

Introduction: The Korean War in Britain

In the summer of 1950, the journalist Malcolm Muggeridge was holidaying in Portofino on the Italian Riviera when the news broke that, on 25 June, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) had invaded its southern neighbour, the Republic of Korea (ROK). Muggeridge worried about how he and his wife would re-join their children should this be the beginning of a wider war. Journeying steadily back to Britain, Muggeridge wrote in his diary in Monte Carlo that everyone was 'frenziedly following the Korean news, some panic beginning'. By the time he reached London and the House of Commons press gallery, he observed that his friend Winston Churchill looked 'ill' over the affair and that the Labour Party benches seemed 'dazed, as though they wondered what was happening and why they should find themselves going in the opposite direction to what they intended'. Muggeridge was not reassured by Prime Minister Clement Attlee's speech pledging support to the ROK and later that year concluded that 'the conflict between East and West has become so fierce that there is no little possibility of being "liberal" about it'.¹ The Korean War had come to Britain.

This book assesses the social impact of this 'small war' on Britain, a war frequently overlooked by popular culture and historians alike. During three years of war on the distant Korean peninsula post-war Britain was confronted with the complex realities of the Cold War. From allegations about American use of 'germ' warfare to anxiety over Communist 'brainwashing' methods, the Korean War precipitated a series of short-lived crises in 1950s Britain. Throughout late June and July 1950 newspapers feverishly analysed the outbreak of war and its ramifications, with articles tracing the history of Korea, the North Korean invasion, the South Korean response and the formation of a United Nations (UN) force, led by the United States in support of the ROK.² Many diary

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entries sent to the social survey Mass Observation (MO)³ during July and August began with anxious comments about the war in Korea. Mathilda Friederich even wrote to her husband, the American journalist Andrew Roth, that her next-door neighbour had begun stockpiling oatmeal, despite the fact she hated it, commenting that 'she has had the war-outbreak hysteria about every month since the last war, as regular as menstruation. Maybe it replaced it'.⁴ For many in Britain and Europe, the invasion of South Korea raised the possibility of a repeat of the sufferings and displacement of the Second World War. Mass Observers caught whispers about another 'world war' and mass mobilisation.⁵ Others worried it was a rehearsal for a Cold War confrontation in Germany.⁶

Britain initially pledged naval support in July 1950, followed by the deployment of over 40,000 British servicemen during the three years of war that followed.⁷ Many of these were young national service conscripts, their service extended to two years from eighteen months, due to the Korean War.⁸ These young men were joined by war-hardened reservists and regular servicemen. In the Korean War Britain's military engaged in some of the most ferocious battles in its post-war history, at Imjin (April 1951) and at the Hook (May 1952). Some 1,078 British servicemen died and a similar number were captured and held as prisoners of war (POWs).⁹ The conflict also posed deeper, disquieting questions for Britain: how far and fast should Britain rearm? Could atomic weaponry be used once again? And how should the growing power of Soviet Russia and of Communist China be addressed? The novelist Graham Greene summed up the situation, saying that the 'whole world' was transfixed with 'whether war is on or off in Korea'.¹⁰

But despite this febrile response to the onset of the conflict, by the time of the cessation of hostilities in 1953 Korea had slipped from public view. One news report noted that England's cricket victory in the Ashes had occasioned more enthusiasm in Britain than the return of troops. Elsewhere, the residents of Bury St Edmunds were mystified as to why the UN flag was flying above the town hall on 27 July 1953, the day the armistice was signed in Korea.¹¹ Why did the initial concern about the war dissipate so quickly? Given its impact and Britain's sizeable contribution, why did Korea fail to occupy a more prominent position in British popular memory? What does its history tell us about how British people engaged with the early Cold War and how does it advance our understanding of 'post-war' British history? These are the central questions of this book.

Using MO surveys, newspaper commentary and a wide range of under-used 'life-writing' material, this book charts the war's changing

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position in the British popular imagination, from early anxiety in the summer of 1950 through to growing apathy by the end of the war and beyond. Its chapters examine the response from different groups to the war, consciously drawing from material produced by both soldiers and civilians. The wealth of personal material now available on Korea also offers a new opportunity to test methodologically innovative ideas about life-writing and the construction of ‘selfhood’ in the modern era. From diary entries on training and travelling to Korea, to the letters young national servicemen wrote home and interviews with repatriated POWs, we can begin to understand how British servicemen viewed themselves in the Cold War era. But by broadening our focus to include those in Britain, we can also understand how concerns about loyalty, democracy and freedom influenced citizens. Alongside ‘front-line’ experiences, this book tells the interconnected stories of those at home, from the brainwashing scandals of the 1950s and 1960s, to early Cold War protest movements that pre-date the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). It involves a cast of diverse characters including military personnel, POWs, war protestors, families and political commentators. Many of these figures became household names during the Korean War, including the stoic Colonel James Carne of the Gloucestershire Regiment, held captive between 1951 and 1953; the anti-Communist peer Lord Robert Vansittart; and the infamous town planner, Dr Monica Felton, who visited North Korea in 1951. In a period typically associated with welfare, peace and reconstruction, this book sheds lights on a moment where the Cold War intruded into people’s lives – and even their views of themselves – in post-war Britain.

Yet in tracing this history, this book tells not only the story of a ‘forgotten’ war in Britain, but also asks why it subsequently became forgotten. Commentators and historians ubiquitously refer to Korea by its clichéd soubriquet, ‘The Forgotten War.’¹² To some extent though, all wars are forgotten. Many of the realities of conflict are incommunicable to subsequent generations: sweltering heat, itchy uniforms and moments of violence, fear and boredom are part of an ‘experiential history’, potentially inaccessible to those who were not there. These aspects of war, what Yuval Harari calls ‘flesh-witnessing’, are very difficult to describe fully afterwards.¹³ Wars always remain partially untold. Moreover, many societies do not wish to remember the experience of war. Soldiers feel forgotten after war, sensing that their version of events does not fit neatly with popular narratives of conflict.¹⁴ Ill-fitting narratives of war partially explain the ‘forgotten’ place of the Korean War in British social history.

Coming just five years after the end of the Second World War, a monumental conflict of seemingly unambiguous moral value, the complex and inconclusive Korean War did not fit with any prevailing or emerging narratives of British identity. Unlike the Second World War, Korea did not show a coherent, embattled nation struggling against the odds, nor did it tell a story that 1950s Britain wanted to hear, as it rebuilt and modernised itself under the auspices of the modern welfare state. Nor did British people generally know a great deal about Korea, despite the swift education in Korean affairs that was introduced in the summer of 1950: the BBC offered overviews of Korean history and culture and Dr Whang-Kyung Koh, later founder of Seoul Women's University, gave an astonishing lecture series of 318 talks on Korea around Britain during the first two years of war.¹⁵ She later recalled being asked by an audience member: 'I don't see how a country like Korea with such a long history and unique and admirable culture has been buried from our eyes. Is it our fault?'¹⁶

The Korean War also remained absent from British popular culture after the fighting ended. One veteran wrote that 'no Robert Graves, Wilfred Owen, or Siegfried Sassoon has emerged. Neither has a Pat Barker, Sebastian Faulks or Louis de Bernières been inspired to write of life in Korea during the period'.¹⁷ British historians have similarly overlooked the conflict, until relatively recently. Korea is typically mentioned only in relation to the Attlee government's infamous introduction of prescription charges to cover rearmament costs in 1951 and Minister of Health Aneurin Bevan's acrimonious resignation as a result.¹⁸ We have tended to regard the Korean War as a violent outlier in the early history of the British welfare state, rather than analysing it as part of the complex legacy of the Second World War and the intertwined anxieties associated with the post-1945 world: the demise of the British Empire, the small wars of the 1950s and 1960s, Britain's increasing redundancy on the world stage and its complex, often ambiguous, role in the Cold War. Korea also posed difficulties for Britain's post-war economy: it challenged the welfare agenda of Attlee's post-war Labour government, threatening party unity, and it exhibited the weaknesses of Britain's international position in the early Cold War and the complexities in its relationships with the United States, the UN and the Commonwealth.

