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The Empire and Nationalism at War ed. by Eric Lohr, Vera Tolz, Alexander Semyonov, and Mark von Hagen (review)

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difficult to use the book for comparative analyses or specific purposes. On the other hand, it is very well-written and the narrative progresses without undue breaks. Moreover, the inclusion of an index of names and important terms used throughout the book improves its usability.

The aim Paert sets for herself with this study, to “capture and recount the story of the Russian elders in order to make clear their historical and cultural significance” (P. 4), is clearly achieved. However, I sometimes get the impression that this was as much about Paert’s personal journey toward understanding certain facets of the discourse of religion in current Russia as it was an academic inquiry into a specific type of religious personality. The intriguing fact that “the influence of individual spiritual elders was disproportionate to their relatively small number” (P. 5) prompted Paert to undertake this journey. She clearly enjoyed it, and the result is a lucid narrative, rich in detail and compelling in the progression of the argument, in spite of some minor structural shortcomings.



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Eric Lohr, Vera Tolz, Alexander Semyonov, and Mark von Hagen (Eds.), *The Empire and Nationalism at War* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2014). 288 pp. ISBN: 978-0-89357-425-3.

In recent years the neglected history of World War I on the Eastern Front has received long-awaited attention. The war on the Eastern Front had resulted in the collapse of three empires and the emergence of several nation-states after a horrific period of violence from 1914 to 1922. Slavica’s project on Russia’s Great War and Revolution aims to contribute to the recent literature on the Eastern Front and expand the understanding of the immediate and long-lasting impacts of war in the territories of the former Russian Empire. Over several years this project has provided a forum for scholars from several countries to expand the understanding of the history of war in the Russian context through theoretical, conceptual, and empirical studies. The project comprises the publication of selected articles of these scholars as well as a constantly updated Web site, which includes valuable supporting materials as maps, illustrations, and sound and image files. The book under review is a valuable outcome of this project and introduces new sources, method-

ologies, and conceptual frameworks to explore how war and imperial collapse transformed lives in the Russian imperial lands before, during, and just after World War I, and how this is remembered.

In the introductory essay Ronald Grigor Suny reiterates an argument shared by Alexei Miller, Aviel Roshwald, and Michael Reynolds that the imperial powers tried to manipulate the aspirations of ethnicities within the borders of their rivals in the course of the war. The intention behind this policy was to further imperial interests. The outcomes, however, were unexpected for both the imperial states and the nationalist groups. The following essays thoughtfully analyze these manipulative policies, their intentions, implementation, and outcomes during the war and revolutionary years in the territories of the Russian empire, with one notable exception – the Caucasus.

Mark von Hagen proposes that the “entangled history” approach can provide a productive methodological framework to understand the process of war and its aftermath on the Eastern Front. According to him, the entanglement of imperial states on the Eastern Front before the war is what shaped how the war was fought and how it ended as “the pressures and the constraints of the various entanglements also resulted in a much more radical postwar recon-

figuration of borders and populations than was the case in the west.” (P. 11) Von Hagen selects certain “spaces” of entanglement – areas of military occupation, and prisoner-of-war camps, and rather than providing a conclusive analysis, points out how the existing literature on these issues can fit into “entangled history” and how future research, especially in the aftermath of the war on the Eastern Front, can benefit from this approach.

From this perspective, Joshua Sanborn’s chapter is a perfect example of that suggestion. In order to understand the dissolution of the Russian Empire (as well as the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires) at the end of World War I, Sanborn proposes to use the multifaceted process of decolonization instead of the teleological and simplified explanation of “rise of nationalism” (P. 50), because “[the rise of nationalism] framework is not robust enough to explain the complicated political and military processes that historically have led to independence, which have been powerfully influenced by both vicious fighting between purported co-nationals and by deep engagement with regional and global powers other than the imperial state most directly affected. The model of national liberation is even less helpful when attempting to explain why conflict continued, indeed frequently intensified, af-

ter the achievement of national independence” (P. 54). Sanborn then explains his “decolonization” model, which includes imperial challenge, state failure, and social collapse and can be applied to the violent processes “in Eastern Europe (and elsewhere, notably the Middle East) in the years of the Great War” (P. 71).

