

ROSALIE TRIOLO

‘Keeping your eyes on Germany’: Victoria’s *School Paper* and complicated relationships with ‘the Germans’, 1910–18

Few are the opportunities today to understand the Great War as Victoria’s state school pupils experienced it.¹ Fewer still are the opportunities to understand how pupils perceived the German people and to identify the sources of those perceptions. The small number of published autobiographies that incorporate school days have been written in later life and many have been subject to modifications related partly to the creative approaches of professional writers but, perhaps more commonly, to the time that has elapsed between the events themselves and the written memory. In the latter case, the modifications have often been the result of authors consciously or unconsciously shaping what they would rather remember, or responding to what others, such as family members, friends, community groups, the media and governments, may wish to say or hear at different times and in different contexts.²

Despite such constraints, some glimpses of school days’ experiences are possible. John Hetherington, who attended Sandringham State School during World War I, recalled in later life his fears that German attacks would come from Port Phillip Bay and recollects that the fears were reinforced by the appearance of two timid Belgian refugee children at his school.³ Don Charlwood, in reflecting on his Frankston childhood, remembers that, despite his mother’s reassurances that smoke in the distance was from the Melbourne factories, any noise was local traffic and ‘war is a long way off; a long way’, he heard ‘boom, boom, boom ... against the pillow and knew what it was’ – the Germans.⁴ Further east, in Gippsland, Winifred Grassick of Krowera State

School would hear gunfire in the distance and fear that ‘the Germans had come to Australia’.⁵ Nearer the city, Ross Campbell attended an unidentified state school in the Camberwell area and recalled in later life:

I did not know much about the Great War, except that it required the packing of lactogen tins. We were taught to sing a song at school ...

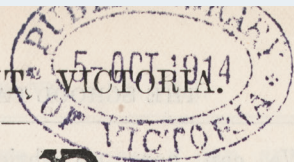
‘On land or sea, wherever you may be,
Keep your eye on Germany’.

It was hard for a small boy in Melbourne to keep an eye on Germany but the song served to implant in me a belief that Germans were a bad lot.⁶

The salient point here is that if Campbell had indeed learned to sing the song from which his lyrics come, ‘For auld lang syne, Australia will be there’, at school, he and his teachers did not locate the lyrics and music in the only compulsory reading for state school pupils and their teachers at the time, the *School Paper*, which was published by Victoria’s Education Department.⁷ Considering that the department usually concluded each edition of the *School Paper* with a song, why did it not offer this particularly popular one during the war?⁸ Indeed, in the years before and during the Great War, what were the department’s messages to its readers about Germany and the Germans? This article argues that the Education Department wished its members to keep their eyes on Germany, but for complex and nuanced reasons that have rarely been considered in previous accounts.

In his report for 1914–15, Victoria’s minister for public instruction, Thomas Livingston, noted optimistically that demand for copies of the *School Paper* had been increasing, with 207,000 copies being printed monthly.⁹ This was in contrast to the local production of supplementary reading books for schools, which had ‘suffered a set-back owing to the need of reducing ... the expense to parents of providing school-books’. Teachers were acknowledged for assisting parents by collecting used copies of recommended books and redistributing them, yet the *School Paper* was obviously considered by departmental officials to be a major contributor to the education of children and the war effort. By the end of the war, another minister for public instruction, William Hutchinson, was able to report that, unlike the teachers’ official digest, the *Education Gazette and Teachers’ Aid*, the *School Paper* had:

suffered no diminution in size nor in the number published ... It has continued to supply graded reading lessons to the elementary schools of this State, to those of Tasmania and Fiji, and to some of the schools of Western Australia, as well as to Victorian registered schools and to the junior grades of certain State high schools.¹⁰



THE SCHOOL PAPER.

FOR GRADES VII. AND VIII. (1914).

No. 180.] [Registered at the General Post Office, Melbourne, for transmission by post as a newspaper.]

MELBOURNE. Price 1d.

[Oct. 1, 1914.

* **TO THE HELPERS AT HOME.**

Troop'ships, ships carrying soldiers.

Shrap nel, kind of shell filled with bullets and a charge of powder. It was called after its inventor, General H. Shrapnel.

A-dieu' (*ad-yuh'*, "u" as in *urn*; commonly, in English, *a-dew'*), good-bye.

Cho-rus (*ko-rus*), here, sound produced by a number acting together



CHILDREN AT A VICTORIAN STATE SCHOOL MAKING GARMENTS FOR THE TROOPS.