This book shows how, despite being forgotten, the Korean War marks a critical moment in British society's understanding of conflict. The Second World War bestowed a specific lexicon of wartime service and social relations, which British people attempted to repurpose in the

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early Cold War. Responses to war in Korea show how quickly the Second World War embedded itself in national identity and how immovable it would become. By contrast, the Cold War never exerted the same imaginative influence and featured little in British people's view of themselves. The Korean War thus exposes the mechanisms and make-up of British society precisely *because* it was forgotten: its inability to fit within prescribed narratives of British history uncovers the characteristics and tensions of British culture and society in the second half of the twentieth century. By focusing on several key areas where the Korean War and British society intersect or collide with one another, *The Korean War in Britain* tells the story of when and why this war became forgotten, and the consequences of this omission.

Three strands underpin the story of the Korean War in Britain and explain its place in post-war British history. The first is 'citizenship'. Matthew Grant has highlighted the plethora of meanings associated with the term, from popular engagement with politics and the welfare state, to immigration. Grant argues that citizenship is thus both a status and a practice.¹⁹ A person is born into or achieves citizenship, but they can also practise it and articulate it in relation to their fellow citizens.²⁰ The Korean War was caught between several conceptions of post-war citizenship, in a world where both warfare and welfare defined a particular set of duties and expectations. For some, warfare and welfare were incompatible: Nye Bevan, for instance, saw the two as mutually exclusive and blamed governments for conceding to military experts' requests for increased rearmament.²¹ Yet the connection between warfare and the new welfare state was more blurred elsewhere. In the one of the only British novels set in the Korean War, *A Hill in Korea* by Simon Kent (Max Catto), one character, Private Rabin, challenges one of his fellow national service conscripts: 'We don't fight wars no more with bullets. We fight with ideas. Where's your education? Is that all the Welfare State's done for you?'²² According to Rabin, the welfare state had produced a new type of soldier: a reconceptualised 'soldier-citizen' for the modern era, who knew in theory both his role in the military and the reasons behind the tasks he was asked to fulfil. This soldier-citizen was an important figure before the 1940s and 1950s, but the Cold War gave a pressing urgency to discussions about his role in British society and the world. In 1948, Field Marshall Lord Wavell stated that 'the soldier is also a citizen and must be encouraged to take an intelligent interest in the problems of the day. Our type of democracy can only survive if freedom of opinion amongst free men is maintained.'²³ The Korean War was a moment of

convergence: older ideas of British duty and citizenship coincided with new concerns over the spread of Communism, but also new formulations of welfare and democracy. Soldier and citizen were cast as compatible, indeed mutually reinforcing, roles.

Second, Korea raised issues about individual agency and 'selfhood' in the Cold War world. Nikolas Rose, Peter Miller and Mike Savage have all argued that in the post-1945 period the state shaped the formation of the modern 'self', through mechanisms of centralised observation, quantification and surveillance.²⁴ This selfhood – the perception people have of themselves as individuals – has emerged as a key interpretative framework for post-war historians.²⁵ For instance, historians of selfhood have labelled the post-war period as the era of the 'psy' disciplines: through psychiatry and therapy but also through more diffuse psychological language, these disciplines provided the framework through which many post-war 'subjects' viewed themselves.²⁶ Selfhood also mattered deeply to governments in the post-1945 period: people's sense of selfhood affected how governments gathered information and ultimately how they ruled their populations. The concept of citizenship hinged on a particular understanding of selfhood and individual agency. Certain individuals were encouraged think of themselves in specific ways as part of wider society, with particular responsibilities. This subjective strand to post-war governance and society led sociologist Anthony Giddens to argue that the 'reflexive project of the self' in fact underpins modern life.²⁷

But not everyone felt that the modern state shaped the self. In a 1953 book produced by his captors, the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV), British POW Andrew Condon wrote that: 'The soldier today can no longer be viewed as a robot[.] ... That is why all those who consider the soldier merely as a thing to be used, like the rifle he carries or the pack he wears, are bound to come out very badly in their calculations.'²⁸ Condon, who was the only British POW to refuse repatriation back to Britain after the war, argued that soldier-citizens did not all view the world in a uniform way: their sense of themselves was not simply shaped by military authorities alone. The Korean War accompanied a broader period of change in the history and language of selfhood and deepening debates over who had the power to shape it. Although the post-war era can be interpreted as the age of 'psychological subject', the psy disciplines did not always provide a simple universal model: as Mathew Thomson argues, subjectivity was not necessarily wholly built around control and regulation.²⁹ The Korean War was not simply a background

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to these charged discussions but an integral part of them, no more so than with the emergence of the term 'brainwashing' during the war. Brainwashing, based on the Chinese word *hsi-nao*, was first used by an American journalist in 1950 to describe a sudden and inexplicable adherence to Communism. As seen in this book, its remarkable popularity as a concept, despite its dubious scientific credentials, emanated from its timeliness: it encapsulated the suspicions of the Cold War world, but also the growing concern over who shaped people's 'minds', views and actions. Brainwashing scandals raised questions about how far individuals could be controlled by external forces, whether malign or benevolent. As with citizenship, selfhood was shaped by warfare as much as welfare in the post-war world. The Korean War forced British people to scrutinise individual capacities and freedoms, not just of soldiers, but of other citizens too.

But again we return to the question: if Korea caused such fraught debate in British life, then how was it so readily forgotten? The cultural memory of warfare – and of the Second World War in particular – pervades each chapter of this book. The 1939–45 war was a constant reference point for both soldiers and civilians. For British servicemen, particularly those national servicemen too young to have served during the Second World War, it provided a constant yardstick of experience. For civilians, it characterised how they viewed war, with some wondering whether they would have to rebuild their air-raid shelters in the summer of 1950. As Geoff Eley has noted, immediate post-war generations were 'suffused' with the memory of the Second World War, even if they remembered little of it themselves.³⁰ David Reynolds too explains how British public discourse was able to construct a satisfying narrative of 1939–45 with astonishing alacrity. The conflict was 'a struggle that had a dramatic and heroic start, a clear turning point in the middle, and an utterly decisive ending – a war waged for unimpeachable moral reasons.'³¹ By contrast, Cold War military occupations, small wars and emergencies told a far more ambiguous tale.³² In this book, the phrase the 'long Second World War' is used to denote this deep and lasting impact on British life and memory. Although a familiar technique in historical writing (almost every century has a 'long' and 'short' alternative), the longevity of the Second World War in British memory is vital to understanding the Korean War's forgotten status at the time and subsequently.³³

The Korean War in Britain explains the British social and cultural experience of the war through these three areas: citizenship, selfhood and forgetting. Each has a specific but shifting significance in the

chronology of Britain's Korean War. Discussions over citizenship and selfhood characterised the early part of the war, forgetting becoming the most dominant response by 1953. In exploring particular 'panics' associated with the war, first over the use of nuclear weapons and later over 'brainwashing,' I argue that Korea was a deeply unsettling, if brief, moment in post-war British history. Its inability to fit with any sense of what Charles Young has termed the 'usable past' contributed to its omission from British history.³⁴ By analysing responses thematically from a purposefully wide range of individuals and groups, the chapters that follow consider how people in Britain understood the early Cold War period and how the Korean War was fought, discussed and subsequently forgotten. This book is not intended to be a military or political history of the war, as several detailed studies already exist, but delineates its social impact beyond the battlefield, five thousand miles away in Britain. But first it is vital to understand the key events of war and this introduction gives a brief overview of Korean War literature alongside a summary of the war itself, before exploring the position of the Korean War and the Cold War in British history-writing in further detail. It highlights how selfhood and citizenship have emerged as growing categories of analysis in Cold War studies and argues why it is important to consider them in the context of post-1945 Britain. It closes by exploring the challenges and possibilities of writing the social history of warfare and bringing domestic and military 'spheres' together in a meaningful way.

