Commemorating the Victor: Marshal Ferdinand Foch and the British, 1919–1931

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Synergies *Royaume-Uni et Irlande* n° 4 - 2011
pp. 23-33

Summary: *There has always been an understandable tension between the justified pride of Sir Douglas Haig in the achievements of the British Army in the 1918 victory and the fact that he had accepted an Allied generalissimo in the person of General Ferdinand Foch and had agreed to place the British Army under his orders. The agreement barely survived the Armistice, and was destroyed by the treaty negotiations. By 1931, with the publication of Foch's memoirs and Basil Liddell Hart's biography, the tension had become hostility. This paper charts the decline in Foch's reputation from the 1919 victory parades, through the fuss over the commemorative statue to be erected in London and over the appointment to the new Marshal Foch chair in Oxford University, to the final disenchantment. It argues that the antipathy of the British military and political establishment and the greater influence of the* maison Pétain *in Paris on French security matters hastened a decline in the esteem which Foch had enjoyed in 1918 and 1919 - a decline which has persisted to this day.*

Keywords: *Foch, Haig, Liddell Hart, commemoration, Great War*

Résumé : *On comprend facilement la tension entre la fierté de Sir Douglas Haig devant les exploits de l'armée britannique pendant la marche à la victoire de 1918 et l'obligation où il s'était trouvé d'accepter un généralissime, le Maréchal Ferdinand Foch, et de placer son armée sous ses ordres. Cet état des choses ne survit guère à l'Armistice et les négociations de la paix tuèrent l'accord. En 1931 la tension devint hostilité suivant la publication des mémoires du Maréchal et la biographie de l'écrivain militaire Basil Liddell Hart. Cette intervention évoque le déclin que l'on constate dans la réputation de Foch après les défilés de la victoire, pendant les tractations au sujet la statue commémorative à Londres ainsi que la nomination à la chaire de littérature française à Oxford, jusqu'à la désillusion finale des* Mémoires. *Elle démontre que l'antipathie de l'*establishment *militaire et politique britannique ainsi que la plus grande influence de la maison Pétain dans les questions de sécurité contribuèrent toutes deux à hâter le déclin de l'estime dont jouissait Foch en 1918 et 1919. Ce déclin persiste jusqu'à nos jours.*

Mots-clés: *Foch, Haig, Liddell Hart, commémoration, Grande Guerre*

Introduction and Background

The military relationship between French and British has never been easy. Ever since 1066 and all that, the (English) Channel has divided the lands of France and Britain. Its recent breaching by a tunnel is merely another episode in the long history of a relationship more frequently marked by enmity and war than by alliance. The Norman invasion of 1066 to claim the English throne; the holding by the Plantagenets of extensive tracts of land that later became part of the French kingdom; the Hundred Years' War, Crécy and Agincourt; Marlborough and Wellington; Trafalgar and Waterloo; the clash over the nineteenth century forging of colonial empires – all these elements combined to form an almost tribal memory that influenced the dealings of these two major European powers at the end of the nineteenth century.[1] Palmerston's Martello towers still stood as testimony to British fears of a French invasion. During the Crimean War, a rare example of Britain and France being on the same side, it is reported (perhaps apocryphally) that the British had to be reminded continually to stop referring to the French as the enemy.

It is an indication of the enormous threat posed by Germany and its allies in 1914, therefore, that Britain and France managed for more than four long years to sink their differences in the face of the common enemy.[2] Yet it proved very hard to create an effective working relationship, and the comment that Britain would fight to the last Frenchman did not originate with the Second World War. France's last wartime premier, Georges Clemenceau, told his counterpart, David Lloyd George, that immediately after the Armistice he discovered in the British an enemy of France. Lloyd George's reported reply was: "*n'est-ce pas notre politique traditionnelle*?" (Clemenceau, 1930: 92). And the creator of the highly popular Colonel Bramble, André Maurois, was a liaison officer during the war. He recorded his attempts to speak of British friendship between 1919 and 1939 and noted that the "memory of nations is dreadfully retentive". He was met with "the vague, irritating persistent memory of the Hundred Years War" (Maurois, 1940: 120).

