6

Commemorating Revolution, Commemorating Women

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The centenary commemorative landscape of the first two decades of the twenty-first century, in many parts of Europe, has been dominated by two main themes: war and revolution. Within those themes, the memories, legacies and commemorations of two major episodes of European history eclipse much else; these are the First World War, 1914–18, and the Russian Revolution, 1917. While both had far-reaching impacts on the nations involved, and even on those not directly involved, the concentration on the commemorative events surrounding these histories tends to obscure and marginalize other important European histories, in particular the impact of feminist and socialist politics on smaller but no less important revolutions, both within the countries impacted by the war, and others not directly impacted. The challenge for memory scholars and, more especially, historians of gender in the twenty-first century is to understand what is included and excluded within commemorations of war and revolution, because, as noted by Lucy Noakes, the study of women in wartime (and revolution) can be a 'particularly potent method of analysing the means by which memories are constructed'.[1] In commemorations of the First World War, the remembrance of male sacrifice and trauma is imbued with different meanings for diverse groups. For example, for the Irish Ulster Unionists (those loyal to the Union with Britain) the losses of the 36th (Ulster) Division at the Somme are often 'relayed as containing the essence of what it means to be an Ulsterman', while for the French it is Verdun, rather than the Somme, 'which encapsulates' the French experience of the war.[2] As Alan Kramer has written, for Germany, Verdun is also the 'great historic battle' even if the Somme caused more casualties.[3] A collection of essays on the Somme explained why it does not feature as a German 'site of memory'; it was a defensive battle and 'in 1917 the German

forces retreated from it, leaving behind no significant memorials, only a deliberately devastated region'.[4] It had no value as a 'site of memory', unlike Gallipoli, also a lost battle, which for the ANZAC troops of Australia and New Zealand, fighting within the British Imperial army, served as 'a foundational 'militaristic, masculinist, and mono-cultural' imagining of what it means to be Australian'.[5] As John Horne has also noted, the First World War, although often ignored in Irish revolutionary historiography, was a transformative event as it 'defined and polarised four competing kinds of Irish statehood: unionism, northern unionism, Home Rule nationalism, and separatist nationalism, and those conflicting mobilisations determined Ireland's post-war development'.[6]

These few examples demonstrate that, as Maggie Andrews puts it, 'commemoration, memories and narratives of past wars and conflicts are utilised to construct a sense of nationhood, but the appeal of any specific version of the nation constructed in this way will not be universal'.[7] It is, however, the case that the issue of gender exclusion, to a greater or lesser degree, from national commemoration events, has been universal.[8] With many of these myth-making memorials and commemorations continuing to be male-centric, it is incumbent on historians, especially feminist historians, to challenge these foundational narratives and 'to ensure this story is inclusive or that its exclusions are at least noted'.[9] It is important therefore to note that the development of the discipline of women's and gender history over the last half-century, and the embedding of feminism as a political ideology in most European states, has meant that recent commemorations will inevitably be viewed, and critiqued, through a gendered and feminist lens. In this chapter, the centenary commemorations of several chosen countries will be studied from a gendered perspective. The revolutionary decade in Ireland provides the opportunity to review the transformation of what were initially male-centred commemorations of politics and the road to war and revolution to more gender-inclusive commemorations as the decade continued, and how and why that happened. Commemorations of suffrage activism, socialist politics and/or female participation in revolution in Britain, Germany and Finland will also be critiqued. What this chapter seeks to challenge is 'gendered' forgetting in commemorative practices, and question what we are missing if we marginalize or neglect to include gender.

The chapter centres on centenaries of suffrage and female revolutionary activism in Ireland, Britain, Finland and Germany, and the key concepts under discussion here are historical politics, memory politics, historical culture and historical consciousness. Historical politics uses history in order to achieve a particular goal. It is an intentional activity in which history is interpreted

according to the interests of a particular political group. The groups in power have their own important narratives that embody their identities and values, influencing how historical knowledge is used. At its most eloquent, history is mobilized in the service of issues of war and peace. In building a national identity, those in power make choices about what is included in the national story and what is left out of it, who are given a voice and who are silenced. When certain people or groups decide what to include in the national story, it always is a matter of memory politics.[10] Many governments set up advisory boards on commemoration and often exert pressure, overt or covert, on what should be commemorated. Memory politics, whether local, national or European was, and continues to be, important to state funders. For instance, in Ireland, the Decade of Centenaries was from the beginning (2012) to be 'measured and reflective . . . inclusive and non-partisan', although it did also acknowledge that the state (that is, the Irish Republic) should not be 'expected to be neutral about its own existence'.[11] However, in the early years of the Decade, anxieties about the impact of revolutionary commemorations on the relationships with the Northern Irish unionist communities and with Great Britain were evident. Meanwhile, in the context of post-Brexit politics, many in Northern Ireland were anxious about the commemoration of the 1921 foundation of that state, especially as it included the centenary of the creation of the still contentious border on the island of Ireland. Likewise, there was a strong steer from the German Foreign Office that the commemoration of the First World War at home and abroad should emphasize European integration.[12]

This applies also to gender in history. In this chapter, we understand historical culture as the numerous ways and means which produce images and information about the past. These include, for example, history research, schooling, music, fiction, memoirs, plays, performances, games, movies, museum exhibitions, visual arts and monuments. These are the tools that help one to remember. According to James Wertsch, remembrance is tied to a cultural and social context. In order to preserve certain memories in the community, the above-mentioned cultural tools are needed to connect individuals to their social environment.[13] Jenny Edkins points out that people cannot control the formation of their memories themselves but remember things as social individuals.[14] An individual's historical awareness is built on many levels, including history teaching, research and writing, oral tradition, generational memory, social discourse, and popular culture. Thus, the perception of past events is never merely informational, but builds on past values and ways of thinking.[15] Historical research alone does not affect people's historical consciousness, but it is a

complex and continuous process of interaction, which Jorma Kalela, a political historian, calls the process of social construction of history.[16] In this process, the study of history is of equal value to other sources in historical culture. The commemorative case studies we use in this chapter will include: the Irish Decade of Centenaries, 1912–23; the commemorative campaigns to remember socialists and pacifists in Manchester and the North-West, focusing on Selina Cooper (1864–1946) from Nelson in Lancashire; the 'male-centric' commemorations of the 1918 revolution in Germany; and, in Finland, the 2018 commemoration of the 1918 civil war.

One hundred years of male historiography

The first two decades of the twentieth century were witness to political and revolutionary upheavals across Europe. Driven by the momentum of revolutionary ideologies, particularly the rise of the nation-state, as well as the forces of feminism and socialism, violent revolutions were not unusual, before and after the First World War. Coming to the terms with these violent pasts was, as Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad write, 'largely a national project',[17] involving processes of historicizing the 'nation'. Where cultural memory is closely linked to the development of these nation-states, narratives emanate most often, as Cynthia Enloe notes, from 'masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope', where heritage and commemorative sites focus on the experiences, contributions and histories of men.[18] Women, as actors and as contributors, are most often marginalized, overlooked or represented in narrowly focused, and passively domestic, ways which do not challenge the dominant male-centric histories. Finland's history writing works as a good example of a national project. Following independence from Russia, the country ended up in a civil war in early 1918. Several stages can be outlined in research on the events of 1918. The first phase started immediately after the war and was written from the perspective of the victors. The agenda of historical politics was clear, and the winners wanted to justify their own wartime activities and penal policy. At this point, it can be seen how the drive to build a new young nation strongly guided official historical research. Historians were tasked with creating a robust, solid national story. It was important to justify what had happened and to keep quiet about difficult and controversial issues, such as rapes and illegal executions. The historiography was very male-centric; men were writing about men. Slowly, during the intervening 100 years, the perspectives have changed and become

more unbiased. In the twenty-first century, research has been largely influenced by the new war history. Many civil war researchers have now studied such phenomena as violence, experiences, feelings and everyday life. At this stage, previously marginalized groups, such as women and children, have also become key research topics. Taking a broad view of the research literature over the entire period since 1918, it can be said that while winners, men and battles were at the centre of research 100 years ago, in the twenty-first century, losers, women and the experiences of the individuals have come to the fore.[19] This change has also impacted on other areas of historical culture in Finland. Indeed, the same trend as in research is clearly visible in fiction, so that women have become actors in civil war literature and cinema in the twenty-first century. The survival of Red women, especially Red widows, has been the theme of several novels and films. According to historian Tiina Kinnunen, fiction is especially necessary when people want to understand a difficult past. Emotion management is also needed, and fiction can help more than academic research. The power of fiction lies in the fact that it can open up new horizons to the reader and help them understand how anger and bitterness may have led to violent acts.[20]