1. When you've finished with your
cheering,
When the last good-bye is said,
When the troopships bid
our shores a long adieu,

Let me rouse you for a mo-
ment
For the work that lies ahead,
For the work that we who
stay at home can do.

The *School Paper* was first published in Victoria in 1896 with one edition for Class III and another for Class IV. By 1918, it was available, monthly, at the cost of a penny for three 'graded reading levels': Grades III–IV, V–VI and VII–VIII. Its aims were described – long after its creation – in the department's first official history; the *School Paper* sought to develop in children:

an understanding love of Victoria, of Australia, of the British Empire, and through these of humanity ... for the work of the hand and the work of the mind, for kindly deed and thoughtful act, and for the heroic part whether played in 'the trivial round, the common task,' or in the greater occasions of life.¹¹

The *School Paper*, along with the *Education Gazette*, was overseen by two men. The editor of both was inspector Charles Long, who was also the founding writer and lead writer over the period, and co-author of the first official history of the department. The director of education during the war was Frank Tate. Long and Tate were close professional associates and had followed similar paths as educators, having been pupil-teachers, trainees, teachers, inspectors and Melbourne Teachers' College lecturers, with Tate having also been a Teachers' College principal. They were strongly committed to state education and demonstrably in agreement on most matters, including the content of departmental publications.¹²

The *School Paper* offered the benefits of being compact, relatively inexpensive to produce and visually appealing in format, especially compared to newspapers of the day. It played a major role in publishing the views of the department and of Victorian and Australian governments, together with the views of individuals who concurred with these official positions. It presented wholly new items by established and new authors, as well as whole, abridged or adapted items that had been published in earlier numbers. Articles were of both Australian and overseas origins, and increasingly the former, in keeping with Tate's and Long's wish to foster knowledge and love of Australia, which was formalised by Tate in May 1904.¹³ The *School Paper* also published extracts from books and local and overseas newspapers that, given the reduced departmental and family income during the war, may not otherwise have found their way into contemporary classrooms or homes. The appearance of any item, text or visual, whether prepared by the department or selected from another source, meant that it came highly recommended and was expected to be used in some way by teachers and pupils. They, and parents, knew that an inspector could ask questions 'on the spot' to check the competence of teacher and pupil readers, and this may have been enough to compel some poorer parents to make the purchase.¹⁴ The *School Paper* was often written with them and other

adult readers in mind, also on the assumption that children would deliberately or unintentionally convey messages in the home.¹⁵ The department declared openly, '[C]hildren ... can influence the majority of homes in the State'.¹⁶

Less absolute was the identity of the enemy during the war. From the outset, all teachers and pupils would have read enough in departmental publications, in a generalised sense, to name 'the Germans'. That the Germans were the enemy was emphasised also, often and at times brutally, in multiple public forums, including the *Age* (Melbourne) and *Argus* newspapers. Belgium was singled out in those publications, especially early in the war, as the victim of Germany's most dishonourable conduct, thus providing the moral justification for the involvement of Britain, its Empire and its Allies in repelling an aggressor that might also eventually attack them.¹⁷ Belgium was also identified in the *School Paper* as having borne the worst of German militarism.¹⁸ But, if readers were faithfully reflecting what they had read in the department's publications and if they were questioned further as to whether 'all' Germans were the enemy, then the answer could not have been so generalised. This was especially so for more discerning readers, among whom were teachers who had been in the department's service for many years before the war.

In the four years leading up to the Great War, Frank Tate, Charles Long, the *School Paper* and the *Education Gazette* influenced many readers' opinions, whether in schools or beyond, about the positive qualities of different friendly peoples. As well as a growing number of articles about the admirable qualities of Australians, both publications contained references to the positive features of citizens of the British Isles and Empire, especially in the highly celebratory *School Paper* Empire Day number.¹⁹ Other articles spoke of peoples who, although not members of the Empire, also possessed qualities worth emulating.²⁰ Within this category, readers learned that there was much that was admirable about the Germans. In fact, immediately before the war, the Germans received more attention for their positive qualities than any other nation outside the British Empire, including the French and Belgian peoples to whom references were near negligible. References to the people of France and Belgium increased markedly – and entirely positively – once the war was underway, further justifying to readers Britain's, the Empire's and the Allies' actions against Germans disposed to militarism.²¹

The positive articles about the Germans four years before the outbreak of war require special attention. In 1910, Class IV teachers and pupils were encouraged to reflect on the positive qualities of the heart of a child, as described by an unnamed German poet:

