

"Isn't this a terrible war?":
THE ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN
TO TWO WORLD WARS¹

Norah Lewis

The trauma of war touches children. Studies by psychologists John Bowlby and Anna Freud of the immediate effects of the Second World War on children in British nursery schools are considered classics in the field.² American educator Dorothy W. Bruach reported increased levels of stress and concern among American children following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, December 7, 1941.³ A number of recent publications, including Ernest Hillen's *The Way of a Boy: A Memoir of Java* (1993), Ben Wicks' *The Day They Took the Children* (1989), and Ruth Inglis' *The Children's War* (1989), and reunions of evacuated British children and hidden Jewish children, confirm the lifelong effects of wartime childhoods.⁴ Participants in the 1988 CBC Radio Series, "Children and War," and the Canadian Childhood History Project seminars, "Childhoods Re-

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1. "Isn't this a terrible war?" Edith McKinnon, *FA*, 18 May 1916.
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Abbreviations:
Family Herald and Weekly Star FHWS
Free Press Prairie Farmer FPPF
The Farmer's Advocate FA
Grain Growers' Guide GGG
Western Producer WP
 2. John Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Maternal Health* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1952); Anna Freud and Dorothy T. Burlington, *Infants Without Families and Reports on the Hampstead Nurseries, 1939-1945* (London: Hogarth, 1974).
 3. Dorothy W. Brauch, *You...Your Children and War* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1943).
 4. Ernest Hillen, *The Way of a Boy: A Memoir of Java* (Toronto: Viking, 1993); Hillen spent three-and-a-half years of his boyhood in a Japanese internment camp; Ben Wicks, *The Day They Took the Children* (London: Bloomsbury, 1989); Geoffrey Bilson, *The Guest Children* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1988); Ruth Inglis, *The Children's War: Evacuation 1939-1945* (London: Collins, 1989).

visited," recalled lasting impressions and, for some, painful lingering memories of wartime childhoods.⁵

Children far from war zones also remembered the war years. A 1991 study by Emilie Montgomery confirms that many British Columbians retained clear and vivid memories of wartime childhood events and experiences of the Second World War. William M. Tuttle's study, *Daddy's Gone to War: The Second World War and America's Children*, provides children's views of United States involvement in that war. Deborah A. Challinor also found that many elderly New Zealanders recalled the effects of the First World War on their lives.⁶

How did Canadian children perceive and respond to two major but distant wars? This paper examines the responses of Canadian children to war as revealed through their letters to the children's pages of five agricultural publications: the Maple Leaf Club of the Montreal-published *Family Herald and Weekly Star* (1896-1968); the Legion of the West (1907-1914), later Pathfinders (1918-1976), of the Winnipeg-published *Free Press Prairie Farmer* (1872-1983); the Beaver Circle of the *Farmer's Advocate* (1866-1936); the Young Canada Club of *The Grain Growers' Guide* (1908-1982); and the Young Co-operators of the Saskatoon-published *Western Producer* (1926-1993). The *Family Herald* and the *Farmer's Advocate* were considered national papers, but the other three tended to focus on western interests and issues. Many rural families, including those for whom English was a second language, subscribed to one or more of these types of newspapers.⁷

Children who wrote to the children's pages often included their names, ages, postal addresses, and their national or ethnic origins. They were a select group in that they were sufficiently literate in English to write to a newspaper club, although, as their letters indicated, English was not necessarily their mother tongue. Only letters that met editorial standards of content and penmanship were selected for publication. But correspondents were also a diverse group. Some

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5. CBC Radio Ideas Series, "Children and War," 1988; Canadian Childhood History Project, *Childhoods Revisited*, "Wartime Childhoods," 1988.
 6. Emilie Montgomery, "'The war was a vivid part of my life': British Columbia Children and the Second World War" (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1991); William M. Tuttle, *Daddy's Gone to War: The Second World War and American's Children* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Deborah A. Challinor, "Children and War: A Study of the First World War's Effect on New Zealand Children" (M.A. thesis, University of Waikato, 1993).
 7. In 1913, there were a total of 259,747 subscriptions to the *FHWS*, *FPPF*, *GGG*, *FA*; in 1939, there were a total of 831,202 subscriptions to the *FHWS*, *FPPF*, *GGG*, and *WP*. In 1943, the *FPPF* became the *Free Press Farm Report*. See *A Chronicle of Finnish Settlements in Rural Thunder Bay*, Bay Street Project No. 2 (Thunder Bay: Candan Uutiset, 1976), 18; Walter Wicks, *Memories of the Skeena* (Saanichton: Hancock Press, 1976), 29. After one year of formal schooling in English, Wicks read the *FHWS* to his German-speaking parents.

writers had family roots that stretched back for generations in their communities, others were recent migrants from one region of the dominion to another, and still others were immigrants or children of immigrants from Great Britain, the United States, Continental Europe, or the Middle East. They lived on farms and ranches, in fishing and mining communities, along traplines and transportation routes scattered across nine provinces (Newfoundland was not part of Canada until 1949) and the Yukon Territory. They ranged from five to sixteen years of age for most clubs, and seventeen to twenty years for ex-members of the Maple Leaf Club. Silent, however, are the voices of the poor, the homeless, those too shy to write, and the illiterate or those not yet literate in English. Although the names of letter-writers increasingly reflected the ethnic diversity of Canadian society, no letters were found from children with Asian-sounding names.

This study considers three questions. First, what were letter-writers' responses to war in 1914 and in 1939? Second, how did letter-writers contribute to the war effort? Third, did their attitudes towards war change over time? In answering these questions, evidence dictates a descriptive rather than an analytical approach; the letters indicate interesting trends rather than measurable changes.

There are difficulties and pitfalls in attempting to reconstruct historical childhoods, although Gwyn Dow and June Factor's *Australian Childhood: An Anthology* clearly demonstrates that the judicious selection of uninterpreted accounts from a wide range of primary and secondary sources can give voices to historical children heretofore silent.⁸ British historian Ludmilla Jordanova cautions historians of childhood against romanticizing traditional values or judging customs and past actions in terms of current value systems. Rather, researchers must interpret historical data in "terms of the value system of the time."⁹ American historian Elliott West further warns researchers not to assume that the experiences of children of one geographical area or social class are representative of all children of the same time period.¹⁰

There are also difficulties in using materials written by children as historical sources. As West and Paula Petrik note, because young writers were still developing their intellectual schema they perceived and understood the world differently from adults.¹¹ Johanna Selles-Roney further cautions that self-revelation by young writers may be limited by the writer's knowledge that his or her

8. Gwyn Dow and June Factor, eds., *Australian Childhood: An Anthology* (Ringwood: McPhee Gribble, 1991).

9. Ludmilla Jordanova, "Children in History: Concepts of Nature and Society," in *Children, Parents and Politics*, ed. Geoffrey Scarre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3.

10. Elliott West, "Children on the Plains Frontier," in *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1859-1950*, ed. Elliott West and Paula Petrik (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1992), 26 - 41.

