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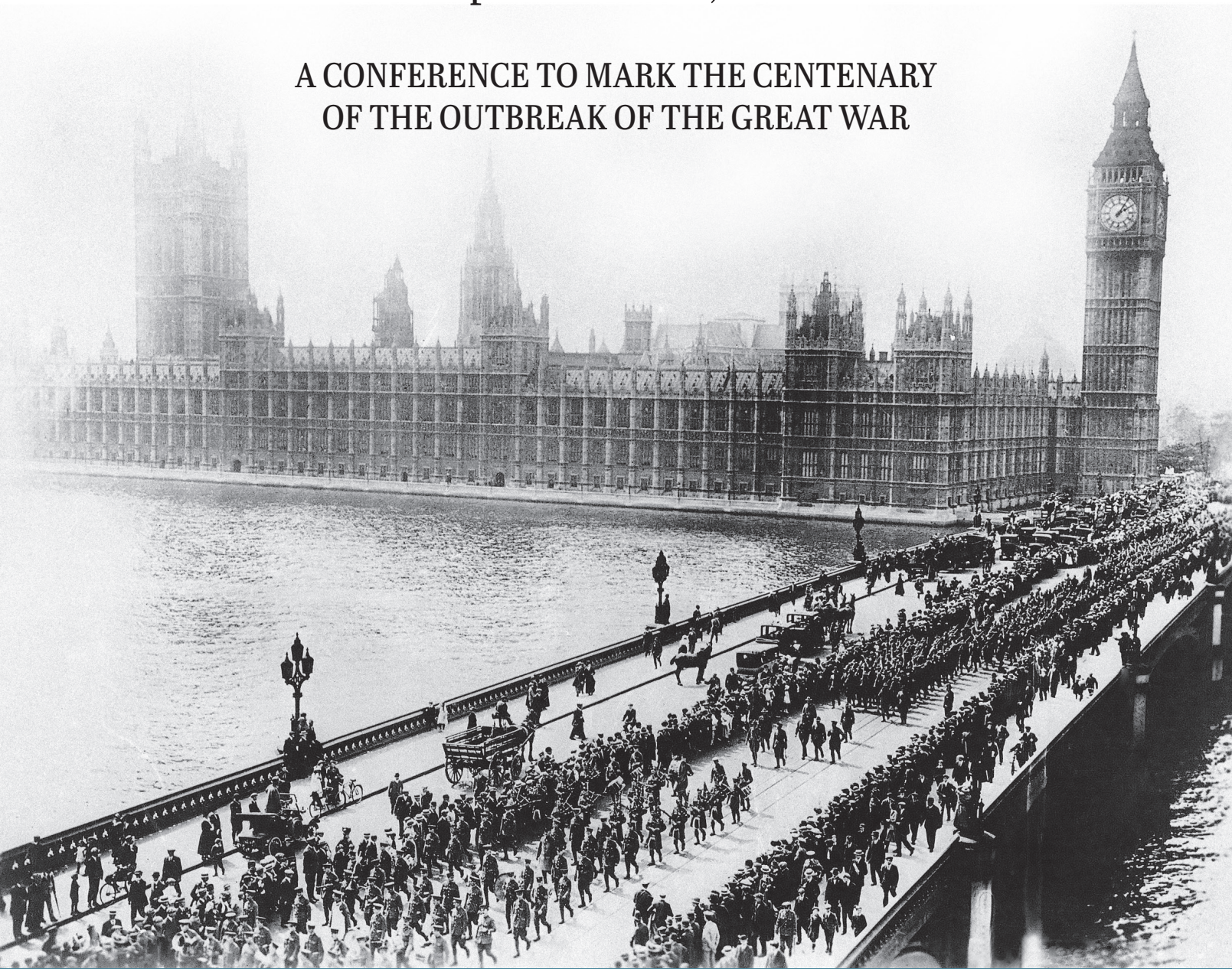


DAN DAVID PRIZE

# THE MEANING OF 1914

Nissan Lecture Theatre, St. Antony's College, Oxford  
September 27-28, 2014

A CONFERENCE TO MARK THE CENTENARY  
OF THE OUTBREAK OF THE GREAT WAR



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## The Meaning of 1914

This year, 2014, marks the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War, which is the occasion for our conference. This year also marks the seventy fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939. Yet even though only twenty five years separate the outbreak of the two World Wars, a period of time that in present day history takes us back to something so contemporary as the coming down of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the events of August 1914 seem to us infinitely more distant and remote than those of September 1939, belonging more to the nineteenth century than the twentieth.