Such suspicion and mistrust persist of course, and are summed up neatly in the timeless episodes of the British satirical sitcom *Yes Minister*. Jim Hacker's fictional diary records an exchange about Civil Defence and nuclear weapons:

> 'But after all, Humphrey,' I added, 'the Americans will always protect us from the Russians, won't they?'
> 'The Russians?' he asked. 'Who's talking about the Russians?'
> 'Well, the independent nuclear deterrent…'
> 'It's to protect us against the French.'
> I could hardly believe my ears. The French? It sounded incredible. An extraordinary idea. I reminded Humphrey that they are our allies, our partners.
> 'They are *now*,' he agreed. 'But they've been our enemies for most of the past nine hundred years.'
> It only needed a few seconds' thought to realise the profound truth of what he was saying. Suddenly it didn't seem at all incredible – just common sense, really. If the bomb is to protect us from the *French*, that's a completely different matter, obviously we've got to have it, you can't trust the Frogs, there's no room for discussion about *that*! (Lynn and Jay, 1983: 47)

Given this background, the enormity of the crisis provoked by the first of the German Spring offensives that crashed through the British lines on 21 March 1918 becomes plain. If the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig, was so shocked by the disaster that he accepted the institution of unity of command under a French general, Ferdinand Foch, then matters were indeed serious. On 26 March 1918 Foch was charged with the

coordination of the Allied action on the Western Front. This responsibility was extended on 3 April to the strategic direction of Allied operations, and he was given the title 'Général en chef des armées alliées'. This article explores how the fact of Foch's appointment was remembered and celebrated, or forgotten and brushed aside, in the years following the 1918 victory up to the publication in 1931 of both Foch's memoirs in French and English translation, and also, the same year, the lengthy biography of Foch by B. H. Liddell Hart.

Popularity in the Interwar

In discussing the degree of popularity among the British of Foch's appointment, it is important to distinguish between, on the one hand, the political and military leaders and, on the other, public opinion in general. Haig soon forgot his panic of March 1918 and in his postwar 'Notes on Operations' he accused the French of doing virtually nothing to help his beleaguered armies. These 'notes', entrusted to the British Museum, not to be opened until 1940, were deemed so explosive in the context of 1940, that they remained closed until the Second World War ended. However, press reaction to Foch's appointment had been entirely positive, and Lloyd George's precaution of not releasing the news to the press until the distraction of the Easter weekend was unnecessary. The writer of a recent letter to the editor of the *London Review of Books* recalled his uncle telling him that the applause following the news of Foch's appointment began near the Swiss frontier and ended somewhere in the North Sea (*London Review of Books*, 18 August 2005).

The 1919 victory parades in Paris and London give further proof of the esteem and enthusiasm which Foch enjoyed in popular British opinion. The French ambassador in London, Paul Cambon, wrote of the "*fête de la victoire*" and two-hour "*défilé de la victoire*" in London on 19 July 1919: "Le plus grand succès à signaler c'est assurément celui du maréchal Foch". The "manifestations" had not stopped since his arrival in London the previous morning: "Dans les quartiers populaires l'enthousiasme fut tel que les témoins oculaires m'affirment qu'il a dépassé celui du 14 juillet à Paris".[3] The *New York Times* reported the procession in these terms:

> … suddenly the air was rent with a new roar. It was a tremendous burst of sound, and the streets were a mass of fluttering flags and handkerchiefs. People went almost wild with excitement, and they seemed as though they would burst the police line in their enthusiasm. Then in the midst of it rode a solitary horseman. His glittering staff came behind, but he was alone, easily managing his curvetting horse and bearing in his right hand the purple baton of a marshal of France. It was Foch and if ever a great soldier received a popular acclaim it was he today. (*New York Times*, 20 July 1919)

The crowning glory came two weeks later when King George V raised Foch to the rank of British field marshal – a rare honour for a foreigner. The red velour baton with its gold lions and surmounted by Saint George killing the dragon is on display today in the Musée de l'Armée in the Invalides, alongside his French baton (with its blue velour rubbed almost through) and his Polish baton. The Americans, not having the rank of field marshal, could only present him with a simulacrum (a rather gaudy one) given by the Knights of Columbus during Foch's triumphant 1921 visit to the United States.

