
THE REITH LECTURES 2018: THE MARK OF CAIN
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Reith Lecturer: Margaret MacMillan
Lecture 3

ANITA ANAND: Hello and welcome to the beautiful Sursock Museum in the heart of the ancient city of Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. Now this place was at the epicentre of 15 years of brutal civil war between 1975 and 1990. The fighting left around 150,000 dead. Much of the city lay in ruins, a people were traumatised.

Now, I have never seen so much building, so much renovation taking place. There are cranes everywhere, scattered about, soaring like metal embodiments of optimism and renewal. In recent years this country has been a refuge to those fleeing war. More than 1.5 million Syrians now live in Lebanon and before them the Palestinians came. Some of their families still live in the refugee camps that first took them in in 1948 and 1967. This is a lively, noisy place full of joie de vivre and yet it remains vulnerable – vulnerable to internal and external regional tensions. We are absolutely delighted to be here for the third of our five Reith Lectures by Professor Margaret MacMillan who has been talking about humanity and war.

In the previous programmes we've talked about why we fight, we've talked about the role of the warrior. Now, we will be discussing the impact of war on civilians: I would ask you please to put your hands together and welcome Professor Margaret MacMillan, the Reith Lecturer for 2018.

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Beirut was being attacked both from the sea and the land by foreign forces. Its citizens held out, but their enemies drew closer. After two months their defences were breached on the land side and the foreigners poured in. The citizens ran to the beaches looking for safety for their enemies leapt from their ships and drove them back into the city. The slaughter began and went on until even the foreign commander, not usually given to mercy, called a halt and granted life to the few remaining citizens who were begging him for mercy.
Beirut has seen many wars and has been besieged many times. This particular episode was in 1110 at the end of the First Crusade and the city was attacked by wooden scaling towers and swords, not rockets and Kalashnikovs, but the sufferings of the civilians – as so often – were great.

And Beirut of course is not alone in having known such suffering and such war; many cities around the world have suffered the consequences of war, both civil war and invasion from outside. And civilians have often almost always suffered in such wars. They've been treated in different ways at different times in different places and that has reflected changes in societies and attitudes. There's always been a problem of how you control the soldiers once they have been encouraged to attack. Very difficult to bring them back under control. Civilians have been, as in the Siege of Beirut, both bystanders and participants. Sometimes being a participant is forced upon the civilians; they often have no choice but to fight or surrender. Sometimes, of course, they choose.

What I want to look at tonight is the ways in which civilians have been involved in war both as its target but as influencing war, as participants in war, sometimes as those encouraging war. I want to start with civilians being targets of war and this has been constant pretty much throughout history. Civilians have been killed, have paid the penalty for their leaders losing a war. That killing has gone on on an increasingly great scale. In the 20th century we became very good at producing goods in our factories, we became very good at science and technology, but we also became extremely good at killing each other. In World War Two, the estimate for the number of civilians died ranges between 50 and 80 million. Almost impossible to imagine.

But we've had such killings on a comparable scale before. In the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century, the populations of the German states in the centre of Europe, which were part of that war, went down (it is estimated) between 25 and 40 per cent. Civilians when they have not been killed have been made into slaves, they have been raped, they've been taken they've been taken for forced labour, they've suffered mass deportations. I don't need to tell you about the number of refugees in the world when you in Beirut are experiencing so much of what is happening in our world today, but, as you know, it's been estimated that perhaps 50 million people around the world are refugees from some sort of conflict or another and what both sides have often done is not just attack the civilians but try to destroy their very means of survival.

In the Middle Ages - we think of the Middle Ages as knights in armour, we think of a sort of chivalry, but in fact what often happened is the poor and the helpless on both sides were attacked by those men who talked about chivalry. Sometimes if you wanted to bring your opponent to surrender what you would do is you would pillage his countryside. It's called the Chevauchee

You would march through the countryside putting towns and villages and farmhouses to fire, killing the civilians, destroying their livestocks, cutting down the trees, the orchard, the olive trees that made it possible for them to survive.

Cities would suffer particular horrors if they held out. The longer you held out, the worse the horror was likely to be. In Magdeburg – just to give you one example – in Germany in the Thirty Years' War, there were 25,000 people living in what was a prosperous and pretty town in 1631. It was besieged by troops representing the Emperor of Austria. Finally it surrendered, the troops came in, the fires started. Seventeen hundred out of 1900 buildings in Magdeburg were destroyed. Civilians were killed, women and children. Some girls as young as 12 were raped. Twenty thousand may have died. It was impossible for a long time to bury all the bodies. When a census was done the following year, there were 449 people living in the town and in Germany they still talk about the sack of Magdeburg as something that almost happened yesterday. It is still there in the German memory, in the German consciousness.

All civilians suffer I think we would agree in war, but I want to take just a moment to talk about the particular sufferings of women. So often women are singled out. Rape is so often expected as reward for soldiers. There was, just to give you one example, the French commando leader in the Algerian War of Independence who said to his men, "You're allowed to rape, but do it discreetly", and that has often been something that has happened in war.

In the 1990s in the Bosnian War, it has been estimated – and again these are estimates which are very hard to get our minds around – 20,000 to 50,000 women were raped by Serbian nationalist forces. These were … these were Muslim Bosnian women. It seems to have been something that the Serbian nationalists – and not all Serbs of course were like this but these were the Serbian nationalist forces – it seems to have been something that Serbian nationalist forces and their leaders encouraged. Women were set aside, Bosnian women were set aside in rape camps and brothels. Public rapes were used to intimidate and to gain information and also of course to encourage flight.

There is evidence that Serbian fighters thought they were doing their people a service by making Bosnian women pregnant, by in a sense trying to destroy the Bosnian race and make them bear Serbian children.