The reason for this is perhaps that, of the six principle belligerents of 1914 four, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Turkey were ruled wholly or in part by authoritarian monarchs, surrounded by aristocratic court entourages, and all endowed with significant personal, extra-parliamentary powers. None of these regimes survived the war. A fifth belligerent, Britain, although a working parliamentary democracy in 1914, was ruled by an elite which combined elements of the old aristocracy with a non-aristocratic *noblesse de robe*, but with the style and culture of the former still dominant. This gave the British governing class at least a surface, *ancient regime* resemblance to its continental counterparts.

In his luminous volume of memoirs *The World of Yesterday* Stefan Zweig looked back on this pre 1914 world as a Golden Age. *The World of Security* was the title of his opening chapter. Of his Viennese childhood and youth he wrote: 'everything in this wide domain was firmly established, immovably in its place, with the Old Emperor at top of the pyramid... and nothing in the well calculated order of things would change'. When he wrote his memoirs Zweig was a refugee from the Nazis and within a year of his own suicide. He had perhaps good reason to look back on his world of yesterday as a paradise forever lost. Yet this sense of loss was widely felt among those who came of age before 1914.

But what exactly was lost? If this European world of yesterday was a place of such security and, as Zweig

also writes, of prosperity and of liberal enlightenment, why did it come to an end in the way that it did; why did the leaders of Europe inflict upon themselves perhaps the greatest catastrophe in their history, bringing upon themselves death and destruction on a scale not seen since the Thirty Years War and with the war becoming, after a twenty year lull, itself a new Thirty Years War, with its second phase even more destructive than its first?

In his Rhodes Memorial Lectures of 1929, still among the most powerful and ambitious accounts of the origins of the war, the great French historian Élie Halévy warned his Oxford audience that he would be shunning diplomatic chronologies: 'I shall not dwell upon the story of the last week before the war as to what such and such a Sovereign, or Prime Minister, or Foreign Secretary should have done or not done'. These were 'pills to cure an earthquake'. Halévy's concern was with the earthquake itself. But it is a characteristic of earthquakes that the pressures building up beneath the earth's outer crust can remain undetected by those on the surface even as the stresses beneath reach breaking point.

Below the surface of the pre-1914 world, with its opulence and apparent solidity, the forces of change such as socialism or feminism or even of destruction such as nihilism or militarism, were gaining strength. For the ruling elites the temptation was to see war as a way of solving the crises and papering over the cracks in society. As another great French historian, Marc Bloch, has said, all the facts of history are in the end facts of psychology; they are the sentiments and judgements of human actors. The diplomatic and political chronologies can reveal how a particular cast of actors responded to Halévy's collective forces. The challenge for the historian is to avoid looking at the collective forces in isolation from the human actors striving to deal with them.

But who were the human actors of 1914, how were they chosen, and by whom: Did these methods of selection produce statesmen (there were no women) of high quality ~ or the reverse? How stable was the institutional and political setting in which the statesmen had to perform; and to what extent were they themselves subject to Halévy's 'collective feelings and movements of public opinion'; or what James Joll has called the unspoken assumptions of the times, and how did this

affect their judgment in times of crisis and stress? In his Rhodes lectures Halévy also describes 'the disturbance of equilibrium' which arises when 'one nation is found to have gained immensely in economic and military strength at the expense of one or many of the others'. Driving the 'disturbance of equilibrium' in the pre-1914 years was the accelerating pace of industrialization in the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the opening decades of the twentieth, with the new industrial giantism of mass production and the application of its methods to the economy of armaments.

The rise of Germany as an industrial and military power was among the most dramatic manifestations of this economic and technological disequilibrium, giving rise among Germany's neighbours to something we are very familiar with from the Cold War era ~ a European version of the arms race with its overhang of insecurity and suspicion which in turn was a backdrop to the diplomatic crises of the pre-war years. But there was also the *German* fear of *Russia* as an emerging industrial and military power, and the belief that, to head off the threat of encirclement by the Entente powers of Russia, France, and Britain, Germany should not postpone the day of reckoning.

We think that the task of understanding these diverse forces and of weaving them together still poses a profound challenge of historical analysis and interpretation and one which can illuminate the world we are living in today. As representatives of the lead sponsors of the conference we want to thank all those who are joining us in Oxford to participate in what we are confident will be a memorable event, and also to thank all our fellow sponsors for their generosity in funding the conference and making it possible.