11. West and Petrik, *ibid.*, 4.

work may be scrutinized and evaluated by parents or teachers.¹² But the value of child-written wartime experiences is best demonstrated in *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, a Jewish girl's record of family life and personal growth while in hiding in an attic in wartime Holland, and the recent *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo*, eleven-year-old Zlata Filipovic's record of her attempt to understand and cope in a city under siege.¹³

I

The First World War

What were letter-writers' responses to the First World War? "When the mother lion roared the cubs roared, too."¹⁴ Most letter-writers reacted to Canadian involvement with patriotic enthusiasm, firm in their belief that Canada must support the Motherland in a war that was deemed both inevitable and justified.¹⁵ Ties to Britain were strong. In 1911, fifty-five percent of Canadians were of British origin or descent, and of the two-and-a-half million immigrants who arrived between 1896 and 1914, more than one-third came from Great Britain.¹⁶ Recent British immigrants and ex-servicemen were among the first to volunteer

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12. Johanna Selles-Roney, "A Canadian Girl at Cheltenham: The Diary as an Historical Source," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 3 (Spring 1991): 93-104.
 13. Anne Frank, *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, rev. ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1967); Zlata Filipovic, *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo* (Toronto: Viking, 1994).
 14. "The mother lion roared and the cubs roared too" was a common saying of the First World War period.
 15. Evan Sutherland, *FHWS*, 9 Sept. 1914; "Unkissinal," *ibid.*, 14 Oct. 1914; "Heavy Weight Kid," *ibid.*, 1 Nov. 1914; "Outdoor Kid," *ibid.*, 18 Nov. 1914; Daphne Read, ed., *The Great War and Canadian Society: An Oral History* (Toronto: Hogtown Press, 1978), 90; "Farm Boy," *FHWS*, 28 Oct. 1914—"Farm Boy" concluded that war "might show that it is better to build an empire on justice, freedom and brotherhood, rather than on armaments"; Phyllis F. Collins, *FPPF*, 30 Jan. 1918: ten-year-old Collins accepted that the war forced Canada to be more self-sufficient in terms of manufacturing. It is unlikely either child reached these conclusions alone.
 16. Donald Creighton, *Canada's First Century 1867-1967* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970), 108-9; M.C. Urquhart and K.A.H. Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1965), Series A 75-133; Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1990), ix - xii, 116-17; Ronald Haycock, "Of Times and People: The Early History of Camp Borden, 1905-1916," *Ontario History* LXXXIII (Dec. 1991): 253-72. Incompetence and political interference plagued the training of recruits.

although, as Arthur R.M. Lower noted, some merely wanted a free trip home, and others were unemployed.¹⁷ Letter-writer Ketta White observed:

This war has shown us how loyal Britain's colonies have been to her—how they flocked to her aid in her hour of need, and forgot all political disputes, when the subjects of Great Britain united to put down the tyranny of Germany.¹⁸

Ties of blood were reinforced by political, legal, and religious institutions based on British models and by school texts and curricula that taught British values of loyalty, honesty, respect for authority, and obedience.¹⁹ Stories and poems by Britain's best-known writers told of great battles, fearless heroes, and the duty to uphold the honour of Monarch and Empire.²⁰ Children's organizations, including the League of the Empire, the International Magna Carta Day Association, and the Boy Scouts, forged additional links between Canadian

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17. Arthur R.M. Lower, *Colony to Nation* (Toronto: Longmans, 1946), 454-60; James G. MacGregor, *North West of Sixteen* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Books, 1977), 178-91; MacGregor indicates that by Christmas 1914, all but one of rural Eastburg's healthy pioneers of British birth had enlisted; Ramsay Cook, "The Triumph of Materialism 1900 - 1945," in *The Illustrated History of Canada*, ed. Craig Brown (Toronto: Lester Orpen, 1987), 378-90; Creighton, *Canada's First Century*, 108-9; W.L. Morton, "The 1920's," in *The Canadians 1867-1967*, eds. J.M. Careless and R. Craig Brown (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), 205-34.
 18. Ketta White, *FHWS*, 2 Aug. 1915; George F. Stanley, *Canada's Soldiers 1604-1954* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1954), 226-77, 290, 296-327. Out of a population of 8,000,000 Canadians, 628,462 enlisted in the armed services, 424,589 went overseas, 60,661 were killed, and 150,000 were wounded. Roger Graham, "Through the First World War," in *The Canadians 1867-1967*, ed. Careless and Brown, 178-79. The First Contingent left 3 Oct. 1914, with 32,665 men, a medical corps, and 7,000 horses.
 19. Harro Van Brummelen, "Shifting Perspectives: Early British Columbia Textbooks from 1872 to 1925," in *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History*, ed. Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig, 1986), 17-31; Gary L. Saunders, *Rattles and Steadies: Memories of a Gander River Man* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1986), 37; Walter Shaw, *Tell me the Tales* (Charlottetown: Square Deal, 1971), 46. Both Saunders and Shaw recall the British focus of their school texts and lessons. Ralph Allen, *Ordeal By Fire: Canada 1910-1945* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1961), 5-7; Allen notes that textbooks lauded imperialism, militarism, and England.
 20. Gerald Massey, "Scarlett's Three Hundred," *The Victoria Readers*, Fifth Reader (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1898), 358-59; Neil Sutherland, "'The Triumph of Formalism': Elementary Schooling in Vancouver from the 1920's to the 1960's," *B.C. Studies* 69-70 (Spring /Summer 1989): 181; although writing of a later period, patriotic displays and decorations were a common feature of classrooms.

children, the Motherland, and the Empire. Patriotic songs and readings, Empire Day celebrations, and the school flag, whether the Union Jack or the Red Ensign, reinforced ties to Britain.²¹

Anxious to assimilate the large number of immigrants into Canadian society, particularly those from Continental Europe, public school administrators and politicians advocated that immigrant children be [Anglo] Canadianized through the systematic use of English as the language of instruction, the learning of patriotic songs and participation in patriotic activities, and a curriculum designed to inculcate [British] democratic attitudes and social values "appropriate" to their new homeland.²² Adopting Canadian values meant, among other things, supporting Canada at war. As letter-writers indicated and historians confirm, recruits also included French Canadians, Acadians, Italians, Ukrainians, Japanese, and Chinese volunteers.²³ Young Olive Powless reported that her father was but one of several Six Nations Indians among approximately 4,000 First Nations' men in the military. In recalling Canada's contribution to the war effort, Lower, a

