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978-0-521-72883-6 - The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War

Adrian Gregory

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The Last Great War

What was it that the British people believed they were fighting for in 1914–1918? This compelling history of the British home front during the First World War offers an entirely new account of how British society understood and endured the war. Drawing on official archives, memoirs, diaries and letters, Adrian Gregory sheds new light on the public reaction to the war, examining the role of propaganda and rumour in fostering patriotism and hatred of the enemy. He shows the importance of the ethic of volunteerism and the rhetoric of sacrifice in debates over where the burdens of war should fall as well as the influence of religious ideas on wartime culture. As the war drew to a climax and tensions about the distribution of sacrifices threatened to tear society apart, Gregory shows how victory and the processes of commemoration helped create a fiction of a society united in grief.

ADRIAN GREGORY is Lecturer in Modern History at Pembroke College, University of Oxford. His previous publications include *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919–1946* (1994) and, as editor, *A War to Unite Us All: Ireland and the Great War* (2002).

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Next year in?