Introduction: The experience of total wars and world revolutions

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Changing Political and Social Identities ...

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Megfenyegették munkatársunkat, a Népszava elé vonulnak április 29-én

Jönnek a gój motorosok!

Ők ígérik, hogy április 29-én délelőtt a Népszava szerkesztősége elé vonulnak. Támadhat a motorizált erő?

Forrás: MTI

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- Üdvözöljük egyesületünk honlapján ! -

Classical sociological and anthropological approaches:

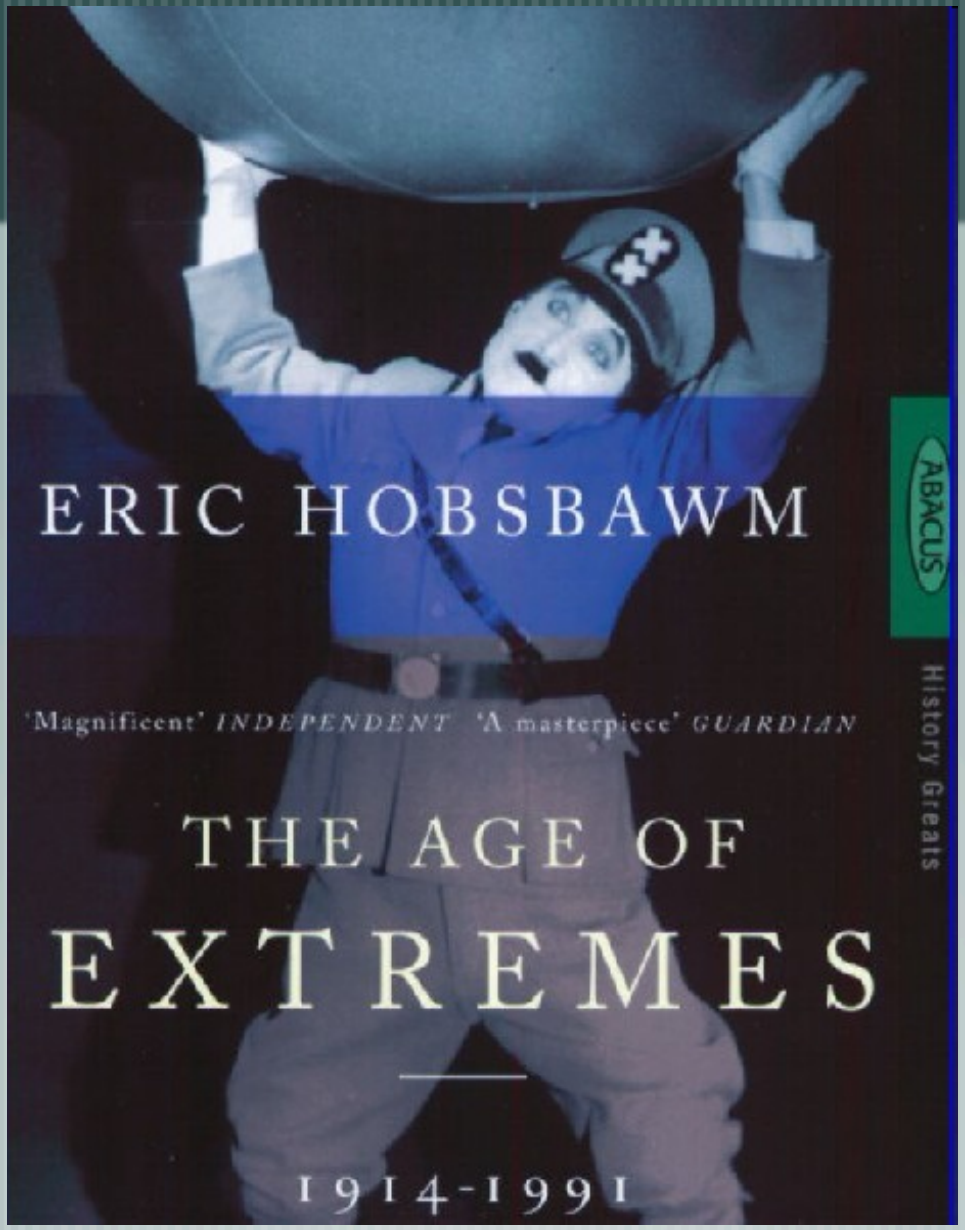
- The construction of collective identity is either naturally given or historically formed.
- Collective identity is an independent ontological reality
- Collective identity is secondary to power relations

The perspective of cultural sociology

- The construction of collective identity constitutes a basic component of social life, like power or economic relations.
- The social construction of boundaries
- The social construction of trust and solidarity among the members of collectivity

Seminar reading

- Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes* (Vintage, 1996) pp. 21-53