How should the heart of a little child be?
 As pure as the lily that blooms on the lea;
 As clear as the dews from the heavens that fall;
 As true as the mirror that hangs on the wall.
 As fresh as the fountain; as gay as the lark.
 That trills out its song 'twixt the day and the dark;
 As glad as the angels, when, soaring, they fly
 On the bright wings of love to their home in the sky.²²

The Germans and their celebrations at Christmas became regular and appealing *School Paper* features of the prewar period. In 1911, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's account of a beautifully decorated Christmas tree and the activities of German families was presented to Grade V–VI readers:

On the evening before Christmas Day, one of the parlours is lighted up by the children, into which the parents must not go; a great yew bough is fastened on the table at a little distance from the wall, a multitude of little tapers are fixed in the bough ... and coloured paper etc. hangs and flutters from the twigs. Under this bough the children lay out the presents they mean for their parents, still concealing in their pockets what they intend for each other. Then the parents are introduced, and each presents his little gift; they then bring out the remainder one by one from their pockets, and present them with kisses and embraces.²³

In the following year, and through three articles, readers in Grades III–VI (including those in Grade VI who had encountered 'The heart of a little child' two years earlier) continued to receive only positive impressions of Germany and its people. In the first article entitled 'A visit to Toy-Land', they learned about a town where 'Santa Claus gets many of the toys which he so kindly gives away'. Doll-making villagers worked together to produce:

rag dolls, wax dolls, talking dolls, jointed dolls, dollies with dark hair or with golden hair, dainty baby dolls, smart little girl dolls in all sorts of pretty frocks – in fact, all the different kinds that you gaze at in shop windows just before Christmas.

Elsewhere in Toy-Land:

whole families [were] very busy not making dolls, but making carts, barrows, Noah's arks, and other things, which the younger children paint with bright colors. Wooden cows and horses and sheep and pigs, also, are made in this delightful place; boats and ships, too, and railway engines and carriages – all of wood.

Nearby was Nuremberg, which had a large toy market, and, a little further still, was another town ‘where a wonderful fair is held twice a year. Only dolls are sold at it, and it lasts for ten days’. The article was supported by two photographs: one of an orderly and attractive German market scene of well-dressed vendors and shoppers, and another of a village in a picturesque farm and forest mountain setting.²⁴

The second article for Grade V–VI readers was, notably, a war-related story. In ‘The children who saved Hamburg’, a German merchant set out to win, through kindness, a war against a cruel enemy. He gave 300 children boughs of his homegrown cherries – ‘ripe fruit, so large and juicy that that the very sight was refreshing’ – to take to a thirsty enemy of unstated nationality. The enemy soldiers cried and accepted the cherries, with their general realising that ‘he was conquered, not by force of arms, but by the power of kindness’. The event was commemorated annually as a holiday called, ‘The feast of the cherries’, with Hamburg’s prosperity further indicated by a photograph of many ships lining its docks. The article concluded:

Every age of the world’s history has its tales of war, and blood-shed, and cruelty, of wild struggles and of great victories. Nowhere among them all do we find the story of a more beautiful victory than that which was won by the little children of Hamburg.²⁵

The final article, following immediately after the Hamburg tale, was ‘The mill of life’. Accompanied by an illustration of a boy fishing in a stream in a picturesque setting, the poem was about a German miller:

The Germans are a thrifty folk, and steady at their toil,
 In mart, or shop, or factory, or delving in the soil.
 They have a saying – wise it is, in memory hold it fast –
 ‘The mill will never grind with the water that is past.’
 The splashing of the water-wheel that turns the grinding-stone
 Goes on and on from early morn until the day is flown.
 The miller says, ‘I may not stop; the water will not last;
 And the mill will never grind with the water that is past’.²⁶

Such stories of the German people and their morals firmly reflected numerous of the department’s preferred values, attitudes and behaviours: purity of spirit, attractive presentation, kindness, creativity, hard work, efficiency, celebrations when earned and no dwelling on by-gones. Given that teachers and pupils were expected to accept and use what was published in the

School Paper, there is no reason to believe that they would have rejected these representations before the outbreak of war.

But how did teachers of Grades III–IV in August 1914 explain to their pupils the paradox of a further two complementary and attractively illustrated articles in the *School Paper*: ‘The land of the Germans’ and ‘The goatherd’s choice’, which were printed in the same month that war was declared? Almost certainly, the August number was either printed or already in circulation before the declaration of war in Australia on 5 August. If it had not been in circulation, the department could have chosen not to distribute copies; but even if it was in circulation, the department could have ordered copies to be withdrawn from schools. Either would have been possible given the tightly regulated system where teachers and officials ignored directives at their peril. Perhaps the department considered that readings for Grade III–IV pupils would, at the time of war’s declaration, pass unnoticed among most Australians, or that withdrawing them would draw unnecessary attention to the department; perhaps it considered that young readers would not take to heart the representations of the Germans amidst all else happening at the time; perhaps it thought young readers’ attitudes about an enemy could be shaped more carefully at a later time.

