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Lawrence Sondhaus. *World War One: The Global Revolution.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 544 S. $99.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-51648-8; $33.99 (paper), ISBN 978-0-521-73626-8.

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L.Sondhaus: World War One

Already in 2003 Jürgen Osterhammel claimed that "the war [of 1914 to 1918] was a global one long before the United States entered it [...]." Jürgen Osterhammel, In Search of a Nineteenth Century, in: GHI Bulletin Washington D.C. 32/2003, pp. 9-28, here p. 13. Nevertheless this war, which is also known as the Great War, la Grande Guerre or the First World War has so far only very rarely been analysed in its global dimension. This is what Lawrence Sondhaus promises to do, i.e. to present the general readers as well as students in history and historians in general with a global history of the First World War. For Sondhaus the revolutionary transformations are the main characteristics of a conflict, which was the cause, catalyst, trigger or accelerator for dramatic and enduring change in the world. (p. xiii). In this context Sondhaus is sure that the statesmen and generals, "who led Europe to war in the summer of 1914 did not envisage the world-wide revolutionary consequences of the conflict whose onset they welcomed (or, at least, did so little to discourage)" (p. 1). His main aim is therefore to describe, how the changes that were not expected came about, focusing not only on military, political and diplomatic aspects, but also taking into consideration transformations in society, regarding gender or labour relations as well as international trade and finance. One major regional focus in this context is on the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, on which the author has published widely, and which in many - at least English speaking - monographs on the war has so far not received the attention it deserves.

Sondhaus starts his study classically with an analysis of the pre-war alliances in Europe - not a very global perspective - followed by some general remarks on the United States and Japan, which joined the group of great powers at the beginning of the 20th century. Furthermore he also looks at the British dominions and British as well as French colonies, leaving out German ambitions in Africa as well as East Asia and the Pacific or most of the developments in China. It becomes quite clear at this early stage that the non-European world is not the aspect, on which Sondhaus is at his best. For example he unfortunately frames Japan's development in the late 19th and early 20th century in the very European terms of modernisation (pp. 24-25) and claims that New Zealand became self-governing only in 1907 (p. 26), although the country in reality gained self-government from 1852 onwards and was the first in the world to introduce women's suffrage already in the 1890ties. Furthermore imperialism as a structural phenomenon that had important ramifications for the First World War is almost completely absent from this study. On the other hand Sondhaus correctly stresses the fact that in the years immediately before the war civilian populations were involved in war efforts to a much greater extent than ever before. Citing the examples of the anti-peace riots in Tokyo at the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 as well as the public rejections of the treaty ending the First Balkan War in 1913 in Bulgaria Sondhaus rightly reminds us that already as the war began civilian populations would accept nothing less than total victory (p. 35).

For the rest of the book Sondhaus' analysis closely follows the chronology of the war looking first at the July crisis, the unfolding of the war in Europe between August and December 1914 and the war in East Asia, the Pacific and Africa. Sondhaus stresses the fact that the military in France as well as Austria-Hungary took quite a few wrong decisions at the beginning of the war, leaving them more than ever dependent on their allies, Britain and Germany. In regard to the war in the Pacific Sondhaus stresses the emerging dispute between Japan and the United States, leaving apart the important conflict regarding the islands in the Pacific between Australia and New Zealand on the one hand and Japan on the other. In regard to the war in Africa Sondhaus focuses on the campaign of Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck in German East Africa, while those in Togo, Kamerun and South West Africa

or the recruiting of black soldiers in French West Africa and the conflicts resulting from that are not discussed. Sondhaus continues his study by describing the deepening stalemate in Europe in 1915, the development on the home front between 1914 and 1916 as well as the gruesome battles of Verdun, the Somme and in the context of the Brussilov-offensive. Here the author shows convincingly that some countries like the Habsburg monarchy already faced supply problems and social hardship early on, while his remarks on recruiting only contain a few sentences on the non-European world (p. 181). Each of these three chapters is followed by an intriguing essay, which focuses on some specific aspect of the war such as daily life in Anzac Cove, the grind in the trenches or the return of Lenin to Russia. Similar essays dealing with life at sea and the legacy of the trenches on mind, body as well as spirit are included after chapters 9 and 12.

In his eighth chapter Sondhaus focuses on the vital year 1917, which was marked by upheaval and uncertainty not only as a consequence of the revolutions in Russia, but also of strikes, mutinies and hunger in many other countries on both sides. At first sight 1917 seemed to be a successful one for the central powers as a consequence of their victories in the east and on the Italian front as well as of the collapse of the allied Nivelle offensive. What needs to kept in mind for Sondhaus, however, is that the Entente held out - not least due to the support by Britain and its empire - and that in November of that year men like Clemenceau and Orlando, who were adamant to win the war, took power in France and Italy. The author then looks at the war at sea, followed by one of his best chapters, which focuses on the entry of the United States into the war. While others in this context concentrate on diplomatic aspects or the mobilisation of the AEF, Sondhaus is more concerned with the transformations, which being at war brought about for women, blacks and immigrants in the United States. While some things changed for women, the war saw a massive migration of blacks into urban areas and the disappearance of many cultural institutions as well as the use of migrants' native languages other than English.

The next chapter deals with the Middle East and India. It is intriguing in regard to Libya, Darfur and Somaliland, where the world war mixed with anticolonial resistance, but unconvincing in its dealing with India, where the author focuses too much on the role of Mahatma Gandhi, who at that time was not yet such an important figure. Sondhaus then turns to the home front in the years 1916 to 1918, looking at the Easter rising in Ireland, the Hindenburg programme in Germany, aggravating supply problems, pledges for reform as well as the really global influenza epidemic of 1918/19. In this context the author rightly points to the fact that the Entente powers were more successful than the central powers in their renewed (second) mobilisation effort. The last two chapters are concerned with the military efforts in 1918 and the Paris Peace Conference. Sondhaus again points to the highly transformative character of the last year of the war and the peace conference. In this chapter the author comes up with aspects, which have so far not been at the heart of his book, such as the situation in China or India and the transformative character of the League of Nations in regard to international relations. Sondhaus also points to the centrality of the rememberance of the Great War. Especially in the victorious countries memories and memorials - for example to the unknown soldier - still have an important status, which sometimes seems to be beyond criticism such as in the case of Australia.

Lawrence Sondhaus has provided us with an intriguing book on the First World War, which focuses on many aspects that have so far not been at the centre of books on this really global conflict. His focus is on the global and transformative character of the war, keeping Europe at the centre, but including - although not always enough in the reviewer's mind - the non-European context. Although not responsible for the starting of the war in the same way as the central powers, the author convincingly shows that the Entente did much more during the war to transform the world. Although civilian casualties were far less than in the Second World War millions of lives of non-combatants were shaped and transformed by the experience of violence and brutality -especially in the first months of the war in Serbia, Gallicia, Belgium and Northern France - by the experience of industrial mobilisation as well as by measures in social and/or cultural spheres. Sondhaus is right to point to the fact that the world and its borders, too were transformed to a large extent by the Great War. The reviewer also agrees with the last sentence of the book: "Perhaps it is our continuing shame at the ease with which the losses of 1914-18 were accepted that causes World War I to keep its place in our collective memory." (p. 507). It will be interesting to see, how far this will be mirrored in the commemoration of the upcoming centenary 2014 to 2018.

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