The Korean War in history

Despite its 'forgotten' place in British popular culture, a sizeable literature on the Korean War has developed over the last sixty years. Korean War historians have focused, almost exclusively, on the origins of the war. Many histories begin in 1945, with the end of the Second World War and the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union about the future of Korea. Japan had occupied Korea since 1910 and its surrender in August 1945 led to a joint agreement by the United States and Soviet Union that they would temporarily divide Korea into two occupation zones, along a latitude line – the 38th Parallel North. Although initially couched in terms of joint trusteeship, all major powers erred against this by the end of 1945 and in 1948 these zones became two separate states: Kim Il-sung's DPRK and Syngman Rhee's ROK. There were violent skirmishes between the two states, but also within them. Both the growing Stalinist-Communist regime in the north and the nationalist

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regime in the south adopted increasingly repressive measures against their own subjects in the period prior to the 1950 invasion.³⁵ Bruce Cumings argued that this period of unrest, where he claimed 100,000 lives were lost, indicates how the Korean War was in fact a long-running civil war, not a 'limited' international war as the Americans claimed.³⁶

But since the 1980s, historians have pointed out how the international context was more important than Cumings claimed.³⁷ Following North Korea's initial attack in June 1950, the UN Security Council agreed to assist South Korea in repelling the attack and Supreme Commander for Allied Powers General Douglas MacArthur was appointed to lead the UN forces in Korea.³⁸ As early as 30 June 1950, President Harry Truman ordered US ground troops to Korea to support the UN 'police action'. Following a successful amphibious operation at Inchon, they pushed back the North Korean People's Army's (NKPA) initial advance and throughout the autumn UN forces moved steadily up the peninsula into North Korea.³⁹

The UN force was diverse: Turkey, the Philippines, Colombia, Belgium, France, Greece, Holland, Thailand and Ethiopia sent infantry brigades or battalions to Korea, with South Africa sending air support and medical support from others, including India and Italy.⁴⁰ The Commonwealth played an important role too. After lengthy discussions amongst Commonwealth governments in the first year of the war, the 1st Commonwealth Division was formed on 28 July 1951, incorporating the British and Commonwealth units already in Korea under one command structure.⁴¹ Robert Barnes has argued that the Korean War brought the Commonwealth together more than it had ever been before, pre-dating the foundation of the Commonwealth Secretariat in 1965 and the Singapore Declaration in 1971.⁴² In 1955, former Commander of British Forces in Hong Kong Terence Airey claimed of the 1st Commonwealth Division that 'Commonwealth unity is the leitmotif and indeed no one who visited the division could have missed that remarkable and inspiring spirit'.⁴³ As this book shows, the extent to which these allegiances were felt by troops in Korea, despite Airey's claim, is less clear.

The initial military successes of UN forces were short-lived. The historian Peter Lowe noted how British chiefs of staff warned about the consequences of pushing too far north beyond the 38th Parallel. But by mid-October, MacArthur had pressed ahead, focused on the total defeat of the NKPA.⁴⁴ Attlee flew to Washington in December to express anxiety about MacArthur and the lack of British influence in decision-making. The previous month, China had suddenly entered the war, declaring that

its security was threatened by the imperialist forces now approaching its borders. On 8 October 1950, Mao sent a segment of the People's Liberation Army, 120,000 CPV troops, to support Kim Il-sung and to push back the rapid UN advance up the peninsula. Some historians argue that China had not been involved in planning the North Korean invasion in 1950 and only entered the war due to provocation by the United States, in particular General MacArthur's threat to march further up the peninsula.⁴⁵ Lowe added that 'Chinese participation could have been averted by the adoption of more sensitive, realistic policies'.⁴⁶ But, using newly accessible material, historians including Chen Jian, Shen Zihua and Donggil Kim have questioned this version of events, arguing that UN forces crossing the 38th Parallel was far less significant than previously assumed in prompting China to join the war.⁴⁷ Kim notes that China had been keen to intervene before November 1950, only being held back Stalin.⁴⁸ Chen argues that its decision to join was more complex than protecting the border with Korea. It was instead predicated on the outlook of the Chinese Communist Party leadership and their commitment to maintain the momentum of the domestic revolution of 1949, teamed with a sense of 'responsibility' towards an Asian-wide Communist revolution.⁴⁹

China's impact in the war was decisive. It launched an immense Spring Offensive in April 1951, which had serious consequences for UN – and British – forces. By this time, MacArthur had been recalled by Truman, ostensibly for criticising the administration's policies in Asia in a letter to the Republican leader in the House of Representatives, and had been replaced in Korea by General Matthew B. Ridgway. As Chinese forces moved down the peninsula, the British were forced to retreat and to fight the oncoming Chinese forces. The largest number of British captives were taken at the Battle of the Imjin in April 1951, the scene of the Gloucestershire Regiment's famous 'last stand'.⁵⁰ Successful UN counterattacks followed and by mid-1951 fighting had concentrated largely around the centre of the peninsula. The nature of the fighting changed at this point, with many more patrols and static positions along the front. Negotiations about a possible ceasefire began on 10 July 1951, continuing intermittently for two years, until an armistice agreement was eventually signed on 27 July 1953.

Three years of war had a devastating effect on the Korean population. One estimate suggests that the north lost over 11 per cent of its population and that 300,000 NKPA troops died: in the south, some 227,000 ROK troops lost their lives.⁵¹ Other estimates are substantially higher, claiming that over one million South Koreans were wounded, killed or missing, with

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a similar number of casualties in the DPRK.⁵² Millions of Koreans were forced to leave their homes during the conflict and many British soldiers recall seeing people on the road, carrying their possessions, to avoid the fighting.⁵³ One British soldier even described witnessing mass executions of civilians and corpses piled up in the grounds of Seoul University.⁵⁴ Why were civilians so embroiled in this war? Many historians argue that the origins of the particularly cruel war in Korea lay in the racialised war in the Pacific between 1941 and 1945. The bitter and brutal conflict ‘fanned the fires of race hate’ and stark racial animosities came to define relations between the United States, its allies and the Japanese.⁵⁵ The tensions of such a ferocious confrontation took a long time to dissipate. A popular view of Asian commentators at the time was that US foreign policy was racially motivated, starting with the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima in 1945 and still evident from its flagrant disregard for the lives of Koreans.⁵⁶

For the United States and its allies, racialised images of Asian ‘fanaticism’ in battle persisted from the earlier conflict. In the British case, the memories of Far East Prisoners of War’s (FEPOWs) cruel treatment also fed into widespread anti-Japanese sentiment in the immediate post-war period.⁵⁷ As Matthew Jones has pointed out, these characterisations of the Japanese as fanatic and cruel were easily shifted to describe the North Koreans and Chinese.⁵⁸ As the following chapters show, such racialised assumptions framed British experiences and interactions with Korea, but so too did older British ideas of Asia and imperial exoticism. The suffering of the local population was still starkly obvious to many servicemen though, as well as to observers on the peninsula. In June 1951, *Picture Post*’s James Cameron decried the ‘monstrous game [where] a million and a half lie dead among the disintegrating chaos of their flattened country’.⁵⁹ Such coverage was seized upon by anti-American opposition campaigns back in Britain which attempted, with limited success, to use images of Korean suffering to undermine the United States and the war in the eyes of the British people.

