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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910320750403321 |
| Titolo | The purpose of the first World War : war aims and military strategies // herausgegeben von Holger Afflerbach |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Berlin, Germany : , : De Gruyter Oldenbourg, , 2015 ©2015 |
| ISBN | 3-11-043599-3 |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (268 p.) |
| Collana | Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquien ; ; 91 |
| Disciplina | 940.311 |
| Soggetti | World War, 1914-1918 - Causes World War, 1914-1918 - Political aspects World War, 1914-1918 - Social aspects |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Note generali | Description based upon print version of record. |
| Nota di contenuto | Front matter -- Table of Content -- Danksagung / Afflerbach, Holger -- List of Abbreviations -- Introduction -- What Was the Great War about? / Afflerbach, Holger -- Military Operations and National Policies, 1914-1918 / Strachan, Hew -- War Aims and Strategies of the Entente Powers of 1914 -- French War Aims and Strategy / Soutou, Georges-Henri -- British Strategy and War Aims in the First World War / Jeffery, Keith -- War as Legitimation of Revolution, Revolution as Justification of War / Kolonitskii, Boris -- Serbian War Aims and Military Strategy, 1914-1918 / Batakovi, Dušan T. -- War Aims and Strategies of the Central Powers of 1914 -- Strategy, Politics, and the Quest for a Negotiated Peace / Chickering, Roger -- "A Life and Death Question": Austro-Hungarian War Aims in the First World War / Fried, Marvin Benjamin -- Reflection -- Mourir pour Liège? World War I War Aims in a Long-Term Perspective / Höbelt, Lothar -- War Aims and Strategies of Powers Entering the Conflict Later than August 1914 -- Ottoman Strategy and War Aims during the First World War / Uyar, Mesut -- "An Act of Madness"? / Gooch, John -- President Wilson and the War Aims of the United States / Schwabe, Klaus -- Conclusion -- "... eine Internationale der Kriegsverschärfung und der Kriegsverlängerung ..." War Aims and the Chances for a Compromise Peace during the First World War / Afflerbach, Holger -- List of Authors |

Sommario/riassunto

Nearly fourteen million people died during the First World War. But why, and for what reason? Already many contemporaries saw the Great War as a "pointless carnage" (Pope Benedict XV, 1917). Was there a point, at least in the eyes of the political and military decision makers? How did they justify the losses, and why did they not try to end the war earlier? In this volume twelve international specialists analyses and compares the hopes and expectations of the political and military leaders of the main belligerent countries and of their respective societies. It shows that the war aims adopted during the First World War were not, for the most part, the cause of the conflict, but a reaction to it, an attempt to give the tragedy a purpose - even if the consequence was to oblige the belligerents to go on fighting until victory. The volume tries to explain why - and for what - the contemporaries thought that they had to fight the Great War.
