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liches Recht auf einen solchen Krieg zu haben, der einen enormen Regelverstoß gegen die internationale Diplomatie (Verletzung der Neutralität Belgiens, Schlieffen-Plan etc.) bedeutete. Regelverletzung auf höchster politischer Ebene in Deutschland – begeistert unterstützt von der sog. geistigen Elite, den kriegsbegeisterten deutschen Professoren z. B. (Klaus Schwabe) – und gleichzeitig also Regelverletzung auf der ›dreckigsten‹, untersten Ebene des Krieges. Woher die Geschichtsmächtigkeit solcher die Grenze von Realität und Irrealität überschreitenden Imagination?

Abschließend sei hervorgehoben, wie wichtig die Ergebnisse von Horne und Kramer für eine Erforschung der weiteren deutschen Kriegsgeschichte sein können, d. h. den Zweiten Weltkrieg des Dritten Reiches. Auch die Ermordung der jüdischen Bevölkerung in der seit Sommer 1941 eroberten Sowjetunion war in ihrem Auftakt an einen Mythos gebunden, vom grenzenlosen Widerstand bolschewistischer Partisanen, per se als jüdisch visioniert. Die jüdischen Männer, die von den – durch Hitlers ›Barbarossa-Befehl‹ ›legitimierten‹ – SD-Einheiten der SS sowie der Wehrmacht beim Einmarsch ins Baltikum erschossen wurden, wurden zunächst als ›Partisanen‹ aufgelistet, ein dehnbarer Begriff, der dann die Ausweitung der Mordaktionen auf die gesamte jüdische Bevölkerung im Kolonialreich der ›besetzten Ostgebiete‹ trug.

Cornelia ESSNER, Berlin

Sophie DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, *La Belgique et la Première Guerre mondiale*. Traduit du néerlandais par Claudine SPITAEELS et Marnix VINCENT, Brussels, Bern, Berlin et al. (Peter Lang) 2004, 334 p. (Documents pour l'Histoire des Francophonies/Europe, 4), ISBN 90-5201-215-6, CHF 44,00.

In this volume, Sophie de Schaepdrijver provides a ›narrative synthesis‹ (p. 11) of events and life in Belgium during the Great War for the general reader, chiefly a Belgian reader, though her work will be useful as well to experts in Belgian history. The author, a Belgian professor of modern European history at Pennsylvania State University in the United States, limits documentation for the most part to verbatim quotations but has used archives of five nations and provides an extensive, up to date bibliography in four languages. Well written, often witty, and vigorous in assailing myths, the book was originally published in Flemish in 1997 but has now been emended to incorporate the findings of recent scholarly monographs. Alas, there is no index or list of abbreviations.

De Schaepdrijver does not present any argument, thesis, or conclusion beyond the obvious one that the war wrought a considerable but far from total transformation in Belgium. She seeks primarily to show ›how it was‹, and her judgment of particular situations is invariably moderate and sensible. Most of the time, she writes history from below, depicting the war's effect on villages and ordinary individuals, the restrictions on women's rights, and occasional acts of defiance. After an excellent sketch of prewar Belgium and two chapters detailing the summer and autumn of 1914, she settles into a social history of occupied Belgium—with the exception of a stomach-churning description of life on the Ijzer (Yser) front. Although, as Jean Stengers said (and de Schaepdrijver agrees), the Ijzer was not Verdun, this chapter should be required reading for any lover of war or those who find it romantic. She also recognizes propaganda's effects and does well at explaining matters which experts know but general readers might not realize, such as the importance of terrain and roads in an era predating tanks and helicopters.

De Schaepdrijver does less well at explaining matters for the non-Belgian general reader. A sudden reference to ›le Comité‹ a hundred pages after last mention of the *Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation* may not trouble a Belgian reader but will confuse others. The same problem occurs with POB (*Parti ouvrier belge*) and van Vollenhoven

(Dutch minister to Belgium). Almost a century after the event, a French Canadian general reader might well wonder why the food crisis was so severe, for de Schaepdrijver does not mention Germany's policy of letting Belgium starve, or why the immediate postwar reform to provide equal manhood suffrage was done unconstitutionally, although scholars will not need explanation. And even Belgian lay readers may be startled by an unidentified reference on p. 248 to Villalobar (Spanish minister to Belgium). These defects are minor, however, in an otherwise valuable work.

The entire book is suffused with Belgium's language question. That is to be expected, considering the intensity and longevity of the issue, and its wartime entanglement with complicated nuances of activism and collaboration. De Schaepdrijver sensibly concludes that most Flemings rejected both activism and collaboration, instead planning to demand language equality and Flamandisation of the University of Ghent as rights from Belgium's own postwar government. However, her detailed dissection of those many nuances becomes a bit wearisome to a non-Belgian reader. Perhaps some of the space could have been better devoted to resistance activities. She does not quite catch the saucily impudent flavor of much Belgian defiance, perhaps because she addresses resistance and resisters only glancingly. She deals briefly and chiefly statistically with Belgian refugees in Britain, France, and Holland. She discusses Belgian prisoners of war in Germany more fully, mainly in terms of language issues and activist propaganda, and forced labor sent to Germany, focusing primarily on resistance to forced deportation as well as the hardships for individuals and families in Belgium. King Albert I, about whom so much has been written elsewhere, is occasionally mentioned, but almost nothing is said about the General Staff with him at De Panne (La Panne) in the famous »little corner never conquered«. What its members did to occupy themselves during more than three and a half years of impasse remains a mystery. One wishes that de Schaepdrijver had included a chapter on Belgians outside Belgium. How did the refugees who remained abroad after many returned home support and occupy themselves? What about the exile press? A short summary of Belgium's role in the African war would be in order, as also perhaps a glance at the role of two or three envoys in Allied capitals. The postwar chapter includes brief mention of Belgium's first major diplomatic foray, to the 1919 Paris peace conference, but describes the results in territorial terms only, ignoring the financial benefits and the spectacular postwar transformation of Belgium's role in Europe.

Above all, one wishes for some discussion of the Belgian government in exile, especially its long debate about ending compulsory neutrality. Aside from that, one wonders what the cabinet members did with their time in the outskirts of Le Havre. De Schaepdrijver says this government was viewed with hostility and contempt by occupied Belgium, but she never explains why except for brief remarks that it was indifferent to the Flemish question and blamed by the king for failing to persuade Britain to lift the blockade of foodstuffs. She explains that the first was less a matter of reality than of activist propaganda and inability to act without the parliament. The second was clearly impossible; although those under occupation probably could not know that, Albert should have understood the limits of Belgian power, if not the British mood. Even fifty years after the Armistice, elderly Britons of the influential classes remained apoplectic in their rage at the United States for feeding Belgium during the Great War, convinced to their graves that this prolonged hostilities and Britain's pain. There are many reasons to be grateful for the efforts of the Commission for the Relief of Belgium, but among them is the fact that its activities in the long run enabled de Schaepdrijver to write this sensitive, detailed, and thoughtful account of Belgium's ordeal.

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