Women have not always of course suffered in this way in war, but they've often been used to … as an excuse for war. Countries have gone to war saying that they need to defend their women. In the First World War a great deal of propaganda was made by all sides about the need to fight the other side because they knew that the other side had designs on their women and this was an excuse often and a justification for war.

But women have also supported war. It's sometimes said we are the more peaceful of the sexes and I don't think that is true; we have sometimes supported war with enthusiasm. The Spartan mothers used to say to their sons, "Come back with your shields or on them." And of course we've probably all heard about the women in the First World War in Britain, for example, who gave out white feathers to men of military age who they felt should be in uniform - not checking

of course whether these men had fought, whether these men had been wounded, but handing them out white feathers to indicate that they were cowards.

Virginia Woolf, the great English novelist, wrote in *A Room of One's Own* – and I'll quote: 'Women have served all these centuries as looking glasses, possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size. Without that power', she went on, 'the earth would probably still be swamp and jungle. The glories of all our wars would be unknown.'

And so I think we have to remember with Virginia Woolf that women have played a role in supporting war and of course they've played a role in supporting soldiers. Women were camp followers and this meant literally that they followed the camps of the soldiers they moved around. They provided food; they provided supplies; they provided companionship; they provided sex. They played a very important role in making sure that the soldiers were able to continue to do what it was that they were doing.

When wars became more complicated, you had women forming associations at home to support the war effort. In the 19th century, as war demanded more and more of the resources of a country, you had women's patriotic associations springing up in countries all over Europe. I'll give you one example from Prussia where you had patriotic Prussian women's associations who would provide resources for the troops, they'd set up hospitals, they'd provide medical supplies, and again they would encourage the men to enroll and to fight.

And I think so often in war women also pick up the pieces - when the war is over, when the war is going on. Sometimes the men can't face what has happened.

I've read a wonderful memoir – and I'm sure there are many such examples – but just one I'll quote by someone called Lebussa Fritz-krokow who was one of these women from a Junker family, a Prussian military type of family in East Russia with landed estates – not necessarily rich but people of certain means – where it was expected the men would fight. And when the Russians were coming, the Soviet troops were coming in 1945, the men quite often went to pieces - they didn't know what to do, they didn't know how to carry on. And she and her mother and the other women in the family survived. They struggled. They looked after the children. She climbed over fences to steal vegetables, she smuggled people out through the Soviet lines. She called her book (I think fittingly) *The Hour of the Women*.

Civilians in general – and this is true of men as much as it is of women – civilians have played, I think, an increasing part in war. They've always been targets, but increasingly the war effort has come to depend on the civilians. Because what has happened of course in the 19th and 20th centuries and the 21st centuries is that war has become more complex, wars are often lasting longer, and it is necessary to marshal the resources of civilian societies to support that war, and so women have done things like working in the factories when the men have gone off to fight; they've gone to work in the offices when the men have gone off to fight; they've gone to work on the farms when the men have gone off to fight. Without women and without civilians in general, without the old men who come back to work or without the boys who come into work, it

would not be possible to carry on the sorts of wars that we have had in the past two centuries and in some cases we're still having today.

And women have often felt an obligation to keep cheerful, to keep morale up. There are so many memoirs, but there's one that I've been reading recently of a woman called Nella Last – a very ordinary woman who was asked to keep a diary. It was part of a project in the UK, the United Kingdom, to try and keep records of what people were thinking and feeling in the 1930s and 40s. And she lived just north of Liverpool. It was on a part of the coast which was known for its shipbuilding and so it was a target. It got bombed regularly by German planes coming over in the Second World War. She herself went to work for something called The Women's Voluntary Service. She still, however, felt the need to run her house. She still tried to keep cheerful. Both her sons were in danger of being called up and one was. She still tried to keep her husband cheerful. He was an air raid warden going out when the bombs hit and trying to deal with things. And she complains in her diary, but she never complains to them. She says … In one entry, she said, 'I feel like the little Dutch boy who put his hand in the dyke to hold back the water.' She said, 'I must' – and I quote - 'I must keep my dyke strong enough or else at times I'd go under. And of course', she added, 'I would be no good to those who have to go and fight.'

And so the complicated relationship of civilians to war, their participation whether willingly or unwillingly when they're made the targets of war, I think is something important; and I think we need also to keep remembering that women quite often have a different experience from men.

Women – and I will leave the subject in a moment – women have also fought sometimes in war. Not so much as men, not nearly so much as men, wars have tended to be fought by men, but sometimes women have become combatants. They're often written out of the record afterwards. It's said there was something wrong with them – they were depraved or they were whores or they really shouldn't have been at the front.

But I think what war did, for civilians generally and I think also for women, was gave them a sense of their own importance in society and their own importance in the war effort. And quite often of course women have led opposition to war. In the last days of the Soviet Union it was the mothers who went out on the streets and said "we don't want our sons to go to Afghanistan" and so women have often played a very important part in voicing opposition to war.

And sometimes I think women have benefitted from war. It's an odd thing about war, but sometimes it brings social change, and sometimes it brings social change in a way that people remember after with a certain amount of nostalgia.

Nella Last, the English woman I mentioned before, talks about her sense of purpose, talks about how she no longer gets the bad headaches she used to get, she no longer gets crying fits. She feels useful. And she also becomes a bit tougher with her husband. Her husband says to her one day, "Why aren't you home? I want my tea." And she says, "Well I've been busy all day", and he says, "You know you're not so sweet as you used to be." And she snaps at him and she puts this down rather proudly in her diary. She said, 'Well who wants a woman of fifty to be sweet anyway and, besides, I suit me a lot better.' He did actually become a bit more sympathetic and began to make the tea occasionally.

