

World War One Goes World Wide Web

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Brussels



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One hundred years after the outbreak of the First World War, the project “1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War” will provide the public with a comprehensive Open Access encyclopedia of the “Great War”. The project is coordinated at Freie Universität Berlin and funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft DFG).

“1914-1918-online” combines the latest international historical research with the benefits of the semantic web. This leads to an advanced digital resource for historians worldwide. The First World War is an important point of reference for the creation of a transnational and global historical consciousness, offering a unique chance to discuss the roots of and possibilities for European integration. At a time of new economic and political crises, a comprehensive examination and analysis of this “great seminal catastrophe of the twentieth century“ is indispensable.

In cooperation with the federal states of Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia and the EU-Committee of the Regions, and with the support of the German Embassy in Brussels and Allianz SE, the online encyclopedia has been launched on 8 October 2014 in Brussels. Moreover an international panel discussed the First World War in the context of European historical consciousness.

www.1914-1918-online.net

Agenda

Welcoming speech by the President of the Committee of the Regions, Michel Lebrun	7
Speech by State of Berlin Commissioner for European Affairs, Permanent Secretary Hella Dunger-Löper	9
Speech by Vice President of Freie Universität Berlin, Klaus Hoffmann-Holland	11
Presentation of 1914-1918-online by Editor in Chief, Oliver Janz	13
Panel “The First World War and European historical consciousness” with Heather Jones (historian and general editor of 1914-1918-online), Paul Dujardin (Director of the Palais des BOZAR in Brussels) and Santanu Das (literary studies researcher, historian, and section editor of 1914-1918-online); Moderator: Martin Kettle (journalist)	17
Closing speech by Member of the Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia, Markus Töns	21
Reception with workstations for trying out the online encyclopedia	23



Welcome Speech by Michel Lebrun (President of the Committee of the Regions)

Dear Ambassador, Dear colleagues, Dear Professors, Dear guests,

On behalf of the Committee of the Regions, I would like to welcome you to this conference launching the encyclopedia "1914-1918-online. International Encyclopaedia of the First World War".

I would like to thank the co-organisers for this initiative, which will help in raising European historical consciousness: The representatives of the German Länder Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia as well as the German Embassy and the Allianz SE.

As you saw on your way in, we are holding this event during the European week of regions and cities and I think the timing is right: 100 years ago our ancestors fought a terrible war against each other, causing thirty seven million casualties: sixteen million deaths and an estimated twenty one million wounded soldiers and civilians. These figures are so high that one cannot imagine the pain and tragedies families all over Europe went through. No European nation was left untouched – and it was the ordinary men and woman who were affected the most.

One century later we European citizens live peacefully together in the EU, and representatives from our regions and cities come together to discuss issues, which in these days are of importance for all of us: jobs and cohesion, sustainable energy and cross-border relations are only a few such topics.

We are privileged to live in these times of peace, but it is not peace for everyone. Just outside the EU borders there is fighting and killing going on. On television, we follow scenes that we were convinced could not happen any more on this continent. We thought we had learned the lessons from the First World War and also from the Second World War. However, it becomes clear that remembering these terrible times is now more than ever necessary.

In our peaceful environment in the European Union of 28 member states, many have forgotten why it was founded to start with. A significant share of EU citizens openly question the integration process and the very fundamental freedoms and values on which the European Union is built. It is more than ever important to highlight that the first objective of EU integration should and must remain the consolidation of 'peace' on the continent.

Because it was out of the ashes of the two world wars that the European Union, as we know it today, was forged. Yet, in historical terms the Union is still young and fragile. As Leaders of European Regions and Cities we should continue to stress that all conflicts in world history – including the two world wars – started "locally". Back in 1914, the assassination of Archduke Franz-Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo spurred a domino-effect of war waging on the continent, which eventually resulted in the First War at a global level. Afterwards many historians agree that the four MAIN reasons for the origins of the war were Militarisation, the existence of a

web of Alliances between Europe's big powers, Imperialism and finally a closed form of Nationalism. I would definitely add a fifth one; it is the absence of any supranational platform where one could discuss and seek to better understand each other's intentions and search for a solution in case a local conflict arises.

