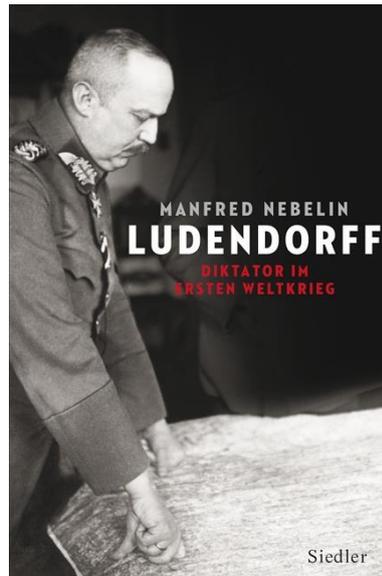


The first political biography of one of the ideological pioneers of National Socialism



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Ludendorff
[Ludendorff]
Dictator in World War I

Siedler
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Manfred Nebelin was born in 1955, is a lecturer in modern and contemporary history and has numerous publications on contemporary history to his name. His research focuses on World War I, the period of National Socialism and the political history of Europe during the 20th century.

Erich Ludendorff (1865-1937) was one of the key figures in the first half of the 20th century – as a celebrated generalissimo in World War I and the mind behind the concept of "total war", as an icon of the *völkisch* movement and an ideological pioneer of National Socialism.

No other member of the German military possessed such power comparable to that of General Ludendorff during World War I. Martial law allowed him to exert influence in all fields of public life, the economy, propaganda and occupation policies. As far as home affairs after the final victory were concerned, his objective was a military dictatorship. In the field of foreign policy, he dreamed of an "Imperium Germaniae"; he linked his *völkisch* motives – long before the emergence of the criminal plans of the Nazis – with the radical idea of a "total war". Thus it was only logical that after World War I Ludendorff should play a leading role in chauvinist circles that were hostile to the idea of a republic and actively participated in the Hitler putsch of 9 November 1923. The catastrophically wrong strategic and political decisions he was responsible for, his interpretation of German defeat as being what became known as a "stab-in-the-back" – all this places Ludendorff fairly and squarely next to Hindenburg and Hitler as one of the disastrous figures in 20th century Germany.

