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Hubertus F. Jahn. *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I.* Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1995. xiv + 229 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8014-3131-9.

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Hubertus Jahn's study of Russian patriotism during the Great War is a welcome book that fills several scholarly gaps. First, studies of World War I that consider its cultural aspects have for the most part included political approaches to the subject, assuming automatically the propaganda value of text and image (posters in particular). As a result, spontaneous expressions of patriotism, seen most often in cottage industry "kitsch" (such as salt and pepper shakers stamped with a picture of the nation's beloved leader/s) have for the most part been left to popular and collector-oriented publications with little or no analytical contribution. Second, when studies have taken on popular culture in the Great War, they have focused primarily on Germany or the Western allies (see, for example, Marie Monique Huss's remarkable article on postcards and pronatalism in France). Finally, accompanying the publication of Richard Stites's *Russian Popular Culture* there has been a great upsurge in research on the subject. Jahn's study is part of this wave and clarifies several aspects of Russian nationalism up to the Bolshevik Revolution that until now tended to be roughly grouped under the "pre-1917" heading.

Most accounts of Russian nationalism in pre-1917 Russia tend to lump the war years together under the Pan-Slavic flag and the actions of right-wing anti-Western, anti-Semitic groups in major Russian cities. Thus, they ignore popular expressions of enthusiasm and respect for Russia and its Western allies at the outbreak of World War I. Indeed, the three years that preceded the Bolshevik seizure of power witnessed a surprisingly rich outpouring of what Jahn terms "patriotic culture" which included "artists, entertainers, and cultural entrepreneurs as well as… reactions of societies and audiences in general" (p. 4). This kind of mass culture, both active and passive, took on traditional forms as well as new kinds of expression as influenced by late-nineteenth-century industrialization and the war conditions themselves. Jahn thus takes on a very challenging case with multiple variables.

The author's first concern centers around the imagery of Russia in World War I. The uniquely Russian contribution to the iconography of that era was the *lubok*, a kind of broadside based on woodcuts that dated back to the seventeenth century. Ironically, most *lubki*, when depicting foreigners, focused on Germans and later, under French influence among others, included satire and war themes. The Great War became the *lubok*'s last hurrah, as by then clients for this kind of art focused more on movies and novels. As Jahn's selection of illustrations shows, however, *lubki* provided a unique mix of folklore and modern, such as the horse-riding Cossack poking a Zeppelin.

Even as traditional *lubki* faded away, they survived in the form of postcard reproductions. The postcard was a new medium in 1914. Introduced in the late nineteenth century, it went through a golden age during the "Belle Epoque" and during the war in all belligerent nations. As Jahn correctly warns, the Russian war postcard did not follow counterparts in other nations, as it derived directly from the *lubok* tradition. Jahn's suggestion, however, that the Russian card, because of its heritage, was unique in conveying messages while feeding public curiosity about the war is exaggerated. Cards representing battlefields, heroics, caricatures or even the evil deeds of the enemy appeared and were sent often in other nations. French representations of Joan of Arc as inspiring a French "poilu" soldier in the trenches are very much an echo of the Russian "patriotic fantasy cards" to which Jahn refers (p. 41).

Peculiarities do exist, however, such as the fact that Russian cards representing leaders barely existed, in contrast to the German case. Yet a bigger problem with analyzing postcards concerns *who* bought them. Postcard makers catered to a variety of markets. Families purchased cards and sent them, but also collected them in specially designed albums. The quality ranged from the cheap black and white print to the ornate lithograph that only the upper class could afford. It would be interest-

ing to see exactly who "consumed" these scenes. This is an issue, however, that is part of the greater problem surrounding the study of early-twentieth-century mass culture–namely, how widespread it truly was. Jahn, wisely, suggests that lower-middle-class urban Russians and families of soldiers at the front were the primary consumers of this paper art and of the other products he discusses. Presumably posters were the greatest expression of patriotic culture, as they were likely to reach the greatest audience. Russia did not depart significantly from other nations in this field, printing posters for a wide variety of reasons. It is thus difficult to categorize them, although there is clearly a pattern of patriotism. Breaking down this pattern into various trends is a challenge, which Jahn's study does quite well in its investigation of the war on stage and in the movies.

Particularly entertaining, Russian circuses took on a variety of pantomime staging at the beginning of the war, expressing the typical enthusiastic reaction to the conflict's beginnings. Soon, however, such expressions of patriotism evolved, often becoming double-entendres reflecting the seeds of discontent with the Tsar's wartime policies. Clowns were particularly well suited to express frustration, either by asking for charity donations (thus acknowledging the difficult economic conditions [p. 93]) or, in the case of the more daring "intelligent" clowns, talking about the problems of everyday life. Meanwhile, wrestlers would demonstrate "Russian strength," an extension of the new nationalist emotions that sports had provided before World War I. Theaters tended to follow a similar path, but became less successful in conveying patriotic messages as the war dragged on. They, like the opera, suffered considerably from the war as actors were drafted, enemy plays and music were banned, and ticket prices shot up. Perhaps the greatest threat to them was the young film industry, which Jahn presents in his last chapter. An anarchical mix of competition among filmmakers and distributors, the film industry provided an odd selection of documentaries, musicals and "moving lubki." The result was "vulgarity, incoherence and cheap laughs" (p. 159). Patriotism thus became a consumer item with great potential but films, like the other media, grew pessimistic as 1917 came around.

Hubertus Jahn has successfully presented and analyzed several facets of the intersection between patriotism and popular culture in late Tsarist Russia. A minor qualm about his book concerns his failure to translate the texts that accompany several postcard and poster illustrations. Although they are analyzed in general terms in his own text, Jahn's failure to provide details on the nature of the jokes takes away from the quality of his analysis. To understand the contemporary humor (beyond the obvious illustration of Wilhelm II getting "the finger") would have been enlightening and likely would have strengthened further the points he makes. Nonetheless, this is an excellent investigation that rises to the challenge of understanding mass culture and further enlightens the popular aspect of late imperial Russia.

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