

The Great War in History

This revised and updated edition of *The Great War in History* provides the first survey of historical interpretations of the Great War from 1914 to 2020. It demonstrates how the history of the Great War has now gone global, and how the internet revolution has affected the way we understand the conflict. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost assess not only diplomatic and military studies but also the social and cultural interpretations of the war across academic and popular history, family history, and public history, including at museums, on the stage, on screen, in art, and at sites of memory. They provide a fascinating case study of the practice of history and the first survey of the ways in which the Centenary deepened and deflected both public and professional interpretations of the war. This will be essential reading for scholars and students in history, war studies, European history, and international relations.

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Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present

Jay Winter

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University of Paris I



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Preface to the second edition (2020)

The first edition of this book dates from 2004. Three reasons persuaded us that it is impossible to reissue this book without revising one chapter, and adding two new chapters and a new conclusion, as well as an updated bibliography.

First, the writing of the history of the Great War did not stop in 2004. There are many works since then that have changed the way we see the war. Scholars have entered new terrain, and, especially in Eastern Europe, historians have shed the blinkers of the Cold War years and explored new archives in order to understand a subject which was, for political reasons, off limits before 1989. We could not ignore these developments.

Secondly, in 2014 the Centenary of the First World War was marked all over the world. In France it was the subject of numerous commemorations, coordinated by a government Commission. Other countries also devoted much time and effort to bringing to public attention what had happened between 1914 and 1918. Everywhere there were publications, conferences, documentary films, television histories, and novels. Did this commemorative wave change or deflect the way we see the history of the war? We could not elude this question.

Finally, and above all, in 2004 the exponential growth of the Internet had, in a global context, just begun. In the intervening sixteen years, it has, in a certain sense, taken over the world. It also revolutionized the working conditions of historians. The digitization and opening to the public of archives and images, the expansion of social media and sites of exchange of goods and information, the arrival of blogs and other forms of exchange among historians at times on opposite sides of the world: these and other developments led us to pose the question as to how, and to what extent, did the Internet change the way we write the history of the Great War?

We have not modified the first seven chapters of this book. We have filled in some gaps in the presentation of how the story of the Great War was told from 1918 to 2000, in chapter 8. We have replaced the last chap-

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ter of the first edition with two new chapters analysing developments since 2000, and a new conclusion. We have also brought the select bibliography up to date. To be sure, we do not cite all the significant books in this field, and ask authors to forgive us for the silences that remain in a work of this kind.

The central question we posed in 2004 rests unchanged. Through a survey of historical writing, in its social setting, we explore the changing ways in which people all over the world have attempted to find meaning in the inaugural massacre of the twentieth century. *La Lutte continue*.

A. Prost and J. Winter
3 February 2020