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21. "League of the Empire"—An Imperial Union of Schools through Schools and through Schools' and Pupils' Correspondence," 1922 Ontario Archives Board. Founded in 1912, by 1922 there were 100,000 Canadian members, most of whom were in Ontario. Ontario's Minister of Education promoted the participation of Ontario students. "Was there ever such an Empire as our Empire? How loosely it links, but how strongly they are held!" Blanche Turner, *FHWS*, 29 Nov. 1916. Turner belonged to the Gaspeaux Branch of the Children of the Empire. She may have meant the League of the Empire. "International Magna Carta Day Association," 1937, V. McNaughton Papers, Saskatchewan Archives Board. Formed in 1907, it was touted as non-racial, non-sectarian, and non-political; it was to draw together English-speaking nations in defence of liberty and Western civilization. J.M.S. Careless, *Canada: A Story of Challenge* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), 328; Elizabeth Kwan, "Which Country, Which Nation? Dominion Dilemmas in Shaping Children's Understanding of Nationality in Australia, Canada and New Zealand," paper presented at the Australian and New Zealand/Canadian History of Education Conference, University of Melbourne, Dec. 1993; Lillian Davidson, *FHWS*, 16 Feb. 1916; Dorothy E. Browne, *FHWS*, 28 July 1915. Favourite songs included "Rule Britannia," "The Red, White and Blue," "The Maple Leaf Forever," and "Auld Lang Syne."
 22. J.M.T. Anderson, *The Education of the New Canadian* (London: np, 1918); Manfred Popkop, "Canadianization of Immigrant Children: Role of the Rural Elementary School in Alberta, 1900-1930," *Alberta History* 32 (1989): 1-10.
 23. Gustave Comeau, *FHWS*, 3 Jan. 1917; Gustave's brother enlisted in the 85th Battalion; Antonette Hebert, *ibid.*, 13 Mar. 1918; Marie B. Arseneault, *ibid.*, 30 Aug. 1916; V.J. Kaye and J.B. Gregorovich, eds., *Ukrainian Canadians in Canada's Wars* (Toronto: Ukrainian Canadian Research Press, 1983); Roy Ito, *We Went to War* (Stillville: Canada Wings, 1984); Ito discusses the contribution of Japanese soldiers in both wars. Paul Yee, *Saltwater City* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1988), 73; "Our Italian Allies," *FHWS*, 2 Aug. 1915.

member of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) during the First World War, observed:

The great and continuing wonder is that such an amazingly high proportion of the population should take an immediate, personal interest in a distant struggle waged for purposes not well understood.²⁴

Letter-writers listed with pride their family members in the military. Young Mary Watson, for example, claimed thirty-seven second cousins at the front and two uncles and a cousin still in Canada. Children were equally proud of sisters and aunts serving with the Medical Corps or Red Cross, although girls bemoaned restrictions that limited them to nursing roles.²⁵ By 1916, women were acting as recruiting officers, a practice decried by teenager "Le Brodeur." He believed women should be home, knitting and keeping house. Several teenage girls quickly responded that women were quite capable of both knitting and recruiting.²⁶

The second major reason letter-writers supported war in 1914 was that they perceived war as the ultimate adventure, and the battlefield as the crucible of heroes. In a study of the response of both Australian and German intellectuals to war in 1914, Australian historian John A. Amos reported:

They all saw the war as a testing time for the national character...a challenge to spiritual renewal, a time when divisions should be done away with and a spirit of great common purpose generated.²⁷

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24. Olive Powless, *FHWS*, 22 Mar. 1916; Edward Ahenakew, *Voices of the Plains Cree* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 120-21: "They [Indians] gave an excellent record of themselves, too, their officers speaking highly of their courage, intelligence, efficiency, stamina and discipline." Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 136: "Japanese Canadians were rarely welcome; blacks were segregated in a construction unit. Canadian Indians, however, were eagerly sought; colonels boasted of their ferocity." Fred Gaffen, *Forgotten Soldiers* (Penticton: Theytus, 1985); Lower, *Colony to Nation*, 456.
 25. William MacPherson, *FHWS*, 9 May 1917; Doris M. Smith, *ibid.*, 11 Oct. 1916; Bessie I. Smith, *ibid.*, 22 Oct. 1918; Mary Watson, *ibid.*, 4 July 1917; Elsie Barrett, *ibid.*, 29 May 1918. Elsie wanted to be a Red Cross nurse. 'Princess Pat,' *ibid.*, 1 Sept. 1915; Marion Cromwell, *ibid.*, 1 Sept. 1915; "Canadian Nursing Sisters," *ibid.*, 9 May 1917.
 26. "Le Brodeur," *FHWS*, 29 Nov. 1916; Blanche Moreau, *ibid.*, 21 Feb. 1917; Billy, *ibid.*, 12 Feb. 1917.
 27. John A. Moses, "'The Ideas of 1914' in Germany and Australia: A Case of Conflicting Perceptions," *War And Society* 9 (Oct. 1991): 77.

In all likelihood the same attitude existed among Canadians. Furthermore, war was presented as an adventure in which the young could participate. Growing numbers of school-based cadet corps diligently practised foot and arms drill in preparation for "real" soldiering. Although these were exclusively male organizations, letter-writer Dorothy Boyle and her girl friends were permitted to train with local cadets.²⁸ Chief Scout Baden-Powell perpetuated the concept of war as adventure when he instructed Scouts of the Empire to "do their duty" by, among other tasks, guarding transportation and communication lines and facilities and serving as signal riders and signallers. During the early days of the war, press releases praised both Belgian and British Boy Scouts for their service as message carriers and conveyance workers.²⁹ Additionally, as Alan R. Young points out, a long series of adventure books for boys "encouraged a misleading view of the reality of war," and Irish historian Kenneth D. Brown argues that model soldiers, books, and games reinforced a "romantic and heroic" view of war.³⁰ War was also the theme of a myriad of adventure stories, spy novels, and serialized stories in newspapers and magazines. *The Allied Boys Series* by Clair W. Hayes and *The Boy Scouts Series* by Lieut. Howard Payson implied that war was a game in which the young could safely participate.³¹

Little wonder that boys under enlistment age, swept up in the excitement and impressed by the uniform, attempted to enlist. Many were successful. Fifteen-

28. Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 117-29; and, "The Cadet Movement in the Moment of Canadian Militarism 1909-1914," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 13 (Summer 1978): 56-68; Don Morrow, "The Strathcona Trust in Ontario 1911-1939," *Canadian Journal of Sport and Physical Education* 8 (May 1977): 12-19; *British Columbia Public Schools Report*, 1911, 69-71. In 1910, for example, British Columbia accepted the terms of the Strathcona Trust to encourage physical training and military drill as part of the school physical education programme. Andrew Vannacto, *FHWS*, 7 Jan. 1915; *ibid.*, 2 Dec. 1914; Dorothy Boyle, *ibid.*, 2 Dec. 1914; Howard Graham, *Citizen and Soldier: The Memories of Lieutenant General Howard Graham* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 40-1. Graham recalled cadets as both a learning and enjoyable experience.
29. Alan R. Young, "'We throw the torch': Canadian Memorials of the Great War and the Mythology of Heroic Sacrifice," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 24 (Winter 1989-90), 8.
30. *Ibid.*, 6-12; Young provides a list of propaganda sources. "Boy Scouts Soldierly Service," *FHWS*, 16 Sept. 1914: a photo shows French Boy Scouts who, like their British brothers, helped with conveying and other services. Polly Pimple, *ibid.*, 30 Sept. 1914.
31. Kenneth D. Brown, "Modelling for War? Toy Soldiers in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Journal of Social History* 24 (1991): 237-54; *Eaton's Mail Order Catalogue*, 1915-16. The twelve-book *Boy Scout Series* by Lieut. Howard Payson (John Henry Goldfarb) included *Boy Scouts on Belgium Battlefields* and *Boy Scouts with the Allies in France*. *The Boy Allies Series* by Ensign Robert L. Drake (Clair Wallace Hayes) also focused on the Great War.

