

# More than 100 Years Ago: Commemorating Victory in the “Great War”. “Stirring the War Drums for the Next Big War”

Serbia in the Great War 1914-1918.

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Theme: [History](#)

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*On November 11, 100 years ago, the First World War ended. At glamorous commemorative events, Western leaders will shed thick crocodile tears over the “twentieth-century catastrophe.”*

However, this does not stop them from stirring the war drums for the next big war on behalf of the ruling elite at the same time: The US-led Nato exercises in Norway near the Russian border with 50,000 soldiers from 31 countries ever before the “emergency”, the two Great powers Russia and China are already preparing for war to protect their countries. (1) Instead of “kneeling down” on the occasion of this centenary of the millions of victims of the largest military conflict in world history to date, the leading Western elite seeks sole world domination and gigantic war profits.

Reports from contemporary witnesses of the Great War from 1914 to 1918 remind us of what war means to combatants and civilians alike. But the Godless and history-forgotten warmongers of the Deep State and their puppets in politics and corporate media will not stop even in the face of these terrifying contemporary witnesses.

**Erich Maria Remarque:** “The youth died before they could begin to live.”

The German writer Remarque (1898-1970) was drafted into the imperial army as a reserve recruit in November 1916, joined the Western Front as a soldier in June 1917 and was wounded at the end of July. In the army hospital in Duisburg he worked in a writing room and began to write down his war experiences here. (2) After his recovery he returned to the army. His famous work “Im Westen nichts Neues” (“All Quiet on the Western Front”), the “classic experience book of a front soldier”, first appeared in 1928 and was translated into more than 50 languages.

Remarque begins his novel with a personal explanation:

“This book is neither an accusation nor a confession. It is only an attempt to report on a generation that was destroyed by war – even if it escaped its shells.” (3)

He then describes the cruelty of the First World War from the perspective of a young front-line soldier who sees himself and his comrades as a lost generation. At the age of 18, his class had already joined the voluntary military service at the insistence of the teacher. They all went straight to war from their school desks, without being able to develop a perspective for their lives beforehand.

Countless comrades lost their lives during missions on the Western Front. Some of the fallen are replaced by inexperienced soldiers from the recruiting camp who are helplessly at the mercy of the extreme demands of the war of positions. The front-line soldier experiences how his comrades are killed in hopeless battles; they are killed in drumfire, shredded by grenades or suffocated by gas attacks. He himself falls shortly before the end of the war as the last of his group on a very quiet day: the army report reports that there is all quiet on the Western front.

Three years after the classic “All Quiet on the Western Front”, Remarque’s anti-war novel “The Way Back” appears as a consistent continuation. In it he paints the picture of a “youth who died before they could begin to live”. The content can be summarized as follows: “November 2018: finally peace. From France, a few front-line soldiers retreat to their homeland, the path to life. The revolution is raging in Germany, nothing has remained of the enthusiasm with which they were sent into the struggle for their fatherland years ago. Instead, the former heroes are met with incomprehension, indifference and open contempt. They feel strange and superfluous, desperately searching for a meaning: ‘Our ideals are bankrupt, our dreams broken’. All that remains is comradeship, but even that is gradually crumbling.” (4)

The course of the historical events has bitterly proved Erich Maria Remarque’s stirring accusation right. For this reason he called for a “fight against the threatening militarization of the youth, against militarism in all its forms” for the time after the end of the war. (5) In Nazi Germany his works were banned as “harmful and undesirable literature” and publicly burned in 1933. He himself was expatriated from Germany in 1938.

