

Pacifist Writer, Propagandist Publisher: Rose Macaulay and Hodder & Stoughton¹

Lise Jaillant

Although Rose Macaulay (1881-1958) was a prolific, well-known and well-connected writer, few of her texts are remembered today. As Hermione Lee notes, “she is read now, if at all, for her haunting post-war novel, *The World My Wilderness*, for two excellent travel books, *They Went to Portugal* and *Fabled Shore* (on Spain), and her last novel, *The Towers of Trebizond*, partly set in Turkey.”² One of her earlier novels, *Non-Combatants and Others* (1916), is nearly forgotten, and yet, it offers a rare opportunity to listen to voices that have been excluded from the dominant representations of the First World War. “In the years after the Armistice,” Janet Watson notes, “women and non-combatants were pushed out of the history of the war, which became exclusively a ‘soldier’s story,’ incomprehensible to everyone else.”³ Written during the conflict, *Non-Combatants and Others* tells an alternative story from a female perspective, a story dominated by pacifism. As Sarah LeFanu argues, it is a striking example of a disillusioned narrative on the war – published more than ten years before the boom of debunking war books by Siegfried Sassoon and others.⁴

Surprisingly, the novel appeared under the Hodder & Stoughton imprint. Macaulay, a vocal pacifist, and Hodder & Stoughton, a publisher closely associated with propaganda – this has always seemed an improbable match, but nobody has ever scrutinized this partnership. Why did Macaulay choose such a firm for her anti-war novel? Why did Hodder & Stoughton accept to bring out a novel that was so critical of the war? Although Macaulay had already published two books with this firm before 1916, Hodder & Stoughton was under no obligation to issue a novel that did not fit in its list. The history of publishing, on both sides of the Atlantic, is full of examples of publishers rejecting books from established authors, even when under contract. For instance, Macmillan turned down H. G. Wells’s

controversial novel *Ann Veronica* (published by Unwin in 1909) while Horace Liveright rejected Ernest Hemingway's *The Torrents of Spring*, ignoring his contract with the author.

So why did Macaulay and Hodder & Stoughton continue with such an unlikely partnership? It is difficult to answer this question conclusively, because the Hodder & Stoughton archive was bombed during the Second World War (only a profit and loss ledger survives in the London Metropolitan Archives). The Rose Macaulay papers at the University of Cambridge do not contain any correspondence with her publisher. There are a few letters for the year 1916 in the archive, but they do not tell us anything about the publishing history of *Non-Combatants and Others*. The same could be said of the Macaulay letters at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas. Yet, it is possible to piece together parts of the story by looking at quantitative information (including sales figures and advertising figures) in the Hodder & Stoughton profit and loss ledger. Advertisements and reviews of the book show that the publisher did not market *Non-Combatants and Others* as an anti-war novel, but rather as a “romance” probably for a female readership. Macaulay's novel was advertised alongside the short stories of “Sapper” – a writer who has often been described as a propagandist.

Rose Macaulay's Association with Hodder & Stoughton

That Rose Macaulay chose a career as a writer came as no surprise to anyone in her family. Her father was a lecturer in English at the University of Cambridge and she was also related to the historian T. B. Macaulay. As LeFanu puts it, “in a household with a father who was a published scholar and where both parents valued literary culture, Rose had been the most bookish of the children, the one in whom her parents' literary aspirations were most clearly expressed.”⁵ Macaulay went to Somerville College, Oxford where she read modern history. Her first poems appeared in the *Westminster Gazette*, and in 1906, John Murray IV, a very traditional publisher who was also an Eton contemporary of her father,

issued her first novel, *Abbots Verney*. Macaulay stayed with the same publisher for her first five novels, from 1906 to 1911.

In N. N. Feltes's words, John Murray was a "list publisher" that focused on its backlist as a steady source of income.⁶ The main objective was not to make money, but to avoid losing money.

Unsurprisingly, John Murray spent little to advertise the books of a young unknown writer such as Rose Macaulay. A search in the *Times Literary Supplement* reveals that her name did not appear in the newspaper until 1912 – when her novel *The Lee Shore* was published by Hodder & Stoughton, an "entrepreneurial" imprint turned towards literary coups.

The thirty-one-year-old Rose Macaulay had just won the first prize of the £1,000 Hodder & Stoughton competition (open to all authors) for this intellectual novel about the opposition between the "Haves" and the "Have Nots." Despite having already written and published several novels, Macaulay was still presented as "the daughter of Mr G. C. Macaulay, Lecturer in English at Cambridge University."⁷ It was not uncommon for a woman to be branded under male tutelage, and the reference to the Macaulay family name might have been a cheap way to get attention and publicity.⁸ For an almost unknown writer, the widely advertised prize was of course excellent publicity. It also placed Hodder & Stoughton in the spotlight, at the time when an increasing number of would-be and beginning writers were competing for a chance to get published. The *Bookseller* thus declared: "the supply of moderately meritorious fiction is nowadays so exceedingly ample that its producers are in the same position as all other persons who are unfortunate enough to have for sale an article with which the market happens to be overstocked."⁹ For all these literary aspirants, the Hodder & Stoughton prize offered the promise of money and fame. Macaulay was awarded £600 – the equivalent of £53,000 today¹⁰ – which helped her buy a flat in London, and live on her own for the first time. Not only did she suddenly become financially independent, her novel was widely advertised (including in the *Daily Mail* – whose

circulation figure was approaching 950,000)¹¹ and reviewed. The *TLS* thus described it as “a very charming story.”¹²

£1,000

Hodder & Stoughton's
£1000 PRIZE NOVEL
Competition Awards

ADJUDICATORS:—MISS BEATRICE HARRADEN, Sir W. ROBERTSON NICOLL & Mr. CLEMENT SHORTER

1st Prize MISS ROSE MACAULAY
FOR HER NOVEL of Cambridge
The Lee Shore

2nd Prize MR. DAVID HENNESSEY
FOR HIS NOVEL of Melbourne
The Outlaw

Hodder and Stoughton, London

Everybody is Reading
WHAT the WORKER WANTS The "DAILY MAIL" ENQUIRY
ON SALE EVERYWHERE, Price 6d.
Hodder and Stoughton, London

Hodder & Stoughton's
Shilling Cloth Novels
 The most beautiful and most representative series of Shilling Net Books on the market
 NEW VOLUMES JUST ADDED

CAPTAINS ALL - Aug. 12
 By W. W. Jacobs

The STRANGE VISITATION
 By Marie Corelli Ready.