year-old R.J. Rutter wrote that he was serving as drummer and bugle boy with the 122nd Battalion, and a Saskatchewan boy reported he was, at seventeen, a returned soldier. He had enlisted at fifteen and served overseas with the 179th Cameron Highlanders.³²

Several writers questioned the validity of war; however, none questioned support of the Motherland. John A. Isaac wrote, "Apparently we are not civilized enough to stop murdering our fellowmen."³³ John Bell observed:

I suppose this war is making a number of the Leaves regret their youth. That is the case with me at any rate. If this war lasts for a few years longer you will see me at the front.³⁴

A third perceptive teenager wrote:

With the guns and machine guns they have now-a-days, it doesn't take long to kill an army. Think of the homes that are broken up and the women and children left to get along as best they can....Think of later generations also, who will have to toil and suffer hardships to pay off the war debts. I pity them.³⁵

But were letter-writers expressing their personal reasoned opposition to war or merely reflecting the views of family members or other influential adults? Desmond Morton reports opposition from Canadian farm organizations, trade unionists, and pacifists to increased militarism following the Boer War.³⁶ Furthermore, the number of letters supporting or opposing war may have reflected the attitudes of editors rather than of letter-writers. Pacifist "Dixie Patton" (Francis Marion Beynon), editor of the *Young Canada Club*, rarely included a letter discussing war. In 1916, she asked young readers to respond to two questions—"Does killing men, and running the risk of being killed, make men strong and brave?" and "Is war good for the countries engaged in it?" Of the thirty responses Patton selected for publication, twenty-eight letters deplored war and two supported war in certain circumstances.³⁷

32. Fred Rutter, *FHWS*, 15 Mar. 1916; R.J. Rutter, *ibid.*, 22 Nov. 1916; "Young'un," *ibid.*, 5 June 1918; Pte. J.B. Thompson, *ibid.*, 13 Jan. 1917; Pte. L.W. Mattson, *ibid.*, 31 Jan. 1917.

33. John A. Isaac, *ibid.*, 23 Sept. 1914.

34. John M. Bell, *ibid.*, 18 Nov. 1914.

35. "Just Simply Smile," *ibid.*, 16 Dec. 1914.

36. Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 123-24.

37. *Young Canada Club*, *GGG*, 14 June 1916 to 16 Aug. 1916.

II

What contribution did young Canadians make to the war effort? With large numbers of men in the military, women and children moved into positions in agriculture and industry previously held by men. Where and when necessary, girls did "boys' work" and boys did "girls' work." Every chore was deemed part of their war effort. Children perceived their war work as important and useful.³⁸ Thirteen-year-old Stirling Dorcas wrote:

A SMALL BOY'S BIT

I'd like to join the army
And do my little bit.
But as I'm only a youngster
I guess that I'm not fit.

But I AM fit to stay at home
And help upon the farm
To feed the pigs, and do the chores.
Won't do me any harm.

I'll work out in the fields this fall
As hard as ever I can,
Then Dad can pat my head and say,
"You're doing your bit, my man."

I'll save my dimes and nickels
That I used to spend before,
And I'll send them on to Belgium
To the needy and the poor.

God help the poor, brave soldiers,
The lads so brave and true,
We're fighting for our dear flag,
The old Red, White and Blue.³⁹

By 1917, the farm labour situation was so acute that the Canada Food Board organized approximately 25,000 urban school boys, ages thirteen to eighteen, as

38. William McEachern, *FHWS*, 26 June 1918; Emma Wood, *ibid.*, 3 July 1918; Lizzie Mayne, *ibid.*, 3 July 1918; Tavern Tait, *ibid.*, 21 Aug. 1918; Challinor, "Children and War," 43.

39. Stirling Dorcas, *FHWS*, 13 Feb. 1918.

"Soldiers of the Soil" to work in agriculture. Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, and other children and youth organizations also helped with planting and harvesting.⁴⁰

Letter-writers indicated they bought saving stamps and war bonds, contributed to the Patriotic Fund (support for families of enlisted men), and raised money for the Shilling Fund (support for Belgian orphans). Young Inez Huston, of Soda Creek, British Columbia, was unsuccessful in her door-to-door solicitations for money to buy gun powder, but she quickly collected thirty-eight dollars for the Patriotic Fund. Other letter-writers reported that they bought war bonds with money earned from their trap lines and from the sale of pet calves.⁴¹

The Junior Red Cross, initiated in 1914, focused the membership of a growing number of branches on specific projects, one of which was packing toilet kits for soldiers.⁴² The editor of the Maple Leaf Club suggested the kits include "boracic acid, cigarettes (which are good for soldiers but not for other people), bootlaces and other cherished trifles for the men in the trenches."⁴³ Boys and girls learned to knit socks and balaclavas and to roll bandages. Their school gardens were now deemed victory gardens and some of the produce was sold to earn money for the war effort.⁴⁴ "Dixie Patton" encouraged young readers to support the Blue Cross, an organization devoted to ensuring proper care of sick and wounded army horses.⁴⁵ Children worked with a will because they believed

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40. Photo of Boy Scouts on berry picking detail, *FA*, 13 Aug. 1916; Photo of the juvenile hoe brigade, *FHWS*, 26 Sept. 1917: five children, approximately ages five to fifteen years, helping in a market garden; John D. Graham, *ibid.*, 12 June 1918: John was a seventeen-year-old Toronto Soldier of the Soil; William Ruhlman, "Soldiers of the Soil: Recollections of the Activities of Vernon Boys, 1914-1918," *Okanagan Historical Society Report* 47 (1983), 68-76; "Gerry" Andrews, "Reminiscences of 'A Soldier of the Soil'," *Manitoba History* 17 (Spring 1989): 26-30; "Big Opportunity," *FHWS*, 1 May 1918. The editor of the Maple Leaf Club encouraged boys to become Soldiers of the Soil. She also reported that "troops of scouts everywhere are taking up sections of land to cultivate it and when they take it up they will make a success of it"; Minto Swan, *FHWS*, 2 Aug. 1915; Swan indicated that urban children were helping on farms two to three years before the formation of the Soldiers of the Soil.
 41. Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 132; Morton reported \$47 million was collected for the Patriotic Fund; "Western Kiddoo," *FHWS*, 21 Oct. 1914; Inez Huston, *ibid.*, 25 Nov. 1914; "An Important Announcement," *ibid.*, 18 Nov. 1914; "Good Soldiers," *ibid.*, 15 Jan. 1915.
 42. Jean Browne, *Papers and Proceedings of the Conference on Child Welfare*, 1923, 71. The Junior Red Cross, formed in 1914, soon was organized in many Canadian schools.
 43. "The Canadian Red Cross Toilet Kit," *FHWS*, 29 Aug. 1917, 8.
 44. Myrtle Adams, *ibid.*, 27 Jan. 1915: Myrtle and five classmates made a heavy quilt which they gave to the Red Cross; "Moonshine," *ibid.*, 13 Dec. 1916.
 45. "The Blue Cross," *GGG*, 3 Oct. 1917: the "Blue Cross" organization was centered in London, England; Robert and Ronald Stewart, *ibid.*, 14 Nov. 1917.