### **Ernst Friedrich: “War against War!”**

Ernst Friedrich (1894-1967) was an anarchist pacifist. Between the two World Wars he was politically, agitatorially and artistically engaged against the war. When he was drafted into the First World War, he refused military service for reasons of conscience. Since he refused to wear a uniform, he was sent to an observation station for the mentally ill. He was sentenced to prison in 1917 for sabotage in an important factory. (6)

With his book “Krieg dem Kriege!” (in the original in four languages: Krieg dem Kriege! Guerre à la Guerre! War against War! Oorlog aan den Oorlog!), which first appeared in 1924 and was translated into another 50 languages, Friedrich erected a monument to the victims of the Great War. The book shows its true face: battlefields, the horrors of the trenches, the severely wounded, the mutilated, the executed, the suffering, the misery and the dying. Friedrich tried to shake the people awake by showing the horrors of war. The book also attracted worldwide attention because the disfigured war victims were largely hidden from

the public in secluded homes for the war-disabled.

**Kurt Tucholsky** (1890-1935), politically committed journalist, writer and one of the most important publicists of the Weimar Republic, commented on the book "War against War!": "The photographs of the battlefields, the photographs of the war-mutilised are among the most terrible documents I have ever seen". (7) And he made the suggestion: "To those who have so often affirmatively listened to me, I suggest: to buy the book in one or more copies and to ensure its distribution". (8) For Robert Jungk (1913-1994), Austrian publicist, journalist and one of the first futurologists, the book "War against War!" was an "eye opener": "Ernst Friedrich opened my eyes to the most terrible of all epidemics, to the great cripple, the senseless destroyer war. (9)

But Ernst Friedrich also writes positive and encouraging things in his book: He made far-sighted suggestions on how to prevent wars. Addressing to parents, he writes in the chapter "Prevention of war": "(...) How many people overlook all too easily the fact that in their own home, in their family, war is prepared voluntarily! And here is the beginning of all vice. (...) You parents, who do not want your sons of other parents to murder loving sons, you should bear in mind that the child you bestow with helmet, sabre and rifle plays its tender soul from the young body! But those children who are brought up to love and solidarity, to unconditional respect for the inviolably holy life of man, the children will certainly be unfit for military service and war use. (...)." (10)

### **Rudolf Archibald Reiss / Henri Barbusse: "The eyewitness accounts of the war crimes in Serbia caused horror in the civilized world."**

The First World War is commonly referred to as the "primal catastrophe of the twentieth century", because without a thorough examination of this great war European history would not be understood. It had determined the further course of the 20th century - until today. An example are the wars in former Yugoslavia. The "primordial catastrophe" began with the fact that Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on 28 July 1914 after the Sarajevo shots and a completely unacceptable ultimatum. It was waged by the great and powerful nation with extreme harshness and cruelty.

On the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, the "Serbian Literature Co-operative" together with the "Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals" published the excellently researched historical work "Serbia in the Great War 1914-1918". It was also published in English, Russian and German. The authors are two famous Serbian historians and members of the board of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU), Mira Radojevic and Ljubodrag Dimic. In the introduction to the book, they state their motive: "The authors of this book had the modest intention, born out of a desire to affirm the scientific results of Serbian historiography, to embed them in the stimulating scientific perceptions of historians of other cultures, and thus to draw attention to the shameful effects of a politically motivated revision of history". (11)

This war was waged by Austria-Hungary not only against Serbia as a state, but also against the entire Serbian people. This is evident from the statements of the German Emperor, who was allied with Austria, as well as from the orders of the army leadership, which it gave to the Austro-Hungarian soldiers when they invaded Serbia. The famous "guiding principle" of Emperor Wilhelm II before the beginning of the war is well known: "Now or never", followed by the words: "The Serbs must be cleared up, and soon. Everything goes without saying,

and these are truisms.” (12) The Austrian cultural critic Karl Kraus has described the Serbophobe mood prevailing in Austria at that time in the World War tragedy “The last days of mankind” with the winged cry “Serbia must die! – whether it wants to or not”. (13)

