moscow to Baghdad, Saigon to Ottawa. This seemingly identical feature in the global veneration of war dead after 1918 invites us to reckon with the common denominators of both the emotional devastation that war violence wrought and the cultural responses it elicited. The huge numbers of war dead pulverized by shells, swallowed in the mud of the trenches, lost at sea, or else rendered unrecognizable by the technologies of death had created nothing less than a collective ritual crisis. The widespread absence of bodies, by threatening to interrupt or even prevent traditional processes of mourning, demanded the emergence and diffusion of new modes of interpretation, remembrance, and commemoration.[49] After all, in the shadow of a catastrophe that resisted words itself, the observation of a period of silence emerged as a mute language for societies around the globe to reflect on their losses and honor their fallen.[50] Today, the minute of silence, as a global language, is still employed to honor unspeakable loss in national contexts across the world, whether during ceremonies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the same time as the atomic bombings, during the International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda, or at 8.46 am on September 11, when the first plane collided with the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York.

Still, even as shared commemorative rituals took root in the common soil of postwar bereavement from 1918 onwards, these newfound languages of mourning were neither fully universal nor entirely novel. Following the Great War, there was no entombment of an Unknown in

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either Russia or Germany, the two nations with the most men to mourn. In the former, the new Bolshevik regime sought to fully disown the cause while, in the latter, a glorified and trivialized vision of war violence, what George Mosse called the "Myth of the War Experience," helped to fuel the militant politics of the Nazi party.[51] Moreover, even the nations that did entomb Unknowns implemented the ritual in accordance with their specific national identities. The legacy of previous conflicts, the place of religion in national life, the proximity of the front lines, and the architectural characteristics of capital cities all shaped the processes of selection, the tombs' inscriptions, and the ceremonies themselves. Furthermore, such rituals were not, in fact, entirely creations of the war period. Europeans seeking to process and transcend the effects of the Great War did not ignore older cultural traditions – classical imagery, religious motifs, romantic forms – as much as they reconfigured them. "The search for an appropriate language of loss," writes Jay Winter, was marked by a "vigorous mining of eighteenth and nineteenth century images and metaphors to accommodate expressions of mourning."[52] There no doubt remains work to be done in understanding the extent to which certain commemorative rituals, in assuming an ever wider currency, managed to conform (or not) to the contours of cultural, political, and religious life in particular national contexts across the world. These global languages, that is, raise difficult questions about the fluidity of mourning rituals in the aftermath of war, and even the ways in which local and indigenous ways of remembering resisted or relented to the *lingua franca* of loss. Has the progressive adoption of the minute of silence, for instance, been more a story of ritual hybridization or of cultural imperialism?

In addition to driving a global circulation of shared forms of mourning, the world wars also impelled the development of a shared language to regulate and address extreme violence in the form of international law. Specifically, these conflicts had major impacts on the development of legal norms relating to the rules of war, humanitarianism, and the prosecution of war crimes. It is necessary to recognize at the outset that the progressive sophistication of international law during the first half of the twentieth century – the coalescence of shared, respected, and actively protected principles – was a halting, nonlinear, and thoroughly messy affair. Moreover, the relationship between the development of humanitarian law and human rights remains a controversial topic among historians of international law, with some arguing that each body of law remained distinct until the 1950s while others underline their early cross-fertilization.[53]

Let us take as an example the First World War, which witnessed both the pronounced development and the marked impotence of international

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law. In terms of achievements, the assertion of humanitarian rights that occurred in the war's wake was an undeniable turning point. Activists, war victims, legal experts, transnational nongovernmental organizations, and new international organizations like the League of Nations helped to secure the international recognition of certain fundamental principles. These included the right to pensions for war victims, limited legal protections such as identity and travel documents for stateless refugees, and children's right to development, assistance, relief, and protection as defined in the (not legally binding) 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Yet all of these rights, developed in the 1920s, remained far from universal. They applied to specific groups of people – defined by age, labor status, military service background, and other categories – but not to individuals.[54] It was only in the post-Second World War era, following the creation of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, when the dignity of each individual began to enjoy (a nonetheless theoretical) international recognition and protection, before impelling a more powerful international human rights movement in the 1970s.[55]