For those teachers and pupils who worked dutifully through their *School Paper* in August 1914, many of the statements in these articles raised challenges. In ‘The land of the Germans’, Germany was presented as ‘a great land and a busy one; and, when you grow older, you will have to learn a great deal about it’. Given the tenor of the remainder of the article, the department clearly did not mean that readers would need to know about Germany as an enemy nation; rather, Germany was a growing world economy and power, its leaders and people were possessed of admirable ideals, and Australia and the Empire would and should engage with it for mutual benefit. Of Germany’s army, readers learned that:

Germany has a very big army. Nearly every young man who is strong and well is made to join the army; he serves as a soldier for a certain time, and then goes back to his work. The Germans need many soldiers for they have a big country to look after, and nations around them with whom a quarrel might easily arise.

German productivity was to be applauded: ‘Germany is a busy land. It has many large towns with great factories where very many things are made.’ Readers were questioned, ‘Have you ever had a toy or a pencil-box or a needle-case with the words, “Made in Germany,” printed upon it? There are many of these things in our shops’. German town planning and architecture were

models: 'Berlin ... has many famous buildings, statues and parks. The streets are wide and well-kept,' and '[a] tower for the display of advertisements, at a street corner' with well-dressed passers-by was pictured in an orderly and spacious setting. The Reichstag was 'one of the largest buildings ... made beautiful with statues, carvings, and goldleaf'. German culture was to be wholly admired: '[There are] concert halls and theatres,' with Germany being 'a land of song ... In no other country do people sing so much. Soldiers sing on the march, and laborers as they plow the land or reap the corn.' German people were not only happy, they were charitable, as evidenced by the generosity of the wealthy at Christmas time:

The Germans make a great deal of Christmas ... [A Christmas tree] is laden with presents; and all kinds of pretty things are hung upon it ... Those who are too poor to buy a tree may have one given to them by some kind person. Rich men will send a tree to a hospital so that sick people may spend a merry Christmas.

And, most importantly, the Germans valued their educational opportunities:

Boys and girls sing on the way to school, and in the woods, where they sometimes spend a summer day with their teachers ... German boys and girls think a great deal of their schools, and, as a rule, they try to learn as much as they can. They know there is not much room in the world for those who are lazy.²⁷

'The goatherd's choice' followed immediately. In it, a German peasant boy, Johann, exhibited remarkable bravery by walking at dusk across 'a perilous bridge' above 'a deep chasm with a foaming torrent' to locate a lost goat. As reward for his bravery, the goat turned into a fairy princess who granted him any one of three wishes:

'Will you be rich with gold and silver; or will you be a great warrior and conqueror; or will you be a poet and charm the hearts of men?'

'I will be a poet,' Johann replied, 'for song is better than gold or conquest.' ... As he grew older, the gift of song came to him, and he became a great poet.²⁸

Thus, in the same month that war was declared and when Frank Tate and Charles Long would have suspected, as with many other Australians, that a war between Britain and Germany was possible, Victoria's Education Department presented accounts of the German people that either reinforced earlier positive representations or extolled new ones: industriousness, quality

of produce, town planning, high culture, high morality, charity, bravery and respect for education. Even then, when Grade III–IV pupils were advised that a war was in progress, ‘the Germans’ were never named as ‘the enemy’ for the remainder of 1914, they were named only once in each of 1915 and 1916, and not at all in 1917 and 1918.²⁹ And, as for what may now be called the 1914 ‘German number’, no retraction or qualification was offered in the Grade III–IV September or October *School Paper* of that year, nor in the *Education Gazette* of the same months.³⁰ Possibly the department offered something of a retraction in its September number of the Grade VII–VIII *School Paper* but, even then, it did not hold ‘the Germans’ entirely accountable for the declaration of war. In ‘What are we fighting for?’, it explained:

Centuries of bitter experience have burned into the soul of the German the fact that he cannot enjoy his freedom unless his Government is very strong ... Germans’ growth has been cramped by the need of being always ready to act as one man against an enemy. This constant thought of war and of instant obedience has fashioned a type of man who has many virtues, but also some grave faults.