their efforts made a difference. As John Craig noted in *Years of Agony, 1910-1920*, children "played a vital role in the work force" and through their contributions of work and money, had a significant role in winning the war.⁴⁶

III

Did letter-writers' attitudes to war change over the period 1914 to 1918? They were fascinated by war rumours, stories, and propaganda. They were shocked by newspaper photographs that provided visible evidence of dead and wounded men and horses, disabled guns, towns and cities reduced to rubble, and a burnt and scarred French countryside. Letters to the children's pages from ex-members now at the front told of shelling, fighting, wounding, and death.⁴⁷ In a moving description of life in the trenches, Pte. J.B. Thompson wrote the Maple Leaf Club:

I am only seventeen and saw some of this when I was sixteen, and know all about it. I was only a mere boy, but thought I was a man, and now I have got to stick to it.⁴⁸

Pte. W.W. Logan also wrote from the front to tell young readers, "You people don't realize what war is like."⁴⁹

Especially traumatic for letter-writers was the death of a relative or the physical and mental state of veterans who suffered the loss of limbs, disfiguring scars and burns, lungs damaged by mustard gas, or psychological stress (shell shock). One teenage girl reported:

I saw what I thought was a terrible sight—over a thousand returned wounded soldiers on parade, and [those] that were unable to walk were riding in cars.⁵⁰

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46. John Craig, *Years of Agony, 1910-1920* (Toronto: Natural Sciences of Canada, 1977), 90-91.
47. E. Kelly, *FHWS*, 5 July 1916, 10; "Your Editor," *ibid.*, 21 July 1915, 8.
48. J.B. Thompson, *ibid.*, 13 Jan. 1917.
49. W.W. Logan, *ibid.*, 19 Sept. 1917.
50. Lover of Khaki, *ibid.*, 10 Oct. 1917; Rose Buerdsell, *ibid.*, 18 Nov. 1914: Buerdsell described the terrible state of soldiers in a hospital near her home in Britain; Andrew Baragan, *ibid.*, 23 Jan. 1917. Not only were there "dreaded telegrams," but also the weekly lists of those killed, wounded or missing in action; L. Peterson, "Press Censorship During World War I," *British Columbia Historical News* 23 (Fall 1990): 29; Flossie M. Thompson, *FHWS*, 31 Jan. 1917; Mary Long, *ibid.*, 7 May 1919.

Letter-writers longed for peace. "Saskatchewan Crocus" wrote, "I hope the war will soon end, and there will be peace ever afterwards, and that men will be brothers to one another."⁵¹ Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, and the subsequent demobilization of military personnel was a bittersweet time. Young Mary Giffel wrote, "We [Sarnia] were awakened by the whistle of Port Huron which set up a racket, the like of which has never been heard."⁵² Children cheered those who returned and mourned those who did not. Letters discussing war disappeared from the children's pages, but it is unclear whether this change reflected the changing interests of letter-writers or the changing focus of editors. In 1918, the "war to end all wars" was over, yet two decades later some of these children would march off to war.⁵³

IV

The Second World War, 1939 to 1940

War came as no surprise in 1939. Letter-writers, all of whom were born during the inter-war years, supported Canada going to war, but they did so with feelings of reluctance and resignation shaped by the lingering horror and still visible scars of the past war, the growth of existing anti-war and pacifist movements during the inter-war years, and perhaps most important, the attitude of their parents towards war.⁵⁴ Individual Canadians, including politicians J.S. Woodsworth and Agnes McPhail, and journalist Violet McNaughton, were but three articulate and respected supporters of the peace movement. Socialist-leaning newspapers, such as the *Western Producer*, provided a forum in which both adults and children expressed anti-war sentiment.

The glorification of war and war heroes was replaced with respect and honour for those who paid the supreme sacrifice.⁵⁵ School texts and readers reflected a

51. "Saskatchewan Crocus," *FHWS*, 28 July 1915.

52. Mary Giffel, *ibid.*, 27 Nov. 1918.

53. Bruce Hutchinson, *The Far Side of the Street* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), 61. Hutchinson's relief that war was over was probably shared by other males approaching enlistment age.

54. Montgomery, "The war was a vivid part of my life," 3; Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1988), 286: the socialist-leaning *WP* supported the peace movement. Letters to the editorial, women's, and children's pages indicated that many readers also supported this view.

55. Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 313-20; *B.C. Teacher*, 14 Nov. 1934; Thomas P. Socknat, *Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1987), 111-12. Socknat notes that as late as 1927 the Women's

"nationalist shift in the country and school," and school curricula included among many other aims the development of tolerance, understanding, and co-operation among young people.⁵⁶ School-based branches of the Junior Red Cross promoted healthy living, encouraged civic and community spirit, and attempted to develop communication among children both nationally and internationally. And as Lucille Marr's study indicates, youth and children's organizations encouraged members to participate in activities that fostered the development of character, godliness, and community spirit rather than militaristic training.⁵⁷

A number of letter-writers indicated that through visits to and letters from Europe during the 1930s, they were cognizant of the possibility of and preparations for war.⁵⁸ In a letter to Young Co-operators, Kim expressed the perception of a number of letter-writers that war in 1939 was "the product of one man, a maniac, who has unleashed the hell of scientific and mechanized warfare upon the world."⁵⁹ Leota wrote:

Our young men do not want to fight nor do the young men of other nations. So let us do all in our power to prevent another war.⁶⁰

A discouraged Walter Showalter stated: "To those of us who have worked for a better understanding between nations, it seems that our work has been in vain."⁶¹

Did other children share their reluctance for war? A 1933 study by American educator Paul Limbert found that half of the 373 pre-adolescent American children in his study believed it was a man's duty to support his country during wartime, but only one-third approved actual participation and then only when war was considered necessary.⁶² A 1940 study by American educator Ralph Preston

League for Peace and Freedom claimed the number of cadets was increasing rather than decreasing, and that schools continued to promote militarism through education.

56. Duff Pattullo, "Education as a Public Service," *B.C. Teacher* XIV (May 1935): 4-12; *British Columbia Programme of Studies*, 1936, 8; Young, "We throw the torch," 5-28.
57. Nancy M. Sheehan, "Education, the Society and Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1915," in *Schools in the West*, 41-42; Robin, *WP*, 8 June 1939: the Junior Red Cross Branch to which Robin belonged made scrapbooks for the children's hospital; *British Columbia Public Schools Report*, 1933-34; *Vancouver School Board Report*, 1939-40, 51; Lucille Marr, "Church Teen Clubs, Feminized Organizations? Tuxis Boys, Trail Rangers, and Canadian Girls in Training," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 3 (Fall 1991): 249-67.
58. Annie Sladek, *FPPF*, 19 July 1939; Frank Zamis, *ibid.*, 19 July 1939.
59. Kim, *WP*, 22 Feb. 1940.
60. Loeta, *ibid.*, 6 June 1939.
61. Walter Showalter, *ibid.*, 19 Oct. 1939.
62. Paul M. Limbert, "What Children Think About War," *Progressive Education* X

of 600 American schoolchildren found that even though the United States was not yet at war, children were taking sides. Both Limbert and Preston noted that American children believed war with an aggressor was both inevitable and justified.⁶³