Foch also received the freedom of the City of London on the same day as his baton, and, at the ceremonial lunch at the Guildhall to mark the occasion, the City Chamberlain proclaimed that Foch's "operations have been on a scale vaster than anything hitherto

imagined, and his great final triumph, borne with modesty and equaled only by his confidence in the hours of peril, is the just reward of a lifetime devoted to the science of which he became so great a master" (*New York Times*, 31 July 1919).

Foch's name was commemorated further by the establishment of the Marshal Foch Chair of French Literature in the University of Oxford. This was endowed by the Greek-born, French-naturalised arms manufacturer, Sir Basil Zaharoff. He was even-handed: he also endowed the Earl Haig Chair of English Literature in the Sorbonne. The two endowments were by way of repaying some of the enormous profits he had made during the war, and as early as September 1918 he had mentioned to Lord Derby, the British ambassador in Paris, that he was prepared to donate £25,000 to Oxford.[4] There is, however, a hint of the presence of national sensibilities in the fact that Oxford demurred at first, because Zaharoff had put in a proviso that the University of Paris should approve the appointment – which Oxford took to be a right of veto. After some debate Zaharoff agreed that instead it would be better to have a representative from Paris on the electoral board, and matters were settled shortly after the Armistice.

The French regarded the appointment to the new chair as an opportunity to improve Franco-British inter-university relations, which had never been close. During the war the Université de Paris had tried to establish closer ties with American universities, Harvard and Columbia in particular, but there were "few examples of *intellectual* sympathy between French and British academics" (Fordham, 2005: 317). Even the Quai d'Orsay attempted to intervene in the selection process – further proof of the diplomatic importance attached to the appointment. Foreign Minister Stephen Pichon wrote to Cambon in London with the name of his preferred candidate, asking him to agree the choice with Lanson, the Université de Paris' representative on the selection panel. There were eight French and five British applicants for the chair, but despite Zaharoff and Lanson agreeing two days before the panel met on one of the French candidates (not the Quai d'Orsay's choice), Oxford disagreed, claiming that none of the French candidates had experience of teaching in England. Professor Gustave Rudler of London University was appointed.[5]

Foch was back in England in 1922 for the funeral of his friend and former Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the murdered Sir Henry Wilson, and again for Haig in 1928. For his own funeral in Paris in March 1929, the band of the Coldstream Guards, plus a detachment of the Guards' 3 Battalion attended. The speed with which agreement was reached to commemorate Foch after his death with a statue to be erected in London provides an illuminating contrast with the fuss over the Haig statue in Whitehall. Unlike the latter's commemorative statue, the design for which was put out for competition and argued over for many years – the statue was only inaugurated in 1937, nine years after Haig's death – Foch's statue was a replica of the one that the French sculptor Georges Malissard had produced for Cassel in northern France, where Foch had had his headquarters for the early part of the war. (The same sculptor executed the Foch statue at the Trocadéro in Paris.) The Duke of Westminster donated a site near Victoria Station, which, being private property, obviated the arguments over the Whitehall site (Westminster City Council thought the Haig statue would be a traffic hazard). The cost of Foch's statue was met through public subscription, organised by the Anglo-French Luncheon Club, whereas the cost of Haig's statue was met from the public purse.[6] The subscribers, of whom there were approximately 8,000, included private individuals, institutions such as banks and municipal councils, an Oxford college, as well as military and naval names.[7]

The arguments over the Haig statue centred on the nature of a suitable method of commemorating the leader of the victorious British troops: should the Fine Arts Commissioners have the final say against the wishes of the military or Haig's family? Was the proximity to the Cenotaph a good or a bad idea? Was the classical style of a bare-headed man on a horse in the tradition of the Marcus Aurelius on the Capitol in Rome (or the Donatello Gattamelata in Padova) better than a more realistic representation of the horse and the field marshal's uniform (the lack of headgear was thought to be undignified)?[8] None of these problems assailed the raising of the statue to commemorate Foch. The Fine Arts Commission had preferred a site at the northern end of Grosvenor Square (mainly because of the pub to the south, which still stands facing the statue today), but since it was private land the Commission could not overrule the preference for the southern site facing French visitors leaving Victoria Station after they arrived on the boat train from Dover. The southern position also meant that the Guards would pass his statue on their way to and from Chelsea barracks. The style of the statue – realistic and modelled from life, rather than generalised classical – was already fixed. In fact, Lady Haig stated that she disliked the design for her husband's statue and much preferred Foch's.[9] The only false note to be aired publicly was sounded by a series of letters to *The Times*, asking why a copy of a French statue had been chosen, rather than having a British sculptor produce a new image. It was pointed out, in response, that Sir Edward Lutyens had been employed to create the monuments to the British Empire's dead in France and Belgium. There had been no complaints from the French that a French artist should have been employed instead.