Germany was described in the same article as ‘the home of high thought, advanced science and great music’ – but it had become:

a dreaded menace to the peace of Europe. The people who had won the world’s respect by their gallant resistance to Napoleon’s tyranny, by their splendid devotion to their universities of learning and schools of music, by their spirited schemes for abolishing poverty [had become] the most heartily disliked people in Europe.³¹

On their own, the above two paragraphs may seem sufficient as a departmental definition of the Germans in 1914, as well as an explanation of why Germany had become an enemy. The negative references would have conformed with other representations in popular circulation in those early months and throughout the war. But the department’s ongoing representations of the Germans were more nuanced and depended on who was writing, which Germans were being described, and with what purposes in mind. Only in hindsight and after a thorough review of the *School Paper* can today’s reader understand how complex was the task for *School Paper* readers of all ages in coming to know and form attitudes about the Germans.

‘What are we fighting for?’, and the department’s most negative accounts of Germans during the war, were written by departmental authors other than Frank Tate and Charles Long. The above article was written by one of

their colleagues, William Gillies, a prolific author of textbooks.³² Although Gillies's articles were approved by Long and the department's deputy editor, Gilbert Wallace, they differed markedly in both voice and content.³³ Gillies's writing was still less like Tate's controlled prose.³⁴ Thus, Gillies described the reputation of the military statesman, Otto von Bismarck, as one of 'aggressiveness, executive capacity, relentlessness and far-sighted scheming', evils that Gillies also saw as afflicting modern German militarism.³⁵ Gillies persisted throughout the war with descriptions of Germany as 'a criminal, and an enemy of mankind' and, with little censorship for young readers, of the violence of German soldiers in blinding a French soldier who had refused to divulge information.³⁶ Indeed, 'the hate that the German soldier nurses in his heart actually – so science tells us – poisons his body and clouds his brain ... [W]e fear to be brought under the tyrannous Prussian Government' and must 'smash the German armies and save the world'.³⁷

The *School Paper* enabled the department to publish extracts and illustrations from local and overseas newspapers on wartime events that were only several weeks old, as well as popular poems and songs.³⁸ Hence, pupils read items such as Rudyard Kipling's 'For all we have and are', reproduced from *The Times*: 'Stand up and meet the war / The Hun is at the gate!'; they read Hilaire Belloc's complicated article, 'Why the Germans fell back from Paris', reproduced from the English magazine, *Land and Water*; and they read New Zealand's view, according to its *School Journal*, of the German army's 'record of evil ... burnt too deep'.³⁹ They encountered the infamous image reproduced from the *Sphere*, London, of menacing German cavalymen herding Belgian refugees, mainly old women and men, children and a priest, beneath smoke-filled skies.⁴⁰ They were also confronted by the adaptation of Robert Baden-Powell's poster, 'Are YOU in this?', with supporting text that Germany was 'the enemy of the human race'.⁴¹ They read the views of British politicians and military leaders against the Germans: David Lloyd George, John Jellicoe and Lord Kitchener, as well as those of other nations' leaders, such as America's Woodrow Wilson, France's René Viviani, and South Africa's Louis Botha.⁴² The *School Paper* also offered reinforcement from other sources, such as story or poetry books written about the war and during the war. Hence, pupils, teachers and parents read Harold Begbie's poem, 'The tribute', reproduced from *Songs and Sonnets for England in Wartime*; Kipling's 'The outlaws' from *King Albert's Book: A Tribute to the Belgian King and People*; and Maurice Barrès's 'The heroism of two French children', from *The Undying Spirit of France*.⁴³

As chief editor and lead writer, Charles Long was probably the author of the numerous articles about German military manoeuvres, especially early in

the war when there was widespread belief that the conflict would be short lived and, thus, every detail should be known.⁴⁴ Most of these reports, which later became known as ‘Progress of the war’, were probably syntheses of daily newspaper reporting. They were almost certainly unfathomable to most readers, especially those without strong mental maps of Europe that included hitherto unknown smaller towns in war zones. Some accounts attested to the cruel work of ‘the invaders’: ‘The wholesale burning and destruction ... at Malines, Vise, Rheims, Termonde, Ypres, and other places, has awakened indignation all over the world,’ as did ‘German cruisers’ when they shelled the English seaports of Hartlepool, Scarborough, and Whitby and, later, German air raids that killed civilians in London.⁴⁵

