



A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland

Catriona Pennell

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In this, the first fully documented study of British and Irish popular reactions to the outbreak of the First World War, Catriona Pennell explores UK public opinion of the time and successfully challenges the myth of British 'war enthusiasm'.

A Kingdom United explores what people felt, and how they acted, in response to an unanticipated and unprecedented crisis. It is a history of both ordinary people and elite figures in extraordinary times. Dr Pennell demonstrates that describing the reactions of over 40 million British and Irish people to the outbreak of war as either enthusiastic in the British case, or disengaged in the Irish, is over-simplified and inadequate. Emotional reactions to the war were ambiguous and complex, and changed over time.

By the end of 1914 the populations of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland had largely embraced the war, but the war had also embraced them and showed no signs of relinquishing its grip. The five months from August to December 1914 set the shape of much that was to follow. *A Kingdom United* describes and explains that twenty-week formative process.

Pennell draws from a vast array of diaries, letters, journals, and newspaper accounts by the very people who experienced the war in its first dramatic five months. She outlines the variety of responses felt amongst both the ordinary people and elite figures from across the country.

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