The order of General Lothar Elder von Hortstein, commander of the 9th Corps of the Austro-Hungarian Army, which he gave after the entry of his troops into Serbia, also revealed the intentions of the great power Austria: “The war leads us into an enemy country with a population that is full of fanatical hatred against us; into a country, where the assassination, as the catastrophe of Sarajevo shows, is permitted even to higher classes, where it is even celebrated as heroism. Against such a population any humanity and generosity is completely out of place, it is even harmful (...). I order that during the operations and throughout the war everyone be treated with extreme harshness, severity and mistrust. (...) Above all, I cannot tolerate the imprisonment of ununiformed but armed inhabitants of the enemy country (...); they must be killed unconditionally. Those who show mercy in such cases will be severely punished.” (14)

In order to inform the world of the crimes committed against the Serbian civilian population as a result of these orders, the Serbian government commissioned a group of criminologists to investigate their character and extent. The famous Swiss physician and university professor Rudolf Archibald Reiss led this group of experts. His first report, based on the collected facts, had the title: “How Austria-Hungary Fought in Serbia”. What is written in this report is difficult to bear: “The type of death chosen by the executioners was very diverse. Very often the victims were mutilated before or after death. I noticed the following types of killing or mutilation: The victims were perforated by shots, murdered, their throats were cut with a knife, raped and then murdered, stoned, hanged, beaten to death with shafts and sticks, stabbed, burnt alive; there were victims (...)”. (15) What follows becomes more and more cruel and sadistic.

The reports of Archibald Reiss were confirmed by other doctors and eyewitnesses and “caused horror in the civilized world”. (16) Shocking facts about the crimes committed in Serbia were also reported by other foreign correspondents such as the American journalist John Reed and the French politician and writer Henri Barbusse (1873-1935), known from his war diary “The Fire” published in 1916.

In the book “Serbia in the Great War 1914-1918” Radojevic and Dimic write: “According to Henry Barbusse, the population was ‘driven mad by terror and fear’. For the Austro-Hungarian army began ‘its annihilation work as soon as it entered Serbia’ with cruelty and ‘hellish orgies’. ‘How often have I been petrified with shock,’ he says, ‘given the results of the murderous drunkenness, fires or sadism of these soldiers who belong to a great country proud of its civilization! What Austria wanted ‘a great and powerful nation, throwing itself at a small people, was nothing other than to destroy Serbia, and had sworn to do it systematically, with fire and sword, with the destruction and burning down of towns and villages, and also with the annihilation and massacre of the Serbs’.” (17)

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*This article was originally published on the “Neue Rheinische Zeitung NRhZ”.*

## Notes

(1) „RT Deutsch“ vom 30.10.2018: „Russischer UN-Diplomat: 'Ja, Russland bereitet sich auf einen großen Krieg vor'“ und „Chinas Präsident Xi Jinping ordnet für das Militär Kriegsvorbereitung an“.

(2) [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich\\_Maria\\_Remarque](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich_Maria_Remarque).

(3) Remarque, E. M. (1957). Im Westen nichts Neues. West-Berlin. Buchdeckel.

(4) Remarque, E. M. (2009<sup>7</sup>). Der Weg zurück. Köln. „Über das Buch“.

(5) [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich\\_Maria\\_Remarque](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich_Maria_Remarque).

(6) [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst\\_Friedrich](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Friedrich).

(7) Friedrich, E. (2004). Krieg dem Kriege. München. Buchdeckel.

(8) [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krieg\\_dem\\_Kriege](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krieg_dem_Kriege).

(9) A.a.O.

(10) Friedrich, E. (2004). Krieg dem Kriege. München, S. 10.

(11) Radojevic, M./Dimic, L. (2014). Serbien im Großen Krieg... Belgrad, S. 9.

(12) A.a.O., S. 94.

(13) Kraus, K. (2014). Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Salzburg und Wien, S. 75f.

(14) Radojevic, M./Dimic, L. (2014) Serbien im Großen Krieg... Belgrad, S. 143.

(15) A.a.O., S. 144f.

(16) A.a.O.

(17) A.a.O., S. 146f.

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