As President of the smallest institutional player at the EU level, I am convinced of the potential role of our Committee in this respect. Whereas conflicts start at the local level, it is often also true that at the local level first, yet significant steps towards reconciliation and mutual trust-building can take place. In the Committee of the Regions we have, for example, political platforms engaging with EU partners in the South (ARLEM) and the East (CoRLEAP). They have proven to be solid springboards for cooperation, dialogue and cross-border action. Also in the Committee's every day work our members from all over Europe meet and forge networks and friendships, which were unthinkable 100 years ago.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Looking at the destructive nationalism at the time, we have to remember the terrible mistakes made and pass on the message to those generations who luckily have no recollection of war. The online encyclopedia tells stories and gives details of the 'Great' War, which are freely available for everyone, not only in Europe, but throughout the whole world. I invite you to consult it and promote it, because I think it is a source of important information to keep the memory of World War One alive.

There's much we can learn from history and I think this encyclopedia offers a unique opportunity to reflect it and the events, which were shaking our European continent 100 years ago.

Thank you for your attention.



Welcome Speech by Hella Dunger-Löper (State of Berlin Commissioner for European Affairs)

Dear Mr. President Lebrun, Dear Members of European Parliament & of the Committee of Regions, Dear Representatives of the European Commission, Dear Panel Guests, your Excellency, Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, On behalf of the city of Berlin and the mayor of Berlin, I'd like to welcome you to the Committee of the Regions. I'm very pleased that so many of you were able to accept our invitation.

Over the last few months, commemoration of the First World War has reached a level not previously seen. In all forms of media – the written press, on the radio and TV, in the news – if you look at Google Alerts, there's been at least ten articles a day over the last year. And it particularly applies to Germany, where commemoration of the First World War has, until recently, been almost completely overshadowed by memories of the Second World War. The First World War has also been neglected in other countries that participated in it, although for different reasons – for example, as has been the case in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In contrast, however, commemoration of the First World War in Belgium, France, and Great Britain has always been marked and has gained a new impetus in the centenary of 2014.

Particularly here in Brussels, in our host country Belgium, allow me to comment on how impressed we have been with the breadth and intensity with which Belgium has come to terms with the First World War. The large number of large and small scale events, numerous exhibitions and well-reconstructed war-sites all testify to an accurate yet differentiated consciousness of this major event of twentieth century history. The way Belgium has included Germany in its commemoration has been impressive and underscores just how solid the friendship is between Germany and Belgium. It's very much to be welcomed that with a distance of one hundred years, Europe is now examining the causes and long-term effects of the First World War. From a European point of view, the First World War provides a host of material not just for discussion, but also for explanations that are valid today, as a large number of questions continue to arise and need to be answered. How could a worldwide conflagration have been caused so quickly on a European continent that even then was so closely interwoven economically and culturally? How can we explain the often divergent commemoration cultures in Europe and what do the different ways cultures interact with the First World War tell us about prospects for further integration in Europe? And what does Europe's development look like from a global perspective? What are Europe's prospects, seen from the outside?

Crises over recent months – whether the conflict in Ukraine or in the Middle East – can, or indeed must, be seen in the historical context of the First World War. The Committee of the Regions, who organized this meeting today, is the correct forum in which to discuss these questions. After all, the committee of the regions is synonymous with a peaceful

Europe built from the bottom up by its citizens and regions. The Committee of the Regions has always – justifiably so – not just discussed important political points in the legislative process, but has also focused on issues linked to the future of Europe.

I'd like particularly to thank President Lebrun for allowing us to hold this important event in this building today – and I'd also like to thank you and all your team for your wide-ranging practical support for the project.