So there was little controversy over Foch's statue and it still stands today in its leafy square, although French visitors, on the whole, no longer arrive in London at Victoria Station. Haig's statue still causes controversy, as the fuss in the *Daily Express* in 1998, on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the Armistice, reveals. The newspaper called loudly for the statue's removal from Whitehall, on the grounds that "the modern generation of military historians believes that hundreds of thousands of soldiers died needlessly as a result of Haig's orders". The paper's editorial writer declared: "We believe that Earl Haig, and his blinkered view of strategy and tactics, bears a heavy and perhaps unforgivable responsibility for those deaths. We do not question his patriotism. But we doubt his judgment and his humanity" (*Daily Express*, 6 November 1998). The headline asked: "Why do we let this man cast a shadow over our war dead?" None of this diatribe (and there were supporting quotes from Alan Clark, Niall Ferguson, Norman Stone and so on) attached to Foch. If he could not be blamed for British casualties on the Somme and at Passchendaele, nevertheless he was in supreme command from March to November 1918, when further large numbers of men became casualties. But by 1998 the French role in the final victory had been largely written out of the British historiography of the war, and none of the opprobrium levelled at Haig was directed towards Foch.

Unpopularity in the Interwar

So much, then, for popular commemoration of Marshal Foch. Among the decision-makers, however, both political and military, feelings were very different. By the Armistice, Haig had forgotten the crisis which had made him accept Foch as supreme commander, and was firmly convinced that it was the British Army that had won the war. He sneered that Foch had a "swelled head" and "thinks himself another Napoleon".[10] When Lloyd George required Haig's presence in London in December 1918, during a visit by Foch and

Clemenceau, Haig refused to leave France. When he found out that his carriage was to be the fifth in the ceremonial procession, all his resentment broke out: "I felt that this was more of an insult than I could put up with, even from the Prime Minister," he noted in his diary. He went on:

> For the past three years I have effaced myself, because I felt that, to win the war, it was essential that the British and French Armies should get on well together. And in consequence I have patiently submitted to Lloyd George's conceit and swagger, combined with much boasting as to 'what *he* had accomplished, thanks to his *foresight* in appointing Foch as C. in C. of the Allied Forces, to his having sent Armies to Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Salonika etc., etc.' The real truth is that the British Army has won the war in France in spite of L.G. [sic] and I have no intention of taking part in any triumphal ride with Foch & a pack of foreigners through the streets of London, mainly in order to add to L.G.'s importance and help him in his election campaign.[11]

It has to be said that the crowds who gave the two Frenchmen a stirring reception were clearly of a different mind, but Haig's belief that his own armies had won the war and not any "pack of foreigners" is clear. Does Haig mean to include Foch in the "pack" or is he to be classified differently? Haig's phrasing is ambiguous.

Then Foch's actions during the treaty negotiations alienated many. His attempt to push through the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles were seen as presumptuous. Britain's Foreign Secretary, A. J. Balfour, remarked on Foch's "attempt to induce the Conference to swallow whole the Military proposals for Peace which most of us had seen for the first time that morning. He put pressure upon the Meeting by informing us – for the first time, be it noted – that after April 1st demobilisation would have rendered the Allied Armies incapable of effective action in Germany; and that it was therefore necessary to have completed our preliminary Peace before that date".[12] Foch's insistence on making the Rhine Germany's western frontier as a means of ensuring France's future security provoked not only his premier, Clemenceau, but the other Allies as well. When, finally, Foch refused to obey the order to call the German plenipotentiaries to receive the proposed treaty terms, the British and Americans were scandalised. President Woodrow Wilson went so far as to state that he would not want American troops under the command of a general who did not obey his government.