So we've tried through history to cope with the fact that civilians are an important part of the war effort and we've tried, I think, to try and protect them. We've had rules of war; and rules are made and rules, as we know, are broken, and I will be talking more about that in my next lecture. But I want to just talk a little bit about what happens to civilians who find themselves in the middle of a warzone like those citizens of Beirut did in 1110 and they do resist. And again we've tried – I say we collectively, human society – we've tried to deal with this. We've tried to deal with civilians who pick up guns and take potshots at soldiers. Should they be treated as soldiers in uniform or should they be treated as something different? And in general armies have not liked guerilla fighters. The word of course comes from the Napoleonic Wars when the Spanish took up weapons and began to try and attack the Napoleonic soldiers in small groups or even individually, and the military of course tend to dislike such kinds of wars and they have tended to regard civilians who begin to fight as not proper soldiers and they've often exacted dreadful punishments on those civilians.

In the Second World War when the Germans were suffering repeated attacks towards the end of the war by the French Resistance and resistance in other countries, they adopted a policy of massive retaliation. As you probably know, there's a town in France called Oradour-sur-Glane where there had been resistance activity and the SS decided to make an example of it. Six hundred and forty-two of the civilians in Oradour-sur-Glane were murdered, including babies. One person escaped, managed to get out a window and escape, but everyone else who was there died. The village has never been inhabited again. The French have kept it as a memorial to what can go badly wrong in war.

Sometimes the worst wars are ones in which civilians are of course deeply involved. And those can be civil wars, and I don't think I need to tell you about what a civil war can be like, and we still see examples of civil war going on today in Sudan, in Yemen, in parts of Africa.

I think one of the reasons that civil wars are so passionate and can be so cruel is because civilians are involved and because they are family wars - because there is a feeling that those who are fighting are somehow part of the family and betraying the family; that it's an aberration, that they're illegitimate; that those who want to say secede from a nation are trying to destroy it or those who want to take over the government of a nation or be recognised as an important part of a nation are somehow illegitimate. And I think that can bring, as we've seen, savage reprisals on both sides, partly because passions are so high and partly because there is this sense that the family is somehow being betrayed.

It didn't happen just here. It didn't happen just in the Middle East. It didn't happen just in Europe. It's happened in the United States as well of course. One of the worst conflicts, the worst conflict the United States has ever suffered was the American Civil War. More people were killed in the American Civil War than in any of the other American wars put together. And you can see those sorts of passions. Let me just quote from General Sherman who was of course a unionist general devoted to maintaining the union and who became responsible for some of the worst atrocities in that war. He wrote to his brother in 1862 as he was already beginning what became notorious for his reprisals against civilians in the South. He said to his brother, General Sherman did, 'It is about time the North understood the truth that the entire South – man, woman

and child - are against us, armed and determined, and we must treat them' – he went on to say – 'as enemies'. And treat them as enemies he certainly did.

And so civilians, as I say, have played all sorts of roles in war. Increasingly of course, as war has become more complex, attacking civilians has become a very important way in which you get at your enemy. With total war, which is what we saw in the late 19th and 20th centuries, societies were fighting societies and it wasn't just a question of putting your soldiers or your Navies already prepared and armed into the field and onto the seas and seeing what they would do. The issue now was to keep supplying them, keep the materials coming.

The First World War lasted for four years and what that meant was that societies had to mobilise all their resources, they had to make sure the factories could produce the equipment that was needed, and that meant immobilisation of the resources and finances of societies in ways which we have rarely seen before. What it also meant of course was that it now became increasingly legitimate to attack the civilians who were working on supporting the war effort because they were now seen as so deeply embedded in the fabric of that war effort that you could no longer make a distinction, and so blockading enemy countries - as the British Navy did - making it impossible for supplies to come in, including food supplies, became a weapon of war.

And of course by the Second World War, we had – I say we and I'm thinking of humanity as a whole – we had the means to attack each other over vast distances. The long range bomber, the bombs made it possible to destroy cities in ways that wasn't possible before. And it became really I think a slippery slope where the allies, just to give one example, began bombing not just legitimate targets – not just factories, not just railway yards, not just shipyards – but increasingly it began mass area bombing of civilians.

The man in charge of the British bombing effort, Sir Arthur Harris – also known not understandably as Bomber Harris – wrote in a top secret memorandum in October 1943: 'The aim of our bombing', he said, 'is not to knock out specific factories.' And he said to the government, 'You should come out and say unambiguously that the aim' – and I'll quote him here – 'the aim is the destruction of the German citizen, the killing of German workers and the disruption of civilised community life throughout Germany'. That was the aim of allied bombing in the Second World War and of course it was the aim of other sorts of bombings – Japanese bombing, German bombing. It became permissible to attack civilian areas. And I think it's significant that when the Nazi leadership was tried at Nuremberg, mass bombing of civilians was not among the indictments levelled against them because the allies were very, very vulnerable on that.

And of course today that blurring of lines continues. We have an expanding range of weapons, the means to deliver more and more terror and horror to far-off countries. We have drone warfare, which is managed often from sites in California, Arizona, and can hit targets in places like Afghanistan. We have a new range of weapons. We now of course are moving into cyberwar where it's now possible to contemplate one power taking out the whole electronic system. And in fact it's already happened. It happened to Estonia. Probably done by Russia. Well I think almost certainly. It's now possible to knock out the whole electronic nerve system on which modern societies depend. And there are new weapons coming along which will make it easier and more

possible to attack civilians – small weapons. If you want to have a few nightmares, I can suggest a YouTube video on killer robots, but don't watch it just before you go to bed.