Whether Canadians shared these attitudes is unclear, but recruitment was brisk. Undoubtedly, some enlisted for the adventure. Others were drawn by ties to Britain, although in 1941 less than fifty percent of Canadians were of British descent, and eighty-five percent of recruits were Canadian-born.⁶⁴ Yet patriotism to Canada and loyalty to the Empire flourished. Each schoolday, children sang "O Canada" and "God Save the King" and repeated, "I promise to be loyal and true to this flag and the Empire for which it stands" as they saluted the Union Jack or the Red Ensign. Young Eric Jacks said he enlisted "to bind together the British Empire—a land of peace and freedom."⁶⁵ "If, in the end, Britain wins all will be well," wrote Georgina Jersak.⁶⁶

Other letter-writers believed the war was to preserve justice and freedom. Thirteen-year-old Elaine Marcenko wrote:

Democracy has been handed down to us by our forefathers who had courage and individual initiative and strength of body and mind. They came to Canada to seek freedom and liberty. They built a government which developed our present democratic system. We must preserve our freedom!⁶⁷

Letter-writers did not mention, or perhaps did not recognize, that for those made destitute and left unemployed by the economic recession of the 1930s, the military offered three meals a day and a regular pay cheque. C.P. Stacey described Canadian volunteers as "patriots, idealists, adventurers, perhaps some who were merely hungry."⁶⁸

(1933): 67-71.

63. Ralph C. Preston, *Children's Reactions to a Contemporary War Situation* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1942).
64. C. P. Stacey, "Through the Second World War," in *The Canadians 1867-1967*, ed. Careless and Brown, 279.
65. Eric Jacks, *WP*, 16 Nov. 1939; J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Oxford, 1975), 2, 18-19.
66. Georgina Jersak, *FPPF*, 9 Sept. 1942; Marjorie Garboski, *ibid.*, 20 Oct. 1943.
67. Elaine Marcenko, *ibid.*, 12 Aug. 1942: 77; Mary V. Nickels, *ibid.*, 7 Oct. 1942, 28; Ito, *We Went To War*; Yee, *Saltwater City* 103-05; "Father won war for our rights," *Vancouver Sun*, 9 Nov. 1991: Alex Louie joined the army because "he and other Canadian Chinese wanted to prove their loyalty to Canada, to really be Canadians"; Rex G. Krepps, *Sparks of Fire* (Cloverdale: Friesen, 1990), 7-13.
68. Stacey, "Through the Second World War," 279; out of a total population of

Military and para-military youth organizations, in serious decline during the inter-war years, were quickly revitalized. Between 1937-38 and 1943-44, in British Columbia alone, the number of cadet corps increased from fifteen with 1,036 members to 112 with 11,400 cadets. In addition, there were 42 Air Cadet Squadrons with 2,966 members.⁶⁹ By 1943, girls were admitted to cadet corps, but not as equals with boys. Cadet Helen Spooner wrote:

The girls were taught sewing, cooking, home nursing, first aid, signaling and map reading.

The boys were taught knots, signaling, first aid and map reading.

Together we do field drill and marching. In winter we had fights, using snowballs for ammunition.

The girls' uniforms are dark navy skirts and white blouses and blue aviator caps. The girls made their own uniforms.

The boys' uniforms are issued by the government, and are brown color—similar to that worn by the soldiers.

We receive good training and are inspected every year.⁷⁰

As a range of clerical and communication roles became available in all three services, women were no longer limited to nursing. Teenager Madeline Chafe planned to enlist in the R.C.A.F. (W.D.) as a wireless operator, and Katherine Maloney intended to follow her three brothers into the army.⁷¹

V

What contribution did letter-writers make to the Second World War effort? Letter-writers indicated, and Montgomery reported in her study of wartime childhoods, that newspapers, newsreels, radio broadcasts, the school curricula, and children and youth organizations urged youngsters to "do their bit" for King

11,300,000 Canadians, approximately 730,000 Canadians, 50,000 of whom were women, enlisted in the armed services. At the end of the war 41,700 were reported killed or missing in action.

69. *British Columbia Public Schools Report* (1937-38), 82; *ibid.* (1943-44), 132; Ontario, Report of the Minister of Education (1943), 125.

70. Helen Spooner, *FPPF*, 31 May 1944; Bob Ogle, *North/South Calling* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1987), 12: "I loved everything about cadets—the airplanes, the courses we took, the wireless, everything."

71. Ruth Roach Pierson, "They're Still Women After All," *The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 89; "Queen Guineyer," *WP*, 24 Mar. 1945; Madeline Chafe, *FHWS*, 22 May 1940; Katherine Maloney, *FPPF*, 2 Feb. 1944; "Prairie Pat," *WP*, 12 June 1914.

and country. Enlistment and manufacturing pulled both men and women from the rural workforce into the military and factories. As in the previous war, youngsters filled the gap. Twelve thousand Ontario boys and girls were organized to work on their family farms, and an additional fifteen thousand youngsters enlisted as part of the Farm Cadet Brigade. In 1943, Beulah Colben, a member of the Farm Girls' Cadet Brigade, wrote, "I am doing service for my country and helping to speed up farm production."⁷² That same year, approximately eleven thousand British Columbian women, boys, and girls were recruited to help in dairy, livestock, and food production. Letter-writers worked about their farms and ranches, convinced that their work was as essential to winning the war as manufacturing gunpowder. Mildred Krezanowski wrote, "This year it's patriotic to grow a [victory] garden, but it's also patriotic to eat the vegetables and fruits produced in the garden."⁷³ Iris Kujansu used the money from the sale of seven plump roosters to buy War Saving Stamps. Fourteen-year-old Ruth Wasieczko and thirteen-year-old Mary Young reported they were working extra hard to help bring the war to an end. In addition to gardening, they milked cows, drove horses, and stoked and stacked hay and grain. Ruth sewed and patched her own clothes, and Mary picked and preserved twenty pounds of raspberries to help the war effort.⁷⁴

School-based Junior Red Cross branches focused the efforts of hundreds of thousands of children on "doing their bit." Contests, competitions, and weekly collections pressured if not coerced school children to buy saving stamps and to contribute funds for milk and eggs for British children. As one woman recalled, "In school, teachers became propagandists." A British Columbia teacher urged his colleagues not to be squeamish about telling students the money they brought was to kill Nazis.⁷⁵ Pamart wrote that every [savings] stamp "brings us a stamp nearer to victory, peace and freedom."⁷⁶ In letter after letter and photo after photo, Red Cross members listed the amount of money their schools raised and

72. Cook, "The Triumph and Trials of Materialism," 458; "Youth Fills the Breach," *FHWS*, 9 June 1943; Beulah Colben, *ibid.*, 2 June 1943, 25; "Farm Labour Emergency," *B.C. Teacher* (Apr. 1944): 262.

