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editorial

Dr Leo Ruickbie
Editor

Following up on my new rallying cry of 'document or disappear', discussed in the last issue, I am publishing the results of my research into the Society for Psychical Research's activities during the First World War. Having recently commemorated the Centenary of the Armistice, it is a fitting time to reflect on what our predecessors in the SPR were doing during this time of national and international crisis. The effects of the Great War were wide-ranging on the Society's members and not always negative, but, perhaps more than any other time, this period highlighted the divergence between the SPR's interests and the concerns of the general public that contributed to the growing isolation of the Society and its diminishing relevance even at a time when interest in the paranormal was at a height. There are lessons here for us today.

In his first article for the *Paranormal Review* as President, Prof. Chris Roe discusses a recent article in the *American Psychologist* making the case for parapsychology against its many critics. This general bias against our subject was a theme that came to the fore at the recent Supernatural in Contemporary Society Conference in Aberdeen last summer. Here, scholars from around the world gathered to share their research, presenting a wide variety of findings and methodologies, but all acknowledging the same prejudice.

I felt this acutely this year when my chapter for a book project was censored on grounds amounting to misrepresentation, defamation and religious discrimination (unfounded, as it happens). The chapter had been accepted by the book's editors after peer review, but was blocked by an individual on the institution's editorial board. Of course, the institution in question could deploy its own legal team against my complaints and protect the offending party behind anonymity and denial, clearly valuing prejudice before academic freedom. I was not the only victim of this: at least one other author was censored and the editors themselves were deeply disappointed. Personally upsetting, it was also a shocking revelation that the principles of science were not always defended nor best represented by the organizations publicly funded to promote them. All this serves to highlight the importance of publications such as the *Paranormal Review* to argue our position, document our history and promote the values of objective research whatever the subject or result. Ψ