You also, I think, have had civilians engaged – partly unwillingly, but also partly willingly – more and more in the wars that their countries have waged, and I think that is partly again with the growth of a complex human society, with the growth of something called public opinion which began to become very, very clear in the 19th century. You saw civilians increasingly taking an interest in what their countries did and often pushing their governments to behave in ways which the governments might not have wanted. The British Conservative Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, who disliked the idea of public opinion enormously, complained once. He said: "It's like having a gigantic lunatic asylum at my back and I'm being pushed to do things that I don't really want to do."

In the 1890s, just to give you one example, Germany and the United States and Britain got into an absurd and very complicated confrontation over the Islands of Samoa in the South Pacific – miles away from anywhere, none of their national interest – but in Germany, in particular, the question of whether Germany would get enough of the Samoan Islands became a very important one. One of the German politicians, a German diplomat who was involved in the negotiations – and there was even talk of war over these islands which most people didn't know where they were - one of the German diplomats said at the time, and again I quote: "For even though the great majority of our pothouse politicians did not know whether Samoa was a fish or a fowl or a foreign queen, they shouted all the more loudly that, whatever else it was, it was German and must remain forever German." And so governments have found themselves, as the Germans did in the 1890s, somehow being pushed by public opinion, by civilian opinion to get into war.

As civilians got more and more engaged, of course governments also had a worry – and I think they still do have it sometimes – that civilians might not be tough enough; that we might have to call them up to fight but will they actually fight? And this was a real worry in the 19th and 20th centuries because certainly before the end of the 19th century and for the first half of the 20th century having very large armies mattered and you got people in the upper classes saying you know all those people who work in factories, all those people who live in cities, will they make good soldiers, can we trust them? Is it a good thing that we actually teach them how to use weapons because they might turn them on us? There was a lot of worry - and I think we still see it in our own societies – about decadence and softness??

One of my favourite quotations is from a very senior British general in the period around 1895 to 1900. He was commander in chief of all the home forces on the British Isles. He said, "It's a very bad sign in our society that ballet dancers and opera singers are now valued so highly." So there was concern. I apologise for the dancers who are here tonight, but it was I think a real concern.

In fact what happened is that as civilians got more engaged in the affairs of their countries, they often became more militaristic rather than less, and the ordinary civilians who went into the armies and received their few years of military training often ended up being more conservative and more militaristic. And even things like games, the Olympic Games, which were started to try and overcome nationalism, became part of this competition. If you look at the language even around the early Olympic Games, it was in terms of competition between one country and

another. And we got, in the schools you got little children wearing uniforms, certainly until before the First World War, and drills: you got little children learning how to be good boy scouts, learning how to march and joining cadets.

We have a bit of it today. I think some of the fascination in the United States with the National Rifle Association is that admiration for military virtues and we still have a fascination with games that involve war; war games are among the most popular electronic games that there are. It even sometimes comes into football. Some of the Ultra fans in Italy in fact organise themselves and wear uniforms and they give themselves names like commandoes, guerillas, Fedayeen. Also call themselves sometimes after partisan groups from the Second World War.

On the other hand, we've had a move in a number of societies where civilians have become less militaristic. If you think of what Germany is like today compared to what Germany was like before the Second World war, it's a very, very different society. So it's not inevitable that civilians will become engaged in the military affairs of their countries in a way that makes them want to see that country fight. Sometimes civilians can – and there's always changes – become more peaceful.

Another paradox of war is that sometimes war has benefitted particular civilian groups. It benefitted women like Nella Last, the housewife who lived just north of Liverpool. It benefitted her because she felt freer to express her own opinions; she got out of the house; she felt that she had a purpose. It benefitted women in groups. Women were given the vote in many European countries as a result of their war work in the First World War. In fact the British government gave a lot of women, women over 30 – they didn't think younger women could be trusted with the vote – but women over 30 got the vote even before the First World War had ended because it was recognised they had played such an important part in making the war effort possible.

Other groups – African Americans in the United States, working classes - have also benefitted from war. It's been recognised as civilians have made a contribution to war, it has also been important for governments and others to support them and to reward them.

And one of the other unintended consequences of war which has benefitted civilians is that in major struggles there has often been a compression between the poles in society between the very rich and the poor because governments have had to mobilise all resources, they've had to have social benefits for the poorer members of society or they won't support the war effort, and they have had to tax the well to do. And so the levelling effect of war, the compression (as economists often call it) between the very rich and the poor, the push towards a broader middle class has often been a reaction to war.

We will never I think fully understand the feelings of those who have fought in war if we haven't done it ourselves of those who've lived through a war, but there's also a curiosity – and I just leave you with this and perhaps you can tell me from your own experiences if I'm wrong – that sometimes in a war situation, for civilians as much as for soldiers, there is a comradeship and an intensity of feeling.

Vera Brittain, who was an English memoirist and anti-war activist, who lost her fiancé, lost her beloved brother, lost two of his friends who she loved deeply in the First World War, said – and I quote: "Whenever I think of the War today, it is not as summer but always as winter; always as cold and darkness and discomfort, and an intimate warmth of exhilarating excitement which made us irrationally exult in all three. Its permanent symbol, for me, is a candle stuck in the neck of a bottle, the tiny flame."

We have to hope that war is not the only way to achieve solidarity in communities, is not the only way to enable people to live and to remember their experiences but sometimes war does bring those benefits.

What I'm going to talk about next time is our often futile but repeated attempts to manage, control and limit war, and perhaps we may live to see it, even outlaw it. Thank you.

(29.12)

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

ANITA ANAND: Margaret, thank you very much indeed. I mean an absolutely fascinating lecture. And I just want to pick you up on that last point that you made that might be quite difficult for some people here to hear – that you know war brings benefits even to the civilian populations who are often caught in the crossfire. Here of all places, I wonder if that is true. If somebody has a comment on that. If I would ask you please to take … when the microphone gets to you just to state who you are, that would be wonderful.