Conversely, in 2018 commemorations of the 1914–18 war in Manchester and more generally across the United Kingdom, focused on patriotic efforts on the home front and the memorialization of the dead. Local groups in towns and cities were encouraged and often funded to research names on the local war memorials, and to honour those men who had been killed on the fighting fronts. In that year, there were, almost simultaneously, national and local commemorations for the partial granting of the vote to women in early 1918, often praising the patriotic commitment to war shown by the majority of suffragettes. Various relatively unknown suffrage campaigners like Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy from Congleton, Lydia Becker from Altham in Lancashire and Alice Hawkins from Leicester have been memorialized with statues and blue plaques while a national mapping project of suffrage activity was untaken. There was, however, very little acknowledgement of the socialist and suffragist women who campaigned against the war and maintained international links with their 'sisters in sorrow' across the Channel. Women who were nurses or munitions workers during the war were included in the story and the possibility of female heroism and courage was acknowledged, but the exclusion of female war-resistors, a radical minority who actively opposed the war in highly political ways, has reinforced the tendency to expect an undifferentiated account of 'women's' experience in support of the war effort that in no way challenges contemporary gender assumptions. So, although there was some willingness

during the centenary to broaden the scope and understanding of the war beyond the battlefield and to include the experiences of women in the narrative, this only went so far.

This century-long valorization of war, even glorious defeat in war, is evident in the masculinist underpinning of most commemorative events prior to the twenty-first century, ensuring that the politics of memory is often bound to the politics of identity. According to John R. Gillis, commemorative activity is by definition 'social and political', as it involves 'the co-ordination of individual and group memories, whose results may seem consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle and in some instances, annihilation'.[21] As Gillis also notes, the role of women in national commemoration was, and in many ways, continues to be 'largely allegorical'.[22] The creation of national days such as Mother's Day in Europe and America in the early twentieth century reflects the acceptable, domestic, maternal position of women within most national foundational myths. Women, Gillis writes, just like racial minorities, repressed social classes or the young, can serve as symbols of a 'lost' or 'glorious' past but 'their actual lives are more readily forgotten'.[23] However, memories are now breaking out of the 'container of the nation-state', although the process of European 'historical transactional memory' proved 'more difficult to construct than its anticipated'.[24] The problem is the existence in Europe of 'multifarious cultural traditions and histories' that need to be 'translated, transformed or boiled down' into a shared legacy.[25] However, despite these challenges, cultural history replaces the frame of the nation with the frame of the transnational, and, as Assmann writes, challenges 'bounded views on national belonging and open[s] up new perspectives for internal differences and relational connectedness between nations'.[26]

One aspect of this transnational 'relational connectedness' is the 'gender issue', and, in particular for this volume, gendered and trans-European national commemorations of revolution in the early decades of the twenty-first century. However, we have to question if a pan-European 'shared sense of memory' is possible or even desirable. Is what happened in Ireland between 1912 and 1923 in any way similar to the revolutions that occurred post-1918 in other European countries such as Germany, Hungary and Finland, which also experienced violence and the trauma of war during the years 1914–19? Similarities are to be found. For example, the brutal suppression of the Irish uprising in 1921 was compared in the Finnish Social Democrat newspaper to the White terror in Finland in 1918. One year later, in 1922, a similar parallel was drawn in that newspaper between the Finnish civil war and the terror and brutalities of Miklós Horthy's Hungary.[27] However, despite these few examples, Edgar Wolfrum et al.

argue that 'a uniform European memory, in the sense of a shared narrative of the First World War, is undesirable and maybe even impossible'.[28] In fact, they continue, the goal should not be a 'uniform European memory' but rather 'the sharing and subsequent recognition of divergent memories'.[29] Indeed, 'the commemorations of 2014 have shown different perspectives of the war across Europe and in other parts of the world'.[30] The difference between content, presence, narratives and, indeed, context in different regions and areas makes a 'shared narrative' of war impossible. As argued, in Eastern Europe 'the First World War does not even form part of an active cultural memory', while in Ireland, for example, commemoration of the First World War happens in an extraordinary number of ways because of complicated political divisions.[31] With the outbreak of the Troubles in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s, First World War memorials to Irish men who fought in the British Army became 'legitimate targets of attack' and a marginalization of commemorations of that war occurred in the Irish Republic.[32] In Northern Ireland, however, commemoration and in particular the remembering of the sacrifice of the Ulster Division at the Somme was central to Unionist memory. Commemoration can also be dangerous, and it was at a commemoration at the Enniskillen War memorial in Northern Ireland on 8 November 1987 that one of the worst atrocities of the Troubles occurred, when eleven people were killed in an IRA bomb attack.

As asked by Wolfrum et al., 'given these differences, what does it mean to establish a European perspective?'.[33] We would suggest that looking to gender history and appreciating the universality of involvement in 'transnational movements such as socialism, the women's movement or peace activism' can perhaps allow us to develop a shared experience of inclusion and exclusion, and shared critiques of gendered commemoration. In her introduction to her edited collection *Women and the Decade of Commemorations*, which deals with the commemorations of the Irish revolutionary period, 1912–23, Oona Frawley notes that 'memory in the present is determinedly transnational'.[34] The 'environment' of the Irish Decade of Commemorations, particularly commemoration of the First World War, has been influenced by events both inside and outside Ireland, and in the case of women, 'wide, even global, questions concerning women's rights has had an impact on our commemorative agenda'.[35] Against the background of contemporary reproductive rights campaigns and campaigns such as #MeToo and #TimesUp, as well as broader gender equality campaigns, who and what we commemorate is informed by contemporary politics, as is how aware we have become of gendered absences in commemorative events. A shared feature of commemorative events for the centenary is the

determined and confident intervention of feminist scholars who have been willing to challenge the male-centric, military-heavy and often nationalistic narratives within and beyond specific national contexts – for example, uncovering and trying to centre transnational female anti-war activism as well as the involvement of women, including militant women and socialist women, in revolutionary activism. As outlined in the 2018 special issue of *L'Homme, Zeitschrift für europäische Geschlechtergeschichte,* on '1914/18 revisited', this has had varying degrees of success in influencing public history and commemorative practices, but, if archived and shared, might offer a model for organized transnational feminist intervention in public commemoration that could be effectively mobilized in future.[36]

Frawley echoes Jenny Edkins in explicitly stating that 'performed commemorations and sites of memorials must not just evoke symbols', but rather recognize how contemporary commemorative work being done by 'activists, artists, scholars and critics' continues to 'inform strands of the women's movement in Ireland'.[37] Indeed, according to Rebecca Graff McRae, 'commemoration is not merely an event . . . it is not an act or a word . . . commemoration is itself constantly under negotiation'.[38] 'Commemoration,' she writes, '(re)produces a relationship between memory, history and identity, past, present and future, which is itself inherently political.'[39] For instance, in the context of the First World War, during the Decade of Commemorations in the Republic of Ireland there was a renewed interest in the notion that 'shared military experience and the shared human costs of that experience might transcend local Irish political and sectarian differences'.[40] This was constructed in the context of a new maturity in the relationship between Ireland and Britain, beginning in November 1998, at Messines in France, when the Queen of England and the President of Ireland stood together at the new 'Island of Ireland Peace Park'. Here the 'ghosts of the 36th ["Unionist" Ulster Division] were joined there by those of "Nationalist" 16th (Irish) Division – whose war record had previously been "forgotten" – to tell a new reconciliatory parable about shared sacrifice'.[41] This 1998 commemoration was followed by the installation of a new 'Cross of Sacrifice' in Dublin's Glasnevin Cemetery in 2014. The fact that this Cross stands in the same cemetery where many of the men and women who fought to free Ireland from British rule during the revolutionary war of 1919–21 were laid to rest makes it explicitly political.