Decolonisation also shaped the fate of the peninsula. Christopher Goscha and Christian Ostermann have argued that Western-orientated historical writing tends to disaggregate the Cold War and decolonisation, rather than exploring the deep connections between two. They ‘collided’ most obviously in Asia, where Cold War politics intertwined with independence movements in Indochina or bolstered certain imperial powers (even if just for a short time).⁶⁰ For example, the British colonial government in Malaya enjoyed a brief boost in its revenues due to the ‘boom’

in rubber prices, precipitated by the rise of raw material costs during the Korean War, even amid the state of emergency then in place in Malaya.⁶¹ In June 1948, the Malayan Communist Party had targeted British colonial managers on rubber estates and violence escalated, prompting the British to establish a 'state of emergency'.⁶² Although not the focus of this book, concerns about Malaya and decolonisation certainly informed the British reaction to Korea. On one level, British troops were sent to Malaya and Korea simultaneously and the two were connected by the shared experiences of military personnel. As one Crown Film Unit film *Men of the World* described, Korea and Malaya were connected outposts in the post-war British military world, which spanned from 'Gibraltar to Hong Kong'.⁶³ Violence in Malaya also peaked at a similar time, in 1951, so both preoccupied political and military authorities. But decolonisation was not just a violent background to events in Korea. Elsewhere in Asia, the relationship between the Cold War and decolonisation provided a 'third way' for newly independent countries.⁶⁴ India, for instance, played a vital part at the end of the Korean War, offering neutral supervision for POWs in UN hands who did not wish to return to China or North Korea.⁶⁵

Yet the social history of the war in combatant countries remains largely untold, particularly beyond the US context. The memories of American servicemen have been captured by some historians including Melinda Pash, David Halberstram and Sheila Miyoshi Jager.⁶⁶ Servicemen's experiences differed sharply from those of the generation before, but also from the following generation, who burnt their Vietnam draft cards.⁶⁷ Susan Carruthers explored the impact of the Korean War and brainwashing on US domestic culture, uncovering the apprehension it revealed in the 'age of McCarthy' and what the Cold War meant to average Americans.⁶⁸ Charles Young and Marilyn Young have also examined the ambiguous legacy of the Korean War in the United States and the extent to which it has been 'forgotten' by Americans.⁶⁹ But how far can we apply these particular arguments to Britain? And why does Britain continue to forget its involvement in this international conflict?

Britain's Korean War

Despite the vibrant literature on the origins, outcomes and allegiances of the war, Korea has rarely featured in histories of the post-war period in Britain, although Nye Bevan's high-profile resignation from the Cabinet in April 1951 over the increase in defence spending is the clear exception to this. David Kynaston has set out the figures motivating

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Bevan's decision. The defence expenditure 'ceiling' was initially set at £2,340 million in 1949 for the period 1951–53, but was revised in August 1950 to £3,400 million and again to £4,655 million by September 1951. By 1952–53 defence expenditure represented 11.3 per cent of Britain's Gross National Product (GNP).⁷⁰ Not everyone agreed with Bevan that this constituted a challenge to the welfare state: Kynaston notes that one 1950 Gallup poll saw 78 per cent of people supporting this increased defence expenditure.⁷¹ However, aside from Bevan's resignation, Korea has featured little in standard texts on post-war Britain. Kynaston largely focused on the economic consequences of the war and David Edgerton, whose book *Warfare State* (2006) puts forward the argument that Britain's economy was still geared up for war – not welfare – after 1945, makes little mention of Korea.⁷²

Yet since the late 2000s Korea has come under more scrutiny, particularly Britain's diplomatic policies and relations. Anne Deighton noted that Korea marked a watershed in British influence in decision-making during the Cold War and Thomas Hennessey has stated that the war's significance in Anglo-American relations was as pivotal as the Suez Crisis of 1956.⁷³ This growing attention has carefully uncovered some of the Cabinet's motivations for sending British forces to Korea. One reason put forward was that the Cabinet wished to support the collective security ideals of the UN. Two days after the invasion of the ROK, when discussing sending naval ships to the region, the Cabinet agreed that it 'was the clear duty of the United Kingdom Government to do everything in their power, in concert with other members of the United Nations, to help the South Koreans to resist this aggression.'⁷⁴ One month later the Cabinet also felt that their actions might encourage other UN members to commit forces too.⁷⁵ This reason was cited later in the war too: Churchill's Conservative government, elected in October 1951, stated that it too wished to continue the collective ideals of the UN.⁷⁶ Sean Greenwood has argued that in fact the 'UN flag ... hid the reality of American power' and, without the Soviet Union sitting on the Security Council, the United States could use it as 'an instrument in the Cold War.'⁷⁷ However, William Stueck argues that whilst the United States mostly 'had much of its way in the United Nations', other member nations tried to slow down the UN's decision-making process as they were concerned that the conflict might escalate.⁷⁸ British representatives at the UN even succeeded in diluting some US draft resolutions.⁷⁹

Mediating US policy was another reason for British involvement. US policy towards China had made successive governments uneasy,

particularly its staunch defence of Taiwan (Formosa), where the ousted Chinese Nationalists had settled. Policymakers in Britain had largely accepted that mainland China was now a Communist state and that the Nationalists on Taiwan had no great political sway: US Secretary of State Dean Acheson had yet to be convinced that this was the case.⁸⁰ Unlike Britain, the United States had not recognised the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the new government of mainland China. On 27 June 1950, the Cabinet noted how Truman wanted to 'prevent any attack on Formosa' and would do anything to prevent its occupation by Communist forces.⁸¹ The following week, Kenneth Younger expressed the difficulty of the British position on Far East policy: 'whatever we say is likely to subject our present difficult relations with China to an even greater strain[.] ... Similarly, whatever we say may have repercussions in the United States, where failure on our part to express clear support might well leave us open to the charge of "dragging our feet"'.⁸² Younger advised making no statement on either side, if it could be avoided.

Supporting the United States in East Asia did, however, have its benefits. Greenwood notes how Attlee and the Cabinet were keen to maintain aid to post-war Europe.⁸³ Britain also wished to safeguard British imperial interests in the Far East, although not at the expense of stability in Europe. On 6 July 1950, the Cabinet agreed that it 'was [e]specially important at the present time that preoccupation with Korea should not divert attention from other danger-spots in these areas; and also that we should not allow the situation in the East generally to blind us to the risks to which we were exposed in Europe'.⁸⁴ Solidarity with the United States was thus seen as important both to Britain's strategic interests and to the domestic well-being of Europe. Although the shifting political intricacies of the 'Special Relationship' are largely beyond the scope of this book, the United States had a complex cultural impact on Cold War Britain. One MO respondent, for instance, noted that the United States was feeding the British, so the least they could do in return was support them in Korea.⁸⁵ Elsewhere, opponents of the war criticised the United States as imperialist or insensitive. The cultural history of the 'Special Relationship' thus infuses the wider history of the Korean War in Britain. But these strategic considerations only tell part of the story of the Korean War. In order to understand its social impact more fully we need to interrogate the meaning and importance of the Cold War in Britain.