I would also like to thank the Free University of Berlin, which over the last three years has been coordinating the creation of the world's first online-encyclopedia of the First World War, headed by Professor Janz. This is, as I said, the world's first online encyclopedia of the First World War. The "1914-1918-online" encyclopedia of the First World War, which has been launched on the web today, provides anyone interested with an excellent contemporary tool for researching questions relating to the First World War.

Professor Hoffmann-Holland, as vice president of the FU Berlin, I'd like to thank you for being here and I'd like to congratulate you on this very impressive and innovative source of information about the First World War. I hope that the online-encyclopedia will be widely visited and will be used extensively, particularly in education. I would also like to thank our panel guests, Mrs. Jones, Mr. Das, Mr. Dujardin, and Mr. Krzeminski, who unfortunately wasn't able to come. I'm very much looking forward to hearing your contributions this afternoon and I'm sure, as Mr. Lebrun said, we will have a very interesting debate this afternoon. The expert knowledge and geographic balance of the panel, I think, promises many interesting and perhaps even new points of view. And I'm very much looking forward to a lively debate under Mr. Kettle's leadership. I'd like to thank Mr. Kettle for chairing the panel.

I'd also like to thank the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia and my colleague, Mrs. Schwall-Düren – unfortunately she couldn't be here today – she very much regrets missing the event. She has actively supported the project since its inception. We have also benefited from the excellent cooperation between the two Bundesländer for today's event. We have a member of the Landtag of North Rhine-Westphalia here today as well as other colleagues. I'm very pleased to see them here.

Last but not least, let me also thank the external affairs partners and the department of the Allianz SE for the excellent and generous support, without which this event would not have been possible. I'd like to thank Dr. Löwe as well, without whose support this event would not have been possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm very pleased indeed that you're all here, and I wish you a very fruitful afternoon. And now I'll give the floor to Professor Hoffmann-Holland for his introductory comments. Thank you!

Welcome Speech by Klaus Hoffmann-Holland (Vice President of Freie Universität Berlin)



Dear president of the Committee of the Regions Mr Lebrun, Dear Ms. Dunger-Löper, Dear colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the executive board of Freie Universität Berlin, I want to thank you so much for hosting today's public launch of the "1914-1918-online. International Encyclopaedia of the First World War", and for joining us today.

My name is Klaus Hoffmann-Holland, and I am Vice-President of Freie Universität Berlin. Unfortunately, urgent new commitments have made it impossible for the Freie University's president to be with us here today – and believe me: Prof. Alt regrets very much that he had to make changes to his original plans, and he has asked me to step in and convey a very cordial welcome to you on his behalf from our university.

It is indeed an honour for Freie University Berlin to present "1914-1918-online. International Encyclopaedia of the First World War", and not just somewhere, but here at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels.

"1914-1918-online" is the largest, most international, well – global encyclopaedia and publication on what is often referred to as the Great War. So it is a milestone in the history of First World War studies, a central topic in modern history. Very important for us is the transnational and global perspective. The plan is to have more than 1000 articles. By now, after just 3 years of the project, we already have 500 articles. In a print version, that would be 6000 pages or about 12 volumes. What we will present today is the biggest network in the field of First World War studies. More than 1000 researchers are participating in the project from 55 countries, involving states like China, Japan, and Trinidad and Tobago. They all contribute to this fascinating and truly international encyclopaedia. In addition to this, we have 25 project partners from 12 countries, who support the project with expertise, data and photo material.

This project is very important for us at Freie University Berlin. Let me name at least two reasons: First of all we understand us, Freie University Berlin, as an International Network University. Being an international network university was the central element of our institutional strategy that was successful in both funding rounds of the German government's national excellence initiative in 2007 and 2012. This institutional strategy focuses on systematically refining the networks of Freie University in the areas of research, support for early career researchers and especially international innovation. So cooperation with regional and international research institutions is at the very heart of our institutional strategy. In this cooperation we, at Freie University, want to live the three values that you find in our founding motto since 1948: truth, justice and freedom. So – what would be a better example for an international research network against the background of this academic ethos than a truly international encyclopaedia on the First World War. And it makes a lot of sense.

