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Sonya O. Rose. *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. xiii + 328 pp. $55.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-925572-6.

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Divided Identities and the Unity of War

In *Which People's War?*, Sonya Rose masterfully unpacks the myth of unity and "oneness" that dominates cultural memories of the British homefront during World War II. The theme of war-time solidarity has been commemorated in films, television dramas, and in the nostalgic recollections of survivors, becoming a measure against which post-war divisiveness could be implicitly compared. In exposing the fissures in wartime notions of "British" unity, Rose unpacks one of the foundational myths of post-war Britain.

Rose's discussion of national identity and citizenship is a model of clarity and sophistication. Not only does Rose offer an in-depth discussion of the relevant scholarly literature, but her footnotes are a tour-de-force of scholarly discussion, offering in-depth historiographical and theoretical commentary to accompany the lucid and readable argument laid out in the text. In this way, the book is a must-read for scholars and graduate students interested in all aspects of identity and citizenship, as well as for general readers more specifically interested in the history of World War WII Britain.

After carefully laying out the component elements found again and again in popular and official representations of national unity, Rose begins to unpack this cultural ideal as she investigates persistent fissures in conceptions of belonging. Rose argues that Britons perceived themselves to be united around three primary cultural tropes: the myth of "the people," a love of "the countryside," and a confidence in the benevolent and paternalistic relations of Britain to a "family" of constituent peoples and imperial subjects. Yet, as Rose argues, this sense of unity remained fraught since women, colonial immigrants, Scottish and Welsh "Britons," and many others fit uneasily into a model of citizenship based on an ideal-typical conception of English manhood: temperate, hard-working, loyal and white.

Seamlessly integrating women's history, labor history, and cultural history, Rose examines issues ranging from the evacuation of working-class children to the relations between colonial immigrants and American G.I.s in order to show the slippages in wartime notions of civic solidarity. In a fascinating chapter on "Good-Time Girls" and Jews, Rose explores the unexpected correlation between conceptions of female promiscuity and anxiety about aliens and outsiders. Perceived as being flashy, selfish, disloyal, and pleasure-seeking, both "good-time girls" and Jews were regarded as "anti-citizens," regardless of their legal nationality or country of birth. "Good-time girls," however, were only marginally more problematic than "ordinary" women, who had to be encouraged to work on war production without losing their femininity or their maternal instincts. Rose has found a fascinating array of documents which encouraged women to wear pretty clothes and make-up at the factory. Rose suggests that as women needed to adopt masculine occupations for the good of the nation, there was all the more at stake in simultaneously preserving their femininity and enhancing their desirability as sexual object and as future wives and mothers. Yet even the campaign to beautify the factory girl never completely reconciled the feminine ideal required by war with the yearning for the wives and mothers of an imagined past. As Rose comments, "Fulfilling the obligations of citizenship by undertaking certain kinds of wartime service actually exposed young women to the charge of lacking the essential virtues of citizenship, particularly if they were away from home and family" (p. 149).

Nowhere was the inclusive idea of a unitary nation more severely tested, however, than when it tried to encompass colonial relations and racial difference. In Rose's final chapter on "Race, Empire, and Nation," she reveals the way an idea of a benevolent empire, undertaken for the good of colonial subjects, was continually tried by the reality of racial discrimination at home and in the colonies. This relationship was rendered even more fraught by the presence of American G.I.s

in Britain. White G.I.s continually harassed black colonial immigrants, their hardened racism alienating even white Britons. Black G.I.s, however, were hardly welcomed as anxiety mounted over miscegenation and sexual contact between black G.I.s and "good-time girls." Despite a strong desire among British officials to make colonial subjects feel welcome in Britain (thus generating good publicity for the British Empire when those subjects returned "home"), a persistent color bar alienated black Britons from their white brethren, even when racist American allies were not complicating relations even further.

While Rose concedes that Britain did "pull together" and achieve the national unity necessary for defeating Hitler, she suggests that "being unified did not depend on a single core of national identity" (p. 290). Her conclusions seem to hint at the hope that identities can be collective without being hegemonic. Rose has revealed the complexities inherent in British ideas of citizenship and belonging at a moment remembered for its national "unity." In unpacking the contested nature of wartime "oneness," Rose has offered a major contribution to the literature on Britain during World War II and provided a compelling framework for thinking about the problems of citizenship, identity, and civic obligation. The book is masterful, erudite, and readable and will become a standard work for those teaching or researching post-war British history.

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