**'Thinking soldiers': the Cold War,
citizenship and selfhood**

Like the Korean War, the Cold War was once a somewhat forgotten episode within British social history. Peter Hennessy noted that, unlike the Second World War, the Cold War was never a 'people's war': Britain was a 'bit player' in a dichotomous conflict and its people were only affected marginally.⁸⁶ Yet this orthodoxy has been questioned. Historians have increasingly examined how British society responded to living with the uncertain, even unthinkable, exigencies of the Cold War. This era generated a distinct societal unease: Joanna Bourke points out that the nuclear age was the first era where neither doomsayers nor prophets of apocalypse could necessarily be dismissed as irrational.⁸⁷ Matthew Grant and Jonathan Hogg explored the prevalence of this 'nuclear culture' on British society, through organisations such as the Civil Defence Corps but also in British film, television and journalism.⁸⁸ The effect of the Cold War on radical political organisations such as CND is well-known, but more recently historians have explored its impact on conservative communities too.⁸⁹ Cold War rivalries were not alone in shaping these developments, but the manifold effects of the conflict on British social life are becoming steadily more evident. In studying responses to the Korean War, this book consciously brings the social histories of post-war Britain and the Cold War together. It does this first by focusing on the impact of the Cold War on British culture and society. From juvenile literature to consumerism, the Cold War's tendrils crept far beyond the political sphere.⁹⁰ Cold War culture must be distinguished from the cultural Cold War: as Patrick Major and Rana Mitter highlight, the latter refers to targeted cultural diplomacy, whereas Cold War culture refers to a broader 'system of meaning and behaviour' during the Cold War.⁹¹ It is this wider definition of culture that this book explores.

This book also contributes to the expansion of Cold War studies, by purposefully analysing a context beyond the United States and Soviet Union. Vociferous debate has accompanied the geographical and conceptual diversification of Cold War studies over the last two decades. Anders Stephanson has called for a stricter definition of the Cold War. Stephanson argued that in many histories, particularly cultural ones, the Cold War becomes 'little more than an empty container of time, a homogeneous stretch where sundry things happen in sundry places for sundry reasons.'⁹² Federico Romero stated that widening the geographical scope of the Cold War has rendered it

‘more and more indeterminate and amorphous, as the traditional paradigm of a highly specific bipolar conflict ... is superseded by a complex fabric of disparate interactions.’⁹³ The result of all this, in Romero’s words, is that Cold War history is obscured by an ‘indistinct global haze.’⁹⁴

But incorporating countries beyond the traditional US–Soviet dichotomy does not dilute the meaning of the Cold War, nor does it damage its value as a category of analysis. As Odd Arne Westad argues, US-centred histories are themselves a product of the cultural battles of the Cold War and to reduce our focus to political rivalry between two superpowers weakens our understandings of the conflict’s global reach.⁹⁵ Broadening the focus of the Cold War also allows more scope for appreciating human agency, or limits of it, in the Cold War. The ‘everyday’ actions, deliberations and musings of those not directly involved in political or military affairs must feature in *any* understanding of war, let alone a highly ideological war, where hearts and minds – not to mention wallets, education and voting practices – are so critical. *The Korean War in Britain* argues that popular understandings of the Korean War in a British context tell an important Cold War story. The social impact of the Korean War in Britain can show how distant, international conflict can resonate deeply with a range of different people, particularly with people who had very recent experience of war themselves. Likewise, appreciating the relevance of the Cold War to British life nuances and enriches domestic post-war history. Far from diluting the Cold War, such approaches acknowledge its global, domestic and social reach.

The broadening of Cold War studies has also enabled the study of more abstract concepts, such as selfhood. Inner lives were an integral part of the Cold War. Recent advances in the field of ‘Soviet subjectivity’, for instance, demonstrate how telling your life was a deeply politicised activity in the Soviet Union, particularly in the case of diary writing.⁹⁶ Autobiographical writing was actually taught in youth institutions and as part of ‘historic’ economic projects.⁹⁷ This historical field gives British historians a refreshingly different perspective on selfhood, in addition to the theories of governmentality so favoured by post-war historians. Selfhood could be taught, shaped and inculcated through both bureaucratic mechanisms and everyday activity. We should not presume that selfhood mattered only to Communist states engaged in ‘thought reform’. A sense of self was a key aim of citizenship education in Britain in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1941 the British Army set up the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA) under the orders of the Adjutant-General, Sir Ronald Adam, who sought to innovate British Army education and recruitment to improve morale and

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the ‘quality’ of British servicemen.⁹⁸ Group settings were used to discuss current affairs and to encourage the development of thinking, soldier-citizens. The format of group discussion reinforced the value of the group over the individual and encouraged self-reflection.⁹⁹ Nor was this attention restricted to the military. The ABCA model in adult education was also deemed so successful that a civilian counterpart, the Bureau of Current Affairs (BCA) was established in 1946 by the Carnegie Foundation to ‘to encourage a civilized [*sic*] and liberal interest in current affairs.’¹⁰⁰ The BCA published discussion pamphlets on a range of political topics, including summaries of the situation of Korea, the nature of Chinese Communism and the Cold War.¹⁰¹ Closer to home, one discussion booklet entitled ‘Think before you vote’ (1950) listed the different types of political argument, reasons for voting and questions one should ask before casting one’s vote.¹⁰² As an article in the Army Educational Corps journal noted: ‘Today, more than at any other period in world history, [the] aims and ideals of civilization [*sic*] are the concern and topic of discussion among all types of citizens.’¹⁰³ Individuals’ view of themselves *mattered* to governments during the Cold War, whether in the Soviet Union, the United States or Britain.

This book argues that this contextualised study of selfhood is a vital element in the social history of the Cold War: it can act as a lens through which to analyse the impact of highly abstract concepts on individual lives, concepts such as citizenship, democracy and even the Cold War itself. Not only was selfhood actively shaped by military authorities and governments, but the language of selfhood underpinned many of the scandals that accompanied the Korean War, from ‘brainwashing’ to political loyalty. On both sides of the Iron Curtain, selves and souls formed as much a part of the Cold War as spies and secret states.

