

# THE GREAT WAR

I wonder how many authors will write down similar phrases in the future. How often will be similar topics mentioned and discussed? How many new documentaries will be filmed and how many conferences will debate the events of the war? I believe that these rhetorical questions could be hardly answered; it is complicated to explain why the world burnt 100 ago. Surely some of us think that there is no sense in investigating time after time the multitude of historical sources, diaries and memoirs, as after all, we know the outcomes: the Entente countries and their allies won the war, Russia was ostracized by the victors because of the Bolshevism, and the countries known as the Central Powers were defeated. The latter lost not only the war, but great territories together with millions of people of their population.

What happened in these years and how did the possibilities of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy change? Did the Empire ever have hope for victory? Which countries and why was it allied to? Why did its one-time allies (Italy, Romania) become its enemies? Completely valid and exhaustive answers cannot be given to these questions, but there will be always smaller details and concepts that can be examined. The studies published in this volume intend to offer answers for some of these questions based on the conclusions of the authors' research. They focus on the most important aspects of the first one and a half year of the war which are for us, Hungarians and (for the history of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) especially interesting. The authors have raised and answered several questions in this volume. What chances did Austria-Hungary, a European power of this era, have in the fights that had not been meant to become worldwide? Did the Monarchy have the proper infrastructure for war? Was the length and density of its railways satisfying? What kind of army potential and military industry did the powers that entered the war have? Did the contemporary decision-makers consider these factors? Was it possible that another situation would emerge on the Balkan? Could Romania obtain the territories for which it had raised a claim earlier towards its allies by sitting on the fence? What were the reasons of Italy for turning against its allies? Solely territorial demands or something else as well?

What did once the Isonzo valley and the Doberdo Plateau mean for the Hungarians? How did its ever returning scenes become painful memories? How many thousands of Hungarian soldiers fought there a losing battle and how many of them died in the river valleys, between the karsts and plateaus? The authors of our volume have left some question open in order to suggest new directions of research, for themselves, for other researchers and for those who are interested in the detailed history of the war that we know today as WWI. A war of four years that cannot be erased neither from Hungarian, nor from world history; four years that still afflicts our lives. A European war where a great power, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy fell into pieces, Hungary's territory shrunk to one-third of its original size and the country lost approximately one-third of its Hungarian speaking population. Tragic consequences that we still feel and endure. Why could all these happen? The present volume tries to answer this question, thus it is worth reading for all who believe that the present is hard to understand and the future cannot be imagined without our past.

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