The new weapons of German warfare were not omitted from such reporting. ‘Incessant attacks’ by German submarines on civilians were regularly condemned: ‘German submarines have been busy at their accustomed task of sinking trading ships. Their most important quarry were the passenger steamers ... [a] barbarous practice.’⁴⁶ A painting by Bernard F Gribble entitled *The work of the Hun* showed one such merchant vessel, abandoned by its sailors crowded in rowing boats – testimony to ‘the ruthless methods of German submarine commanders’.⁴⁷ As submarine attacks increased in 1917, so did the number of accounts.⁴⁸ Aerial attacks were also to be feared, but even more so was the sinister stealth in German Ferdinand von Zeppelin’s new means of wreaking havoc, the Zeppelin airship. This fear was demonstrated in Alfred Noyes’s poem, ‘The search-lights’, along with the grim illustration from the *Sphere*: ‘A ship searching for submarines in the water and Zeppelins in the air’.⁴⁹ And the German use of gas was described as ‘a cruel and barbarous form of warfare’, ‘a ghastly business’, but mentioned only twice in all reporting, probably because its horror was deemed too much for young readers.⁵⁰

The differences in the reporting of things German and the diversity of sources from which the materials were derived must surely have baffled some pupils and led them to question the accounts. The capture of the German cruiser SMS *Emden* was celebrated early in the war. However, despite it having sunk 21 ships, including unarmed merchant vessels, readers were told that ‘the German captain won the regard of our people by treating the captured sailors with kindness’. The sailors included British naval men captured during the *Emden*’s landing of a contingent on the Cocos Islands. Also, on landing at Direction Island, part of the Cocos–Keeling Islands, ‘to their credit be it said, [the Germans] did not ill-treat any of the islanders’.⁵¹ Later, readers encountered the report by a French cavalry officer as to how a wounded German soldier selflessly shared with him and a dying Scotsman a morphine injection, before

the German died.⁵² And, at the same time that Belgian children were praying not to be overheard by a spy and attacked in their homes, German pilots in Germany's budding air force were proving 'brave' and 'chivalrous' on the battlefield: 'It is not uncommon for them, after one of our men has met with an accident and been brought down, to fly over our lines, and, dropping a note, inform us whether the victim is killed or only slightly wounded.'⁵³ Such commendable acts were, indeed, reminiscent of prewar Germans, who were 'guided by great thinkers like Kant, Schiller and Goethe – men who taught them to look on all men as brothers ... of free nations'.⁵⁴ Moreover, pupils did not need to look back to old numbers of the *School Paper* if they wanted to know who Friedrich Schiller was. In September 1915, Grade VII–VIII readers encountered him as '(1759–1805) a great German poet' and, though they probably suffered heightened confusion as a result, were urged to read his laudatory poem about Britain:

Great-hearted Britain, Mistress of the Sea,
This storm cloud lowers and would break o'er thee!
How cam'st thou thus to be
The homeland of the free?
The sceptre of the sea,
Was not it won for thee
By many a gallant deed in many a hard-won fight?
Blush, nations of the earth; the palm award
To Britain's spirit and to Britain's sword.⁵⁵

A close reading of the *School Paper* reveals that, for the duration of the war, not one article contradicted the August 1914 impressions of the way in which educated and culture-loving German civilians conducted themselves. Neither did the department at any time call on Victoria's state school children to hate German peoples or actively perform deeds to hurt them, whether the Germans were residents of Australia or living overseas. There was not one example in any number of the *School Paper* of an illustration akin to a Norman Lindsay representation of 'the Hun'.⁵⁶ Just as Ross Campbell never learned 'Keep your eye on Germany' from reading a *School Paper*, neither did Don Charlwood's recollection of "'Kaiser Bill's" face' – 'cruel; his moustache turned fiercely upward; from his helmet rose a sharp spike' – come from a *School Paper*.⁵⁷