The question then is, how, in divergent circumstances, and given its explicitly political nature, do we come to terms with the contemporary challenges of commemoration? Returning to Wolfrum et al., they note that the 'role that politics played and still plays in commemoration remains vital'. This is mainly

because it defines the scope of the relationship between societal commemoration and the politics of memory: ranging from developments at grassroots or communal level, as well as everyday experiences and family memories, to top-down decisions made by politicians and their interests.[42]

Owning commemoration and public space

Two questions of importance occur here, particularly in relation to the issue of gender and commemoration, namely who has ownership over commemorations and what are the political implications of how the commemorations are performed in public spaces? In most countries commemorations are funded and driven by the state, combined with academic, cultural, local and community initiatives, which are often also financed through the state or its agencies – arts councils, lottery funds, community funds, university seed funding and so on. In Ireland, the government established seed funding for several capital projects and expansion of national and local museum exhibitions on the revolutionary period 1912–23. These commemorations range from the passing of the 1912 Third Home Rule Bill, the 1913 Dublin lock-out strike, the 1916 Easter Rising, the 1919–21 War of Independence, the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty and the creation of the Northern Irish State, the 1922 setting up of the Irish Free State and, finally, the 1922–3 civil war.[43] Within these events, issues of nationalism, unionism, trade unionism, feminism and socialism were present, and women were integral to all of these histories, however much it was not reflected in the mainstream narratives until the influences of second-wave feminism and a generation of feminist historians changed this. It is useful to see how, over the course of the Decade of Centenaries, the inclusion of women's histories and contributions has transformed both the commemorative landscape and how we write histories of the Irish revolutionary period. The Irish government provided funding for arts, cultural and local communities to develop centenary programmes. Most recently, as the Decade of Centenaries draws to a close, the government decided that in order to promote an 'inclusive, respectful, authentic, measured and consultative approach to commemorations . . . recognising the differing perspectives on our shared history and seeking to strengthen peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland', it would provide funding for 'sensitive' commemorations for the years 1921–3 – years regarded as the most divisive and contested in the commemorative decade.[44] Included in the guidelines for the Arts Awards were 'the experiences of women . . . during the revolutionary period and their changing role in society'.[45]

Along with this mainstream seed funding the government also created a major, well-funded, specialist Arts award, the Markievicz Award, which was set up to provide 'support for artists . . . [and to] develop new work that reflects on the role of women in the period covered by the decade of centenaries 2012–23 and beyond'.[46] The award was named after the socialist, feminist and militant revolutionary, Countess Constance Markievicz. Coming from an aristocratic Anglo-Irish Protestant background, Markievicz, in rejecting her class privilege, became involved in militant suffrage, socialist and revolutionary activism. She was imprisoned for her part in the Easter Rising 1916, became the first woman MP elected to the House of Commons in 1918 (although, as an Irish Republican, she did not take her seat), and was later the first woman TD (Irish MP) and the first woman Minister in an Irish government. She was also one of the six women in the second Dáil (Irish Lower House of Parliament) who rejected the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, took the anti-Treaty side in the civil war and was imprisoned by the Irish Free State for that stance. While Markievicz could not be said to have been written out of Irish history books – indeed, she is often the only revolutionary woman included in accounts of this era – the sanitization (and occasional demonization) of this rebel Countess has long been a trope in Irish history. For a centrist government to name the award after a revolutionary woman who had studied Marxist political theory, and was particularly influenced by the work of Maxim Litvinov, whom she read while in Holloway Prison in 1918, perhaps shows the 'forgetting' of her radical views on and support for the redistribution of vacant land, and her vision of a Bolshevik Irish state.[47] Indeed, a portrait of Markievicz, gifted to the UK Parliament by the Irish Oireachtas (Parliament) in 2018, to commemorate the centenary of her 1918 election win, shows her in a more respectable full-length ballgown (the 'docile' aristocrat) rather than in the usual image of the revolutionary Countess in her Irish Citizen Army uniform, holding a revolver, or the socialist Countess working in the soup kitchen set up by the Irish Women Workers' Union (IWWU) to feed the starving Dublin workers during the 1913 lock-out strike.

In Britain, the First World War has a huge cultural significance and its centenary was seen as a major event in British life.[48] In 2014, the British government saw it as a bonding exercise around a celebration of British values,[49] and the year began with a clumsy attempt to prevent historical debate, using the nationalist *Daily Mail* to construct a false consensus around a commemoration centred on celebrating the heroism and sacrifice of British soldiers.[50] MP Michael Gove, then Education Secretary, asked, 'Why does the left insist on belittling true British heroes?', which prompted a response from historians who pointed out that history is not a matter of supplying 'the right answer' but of interpretation

Figure 6.1. Boleslaw von Szankowski's portrait of Countess Constance Markievicz, 1901, reproduced with permission of the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin.

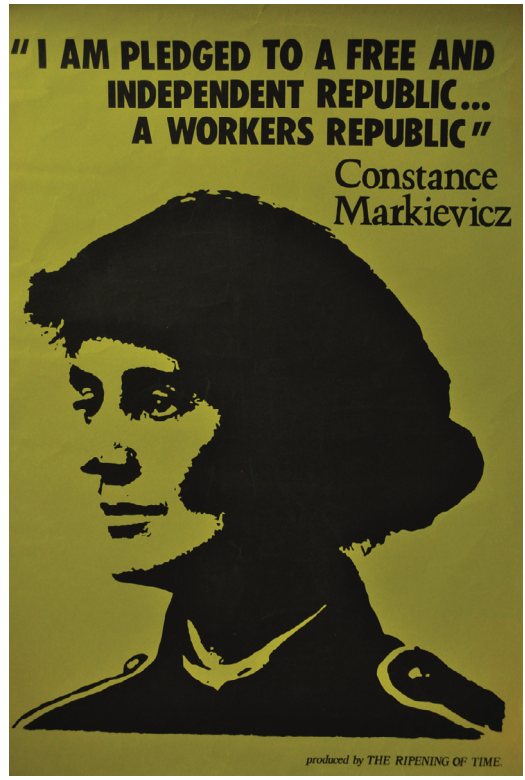

Figure 6.2. 'The Ripening Tide' poster, 1976, reproduced with permission of the Jackie Clarke Collection, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

based on evidence.[51] The whole affair highlighted the ideological nature of commemorative activities and how these could be manipulated to support a particular agenda. The centenary has been seen by many UK academics as an opportunity to broaden and shift the narrative, to move some stories from the margins to the centre and to set the terms of the debate for the next decades. Three major themes which had previously been excluded from popular history emerged: first, the global reach of the war and the contribution of colonial and Commonwealth troops, secondly gender, which had previously tended to look at women's experience in an undifferentiated way, and thirdly resistance to the war. The commemorations did indeed include new stories and pushed against the boundaries of British reluctance to engage with the world beyond its own

borders, but in the end did little to question gendered assumptions about the experience of the war or its meaning, tending instead to highlight stories that reinforced existing gender norms, such as women in nursing, or stories that fitted with contemporary feminist interest in women taking over male roles during wartime or showing bravery comparable to that of men.[52]