FOUAD SINIORA: Thank you very much for a very fascinating lecture….I am Fouad Siniora. (**Anita Anand asks who he is**) … I am the former prime minister of Lebanon. If we actually want to stop war, we have to really address the real problems that haven't been solved in this part of the world that is not stopping real war to come in. And I think this is the right question that should be asked, not only try to put some examples about the miseries and the miseries of women and others and so on. Thank you.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Well I think the miseries of women are quite important …if I may say. But no, I think and I'm glad you asked the question because I think it is very important for us to understand war. My view is that war is deeply embedded in human society. We don't have to like it or approve of it, but it's very much part of being human. And it's not something that is particular to this place or to any other place; it is something that runs right through human history and I think we have to accept that. It doesn't mean we accept war, but I think we have to understand war and I think we have to understand why it starts, why people fight, how do you stop it, what impact it has on society, how society is engaged in it.

And so what I'm doing as an historian is trying to understand war better because I think if we don't understand it better, all of us, wherever we live in the world, are going to find ourselves getting into situations where we think war is an option and I think we need to know just how dangerous war is and how uncontrollable it can be once it starts.

ANITA ANAND: Let's go back to our former prime minister. So now that you've heard what Margaret has had to say maybe you want to come back?

FOUAD SINIORA: Well my question is still pertinent…Just to give you an idea. About … Today I've heard about the number of refugees in the world, which is about six to eight million refugees.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yeah.

FOUAD SINIORI: Half of them are from the Arab world although the Arab world in population and in terms of area constitutes about 5 per cent of the total world.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yeah.

FOUAD SINIORI: This tells you about the extent of problems in the region. How to deal with the … with the situation? This is what really matters to us.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yes.

ANITA ANAND: … we look to a historian to give us a historical context. You as a former prime minister can give us perhaps a political context. When you say you want to hear what those reasons are, you must have thought about this a lot? You're the former prime minister of Lebanon. Do you have the answer to that question that you've just posed?

FOUAD SINIORI: Well I think … I think we have to join forces, the world at large, in trying to put an end to a problem in the Middle East that is not spreading only in the Middle East but spreading in the whole world; that is affecting the whole world in terms of more refugees than which Europe is suffering from.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yeah.

FOUAD SINIORI: And that's why it has to be done on the basis of common interests between the Western world and the Middle East in order to put an end to this situation.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: I mean it seems to me what you have here – and I'm not an expert in any way on the complicated history of the Middle East – but what you have is that toxic combination of tensions within a region and you have outside meddling. And you're right, I mean it has … the solutions to the problems of the region have to come both from people within the region but also have to come from those outside powers that meddle, but you have to mention Russia as well, you have to think of Turkey. You know the problems it seems to me that the Middle East suffers from is partly geography – you're too close, you're too tempting, there are too many people.

But what historians can do … We can't provide answers, easy answers, but what we can do is help perhaps ask questions and we can, by comparing other conflicts in other times, we can say how did they finally come to an end? How did the Thirty Years' War in Germany finally come to

an end? That was for Europe as bad as the wars that you have suffered in this century. In the 17th century huge sloughs of Europe were destroyed by the Thirty Years' War. How did it finally come to an end? What was the solution? How was it brought about?

But I think there is no easy answer to what … the present problems of the Middle East and I don't see one emerging in the future. But I agree with you: unless there is cooperation, there is no hope of getting any lasting peace here.

ANITA ANAND: Gentleman over there.

BASHAR HAIDAR: I'm Professor of Philosophy at the American University of Beirut. Your talk had many insights about the impact of war. One of the striking ones and interesting ones of course ae the benefits of the war to the marginalised including women and minorities. And I have a kind of question here: does this impact differ between national wars and civil wars? Because national war, there's a sense of pride in them, the sense of rewarding the sacrifice; even the effort in favour of war is rewarded. Civil wars tend to be looked back at with shame where civilians can be seen only as victims, not as heroes supporting the war effort. And the women and the marginalised do not benefit, it seems to me, from these civil wars. Do you agree with this?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yes. I think civil wars are different in their nature. I think because they are within a society, they fragment that society even more. And the ending of civil wars, which comes eventually - usually when one side simply can no longer fight on - is often not the solution to the problem; it often leaves very, very bitter memories.

I mean I think we're seeing in the United States, for example, just how long those memories of the Civil War and the resentment of the South have gone on. I think we're still seeing that surfacing in American politics today. St Augustine said that the purpose of war should be to make peace and that you should remember – and others have said it too – that you should remember that those who have been defeated will one day want revenge unless you treat them well. And the temptation of course is always to treat the defeated badly, but I think the temptation is much greater in a civil war because you're more unforgiving in a civil war. You feel such a resentment to the other side for having created it and so I think civil wars bring a particular burden and place a particular burden on society. And I think they're more difficult to commemorate as well. They're more difficult to remember afterwards because there will continue to be such disagreement over how to commemorate them.

But if you are say Britain that won the Second World War, you can commemorate that as a moment when you came together and when you won an important victory. There's no way of commemorating a civil war in the same way and this is why they're so difficult and so painful to talk about, I think. The Spanish at the moment are having this endless discussion about how to commemorate their civil war and that of course was over half a century ago/

ANITA ANAND: Question down here...