73. Mildred Krezanowski, *FPPF*, 3 June 1943.

74. Irene Kujansu, *ibid.*, 10 Mar. 1943; Ruth Wasieczko, *ibid.*, 8 Sept. 1943; Mary Young, *ibid.*

75. "Everything was Propaganda," Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Years, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1974), 124; Bruce Mickleburgh, "Nickels and Dimes for Victory," *B.C. Teacher* (Sept. 1942): 29; "Pledge," *ibid.* (May 1944): 313; model poster was provided to exhort children to buy saving stamps during their summer holidays; *Pathfinder-in-Chief, FPPF*, 1 Apr. 1942.

76. Pamart, *WP*, 1 Apr. 1943.

provided visible evidence of articles knitted, sewn, quilted, or collected for soldiers, British nursery children, prisoners of war, and wounded soldiers.⁷⁷

Junior Red Cross members were recyclers before recycling was an environmental concern. They scrounged the countryside for scrap iron, rubber, rags, bones, paper, aluminium, and milkweed pods for manufacture into war materials. Nineteen Manitoba boys, for example, gathered fifteen tons of miscellaneous salvage.⁷⁸ And a young Albertan wrote:

We hitched two horses to our big wagon and went out to the prairie to look for bones. We piled the wagon full of bones and hauled them to town. We made \$3.80 as bones were only \$5.00 a ton. We gave the money to the Red Cross.⁷⁹

Through Junior Red Cross activities members learned compassion for those in need, how to work in groups to accomplish specific goals, and the practical and useful skills of knitting, organizing money-making projects, and conducting business meetings.

VI

Did letter-writers' attitudes to war change over the period 1939 to 1945? Their letters indicated that older children were aware of major events, specific battles, and the types of airplanes and armaments in use.⁸⁰ Information to the public, however, was filtered through the Wartime Information Board and released in carefully selected and censored press releases, radio broadcasts, radio

77. Helen Larner *FPPF*, 3 Dec. 1941; Sophie Krell, *ibid.*, Nov. 1944; Sheila Johnstone, *ibid.*, 27 Aug. 1941; Marjorie Chase, *ibid.*, 17 Mar. 1944; Ruth Hiller, *ibid.*, 28 July 1943.

78. Maud M. Kerr, "The Junior Red Cross," *FHWS*, 10 Mar. 1942, 30; *British Columbia Public School Report (1939-40)*, 29; Pathfinder-in-Chief, *FPPF*, 14 Apr. 1943; Rosa Prefontaine, *ibid.*, 21 Jan. 1942: the eighteen children in Rosa's class raised ten dollars for milk for Britain; Henry Martin, *ibid.*, 1 Apr. 1941; Pathfinder-in-Chief, *ibid.*

79. Paul Hansen, *FPPF*, 28 Jan. 1942. Rubber was used for tires, aluminium for planes, bones for explosives, woollens for blankets, paper for shell wadding, milkweed for flotation jackets.

80. Mary Collingwood, *FPPF*, 10 Apr. 1941; Mary kept scrapbooks of wartime events, machines, and personalities; letter-writers were asked to discuss the most important event of each year of the war. Alice Cameron, *FPPF*, 25 Nov. 1942—Hong Kong and Dunkirk; Eleanor Hughes, *ibid.*, 7 Dec. 1941—Pearl Harbour; Marion White, *ibid.*, 18 Aug. 1942—Dieppe; Vivian Hynes, *ibid.*, 18 Aug. 1942—Rommel's Retreat; Walter Zaychowski, *ibid.*—Defence of Stalingrad.

dramas, movie news reels, and the National Film Board's "Canada Carries On" and the "World In Action" series. Children, along with the public in general, were constantly reminded of the terrible consequences of defeat, the rightness and superiority of Allied forces, and the personal responsibility of every Canadian to be vigilant against the enemy.⁸¹

Children's books published during the Second World War generally focused not on the adventures of war but on the three services and the machines of war.⁸² Newspaper photographs and movie newsreels rarely showed the ravages of war, but rather armaments rolling off assembly lines, smiling military personnel, cheerfully coping civilians, evacuated British children, and King George and Queen Elizabeth touring bombed areas of London. Both letter-writers and children's editors recounted acts of bravery and narrow escapes by youngsters who served as messengers and intelligence gatherers for national partisan and resistance groups in German-occupied countries.⁸³ War was not presented as a game in which children could safely participate, but they learned there were tasks children could accomplish which adults could not.

As during the First World War, letter-writers listed those they knew in the services, but letters reporting the death of a father or brother were rare. Did the absence of such letters reflect the attitude of the new generation of children's editors or the actual content of the children's letters?⁸⁴ No letters were found from members or ex-members at the front, and only two or three writers said they were army recruits. The absence of such letters may, however, reflect military censorship rather than the attitude of editors or letter-writers.⁸⁵

Almost as soon as war began, letter-writers gave thought to the peace that would follow, but they wanted a peace that would last. In 1939, "Lochinvar" wrote:

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81. Stephen Franklin, *A Time of Heroes 1940-1950* (Toronto: Natural Science of Canada, 1977), 66-77; "If Hitler Should Come to Winnipeg," *FPPF*, 25 Feb. 1942; "The Young Historian," *Manitoba History* 13 (Spring 1987): 27-30. In a effort to raise money for war bonds, a mock invasion of Winnipeg was staged on 19 Feb. 1942; comic-book characters also battled the enemies of freedom.
 82. Jean Woodrow, "The School Library in Wartime," *B.C. Teacher* (Feb. 1943): 173: realism rather than fantasy best described the genre of the war books Woodrow recommended; Doris F. Maloney, *WP*, 17 July 1941.
 83. *WP*, 2 Mar. 1944: Pictures of two Yugoslav guerrilla fighters, ages 14 and 15 years; Eileen Stusrud, *FPPF*, 7 June 1944; Pathfinder-in-Chief, *ibid.*, 1 Mar. 1944; *ibid.*, 2 May 1945; Jean Serlin, *ibid.*, 18 Feb. 1942.
 84. David C. Jones, "'There is Some Power About the Land': The Western Agrarian Press and Country Life Ideology," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17 (Autumn 1982): 96-108. Jones notes that agrarian newspapers tended not to print materials that did not reflect the editorial philosophy of the newspaper.
 85. G. Stepa, *WP*, 25 Sept. 1941; *ibid.*, 15 Oct. 1941; "Red Devil," *ibid.*, 16 Oct. 1941; E. Jackson, *ibid.*, 18 Mar. 1941.

This time we must avoid the mistakes of the last war and the subsequent peace treaties. And this can only be done by better and more tolerant understanding....Only by such application can you and I [through] public opinion hope to avert another catastrophe.⁸⁶

Kim, who a few months earlier had decried the necessity of war, stated, "Then, afterwards, we must make a peace that will endure, and see that it does endure."⁸⁷ The founding of the United Nations in April 1945 gave hope of a brighter future with an arena in which nations could discuss and settle differences.⁸⁸ Unlike those in 1918 who simply longed for the end to the "war to end all wars," letter-writers in 1945 appeared to accept that peace could be maintained only through discussion and compromise. "Fernanda" mused in May 1945:

I couldn't help wondering how many more times it [war] will have to be done. We'll have to work together, a world fraternity to prevent it."⁸⁹

In June 1945, "Moss Rose" observed:

The nations of the world have another job before them and that is to win the peace. By that we mean to ensure a lasting peace.⁹⁰

A month later Doris Finnon reminded fellow readers:

We must work to make this a better world in which to live. Surely now the world has learned the wickedness, the cruelty, the foolishness of war.⁹¹

86. "Lochinvar," *ibid.*, 14 Dec. 1939.