FRÄULEIN SCHMIDT and MR. ANSTRUTHER
 By the Author of "Elizabeth and Her German Garden" Ready

ARAMINTA J. G. Smith Ready

Full List on application NET each

Hodder & Stoughton, Warwick Sq., London, E.C.

Figure 1: Advertisement for *The Lee Shore*, *Daily Mail*, August 3, 1912, 9.

After six years of obscurity, Macaulay must have felt very grateful to Hodder & Stoughton for helping her break through as a successful writer. Responding to a message of congratulations from S. C. Roberts (an old family friend and head of Cambridge University Press), she wrote “I am extremely delighted to have so much money all at once.”¹³ John Murray also magnanimously congratulated her, and she wrote him:

The book isn't a good one, as a matter of fact, but fortunately the taste of the judges can't be very good either, so all was well. **Perhaps it may make my future books sell better than the past ones – Hodder and Stoughton seemed to think it probably would, so I hope it will.** Though I don't believe my books will ever sell really well. The results of this competition surprised me very much. I sent in mine because I thought it was more fun to, and I never thought it had a chance and was contemplating approaching you with it in the autumn after I got it back rejected! (emphasis added)¹⁴

Here, Macaulay insisted on Hodder & Stoughton's confidence in the commercial potential of her books, but she perhaps underestimated the risks attached to working with such a commercially orientated publisher. Up to 1912, Macaulay had positioned herself as a serious writer published by a venerable, "list" publisher. The £1,000 competition placed her in an entirely different category – that of the bestselling author associated with an "enterprising" publisher eager to maximize profit. The transition between these two extreme positions in the literary field was so brutal that it inspired this unflattering commentary in the *Saturday Review*:

The astonishing and perplexing thing is to find a book of this class winning a competition that is presumably run on sound commercial lines. Its class is that of the book charming rather than good, sympathetic rather than provocative; a class in which there exist many novels better than this, some of them published during this year. In saying this we have no intention of decrying Miss Macaulay's work, but we cannot help suspecting that she must feel surprised at this novel having earned at a blow at least as much as any of her previous books.¹⁵

The reviewer implied that the Hodder & Stoughton prize was a mixed blessing for Macaulay: it boosted the sales of her novel, but it also associated her with a different sub-section of the literary sphere

traditionally seen as unsophisticated (“*symbolically* excluded and discredited,” in Pierre Bourdieu’s terms).¹⁶ On August 3, 1912, for example, readers of the *Daily Mail* encountered an advertisement for *The Lee Shore* (Figure 1) on the same page as a sensational new feuilleton, “Every Woman’s Sin.” Whether or not Macaulay was aware of the risks of being associated with the “field of large-scale production” (Bourdieu 39), she made the decision to leave John Murray and went on to publish her next novel, *The Making of a Bigot*, with Hodder & Stoughton in 1914.

The modernity of Macaulay’s topics and style is arguably what attracted Hodder & Stoughton. For a firm known for popular page-turners, publishing a trendy modern writer added prestige to its list but also carried some risks. Perhaps to reassure readers who might be intimidated by or hostile to the new literature, one advertisement mentioned *The Making of a Bigot* below Morice Gerard’s *A Heather Mixture* - “a fascinating romance of love and adventure” (Figure 2). In sum, the partnership between Macaulay and Hodder & Stoughton was mutually beneficial – but also risky due to their different positionings in the literary field. The publication of *Non-Combatants and Others* in 1916 made these differences particularly obvious.

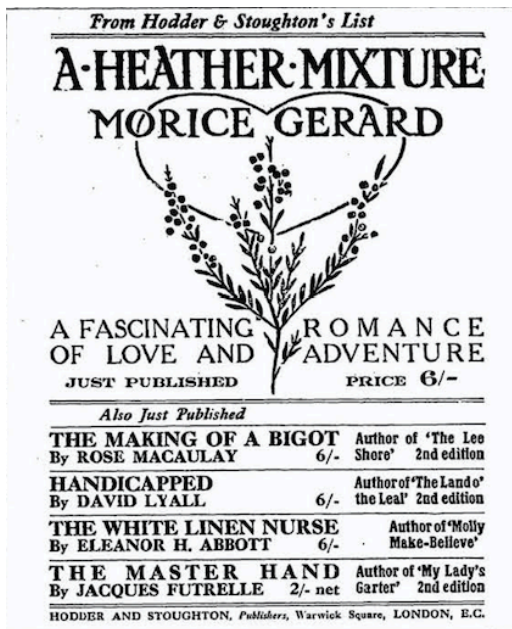


Figure 2: Hodder & Stoughton advertisement, *Times Literary Supplement*, March 12, 1914, 123.

Non-Combatants and Others and Pacifism

Macaulay's novel tells the story of Alix – a young disabled woman who refuses to engage with the war at all, and spends most of her time drawing and socializing with her friends in art school. Her mother Daphne Sandomir is an important figure in the peace movement, although her exact allegiance is disputed: “she was called by some a Pacificist, by more a Pacifist.”¹⁹ As Sybil Oldfield puts it, “the pacifists totally renounced participation in any war; the ‘pacifists’ concentrated on the means of preventing war and of bringing wars to an end.”²⁰ The name “Sandomir” is itself highly symbolic: Daphne's late husband was a “Polish liberationist” (21), and as Shafquat Towheed points out, “Sandomir is the Latin of the Polish Sandomierz, which literally means ‘to judge peace.’”²¹ Alix's mother travels around the world, goes to peace conferences, and tries to convince important stakeholders that the war can be stopped. Her sister Eleanor (Alix's aunt) also leads a busy life. But instead of trying to stop the conflict, Eleanor takes part in the war effort as a member of various committees. Both Daphne and Eleanor are presented as healthy and full of purpose, if in opposition –

whereas Alix is described as self-centred and neurotic through her lack of engagement either way (“narrow-hearted, selfish and indolent,” in her mother’s opinion).²² In a wartime context, the fact that she is disabled is highly significant. As Debra Rae Cohen points out, “writing in midwar, when disability cannot help but be read as an analogue for woundedness, Macaulay uses Alix’s lameness to unsettle the distinctions between soldier and civilian, wounded and unwounded, male or female war experience, and ultimately to deconstruct the very notion of noncombatancy itself.”²³

