



# The First Nazi: Erich Ludendorff, The Man Who Made Hitler Possible

By Will Brownell, Denise Drace-Brownell

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“...[T]he authors deliver a chilling, well-researched biography that opens a whole new window on the world wars and the German psyche at the time.”—**Kirkus**

“A brilliant tactician and an abysmally poor politician and strategist, Ludendorff summed up the strengths and weaknesses of the German General Staff. His is a fascinating story of talent, discipline, obsession, and denial.”—**Professor Isabel Virginia Hull, PhD, Cornell University**

One of the most important military individuals of the last century, yet one of the least known, Ludendorff not only dictated all aspects of World War I, he refused all opportunities to make peace; he antagonized the Americans until they declared war; he sent Lenin into Russia to forge a revolution in order to shut down the Russian front; and in 1918 he pushed for total military victory, in a slaughter known as “The Ludendorff Offensive.”

Ludendorff created the legend that Germany had lost the war only because Jews had conspired on the home front. He forged an alliance with Hitler, endorsed the Nazis, and wrote maniacally about how Germans needed a new world war, to redeem the Fatherland. He aimed to build a gigantic state to dwarf even the British Empire. Simply stated, he wanted the world.

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## Editorial Review

### Review

“Recommended for readers interested in the history of World War I and the components that led to World War II.”—*Library Journal*

“... [T]he authors deliver a chilling, well-researched biography that opens a whole new window on the world wars and the German psyche at the time.”—*Kirkus*

“Erich Ludendorff was among the most important military figures of World War I. From August 1916 almost until the armistice in November 1918, Ludendorff led the Imperial German army to victory over the new Soviet Union and to crushing defeat at the hands of the Western Allies and the United States. A brilliant tactician and an abysmally poor politician and strategist, Ludendorff summed up the strengths and weaknesses of the German General Staff. After the war, he was instrumental in propagating the myth that Germany was undefeated (the "stab-in-the-back legend"), wrote the first book extolling "total war," briefly aided Hitler's new Nazi movement, and then drifted ever further into the haze of rightwing conspiracy theories that poisoned the Weimar Republic. His is a fascinating story of talent, discipline, obsession, and denial.”—Professor Isabel Virginia Hull, PhD, Cornell University.

“A very accessible book about a little known chapter of history. This book exposes the critical role of General Ludendorff in shaping the course of WWI and the rise of the Nazis. A chilling view into the mind of a man who had a profound impact on the 20th Century... It is impossible to fully appreciate the Nazis without understanding Ludendorff... This book makes many chilling connections, and will provide insight and spark thoughts for experts and novices alike.”— J. Furman Daniel, III, Research Professor in Grand Strategy, International Security and Military History, the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University

“A hero for early tactical victories in World War I, German General Erich Ludendorff should be remembered more for his spectacular strategic failures. It was Ludendorff who ultimately led Germany to defeat, served as midwife to the Russian Revolution, aided the early rise of Hitler, and helped set the stage for World War II and the Holocaust. In this important and compelling history, the authors' clear narrative and patient research succeed in connecting dots that have long been overlooked.”

— Colonel (retired) Jay M. Parker, PhD Chair of International Security at the College of the National Defense University, Washington DC, previously Chair of the International Relations and Security Foreign MS in Foreign Service Program, Georgetown, and Professor of Military History, West Point

### About the Author

**Will Brownell, Ph.D.** is a scholar with both military and academic experience. Militarily, he has served as a translator and interpreter for the US Army and State Department. He was educated at Exeter, Cornell, Columbia, plus the Universities of Madrid and Paris. An expert in European military history, he is the author

of *So Close to Greatness*, the biography of Ambassador William C. Bullitt, the first US Ambassador to the Soviet Union. He lives in New York.

**Denise Drace-Brownell, JD, MPH** is a technologist, inventor, and international business executive. She has negotiated complex, high profile multi-state and global agreements. She was educated at Columbia and Rutgers, plus the Universities of Pennsylvania and Illinois. She lives in New York.

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