In the British context, it is important to understand the 'impact agenda', under which academic research is expected to demonstrate a direct influence on the economy, policy or society. Measurable impact is rewarded by funding for universities and career success for individual researchers, and it has been a major factor in encouraging and supporting the intervention of academics in public debate rather than confined to closed workshops or learned publications.[53] This is reflected in the nature of funded projects during the centenary, which centre on five Engagement Centres co-funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).[54] The emphasis is on co-production, on academics working closely with community partners to produce joint findings – purely academic projects are not funded. Of the five centres which act as hubs coordinating the activities of several universities, Voices of War and Peace lists a specific interest in 'Gender and the Home Front', often gendered female, while Gateways to War includes expertise on 'Conscientious Objectors and Military Tribunals', which essentializes war resistance as a predominantly male experience. These hubs have coordinated and funded a vast number and variety of commemorative activities that have brought together community and academic partners on an unprecedented scale. As well as the Engagement Hubs and separate HLF-funded projects, more than 400 of which feature women's war experience,[55] the main brokers in forming and reflecting public opinion are the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Imperial War Museum (IWM), who have also cooperated and shared material during the centenary. However, the work of campaigning groups has also been significant in raising the profile of gendered resistance to war and offering an ongoing critique of aspects of commemorative practice that glorify war.

The BBC dedicated 2,500 hours of radio and TV broadcast between 2014 and 2018, including drama and supporting material on its website, to First World War commemoration.[56] Although a few academics like Professors Mary Beard and Alice Roberts have become well-known media figures, the BBC has a preference for celebrities as presenters, and academics have mainly acted as advisors or interviewees. Popular history books on war by television journalists Kate Adie and Jeremy Paxman became best sellers.[57] An exception is the academic David Olusoga, presenter of *The World's War* in 2014, whose book and programme

interrupted the overwhelming focus on the British war experience.[58] In 2014, the BBC collaborated with academics to create four massive open online courses (MOOCs), including one on heroism hosted by researchers at the University of Leeds.[59] *Changing Faces of Heroism* critically interrogated the concept in France and Germany as well as Britain and included war resisters and women as heroic figures. The programme *Voices of the First World War* used BBC and IWM sound archives to 'tell the story of World War I through the voices of those who were there'.[60] The voices and topics chosen were predominantly male and focused on major battles, although the conscientious objector (CO) experience is covered in one of the episodes. *World War One at Home* was a project developed in collaboration with both the IWM and the AHRC and included local as well as national and international stories.[61] Conscientious objection was included as one of the themes, but the focus was on 'the individuals who made a stand against conscription' and neither included the organizations supporting these individual men nor situated the COs within the context of a broader war resistance, where women played a leading role. Women were well represented in the project, with a wide variety of experiences showcased, but their prominence in opposing the war was overlooked and the majority of the stories chosen fit into the celebratory narrative showing bold girls and women creating spaces for themselves in male territory.[62]

A civil war museum has never been established in Finland; the memories have been too painful. However, during the commemorative years of the civil war in 2008 and again in 2018, dozens of short-term exhibitions were opened in museums all over the country, dealing with either the local perspective or the civil war more broadly. A central theme of the exhibitions was the aim to understand both sides of the war while avoiding conscious confrontations. In these exhibitions, the role of women was also highlighted, and they were seen as active subjects, not just passive objects. In addition to cultural history museums, the theme of the civil war was discussed in public galleries, such as the City of Turku Art Museum (WAM), whose aim in the civil war exhibition was to remind visitors of ongoing civil conflicts around the world. According to folklorist Ulla-Maija Peltonen, dealing with historical trauma requires remembering and critically confronting the issue that caused the trauma. Then repetition and dismantling of the trauma become the most important means of overcoming it.[63] In dismantling traumas, cultural experiences can also be valuable. During the memorial year 2018, many theatres included in their repertoires history-based plays about the civil war. The stories of women featured in many performances. For example, the musical *Girls 1918* at the Tampere Workers' Theatre, and *The Blood Roses* at Kom Theatre in

Figure 6.3. Grim memories and harsh experiences of a civil war will always overshadow a nation for a long time. The means of both research and art are needed to dismantle the national burden of the war. In Finland, in the Tampere Workers' Theatre the brutal destinies of young female soldiers were the focus of the musical *Girls 1918*. The distinctive feature of this musical was the combination of dark historical stories and modern rap music. Photograph: Kari Sunnari/ The Tampere Workers' Theatre.

Helsinki were both box office hits. Both were based on a novel of the same name by Anneli Kanto, which narrated the story of young female soldiers and their brutal fate. In addition to professional theatres, the theme of the civil war and women was also taken up by other interested parties. For example, the Helsinki City Museum produced the play *The Spring of Hate – Helsinki 1918*, written by Sirpa Kähkönen. Smaller provincial theatres also wanted to take on a new, local perspective. For example, in Turku, the premiere of Jo-Jo Teatteri talked about the girls who had worked at the local cotton factory and who became female soldiers, and Tehdas Theatre depicted how the mistress of the house and her maid had ended up in different prison sides in the play *The Colours are Freedom – Red and White*.[64]

In Finland, the civil war has also been dealt with through various immersive events. For example, artist Kaisa Salmi produced *Fellman's Field – A Living Monument of 22,000 People* as a work of performance in Lahti on 28 April 2013. Here it was staged in the same field where 22,000 Red women, men and children had waited for their interrogation and sentencing for six days in April–May 1918. The performance was attended by thousands of people, united by a desire to remember the victims of the civil war and reconcile the injustices that took place. The reception of the event was controversial. Some thought it was tearing open old wounds for no good purpose.[65]

Figure 6.4. This picture is a still frame from the documentary film *Fellman's Field* (in Finnish *Fellmanin pelto*) by Kaisa Salmi. In 2013, artist Kaisa Salmi directed a performance called Fellman's field – monument of 22,000 people. The event was attended by more than 10,000 people from all over Finland. The immersive performance was based on the events in the civil war's largest prison camp, where 22,000 Red prisoners spent several days in poor conditions on this same field waiting for their hearings. Reproduced with permission of the artist Kaisa Salmi.

In Manchester, England, in 2014, a group of local volunteer researchers decided to explore alternative narratives of the years 1914–18 using the city and the surrounding textile towns of the North-West as examples of local and individual sites of resistance to the war. Many of the anti-war women in the North-West were under surveillance by the Special Branch and MI5, and a number of women were imprisoned as a result of their anti-war activities. Of course, there was sizeable opposition to the war across the country and a local, regional and national network of anti-war activists existed, but this research enabled an exploration of the networks of local resistance in more depth and the creation of spaces to commemorate this resistance. The research shone a light on the largely forgotten Women's Peace Crusade (WPC) which, although a national campaign, spread like wildfire through the industrial north: one of its main protagonists was Selina Cooper from Nelson. Firstly, a film was made about the Crusade with more than 100 volunteers from Manchester, Blackburn, Bolton, Rochdale, Oldham and Nelson who acted in the film, and twenty researchers who pored over local archives and newspapers to discover some of the socialist women active in each town: Lydia Leach from Blackburn, Elsie Winterbottom from Oldham, and Gertrude Ingham and Selina Cooper. As part of a process of commemoration, a group of

Figure 6.5. Peace Crusade Choir, 2018, photography by and permission from Ali Ronan.

volunteers from Nelson bid successfully for a grant from the HLF. This funded the appointment of project facilitator, Charlotte Bill, and the creation of a series of exhibitions and displays. There was an exhibition celebrating Cooper's life, there were display boards illustrating the story of the socialist and anti-militarist conscientious objectors in north-east Lancashire during the First World War, and a set of banners telling the history of the socialist Clarion Movement. The only existing Clarion clubhouse is located just outside Nelson, near the village of Newchurch on Pendle Hill in Lancashire.

