

(p. 262). Given the importance of transnational ties, the presence of a Belgian amongst the conspirators seems less surprising.

This observation ties in with a third aspect of this book, namely visions of solidarity in Western Europe. In some cases, support for Joris came from groups and individuals who had an existing interest in the Armenian cause. Coverage in the Parisian periodical *Pro-Armenia* (as noted in Henk de Smaele's chapter) is one such example; the efforts of the Belgian radical politician Georges Lorand (as discussed in Marnix Beyen's chapter) are another. For others, such as the Antwerp anarchist Victor Resselier, activism on Joris's behalf seemed to reflect broader political affinities. Moreover, Beyen shows that, like many solidarity campaigns, Belgian mobilization during the Joris affair could serve a variety of purposes. The coexistence of different political agendas did not just characterize the *Jorisard* campaign but also the object of its efforts: Maarten Van Ginderachter addresses this aspect as he examines and contextualizes Joris's intellectual and political trajectory. Joris's political attachments may have looked contradictory, as they encompassed anarchism, social democracy, Flammingantism, support for Armenian nationalism as well as cosmopolitan visions of a world without borders. Van Ginderachter's nuanced discussion therefore provides us with a valuable reminder that we should not expect ideological coherence when it comes to the motivations and preoccupations of political activists.

As a whole, this volume constitutes a consistently engaging enquiry that reflects the careful planning by its editors. Rather than being a collection of stand-alone essays, the pieces add up to a systematic examination of the Yildiz bombing and its manifold dimensions. The individual chapters follow on from one another quite naturally. At times, authors repeat key information that is relevant for their own chapter, but thankfully, such overlaps have been kept to a minimum. As a result, the book invites reading from cover to cover. Historians of modern Belgium, of national movements, of international relations and of the Euro-

pean left will all find useful material in this book. The volume serves as a model of how the writing of transnational history can be approached as a collaborative venture.

Daniel Laqua

MATT HAULTAIN-GALL

The Battlefield of Imperishable Memory. Passchendaele and the Anzac Legend

Victoria, Monash University Publishing, 2021, xvii + 317 p.

Matt Haultain-Gall is an Australian historian living in Belgium, a research associate at the Université Catholique de Louvain, who has focused for many years on the cultural and social consequences of the First World War. For his doctoral thesis, presented at the University of New South Wales in 2017, he examined how Australia and Australians remembered and commemorated the Battle of Messines and the Third Battle of Ypres, also known as the Battle of Passchendaele. This book is the result.

For Australia, the First World War is considered as the 'coming of age' of the nation, the moment when something like an Australian nationhood emerges. This should come as no surprise: of the then population of 5 million, no less than 330,000 - all volunteers - served in the Australian Imperial Force, or one in fifteen. Moreover, with 215,000 'losses' (dead, wounded, missing, sick, prisoners of war) including 60,000 killed, the Dominion paid a very heavy toll.

Of those who died, 12,750 fell in Belgium during the battles of 1917, over 21% of the total Australian war dead. October 1917 was even the deadliest month for the Australian army. Yet Haultain-Gall notes that the Battle of Messines (7-14 June 1917) and the Third Battle of Ypres (31 July-10 November 1917) are relatively badly represented in both Australian World War I historiography and commemorative practices. For example, apart from a memorial to the 5th Australian Division, there are no national Australian monuments in Belgium while during the recent centenary, the 'great' official Australian ceremony on 26 September 2017 at Polygon Wood (Zonnebeke) was but a sideshow

compared to those at Gallipoli in Turkey in 2015 or Villers-Bretonneux in France in 2018. The central question Matt Haultain-Gall asks is how to explain this marginal position of the Belgian battlefields in Australian historiography and commemoration. And his well-researched answer is broadly that what happened to Australian soldiers in Belgium in 1917 was difficult to frame within the official discourse on Australia in World War I and the subsequent dominant self-image of many Australians. While the earlier and later battles in Turkey and France could be portrayed either as 'exclusively Australian' victories or as examples of Australian bravery, the Battle of Messines and the Third Battle of Ypres were not. Especially the bloody and brutal industrial destruction suffered by Australian forces in October 1917 could not possibly be matched by the values of bravery, manhood and 'offensive spirit' which figured prominently in the 'ANZAC legend' and which to this day remain very much present in the Australian collective memory (a central concept in Haultain-Gall's book). As Joan Beaumont writes in her introduction, Matt Haultain-Gall's study confirms that the processes that make up collective memory are always selective, in part accidental and, from the historian's point of view, unjust.

Although the author unfortunately does not make the reflection, the subject of his book transcends the Australian case discussed therein and touches on important issues related to memory and historiography in general and that of war in particular: who gets into the history books (and who doesn't), who and what do we commemorate (and how and why)? The observation is again and again that "losers" such as refugees, prisoners of war, those who performed labour either behind the front or forced by occupiers, but also those who fought in battles less favorable to the dominant narrative are relegated to the margins of historiography and thus also to the margins of what is commemorated. In this sense, it is a pity that Matt Haultain-Gall never takes the comparative route in his book. The Australian historiography of World War I is not tested against that of other countries such as, for example, Canada which, after all, was also a dominion for which World War I constitutes the 'Birth

of a Nation' but still seems to have developed a less exclusive national discourse. Jay Winter's and Antoine Prost's standard work *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the present*, of which a new edition was recently published, is not even mentioned in the bibliography. And while ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, a comparison with New Zealand is also almost nowhere made.

But this is just one reservation about a book that not only keeps the academic standard consistently high, including excellent endnotes, index and bibliography but also reads very smoothly. Remarkable and positive is that the author not only relies on Australian sources (including for a large part press analysis) but also - albeit to a lesser extent - on British and Belgian sources and literature. This inclusion of texts in French and Dutch remains (unfortunately) very exceptional among English-speaking *grandeguerrists* and therefore deserves praise. *The Battlefield of Imperishable Memory* is meticulous, critical and comprehensive history that brings clear, new insights. During the centenary of the First World War, what I considered to be the ultra-nationalist and jingoistic attitude of Australians, both on the official side and among individual visitors, had often puzzled me. Thanks to Matt Haultain-Gall's excellent book, I now understand what could explain it.

Dominiek Dendooven