You might doubt the word of Charles Van Doren, who wrote on the idea of an encyclopaedia. I quote: "Because the world is radically new, the ideal encyclopaedia should be radical, too".

We could transfer this to our situation here. We could say: Because the world is international, the ideal encyclopaedia should be international, too.

And we could even say:

Because the First World War is an international topic, the ideal encyclopaedia on the First World War should be international, too.

And a second reason that makes this project highly important for us at Freie University Berlin – and I hope in the global academic community. It's an open access publication in English – so we expect a global public impact. The encyclopaedia is a research-based thesaurus. It is reliable and it presents knowledge and information on the highest standards from multiple perspectives on the First World War. This encyclopaedia is not limited to the academic community. It is accessible for all those who are interested in history. And it is really accessible. It is published in English and – it is for free. So all in all, it is an important contribution to public history.

Please try to remember the first time you entered into the world of encyclopaedias. Maybe like I did so often: looking up entry A, then jumping to B, not quite making it to C, because on the way I came across D and so on. You look for a small single stone and end up with a huge mosaic. This is part of the fascination of a real encyclopaedia. It may combine perspectives into a multi-dimensional picture. And we especially hope that this international encyclopaedia of the First World War, 1914 to 1918, with the use of semantic web technology and innovative navigation paves the way for the enormous content I mentioned earlier. Multimedia is embedded, and you will find links to external resources. From my point of view, this way to develop and work with big and complex research data in the framework of digital technology might be a model for scientific encyclopaedias in the 21st century and electronic publishing as such. E-publishing and e-research have to be in the focus of research intense universities like Freie University.

I am looking forward now to the presentation of 1914 to 1918 by my colleague Oliver Janz and am looking forward to interesting discussions and a first test of the new encyclopaedia at some workstations later.

I wish us all many new insights and fruitful discussions.

Again, thank you very much for your support.



Project Presentation by Oliver Janz (Editor in Chief of 1914-1918-online)

Dear President Lebrun, Dear Excellencies and Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,
On behalf of the History Department and the Center for Digital Systems at Freie Universität Berlin, the Bavarian State Library and my fellow general editors, let me first of all thank the Committee of the Regions for hosting the public launch of the “1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War“. We are also deeply grateful to the German Foreign Office, the Allianz SE, the Federal States of Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia for their support. It has been a wonderful collaboration over the past few months. I would also like to welcome all viewers who have joined us via livestream on the web, especially those at the parallel events in Rome and Potsdam.

We just saw a short film giving you a first impression of “1914-1918-online“. You are welcome to explore the encyclopaedia in more detail at the media stations during the reception. I would now like to give you a brief introduction to “1914-1918-online“, its general idea, and its main features. The general public’s understanding of the First World War continues to be shaped by the Western Front, images of endless trenches, positional warfare, and the industrial battles of attrition at Somme and Verdun. In academic history, too, the predominant view still focuses on Central and Western Europe. It has largely been forgotten, at least among the wider public, that Eastern and Southern Europe were more affected by the war than Central and Western Europe. It is even less commonly known that the losses on the Eastern and Southern fronts and in the Middle East were higher than in the west, where there was brutal attrition warfare. The First World War, however, not only affected all of Europe, but was also a global conflict. In an age marked by increasingly rapid globalization, the global character of the First World War deserves special attention. The war was not only a profound turning point for Europe, but also for many countries outside the continent. It transformed their self-awareness and their relationships to the empires, while providing them with critical momentum towards decolonization. No previous event in world history had changed the lives of so many people on every continent. The war was not only conducted between the European powers outside Europe, such as in Africa or on the world’s oceans, but also directly involved sovereign non-European states on a large scale, above all Japan, the Ottoman Empire and the United States, as well as numerous other nations.