The commemoration in Nelson focused on the above-mentioned socialist and pacifist Selina Cooper (1864–1946). Cooper moved from Cornwall with her family to Nelson in 1875 and she worked full-time from the age of thirteen, joining the Nelson branch of the Cotton Workers Union and in 1891 leading a dispute over the lack of decent toilet facilities for women weavers. Like many working-class women in Nelson, she attended education classes at the local Women's Co-operative Guild and was involved in the local Independent Labour Party (ILP). She worked closely with other socialists locally like Gertrude Ingham, whose son Alex was imprisoned. In 1900, she joined the North of England Society for Women's Suffrage, helping to organize a petition that was signed by women working in the Lancashire cotton mills and was chosen as one of the delegates to present it to the House of Commons. In 1911, she became a national organizer for the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and was involved in the Election Fighting Fund, which was an informal project between the Labour Party and the NUWSS to encourage the election of pro-suffrage candidates. During the First World War, Cooper was a pacifist, totally opposed to military conscription. In 1917, she organized a huge WPC procession in Nelson. After the war, Cooper continued to be actively involved in local, national, and international politics, joining the committee of the Nelson branch of the League of Nations Union and the local No More War Movement. She organized the Nelson contingent of the Peacemakers' Pilgrimage in 1926 and was part of a Women Against War and Fascism delegation to Germany in 1934. This commemoration of Cooper has been another important breakthrough in the slow but determined process of remembering women who have been largely forgotten in the patriotic narrative of the First World War. It follows on from the campaigns in Manchester and other cities to remember suffrage and socialist women whose activism has often been overshadowed by the pro-war Pankhursts and the militant suffragette campaign. Sylvia Pankhurst's pacifism and socialism, although recognized, are often side-lined. Pankhurst was a regular visitor to Manchester and the Lancashire cotton towns, speaking at numerous meetings of anti-war organizations.

In the case of the First World War, gender history scholarship is well-established in Germany (and Austria), with several influential and respected researchers publishing on various gender aspects of the war experience.[66] This has meant that there was at the very least a token inclusion of women's war work in the commemoration of the war itself in 2014–18. However, this is not the case when it comes to the history of the revolution of 1918. There is very little gendered history of the revolution and what there is has not yet established itself in the public imagination,[67] with several scholars remaining unconvinced that women played key roles in the revolutionary events or that their contribution has anything to tell us about its nature and scope.[68] Without feminist pressure – as happened in Ireland – and underpinning research, it is perhaps not surprising that German museums could largely ignore the gender dimensions of the revolution and overlook women's roles. As a result, museums generally presented the male experience of the revolution as the whole experience without reflecting on gender at all. The presentation of the revolution often took its narrative from contemporaneous accounts, which are steeped in normative gender discourse, meaning that the museums have often reproduced these prejudices uncritically and presented the women as bystanders, motivated by supposedly feminine qualities of curiosity and political naivety. This encourages the idea that women are a-historical, as if outside of history, since they are only described according to stereotypical and supposedly unchangeable criteria. This danger has been noted by Brigitte Studer in her 2021 book.[69] The image of the revolutionary presented in exhibitions in Germany during 2018–19 was very narrow and gendered male: offering us either men with guns on barricades or fiery revolutionaries spreading the word as in the interactive project 'The rolling revolution' (*Die Revolution rollt*) that traced the progress of the revolution through the railways stations of Germany in November 2018, or in the case of Munich, of the soldier poet, the visionary, the dreamer.[70] Neither of these tropes are inclusive, and their dominance means that revolutionary women can only become briefly visible as a kind of drag king, if they adopt male roles and poses. As Moritz Föllmer's study has shown, this trope also hides a number of masculine roles and identities essential to an understanding of the revolution, so if our aim is to understand fully the nature and scope of these important events, challenging the narrow representation of a single revolutionary identity must be a priority.[71]

The history of the revolution is still present in Germany as a bone of contention, especially between different factions on the left, and there is also a strong regional flavour to commemorations. Three areas that were central to the revolution are: Kiel as the birthplace of the revolution; Munich, where the People's State of Bavaria (November 1918–April 1919) and then the two Bavarian Council

Republics (April–May 1919) were established and defended until their final defeat by government forces; and Berlin, where the Republic was proclaimed on 9 November 1918. In the naval city of Kiel, commemorations centred on the sailors' uprising, which is claimed as the catalyst and cornerstone of German democracy, positioning Kiel as the de facto birthplace of modern Germany.[72] Kiel's year of commemoration included a major new exhibition at the Maritime Museum as well as a touring version that travelled round the towns and cities of Schleswig-Holstein, several public talks and exhibitions and a newly commissioned opera, *False Betrayal* (*Falscher Verrat*), which premiered in Kiel in November 2018. The opera's plot centred on a love triangle involving a revolutionary sailor and a ship's officer vying for the affection of a female prostitute. Attempts at feminist interventions were largely unsuccessful in challenging the preferred focus on the sailors' experience. Although women were present in the Maritime Museum exhibition, they were cast as bystanders and as beneficiaries of the male-led uprising rather than political actors in their own right, while the touring exhibition featured eye-witness accounts from an exclusively male perspective. This was a missed opportunity to present a more nuanced and complete understanding of the revolutionary context that required a large amount of civilian support and years of anti-war activism, much of it by socialist women and girls, to enable the sailors' uprising to spread so swiftly to the

Figure 6.6. Rehearsal image from *Women of Aktion* by Bent Architect, 2018, photography by and permission from Karol Wyszynski.

local population and then to the rest of Germany. One of the few exceptions was a new play, funded by the AHRC and based on research by Ingrid Sharp and Corinne Painter, that was performed in Kiel as part of the commemorative events. The play, *Women of Aktion*, by the Bradford theatre collective Bent Architect, offered a rare female-centred perspective, telling the story of five women, three from Kiel and two based in Munich, who had played a significant role in the revolution, including strategic planning, communication, logistics and supplies.[73]

In Berlin, the revolution was more or less erased, with commemorative activities and exhibitions choosing dates that meant it did not need to engage with the revolution. At the German Historical Museum, which although situated in Berlin can be seen as representative of the nation, the exhibition *1917: Revolution, Russia and Europe* stopped short at 1917 after the Russian revolution,[74] while the exhibition *Democracy 2019 Weimar: On the Nature and Influence of Democracy*[75] centred the debate on the question of German democracy during the successful transition from Empire to Republic during the first, relatively bloodless, month of the revolution rather than engaging with the contentious history of the subsequent violent suppression of revolutionary forces by the governing Social Democratic Party (SPD). Likewise, the public history project *100 Years of Revolution Berlin* side-stepped controversy by focusing mainly on November and December 1918, thus avoiding having to deal with the SPD's suppression of the revolution using violent right-wing troops.[76] Dividing the project into seven themes like seven injunctions that the public has to follow ('Versammelt euch', 'Macht Frieden!', 'Mischt euch ein!', 'Informiert euch!', 'Keine Gewalt!', 'Beteiligt alle!', 'Solidarisiert euch!' - 'Gather together', 'Make Peace!', 'Get involved!', 'No Violence!', 'Take part!', 'Declare Solidarity!'), the project reduced major episodes of violence like the 'January Uprising' and the 'March Days' in Berlin to a discussion about solidarity as the cement of democracy. This approach to the revolution also fails to show revolutionary women participating somewhere else than in the fight for the right to vote. In Munich, the stress was on the figure of Kurt Eisner and on the poets, theorists and dreamers of the revolution – all of whom were men.[77] For example, the exhibition *Poetry is Revolution* considers the work of Eisner, Erich Mühsam, Gustav Landauer and Ernst Toller.[78]

