

## World War I

World War I was the cause, catalyst, trigger, and accelerator of revolutionary change on an unprecedented scale. This is an indispensable new introduction to the global history of the conflict and its revolutionary consequences from the war's origins to the making of peace and across all of its theaters, including the home fronts and the war at sea. Lawrence Sondhaus sets out a new framework for understanding key themes such as the war aims that inspired the belligerents, the technological developments that made the war so deadly for those in uniform, and the revolutionary pressures that led to the collapse of the Romanov, Habsburg, and Ottoman empires. He also highlights the war's transformative effects on societal norms and attitudes, gender and labor relations, and international trade and finance. The accessible narrative is supported by chronologies, personal accounts, guides to key controversies and debates, and numerous maps and photographs.

**Lawrence Sondhaus** is Professor of History at the University of Indianapolis, where he is Director of the Institute for the Study of War and Diplomacy. His previous publications include *Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf: Architect of the Apocalypse* (2000), *Naval Warfare, 1815–1914* (2001), and *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (2006).

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# War I

The Global Revolution

LAWRENCE SONDHAUS



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## Preface

The goal of this book is to provide a global history of World War I, useful to general readers as well as to students of history and to historians seeking an up-to-date synthesis of the latest work on the subject. Revolution provides the unifying theme, with each chapter addressing some way in which the war provided the cause, catalyst, trigger, or accelerator for dramatic and enduring change. These include the revolutionary war aims of most of the combatants, the technological revolution that made the war so deadly for those in uniform, the revolutionary sentiment that grew among ordinary combatants (manifested most dramatically in wartime mutinies), and the revolutionary pressures that led to the collapse of the Romanov, Habsburg, and Ottoman empires. Beyond the military, political, and diplomatic realm, the book addresses the war's transformative effects on societal norms and attitudes, gender relations, and labor relations, especially in the urban areas of Europe and America, and on international trade and finance, with the rise of the United States to replace Britain as the center of the global economy.

Among general histories of World War I, this book is distinctive in the manner in which it reflects my insights into the Habsburg empire and the relationship between Germany and Austria-Hungary. The alliance of the Central Powers not only made possible the start of the war, but also shaped its course and outcome more than most historians (especially those writing in the English language) have recognized or acknowledged. Most Anglophone historians of World War I have completely misunderstood Austria-Hungary and the dynamic between the Central Powers and, as a consequence, have to some extent misunderstood the war. Among the competing works, even those marketed as “global” still reflect either a strong emphasis on the Western Front or a greater depth of understanding of the Western Front when compared to the other theaters of the conflict (the Eastern, Italian, and Balkan fronts, and the action at sea or beyond Europe). I have endeavored to produce a superior summary account, especially of these other theaters as well as the naval war.

With an eye toward making the book as useful as possible to its intended audiences, I have included features that are linked to, but can stand apart from, the main narrative of the text. Most chapters include three to five “Boxes” providing excerpts of primary documents or voices of individuals, the latter including the broadest possible representation of roles, ranks, classes, and genders, as well as of combatant countries and theaters of action. Seven “Perspectives” boxes provide examples of scholarly debate on the war's most controversial aspects. Each of the fifteen chapters includes a timeline and captioned illustration, and ends with a list of suggestions for

further reading. The number of chapters allows roughly one chapter per week for a course offered in a semester format. The relatively short chapters, further subdivided, should allow instructors great flexibility in assigning readings that match up with their lectures or class topics. Finally, five “daily life” essays shed further light on the human experience in areas such as life in the trenches or aboard a submarine. Such features, punctuating an engaging narrative, should make this book appealing to general readers as well.

## Acknowledgements

I owe a great debt of gratitude to the mentors, colleagues, and friends who have influenced my understanding of World War I over the years, and for the countless exchanges and conversations that prompted me to articulate many of the ideas and interpretations now incorporated in this book. In particular, I thank my colleagues at the University of Indianapolis, Ted Frantz, Joseph Prestia, and Milind Thakar, for their helpful comments on the sections concerning the United States, Romania, and India, respectively. I would like to thank my editor, Michael Watson, for his constructive suggestions and overall role in shaping the finished product.

By March 2007, when I began to discuss this project with Cambridge University Press, the number of living veterans of World War I had dwindled to fifteen, whose documented service before November 11, 1918 included a variety of roles in the armed forces of the British Empire and eight other countries. They ranged in age from 106 to 111. As this book goes to press, three remain, all aged 110: Claude Stanley Choules (Royal Navy); Florence Patterson Green (Women's Royal Air Force); and Frank Woodruff Buckles (US Army). This book is dedicated to them, and to the memory of all who served with them.