Indeed, the shared language of law revealed other severe limits during the era of the First World War. A progressive codification of the rules of war and international efforts to peacefully resolve conflicts without violence was visible in the Hague Peace Conferences (1899 and 1907) and the creation of the intergovernmental Permanent Court of Arbitration (1899). But the international norms and hopes embodied in such efforts did not survive August 1914. Violations of treaty law and the laws of war in the conflict's opening weeks quickly pitted imperial Germany and the Allied powers against one another in an ongoing legal clash over what was permissible in warfare and why.[56] The frailty of international law became further evident in the failure to adequately address war crimes in the conflict's aftermath. In accordance with Articles 228 and 229 of the Treaty of Versailles, which gave the Allied and Associated Powers the right to bring before military tribunals those persons accused of violating the laws of war, a total of twelve war crimes trials for former members of the imperial German armed forces were held before the highest German court in Leipzig in 1921 and 1922.[57] Similarly, the Paris Peace Conference took up the effort to prosecute Ottoman war criminals, provisions for which were included in the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres and which prompted the Ottoman government to organize a series of courts martial during 1919–1920.[58] Both legal efforts were an overwhelming failure: Kaiser Wilhelm II was never tried, there was no systematic legal redress for German atrocities committed in Belgium, and the architects of the Armenian genocide escaped prosecution. The failure to administer

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postwar justice on the national level suggested the need for an overarching legal framework with supranational jurisdiction and authority. It was only a generation later, after the Second World War, that the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg and the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal exercised an authority – transcending national boundaries – to prosecute individuals for crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.[59]

The construction of a widely recognized legal instrument to codify certain sorts of atrocities as international crimes finally came in the post-Second World War period. The Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin, who as a law student had been struck by the inability of international law to achieve justice for the Ottoman crimes against the Armenian people during the First World War, coined the term "genocide" in 1944 in response to Nazi extermination policies in occupied Europe.[60] His campaign to establish an international treaty criminalizing genocide and obligating states to enforce its prohibition culminated in December 1948, when this so-called Genocide Convention became the first human rights treaty unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. Taken together, that is, the extreme violence of the world wars, particularly the exterminatory violence directed against minority groups, had helped to solidify a collective will and a judicial machinery to name, prosecute, and punish certain crimes that, earlier, would have defied international legal efforts.

In some ways, then, the legacies of this global language of international law that emerged by and large from the world wars are still with us. Most sovereign nations, for instance, are still party to the Genocide Convention. Yet the history of international law, as well as current events, reminds us that international law is only as powerful as those who recognize and enforce it. Historians of war will need to continue grappling with the history of international law as a means to not only globalize their objects of study but also to map the many disjunctions between the ambitions, achievements, and failures of systems of international justice – in the past and in the present alike.[61]

Finally, the world wars have become the subject of global languages of memory which aim to create universally recognizable narratives of war violence, and to solicit and stimulate shared empathy among postwar survivors, successive generations, and bystanders of memory – that is, people who encounter and absorb (more or less passively) the traces of a tragic past. War museums, often located on sites of memory – whether battlefields or locations of civilian massacres – are major instruments in the emergence and consumption of the global memory of the world wars.[62] This global memory is first and foremost reflected in the design

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and organization of museum spaces. Frequently, they adhere to similar museographic models, either because they have been designed by renowned international architects or because curators, designers, and museum professionals draw direct inspiration from preexisting war memorial museums across the globe.

A notable example is the renovation of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in the early 2010s. This museum addresses both the commemorative imperatives of the survivors of the atomic bombing (the *Hibakusha*) and their descendants (*Hibaku nisei*), as well as those of international visitors. The permanent exhibition and its renewed museography draw intentionally from the grammar, visual codes, and referential frameworks of other Second World War memorial museums in Europe, such as the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum or the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris.[63] Several narrative elements illustrate this globalization of memory languages related to wartime violence.[64] These include: an emphasis on individual life stories, which responds to a moral imperative to preserve personal identities amid the collective catastrophes of the Holocaust and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the growing prominence of objects deeply connected with intimacy and humanity – such as clothing or toys – in museographic displays; the use of group portraits and headshots to stimulate visitors' emotional identification with victims regardless of their backgrounds and identities; and the increasing focus on children in memorial narratives as universal symbols of innocence, victimhood, and the unnatural interruption of lineage. There is a global vocabulary of institutional memorialization that visitors not only recognize but expect. Each of these museums is organized around specific, well-known artifacts, featured prominently in their collection, that are central to their identity, mission, and narrative and globally disseminated through photographs or souvenirs.[65] In the case of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Shin's tricycle, owned by a three-year-old boy killed in the atomic bombing on August 6, 1945, is both the testament of a young life cut short by tragedy and a global symbol of victimhood.

This globalizing tendency in war museums, while allowing for engagement with broader audiences and emphasizing the universal significance of individual tragedies, also carries the risk of simplification, decontextualization, and even voyeurism. For instance, children's drawings may appear to speak a universal language but are in fact shaped by culturally specific codes that are often overlooked in globalized memorial contexts. The same applies to ruins: Their perceived universality can obscure the specificity of the localities to which they inevitably belong. A poignant example is the martyred village of Oradour-sur-Glane, where over

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600 civilians were massacred on June 10, 1944. The ruins of the village – including houses and the church – have been carefully preserved in their wartime state since the end of the Second World War.[66] The decisions to leave ruins intact, to preserve them alongside the construction of new buildings (such as the new and old Cathedrals of Coventry, devastated in an air raid on November 14, 1940), or to rebuild cities after wartime, derive both from local imperatives and from a global reflection on destruction and resilience. Global museums and sites of memory can raise important questions about violence and inhumanity. But they can also risk obscuring the specific dynamics and historicity of each tragic event and wash away the story of individual lives through an insistence on universal lessons.