The Irish Decade of Centenaries

In Ireland, the Decade of Commemorations or Decade of Centenaries began in 2012. Through the years 2012–23,[79] various pivotal events that marked the

decade 1912–23 were chosen for national commemoration. Commemoration, as argued by the Irish President, Michael D. Higgins, offered 'the opportunity to reflect, to look deeply at change over time, to provide an understanding of where they have been, where they are today, and why'.[80] During 2020 and 2021, towards the end of the Decade of Commemoration, the President hosted a number of *Machnamh 100* seminars which were addressed by scholars, researchers, cultural commentators, archivists and historians on various aspects of commemorations. So far, these seminars have looked at the challenges of Public Commemorations, including remembering those who were excluded, as 'ethical remembering requires us to include those who may hitherto have been excluded from official, formal accounts of history' in order to produce a 'more comprehensive and balanced perspective on the independence struggle'.[81] As well as looking at the mainstream political campaigns during this period, the context of Empire, the First World War, and the Partition of the island of Ireland in 1921, the President also invited scholars to give papers on issues of 'Land, Social Class, Gender and the Sources of Violence'.[82] These seminars reflected, as the President noted, the 'inclusion of marginalised voices, the disenfranchised, voices from below in our recollections of the past. It must include the essential part played by women in the period … the role of class, and an openness to stories of "the Other", the stranger, the enemy of yesterday.'[83]

While the *Machnamh 100* seminars strove, and to a large degree achieved, this broad and inclusive concept of commemoration and remembrance, the Decade of Centenaries, as it began in 2012, reflected a much narrower, much more mainstream narrative of commemoration. In this section, we will discuss how the centrality of women to the commemorative events of the Irish Decade of Centenaries came about, and the impact that inclusion of women's voices does have and will continue to have, on the broader writing of history. In 2011, an Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations was set up by the then Taoiseach (Prime Minister) to advise government on historical matters relating to the Decade of Centenaries, and to consult widely with academic, community and voluntary groups and members of the public to ensure that significant events were commemorated accurately, proportionately and appropriately in tone.[84] Its first statement of intent in 2012 signalled that all commemorations would 'be measured and reflective' and 'informed by a full acknowledgement of the complexity of historical events … of multiple readings of history, and of multiple identities and traditions which are part of the Irish historical experiences'.[85] The first mention of a woman in the list of planned commemorations was for six years later, in 2018, and was to be the

commemoration of the 1918 'General Election with new franchise including women'.[86] The activities of suffrage, trade union and nationalist women prior to 1918 were overlooked, and the 'multiple identities' referred to here were not especially inclusive of women's histories and experiences. One of the first centenaries to deal with histories outside of the mainstream political and military centenaries was that of the 1913 lock-out strike in Dublin.

Dublin, Ireland's largest city, had, in 1913, high levels of unemployment, poverty, and terrible living conditions for the poor. The city was never fully industrialized, and many workers were unskilled labourers on day wages or factory workers on terrible pay and conditions. Over the previous five years, since the forming of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) in 1908, trade union leaders worked at mobilizing the city's large unskilled workforce; by 1913, the ITGWU was the largest and most militant union in the country. While it did not admit women, a sister organization, the Irish Women Workers' Union (IWWU), had been set up in 1913 to advocate for the rights of women workers. On the platform at the meeting to launch the IWWU on 5 September 1911 were women activists from socialist, nationalist and feminist backgrounds. One speaker was the well-known feminist, and leader of the militant suffrage Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL) Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, who called on all to work together 'for the welfare of both sexes'.[87] Another speaker, Countess Markievicz, a member of the militant separatist, feminist organization Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland), told the audience that 'as you are aware women have at present no vote, but a union such as now being formed will not alone help you obtain better wages, but will also be a means of helping you get votes'.[88] Delia Larkin, leader of the IWWU, and sister of Jim Larkin, leader of the ITGWU, said that women workers were weary of 'toiling to fill the pockets of unscrupulous employers receiving for their labours not sufficient to enable them to exist'.[89] The presence of militant feminist, socialist and nationalist women demonstrated that despite their differences, female political activists were determined to work together in Ireland. By 1913 they had a chance to show their unity of purpose.

One of the largest employers of women workers in Dublin was Jacob's Biscuit factory; the *Irish Worker* (edited by Jim Larkin) regularly complained about the treatment of women workers by Jacob's and other employers. These complaints led to a series of strikes at Jacob's throughout 1912 and the employers began a campaign of intimidation of their women workers. They wanted to prevent them from joining the IWWU and even demanded that they stay away from Liberty Hall, the headquarters it shared with the ITGWU. The cause of labour and the

cause of women were becoming more united; as the suffrage paper, the *Irish Citizen*, noted, by September 1913, 'the men of Mr Larkin's union . . . frequently [acted] . . . to protect Suffragettes from . . . hooliganism'.[90] As both the IWWU and the ITGWU became more militant, employers reacted by becoming more virulently anti-union, many demanding that their workers leave their unions. By August 1913, a standoff developed between the employers and the unions, leading to a lock-out of unionized workers on 15 August. By that date, the links between militant and radical suffrage women and labour women were well advanced, and throughout the lock-out the work of women was central to the campaign to win union recognition.

The lock-out would last five bitter months, ending in January 1914 when it was evident the workers had lost the dispute. During the strike, the participation of IWWU women, suffrage campaigners and socialist women was central. Women took their place on the picket lines, worked at the soup kitchen in Liberty Hall to feed the starving families of striking workers, and joined the newly formed workers' militia, the Irish Citizen Army (ICA), which was set up to defend workers against attacks from the Dublin Metropolitan Police and strike-breakers. This was a space where the working women of the IWWU came into contact with the middle-class radical feminist and nationalist women, creating female activist networks which were to prove very vital in the coming revolution. This was also a space where links with radical British women were made and political Irishwomen collaborated with socialist women in the UK on plans to aid the children of strikers. British socialist and suffragist Dora Montefiore, accompanied by activist Lucille Neal and trade union organizer Grace Neal, arrived in Dublin on 18 October 1913, determined to provide respite for workers' children 'from the hardship of the industrial dispute' which was ongoing.[91] The plan, called the 'Save the Kiddies Scheme', was to offer holidays for the workers' children in the homes of British workers, as a respite from the poverty, hunger and violence around them. In collaboration with Delia Larkin and the women activists in Liberty Hall, homes were located, and a list of needy children drawn up. As Montefiore said, 'Dublin mothers were prepared to trust the English mothers', which demonstrates, as Karen Hunt notes, the visceral power of solidarity.[92]

However, this power of solidarity could not stand before the disapproval of the Irish Catholic hierarchy. The Archbishop of Dublin declared the Save the Kiddies Scheme a 'most mischievous development' as there was no guarantee that the Dublin children would be sent to Catholic families.[93] Despite continued efforts by Montefiore and her supporters, the scheme was defeated, by 'book, bell

and candle'.[94] Montefiore's intervention in Dublin in 1913 did 'illustrate the interconnections between the struggle of labour and women', and as she explained herself, her inspiration was the efforts of 'New York Socialists' to evacuate children from the 'violent industrial dispute in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912'.[95] As Hunt explains, while the scheme was an example of working-class solidarity, it was also 'solidarity with a gender dimension'.[96] Meetings to raise funds for the scheme were addressed by socialist, feminist and Irish trade union leader James Connolly, as well as suffrage speakers Charlotte Despard and Sylvia Pankhurst, and IWWU leader Delia Larkin.[97] Although ultimately a failure, the scheme was, as Hunt argued, 'an act of working-class solidarity organised by women which sought to show why a transnational red flag solidary organisation was a necessity . . . as the world wandered to war'.[98]

