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Editor's Welcome

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Editor's Welcome

The term *home front* recently celebrated its centennial. It emerged from the chaos of World War I, marking a growing realization that in an era of total warfare the labor of the soldier in battle and the efforts of the civilian at home had become connected. In one early example from August 1918, the British suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst declared that “there are but two actual fronts to this whole war—the battle-front and the home-front.” She was well aware that those on the home front had a grave responsibility for the outcome of the conflict. “If we [at home] weaken in spirit,” she wrote, “if we whisper that we are down-hearted, if our physical energies flag, then the fighting-line over there may falter, may even crumble,” primarily because “an army fights on the spirit of the men and women living in comparative safety at home.”¹

Pankhurst's perspective might have been a surprise to the readers of *Harper's Bazaar* in 1918, but with a trajectory now exceeding one hundred years, her conception of the home front is no longer a novelty. World War II brought to life scores of national home fronts. The Cold War, even in the general absence of a definable battlefield for much of its life span, featured home fronts both East and West. And the so-called War on Terror, so much different in nature than the many conflicts that preceded it, still generates fervent discussion about the efforts of civilian home fronts in support of the struggle.

Despite the rich history of the very idea of a *home front*, however, the scholarly world was astonishingly slow to develop much interest in the concept. Writing back in 1973 about the US home front of WWII, for instance, Geoffrey Perrett mused that “America's domestic history appears to have jerked to a halt in 1939, then revived at breakneck speed six years later.”² Indeed, not

until the 1980s did academics systematically begin to study that particular home front, eventually producing a body of literature that illuminated such phenomena as Rosie the Riveter, latchkey children, domestic propaganda and advertising, civilian defense efforts, the contributions of African Americans, and the mistreatment of Japanese Americans.

The surge of scholarship on the US home front of WWII over the past forty years has coincided with a worldwide growth in studies of other home front contexts, ranging from the Indian home front during WWI to the British home front during the Anglo-Boer War, and from the Argentine home front during the Falklands (or Malvinas) War to both the Russian and Japanese home fronts during the Russo-Japanese War.³ These examples are just a few among many such studies, demonstrating that scholars across the world have increasingly come to agree with Pankhurst in recognizing the vital role of the home front in times of modern war.

Unfortunately, for some time that scholarship has faced a daunting challenge: the absence of a natural publication forum. There are, to be sure, numerous academic journals that focus on war. But their missions routinely privilege research on martial leadership, battle strategy, tactical armaments, or military logistics. In their pages, at least, there is little appetite for scholarship that seeks to reveal the complex contributions of women in wartime factories, the intricate layers of domestic propaganda, the conflicted experiences of racial and ethnic minorities, or the mobilization of children—let alone the home front roles of culture, the arts, the media, music, finance, rationing, salvage work, family units, gender and sexuality, communication with the battlefield, and much more.

Home Front Studies aims to provide a home for exactly these sorts of scholarly projects. As a consequence, it will feature work from a wide variety of disciplinary fields across the humanities. In these pages, historians and gender studies scholars will mingle with art historians and rhetoricians, while researchers from fields such as design and journalism will find their work published alongside their peers in sociology and musicology. The common denominator among all of them, of course, will be an overriding interest in the dynamics of the home front experience.

The time periods and geographic locations of the studies appearing in the journal will also range widely. The experiences of widows during the US Civil War are as important to study as the contributions of queer Cold War activists in Australia, while the travails of Stalingrad during WWII are as essential to understanding the home front as the struggles of Zagreb during the Croatian War of Independence. Moreover, the scholars who produce these studies are as likely to hail from the United States as they are to come from countless other places across the world. The phenomenon of the home front, after all, is not bound by geography or culture.

The essays and reviews in this debut issue offer an initial glimpse of the broad interests of *Home Front Studies*. Bonnie M. Miller, an American historian, leads with a thoughtful examination of the provocative US newspaper coverage of the Cuban struggle against Spanish rule on the eve of the Spanish-American War, seeking to better understand the role of that coverage in convincing readers back home that US intervention in the conflict was justified. Bart Ziino, a cultural historian specializing in WWI Australia, turns to the ways that domestic Red Cross chapters fostered emotional resilience among Australian civilians during that war. Christina M. Knopf, who represents communication and media studies, shifts to the US experience in WWII, carefully studying the ways that family letters between the home front and the battlefield came to reflect the government's favored propaganda themes in their depiction of children. Allan M. Winkler, a distinguished historian of that same home front, then offers a personal narrative of his own scholarly journey through home front studies—a journey that offers crucial insight into the very dynamics that gave rise to this journal. Finally, five more scholars review some of the latest books with home front themes, including examinations of the struggles of Fallujah, Iraq; the civilian draft during the US Civil War; and the unusual trajectory of a Vietnam veterans' memorial.

It is worth noting that while *Home Front Studies* will shift to a double-anonymous peer-reviewed model with its next issue, the four articles in this debut were commissioned. My goal in inviting Miller, Ziino, Knopf, and Winkler to contribute their work to this issue was to establish from the journal's very first moments that its

scope is both ambitious and broad. I am especially grateful to them for overcoming the difficulties of finishing their labors in the midst of a pandemic.

It is similarly worth pausing to note that any undertaking as complex as launching a new academic journal is necessarily the result of a group effort. Countless people, from my colleagues at Seton Hall University to several founding journal editors who offered me specific guidance, encouraged the development of the project from early on. The energetic team at the University of Nebraska Press swiftly proved that the journal would have a welcome home in Lincoln. Pearl James, a literature scholar who is an expert in the visual propaganda of WWI, was enthusiastic about taking on the duties of the journal's reviews editor—and her industrious work on this issue's reviews is manifest. Finally, a look at the journal's masthead will show that several senior scholars serve on the advisory board, offering their experienced counsel as the project grows. Additional academic colleagues, each an expert in a home front-themed area of inquiry, serve on the journal's editorial board, where they and a number of guest reviewers will play pivotal roles in assessing submissions to the journal.

Yet above and beyond the many who have so far contributed to this project are the journal's readers. If, as Pankhurst argued, the home front is an indispensable factor in the successes of the battle-front, then it is no less true that the readership is an indispensable factor in the success of any journal. Simply put, the most basic mission of any academic journal is to find its ideal audience by providing insightful and even inspiring research that advances a series of key scholarly conversations. Whether you are reading the fruits of that mission soon after publication or long after this issue's contributors have retired, my hope is that you will find exactly that sort of work in these pages. Thus, I welcome you to *Home Front Studies*, and I look forward to featuring important and engaging work here in the years to come.

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NOTES

1. Emmeline Pankhurst, "Building up the Home-Front," *Harper's Bazaar*, August 1918, 45.
2. Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939–1945* (New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1973), 10.
3. Tan Tai-Yong, "An Imperial Home-Front: Punjab and the First World War," *Journal of Military History* 64, no. 2 (April 2000): 371–410, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i207158>; Richard Brown, "War on the Home Front: The Anglo-Boer War and the Growth of Rental in Britain; An Economic Perspective," *Film History* 16, no. 1 (2004), 28–36, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3815557>; Juan Mundel and Yadira Nieves-Pizarro, "Advertising in Times of War: Themes in Argentine Print Advertising during the Malvinas/Falklands War," *Journal of Marketing Communications* 25, no. 2 (2019), 158–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2017.1345777>; Tsuchiya Yoshifuru, "The Role of the Home Front in the Russo-Japanese War," in *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904–1905*, vol. 2, *The Nichinan Papers*, ed. John W. M. Chapman and Chiharu Inaba (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 218–31.