Methods and sources

Advances in the history of selfhood, as well as the range of personal material now accessible to historians, offer an opportunity to ask a new set of questions of the Korean War and the Cold War in Britain. This book examines the significance of selfhood, citizenship and forgetting by using a range of unexplored ‘life-writing’ material in each of its thematic chapters. Life-writing is an imperfect way to access subjectivity: it often captures action rather than inner thought and is criticised for being ‘non-representative.’¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, even if selfhood is never fully accessible, its traces are present in a range of historical sources. Analysing life-writing practices among Japanese servicemen, Aaron Moore argues that

soldiers use diaries to understand their position in great world events: in this way a diary is a concrete example of an individual participating ‘in the act of defining (subjectifying) themselves and the world around them.’¹⁰⁵ In other words, life-writing is selfhood *in action*. It is through the letters, diaries, questionnaires and oral history interviews produced during and after the Korean War that we see individuals trying to understand themselves and their role in the world. As each chapter of this book sets out, it is vital that we understand the process by which such material is produced. This book explores the dynamics and function of different types of life-writing, such as letters and diaries, but it also broadens the definition of what can be classed as life or self-writing. For instance, MO responses and military questionnaires also prompt their writers to consider themselves and their roles in a similar way to oral history interviews or written memoirs. Many of these sources have not appeared alongside one another in historical analyses of the Korean War before. One particularly important set of life-writing comes from recorded oral history collections from the National Army Museum and Imperial War Museum, recorded between the late 1980s and the early 2000s. Using ‘secondary’ oral history interviews alongside other life-writing sources presents exciting methodological possibilities.¹⁰⁶

In examining these responses to Korea by both civilian and soldier, this book offers a deliberately wide-angle perspective on Britain’s experience of the Korean War. Military history, in its most traditional sense, has often seemed at odds with this kind of social history. It is typically associated, particularly by academic historians, with empirical accounts of armies at an operational or strategic level. From the 1970s, however, ‘new military history’ aimed to place human experience at the centre of historical analysis. Historians used literary criticism, psychology and autobiographical theory to provide a more nuanced account of military experience. John Keegan’s *The Face of Battle* (1976) is often acknowledged as one of the first works of new military history and remains a comprehensive and moving examination of soldierly experience.¹⁰⁷ Richard Holmes too noted that military history can reduce ‘one of the most passionate of dramas ... to a knockabout affair dripping with clichés ... [or] to a desensitised operational narrative in which the individual is lost in a welter of arrows on a map.’¹⁰⁸

Nonetheless, the transition from traditional to new military history has not been seamless. Joanna Bourke notes that the new military historians, who hail from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, have adopted this ‘convenient soubriquet’ primarily to vent their frustration

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at the prevailing historiography and its hegemony over the history of warfare. As a result, she noted that new military historians form quite a disparate body of scholars.¹⁰⁹ More traditional military historians have argued that they are woefully ignorant about the details of wars, preferring to focus on the representation of those wars: as Bourke concedes, war cannot simply be a collection of ‘tropes’.¹¹⁰

The challenge that remains for new military historians is to scrutinise human experience whilst still rigorously analysing military sources and their context. It is a difficult task. One of the main stumbling blocks to such writing is the continued tendency to divide military and civilian ‘spheres’. Military and social historians alike have deepened the conceptual gulf between the two.¹¹¹ Samuel Hynes’ underlying assumption in *The Soldier’s Tale* (1998) is that war profoundly changes a man: he travels from innocence to experience, from naivety to knowledge through his immersion in war.¹¹² But although the distinction between soldier and civilian is helpful on a basic level in analysing employment, legislation, and fighting itself, it is not necessarily applicable when assessing the wider social impact of conflict. A central argument of this book is that the two ‘spheres’ are different but also intimately connected and that it is misleading to depict the civilian and the soldier as worlds apart during the 1950s, not least because of peacetime conscription and the recent memory of the Second World War. As the Labour MP James Harrison noted in March 1953, ‘every family has [had] someone in the Army now, so that it has become part and parcel of our daily lives’.¹¹³ This is not to belittle the Korean War serviceman’s sense of separation. Servicemen understandably felt isolated at times and there remain some areas of experience that are ‘impossible to describe’. Nevertheless, by examining areas of commonality in more detail, I suggest that it is productive to consider the crossovers which characterise both the military and wider society at this time.

This book’s structure further demonstrates the connection between military and civilian ‘worlds’. Chapter 1 explores the popular responses from British people to the invasion of the ROK in June 1950. Although initially uncertain about war aims (and even where Korea was), British people became more concerned during the course of the summer of 1950, aggravated by anxieties over the potential use of the atomic bomb on the peninsula. This chapter highlights the pre-existing cultural assumptions about Korea and the ‘Far East’ in the British imagination, as well as the complex legacy of the Second World War and its impact on how British people conceptualised any conflict. This is evident too in the latter half

of this chapter, which offers a detailed analysis of MO surveys conducted in 1950. Conducted largely around central London, the survey responses demonstrate the enduring impact of total war on urban communities, and how different people conceptualised and rationalised the early Cold War.

Chapter 2 introduces the perspective of servicemen, sent to Korea from July 1950. The first section examines the relationship between the Second World War generation and younger servicemen in Korea. Following the lead of Richard Vinen, it uses letters sent home to investigate the reach of the 'long Second World War' and the influence of post-war domesticity and masculinity in framing responses to Korea. It also asks how 'experience' – a central concept for social historians – was conceptualised on an everyday level and the second half of this chapter uses a neglected body of source material, 'battle experience' questionnaires, completed by all British Army officers upon their return from Korea. In using these new sources, this chapter points out that British servicemen were some of the most prolific form-fillers in post-war history and 'battle experience' questionnaires should be analysed as part of wider social surveying projects – and projects involved in shaping selves – in the post-war era.

Chapter 3 provides a deeper analysis of one particular type of serviceman: the conscript. Conscription is an important component in the history of the Korean War, as national servicemen formed up to 50 per cent of some units. National servicemen offer unique reflections on the Korean War and this chapter investigates the continuing significance of class and masculinity in the interactions between these young men, coming from many different social backgrounds. This chapter also explores the broader significance of conscription and citizenship in post-war Britain. It argues that citizenship and duty became especially prescient in the early 1950s as Western governments sought to cement their ideological stance against Communism. The national serviceman epitomised the soldier-citizen in practice, yet it often failed to translate into practice or into the mindsets of those sent to Korea. Chapters 2 and 3 together centre largely on servicemen in the British Army, as they formed the bulk of Britain's military force in Korea, although the Royal Air Force (RAF) and Royal Navy (RN) played important supporting roles.¹¹⁴

The nature of the war shifted in mid-1951 as fighting became more static and in the wake of the capture of many British servicemen in spring 1951. Chapter 4 explores the experiences of the 1,060 British servicemen who were taken prisoner by the NKPA and CPV during the war. It explains the political education prisoners received, as well as the defection of twenty-one American and one British servicemen (Royal

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Marine Andrew Condron) to China at the end of the war. This defection prompted concern back at home that servicemen had been ‘brainwashed’ whilst in captivity. Few detailed studies exist on the specific cultural impact of brainwashing in Britain, where the idea was more than just a cultural import from the United States. This chapter charts the specific history of brainwashing in Britain, first by examining the interrogations British POWs underwent when they returned home and the suspicion with which they were treated. The growing popular concern – or fascination – with brainwashing in 1950s and 1960s Britain emanated from specific British anxieties and popular views on freedom and democracy. In exploring this history, this chapter offers a new analysis of one of the twentieth century’s most widely used and ill-defined concepts.

The treatment of POWs was also a major concern to those who opposed the war, particularly to groups associated with the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), who argued that the CPV were, to some extent, enlightened captors. Chapter 5 examines several key elements of British opposition to the Korean War. It explores resistance to the war from political groups and organisations, such as the Britain–China Friendship Association and the early Cold War peace movement. It argues that the Korean War was a definitive but overlooked moment in the history of the British left and set the tone for subsequent opposition to Cold War geopolitics. For instance, some of those galvanised by the Korean War would go on to play important roles in CND and other anti-war movements. British opposition to the Korean War tells a different story of Cold War resistance, one which begins long before the first CND Aldermaston march in 1958. The final section of the chapter delves into the case study of one particular opponent, the town planner Monica Felton. Felton’s visit to North Korea and claim that US forces were committing war crimes resulted in her dismissal from the Stevenage Development Corporation and this caused quite a stir in post-war Britain. Although opposition was never far-reaching, this chapter nevertheless indicates how citizenship did not go unchallenged in post-war Britain and the language of loyalty and treason abounded.