There were other incidents during the 1920s that damaged Foch's reputation. There were public disputes, aired in the press, over wartime events: with General Castelnau over the Battle of the Frontiers in 1914, when Foch ignored (although he claimed not to have received) an order from his army commander, Castelnau. With King Albert of the Belgians, over Foch's role in encouraging/ insisting/ exhorting the Belgians to stand on the Yser in October 1914. With the Italians, over Foch's role in saving the Italian Army from disaster after Caporetto in 1917. So, when, after Foch's death in March 1929, the French journalist Raymond Recouly published his *Mémorial de Foch* (translated into English as *Marshal Foch: His Own Words on Many Subjects* the same year) and Foch's own memoirs appeared in French and in English translation in 1931, the British were prepared to believe the worst. Recouly rehearsed all the arguments with Clemenceau over the peace treaty and the reasons, as Foch saw it, for the treaty's failure. The memoirs themselves got poor reviews.

An anonymous review in the *Army Quarterly* began by stating that the memoirs were "disappointing" – "they [throw] no fresh light on the war" – and that they were "woefully

inaccurate". These three comments all occur on the first page. The writer goes on to blame Foch for exposing Sir John French's right flank during the Battle of the Marne in September 1914 (p. 332), thereby "slowing" the British advance and allowing the Germans to "escape". "The course of the war might perhaps have been different but for Foch's failure to obey orders and inability to grasp a fairly plain situation in the field." As for the events of 1918 (p. 336), "Now that the various plans of Ludendorff during 1918 are fully known, it is obvious that Haig's deductions as to their nature and scope were more accurate than Foch's" (*Army Quarterly*, July 1931: 329–36).

In *The New Statesman and Nation*, R. C. K. Ensor mentions once again his disappointment: "what a wonderful body of facts and comments he might have bequeathed to posterity! But the *Memoirs* are not at all like that." And again, Foch's "memory" of events is disputed: "The 1914 narrative is not all satisfactory. Its account of the events is often surprisingly misleading, and it lapses occasionally into even more surprising inaccuracies". He continues:

> To anyone who is fairly well up on the facts, as they have been elucidated by French, German and British records now generally available, its pages will impart nothing; while anyone lacking that familiarity might easily be led astray by them. (Ensor, 1931: 223–34)

The most damning review of all was written by General E. L. Spears in the *National Review.* Spears knew Foch well, of course; he had been a liaison officer with the armies in Foch's Groupe des Armées du Nord between 1914 and 1916, and he headed the British mission to the French Ministère de la Guerre whilst Foch was Chef de l'Etat-Major de l'Armée in the ministry in 1917. Once again, Spears takes issue with Foch's account. His 1914 Battle of the Marne is "very misleading"; as for First Ypres in October 1914, "the whole section of the book dealing with this period gives a most exaggerated view of the importance of Foch's interventions, is very unjust to the British, and is an extremely biased and unfair account of what happened". On a single page (p. 475) we read these phrases: "an entirely false picture has been given"; "bias exhibited towards the British"; "altogether inaccurate"; "A similar misstatement concerning the Belgians"; "completely wrong in his facts" (Spears, 1931: 469–76).

To be fair, it was not only British readers who were disappointed. Doyen Pierre Renouvin, himself a First-World-War veteran and *mutilé de guerre*, so declared himself. He pointed out in his review how disappointingly little of the man appeared in the pages. He lamented their report format, and claimed that the memoirs would not inspire the general public; nor would they please historians "qui cherchent avant tout la qualité du témoignage" (Renouvin, 1931: 302–5).

The final nail in the coffin of Foch's reputation was hammered home by the military writer Basil Liddell Hart. His lengthy biography of the marshal remains the standard work in English. It appeared only a few months after the publication of Foch's memoirs, hence profited from some of that momentum. The tone of the book is set immediately by its title: *The Man of Orleans*. Liddell Hart's Foch is a mystical (male) version of Jeanne d'Arc, saving his country by faith rather than science. There are no fewer than twenty-two entries in the index for Napoleon Bonaparte, some of them extending over several pages. Liddell Hart implies almost that Foch was a bad influence on the British by using medical similes. Prewar, for example, Henry Wilson was injected with "Fochian serum" (Liddell Hart, 1931: p. 61).

Then Foch infected Sir John French in the same way: with "gusts of optimism" (p. 134); Foch "infused French with his own assurance" (p.138); an "injection of Fochian serum" (p. 139).