In 2013, the centenary of this 1913 lock-out dominated the commemoration landscape. The Irish government, trade unions, museums, libraries and history societies all held commemorative events, from August 2013 through to January 2014. The Irish President, a labour politician in his former life, led the state commemoration on Saturday 31 August 2013 – the centenary of 'Bloody Sunday' 1913, when the Dublin police attacked a meeting of striking workers on O'Connell Street, killing three. He laid a wreath at the statute of Jim Larkin, which stands among many statues of male political, civic and cultural leaders on O'Connell Street – there are no statues of women. Trade union and socialist women were, however, part of the 2013 commemorations. In March 2013, a plaque to the IWWU was unveiled at Liberty Hall – the headquarters of Ireland's largest trade union, SPITU, into which the IWWU was subsumed in the 1980s. At the launch, feminist historian Margaret MacCurtain insisted: 'Women like Delia Larkin, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Louie Bennet, Helena Molony, Mary Galway, Rosie Hackett and a host of others have become part of the school curriculum because other women will not let them be forgotten.'[99] By that date, Rosie Hackett, in 1913 a young working-class IWWU member and Jacob's factory worker, had become well known to the Irish public, because of a bridge. In 2012, Dublin City Council set up a Commemorative Naming Committee for a new bridge being constructed over the River Liffey, adjacent to Liberty Hall.

To that date, no bridge over the river had been named after a woman: most were named after famous male writers, politicians or revolutionaries. As would be expected, a number of male politicians, literary figures and trade unions activists were put forward in the media as potential candidates but when the Naming Committee made public its call for nominations, an extraordinary campaign took off to name the bridge after an unknown, ordinary, female trade

union activist and 1916 rebel, Rosie Hackett. Several young feminist and labour activists began a hugely effective social media, mainstream media and lobbying campaign in support of Rosie Hackett. They set up a Facebook page 'Rosie Hackett Bridge Campaign', wrote articles in newspapers, and had historians, including co-author of this chapter, Mary McAuliffe, address packed meetings on the subject of Hackett and on the non-representation of women generally in commemorative and memorial spaces. They lobbied national and local politicians and gathered thousands of signatures in support of their campaign. Hackett, they said, captivated them with 'her humble working-class roots, her defiant and unrelenting sense of justice and her undaunted struggle for her vision of a more equal and just society'.[100] Despite some 'indignant backlash' that a major bridge should be named after an unknown woman, the campaign succeeded, and on 2 September 2013 Dublin City Council announced that the bridge would be named after Rosie Hackett.[101] This very public campaign in 2013 marked a sea change in the inclusion of women in Ireland's commemorative landscape, even when the state and its institutions lagged behind. In 2014, with no state commemoration of the centenary of the formation of the largest militant nationalist women's organization, Cumann na mBan (Council of Women), the Women's History Association of Ireland (WHAI) organized three days of commemorative events in April of that year. As well as holding a major two-day conference, the WHAI worked with Glasnevin cemetery, where many of the revolutionary leaders, men and women, are buried, to organize a national commemoration of Cumann na mBan at which the President of Ireland laid a wreath in their memory.[102]

The success of these events encouraged more focus on the role of women during this period of Irish history. One of the major commemorative projects for 2016, and the centenary of the Easter Rising, was the Richmond Barracks renovation project. The Barracks was where all the 1916 rebels were taken after their surrender at the end of Easter week, 1916, among them seventy-seven women. When the Barracks project was announced in 2014, the role of women was not mentioned, but as noted by Laura McAtackney, by 2016 and the opening of the Barracks, 'The women of 1916 and the Irish Revolution' was one of the core themes.[103] 'Clearly,' she writes, 'there were changes in both personnel and the public discourse between 2014 and 2016 to refocus . . . Richmond Barracks from a normative history to a site that explicitly engages with the previously marginalised roles of women.'[104] The '77 women' book and exhibition, as well as the '77 women' quilt project are all now central to the Barracks heritage site. However, this had not been part of the state plan for the barracks, rather it was a

Figure 6.7. Revolutionary women of Easter 1916, Dublin, autumn 1916, reproduced with permission of Kilmainham Gaol Museum.

Figure 6.8. The '77 women' of 1916 quilt, Richmond Barracks Exhibition, 2016, reproduced with permission of Richmond Barracks, photograph by Dan Butler.

collaborative effort between a group of feminists, academics, activists and artists who came together as a planning subgroup during the development phase of the Barracks.[105] This subgroup engaged academics to research and write the book on the seventy-seven Easter Rising women, and a local artist to work with seventy-seven local activists to create a commemorative quilt.

Many of the contemporary activists and the seventy-seven women of 1916 came from feminist, trade union and socialist backgrounds, and issues of work, equality and inclusion were similar for the 2016 and 1916 women. This more direct activism and engagement by feminist academics and campaigners has impacted, in a central way, on the inclusion of women's histories in the Decade of Centenaries. It continued in 2015 when the Irish National Theatre, the Abbey Theatre, announced their season for 2016, which would focus on the centenary of the Easter Rising, called *Waking the Nation*. While the programme included many plays and events of interest, it had '18 men on the programme in terms of writers and directors and just two women – and all the plays were written by men, apart from one play referred to as a "monologue for children"'.[106] In response to the privileging of the male voice and the exclusion of women's voices, a meeting of women producers, artists, writers, activists and academics was held at the Abbey Theatre on 12 November 2015 where *Waking the Feminists* was launched. *#WakingTheFeminists* was set up as a 'one-year grassroots campaign . . . November 2015 to November 2016 and had huge success in advancing equality for women in Irish theatre'.[107] Its impact was global, with major Hollywood actors such as Meryl Streep tweeting support. In response to the exclusion of women's voices the Arts Council of Ireland funded *Waking the Feminists* to commission a piece of research into gender balance in Irish theatre.[108]

Not only did the controversy centre on the exclusion of women's voices in Irish theatre and culture but was also part of the broader discussion about the exclusion/inclusion of women in the Decade of Centenaries. A public consultation process was launched by the government in November 2017 'to stimulate a public conversation around how the significant historical events between 1918 and 1923 might be appropriately remembered'.[109] Some the telling themes referenced in the submissions received were 'the role of women and the role of the labour movement', which demonstrated that, by 2017, much had changed, and gender and class had become central to the centenary of the Irish revolutionary movement. The Decade of Centenaries 2021 Programme reflected this insistence on the inclusion of women – one of its eight main themes being the 'experiences of women'.[110] As part of this, the state invested in several woman-centred centenary projects, including funding for *Mná100* (Mná is the Irish for women), a dedicated online resource 'to document women in our history, particularly their contribution during the Irish Revolutionary period, 1912–1923'.[111] Funding, €25,000 to each recipient, was also made available for the Markievicz Award, for artists to reflect on 'the role of women in the period covered by the decade of centenaries 2012–2023 and beyond'.[112] Other funded

projects, including new and expanded permanent exhibitions at both national and local museums, as well as the continuing digitization of records in the Military Archives, have also been impacted by the continuing focus on women. For instance, in January 2020, the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) launched its revamped permanent exhibition *Irish Wars, 1919 to 1923*, which was 'substantially reimagined' as part of the museum's 'decade of centenaries commemorations'.[113] An expanded subsection dealt with a 'new kind of war' entitled 'Women and Violence in the Irish Wars'.[114] The experiences and contributions of women in Ireland's revolutionary decade are currently, in 2022, in many ways central to the narratives. This was achieved not by a state-driven desire to include women, but by the numerous campaigns by feminists, activists and gender historians who demanded that women's contributions, activities and legacies were deserving of commemoration.