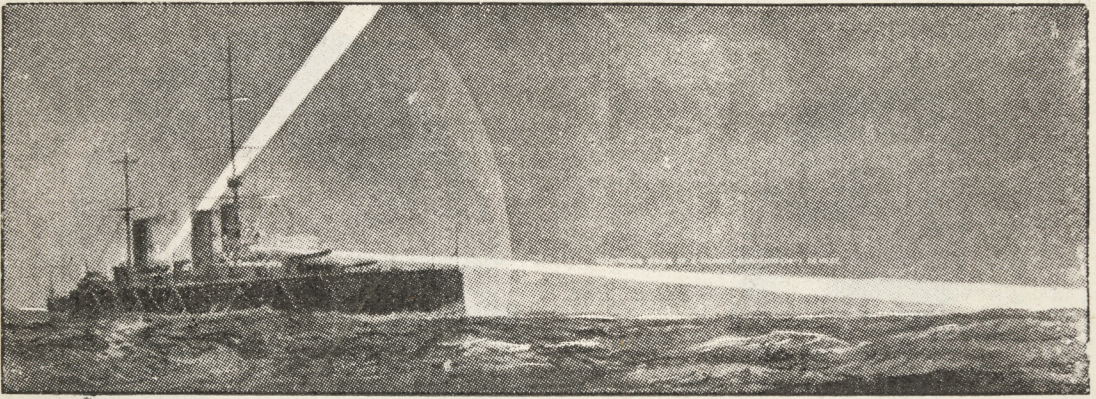
Sparing young readers from entirely gruesome representations of the Germans is, however, insufficient explanation for the other more flattering or, at least, less condemnatory, attitudes. There seems one feasible explanation for the August 1914 'German number' and for the disinclination of Frank Tate

and Charles Long for much of the war to publicly condemn Germany and all Germans.⁵⁸ They made a distinction grounded in ‘education’. ‘The land of the Germans’ reported that ‘German boys and girls think a great deal of their schools’ and, according to Tate and Long, so did German educators.⁵⁹ Since the 1880s, German educators had been praised in the *Australasian Schoolmaster*, *Education Gazette* and reports of the Royal Commission on Technical Education in Victoria, 1899–1901, for their educational methods, which had significantly influenced the ‘New Education’ movement in Britain.⁶⁰ This ‘education’ was Britain’s response to social, political, economic and technological events across Europe that indicated that Britain was at risk of losing its industrial, trading and naval supremacy. The greatest threat to this supremacy came from Germany. Yet, in the years before the war, rather than decry German educational methods, many British, as well as Australian educators, sought to practise them. Tate and Long were amongst Australia’s most powerful advocates. Indeed, five years before the outbreak of war, they published in the *Education Gazette* for August 1909 the telling comment of an English consul: ‘England has more to fear from German schools than from German Dreadnoughts’, this being more a tribute to German educational methods and economic ascendancy than the prediction of war.⁶¹

There were further reasons for Victorian teachers to integrate German thinking and methods into their teaching. In 1911, Tate and Long published in the June *Education Gazette* a positive article by German language teacher J Rucker of the Melbourne Continuation School (the forerunner of Melbourne and MacRoberston high schools) calling for deeper relations between Australians and Germans: ‘The close historical relation between the two countries ... [had] greatly affected English thought and expression.’ Rucker also claimed that a better commercial relationship could be developed with Germany without compromising England’s ‘margin to the good’. According to his statistical calculations from the *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, ‘no other country’ could match the number of Germans naturalised as British subjects. His conclusion would also have pleased Tate and Long:

It is hardly necessary to mention German literature, for every man of culture must realize how beneficial it is to revel in the sublime thoughts of Goethe, Schiller, Heine and all the other great thinkers, writers, and educationalists of Germany.⁶²

Moreover, one year later, in 1912, Tate asked Long to publish in the *Education Gazette* two letters that he had received from Victorian teachers who had visited German schools. Teachers learned that the buildings were well



From *The Sphere*.]

**A SHIP SEARCHING FOR SUBMARINES IN THE WATER AND ZEPPELINS
IN THE AIR.**

Illustration from *The School Paper* (Melbourne), Grades VII and VIII, July 1916, p. 87

equipped and clean; also that the teachers were ‘specialists’ in their curriculum areas. Unfortunately, there was less fun than in Victoria’s junior classes, but senior German pupils knew German history and culture well. As for the German emphasis on rote learning, ‘Miss U’ was undecided: ‘From one point of view such learning is not good, as the pupils need give little thought to the subject. Yet, from another, the subject is better remembered.’ But she was certain of one benefit that also suited Tate and Long’s growing admiration of ‘all things Australian’: ‘The pupils talked of the different heroes as if they knew them personally. If Australians knew as much about Australian history as the Germans know of Germany it would be of great value to them.’⁶³ This echoed an article eight years earlier in the *Australasian Schoolmaster* similarly praising German educators for their excellent methods in familiarising German pupils with German placenames and topography.⁶⁴

By 1914, German educational methods had infiltrated Victoria’s state schools alongside the ‘New Education’ and, even with the war in progress, Tate and Long remained convinced that the methods should be pursued. In 1915, the *Education Gazette* published the view of a visiting scholar who had studied in England and Germany and who commended Australians for wisely following England, Germany and America in their educational methods. He also praised the ‘summer school’ model that the department had adopted for its teachers in their Christmas breaks.⁶⁵ Elsewhere in the department’s community, the Melbourne Teachers’ College principal, Dr John Smyth, had experienced in Germany the educational methods of different institutions before becoming principal and praised those methods publicly until at least December 1914.⁶⁶ A short distance away at Melbourne High School, the