Chapter 6 analyses the impact of the war after 1953. It explores the small number of popular representations of the Korean War in film and fiction, from poetry to *Fawlty Towers*, and considers again the impact of the Second World War in eclipsing the Korean War. This chapter highlights a notable change in tone across the second half of the twentieth century. Malcolm Muggeridge’s early panic had been replaced with apathy in many quarters and the dominance of the Second World War in

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popular culture ousted any sense that the Korean War – or indeed, the wider Cold War – might have been formative in British life. This book traces that change and illuminates moments when the Korean War was central to debates about selfhood, citizenship and the memory of conflict.

Notes

- 1 Hoover Institution Archives, Malcolm Muggeridge collection, Box 1, diary 26 June 1950, 29 June 1950, 5 July 1950 and 21 November 1950.
- 2 'Hot war in the east', *Daily Mail*, 26 June 1950, p. 1; 'Strategic position of Korea', *The Times*, 27 June 1950, p. 5; 'Korea, a test of liberty: resisting aggression', *Manchester Guardian*, 10 July 1950, p. 7.
- 3 Mass Observation Archive materials reproduced with permission of Curtis Brown Group Ltd, London on behalf of The Trustees of the Mass Observation Archive (© The Trustees of the Mass Observation Archive).
- 4 Bishopsgate Institute Library, ROTH/3/42, letter from Mathilda Friederich to Andrew Roth, 6 July 1950.
- 5 Mass Observation Archive (hereafter MOA), 9-1-A, public opinions of the Korean War, June–July 1950; MOA, 9-1-B, news quota survey of public attitudes to Korean War, July 1950; MOA, 9-1-C, news quota survey of public attitudes to Korean War, August 1950.
- 6 Kenneth Ames, 'Korea: a warning to Germany', *Daily Mail*, 27 June 1950, p. 4; Brian Horrocks, 'The lesson of Korea: could this happen in Western Germany?', *Picture Post*, 12 August 1950, pp. 12–13.
- 7 Estimates vary widely due to the lack of official statistics. Farrar-Hockley stated there was a standing commitment of 27,000, but total contribution of 81,084. It is unclear if this total included Commonwealth forces. Anthony Farrar-Hockley, *The British Part in the Korean War, Volume II: An Honourable Discharge* (London, 1995), p. 420.
- 8 An estimated 40 per cent of 20,000 troops stationed in Korea during 1953 were National Servicemen and up to 50 per cent of certain units were composed of them, see *Hansard*, House of Commons Debate (hereafter HC Deb), vol. 518, cols 1304–43529, Mr Nigel Birch MP, 29 July 1953.
- 9 Farrar-Hockley, *The British Part in the Korean War, Volume II*, p. 491.
- 10 Graham Greene, 'Malaya: the forgotten war', *LIFE Magazine*, 30 July 1951, p. 51.
- 11 'The war which was forgotten in excitement of the Test Match', *Bury Free Press*, 31 July 1953, p. 1.
- 12 Joe Shute, 'Britain's Korean War veterans win their final fight', *Daily Telegraph*, 29 November 2014, www.telegraph.co.uk/history/britain-at-war/11260575/Britains-Korean-War-veterans-win-their-final-fight.html (accessed 10 June 2016); John Ingham, 'Korean War remembered: hundreds gather to honour the dead of Britain's forgotten war', *Daily Express*, 3 December 2014, pp. 20–1.

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- 13 Yuval Noah Harari, *The Ultimate Experience: Battlefield Revelations and the Making of Modern War Culture 1450–2000* (Basingstoke and New York, 2008), p. 7.
- 14 Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behaviour in the Second World War* (New York and Oxford, 1989), pp. 267–8; Aaron William Moore, *Writing War: Soldiers Record the Japanese Empire* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2013), p. 244.
- 15 BBC Written Archive (hereafter BBC), S322/85/1, home news and entertainment, ‘Korea in world politics’, 8 September 1950.
- 16 Whang-Kyung Koh, *Korea through British Eyes* (London, 1952), p. 22.
- 17 Anthony Perrins (ed.), *A Pretty Rough Do Altogether: The Fifth Fusiliers in Korea, 1950–1951* (Alnwick, 2004), p. 338.
- 18 David Kynaston, *Family Britain, 1951–57* (London, 2010), p. 80; Peter Hennessy, *Having it So Good: Britain in the Fifties* (London, 2007), p. 219.
- 19 Matthew Grant, ‘Historicizing citizenship in post-war Britain’, *The Historical Journal*, 59:4 (2016), 1189.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 1198.
- 21 Aneurin Bevan, *In Place of Fear* (Weybridge, repub. 2008; orig. edn, 1952), p. 129.
- 22 Simon Kent (Max Catto), *A Hill in Korea* (Watford, 1954), p. 12.
- 23 Archibald Wavell, ‘Minerva’s owl, or education in the army’, *Army Education: The Journal of the Army Educational Corps*, 22:1 (1948), 11.
- 24 Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (2nd edn, London, 1999), p. 10; Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, ‘The Tavistock programme: the government of subjectivity and social life’, *Sociology*, 22:2 (1988), 171; Mike Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 68–9.
- 25 Such examinations include: Simeon Koole, ‘How we came to mind the gap: time, tactility and the tube’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 27:4 (2016), 528–9; Celia Hughes, ‘Negotiating ungovernable spaces between the personal and the political: oral history and the left in post-war Britain’, *Memory Studies*, 6:1 (2013), 70–90.
- 26 Roger Smith, *The Norton History of the Human Sciences* (London and New York, 2007), p. 579; Rose, *Governing the Soul*, pp. xviii–ix. However, Rose maintains that language ‘is only one aspect or element of the ways in which the human being’s relation to itself is shaped and reshaped historically’.
- 27 Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 244.
- 28 Andrew M. Condron, Richard G. Corden and Larance V. Sullivan, *Thinking Soldiers: By Men Who Fought in Korea* (Peking, 1955), pp. 1–2.
- 29 Mathew Thomson, *Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture and Health in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford and New York, 2006), pp. 6–7.
- 30 Geoff Eley, ‘Finding the people’s war: film, British collective memory, and World War II’, *American Historical Review*, 108:3 (2011), 818–19. Echoed elsewhere in James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass-Observation and the Making of the*