By any reckoning, it seems that demands to include women in Ireland's Decade of Centenaries have been a success. Indeed, in more recent additions to revolutionary historiography, by male and female scholars, the roles and contributions of political and militant women, women's suffrage, trade union and republican activism, and the experiences of women, including the violence they suffered, are no longer marginalized. This is something which feminist historians have been working towards for more than five decades, since 1983 with the publication of the first major history on revolutionary women, including Cumann na mBan, Margaret's Ward's *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism*, or indeed since 2000 and the publication of Louise Ryan's ground-breaking article on gendered violence against women during the War of Independence, '"Drunken Tans": Representations of Sex and Violence in the Anglo-Irish War (1919–21)', published in the *Feminist Review*.[115] Since then, several books and articles, many by feminist scholars, have looked at the role of Ireland's pro-suffrage, socialist and revolutionary women. Archives which allow further knowledge of women's revolutionary activities have also been opened, catalogued and/or digitized, including the vast Military Pensions Applications Files, which serve to broaden our understanding of the role of women in this period.[116] In 2021, there were more than 13,300 pension files, of which 3,758 relate to women, with more to be released. These files are from women, the majority (2,362) members of Cumann na mBan, from all classes and all areas of the country. While most of the successful female applications were granted the lowest grade of pension (grade E), the files are important in revealing who these women were, what they said they did, what motivated them, the violence and traumas many suffered, and the legacies

of their involvement in their later lives. These and other archives have transformed the historiography of mainstream revolutionary narratives, as well as knowledge of political and militant women's motivations, involvement, activities, suffering and legacies, and continue to do so. However, while funding for these archival projects is to be welcomed, the histories of other women and their archives continue to be resisted by the state. Even as more records of revolutionary women become available, the archives of those women who were institutionalized in Ireland's infamous Magdalen Laundries and Mother and Baby Institutions remain closed. In the state reports on the treatment of women and children in these institutions, which have bookended the Decade of Centenaries, the McAleese Inquiry into the Magdalen Laundries (2013) and the Mother and Baby Home Commission (2021),[117] official archival materials, state records, records of the religious congregations, local archives, and the testimonies of state officials and members of the religious orders who ran these institutions were privileged over the testimonies of survivors. However, in 2022, despite all that has been achieved with the inclusion of some women in Irish histories, the trauma memories, testimonies, and histories of some 'inconvenient' Irish women are still being sanitized, managed and marginalized. Furthermore, despite the successful inclusion of women in many aspects of Ireland's Decade of Centenaries, vigilance is still necessary. In February 2022, the centenary of the split in Cumann na mBan, the largest militant female republican organization, which rejected the Anglo-Irish Treaty by a large majority, passed unobserved by any state remembrance. The split between political and militant women would be central to the coming civil war in 1922–3, a war often recalled as being 'brother against brother', when 'sister against sister' was as relevant and central to the histories. The battle for female inclusion in historical narratives and commemorations continues.

Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from these case studies? Women were nowhere represented as central to – or even influential in – the revolutionary events of the First World War era. Even where women were present, they were peripheral and could be removed or overlooked without affecting the narrative. Even where published sources were readily available, the choice was made to exclude women. In Schleswig-Holstein, the travelling exhibition on the November 1918 revolution (as opposed to the fixed Maritime Museum exhibition) did not contain even a

single eyewitness account by a woman. As the aim was to create a link between the revolution and civic-mindedness in the present day, the un-reflected absence of role models for women and girls is disturbing. This imbalance was also reflected in the '100 years of Revolution Berlin' project: of more than 250 exhibitions, guided tours and open discussions, just twelve were dedicated to women's experiences, and of these, eight were about the right to vote. The only representation in Germany that centred revolutionary women was in the feminist-informed exhibition *Damenwahl!* in Frankfurt, but this was a specific exhibition about female suffrage rather than an attempt to show women's revolutionary roles.[118] Another aspect of the commemorations has been the dominance of male expertise, whether in journalistic debates or in academic conferences, where women were often outnumbered ten to one, and often relegated to a single panel discussing women's experiences of revolution. This was then reflected in the publications arising from the conferences which offered a similarly undifferentiated view in a lone chapter on women, often with a generic title such as 'women in the revolution'. The example from Berlin fits this pattern, with just one panel on 'Women in the Revolution', which is where female scholars Dania Alasti and Gisela Notz were to be found.[119] On the other hand, several panels featured male historians such as Robert Gerwarth, Wolfgang Niess or Mark Jones. In Ireland, anger at the absence of female historians from panels on the revolutionary period led to the creation, in 2016, of a twitter account @ManelWatchIre, set up to name and shame manels (all male panels). This has had some impact, as it would be a very foolhardy organizer who would put together a revolutionary manel now!

However, unless feminist scholars and activists insist on inclusion, women often remain marginalized. So, how do we explain the choices that at every level excluded women on into the twenty-first century? In Germany, for instance, the research context on the revolution is problematic, and the interpretation of events contested on party lines. For Wolfgang Niess, writing in 2018, the revolution has been interpreted in a variety of ways, most of them negative, and heavily influenced by party affiliation.[120] Indeed, German scholarship has only recently begun to look beyond questions of responsibility and blame to consider the revolution in a broader context, with the publication of Alexander Gallus' edited volume *The Forgotten Revolution* (*Die vergessene Revolution*) in 2010 kick-starting the trend.[121] The work of Kathleen Canning has been especially important in providing a gender perspective and a more capacious understanding of revolution in terms of time and spaces that allows women to become visible.[122] In the context of the centenary, a new interpretation of the revolution has

emerged as in fact representing the catalyst for and cornerstone of German democracy. Unsurprisingly perhaps, this take is more popular in Kiel than elsewhere, and much of the commemoration in other parts of Germany skilfully avoided engaging with the revolution as outlined above. In his speech to mark the founding of the Weimar Republic, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, too, chose to bypass the revolution entirely and erase the new Republic's revolutionary roots. Instead, he characterized the Weimar Republic as 'an experiment in democracy' that had begun on 9 November 1918, apparently for no particular good reason. Steinmeier instead situated the revolution in the Republic's progressive constitution: 'Anyone looking at the constitution today will be amazed at how progressive its aims were and how topical they still are. Yes, what was written there was truly revolutionary.'[123] Without any sort of context to explain why the constitution may have reflected its revolutionary roots and taken a distinctly progressive position on workers' rights and universal adult suffrage, the document is indeed surprising.

There is still a long way to go before the full range of women's experiences during and after the war is included in the commemorative practices within nation-states and internationally. Our case studies have shown significant variation between the national contexts discussed in this chapter, with some signs that gendered perspectives and narratives explored in feminist research can carry over into public histories and reach a receptive audience. The importance of feminist challenge to dominant and largely male-centric narratives and commemorative practice is illustrated in particular by the Irish case which offers a possible model for coordinated and varied interventions by gender, women's and feminist historians in public debate through cultural and artistic as well as historical methods. This is further underlined when we consider how central women's scholarship has been to expanding public history narratives around the First World War and associated revolutions to include gender perspectives. However, in several national contexts, applying a gender lens specifically to the history of the revolutionary period post-1917 is less well-established and it has been harder to gain recognition of women's political agency and activism as revolutionaries. This could be in part due to the relative lack of scholarship on revolutionary women compared to several decades of academic interest in women's roles and experiences during the war period itself. The opportunity, as Sylvia Schraut and Sylvia Paletschek noted, 'to inscribe the female experience into memory culture' is inextricably linked to contemporary feminist and gender politics and, more especially, to the work of gender historians in these periods of history.[124] While contemporary feminism and gender politics

play a part in demanding that women be included in commemorations, if gender historians are not at the forefront of research on revolutionary movements and experiences, the activism, contributions, impacts and legacies of revolutionary women will continue to be marginalized and excluded.