

# The Myriad Faces Of War: Britain And The Great War, 1914-1918

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inevitably, eroded the imperial connection in judicial matters. In making his case, Swinfen has steadfastly maintained that the main opposition to the retention of the Privy Council's prerogatives was "political rather than juridical" (p. 17), although the lines were often blurred. Ultimately, desire to create flexibility in the Commonwealth framework combined with a recognition that in the contemporary situation, such a link to the Empire was a gross anomaly, led to a progressive loosening of this last link with Empire. Today only New Zealand and a handful of New Commonwealth nations retain the right of appeal to the British Privy Council.

This volume will appeal mainly to scholars interested in international law, legal history, British Empire-Commonwealth history, and political sociology. Graduate students will find this a most useful monograph which defines not only the legal side of imperial relations, but also one that addresses broader issues in the transformation of the British Empire to a multi-racial Commonwealth in the twentieth century.

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Trevor Wilson. *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918*. New York: Basil Blackwell, Inc. 1986. Pp. xvi, 864. \$24.95.

As time passes scholars are beginning to reassess the events and developments of the First World War. The gigantic mass of unpublished material now available in the Public Record Office, and in other archives also, allows them to study and interpret every aspect of the war in a manner impossible only a few years earlier. Some time ago, when I attempted to describe one phase of Lord Milner's wartime diplomatic policy in a book I was writing about him, I was forced to declare of it: "These are deep waters. They are made murky by the fact that Lord Milner's papers, as the History of *The Times* puts it, 'have been returned to the inaccessibility of the Cabinet Office's files.'" Now these Cabinet Office files and many other sources lie open to diligent and eager scholars who are exploiting them in every conceivable way in order to produce new insights and new understanding of the terrible events encompassed by what we call the First World War.

It is most probable that this new movement in writing history began even before the official British archives were thrown open to all, instead of being restricted to a select few. Historians, although they do not always recognize it, owe a debt to the late Lord Beaverbrook who played a great role in these developments. In the 1950s and 1960s he employed his newspapers in order to advance the study of recent history. His *Sunday Express* and his *Evening Standard* often devoted a considerable portion of their space to reviews of books dealing with historical topics. The gossip columns of these newspapers commonly contained items of information, sometimes inserted there by Beaverbrook himself, dealing with the subjects and authors of these works. Indeed, books written by Beaverbrook attracted a great deal of attention and these began to change the outlook of people in Britain about the conduct of their leaders in the First World War era. In 1956 Beaverbrook published his *Men and Power* which dealt with the political and military events of 1917 and 1918. Shortly after, I met a retired banker in Oxford who had just read the book. The man was in a rage. He sputtered to me: "Why, if we had known this about Haig and

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