87. Kim, *ibid.*, 18 Mar. 1939.

88. The founding meeting of the United Nations was held in April 1945.

89. "Fernanda," *WP*, 31 May 1945; Winnifred Ariel Weir, "Two Wars Viewed from Windermere," *British Columbia Historical News* 23 (Fall 1990): 19. Weir recalled that VE Day had been anticipated and plans had been made to celebrate, but VJ Day celebrations were more subdued.

90. "Moss Rose," *WP*, 7 June 1945.

91. Doris Finnon, *FPPF*, 13 July 1945.

VII

Historians have systematically recorded, examined, and analyzed Canada's participation in two world wars in terms of military achievement, political change, and economic development. Although letter-writers were aware of specific events and important battles, their knowledge of war was, understandably, limited. Letters from ex-Leaves at the front reminded fellow readers they had to experience war to know war. Nonetheless, letter-writers indicated, and studies by Challinor and Montgomery conclude, that children far from the war zone were shaped by events that touched their families and communities. Richard Hann observes in his introduction to *The Great War and Canadian Society: An Oral History* that interviewees did not recall the First World War as a "diplomatic or military experience" but as "a highly disruptive social experience."⁹² And Barry Broadfoot's popular collections, *Six War Years, 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians Home and Abroad*, and *The Veterans' Years: Coming Home From the War*, confirm that the Second World War irrevocably changed Canadian society.⁹³

For some children the war was a romantic and exciting event, but there were also negative aspects. Children were expected to contribute to the war effort to the point of sacrificing money, time, and energy. Letter-writers indicated that they willingly did so. It was, however, the breakdown of their families or the death of their fathers, brothers, friends, or neighbours that brought home the tragic reality of war.⁹⁴ What was lost could never be replaced. One of Canada's best-known photos of Second World War, for example, shows a long line of the Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles marching along a civilian-lined street to the New Westminster train station and the first leg of their journey overseas. A small boy, arm outstretched, runs after the outstretched hand of his marching father while a pursuing mother reaches for the running child. In a November, 1992 interview on Vancouver CBC Radio, the boy, now in his middle fifties, reported that his father was greatly changed by war and found it difficult to re-adjust to civilian life. His parents subsequently divorced, and father and son were unable to re-establish a close relationship.⁹⁵

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92. Read, *The Great War and Canadian Society*, 25-26; Challinor, "Children and War." As with Canadian children, the physical, mental, and emotional state of some returning soldiers, and the fact that many did not return at all, made many New Zealand children aware of some of the tragedies of war.
 93. Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Years*, and *The Veterans' Years: Coming Home From The War* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985).
 94. Challinor, "Children and War," 43; Montgomery, "The war was a very vivid part of my life," 189-92; Broadfoot, *Six War Years*, 35, 120-21, 124, 129.
 95. "Wait for me Daddy," photo by C.P. Dettloff, 1 Oct., 1940, the British Columbia Regiment, Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles, marching down Eighth Street, New Westminster; Vancouver CBC Radio's The Afternoon Program, Nov. 1992.

As with the child in the photograph, the end of the war and the demobilization of military personnel created stresses both for those returning and for those on the home front. In some cases, family members had been killed and family circles irrevocably broken. In others, long-absent fathers failed to re-establish their places as heads of families, and growing or grown children were unwilling or unable to relinquish the responsibility and independence they had assumed and freedom they had experienced while fathers were away.⁹⁶ In some families the period of separation had been too long, and fathers and children could not form positive relationships. Some veterans were so traumatized by their war experiences that their adjustment to civilian and family life proved a long painful process which created serious problems for them and their families. In a study published in the *Canadian Psychiatry Association Journal*, for example, psychiatrist John S. Sigal alerted other professionals to possible psychological problems in the lives of spouses and children of those men who had spent a prolonged detention in a Japanese prison camp.⁹⁷

But disruptions were not limited to family life. As women and young people assumed responsible positions as agricultural, munitions, and medical workers, they redefined their roles within their families and within Canadian society. Children and young people were aware of their contribution. As Neil Sutherland points out, children's work "played a central role in shaping adult identities."⁹⁸ The eleven women featured in the recent National Film Board production, *And We Knew How to Dance*, confirmed that they felt they were doing their bit to win the First World War. One woman began work in a munitions plant at age fourteen and another in an aircraft factory at age fifteen. All eleven women agreed their war work was difficult and often stressful, but it was a maturing, satisfying, and exciting experience.⁹⁹ As wage-earners, youngsters achieved a sense of independence; as war workers, they achieved a feeling of self-worth. But as veterans returned and war plants closed, women and young workers were among the first laid off. Many were unable or unwilling to return to pre-war positions or places,

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96. Ben Wicks, *When the Boys Came Marching Home* (Toronto: Stoddard, 1991); Bill McNeil, *Voice of a War Remembered: An Oral History Of Canadians in World War II* (Trent: Doubleday, 1991). Individuals interviewed by both Wicks and McNeil recalled how difficult it was for both veterans and family members to adjust to life together.
97. John J. Sigal, "Effects of Paternal Exposure to Prolonged Stress on the Mental Health of the Spouses and Children," *Canadian Psychiatry Association Journal* 21 (1976): 169-72.
98. Neil Sutherland, "'We always had things to do': The Paid and Unpaid Work of Anglophone Children Between the 1920's and the 1960's," *Labour/Le Travail* 25 (Spring 1990): 107.
99. *And We Knew How to Dance*, National Film Board, 1993.

and hence were left at loose ends. Furthermore, those young people who disrupted their schooling to join the war workforce were at a disadvantage, as they frequently had low educational levels and no specific trade skills. Consequently they faced a lifetime of low-paid "blind alley jobs."¹⁰⁰

Did the experience of two world wars change the attitude of young Canadians to war? In 1914, children cheered as Canadians marched off to war; in 1918, they greeted peace with a mixture of relief and sadness. In 1939, children watched Canadians reluctantly go to war; in 1945, youngsters were optimistic that future disputes could be settled by peaceful methods. Yet, in spite of the destruction created by two world wars and the horror wrought by two atomic bombs dropped on Japan, the excitement and glory of war still held appeal for some. In 1950, five years after the end of the Second World War, Canada raised an all-volunteer force of 10,587 men, composed of veterans, new recruits, and regular and reserve force members, for the "Canadian Army Special Force." This time, however, Canadians went to war not to support the Motherland, but to support NATO forces fighting in Korea. For some Canadians, war was still the ultimate adventure.¹⁰¹

100. Ontario Department of Education, *Report, 1942-43*, 20, 89, 125; "Child Labour and the War," *Canadian Welfare* 17 (Nov. 1914): 14-18.

101. Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 234.