In his Epilogue (p. 458) Liddell Hart wrote: "In the council of war as in the classroom he was convincing because he was passionately convinced. The more general he was, the better his effect as a general, and the less harm he caused to offset his heartening influence". These comments (which damned with faint praise?) must be seen in the light of Liddell Hart's conviction that there was a British way of warfare, an indirect approach, which was to be preferred to any "Continental commitment". In Liddell Hart's view, Foch represented an old-fashioned and outdated approach to war that had cost Britain dear (Reid, 2009). Moreover, Foch was that highly suspicious phenomenon (to the middle-class British at least), a convinced (although, it must be said, not ostentatious) Catholic. The 'old school' had been discredited, Haig along with Foch, and Liddell Hart wanted young military thinkers and leaders to come to the fore.

Not surprisingly Weygand was outraged. General Maxime Weygand had been Foch's devoted chief of staff right through the war, and looked upon Foch almost as a father figure. Liddell Hart had thanked him in his Preface for his help. Weygand wrote immediately, denying that he had helped and rejecting the conclusions and tenor of the biography.[13] Whether Weygand had any influence over the fate of the book in France is unclear. Liddell Hart himself believed that his book had been 'banned'. In a note about the matter he wrote:

> Nearly two years ago an important French publishing house (Payot), which has translated previous books of mine, contracted to publish my life of Foch. I have just heard from my Paris agents that this firm now declares that it cannot publish the book – on the ground that it differs too much from the view of the Marshal held in France. This seems an astounding excuse, and all the more so because mine is the first attempt to compile a life of Foch in the light of the historical records now available, German as well as French and British.
> In the original contract there was a clause by which it would become null and void if the political tendency of the book proved to be such as to make it impossible to publish in France. But it seems extraordinary to confound historical criticism of Foch's generalship with an anti-French 'political' tendency.
> The leading war historians here have given the book high praise and the consensus of their verdict is that while it demolishes the Foch legend, it gives the real man, great in spite of his proved mistakes.
> The French publishers are a firm in close relations with the French Ministry of War, and the translation was entrusted to an officer who is an instructor at the French Staff College. Hence I can only surmise that some influence may have been brought to bear on them – perhaps from some former associates of the Marshal.[14]

Dualism's Effects

What does this dualism – on the one hand, popular recognition in victory parades, a British field marshal's baton, a statue in a London square (rare for a foreigner, much less a foreign general), a named chair at a prestigious British university, yet, on the other hand, a steep decline in prestige amongst military and political classes – tell us about the Franco-British relationship between 1918 and 1931, and what effect has this dualism had?

In some ways the dualism, or ambivalence, reflects the difficulties of the military/defence relationship in the interwar years, and British views of and judgements on

France – what Anthony Adamthwaite has described as "the ravages of twenty years of *mésentente cordiale*" (1995: 226). The decline in Foch's reputation reflects the theme of the essential 'rottenness' of the Third Republic. (J.-B. Duroselle's study of the 1930s, for example, was entitled *La Décadence*.) Hence, in his review cited earlier, Spears described the triumph of the victory celebrations, but then asserted: "Now Marshal Foch's Memoirs are given to the world, and it is as if he has come off his pedestal, given up voluntarily the place we were all ready to concede to him". In his review of Liddell Hart's biography the British official historian, Sir James Edmonds, ended: "The legend of the victorious Foch, as the author tells, had a long start; but, if his authorities are worth anything, he has done much to demolish it" (*Times Literary Supplement*, 22 October 1931). So the supreme commander of 1918 had feet of clay and has no lessons for military action in the future. There is a later, and much better and more balanced biography of Foch, by another of the British official historians, Cyril Falls. It provided an antidote to the Liddell Hart picture, yet Falls' more positive view has had little influence. Being published in 1939, it was overtaken by events.

The decline in Foch's reputation might also reflect another British view of France in the interwar – the point of view that Anthony Adamthwaite puts forward. France was not rotten, but lacked the will to fight for the Versailles Treaty and its promises of security and reparations. Foch's failure to achieve the Rhine frontier during the treaty negotiations exemplifies this lack of will, especially as it created much antagonism as a result. He never stopped fighting in the years that remained before his death. Yet it was the *maison Pétain* that prevailed over the *maison Foch* in French councils, despite Weygand's presence as Foch's proxy. As Judith Hughes has shown, the protagonists of a static defence (the Maginot line) overcame those such as Foch and Guillaumat, who wanted to defend France in a manoeuvre war (Hughes, 1971: 187–229). So Foch's decline in British esteem matched his decline in the argument over French strategic directions.