FADLO KHURI: Hello, Fadlo Khuri, President of the American University of Beirut. First of all, a wonderful lecture. Not surprisingly thought provoking. So you talked about civil wars briefly or you got drawn into a discussion of civil wars and you talked about also decisive wars like the Second World War. What I'd like to hear a little bit is your thoughts on the indecisive wars, those that linger with no resolution – Vietnam in the American psyche or the Afghanistan invasion for the Russians or indeed the war that you're most famous for studying, World War One – because these unresolved wars, like most civil wars, tend to leave more loose ends.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yes I think wars always leave loose ends but some more than others. I mean I think in a way you should wish for a decisive victory because at least it's over and done with. The ending of the First World War left very bad feelings on both sides. Among the allies, the Japanese, who were an ally in the First World War, and the Italians felt they'd been cheated and that helped to lead to the move in both Italian and Japanese politics towards more nationalistic and indeed (in the case of Italy) fascist politics, and Germany was left feeling that it hadn't really been defeated. And this rather poisonous – and it was a myth – grew up in Germany, fuelled of course by the German high command, that Germany had never lost in the battlefield, therefore it shouldn't have signed a peace treaty, and that helped to fuel the rise of Hitler to power. And so an unresolved war, a war that ends in an unresolved way, can lead to further problems.

The alternative is absolute defeat and the allies in the Second World War decided on unconditional surrender. But you then look at the price that Japan and Germany paid for that. I mean they were levelled. You know it's very hard when you try and weigh these things. I'm not sure there is a moral calculus. How do you weigh it? On the other hand, both Germany and Japan have become peace loving societies and democratic societies since the end of the Second World War, so I suppose you could argue that over the years maybe that price was worth it.

But you know I think the wars that don't ever end … and I find very worrying this whole notion of a war on terror. I don't see how you can wage a war on a noun anyway and the war on terror or terrorism seems to have no end, so how do you know when you've won? And I think what we all want is some sort of resolution. But no, the indeterminate wars Afghanistan has never ended.

ANITA ANAND: What would that look like – a war on terror that ended or had a full stop? What would that be?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Well I think the trouble with the war on terror is it's a war on a concept and we have philosophers here who can tell me more about the difficulties of waging war on a concept. But I mean what I think of as war is an organised application of force by one organised group against another and at some point somebody wins and somebody loses. But with something like a war on terror there is no end to it. You can't say that anyone's won and new terrorist groups are always appearing and so you mobilise for something which has no end and is that the right language? I think I would rather say that terrorists are criminals and they should be treated as criminals and they should be treated as the police and the courts by criminals and then you know what you're dealing with.

ANITA ANAND: Can I ask all of you, a lot of people listening to this now and they have had no experience of living through a war and we haven't heard yet from had anyone yet who can actually tell us what that actually felt like ..whether it's changed their mode of thinking living through those days. What did that feel like?

YUSEF AL ZAIN: My name is Yusef al Zain I am a businessman. I'm a Lebanese … came to Beirut. It was the most incredible experience that we lived for two years and then all of a sudden, we suddenly were living in the middle of a war. And it happened at such a speed, in such a way that no one could have ever imagined to plan for it or to think about it or to … And since then what has happened over from 1975 till 1990 is that there was a continuous amount of fighting, for different reasons. Every single three, four years we had a different reason to continue going with the war. Then the war stopped in 1990 and we are continuing to live in cold war. And till today we are unable as a nation, as a people that have suffered from a serious amount of damage to our families, to our individuals, to our society, to our businesses, to our legacy, to come to grips with what we have lived with, through, and to understand it and to try to deal with it. …

ANITA ANAND: When do you think things may change? *(Yusef Al Zain laughs)* A lot of people are laughing, a lot of people are chuckling and shaking their heads.

YUSEF AL ZAIN: No, it's not a question of laughing. It's a question of really if we look at…You mentioned two examples, which is Germany and Japan that went from warrior-like nations to peaceful nations, and definitely there was a huge vaccination for that society to decide to make the transition. South Africa I think for a country like Lebanon is a much more relevant example of completely two different cultures that fought each other in a massive manner, but finally were willing to come to grips through what they called the tribunals or the truth tribunals and they made people commit and commend and accept the guilt.

ANITA ANAND: *(over)* Thank you.

YUSEF AL ZAIN: We have not done that.

ANITA ANAND: Thank you very much. If you pass that to the young lady over here. Yes what was your question?

SALIFA HYAT: I am Salifa Hyat. I'm a correspondent and I'm 19 years old. So I obviously never lived the war, the civil war, and all I hear or all I know of the war is from my parents or my family members. And I believe that at some point we lose what is war, so I do not have a clear definition or a clear understanding of what was our civil war. How does this affect us negatively at some point – the younger generation, the generation that never lived the war? Our view, how does this affect our view on other people of our society? Thank you.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: I think it is so important – again we were talking about it earlier – to know when to talk about things, but to try and talk about them. I mean some of the most interesting developments I've seen have been peacebuilding initiatives when you get people trying to bring groups together in small groups and have them talk about what divides them. I think what is dangerous is the silence where you simply don't talk about them at all but they're

there under the surface and if you can try and bring people of different perspectives together and have them share their perspectives. Quite often people who belong to a particular group, have a particular memory of the past, don't know what another group is thinking and it seems to me one step towards understanding ourselves and others better is to try and understand what it is other people are remembering and how it is they see me.

I come from a country which has mercifully Canada has been spared the conflicts you've had in Lebanon, but we've had a long running conflict between English and French speakers in my country and I think one of the things that has helped to bridge that gap is that English speakers have begun to understand the fears and the resentments of the French speakers and have begun to learn French much more and the French language in Quebec is now protected and French culture is protected and that I think has been a reassurance. But it's a very long process. I think there is no easy solution. But I think for your generation, possibly with the passage of time you may see a thawing. You have a cold war at the moment. Cold wars do thaw. The cold war ended peacefully – the big cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union – so let us hope that one day your cold war will come to a peaceful end and there will be a thaw rather than a renewed deep freeze.