## **Margaret MacMillan**

Warden, St Antony's College, Oxford

## **Ariel David**

Director and Board Member, the Dan David Foundation

## **Simon Head**

Director of Programmes, The New York Review of Books Foundation

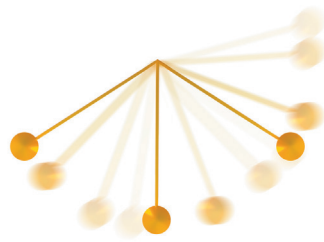
## Saturday, September 27

10:45 am	<p><b>Welcoming remarks</b> Margaret MacMillan, Warden of St Antony's College, Oxford; Ariel David, Director and Board Member, The Dan David Foundation; Simon Head, Director of Programmes, the New York Review of Books Foundation</p>
11:00 am	<p><b>The Economics and Technology of War: Mass Production, the Arms Race, and the Shifting Balance of Power</b> Michael Howard, Oxford; Jörn Leonhard, University of Freiburg; Hew Strachan, Oxford Chair: Margaret MacMillan, Oxford</p>
12:30 pm	<i>Lunch in St. Anthony's Dining Hall</i>
1:30 pm	<p><b>Intimations of Apocalypse: European Modernism Before and After 1914</b> Elitza Dulguerova, University of Paris; Neil MacGregor, Director, British Museum; Margaret MacMillan, Oxford Chair: Marina Warner, Oxford and Birkbeck College</p>
3:00 pm	<i>Coffee break</i>
3:30 pm	<p><b>Odd Man Out? Britain as Offshore and Global Power</b> Vernon Bogdanor, Kings College, London; Max Egremont, independent scholar; Avner Offer, Oxford Chair: Nicholas Rodger, Oxford</p>

## Sunday, September 28

10:00 am	<p><b>An Avoidable War? Pre-1914 Diplomacy in Historical Perspective</b> Christopher Clark, Cambridge; Robert Gerwarth, University College, Dublin; Marc Trachtenberg, University of California, Los Angeles Chair: Simon Head, Oxford and New York University</p>
11:30 am	<i>Coffee break</i>
12:00 pm	<p><b>Diplomacy in a Nuclear Accelerator: The Nationalisms of 1914</b> Robert Evans, Oxford; Christa Ehrmann-Hämmerle, University of Vienna; Eugene Rogan, Oxford Chair: Ariel David, The Dan David Foundation</p>
1:30 pm	<i>Lunch</i>
2:30 pm	<p><b>Beyond 1914: Witnesses to Europe's Second Thirty Years War</b> Simon Head, Oxford and NYU; Peter Pulzer, Oxford; Iris Rachamimov, University of Tel Aviv Chair: Adam Ridley</p>

**FOLLOWING THE FINAL SESSION, THERE WILL BE A DRINKS RECEPTION ON THE LAWN OUTSIDE FOR ALL THOSE ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE**



DAN DAVID PRIZE

**THE DAN DAVID PRIZE** is a joint international enterprise endowed by the Dan David Foundation and headquartered at Tel Aviv University. The prize has an annual value of \$3 million which is divided equally each year between recipients for outstanding achievements with a scientific, technological, cultural, or social impact. Each year fields are chosen within the three time dimensions, Past, Present and Future. Recipients donate ten percent of their prize money to graduate students doing research in their fields.

The Prize encourages research that cuts across established disciplinary boundaries. It fosters universal values of excellence, creativity, justice, democracy, and progress and without reference to gender, race, ethnicity, color, religion, language, nationality, disability or political affiliation. Recipients of the Prize have included Margaret Atwood, Saul Friedlander, Robert Langer, Goenwan Mohamad, Adam Michnik, Amoz Oz, Pierre Nora, Tom Stoppard and Leon Wieseltier.



THE MIRIAM AND ADOLFO SMOLARZ AUDITORIUM AT TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY,  
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# Biographies

**Vernon Bogdanor** is Professor at the Institute of Contemporary British History at Kings College, London, and was Professor of Politics and Government at Oxford. He is the author of *The Coalition and The Constitution* (2011) and *The New British Constitution* (2009). He is currently writing a history of Britain from 1895 to 1914.

**Christopher Clark** is Professor of Modern European History at Cambridge, a Fellow of St Catherine's College, and a Fellow of the British Academy. In September 2014 he will become Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. He is the author of *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (2012) and *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia* (2006).

**Ariel David** is Director and Board Member of the Dan David Foundation. He is a journalist and has reported from Italy and the Middle East for publications such as the *Associated Press*, *The International New York Times*, and *Haaretz*. He is active in business ventures from renewable energy to private equity.

**Elitza Dulguerova** is *Maître de Conférences* at the University of Paris I ~ Pantheon Sorbonne. She is the author of *Usages et Utopies: L'Exposition Dans l'Avant-Garde Russie Prérévolutionnaire* (2014) and *Magasin : La Négotiation de la Valeur d'Exposition dans l'Avant-Garde Russe* in Laurence Bertrand Dorléac (ed) *La Lettre du Séminaire Arts et Sociétés* (2009).

**Max Egremont** is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and Chairman of the Friends of the National Libraries. He is the author *Siegfried Sassoon: A Life* (2005) and of *Some Desperate Glory: The First World War the Poets Knew* (2014).

**Christa Ehrmann-Hämmerle** is Professor of History at the University of Vienna. She is the author of *Hemiat/Front - Geschlechtergeschichte(n) des Ersten Weltkriegs in Österreich-Ungarn* (2014) and editor, with Owsald Uberegger and Birgitta Bader-Zaar of *Gender and The First World War* (2014).

**Robert Evans** is Regius Professor of History Emeritus at Oxford and a Fellow of the British Academy. He is the author of *Austria, Hungary and the Habsburgs: Central Europe 1683-1867* (2006) and the editor, with Michael Schaich and Peter H Wilson of *The Holy Roman Empire 1495-1806* (2011).

**Robert Gerwarth** is Professor of Modern History at University College, Dublin and Director of The Centre for War Studies at UCD. He has held research fellowships at Harvard and the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton. He is the author of *Krieg im Frieden: Paramilitärische Gewalt Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* and *Hitler's Hangman: The Life of Reinhard Heydrich* (2011).

**Simon Head** is a Fellow at the Institute for Public Knowledge at New York University, and a Senior Member at St Antony's College, Oxford. He is Director of Programmes at the New York Review of Books Foundation. He is the author of *The New Ruthless Economy* (2005) and *Why Smarter Machines are Making Dumber Humans* (2014).

**Michael Howard** is Emeritus Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and Regius Professor Emeritus of History. He is was appointed a Companion of Honour (CH) in 2002, and to the Order of Merit (OM) in 2005. He is a holder of the Military Cross and was knighted in 1986. He is the author of *The First World War* (2003) and *Liberation or Catastrophe? Reflections on the History of The Twentieth Century* (2007).

**Jörn Leonhard** is Freidrich-Schiller Professor of West European History at the University of Freiburg and co-Director of the School of History at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS). He is the author of *Europäische Krise und Globaler Konflikt: Eine Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (2014) and *Bellizmus und Nation. Kriegsdeutung und Nationsbestimmung in Europe und den Vereingiten Staaten 1750-1914* (2008).

**Margaret MacMillan** is Professor of History at Oxford and Warden of St Antony's College. She was Provost of Trinity College at the University of Toronto 2002-2007, and Professor of History at the university. She is the author of *Peacemakers: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and its Attempts to End War* (2003), and of *The War That Ended Peace: The Road to 1914* (2013).

**Neil MacGregor** has been Director of the British Museum since 2002, and was Director of the National Gallery, London 1987-2002. He has been Editor of *The Burlington Magazine* and was appointed to the Order of Merit (OM) in 2010. He is the author of *A History of The World in 100 Objects* (2011) and *Shakespeare's Restless World: An Unexpected History in Twenty Objects* (2012).

**Peter Pulzer** is Emeritus Professor of Government and Public Administration at Oxford and Emeritus Fellow of All Souls College. He is the author of *Germany 1870-1945: Politics, State Formation, and War* and *Jews and The German State: The political History of a Minority 1848-1933* (1992). He is a holder of the *Grosse Silberne Ehrenzeichen für Verdienste* of the Austrian Republic.

**Iris Rachamimov** is Professor of History at the University of Tel Aviv and Director of The Cummings Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies. She is the author of *Military Captivity in Two World Wars: Legal Frameworks and Camp Regimes*, in *The Cambridge History of War, Vol IV*. (2012) and *POWs and The Great War: Captivity on The Eastern Front* (2002).

**Adam Ridley** was Director General of the London Investment Banking Association 2000-2005, and Special Advisor to Sir Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson as UK Chancellors of The Exchequer. He was Chair of the Lloyds of London Names Advisory Committee 1995-1996. He is the author, with Helen Wallace, of *Europe, The Challenge of Diversity* (1985). He was knighted in 1985.

**Nicholas Rodger** is a Senior Research Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford and was Professor of Naval History at the University of Exeter. He is the author of *A Naval History of Britain: Vol I The Safeguard of The Sea* (1997) and *Vol II Command of The Ocean* (2004).

**Eugene Rogan** is Associate Professor of the Modern History of the Middle East at Oxford, and a Fellow of St Antony's College. He is the author of *The Arabs: A History* (2009) and *The Fall of The Ottomans: The Great War in The Middle East* (2014).

**Hew Strachan**, is Chichele Professor of War at Oxford and Fellow of All Souls College. He was Professor of Modern History at the University of Glasgow 1992-2000. He is author of *The First World War; Volume I To Arms* (2001) and *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (2013). He is Lord Lieutenant of the County of Tweeddale and was knighted in 2013.

**Marc Trachtenberg** is Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has been a Guggenheim Fellow and a German Marshall Fund Fellow. He is the author of *A constructed Peace: The Making of The European Settlement 1945-1963* (1999) and *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method* (1996).

**Marina Warner** is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and Chair in English and Creative Writing at Birkbeck College, University of London. She is a Fellow of The British Academy and was Professor of Literature at the University of Essex until her resignation earlier this year. She is the author of *Stranger Magic: Charmed States of the Arabian Nights* (2012), and *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tale* (2014).