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- Modern Self* (Oxford, 2010), p. 1; Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850–2000* (London, 2000), p. 221.
- 31 David Reynolds, 'Britain, the two World Wars and the problem of narrative', *The Historical Journal*, 60:1 (2017), 217.
- 32 Graham Greene argued that an air of 'moral disapprobation' hung over conflicts like Malaya, see Greene, 'Malaya: the forgotten war', p. 51.
- 33 I would like to thank Professor Mathew Thomson for his observations on the 'long Second World War'.
- 34 Charles S. Young, *Name, Rank, and Serial Number: Exploiting Korean War POWs at Home and Abroad* (New York, 2014), p. 180.
- 35 Adrian Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea* (London and New York, 2002), pp. 67–8.
- 36 Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York, 2011), p. 66. Similarly, other have argued that the Japanese repression of political dissent and Korean collaboration led to a stultified resistance movement in Korea and no agreement between different groups of modernisers, even by 1945. This added to the already substantial social, economic and even cultural divisions in post-1945 Korean society. See Allan R. Millett, 'The Korean War: a 50-year critical historiography', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 24:1 (2001), 189–90; Edward I-Te Chen, 'Japan: oppressor or modernizer? A comparison of the effects of colonial control in Korea and Formosa', in Andrew C. Nahm (ed.), *Korea under Japanese Colonial Rule* (Kalamazoo, 1973), p. 252; Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea*, p. 51. The 'limited war' thesis, that the war was aimed at forestalling Soviet aggression elsewhere, was disputed as early as 1952 by the historian I.F. Stone, see I.F. Stone, *The Hidden History of the Korean War* (London, 1952). Rosemary Foot argued that there was support from within the United States for an expanded conflict against Communism, not least from MacArthur, see Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950–1953* (New York, 1985), p. 25; David Rees, *The Limited War* (New York, 1964).
- 37 William Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton and Oxford, 2002), pp. 1–3. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the release of more documents in the mid-1990s, the involvement of the Soviet Union has come to light. Scholars have pointed to Joseph Stalin's direct involvement in the North Korean invasion of 1950, as he attempted to both safeguard Soviet interests in South Asia and check the power of the fledgling Chinese Communist state, see Shen Zhihua, 'Sino-Soviet relations and the origins of the Korean War: Stalin's strategic goals in the Far East', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 2:2 (2000), 44–68.
- 38 The Soviet Union were boycotting the UN Security Council due to UN's refusal to include Communist China, although the Soviet Union returned in August 1950 and presented a counter-resolution to US plans to unify the peninsula.
- 39 The (North) Korean People's Army was referred to as NKPA in UN documents.

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- 40 National Army Museum, *Project Korea: The British Soldier in Korea 1950–1953* (London, 1988), p. 22; Max Hastings, *The Korean War* (Basingstoke, 2010), p. 345. Peter Lowe argues that many of these contributions were largely nominal, see Peter Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War* (London and New York, 1986), p. 178.
- 41 Jeffrey Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War: An Alliance Study* (Manchester and New York, 1988), pp. 88–108. These included the following contributions: UK (58 per cent), Canada (22 per cent), Australia (14 per cent), New Zealand (5 per cent) and India (1 per cent).
- 42 Robert Barnes, 'Branding an aggressor: the Commonwealth, the United Nations and Chinese intervention in the Korean War, November 1950 – January 1951', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33:2 (2010), 232.
- 43 Terence Airey, 'Review: the First Commonwealth Division: the story of British Commonwealth land forces in Korea 1950–3 by C.N. Barclay', *International Affairs*, 31:4 (1955), 506. Not all Commonwealth historians see Korea as quite so definitive. Using oral history interviews Sue Onslow has observed that, although the Commonwealth was profoundly influenced by the Cold War, it 'defied ideological typecasting', containing members from NATO countries (Britain and Canada), a member of SEATO and CENTO (Pakistan), as well as later Non-Aligned countries, such as India, see Sue Onslow, 'The Commonwealth and the Cold War, neutralism and non-alignment', *The International History Review*, 37:5 (2015), 1059–60.
- 44 Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War*, pp. 189–90.
- 45 Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (Stanford, 1960), p. 57; Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic* (Maryland, 2003), p. 84.
- 46 Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War*, p. 201.
- 47 Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York, 1994), p. 4; Shen, 'Sino-Soviet relations', 44–68; Donggil Kim, 'New insights into Mao's initial strategic consideration towards the Korean War intervention', *Cold War History*, 16:3 (2016), 240; Christopher Goscha and Christian Ostermann, 'Introduction', in Christopher Goscha and Christian Ostermann (eds), *Connecting Decolonisation and the Cold War in Southeast Asia* (Washington, DC, 2009), p. 6.
- 48 Kim, 'New insights into Mao's initial strategic consideration', 241.
- 49 Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War*, p. 5.
- 50 For more on the Battle of Imjin, see S.P. Mackenzie, *The Imjin and Kapyong Battles: Korea, 1951* (Bloomington, 2013); David Green, *Captured at the Imjin River: The Korean War Memoires of a Gloster 1950–1953* (Barnsley, 2003), pp. 93–4.
- 51 Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea*, p. 88.
- 52 Anthony Farrar-Hockley wrote in the official history of the British in Korea that one million civilians had been killed, along with 100,000 NKPA troops

- and almost one million Chinese troops killed, wounded or falling ill during the war, see Farrar-Hockley, *The British Part in the Korean War, Volume II*, p. 416. Using official UN publications, Peter Lowe estimated that the ROK had 300,000 authenticated casualties but that the total was in fact far higher, around 1.3 million total casualties; China had 900,000 casualties and there were one million civilian casualties in the DPRK overall, see Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War*, p. 218.
- 53 National Army Museum (hereafter NAM), 1989–05–164, oral history interview by unnamed interviewer with Frank R. Wisby, 1989; NAM, 8905–261, oral history interview by David Smurthwaite with Sebastian ‘Sam’ Mercer, 18 July 1988.
 - 54 Imperial War Museum (hereafter IWM), 19913, oral history interview by Conrad Wood with Thomas Ashley Cunningham-Boothe, 8 December 1999.
 - 55 John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (London and Boston, 1986), p. 11; Matthew Jones, *After Hiroshima: The United States, Race and Nuclear Weapons in Asia, 1945–1965* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 7. I thank the reviewers of this book for their guidance in this area.
 - 56 Jones, *After Hiroshima*, p. 56.
 - 57 Lizzie Oliver, “‘What our sons went through’: the connective memories of Far Eastern Captivity in the Charles Thrale Exhibition, 1946–1964”, *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 7:3 (2014), 242–4; Felicia Yap, ‘Voices and silences of memory: civilian internees of the Japanese in British Asia during the Second World War’, *Journal of British Studies*, 50 (2011), 928–9.
 - 58 Jones, *After Hiroshima*, pp. 21, 7 and 59.
 - 59 James Cameron, ‘Korea: twelve months’, *Picture Post*, 23 June 1951, pp. 13–14.
 - 60 Goscha and Ostermann, ‘Introduction’, pp. 2–3.
 - 61 Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame: Britain’s Dirty Wars and the End of Empire* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 150.
 - 62 The standard narrative of the Emergency is that it began in June 1948 with twenty-six murders in British-owned rubber plantations, leading to three years of unchecked violence and ending with the murder of High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney in 1951. After this point, the British perfected their counter-insurgency techniques to rid much of the country of insurgents by 1955 and the Emergency ended in 1960. Martin Thomas, however, questions this oversimplified narrative, arguing that the political failure of the Malayan Union in early 1948 and the resentments it stirred up played an important part in the origins of the emergency. See Martin Thomas, *Fight or Flight: Britain, France and their Roads from Empire* (Oxford, 2014), p. 132.
 - 63 *Men of the World* (dir. Ronald Clark, Crown Film Unit, 1950).
 - 64 Goscha and Ostermann, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.
 - 65 Robert Barnes, ‘Between the blocs: India, the United Nations, and ending the Korean War’, *Journal of Korean Studies*, 18:2 (2013), 263–86.
 - 66 Melinda L. Pash, *In the Shadow of the Greatest Generation: The Americans who Fought the Korean War* (New York and London, 2012); David Halberstram, *The*

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- Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (London, 2008); Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* (London, 2013).
- 67 Pash, *In the Shadow of the Greatest Generation*, p. 37.
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