Another view of Franco-British interwar relations has Britain as the governess, and the French fearful to take any steps without looking over their shoulder. So the decline in Foch's reputation fits this view as well. The supreme commander had lost the authority that had been granted during the crisis days of March 1918, and the tables had been turned completely.

Finally, the commemoration of a foreign victor presents grave difficulties of iconography. On the whole the British don't 'do' victories, preferring to celebrate defeats such as Dunkirk instead. The last great spurt of victory-monument building in Britain came as a result of the Napoleonic Wars, with Nelson's column in London perhaps the greatest example of the genre. Those monuments commemorated victories over the nation that produced Ferdinand Foch, and so made it very difficult to find the 'language' required for a suitable monument. It was much easier, to cite a more recent example, to raise the 'Britannia Triumphant' monument to the 'heroes' of the war in the Falkland Islands in the old tradition. And, of course, most of the analyses of commemorative sculpture of the First World War focus on memorials to the dead, civilian and military, rather than on victory monuments.

What is the result of this ambivalence over Foch's legacy in Britain? It may be seen in the recent historiography of the First World War. To read much of what is written about the fighting in 1918 is to get the impression that there were no French on the battlefield at

all (or else, it was the Americans who showed the decadent Europeans how to win a war). The most recent work on 1918, for example, written by a member of London's Imperial War Museum staff, is called *1918: A Very British Victory*. Sir Douglas Haig's reputation as the British commander-in-chief still provokes bitter disputes amongst British and Anglophone historians and still provides material for monographs. It is perhaps time to put the French and their generals back into the First World War picture.

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Notes

[1] This theme has a long historiography. See especially Johnson, Crouzet and Bédarida (eds.) (1980), and Waites (ed.) (1971). The piece by Jean-Baptiste Duroselle in the latter work ('Strategic and Economic Relations During the First World War') is an excellent brief synthesis. More recently, in English, Robert Gibson (1995) has mined the same lode; and, in French, see Philippe Daudy (trans., 1991).
[2] See Tombs and Tombs (2006).
[3] Cambon mss., PA-AP 42, vol. 60, ff. 100–103, Archives diplomatiques, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris.
[4] See the files in ED 241/1967, The National Archives, Kew [hereafter TNA]. Zaharoff's offer to Derby was made on 18 September 1918, and agreement reached 15 November 1918.
[5] Pichon's letter and Lanson's report on his mission to Oxford are in the records of the Conseil de l'Université de Paris, séance du 1 décembre 1919, AJ/16/2590, ff. 341–3, Archives nationales, Paris.
[6] Marshal Foch, Grosvenor Gardens, WORK 20/193, TNA. The Office of Works in the person of its permanent secretary was not impressed: "These people are determined to have a statue of Foch", Sir Lionel Earle minuted, 12 November 1929, *ibid*. And the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres of the Fine Arts Commission opined that the Malissard statue was "a very poor and commonplace thing, and extremely expensive into the bargain […] Is there no chance of getting the work for one of our own people? We would give Malissard a lesson!", 26 November 1929, *ibid*.
[7] 'Subscribers to the Marshal Foch Memorial in London' (n.p., n.d.), Rare Books Collection, acc. no. 13950, Imperial War Museum, London.
[8] On the controversy over the Haig statue see Heathorn (2005).
[9] TNA, Office of Works memorandum, 26 July 1935, WORK 20/186.
[10] Haig diary, 27 October 1918, acc. 3155, no. 97, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.
[11] Haig diary, 30 November 1918, *ibid*.
[12] TNA, Memorandum, 5 May 1919, FO 800/216.
[13] Différend Weygand-Liddell Hart, 1K 129/1, Service Historique de la Défense, Département Armée de Terre, Vincennes.
[14] 'Note on the French "banning" of my book on FOCH', n.d., Liddell Hart mss., LH 11/1933/34, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London.