The young woman is particularly shattered after the death of her brother Paul in France. She learns the true cause of his death by chance, when a soldier who had known her brother tells her:

Of course there are some men out there who never ought to be there at all; not strong enough in body or mind. There was a man in my company; he was quite young; he’d got his commission straight from school; and he simply went to pieces when he’d been in and out of trenches for a few weeks. . . . I believe he saw his best friend cut to pieces by a bit of shell before his eyes. He kept being sick after that; couldn’t stop. And ... it was awfully sad ... he took to exposing himself, taking absurd risks, in order to get laid out; every one noticed it. But he couldn’t get hit; people sometimes can’t when they go on like that, you know—it’s a funny thing—and one night he let off his revolver into his own shoulder. I imagine he thought he wasn’t seen, but he was, by several men, poor chap. No one ever knew whether he meant to do for himself, or only to hurt himself and get invalided back; anyhow things went badly and he died of it...²⁴

Alix realizes that the man who has died of a self-inflicted wound is in fact her brother. This life-changing event forces her to question her passivity and to become gradually more involved in efforts to

stop the war. Likewise, Alix's surviving brother, a journalist, rejects the jingoism of the press and the sentimentality of war poetry (a "flood of cheap heroics and commonplace patriotic claptrap").²⁵

Macaulay's description of the peace movement is grounded in the historical context of the time. For example, we learn that Daphne Sandomir "tried, but failed, like so many others, to attend the Women's International Congress at the Hague."²⁶ The Congress was an actual event that took place in April 1915 with female delegates from most combatant nations.²⁷ One hundred and eighty British women applied to attend, including many well-known political personalities such as Emmeline Pethick Lawrence – although the government took punitive measures and refused passports to most of them. Despite the obvious difficulty in organizing an international conference in war-torn Europe, the congress took place as planned in the neutral territory of the Hague and produced resolutions that may have been influential. As "the first international meeting to outline what the principles of any peace settlement should be,"²⁸ it allegedly inspired the Fourteen Points outlined by the American president Woodrow Wilson after the conflict. When Macaulay was writing her novel, the peace movement was still highly controversial. Accused of being "pro-German," Daphne Sandomir struggles to convey her message as hecklers interrupt her meetings: "those who believed themselves to differ would shout 'Fight to a finish,' and 'Crush all Germans,' and 'Smash the Hun, *then* you may talk of peace,' and 'Here's some soldiers back here, you hear what *they've* got to say about it,' and other things to the same purpose; and once or twice they sang patriotic songs so loud that the meeting closed in disorder."²⁹ *Non-Combatants and Others* can therefore be seen as a space of dialogue on the peace question, at the time when the issue could hardly be discussed in the public sphere.

The title of the novel is also a reminder that "non-combatants" are in fact immersed in the conflict. Susan Grayzel notes that the term "home front" appeared at that time: "as the innovation of applying the adjectives 'home' or 'domestic' to the military term 'front' would suggest, the First World War

involved civilians in a way not found in any previous modern European war.”³⁰ It is precisely this involvement in the war that Alix tries to avoid, without success. For the hypersensitive young woman, the war is felt as an attack on her senses. Visual reminders are everywhere – from the uniforms of her cousins (Dorothy “in her V.A.D. dress” and Margot “in the khaki uniform of the Women’s Volunteer Reserve”)³¹ to the Kitchener posters on the walls of a recruiting station (“Alix, looking down, met the hypnotic stare of the Great Man pictured on the walls”).³² Walking through Chancery Lane – which has been devastated by an air raid – Alix is stopped by a newspaper vendor: “*Star, lady? Globe, Pall Mall, Evening News?* British fail to hold conquered trenches. . .”³³ These visual and aural stimuli have a direct impact on Alix’s nerves (a term repeated twenty-two times in the novel). As the sociologist Georg Simmel had noted in his 1903 essay “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” the experience of modernity is characterized by an over-stimulation of the senses. The war adds new stimuli to the existing chaos of modern life, leaving Alix in a state of “nervous breakdown.” Her brother Nicholas tells her:

The war’s playing the devil with your nerves, that’s what it means. You do things and feel things and say things, I dare say, that you wouldn’t have once, but that you can scarcely help now. You’re only one of many, you know – one of thousands. The military hospitals are full of them; men who come through plucky and grinning but with their nerves shattered to bits.³⁴

Here, Alix’s experience is explicitly compared to that of soldiers, blurring the distinction between non-combatants and combatants. Like Julia in H. D.’s *Bid Me to Live* – a character that Trudi Tate has described as “a civilian war neurotic”³⁵ – Alix is unable to maintain a sense of balance. Having failed to isolate herself from the conflict, she decides to join her mother’s peace campaign, a campaign set in military terms. “We’re fighting war, to the best of our lights, and with the weapons at our command,” as Daphne tells her daughter.³⁶

In the novel, the fight for peace is closely related to a feminist agenda.³⁷ Before the war, Daphne Sandomir was active in the defence of a wide range of causes – including the “economic and constitutional position of women.”³⁸ When explaining her vision for a peaceful society, she presents women as individuals rather than “the guardians of the race or the custodians of life.”³⁹ Unlike other militants, she refuses to essentialise women’s role: “she took women as human beings, not as life-producing organisms.”⁴⁰ Alix is herself deeply influenced by the women’s rights movement. During her stay at a distant cousin’s in London, she meets people who hold a much more conservative outlook than that of her close family and friends. Having “hitherto moved in circles where every one thought, as a matter of course, that [women] ought to have the vote,”⁴¹ Alix observes these acquaintances making fun of Rachel Simon, a young woman with a suffragette past. Despite Alix’s lack of reaction, Rachel feels they share the same vision. After being publicly ridiculed, she bursts into tears and says: “You won’t *see* . . . You, none of you *see*. Except her – she indicated Alix – and she won’t talk; she only smiles to herself at all of us.”⁴² As the novel progresses, Alix gradually reconciles her feminist vision and her actions – with a commitment to join her mother’s fight for peace and for women’s rights, and in so doing, rejects silence.

