The Second Great War
by Jay Winter

The history of the Great War falls into two halves. The first, between August 1914 and March 1917, was dominated by failed offensives aiming at a breakthrough of the enemy’s lines on both the Eastern and the Western fronts. It led only to stalemate and an unprecedented bloodbath. What I would like to call the “second Great War” started in early 1917, when the conflict turned into a revolutionary moment in Russia and when older fault lines in the societies of all other combatants emerged and deepened as a result of the hardships and injustices imbedded in the way the war was waged. Hunger led to demonstrations, strikes, and uprisings at home; the seemingly endless casualty lists and calls for further sacrifice led to grumbling, anger, and mutiny among soldiers and civilians throughout Europe, east and west. With the Bolshevik takeover in November 1917, the Great War was transformed into a series of other conflicts which raged after the end of hostilities among belligerents of the First Great War in November 1918. Thus international war bled into civil war, counter-revolution, national wars, class war, brigandage, pogroms and ethnic cleansing legitimated in international law as “population exchange” in 1923. The Second Great War is the subject of this lecture, adding a new chronological, geographical, and analytical dimension to the history of the violent decade between 1914 and 1924.

Jay Winter is the Charles J. Stille Professor of History emeritus at Yale University and Honorary Professor at the Australian National University. He is the author of *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (1995), *War beyond words: Languages of remembrance from the Great War to the present* (2017), and editor of *The Cambridge History of the First World War* (2014). He won an Emmy award as co-producer of “The Great War and the shaping of the twentieth century” (BBC/PBS) in 1997, which was shown in 28 countries.