ANITA ANAND: I had a very interesting conversation with somebody here in Beirut and I said, "Look, the civil war, how do you teach it at school because you have all of these different interest groups? How do you teach it?" She said, "Oh we don't talk about it at school. Of course we don't talk … We don't go near it." You talked about the Spanish struggling to come to terms with talking about the civil war. Looking at history, at what point does it become okay for a people to examine a wound that hurt so very deeply?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: I think it becomes okay when the wound has begun to heal and that usually means the passage of time. I think it's very difficult to talk right after a dreadful conflict about what happened. I think in Rwanda, for example, they've done some talking about the murder of innocent Rwandans but not too much. In South Africa after apartheid, they did try and have truth and reconciliation but I think there the institutions were strong enough. But when you have a society that is coming out of a very difficult period where there is no agreement on what that period meant, when there is no real agreement on what a peace should look like, then do you really want to open this up again? And we know that people take history very seriously - they will use the past to argue with each other, they will tell each other stories, they will blame each other for things in the past - and I think it's a matter of timing. I think the Spanish probably should be talking about it now because enough time has passed and two or three generations have gone on. I see someone shaking his head, so perhaps you're Spanish and perhaps you feel they shouldn't be…

ANITA ANAND: Who's the gentleman shaking … Who was it shaking your head? You sir?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yeah.

HAKID HABIB: I didn't mean that.

ANITA ANAND: That'll teach you.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Sorry to put you on the spot. *(Hakid Habib laughs)*

ANITA ANAND: Tell us who you are, first of all.

I'm Hakid Habib (ph): I'm a sort of banker, but I'm originally an anthropologist. What I mean is that in Spain it's still quite bitter this issue.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yeah.

HAKID HABIB I mean let's look even at the United States. The Civil War is still partly taboo between individuals not at the national level. The War of the Roses is behind us, yes, so I think the scale of time is very long.

ANITA ANAND: what about here?

HAKID HABIB: I will not try to guess.

BRAHIM SHAMSADEEN: I'm Brahim Shamsadeen, Lebanese former minister of state. I have two questions for you, professor, but first I have to say that I don't agree with the idea that war or violence is embedded in human nature. It's a part of the social dynamism to put it this way. My first question: has there ever been a situation where we can call it as a cold civil war? This is my first question.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: What civil war, sorry?

BRAHIM SHAMSADEEN: Cold civil war.

ANITA ANAND: A cold war, a cold …

BRAHIM SHAMSADEEN: No, no, a cold civil war. Not just cold war.

ANITA ANAND: A cold civil war, uhuh.

BRAHIM SHAMSADEEN: Second question. Usually governments go to war, they decide to go to war. Has there ever been a situation in history besides Sparta that a whole society has decided to go to war and to be a warrior society rather than just to be victimised or be on the victim side and receive the ..……? Thank you.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: A cold civil war. Yes, I think you're right – I think there have been times when you've had people who have felt great suspicion and hostility towards each other and I think you could argue we have a bit of that in Italy at the moment between the North and the South. You know Italy remains I think a deeply divided country.

The great thing about a cold war is it remains cold. It means you can organise for war, you can be rude about each other, but you don't actually start killing each other, and sometimes you just need enough deterrence and sometimes you eventually get used to each other.

A whole nation going to war? There have certainly been nations that have been more warlike than others where military values have been exalted. I think of Prussia. Prussia, the joke used to be about Prussia that it's not a country that happens to have an army, it's an army that happens to have a country, and among the Prussian upper classes in particular war was something that young men did that was just expected of you. You were brought up in one of these Prussian Junker families, these landed families, and it was expected you would serve your king probably by being a soldier and if you couldn't be a soldier then you'd be a civil servant or you'd possibly go into the church which was seen as a third and not as desirable option.

And so you do get societies in which military values are exalted, but even in those societies you get people who say this is wrong. And in 1939 when Germany was going to war – and this was a war that certainly the German leadership wanted – a great many Germans were shattered. They were upset, they were depressed; they didn't want to go to war. And so societies I think are complex organisms in which you do get very different views on whether societies should or shouldn't go to war, but I think you can argue some societies are more warlike than others and I would argue that.

HEBBA KANZO: Hi, my name is Hebba Kanzo and I'm a journalist here in … in Lebanon covering the region. You were talking about … You asked the question earlier about people who haven't experienced war. I'm Lebanese American, so I only know war through my parents' eyes. And I took a family member to Beirut and there was an exhibition of scars of war, so it was representations of buildings which have been bombed out, bullets. And one of the photos is … was a family hiding in a staircase and this family member could barely look at the picture, so I know there's a lot of people like that that can't, especially here in Lebanon, that can't relive that. So who should be responsible for telling their stories - is it the younger generation within Lebanon, is it historians like yourself that have been outside of Lebanon – to get that other perspective? Who do you think … Who represents the best representation for …

(1.13.54) ANITA ANAND: Before … before Margaret answers …

HEBBA KANZO: Yeah.

ANITA ANAND: … who do you think?

HEBBA KANZO: I think it should be a mix personally, but there is so much political attachment, especially with the civil war here, because it was so gruesome and so long that people have their deep affiliations with certain political parties of who they think is right and who they thought was wrong and they have their own personal stories of their brother still missing or family member still gone. So it is still deeply rooted in a lot of hate, anger, resentment and sadness. What do you think?

MARGARET MACMILLAN: I think stories are told in a number of ways. I think they're told by people like me who collect stories and think about them often a long time later, but they're

told by the people who live through it and they're told by artists. I think we owe a great deal to the novelists and the poets and the painters and the musicians who can do something to portray what people have been through. And I think for people telling their stories, it must be their own choice. It can be very difficult and sometimes I think the telling of the story perhaps can be a sort of catharsis.

