

Nicoletta F. Gullace. *“The Blood of Our Sons”*: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. Pp. 198. Paper \$31.95.

The Blood of Our Sons explores the British experience on the home front during WWI. Nicoletta Gullace analyzes cultural and social practices as she intertwines feminism and political history to examine how WWI helped British women to gain political recognition. The “book traces the way the cultural construction of gender actually shaped the law” (10).

Gullace illustrates the importance of the 1918 Representation of the People Act abolished all restrictions for male voters over age twenty-one and allowed women over age thirty who met certain property qualifications to cast a ballot for the first time. Perhaps because women were not fully enfranchised until 1928, the 1918 act has not received much scholarly attention.

Gullace examines women’s personal experiences of the war and how their life changed because of it. She shows how nationalism during a time of war could benefit women in showcasing their abilities at home. Prior to the war, some suffragettes used violence to express their political views. Now the British government’s propaganda machine convinced the British people that violence perpetrated by the Germans justified war against them and the broadening of the franchise at home. Gullace’s examination of British propaganda posters is especially successful in showing that it was women’s war related work that turned them into eligible voters. By proving their worth, women were recognized as an integral part of British society who deserved equal rights.

The Blood of Our Sons is an excellent brief history of the British women’s suffrage movement during World War I. It is suitable for both undergraduate and graduate courses. Social and cultural anthropologists will find it useful to explain how war can change a society’s view on a group of people.

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