Eric Lohr’s essay also deals with the “rise of nationalism” framework. While the classic works on nationalism stresses the long-term conditions for the emergence of nation, the essay focuses on the imminent and coincidental causes that let nationalism to form. In this regard, the chapter contributes to studies that explain how national identification and national communities emerged in certain settings. The distinctions that Lohr proposes between “nationalist” and “war nationalist” policies are also useful. Lohr states that “when a boycott of a certain national group can be labeled as a nationalist policy, the policies that were improbable in a normal setting such as deportation, mass killing, expropriation would be war nationalist” (P. 98). He underlines the impact of war on the version of nationalism and nationalist policies that appeared in the course of and after World War I. “When nationalisms burst onto the scene in 1917–18, they took violent, militarized forms that had as much to do with the experience of war as

the accumulated experiences of the decades prior to the war” (P. 106).

Whereas Lohr’s essay qualifies the version of nationalism that developed in the course and aftermath of the war, Alexei Miller argues that the war and its aftermath affected the competition between Russian and non-Russian nationalisms in the western borderlands of the Russian Empire. Miller’s essay is also a perfect example of the “entangled history” approach, and powerfully argues that the rise of Ukrainian nationalism was not due to the effort of Ukrainian nationalist organizations but mostly the result of the policies of Russian and Central European powers during the war and the Bolshevik policies of *korenizatsiia* (Pp. 87–88).

In addition to the essays of Lohr, von Hagen, and Miller, who introduce several contextual factors that accelerated the formation of nation-states during and after World War I, Boris Chernev focuses on the connection between the Brest-Litovsk peace conference and the origins of Ukrainian statehood. He formulates a Brest-Litovsk system, which “provided the framework for the ukrainization policies carried out by a succession of actual and would-be Ukrainian governments between the spring and autumn of 1918 and in several aspects anticipated early Soviet indigenization policy” (P. 165).

In Andrei Cusco’s chapter on the development of nationalism

in Russian Bessarabia, ambiguous and suspicion-driven Russian imperial policies appear to be the main instigator of an outcome that was regarded to be impossible before the war – the integration of Bessarabia into “Greater Romania.” According to Cusco, “The threat of separatism or ‘Romanian irredentism’ was mostly a mental construct of insecure imperial officials who faced new challenges in a multiethnic content that could no longer be perceived in premodern terms” (P. 146). Domestic and international developments during the war increased Russian suspicions about the loyalty of the Bessarabian people, and at the same time lifted the status of Bessarabia in the “hierarchy of national priorities in Romania” (P. 162).

Marco Buttino’s essay on Central Asia is an important contribution to the collection not only because it diversifies the geographic concentration of the volume on the western borderlands but also because it focuses on the local dynamics of decolonization and emphasizes the immediate concerns of the warring parties in Turkestan between 1916 and 1920. In Buttino’s analysis, “revolutions” and “counterrevolutions” were mostly “reactions to chaos, famine and the spread of violence” and “were actually attempts by local groups to re-establish order and defend themselves in a situation

that was becoming increasingly threatening” (Pp. 109–110).

A common aspect of all these essays is an emphasis on the inadequate and counterproductive policies of the Russian imperial government and military in dealing with the central challenge of modernity, as Ilya Gerasimov formulates it: “How to reconcile the fundamental and multilayered heterogeneity of the ‘old regime’ and the ideal of the single homogenous nation?” (P. 204). According to Gerasimov, a considerable portion of the educated Russian society was trying to formulate its answers to this question and unite as a political force that proposed social reforms without revolutionary upheaval. Gerasimov analyzes the economic, social, political, and foreign policy considerations of the progressivists and argues that they envisioned Russia as “a commonwealth of local ethnocultural communities bound together by the pan-imperial political loyalty and Russian-language universal public sphere, fully acknowledging the parallel existence of local circuits of national cultures and loyalties” (P. 210). Gerasimov claims that the Russian imperial state did not embrace this vision and did not allow progressivists to acquire “institutionalized authority” beyond the *zemstvo* network before the war. When the February 1917 revolution allowed the progressivists access

to state power, they failed to realize their vision as they lacked “the legitimacy to monopolize supreme authority in the country, and did not have a political machine of [their] own to rely upon in governing the society” (P. 214).