The First World War was not only a pan-European and a global war; it also gravitated towards a “total war“. Civilians were victimized to an extent that was previously unimaginable. Both the Allies’ sea blockade and the German U-boat war aimed to place a stranglehold on the enemy’s entire economy, armaments production, and food supply. It is therefore possible to speak of a trend towards “total war“. Indeed, from the beginning of the First World War, civilians were made the direct target of violence.

It is further possible to speak of “totalization“ because the conflict touched upon almost every area of existence. By the end of the war, nothing was as it had been before. The victorious nations in Europe emerged weakened from the conflict; Europe had lost its dominant position in the world, while the United States and Japan had benefited greatly in economic terms and in their geo-strategic position.

Another effect of the war was the devastation of entire landscapes. Throughout Western and Eastern Europe millions of homes, businesses, churches and works of art were destroyed. Vast agricultural areas were contaminated.

The destruction that was wrought by the war, however, was not only of a physical or material nature. In 1915, Sigmund Freud had already observed that the war (I quote) had “destroyed so much that is precious in the common possessions of humanity, confused so many of the clearest intelligences.“ Indeed, the war had also resulted in the mobilization of intellectuals on both sides. At the end of the culture war, there were not only incinerated libraries, but also lasting hatred between the enemy nations.

Extending the view beyond Central and Western Europe puts the war’s conventional periodization into perspective. The First World War was not only a global war, but also an especially long one. In many respects, it began long before 1914, primarily in Libya, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. It also lasted much longer than 1918. This year did not signify the end of hostilities. Numerous additional wars and armed conflicts, such as the Russian Civil War and the Greco-Turkish War, were directly related to the First World War and were fought through the early 1920s.

These are just a few of the central perspectives that inform the encyclopedia’s orientation. The encyclopedia aims to portray the First World War in its entire spectrum from a transnational point of view as a pan-European and global conflict that extended beyond the year 1918. This transnational approach includes comparing the participating nations and regions, as well as considering their many entanglements and interdependencies.

The encyclopedia summarizes the latest knowledge of international experts and makes it accessible to a degree that is more comprehensive than has thus far been the case. In this way, it contributes to a post-national and global understanding of the First World War. Through its comparative global design, the encyclopedia also strives to identify knowledge gaps and to thereby stimulate further research.

These perspectives and objectives are reflected in the encyclopedia’s article structure in various ways. The encyclopedia offers global, transnational, and comparative, but also national and – above all within the encyclopedic entries – local and individual perspectives. It depicts a multi-layered history of the First World War, a war that wove together individual, local, regional, national, and transnational histories in an unprecedented way. Users can choose among depictions of various depth, complexity, and levels of abs-

traction – from transnational survey articles to encyclopedic entries. And the encyclopedia does not start with the year 1914 nor conclude with the year 1918. It does justice to the previously mentioned extended periodization and systematically examines the conflicts that followed immediately after the war, as well as its other consequences and the way the war was commemorated.

This ambitious undertaking would not have been possible without a close collaboration across disciplines. This intersection of digital technology and history (often called e-history) has been facilitated by the cooperation of interdisciplinary teams working together to produce and publish a new type of encyclopedia using Semantic Media Wiki-based technology. The Center of Digital Systems at Freie Universität Berlin, led by my colleague Nicolas Apostolopoulos, has created a new platform in order to meet the requirements of both the peer-reviewed publication process and the academic community. In the encyclopedia, textual content is enriched with new media and interlinked by employing metadata-based information. The encyclopedia thus offers semantic search options that enable the user to obtain and analyse new perspectives of its content. This is achieved by using Semantic Media Wiki technology based on Open Source Software.