I had a colleague in Oxford who worked on people who had been tortured by police in a number of Latin American countries - in Brazil, for example - and she was only trying to look at what they did when they went to try and get compensation, but she said when she talked to them they wanted to tell her mostly their stories. And she said she didn't ask them because she thought it would be too painful, but she said she felt that they wanted her to understand what they had been through and that they found the telling of their often awful stories something that helped them deal with those stories, that they were telling it to another person. So I think it's a whole range, but I think people should be encouraged to tell their stories because they are important. I think some of the most vivid things I've ever read on war have been the stories of people who've been through it because they tell it in a way that no one else can ever tell it.

ANITA ANAND: Gentleman here.

YASEEN JERBER: Thank you. I'm Yaseen Jerber I'm a Member of Parliament. Actually I have, as somebody who has lived through the Lebanese civil war, I've some conclusions. First of all, I think I mean humanity is the same all over the world. Why do civil wars happen in places and doesn't happen in other places? I think there's a lot of manipulation that takes place in certain societies.

ANITA ANAND: The outside hand or an inside ha…

YASEEN JERBER: *(over)* Of course …

ANITA ANAND: An outside hand.

YASEEN JERBER: … because civil wars cost money. I mean for 15 years who financed the war – arms and so on? And the second thing is that there's no going back. Once you're in a civil war, the society is usually very much affected. I've been an MP for 22 years and I know that the effects of the civil war are living with us for a long time. We're going to see that in other places – in Iraq, in Syria, in probably many other societies that are going through civil wars at the moment.

ANITA ANAND: Okay.

MARGARET MACMILLAN: Yeah. I think the effects of such wars, you're right, are made worse. I think there are those who will stir them up for their own reasons and those can be people within a society or people from outside. Of course it matters who starts a war, but once a war starts – as Clauzewitz, the great German philosopher of war said – "war has its own logic" and it takes on a life and of course it's very difficult to stop. Once you get … I think there's always a moment - and I think we saw it in Northern Ireland as well – that once you get people being

killed, once blood is shed then it becomes very, very difficult to go back because people want revenge. And it is something that again runs right through our society: you want revenge. And yes I think there are very wicked people in the world who stir this up for their own reasons and don't care what damage they do and see people as pawns to be moved around and don't think of the costs of what it is doing to the actual people because they don't have the imaginations or they don't have the consciences.

ANITA ANAND: Yes the lady on the green microphone.

RANA HAMA: My name is Rana Hama and I'm a writer who lives here in Lebanon. You said you wanted to hear about people who lived through the war. I was 4 years old when the war broke out and it was a very exciting time. It really was. You know bombing could flare up any time, we had to run … we had … As children we had a bag constantly packed next to the bed with all our games, with snacks, with anything we needed to spend the night - possibly a few hours or possibly the whole night in the underground shelter. And then I left when I was 12 and I came back when I was 28. And I think one of the things that people don't address here is the problem people have with identity. We have a huge Lebanese population that has an identity crisis. We don't know if we're Lebanese, we don't know if we're European or American or wherever we grew up. Schools have an issue with children learning Arabic because so many of the population has married foreigners. So I think one of the things that people should address, especially here in Lebanon should they ever hope to come to some kind of solution, is what is the identity of the Lebanese people living here today? .

ANITA ANAND: Do you have an idea what it should look like?

RANA HAMA: I think the first thing is that men … women should be equal to men. This is … this is definitely the first way to go about it. And, secondly, I think we need to create a Lebanese culture. One of the things that happened here was that you had these huge Lebanese flags going u… going you know up in the city to remind everybody that first and foremost that they are Lebanese. Before they are Christian, before they are Muslim, before they belong to this faction or to the other, we have to be Lebanese, so we have to create a Lebanese culture and this has to ingrained. Students in schools studying history are still studying about the Phoenicians. They need to study about what it is to be a modern Lebanese person today and that I think would be the first step forward.

ANITA ANAND: Thank you very much… The gentleman who has so patiently been waiting for a microphone here. That really will be the last question of the night.

BESSAM SHEB: I'm Bessam Sheb and I'm a surgeon. I would like to provide a contrarian point of view. In the Middle East I never thought in 1975 when the war started that Beirut will be reunified. I think the reunification of Beirut for us is as important as the reunification of Berlin. And we have examples in the area … I know there's like a bashing mood here, but Cyprus is 120 kilometres away and it's still divided. Sudan has divided. We're engulfed by civil wars all over the place and we showed some kind of resilience that may be due because of this civil war. We're not doing so badly; we're developing an identity and Lebanon is reunified, and I think that's an achievement.

(audience applause)

MARGARET MACMILLAN: I think you're so right because I think you are miraculous in some ways when I think of what this country has been through and perhaps that is - to answer your question – perhaps that is part of the Lebanese identity: the resilience and the capacity to continue to have a country in the face of obstacles and challenges that would have finished other societies off. And you can all see, because you live here, how much more could be done. I came here first in 1970, before the trouble started, before many of you were born I think, and it was a wonderful and vibrant city, and then I do remember reading about it during the civil war and thinking it will never be the same. And I know it's not the same, but it's still wonderful and it's still vibrant. And that is the resilience I think, which is such an important part, and that is why some societies I think do manage to recover from wars in ways that other societies perhaps don't.

ANITA ANAND: Well that seems like a perfect place to leave it. Margaret for her fourth lecture is going to be in Belfast in Northern Ireland and we'll be asking if we can ever manage war.

In the meantime, do take a look at the Reith site via the BBC Radio 4 website. There's lots of information there, lots of archive, lots of pictures. But for now a big thank you to our hosts here at the Sursock Museum in Beirut, to our audience, to our BBC Reith Lecturer: Professor Margaret MacMillan.

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE