

# Controversy: Total War

By [Daniel Marc Segesser](#)

**Total war is a controversial term used in the past by politicians, publicists and military officers as well as by computer specialists and academics in the present. Since its conception by French politicians during the First World War in a time of severe crisis (1916/17), it has become a term used by historians and other academics to cover a wide array of elements when looking at wars of the past. A real total war was and is impossible. Elements of total war – total war aims, total methods of warfare, total mobilization and total control – can, however, be identified and can serve as a useful tool for further transnational research on war.**

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## Total War: Game or Academic Concept? – An Introduction

Searching for “total war” in the wideness of today’s internet will not at first yield academic definitions of the term, but will rather open up the world of computer strategy games. The first of these was released in 2000 by Creative Assembly in Horsham (United Kingdom) and many have followed since. These war games mainly focus on unrestrained warfare and combine turn-based strategy, resource management as well as tactics in real-time, simulating considerations and circumstances of operational warfare in different periods of time.<sup>[1]</sup>

On the other hand, “total war” is a term that has been used in the past mostly by people to the far

right of the political spectrum.<sup>[2]</sup> Furthermore, it has been used as an academic concept by researchers such as David Avrom Bell, [Roger Chickering](#), Stig Förster, Jean-Yves Guiomar and Mark E. Neely. In a series of conferences between 1992 and 2001<sup>[3]</sup> (with a later spin-off on the age of revolution<sup>[4]</sup>). Chickering and Förster offered a sustained discussion not only of the development of warfare between 1861 and 1945, but also of the understanding of total war and the ways in which the concept could be a useful tool for academic research. Although a “sense of discomfort” reigned at these conferences on how to use the concept as an academic tool and as to what degree it was used in the time period in question,<sup>[5]</sup> the series produced extensive research on the issue. This has sparked debate and led other researchers to wonder if the concept could also function as a useful tool of analysis for research on other wars. Examples of such an approach are the studies of McPherson, Neely and Trudeau on the American Civil War or of Bell and Guiomar on the French and Napoleonic Wars. The answers as to whether the concept could be applied in these circumstances are diverse and no undisputed definition of “total war” has so far been reached. Such a definition should not be expected for some time to come and it is not the aim of this contribution to offer one. Rather, its object is to present an overview of the uses of total war in history and to give an idea of some of the positions taken in the context of the historiographical controversy. This article will not aim at completeness and will have a special focus on the First World War.

## Total War – A Historic and Historiographic Term

### Total War in the Context of the First World War

For a long time the term “total war” – and even more so its German translation “*totaler Krieg*” – were linked to the inter-war period or the Second World War, the publication of [Erich Ludendorff's \(1865-1927\)](#)<sup>[6]</sup> *Der totale Krieg* and a speech of Nazi propaganda minister [Joseph Goebbels \(1897-1945\)](#) in 1943.<sup>[7]</sup> The terminology was, however, not well defined and none of the authors took the pains to refer to earlier uses of the term or to say from where they had taken the idea. This might have been a consequence of the word “total” itself which could in its meaning contain everything that seemed inexplicable to contemporaries. The first use of the term by German mathematician [Georg Christoph Lichtenberg \(1742-1799\)](#) seems to point in this direction, as he used it in his letters from England to [Heinrich Christian Boie \(1744-1806\)](#) in the years between 1775 and 1778 in conjunction with other phrases such as “total battle” or “total campaign.”<sup>[8]</sup>

Although ideas about war that came to be identified later with the concept of total war were discussed in conflicts before the First World War, neither the term nor a specific idea of it seem to have come up before 1914. [Carl von Clausewitz \(1780-1831\)](#) used the term “absolute war” as a matrix to describe the character of the Napoleonic wars which, according to him, came closest to what he defined as the maximum use of force. Even the ultimate outcome of a war was, however, as Clausewitz believed never “absolute” or “final.”<sup>[9]</sup>

Later military leaders in Germany, however, did not continue to follow Clausewitz's rationalizing and

confining ideas of the politics dominating military decisions.<sup>[10]</sup> In their conceptions of a future war, which took account of the process and consequences of industrialization, H.G. Wells (1866-1946) and Jan Gotlib Bloch (1836-1902) discussed things like pre-war preparations for an all-out war, issues of mobilizing the economy for war in peace time and the question of whether in a future war there could be a differentiation between combatants and civilians as was stipulated in the Hague regulations on land warfare. No systematization took place, however, and (military) authorities in Germany, Britain, Austria and Australia made preparations for such a war before 1914.<sup>[11]</sup>

When the First World War began no one had an idea of the extent to which this war would be different from others before. It took some time for politicians, the military and societies as a whole to adjust to the new ways of this war. In this context, some right-wing Frenchmen coined the term “total war” in 1915 and 1916. In this latter year Léon Daudet (1867-1942) published a series of articles in the journal of the *Action Française* which were turned into a book in 1918.<sup>[12]</sup> On 20 November 1917 it was the new French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929) who used the word in his inaugural address to the National Assembly to describe his war policy as follows:

We present ourselves in the single aim of total war. My policy has one aim: to maintain the morale of the French people in this, the worst crisis of its history. [...] My foreign policy and my home policy are the same. At home I wage war. Abroad I wage war [...] I shall go on waging war.<sup>[13]</sup>

In this English translation “total war” is used to render the French “*guerre intégrale*” used by Clemenceau rather than “*guerre totale*.”<sup>[14]</sup> Although the two terms only differ slightly, this difference is of some importance, especially when comparing the use of “*guerre totale*” made by Daudet in his series of articles. While “*intégrale*” stresses the fact that there are no limits or that no diminution will be accepted, “total” in French stresses the inclusion of all elements or persons into a process, as is the case with the English word “total.”<sup>[15]</sup> Clemenceau’s aim was to stress the fact that there would be no limitations in his way of conducting the war. He was determined to win the war at whatever cost: he imposed the more aggressive Ferdinand Foch (1851-1929) as new commander-in-chief of the Entente and he did not tolerate any idea of a compromise peace.<sup>[16]</sup> On the other hand, Daudet had a slightly different emphasis and was convinced that it would be necessary for France to mobilize all the resources of its industrialized society to win the war:

[Total war] is the extension of the struggle in its pronounced as well as its chronic phases to the fields of politics, economics, trade, industry, intellectual abilities, jurisprudence and the financial world. Not only armies fight in battle, but also traditions, institutions, customs, codes, minds and most of all banks.<sup>[17]</sup>

Clemenceau always remained rather vague in what he meant by “total war” or “*guerre intégrale*” and he never referred to the terminology of the *Action Française*. In his policy, however, he followed most of the lines taken for some time by this right wing organization.<sup>[18]</sup> The concept of “total war” was thus born out of the conviction that a radicalization of warfare as well as a comprehensive

mobilization of human and material resources was necessary at a time when France was on the defensive in Verdun in 1916 and after the unsuccessful Nivelle offensive in 1917 when it tried to hold its ground.<sup>[19]</sup>

## **Total War in Political and Military Discourse from the Inter-War Period to the Cold War**

In the inter-war period the issue of the mobilization of a nation for war and the creation of bodies to co-ordinate the war effort constituted central aspects of the preparations made by political bodies as well as the military. The term “total war” was, however, not often used and Daudet never mentioned at all.<sup>[20]</sup> One of those who used the term was Italian general Giulio Douhet (1869-1930). Looking towards the future, he claimed that “it is within the power of human foresight to see now that future wars will be total in character and scope.”<sup>[21]</sup> In Italy a debate ensued within the military in which the terms “*guerra integrale*” and “*guerra totale*” were used in a similar way as in France during the First World War but no generally accepted definition or concept arose.<sup>[22]</sup>

Another man who began to think about “total war” early on was Erich Ludendorff. Forced to flee from revolutionary Germany in 1918 and not much more successful in his endeavours in the years after that, he tried to make sense of the disaster that the defeat of 1918 had meant for him and in his view – and in that of many others – for the German nation. Although he withdrew from public life after the failed Hitler coup of 1923 he became obsessed with presenting his views in a series of publications, the best known of which is his *Der totale Krieg* of 1935/36. His scapegoat for defeat became the home front which had failed to sufficiently support those at the front. Ludendorff was convinced that “evil agents” and “destructive elements” such as any sort of socialists and war-profiteers had conspired to bring about the downfall of Germany. Therefore, a moral and spiritual reawakening was necessary and a new German leadership had to do everything possible to manage civilian morale in time of war. He rejected Clausewitz’s dictum that war was a continuation of politics by other means and, following a Darwinian vision of international politics, he defined war as the basic principle of international relations. War could not be subservient to politics because the two were “in the final analysis, one and the same.”<sup>[23]</sup> Not to have recognized this had been Germany’s failure in the First World War, Ludendorff concluded. In his present time, he was convinced, it was important to draw the proper lessons from the past in order to be able to win the next war. Although he read a lot of publications by civilian as well as military writers of the time on the lessons to be learned from the defeat in the First World War, Ludendorff did only occasionally make a comment.<sup>[24]</sup> He was trapped in his own world-view and *Der totale Krieg* made no great contribution to the debate on the lessons to be learned from the First World War. It was mainly another presentation of his meditations on the last war, not least because he characterized himself as “an enemy to all theory.”<sup>[25]</sup> For Ludendorff the political constellation, the principles of operations as well as the mobilization of people and material resources would follow similar lines as in the past. As Roger Chickering has claimed, “Ludendorff’s total war was the Great War done right”<sup>[26]</sup> and with military leadership in real command of all aspects of the war. He was opposed to a division between civilian and the military leadership and

made it clear that in his mind the military commander needed to be at the top. Only in that way could he take full responsibility for the prosecution of a war that required more of him than ever before:

Total war requires enormous things from the commander. Effort and labour will be expected from him that have never been asked for from commanders in the past, not even from Frederic the Great.<sup>[27]</sup>

Ludendorff, who had parted company with [Adolf Hitler \(1889-1945\)](#) after the failed coup of 1923, was not sure that the “Führer” would be able to lead his country to victory but he made it clear that a nation only deserved to win a future war if it aligned itself behind the commander in a total war for national survival.<sup>[28]</sup> Although the booklet sold about 100,000 copies – much less than other books by Ludendorff – it was mostly ignored by leading military authorities and the leaders of the National Socialist regime. Nevertheless it would be wrong to dismiss Ludendorff’s volume as the dreams of an old crank, not least because it presented ideas that had become commonplace amongst military and political opinion in Germany, even if the term that Ludendorff chose for his study was not often used in this context. After the use of the term by Joseph Goebbels in 1943 and because Ludendorff had been an important symbolic leader in the ideological reconstruction of the right after the First World War, his book became the focus of many studies on long-term military thought in Germany in the years after the end of the Second World War.<sup>[29]</sup>

A little over two weeks after the capitulation of the last German troops in Stalingrad, Nazi propaganda minister Goebbels gave a notable speech in the *Sportpalast* in Berlin in which he used the term “total war” in order to tell his audience what he expected the German war effort would be like in the future.<sup>[30]</sup> Referring to the last stand that the “heroes from Stalingrad” had made, Goebbels demanded from the German people to stand together in this difficult situation. It was absolutely necessary to take the most rigid measures to win the war and to stop the rule of Bolshevism not only in Germany, but in the whole of Europe and the world.<sup>[31]</sup> Although Goebbels did not refer to any propagandist of “total war” in First World War France – why should he, as France had been the arch-enemy ever since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century? – his situation was quite similar to that of France in 1916/17. Goebbels’ use of the term was – as in the case of Georges Clemenceau or Léon Daudet – born out of crisis and the conviction that only a radicalization of warfare as well as a comprehensive mobilization of human and material resources would be able to overcome the existing difficulties. Goebbels believed that only Germany would be able to halt the onslaught of the wild hordes from the steppe and therefore called on the German people to make every effort to mobilize all resources for the war. To him the men of Stalingrad were a symbol of the will to resist the attack from the east to be emulated by the German people not only militarily but also mentally and intellectually.<sup>[32]</sup> Here Goebbels clearly followed ideas that had been brought forward by Ludendorff, to whom he, however, did not refer, the reasons for which have been explained above. As defeat for Goebbels would mean the complete annihilation of the German people – according to the Nazi propaganda minister, a fact accepted by the people – Germany had to move on to “total warfare” (“*totale Kriegführung*”) which was the business of the whole German nation with no regard for class or profession.<sup>[33]</sup> In order to

boost morale all necessary measures had to be taken on the home front, including the closure of any leisure activities, the curtailment of any luxury except for things necessary for the relaxation of the workforce such as theatres, cinemas and music halls as well as the mobilization of all women and men not recruited for the armed forces for the war economy.<sup>[34]</sup> Industrialized society had to be placed at the disposal of military aims as completely as possible. The climax came at the end of the speech when Goebbels asked his audience directly whether they wanted “total war” and “if necessary more total and more radical than we can imagine it at this present time” only to be met with a roaring applause.<sup>[35]</sup> Almost at the same time American economists were using the term to describe and push the economic effort that was needed to win the war.<sup>[36]</sup>

At the end of the Second World War “total war” did not just disappear from political and military discourse although it was much less frequently used, especially on the European continent.<sup>[37]</sup> During the Cold War, the mobilization of society remained important among western democracies as within the communist world led by the Soviet Union. Sometimes the term “total war” itself was used in this context, for example by Hellmuth Heye (1895-1970) in 1962 but most of the time only aspects of it that had surfaced earlier on – such as total mobilization or a radicalization of warfare – would be discussed.<sup>[38]</sup>

### **Historians on Total War after 1945**

At the end of the Second World War the term “total war” did not enter the vocabulary of historians, especially on the European continent, most probably due to its being related to the far right-wing of politics. Those historians who looked at the character of **warfare** or the mobilization of people and resources during the world wars used other terms to talk about what they had found. Furthermore, if referred to, “total war” was not so much linked to the idea of the efforts made by the population but rather to the death, destruction and maltreatment inflicted on enemy populations.<sup>[39]</sup> Finally, it was in the context of the debates in Germany on continuities between Nazi Germany and earlier political leaders and military in that country that the term resurfaced. Looking at the terminologies like “absolute war” by Clausewitz and “total war” by Ludendorff, historians like Hans-Ulrich Wehler often found more differences than similarities.<sup>[40]</sup>

In the Anglo-Saxon world there was less regard for the moral implications of the term, some using it early on to describe the death and enormous destruction brought about during the American Civil War. In 1948 John B. Walters published an article called “General William T. Sherman and Total War”<sup>[41]</sup> and T. Harry Williams’ book on Lincoln and his generals began with the sentence: “The Civil War was the first of the modern total wars, and the American democracy was almost totally unready to fight it.”<sup>[42]</sup> Later on the term was taken up to describe the characteristics of the age of the two world wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the preparation for war in the 1930s or simply the realities of the Second World War.<sup>[43]</sup> After the end of the cold war – in the context of the idea propagated by Francis Fukuyama that the victory of capitalism and the principles of freedom and democracy would

bring about a peaceful and harmonious world – the time of total war seemed to many to be finally over. As Stig Förster has, however, correctly pointed out, the situation was not that straightforward. Wars continued to happen, even if they seemed to be more limited than had been the case in the nineteenth and especially in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, even if the “age of total war” was over in the present, it would be the duty of historiography to make a contribution “to stop the resurgence of this horrible phenomenon, which cost the lives of probably more than 60 million people in two world wars.”<sup>[44]</sup>

Starting off with the discovery that figures from opposing political ends such as conservative Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke (1848-1916) and left-wing military analyst Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) summed up their impressions of German Wars of Unification similarly by referring to the idea of people’s war.<sup>[45]</sup> Förster together with colleagues like Roger Chickering, Jörg Nagler, Manfred Boemeke and Bernd Greiner started a series of conferences to sound the historical meaning of total war by looking more closely at the way in which the idea of people’s war and modern war were linked to the conceptions of “total war” or “military revolution” in the early modern period.<sup>[46]</sup> The conferences produced extensive research<sup>[47]</sup> and resulted in six volumes published in a series of publications of the German Historical Institute in Washington.<sup>[48]</sup>

Although none of the studies published in this context was able to come up with an accepted definition of what total war was and although there was no agreement as to when it was appropriate to use the term, this research has done much to clarify what could be elements of total war and how it could successfully be used as a tool for research (despite its past as an instrument of propaganda by far right-wing political groups such as the *Action Française* and the NSDAP). In his summary at the fifth conference in Hamburg in 2001, Förster argued that the series had shown how difficult it was to call even one of the wars that had been dealt with a “total war.” From the First World War onwards politicians as well as military officers had called wars total and had encouraged a complete mobilization of all resources. They had also tried to gain control over the war effort of their country but had not succeeded in any case. Instead, they sparked total chaos. Therefore, Förster convincingly argued that total war could only be looked at as an ideal type.<sup>[49]</sup>

This finding was confirmed by researchers who looked at the two world wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from a more global perspective. [Daniel Marc Segesser](#) was able to prove in his study on Australia and the British Empire in the First World War that, although elements of total war such as the internment of enemy aliens, the centralization of decision-making with regard to the economy or the tightened control of the state over social norms could be identified, other aspects were not present in this war in Australia. Almost no battles took place in this region of the world and the country suffered no war damage except for the loss of a huge number of men who died on the battlefields far away from their home.<sup>[50]</sup> John Robertson made similar comments in his study on the Second World War:

People can disagree over what is meant by 'total war'. To merit that term, how much of its resources does a nation have to allocate to war? Or does it have to be devastated by

warfare, like Germany early in 1945? For a country, which is free of enemy soldiers, and almost untouched by enemy shells and bombs, 'total war' could fairly be held to admit the continuation of some peacetime leisure pursuits. Australians felt, for example, that some sporting fixtures needed to be held, so as to benefit morale.<sup>[51]</sup>

Robertson again pointed to the issue of morale on the home front which had already been an important point for Clemenceau and Goebbels and which needs to be taken into account when looking at what "total war" can mean as an ideal type tool for research. In his study already mentioned, Förster takes notice of such aspects and stresses the fact that "total war" should not be understood as a great narrative with a straight line from the French Revolution to Dresden and Hiroshima as historical developments are always contradictory and affected by elements of chance. According to Förster, however, the major components of "total war" can be identified: total war aims, total methods of warfare, total mobilization and total control. "A real total war was and is, however, impossible. Nevertheless there were some concrete examples that clearly point into the direction of total war."<sup>[52]</sup>

In a similar manner, Jean-Yves Guiomar identified the complete mobilization of society for war (total mobilization), the rejection of any outcome other than the complete destruction of the adversary (total war aims) and a tendency towards the erasing of boundaries between professional soldiers and civilians (total methods of warfare) as the central elements of "total war."<sup>[53]</sup> Nevertheless, Guiomar also had his own original perspective as he focused on the conditions under which a war may become total. For him the issue of radicalization was more important than the experience of total war.<sup>[54]</sup> Similarly David Avrom Bell stressed the importance of new ways in warfare, the cataclysmic intensification of the fighting – the final, cleansing paroxysm of violence – that brought about "total war" during the French and Napoleonic Wars. Revolutionary ideology and the rise of nationalism, the two factors normally mentioned in this context were less important according to Bell.<sup>[55]</sup> On the other hand, Beatrice Heuser urged more caution in her study on the prolific French writer Jacques Antoine Hyppolyte Comte de Guibert (1743-1790). According to her, it would not be appropriate to draw too straight a line between the writings of the French theorist and what later became known as "total war."<sup>[56]</sup> Except for Heuser none of these authors referred to Clausewitz's concept of "absolute war" to which German authors often refer.

As indicated above, the term "total war" had already been applied to the American Civil War shortly after the end of the Second World War. In 1988 James McPherson took it up again in his book *Battle Cry for Freedom* and a little later in his contribution to the volume by Förster and Nagler.<sup>[57]</sup> The term was not reflected upon by most of these authors who took the totality of the American Civil War as a given due to devastation of the war, the radical political, economic and social changes brought about by the war and the mobilisation effort of the societies at war. Although McPherson agreed that the American Civil War had not been a total war from the beginning, it had become one along the way and merited to be labelled as such.<sup>[58]</sup>

Mark E. Neely questioned such a label asking what "total war" really meant. He traced the term back

to Giulio Douhet – and not to the French war effort as explained above – stating that it was a loose term with several meanings. Furthermore, Neely expressed some surprise at the fact that many American historians had become attracted to a term which had originated amongst right-wing fascist and national socialist activists in Italy and Germany. This, he explained, was due to the respectability the term had won especially in the United States during the Second World War when it was linked to the old idea of the planning and mobilization of the domestic economy for the war effort.<sup>[59]</sup> As no one in the Civil War did systematically break down the distinction between combatants and non-combatants or soldiers and civilians Neely concluded that it would be wrong to call the American Civil War a “total war.” He even claimed that this war “did little to usher in the shock of the new in the twentieth century.”<sup>[60]</sup> Similarly, Noah Andre Trudeau did not agree with calling the American Civil War a “total war” as this would be to “misread Sherman's intentions and to misunderstand the results of what happened.”<sup>[61]</sup>

In regard to the First World War, the debate on the use of “total war” started before the conference series by Förster, Chickering and their colleagues. Arthur Marwick used the term in 1981 when looking at the organisation and mobilization of society in Britain.<sup>[62]</sup> In his book *British Economic and Strategic Planning 1905-1915* David French made it clear in 1982 that it would be wrong to call the First World War a “total war.” There was certainly a process of totalisation, but British prime-minister [David Lloyd George \(1863-1945\)](#), who had a vision of total war, due to opposition from several sides failed when he tried to put it into practise.<sup>[63]</sup> Similarly John McDermott pointed to the fact that it was difficult for a country to fight an all-out war against its best customer, an aspect that had not been taken account of in an adequate manner in research on “total war.”<sup>[64]</sup> [Keith Grieves](#) followed the same line:

In the British context there is one crucial sphere of the war effort whose 'totality' has been over-emphasized. The failure to note the persistent deficiencies of manpower organization has led to the misleading assumption that the government managed a well-co-ordinated, all-encompassing war strategy.<sup>[65]</sup>

Influenced by the conference series Richard Bessel looked at the mobilization of the German economy during the First World War. He concluded:

The point at which the mobilization of German society began to unravel was when Germany's military rulers attempted to push that society beyond the realm of the possible. It was not so much that the mobilization failed as that the project for which the Germans were mobilized ultimately was beyond their capacity to realize.<sup>[66]</sup>

Niall Ferguson pointed to the fact that the mobilization of the financial resources for the war had remained limited and [Hew Strachan](#) stressed the fact that although elements of total war had been present in the First World War, in other aspects it had remained limited.<sup>[67]</sup> In his study of the situation in Australia, Daniel Marc Segesser came to similar conclusions. He identified elements of total war and a growing radicalisation even at such a great distance from the major battlefields but, in

a similar manner to Bessel and French, concluded that Australian Prime Minister [William Morris Hughes \(1862-1952\)](#) had failed in his attempt at totalizing the war effort of his country because what he tried was beyond the capacity and the will of his country's people. According to Segesser it was, however, important to realize that the tendencies toward total warfare not only became more pronounced between 1914 and 1918 but also a more global phenomenon.<sup>[68]</sup> This has also been shown by an analysis of [Shin'ichi Yamamuro](#) on the manner in which the Japanese military reacted to the changes in warfare that the First World War had brought about. Unfortunately Yamamuro does not reflect on the issue of the terminology and the concept of "total war" used in Japan in the interwar period. However, he shows that linked ideas were important for East Asia as well.<sup>[69]</sup>

## Conclusion

Total War always was and is a controversial term in its use by politicians or the military and as a concept for academic research. There are no signs that there will be a change to this in the future. This should not really come as a surprise as the word "total" which encompasses everything but does not say what this "everything" includes offers a wide variety of opportunities to include or exclude aspects. Stig Förster has certainly made an important contribution by identifying aspects that have to be considered when looking at the totality of wars, i.e. total war aims, total methods of warfare, total mobilization and total control. In a Weberian, ideal-type sense the term "total war" can certainly be a good analytical framework to assess the impact of a war on and the contribution made by any country to a war. The term may even offer opportunities for more transnational perspectives in future research on large-scale wars such as the First or the Second World War, the French and Napoleonic Wars or colonial wars. Taking into consideration the warning of John Robertson that "total war" may not mean the same to all countries involved in a war, the concept could be helpful to research on wars as it may offer new roads for comparisons or for analyzing existing entanglements, transfers and connections as well as looking at the political, economic, social and cultural impacts of war. The different "totalities" of wars are a challenge to [historiography](#). Rightly Roger Chickering has claimed that "total war requires total history."<sup>[70]</sup> He presented a micro study in which he tried to reach this aim.<sup>[71]</sup> In a transnational collaboration the concept of "total war" can be helpful to analyse the conduct of war – also on the home front of neutral countries – of mobilization, war aims and the control or grip of state bureaucracies on the political process, economic and social development as well as cultural evolution. Whether it will then be necessary to revise the conclusion that Stig Förster drew after the conference on total war in the First World War, i.e. that "a number of significant tendencies *toward* total warfare [have been identified] between 1914 and 1918 [but that the conference participants] agree[d] that World War I was not yet a total war"<sup>[72]</sup> remains to be seen.

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## Notes

1. ↑ See [www.totalwar.com](http://www.totalwar.com) (retrieved: 22 July 2014).
2. ↑ Examples are Léon Daudet from the *Action Française* or Erich Ludendorff. For further discussion see the section Total War in the Context of the First World War.
3. ↑ See selected bibliography for the five volumes published in this context by the two editors (sometimes together with others).
4. ↑ Chickering, Roger / Förster, Stig (eds.): *War in an Age of Revolution 1775-1815*. Washington et al. 2010.
5. ↑ Cf. Chickering, Roger: Introduction. In: Chickering / Förster (eds.), *War in an Age of Revolution* 2010, p. 11.
6. ↑ Ludendorff, Erich: *Der totale Krieg*. Munich 1936.
7. ↑ Heiber, Helmut: *Goebbels-Reden, Volume 2*, Düsseldorf 1971-1972, pp. 172-208.
8. ↑ The term itself is only used in his booklet with material to his *Letters from England*. Cf. Lichtenberg, Georg Christoph: *Sudelbücher II Materialhefte, Tagebücher (Schriften und Briefe, Volume 2)*, Munich 1971, p. 569. The term is not found in his *Briefe aus England an Heinrich Christian Boie* printed in Mautner, Franz H. (ed.): *Georg Christoph Lichtenberg Schriften und Briefe, Volume 2*, Frankfurt am Main 1983, pp. 30-70.
9. ↑ In the German version, von Clausewitz, Carl: *Vom Kriege: Hinterlassenes Werk*, 20th edition by Werner Hahlweg, Bonn 1991, p. 199 the term “absolut” is used, while the English translation von Clausewitz, Carl: *On War*, Howard, Michael / Paret, Peter (eds. and trans.), London 1993, p. 89 uses the term “final.”
10. ↑ Wehler, Hans-Ulrich: *Der Verfall der deutschen Kriegstheorie: Vom “Absoluten” zum “Totalen” Krieg oder von Clausewitz zu Ludendorff*, in: von Gersdorff, Ursula (ed.): *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte, Wege der Forschung*, Frankfurt am Main 1974, pp. 277 and 287.
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12. ↑ Wehler, *Verfall* 1974, pp. 299-300.
13. ↑ Inaugural address of Georges Clemenceau to the National Assembly, 20 November 1917, quoted in English translation in: Ferro, Marc: *The Great War 1914-1918*. London 1987, p. 199.
14. ↑ Cf. the French edition Ferro, Marc: *La Grande Guerre 1914-1918*, Paris 1990, p. 340.
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19. ↑ Wehler, *Verfall* 1974, p. 300.
20. ↑ Cf. the several articles in: Förster, Stig (ed.): *An der Schwelle zum Totalen Krieg: Die militärische Debatte über den Krieg der Zukunft 1919-1939*, Paderborn 2002.
21. ↑ Douhet, Giulio: *Command of the Air*. New York 1942, p. 6. The original *Il dominio dell’aria* was first published in 1921 but is today mostly quoted from the second edition of 1927.
22. ↑ Künzi, Giulia Brogini: *Die Herrschaft der Gedanken: Italienische Militärzeitschriften und das Bild des Krieges*, in: Förster, *An der Schwelle zum Totalen Krieg* 2002, pp. 69-73.

23. ↑ Ludendorff, Erich: *Kriegführung und Politik*. Berlin 1921, pp. 1, 6, 11. The translation is taken from Roger Chickering's article quoted below.
24. ↑ Chickering, Roger: *Sore Loser: Ludendorff's Total War*, in: Chickering, Roger / Förster, Stig (eds.): *The Shadows of Total War: Europe, East Asia and the United States 1919-1939*, Washington et al. 2003, pp. 151-166.
25. ↑ Ludendorff, *Der totale Krieg 1936*, p. 3.
26. ↑ Chickering, *Sore Loser 2003*, p. 174.
27. ↑ Ludendorff, *Der totale Krieg 1936*, p. 120 (translation by the author).
28. ↑ *Ibid.*
29. ↑ Cf. Chickering, *Sore Loser 2003*, pp. 175-178 and Wehler, *Verfall 1974*, pp. 308-311.
30. ↑ Speech of Nazi propaganda minister at a rally of the Gau Berlin of the NSDAP on 18 February 1943 printed in: Heiber, *Goebbels-Reden Volume 2 1971-1972*, pp. 172-208.
31. ↑ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-179.
32. ↑ *Ibid.*, pp. 175, 179-183.
33. ↑ *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187.
34. ↑ *Ibid.*, pp. 189-202.
35. ↑ *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205 (translation of the quote by the author). For more details see: Kutz, Martin: *Fantasy, Reality, and Modes of Perception in Ludendorff's and Goebbels's concept of "Total War"*, in: Chickering, Roger / Förster, Stig / Greiner, Bernd (eds.): *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction, 1937-1945*, Washington et al. 2005, pp. 189-206.
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41. ↑ Walters, John B.: *General William T. Sherman and Total War*. In: *Journal of Southern History* 14 (1948), pp. 447-480.
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49. ↑ Förster, *Zeitalter* 1999, pp. 18-19.
50. ↑ Segesser, *Empire und Totaler Krieg* 2002, pp. 522-530.
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