“1914-1918-online” represents a major undertaking in the field of digital history publication under the Open Access paradigm by promoting free and unlimited dissemination of the content to individual users, search engines, and reference services. This availability is complemented by novel navigation schemes that allow for non-linear access throughout the text via thematic and regional contexts. The platform is designed to enable users to follow threads according to their specific interests, integrating a broad range of texts and media from various contexts. Visualizations of thematic connections support the navigation of the encyclopedia in ways that surpass the standards of current digital history publications.

An encyclopedia of this scope can only be the result of a huge collaborative effort. “1914-1918-online” is a joint project of the History Department at Freie Universität Berlin, the Center for Digital Systems at Freie Universität Berlin, and the Bavarian State Library.

The project started in November 2011 and is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and Freie Universität Berlin. The German Historical Institutes in London, Moscow, Paris, Rome, and Warsaw also provided financial and staff support. A total of twenty-five partners from twelve countries support the project in several ways, for instance by allowing the use of their rich collections.

The project currently involves more than 1,000 authors, editors, external referees, and partners from over fifty countries and is thus, as far as we know, the largest and most international network of experts in First World War Studies (as well as one of the largest scholarly networks in the humanities

in general). It is precisely because of its decidedly international and transnational character that we wanted to launch the encyclopedia not in a national context, like Berlin for instance, but on a European stage.

We are very pleased to launch the result of this joint international effort today. We are proud to present the academic community and the general public with the equivalence of almost 6,000 printed pages – roughly a twelve-volume work. In addition, users will find an international bibliography of the First World War with more than 4,000 titles, an Index with thousands of entries, over 1,000 images, and more than 3,000 external links to web-resources, such as digitized source texts, contemporary films, or historical recordings.

To sum up, “1914-1918-online” is not only the largest international network of First World War experts, but also the most comprehensive and innovative encyclopedia, guide, and online-resource in the field of the First World War to-date.

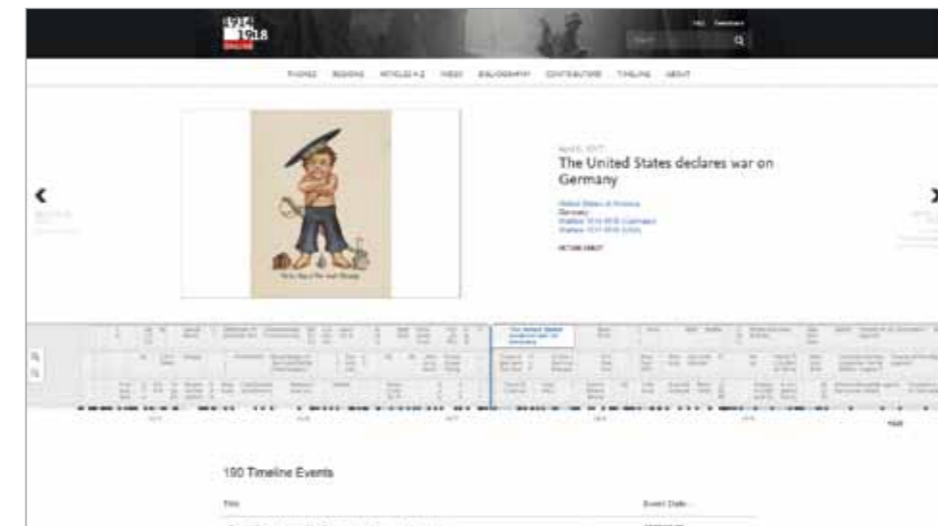
Before I finish, let me express my special gratitude to the project team, who over the past three years coordinated the invitation, reviewing, and editing process involving hundreds of authors, editors and referees, enriched the content with meta- and geodata, images and maps, as well as external links and resources, indexed each article and set up the Semantic Media Wiki and implemented and designed the encyclopedia’s User Interface (just to mention a few of the tasks and challenges the members of the team faced).