By the time she completed the novel, Rose Macaulay had become entirely disenchanted with the war. In April 1915, her friend Rupert Brooke, who had joined the navy, was bitten on the lip by a mosquito and quickly died of blood poisoning. As LeFanu points out, “he was six years younger than her but very much more sophisticated. For some time, they’d been rivals in the poetry pages of the *Westminster Gazette* and he’d introduced Rose – who still lived at home with her parents – to his friends in literary London.”⁴³ In May, shortly after learning about Brooke’s death, Macaulay enrolled as a V.A.D. at a military convalescent home in Great Shelford near Cambridge. Her sister Jean thought it was “a mad choice” because Rose could not stand the sight of blood or even distressing stories. Then in July, her

father suffered a stroke and died suddenly. For LeFanu, “the novel that she started writing soon afterwards was imbued of a sense of personal grief, alongside a simmering anger at a society that preferred not to listen to the testaments of the soldiers sacrificing their lives on its behalf.”⁴⁴

Macaulay’s disastrous experience as a volunteer nurse undoubtedly inspired the character of Alix. When her cousin John Orme (on leave after being wounded at the front) wakes up in his sleep, his eyes “now wide and wet, and full of a horror beyond speech,” Alix reacts by being “suddenly and violently sick.”⁴⁵ The author and her character also share their gradual evolution towards pacifism. At the beginning of the war, Macaulay wrote several poems that present the war as an exciting adventure. For example, her poem “Many Sisters to Many Brothers” deals with a woman’s sense of being excluded from the action:

Oh it’s you that have the luck, out there in blood and muck:

You were born beneath a kindly star;

All we dreamt, I and you, you can really go and do,

And I can’t, the way things are.

In a trench you are sitting, while I am knitting

A hopeless sock that never gets done.

Well, here’s luck, my dear; - and you’ve got it, no fear;

But for me ... a war is poor fun.⁴⁶

As Nicoletta Gullace notes, this “feeling of being left behind and left out that was experienced by many women at home” led to “demands for female combatant service.”⁴⁷ For many middle-class women, nursing came to be seen as a parallel to military service, a chance to contribute to the war effort at home and abroad.

Like Vera Brittain, Macaulay's initial enthusiasm for the war was replaced by a long-standing commitment to pacifism. But whereas Brittain's disillusionment is a product of the post-war years, Macaulay adopted an anti-war position in the middle of the conflict. In a recent radio interview, Sarah LeFanu has presented *Non-Combatants and Others* as a precursor to the disillusioned war novels of the late 1920s:

It came out in 1916 - predating by more than ten years those memoirs and novels by Edmund Blunden, Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves and others that alongside the works of the war poets have become the foundational texts for our perception and understanding of the war. Those books of course were written by men who served as soldiers. Each was shaped and mediated through a later post-war process of reflection. Rose Macaulay's novel is very different. Not only was it written and set in 1915 but unlike those canonical works of fiction and memoir that show the war as experienced by those fighting it, it shows us the war as experienced by those watching it: the non-combatants.⁴⁸

Indeed, Macaulay's novel gives us a chance to listen to voices from the margins, voices that we do not traditionally associate with the Great War. *Non-Combatants and Others* is not a "soldier's story," unlike later accounts of the war. Janet Watson notes that from the late 1920s, "veterans who were not in the infantry, other active non-combatants, and especially women reimagined themselves as survivors surrounded by devastating carnage (whether physical or emotional). They were writing their own soldier's stories."⁴⁹ In addition to presenting nursing as a form of military service, Brittain's *Testament of Youth* also carries an unambiguous pacifist message – whereas *Non-Combatants and Others* echoes a wider range of voices. Commenting on the "polyphonic nature" of Macaulay's novel, Angela K. Smith associates this formal experimentation with other modernist texts such as Virginia Woolf's *To the*

Lighthouse.⁵⁰ For Smith, these multiple voices diminish the authority of the omniscient narrator, resulting in an ambivalent message. I would add that Alix's disillusioned voice remains dominant in the novel and gives it a strong pacifist tone.

Macaulay became an enthusiastic supporter of the work of the League of Nations Union and from 1936, an active member of the Peace Pledge Union. But, as Martin Ferguson Smith points out, "she found it hard to be consistent and thoroughgoing in her advocacy of pacifism."⁵¹ Her six-page PPU pamphlet *An Open Letter to a Non-Pacifist* (1937) is riddled with contradictions. "No pacifist (that I know of) objects to a certain amount of coercion," declared Macaulay, "What pacifists object to is the use of savage and murderous weapons of injury and assault to gain victory over their opponents."⁵² Macaulay resigned her PPU sponsorship in March 1938, when German troops invaded Austria. However, she never entirely renounced her pacifist convictions. In 1951, she wrote to her friend, the Reverend John Hamilton Cowper Johnson:

When do we get to the point of rejecting War? I have long felt that one great international gesture would be worth while; saying, just once, to potential aggressors, "Go ahead if you must and do your worst; we do not intend to behave like barbarians, whatever barbarians may do to us." This might mean occupation and domination by some barbarian power like Russia; very unpleasant, pernicious and horrible; but could not be more so than waging war ourselves, with all its cruel atrocities.⁵³

This echoes a central theme of *Non-Combatants and Others*: the commitment to "the principles of international justice and permanent peace."⁵⁴

Although it did not call for an immediate end to the war, *Non-Combatants and Others* can be described as a pacifist novel – but Hodder & Stoughton downplayed this pacifism and marketed the book as a romance, presumably for an audience of female readers. An announcement in the *Times Literary Supplement* thus declared:

The war . . . colours the autumn fiction to come from Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, whose forthcoming announcements include a new volume by “Sapper,” entitled *Men, Women and Guns*, to come next month; a smaller collection of soldier stories by A. Neil Lyons, entitled *A Kiss from France*, intended as a companion volume to *Kitchener Chaps*; and *Non-Combatants*, by Rose Macaulay, **a romance of England during the war**. Mr John Buchan is also bringing out with the same publishers a companion story to *The Thirty-nine Steps* entitled *Greenmantle*, in which Mr Hannay recounts his further adventures on a mysterious mission to Berlin, Constantinople and the East.”⁵⁵

Macaulay’s novel appeared on a list dominated by male writers who presented the war as a great adventure: “Sapper,” A. Neil Lyons and John Buchan. This is hardly surprising, considering Hodder & Stoughton’s close links with propaganda. As Jane Potter has argued, the firm’s director, Ernest Hodder Williams, and its editor and literary adviser, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, “had close personal ties to the corridors of power”.⁵⁶ The Schedule of Wellington House Literature, kept at the Imperial War Museum, shows that Hodder & Stoughton published more than 130 pamphlets and books for the War Propaganda Bureau, a number unmatched by any other publishers.

Advertisements also show that Macaulay’s novel was sold alongside books that offered a very different picture of the war. One advertisement in the *Manchester Guardian* is placed next to a photo of a British

bombardment of the German trenches. It also includes a list of “some new and really worth while books on the war” – including *Doing their Bit*, about munitions factories at home, and Frances Wilson Huard’s *My Home in the Field of Honour*: “This graphic and picturesque book is the first to pay adequate tribute to the glorious heroism of the women of France.” *Non-Combatants and Others*, which is listed in the fiction category, is described as:

A brilliant novel by a very clever author. The story deals especially with the point of view of a girl, and the different ways in which she tries taking the War, and the different attitudes of the people round her, and her relations with a man who is fighting.

There are two interesting things here: the first is the focus on the female voice (both the author and the main character are women); and the second is the emphasis on the romance between Alix and Basil. This focus on the love story shows that the publisher was probably targeting a female audience, in order to maximize the novel’s commercial appeal. Novels such as *The Zeppelin Destroyer* appeared in the same fiction category. Again, the war is presented as an exciting adventure: “The War has produced no book more thrilling or more full of vivid pictures of exciting fights and hair-breadth escapes than *The Zeppelin Destroyer*.”⁵⁷

Post-war

Non-Combatants and Others was released at around the same time as Sapper’s new collection of short stories, *Men, Women and Guns* (both books were sold for five shillings). “Sapper” was the pen name of Herman Cyril McNeile, a professional subaltern officer, who joined the army in 1907 and retired in 1919. His entire writing career and persona were influenced by the conflict: “Sapper” is a reference to his battalion, the Royal Engineers; he became famous for his short stories about the war (“amongst the

very best that have come to us from the trenches,” as the *Spectator* put it)⁵⁸; and he later sustained his popularity as the creator of Bulldog Drummond, an ex-officer who fights against England’s post-war enemies. While Sapper did not shy away from describing the horrors of the conflict, he often used humour to tone down its most appalling aspects. For example, in the introduction to *Men, Women and Guns*, the narrator’s old aunt asks him to describe what it feels like to be shelled:

I drew her a picture – vivid, startling, wonderful. And when I had finished, the dear old lady looked at me.

“Dreadful!” she murmured. “Did I ever tell you of the terrible experience I had on the front at Eastbourne, when my bath-chair attendant became inebriated and upset me?”⁵⁹

In contrast, *Non-Combatants and Others* uses a style that contemporary reviewers often described as dry and unsentimental. Winifred Holtby thus declared that after the publication of *The Lee Shore*, “[Macaulay’s] manner changed. She became, it seemed, frightened of sentiment, even of kindliness.”⁶⁰ This modern style was well suited to convey her pacifist message, which anticipates the “War Books boom” of the late 1920s. As I have argued elsewhere, Sapper never came to share the disillusioned view on the war.⁶¹

Sapper’s non-disillusioned narration fitted well with Hodder & Stoughton’s list, and the publisher invested important resources to create interest in *Men, Women and Guns*. Sapper’s book thus included an attractive coloured dust jacket, which contributed to its commercial appeal (Figure 3). *Non-Combatants and Others* had a much smaller print run, and it seems that there is no extant copy of its dust jacket. A *TLS* review mentions the contrast between the “charming” landscape represented on the paper cover and the rather depressing content of the book – another indication that Hodder & Stoughton was trying to downplay Macaulay’s criticism of the war.⁶³



Figure 3: First cheap edition of Sapper's *Men, Women and Guns* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1917)

Hodder & Stoughton spent four times more on advertising *Men, Women and Guns* than on *Non-Combatants and Others*.⁶⁴ In one advertisement, Sapper is presented as the author of *The Lieutenant and Others* and *Sergeant Michael Cassidy* – “of which over 200,000 have already been printed.”⁶⁵ And like Sapper’s previous books, *Men, Women and Guns* went on to become a bestseller, selling more than 146,000 copies in the ten years following its publication. In contrast, printing and advertising figures show that the publisher invested fewer and fewer resources to promote Macaulay’s work. *The Lee Shore* was well advertised, it had a first printing of 9,000 copies (of which 7,873 were sold before the end of the financial year ending March 31, 1913), and it was reprinted in 1914 and 1915. For *The Making of a Bigot*, the advertising budget,⁶⁶ the first printing was also lower (at around 5,000 copies), and there was no reprinting. For Macaulay’s next novel, *Non-*

Combatants and Others, the first printing was only 3,000 copies (three times less than the first printing of *The Lee Shore*), of which 2,586 had sold by March 31, 1917. The advertising budget plummeted to £49 – 40% less than the advertising budget for *The Making of a Bigot*. The publisher made a modest profit of less than £49. This semi-failure probably explains why Macaulay moved to Constable for her next novel, *What Not*, and her poetry collection, *Three Days* (both published in 1919).⁶⁷

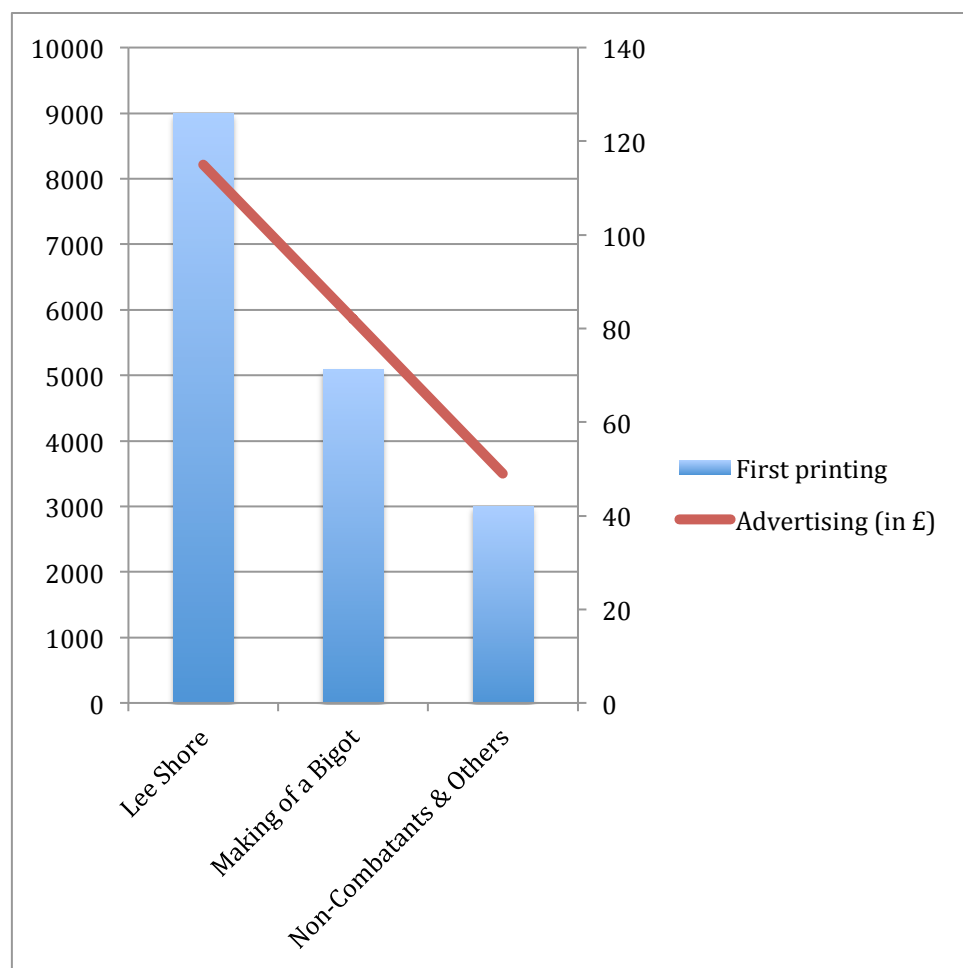


Figure 4: Printing and advertising figures, *Lee Shore*, *The Making of a Bigot* and *Non-Combatants and Others*

Critical Reception

In *Virginia Woolf and the Great War*, Karen Levenback has argued that Macaulay's novel was a critical failure, which convinced Woolf to avoid any explicit criticism of the war when she was writing *To the Lighthouse*. According to Levenback: "Woolf could not have forgotten that for all the post-war recognition afforded Macaulay (including being awarded the *Femina-Vie Heureuse* Prize in 1922), she would not have garnered such distinction had her reputation depended on the reception afforded to her civilian war novel *Non-Combatants and Others* (1916), an anti-war book so blasted by the wartime press that when the smoke cleared, Macaulay had lost not only her publisher but her readers."⁶⁸

Although it is certainly true that *Non-Combatants and Others* attracted some criticisms, there was no consensus. Negative reviews often described the book as too grim to be realistic. The *Times Literary Supplement* declared: "impossible as it is to exaggerate the misery and horror of these times, we feel that her note is, somehow, forced, and that her very style, with its careful elimination of sentimentality, contributes toward a general effect of exaggeration."⁶⁹ While the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* generally recommended Macaulay's book, the reviewer also pointed out that the "incident on pages 159-160" (when Alix feels sick after hearing the truth about her brother's death) "might have been omitted. The artist need not follow the photographer in including everything in his picture."⁷⁰ Interestingly, the reviewer did not question the truthfulness of this episode, but seemed to reject it on the ground of taste. The *Englishwoman's* reviewer said Alix Sandomir's misery downplayed "all that is splendid or pitiful in life or death, belittling those who fight." The journalist also criticized Daphne Sandomir as one of those "who act from a nervous desire to be doing something different from the common task . . . without any clear idea of the result of their activities." In real life, the reviewer argued, the conscientious home-front volunteers enjoy exhilaration and the comfort of "a good conscience."⁷¹

The *Dundee Courier* was much more enthusiastic. The review appeared alongside various news of the war, including the news of two "Dundee brothers killed in action." The reviewer wrote:

Miss Rose Macaulay's new story, *Non-Combatants*, tells of the war as it reacts on people left at home; . . . To anyone (and who has not?) having connections with the lads at the front this stirring volume will go far to heal many of the scars that now marr the mental outlook. Here, too, the afflicted one will find not a little to comfort at those moments when the brain goes out into the wilderness of despair.⁷²

In this review, Macaulay's novel is presented as realistic rather than too gloomy. Similarly, *Everyman* described the novel as "one of those few novels which people will read in years to come in order to gain some idea of what the years 1914-16 really felt like to those who lived through them in England."⁷³ Unlike war books by Sapper or John Buchan, *Non-Combatants and Others* offered a female perspective on the domestic front. For the *Bookman*, "Alix of *Non-Combatants* . . . is the woman of the war, with the 'blank misgivings of a creature' who looks on a mad world and its broken delights."⁷⁴

These mixed reviews show that pacifism and disillusionment were discussed in mainstream venues, even during the conflict. This important fact has been largely neglected in histories of the war. For example, Janet Watson suggests that "novels and memoirs, in small but clearly noticeable numbers, began to be critical of the war soon after the Armistice." She adds: "they were still very much a minority view, however, and they failed to trigger a more general cultural response, despite their visibility in the literary community."⁷⁵ The phrase "minority view" could well apply to the alternative voices echoed in *Non-Combatants and Others*, a novel that failed to reach the mass audiences who read war books by Sapper or John Buchan.

