



Quotes from Norman Walter (an official at the German Embassy in London) speaking in August 2013 about the anniversary of the First World War in 2014

“For us (Germans), it is about remembrance and reconciliation, and trying to learn lessons. We would prefer not to have any celebrations, having lost. We don’t want to commemorate the battles. We want to commemorate the dead.”

“What unites is that we (both Britain and Germany) lost millions of people. We can’t tell you how you should celebrate, but our feeling is that issues about who was guilty and all that should be left more or less to historians and shouldn’t feature dominantly in politician’s speeches.”

“The biggest single contribution to the start of the First World War was Germany, but others played a part.”

“Whether it was a win or not, it wasn’t worth it. It would be easier for us to take an active part (if there were no celebrations). It would be easier to concentrate more on commemoration and what we lost. A whole generation was wiped out.”

“The European idea (the idea that European countries should co-operate together in an organisation like the European Union so that war could not break out again) is something that helped us overcome the situation where a war like this could start, where European countries could go to war with one another.

It may sound far-fetched here (in Britain), but it doesn’t elsewhere in Europe. The European community (the European Union) will very much be part of the German commemoration (of the First World War). Thankfully we have the European Union.”