

# **The Total War of Paris Mathematicians**

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(with H el ene Gispert and Catherine Goldstein)

From 1914 to 1918, Paris mathematicians were highly mobilized for war. The wartime experience of influential Parisian mathematicians was total, in three areas especially: military expertise, scientific and innovation policies, and intellectual debates about the relation between science and society. Paris mathematicians' early role as the unquestioned leaders of the scientific mobilization was anchored in a prewar context where mathematics held a high status in the sciences and in society. In wartime, mathematicians were active at the Academy of Sciences and in government and contributed to sound-ranging and ballistics. The roles of mathematicians underwent significant changes in the course of the conflict. The effects of war on postwar images of mathematics can be assessed by focusing on three specific aspects: institutional reconstruction, internationalism, and modernism. In contrast to the view made popular by members of the Bourbaki group's first generation, we argue that there was no sharp decline in postwar mathematics in Paris due to mass casualties on the front, but rather that the war generations simply adhered to views of mathematics that were strikingly at odds with the ones Bourbaki members would promote starting in the 1930s.