Readers did not wait until 1928 and the “War Books boom” to become interested in non-heroic narratives on the war. “Traditional notions of ‘heroism,’” as Angela K. Smith puts it, “are already presented as meaningless in this early novel.”⁷⁶ Although there was a (small) audience for *Non-Combatants and Others*, Hodder & Stoughton was probably not the right kind of publisher for the book. As a mass-market publishing enterprise, it was ill prepared for a novel that foregrounded a range of voices from the margins. The publisher was very good at presenting the war as a great adventure: the dust jackets of Sapper’s short stories, for instance, often show jovial characters smiling and having fun. This representation of the war could not apply to *Non-Combatants and Others*. Faced with a book so different from the rest of its list, Hodder & Stoughton tried to emphasize its most marketable aspects (such as the love story between Alix and Basil), ignoring its pacifist undertone. After the release of Macaulay’s novel, the firm continued to issue propaganda that presented pacifists as politically naïve – for example Elizabeth Robins’s 1919 novel *The Messenger*.⁷⁷ So why did Macaulay choose such a publisher for her anti-war novel? Why did Hodder & Stoughton accept to publish a novel that was so critical of the war? My answer is that Macaulay and Hodder & Stoughton were like an ill-assorted couple. They had a brief honeymoon in 1912, when *The Lee Shore* was published. And after that, cracks started to appear. The relative commercial failure of *Non-Combatants and Others* was the final blow that led to their divorce.

Works Cited

- Attenborough, John, *A Living Memory: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1868-1975*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Translated by Randal Johnson. New York: Columbia UP, 1993.
- Cohen, Debra Rae. *Remapping the Home Front: Locating Citizenship in British Women's Great War Fiction*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 2002.
- Emery, Jane. *Rose Macaulay: A Writer's Life*. London: Murray, 1991.
- Feltes, N. N. *Literary Capital and the Late Victorian Novel*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1993.
- Ferguson Smith, Martin. Ed. *Dearest Jean: Rose Macaulay's Letters to a Cousin Manchester*: Manchester UP, 2011.
- Grayzel, Susan. *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1999.
- Gullace, Nicoletta F., *The Blood of Our Sons: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Holtby, Winifred. "A Woman of the Day: Rose Macaulay." *Yorkshire Post*, December 10, 1926.
- Jaillant, Lise. "Sapper, Hodder & Stoughton, and the Popular Literature of the Great War." *Book History* 14 (2011): 137–66. doi:10.1353/bh.2011.0011.
- Lee, Hermione. "'Chatter, Chittery... Lean as a Rake.'" Review of *Rose Macaulay*, by Sarah LeFanu. *Guardian*, June 14, 2003. Accessed October 25, 2015.
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/jun/14/featuresreviews.guardianreview11>.
- LeFanu, Sarah. "Non-Combatants and Others." *Minds at War*. BBC Radio 3, June 24, 2014.
- Levenback, Karen L. *Virginia Woolf and the Great War*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse UP, 1999.
- Macaulay, Rose. *An Open Letter to a Non-Pacifist*. London: Issued by Wm. Collins Sons for the Peace Pledge Union, 1937.

Macaulay, Rose. *Non-Combatants and Others*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916.

McEwen, John M. "The National Press during the First World War: Ownership and Circulation."

Journal of Contemporary History 17, no. 3 (July 1, 1982): 459–86.

Officer, Lawrence H., and Samuel H. Williamson. "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present." *MeasuringWorth*, 2015. Accessed October 25, 2015.

<http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/>.

Oldfield, Sybil. *Spinsters of This Parish: The Life and Times of F. M. Mayor and Mary Sheepshanks*. London: Virago, 1984.

Omnium, Jacob. "Under Cover." *Bookseller*, September 13, 1912.

Poems of Today: An Anthology. London: Published for the English Association by Sidgwick & Jackson, 1915.

Potter, Jane. "For Country, Conscience and Commerce: Publishers and Publishing, 1914–1918." In *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History*, edited by Mary Hammond and Shafquat Towheed, 11–26. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Reynolds, Nigel. "Last Chapter as Oldest Publisher Is Bought Out." *Telegraph*, May 11, 2002.

Accessed October 25, 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1393853/Last-chapter-as-oldest-publisher-is-bought-out.html>.

Sapper. *Men, Women and Guns*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916.

———. *Sapper's War Stories*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930.

Simmel, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life [1903]." In *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, edited by Kurt H. Wolff, 409–26. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1950.

Smith, Angela K., *The Second Battlefield: Women, Modernism and the First World War*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000.

Smith, Constance Babington. Ed. *Letters to a Friend from Rose Macaulay, 1950-1952*. London: Collins, 1968.

Tate, Trudi. *Modernism, History and the First World War*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998.

Tynan, Katharine. "The Bookman Gallery: Rose Macaulay." *Bookman*, November 1916.

Vellacott, Jo. *Pacifists, Patriots, and the Vote: The Erosion of Democratic Suffragism in Britain during the First World War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Watson, Janet S. K., *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.

Wiltsher, Anne. *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War*. London: Pandora, 1985.

¹ I am grateful to Ann-Marie Einhaus, Shafquat Towheed and the editors of this volume, who have read and commented on earlier versions of this essay.

² Hermione Lee, "'Chatter, Chittery... Lean as a Rake,'" review of *Rose Macaulay*, by Sarah LeFanu, *Guardian*, June 14, 2003, accessed October 25, 2015,

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/jun/14/featuresreviews.guardianreview11>

³ Janet S. K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 10.

⁴ The edition edited by Sarah LeFanu (Capuchin Classics, 2010) has contributed to a recent critical revival, but the novel remains little known among ordinary readers.

⁵ Sarah LeFanu, *Rose Macaulay* (London: Virago, 2003), chap. 3.

⁶ N. N. Feltes, *Literary Capital and the Late Victorian Novel* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1993), 28.

⁷ "News Notes," *Bookman*, August 1912, 185.

⁸ I am grateful to Shafquat Towheed for this suggestion.

-
- ¹⁰ Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, “Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present,” *MeasuringWorth*, 2015, accessed October 25, 2015, <http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/>.
- ¹¹ John M. McEwen, “The National Press during the First World War: Ownership and Circulation,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 17, no. 3 (July 1, 1982): 468.
- ¹² Review of *The Lee Shore*, by Rose Macaulay, *Times Literary Supplement*, October 24, 1912, 464.
- ¹³ Rose Macaulay, letter to S. C. Roberts, August 4, 1912, Harry Ransom Center, Austin, Texas, qtd in LeFanu, *Rose Macaulay*, chap. 4.
- ¹⁴ Rose Macaulay, letter to John Murray, n.d., John Murray archive, National Library of Scotland, qtd in Jane Emery, *Rose Macaulay: A Writer’s Life* (London: Murray, 1991), 136.
- ¹⁵ Review of *The Lee Shore*, by Rose Macaulay, *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, November 16, 1912, 617.
- ¹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, translated by Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia UP, 1993), 39.
- ¹⁹ Rose Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916), 21.
- ²⁰ Sybil Oldfield, *Spinsters of This Parish: The Life and Times of F. M. Mayor and Mary Sheepshanks* (London: Virago, 1984), 176.
- ²¹ Towheed, email to author, November 7, 2015.
- ²² Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 22.
- ²³ Debra Rae Cohen, *Remapping the Home Front: Locating Citizenship in British Women’s Great War Fiction* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 2002), 31.
- ²⁴ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 156-57.
- ²⁵ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 71.

-
- ²⁶ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 232-33.
- ²⁷ Anne Wiltsher, *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War* (London: Pandora, 1985), 82. See also Jo Vellacott, *Pacifists, Patriots, and the Vote: The Erosion of Democratic Suffragism in Britain during the First World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 53-82.
- ²⁸ Wiltsher, *Most Dangerous Women*, 92.
- ²⁹ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 279.
- ³⁰ Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1999), 11.
- ³¹ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 5-6.
- ³² Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 58.
- ³³ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 64.
- ³⁴ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 219.
- ³⁵ Trudi Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998), 40.
- ³⁶ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 269.
- ³⁷ This reflects a historical reality, as “a significant portion of the nation’s women in 1914 – including over half the leadership of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies [NUWSS] in Britain – were either pacifists or at the very least ‘pacificists’” (Oldfield, *Spinsters of This Parish*, 176). On the divisions among the NUWSS, see Vellacott, *Pacifists, Patriots, and the Vote*, 36-58.
- ³⁸ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 231.
- ³⁹ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 268.
- ⁴⁰ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 268.
- ⁴¹ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 87.
- ⁴² Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 91.
- ⁴³ LeFanu, “Non-Combatants and Others.”

-
- ⁴⁴ LeFanu, “Non-Combatants and Others.”
- ⁴⁵ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 28.
- ⁴⁶ *Poems of Today: An Anthology* (London: Published for the English Association by Sidgwick & Jackson, 1915).
- ⁴⁷ Nicoletta F. Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 61.
- ⁴⁸ Sarah LeFanu, “Non-Combatants and Others,” *Minds at War*, BBC Radio 3, June 24, 2014.
- ⁴⁹ Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, 220.
- ⁵⁰ Angela K. Smith, *The Second Battlefield: Women, Modernism and the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000), 148.
- ⁵¹ Rose Macaulay, *Dearest Jean: Rose Macaulay’s Letters to a Cousin*, edited by Martin Ferguson Smith (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2011), 173 n13.
- ⁵² Rose Macaulay, *An Open Letter to a Non-Pacifist* (London: Issued by Wm. Collins Sons for the Peace Pledge Union, 1937), 4.
- ⁵³ *Letters to a Friend from Rose Macaulay, 1950-1952*, edited by Constance Babington Smith (London: Collins, 1968), 74.
- ⁵⁴ Macaulay, *Non-Combatants and Others*, 265-66.
- ⁵⁵ “Autumn Announcements,” *Times Literary Supplement*, August 10, 1916, 380 (emphasis added).
- ⁵⁶ Jane Potter, “For Country, Conscience and Commerce: Publishers and Publishing, 1914–1918,” in *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History*, edited by Mary Hammond and Shafquat Towheed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 16.
- ⁵⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, July 20, 1916, 3.
- ⁵⁸ Qtd in Hodder & Stoughton advertisement, *Times Literary Supplement*, November 23, 1916, 559.
- ⁵⁹ Sapper, *Men, Women and Guns* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916), 15.

-
- ⁶⁰ Winifred Holtby, "A Woman of the Day: Rose Macaulay," *Yorkshire Post*, December 10, 1926, 4.
- ⁶¹ Lise Jaillant, "Sapper, Hodder & Stoughton, and the Popular Literature of the Great War," *Book History* 14 (2011): 137–66.
- ⁶³ Review of *Non-Combatants and Others*, by Rose Macaulay, *Times Literary Supplement*, August 31, 1916, 416.
- ⁶⁴ The total advertising budget for *Men, Women and Guns* was 187 – 1 – 6. Hodder & Stoughton spent 49 – 3 – 1 to advertise *Non-Combatants and Others* (Hodder & Stoughton Profit and Loss Ledger, Ms. 16312, London Metropolitan Archives).
- ⁶⁵ Hodder & Stoughton advertisement, *Manchester Guardian*, August 31, 1916, 3.
- ⁶⁶ The total advertising budget for *The Making of a Bigot* was 81 pounds and 17 shillings (versus 114 – 10 – 9 for *The Lee Shore*).
- ⁶⁷ In his house history, John Attenborough suggests that Macaulay left Hodder & Stoughton because she "did not like to be typed or even labelled 'popular,'" thus highlighting the different positionings of author and publisher. John Attenborough, *A Living Memory: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, 1868-1975* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975), 103.
- ⁶⁸ Karen L. Levenback, *Virginia Woolf and the Great War* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse UP, 1999), 84.
- ⁶⁹ Review of *Non-Combatants and Others*, by Rose Macaulay, *Times Literary Supplement*, August 31, 1916, 416.
- ⁷⁰ "Current Literature," *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, September 25, 1916, 2.
- ⁷¹ Qtd in Emery, *Rose Macaulay*, 155.
- ⁷² "New Books," *Dundee Courier*, September 25, 1916, 4.
- ⁷³ Qtd in Hodder & Stoughton advertisement, *Times*, October 6, 1916, 4.
- ⁷⁴ Katharine Tynan, "The Bookman Gallery: Rose Macaulay," *Bookman*, November 1916, 37–38.
- ⁷⁵ Watson, *Fighting Different Wars*, 188.

⁷⁶ Smith, *The Second Battlefield*, 144.

⁷⁷ See Smith, *The Second Battlefield*, 157-58 n20.