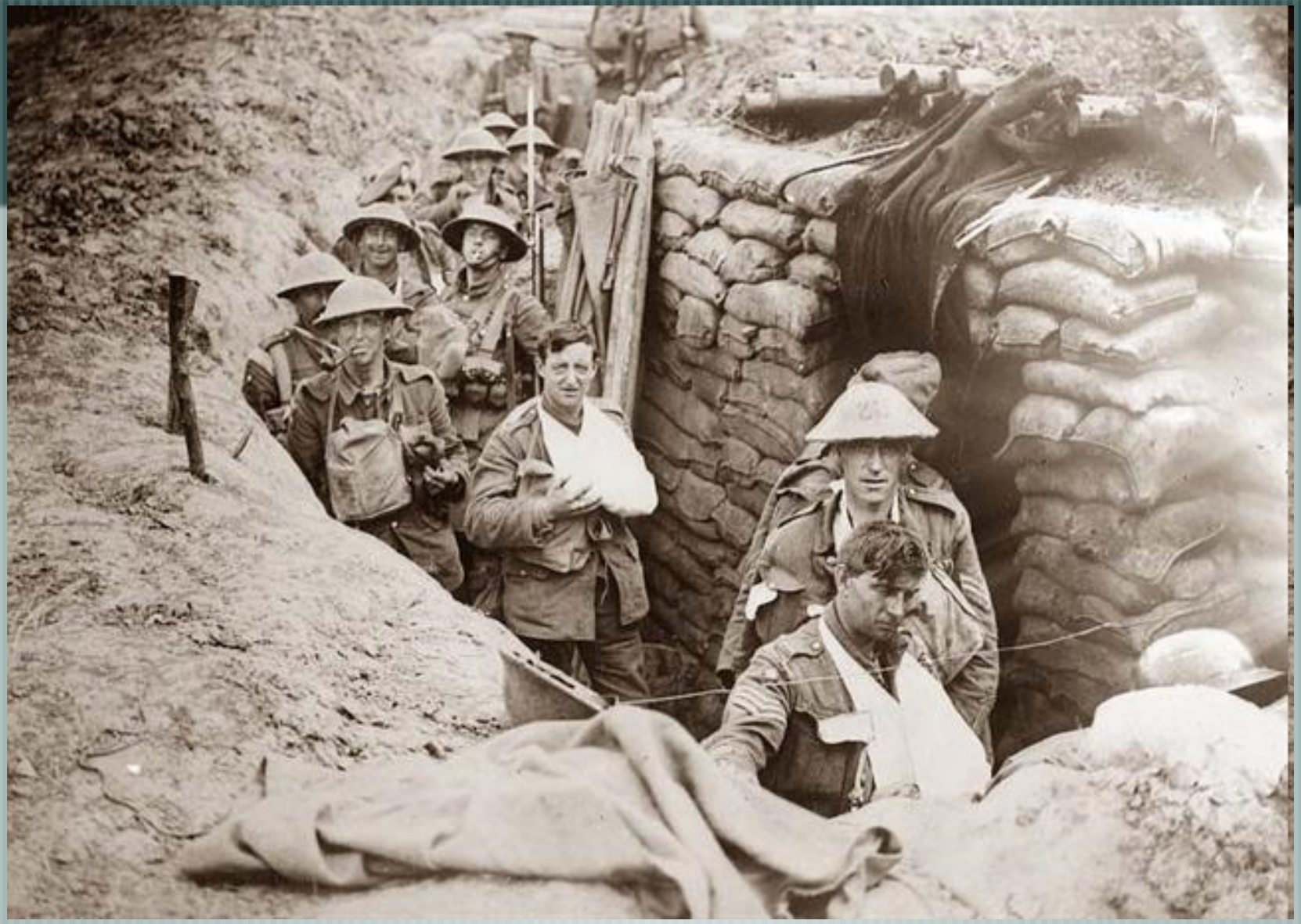

ERIC HOBSBAWM
ABACUS
History Greats
'Magnificent' INDEPENDENT 'A masterpiece' GUARDIAN
THE AGE OF
EXTREMES
1914-1991

The context

- Total wars and the cold war
- World Revolution:
  - political, social, cultural
- Economic Crisis and the fall of Liberalism
- The end of Empires: Third world
- The imperative of modernization

The Age of Total War

- The society of C19 crumpled in the flames of a 31 years world war.
- From July 1914 to August 1945 Europe was in war. The period between 1918-1938 was not really a peace. Europe lived and thought in terms of war in this period, too.
- Discontinuity experienced in Central Europe (see Joseph Roth)



The trauma of the WW I

- See Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*
- German *Blitzkrieg* as a necessary strategy was blocked and the front became a massacre machine
  - Soldiers lived like rats, parapets, barbed wire, machine guns (Ernst Junger: "hurricane of steel")
  - Verdun, 1916 February-July 2 mil. Men battle 1 mil. Died 60000 Brits died on 1th day.

Cultural consequences

- The experience of massacres helped to brutalize both warfare and politics
- The shared experience of living with death created two "incommunicable" identities
  - A sense of meaninglessness and hatred of the war
  - A sense of courage and superiority to women and those who not fought

A penal peace: the Treaty of Versailles

- Making the world safe from social revolution
  - The support of anti-Bolshevik nationalist local elites
- Re-mapping Europe after the collapse of the Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman Empires
  - Creation of *de jure* nation-states which were *de facto* multinational states and multi ethno-linguistic societies

Fascist movements

- The mobilization of masses
  - Reclassifying victims to superiors
  - Total transformation of society: adaptation of revolutionary rhetoric
- The resentment of the little men
  - Anti-modernism and pro-technology

The World Revolution

- Belief in universal emancipation and in the alternative path of modernization
  - Russia: vast, rural, pre-industrial country
- The *avant-garde* of professional revolutionaries
  - Unconditional loyalty as alternative to mass parties
  - Urban intellectuals