Ours magazine presented a respectful account of German soldiers engaging with the British in the unofficial ‘Christmas truce’ of 1914.⁶⁷

As the war continued, both educational institutions came to eschew such comments, lauding at length what was positive about the Empire and Allies rather than condemning all Germans. This became the overriding approach of the *School Paper*. Nevertheless, Tate surely shocked many readers when he declared boldly in June 1916 that German education had instilled in Germans a greater devotion and ‘constancy to duty’ and that Germans were entitled to mock the English and their kin for their lesser devotion.⁶⁸ A further article by Tate conveyed his meaning in its title, ‘The continuation schools of Munich: how Germany prepares the rank and file of her industrial army’.⁶⁹ Moreover, the item was published not only in the same *Education Gazette* as an article concerning the question of action on Victoria’s German Lutheran schools, but directly after it.⁷⁰ This enduring respect for German education, along with Tate’s seat on the Council of Public Education – an advisory board of representatives from various educational interest groups – offers a significant insight into why Victoria chose not to close Lutheran schools.⁷¹ As late as July 1917, in an *Education Gazette* complete with sobering details and portraits of teacher–soldiers wounded and dead, the ‘modern and commercial history of Australasia, England, Germany, and the United States of America, and ethics of business, international trade and wages’ were presented as still worth knowing and emulating.⁷² And, learned and peace-loving German educators in Germany as well as German civilians in Australia were represented as superior to selected Australians on the home front – notably the ‘anti-conscriptionists’, ‘shirkers’, and non-industrious ‘strikers’ and ‘slackers’, the latter including women and children failing to do their utmost by way of comforts work, fundraising, promoting the war savings movement or supporting returned men or bereaved families on the home front.⁷³

Tate and Long deeply disapproved of German politicians and military leaders and their methods. They viewed the men as cruel, greedy and prepared to seek power at all costs for personal gain rather than community good.⁷⁴ German (or Austrian or Turkish) residents of Australia were not in this category because they were not perpetrators of the war crimes emanating from Germany. Long was hopeful of a return to higher thoughts and deeds in Germany by mid 1917, writing to Grade VII–VIII readers: ‘Constitutional changes are taking place in Germany, tending to give greater executive power to the people’s representatives. The situation plainly shows that the military caste is losing its hold.’⁷⁵ He had longer to wait. Tate also shared his disgust at the German military’s attacks on civilians. Frustrated by anti-conscriptionists in the lead-up to the second

plebiscite, Tate considered what could happen to Australia if Germany won the war and the British Empire no longer controlled southern seas. In a letter to his friend, Sir James Barrett, he wrote briefly of 'German atrocities', especially of the feelings of revulsion generated by 'the *Lusitania* horror'.⁷⁶

On the other hand, Tate and Long seem to have been convinced that the great German educators, philosophers, writers and poets, whose work of the previous 30 years they had admired, would have been as much opposed to war and in favour of peaceful resolutions as they were. Rather than viewing all Germans as the same, Tate and Long appear to have made distinctions rare for their time. If they condemned 'all Germans' they would be condemning educational theories and methods in which they steadfastly believed, despite the war. This is especially remarkable when one considers that Tate had two sons at war and Long, four.⁷⁷ If they condemned no Germans, they would be considered unpatriotic towards their Empire and would draw unwelcome publicity to themselves and their department. This might have distracted attention from the department's extraordinary efforts, overseen by them, to support all Australian, imperial and Allied troops as well as deserving peoples on related home fronts.⁷⁸ The pair may also have been of the opinion held by millions worldwide that the war would be short lived and, even when this proved not to be the case, they may have believed there would be a return soon after to the prewar status quo, including a world of the higher living, thinking, educational and moral standards espoused in 'The land of the Germans' and 'The goatherd's choice'.⁷⁹ They never felt a need to retract those and numerous other articles because the contents represented much that to them was admirable. Nowhere did Tate and Long expressly articulate these distinctions, but they are the most credible explanations for the stance the two and their department took – a stance that was less aggressive and more complex than the widespread negative feeling in the community. There were diverse reasons for 'keeping an eye on Germany' and they were not merely military. Victoria's *School Paper* and many of the Education Department's official documents offer rarely considered perspectives on 'the Germans' during the Great War.