While Gerasimov’s essay focuses on the attempts of Russian liberal intellectuals to make sense of the ongoing war, Sergey Glebov’s chapter discusses how a group of Russian émigré intellectuals interpreted the intellectual, social, economic, and personal trauma that they experienced in the aftermath of World War I. Glebov asserts that these traumas led the founders of the Eurasianist movement to disengage from the European civilization and identify Russia with the colonial world and attempts to find the neglected impact of Eurasianist thought on scholarship, the arts, and literature in interwar Europe. He tries to rescue the movement from obscurity, and attributes the first traits of “fervent critique of colonialism – arguably the first instance of a sophisticated critique of cultural colonialism in Europe” to the Russian Eurasianists (P. 220).

Following these valuable discussions of how the domestic and international war context affected the dynamics between empire and nationalism, the last two chapters shed light on the use of war history for contemporary political purposes.

Thomas Balkelis’s essay explains the use of history for the construction of nation-state based on the example of Lithuania. Balkelis shows how a constructed memory, which was seen to be a vital part of national identity, could either be reshaped or fade as domestic and international concerns change. Anti-Polish sentiments were useful to create a Lithuanian identity in the interwar period; however, it lost relevance when Lithuania and Poland put in their bids to become members of the European Union. Polish and Lithuanian elites negotiated a reconciliation of historical memories, and as recent polls (2010) show, this is having a positive impact on public perceptions. Balkelis situates this reformulation of historical memories in the larger context of Eastern Europe where remembrance and amnesia work to create new identities (P. 254).

Vera Tolz’s concluding chapter directs attention to the political use of the memory and interpretation of war in Russia after 1990. According to her analysis, Russian rulers devised several interpretations of events that took place during World War I and the Civil War era to serve their political aims. In the period from 1990 to 2009, Russian victimhood during World War I and the Civil War was emphasized. This became an important weapon in the “war of memories” in Eastern

Europe, where Russia was recasting its political clout in the Putin era. Citing Serguei Oushakine (*The Patriotism of Despair*), Tolz points to the widely shared public conception of historical victimhood and also to perceptions of international isolation as reasons for public acceptance of the official promotion of Russian victimhood. According to Tolz, after 2010, another interpretation emerged, in which the history of World War I and the Civil War are interpreted to emphasize that Russia had always been under attack and that there had been internal actors, that is, opposition parties that might serve the interests of external enemies. The current political atmosphere in Russia in the aftermath of the Crimean and Ukrainian crisis, further increases the validity of Tolz's arguments.

Collectively, these essays contribute to an understanding of multiple local, imperial, and international factors that influenced the ethnic policies of the Russian Empire as well as emerging nationalisms during World War I and its aftermath. The new conceptual frameworks and informative material provided in these essays will also stimulate further research.



Ольга ГУЛИНА

Philipp Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation-States: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014). 288 pp. Bibliography. Index. ISBN: 978-1-78238-302-4.

Интерес к книге обусловлен ее актуальностью. Сегодня мы наблюдаем усиление и обновление национально-детерминированной риторики в устах общественных и государственных деятелей России и стран Запада. Происходящие в мире политические события, возникающие политические и религиозные движения заново ставят вопрос о значимости этнической / религиозной / лингвистической "чистоты" отдельных территорий, обществ и государств. Такие эксцессы, как "выдавливание" представителей крымско-татарского народа с территории Крыма или расстрел журналистов редакции *Charlie Hebdo* во Франции следует рассматривать как демонстрацию низкого уровня этнической и религиозной толерантности, которая уже не раз становилась причиной этнических чисток в Европе XIX века.

Книга состоит из пяти глав (каждая завершается заключением), включающих историческую типологизацию этнических чисток. Первая глава книги