Without their commitment and hard work these results would not have been possible. They have done a wonderful job. This, ladies and gentleman, I think, merits a special applause.

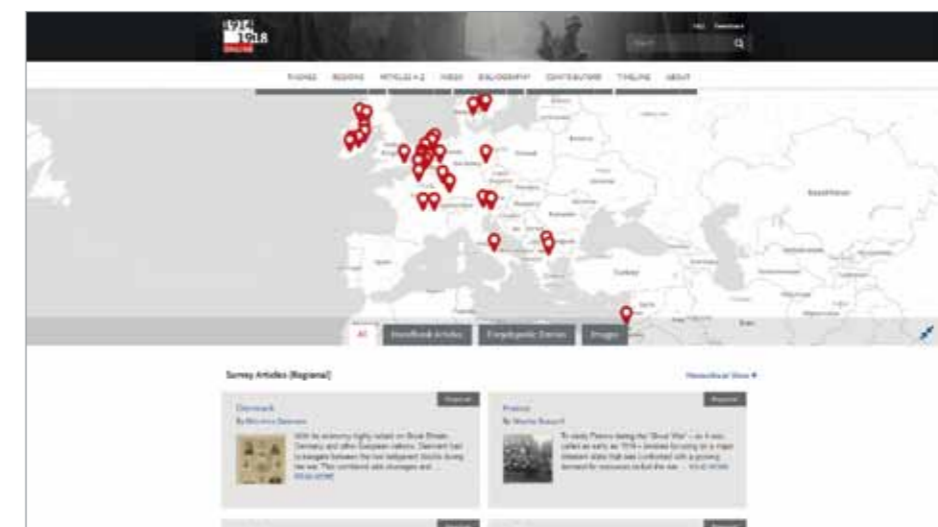
Encyclopedia Screenshots



Encyclopedia > Home



Encyclopedia > Timeline



Encyclopedia > Regions



Panel “The First World War and European historical consciousness”

The panel was led by the associate editor of The Guardian, Martin Kettle. Panellists Heather Jones (London School of Economics), Santanu Das (King’s College London) and Paul Dujardin (BOZAR Brussels) elaborated on the European historical consciousness in regards to the First World War.

Does the First World War belong to a different world?

World War One is not as distant as 100 years may suggest. It occurred in a world that most people today could easily manage. The bitterness of war remains and historians have to be aware that the history of World War One is a history of human stories and ruined lives.

Some elements of the modern world were results of the First World War: passports and the necessity to check them at borders, modern POW camps with floodlights and control, as well as financial institutions to regulate the markets in a way that was unknown before WW1.

Was World War One a global war?

As is true today, in 1914 Europe was not an island. Within days of its outbreak, the war became a world war, as the British and French empires were mobilized almost immediately.

The First World War was a major turning point in colonial history. World War One marked the first time that large numbers of non-Europeans came to Europe after centuries of Europeans going out to the world. More than four million non-whites fought in WW1; these groups are all represented in the encyclopedia – and not just mentioned, but properly researched.

The fundamental shift can also be seen in the fact that Europe became a contact zone for encounters with ordinary non-Europeans. This also led to new forms of prejudice and racism. New self-determination led to new interpretations of the world order. Furthermore, international law and organizations such as the ICRC became much more important after the war.

How has our memory of World War One changed? Is there a common narrative?

No generalization is possible. In many countries the memory of WW1 is overshadowed by the memory of WW2. Some countries like Poland focus on Polish independence rather than on WW1. Historians and WW1 studies have become much more transnational, multilingual, and global due to factors such as cheap travel to archives and sources, technology, and diplomacy. However, the public’s understanding does not currently reflect the academic perspective and remains largely national.

What do projects like 1914-1918-online bring to the table?

Presenting an encyclopedia like 1914-1918-online in Brussels at the Committee of the Regions highlights the transnational aim of the project and of WW1 research today. Arts and education have the moral duty to find a common narrative and to spread a global perspective. Free access to education is crucial for reaching the public.