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Given the impossibility of covering the global history of the two world wars, this edited volume is organized around those historiographical approaches that we consider the most illustrative. Indeed, our goal is not to provide an exhaustive description of a particularly vast, rich, and complex topic. Rather, we seek to inspire future research, to combine topics normally studied in isolation from one another, and to bridge complementary historiographies that remain largely distinct.

Part I contains chapters that, respectively, explore the connected histories of total war and colonial violence (Erik Linstrum, Chapter 1), the transnational construction of the Japanese home front (Sheldon Garon, Chapter 2), the migration of Western strategic ideas into China (Victor Louzon, Chapter 3), and the psychological dimensions of total warfare between the US and Japan in the 1940s, particularly strategic bombing and the transnational concept of morale (Ran Zwigenberg, Chapter 4). In combination, they show how theories and practices of total war in the first half of the twentieth century were at once highly mobile and strikingly malleable: imported and exported across political boundaries, reconfigured according to context. The chapters also help connect the concept of total war to related ones such as the "home front" and civilian "morale" from a less Eurocentric perspective, raising important questions about the extent and impact of ideological and material circulations during periods of armed conflict and their aftermaths.

By focusing on the relationship between the history of sensibilities, political and diplomatic history, and the social history of international law, Part II emphasizes humanitarian aid and law as key developments at the intersection of globalization and warfare. Two chapters analyze the First World War as a moment of unprecedented mobilization that triggered massive material aid and compassion to war victims – by

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international aid organizations, humanitarians in the field, and global public opinions – between Europe and the Americas (Mary Elisabeth Cox, Chapter 5, and María Inés Tato, Chapter 6, respectively). The following two chapters explore how international humanitarian law impacted the experience of imperial captivities across the Pacific region during the First and Second World Wars (Mahon Murphy, Chapter 7, and Sarah Kovner, Chapter 8, respectively) – a topic usually studied with a focus on the Western and Eastern Fronts of the European theater of war. Together, these interventions encourage historians to reflect further on the actors, geographies, and legacies of the world wars, the concept of neutrality beyond its traditional diplomatic and legal connotations, and the successes and failures of international law in mitigating or responding to extreme violence.

Part III examines how the world wars as global conflicts gave rise to a range of encounters that reinscribed imperial and racial hierarchies in the United States, Australia, and the British and French Empires. Individual chapters show how the First World War's intensifying demands for racial equality produced a white supremacist backlash in the United States (Cameron Givens, Chapter 9), how First World War foodways encoded imperial racial and gendered hierarchies (Bruce Scates, Chapter 10), and how the First and Second World Wars both upheld and shattered existing patterns in the experiences and representations of Asian and African colonial soldiers (Eric T. Jennings, Chapter 11). In combination, these chapters show that wartime encounters bore an intimate connection to the reconfiguration of identities, particularly ideas of otherness and belonging. Indeed, the world wars were central to the history of race and empire in the first half of the twentieth century, in terms of both the structures of oppression they further ossified and the global aspirations for racial equality and decolonization that they further enflamed.

Part IV explores the cooperative and contested nature of memory formation as an international and transnational process. Individual chapters examine, respectively, the centennial commemorations of the First World War in India and Britain to understand the specificities, asymmetries, and instrumentalizations of memory in the wider colonial context (Santanu Das, Chapter 12), the cultures of war victory in Eastern Europe to show how the memory of the world wars was (re)-shaped to fit shifting political interpretations of global history (John Paul Newman, Chapter 13), and how collective memories of the world wars and their genocidal dimensions were constructed and contested at museums and sites of memory (Annette Becker, Chapter 14). These contributions highlight major directions for future research on the global

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production and consumption of war memories – in various national and post-imperial contexts, at different levels of society, and for specific political purposes.

The collective achievement of this volume's fourteen chapters inheres not only in what they cover but also in what they do not: Together, they show how far the discipline has yet to go in globalizing the study of war, highlight how many paths there are to take in pursuit of that endeavor, and suggest how promising the intellectual payoffs might be. They challenge us to think more closely about the questions we ask, the sources and methods we use, and what we aim to accomplish in writing the history of war. Military historians need not be global historians, or vice versa; history will, after all, remain a house of many rooms. But it is time for them to start thinking together.

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