Closing Speech by Markus Töns (Member of the Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia)

Thank you very much! I don't know whether I can summarize everything I've heard – I doubt it, but I would nevertheless like to address you, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Panel Guests.

Wars don't just break out; wars are made by people. That's why it is important for us to tackle the First World War openly and publicly. Over the last few decades, Germany has been working on coming to terms with the Second World War rather than with the First World War. But discussions about the First World War should take place neither in small groups nor purely by military historians and strategists; rather, this should be a public discussion. It seems today that we need a broad public debate, because each generation needs to come to terms with these dramatic events and draw its own conclusions from them. Nothing should stop us from learning from the past in order not to repeat the same mistakes.

Against this background, I welcome the online launch today of the encyclopedia of the Great War, which addresses the subject comprehensively and from multiple perspectives. With over twenty-five project partners from numerous countries and authors from around the world, the encyclopedia provides us with an excellent basis for a global awareness of history.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in North Rhine-Westphalia the culture of commemoration is part of our government's overarching concept of "remembering for the future" and as such is a very important political concern. That is why we are pursuing the objective of bringing schools and civil society increasingly into contact with memorials. The culture of commemoration is important in North Rhine-Westphalia because the history of our federal state is closely interwoven with the history of the First World War. This is why we've been happy to support the project partners in the inauguration of the online encyclopedia today. Shaping the present and the future is explicitly linked to questions of whether and how we remember what has happened before. I would therefore agree with what Mrs. Dunger-Löper said – that current developments are always to be viewed from a historical angle.

The crisis in Ukraine that the panel members mentioned confronts the EU with one of its biggest challenges since its creation. And against the background of our ongoing sixty-five year old peace process, today's debate shows, I think only too clearly, that where we're come from often determines where we are going. I'm convinced that a continuing commemoration of the horrors of the two terrible world wars teaches us a very specific lesson: that today's and tomorrow's crises must be countered with diplomatic means, because as Albert Einstein said: "I don't know what weapons a third World War would be fought with, but a fourth World War will be fought with sticks and stones."

Now, with this in mind, I cannot but agree with the previous speakers. On behalf of Minister Schwall-Düren, who has

sent her apologies today, I would like to thank all involved in this excellent project. My thanks go to President Lebrun of the Committee of the Regions for allowing us to use your building and for giving us the opportunity to present the online encyclopedia here to an international audience.

My special thanks also goes to the Free University of Berlin, which along with its numerous project partners has made the online encyclopedia available to citizens around the world and has contributed so much to the commemoration of the fates of countless people during the First World War. I'd also like to thank Mrs. Jones, Mr. Das, and Mr. Dujardin, who unfortunately had to leave already, for the extremely interesting panel discussion. I would also like to thank Mr. Kettle for organizing this event. And finally, I would like to thank the official state of Berlin for its excellent cooperation and the external affairs service and Allianz SE for their valuable support.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd like to invite you all to a small reception and ask you to take a look at one of the work stations outside to get a personal impression of the online encyclopedia. Let's all hope that this freely accessible encyclopedia will contribute to ensuring that war between European peoples remains something unimaginable in the future. Thank you for your attention!

Reception with workstations for trying out the online encyclopedia

Following the presentation of “1914-1918-online” and the panel discussion on a European consciousness of WW1 memory, the reception, hosted by the Committee of the Regions, offered the chance not only to test the encyclopedia, but also to discuss with the designers and contributors the encyclopedia’s concept, possible future cooperation, and the possibilities that online education offers in general.





The 1914-1918-online team



A delegation of the Berlin project team with general editors Ute Daniel and Heather Jones and section editor Santanu Das.

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Center for Digital Systems (CeDiS), Freie Universität Berlin – Prof. Dr. Nicolas Apostolopoulos
Bavarian State Library (BSB), Munich – Gregor Horstkemper

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