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0521771374 - The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth, and Mobilization in Germany

Jeffrey Verhey

Frontmatter

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The Spirit of 1914

Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany

This book is the first systematic analysis of German public opinion at the outbreak of the Great War and the first treatment of the myth of the “spirit of 1914,” which stated that in August 1914 all Germans felt “war enthusiasm” and that this enthusiasm constituted a critical moment in which German society was transformed. Jeffrey Verhey’s powerful study demonstrates that the myth was historically inaccurate. Although intellectuals and much of the upper class were enthusiastic, the emotions and opinions of most of the population were far more complex and contradictory. Jeffrey Verhey further examines the development of the myth in newspapers, politics, and propaganda, and the propagation and appropriation of this myth after the war. His innovative analysis sheds new light on the German experience of the Great War and on the role of political myths in modern German political culture.

JEFFREY VERHEY is a researcher at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Bonn, and has previously taught at the University of California, Berkeley, the University of California, Davis, and the Free University of Berlin. He is the author of numerous articles on modern German cultural history, the history of comparative propaganda, and the history of comparative stereotypes.

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Enthusiasm always does, and always must, defeat him who is not so enthusiastic. It is not the power of the army nor even of the weapons, it is the strength of the will alone which achieves victories.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, Eighth Address (1808)

. . . the people's war. Any nation that uses it intelligently will, as a rule, gain some superiority over those who disdain its use. If this is so, the question only remains whether mankind at large will gain by this further expansion of this element of war; a question to which the answer should be the same as to the question of war itself. We shall leave both to the philosophers.

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Book 6, chapter 26 (1832)

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page xi
<i>List of tables</i>	xii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xiv
Introduction: The myth of the “spirit of 1914”	1
1. Public opinion in Germany, July 1914: the evidence of the crowds	12
Newspapers as a source for studying German public opinion in 1914	12
Mass psychology and the analysis of the crowds of 1914	22
Curious and enthusiastic crowds in Berlin, 25 July	26
Crowds in Germany (except Berlin) on Saturday, 25 July	33
Enthusiastic and curious crowds in Germany, Sunday, 26 July–Thursday, 30 July 1914	38
Crowds of panic and fear	47
Crowds against war	52
2. The response to the outbreak of the war	58
The response to the proclamation of the state of siege, 31 July	58
The response to the proclamation of mobilization, 1 August	64
3. The “August experiences”	72
Curious crowds, audience crowds	72
“Carnavalesque” crowds	82
Crowds of panic and depression	89
“War enthusiasm”: volunteers, departing soldiers, and victory celebrations	97
4. The “spirit of 1914” in the immediate interpretations of the meaning of the war	115
The “Great Times”: the melodrama of the August experiences	117
The “ideas” of 1914	126
Toward a “myth” of the spirit of 1914	134

x	Contents	
5.	The government's myth of the spirit of 1914	136
	Sustaining the "spirit of 1914" through censorship	142
	The "new orientation"	146
	Propaganda in the service of national unity	149
6.	The "spirit of 1914" in the discourse of the political parties	156
	The 4 August vote in parliament: the birth of the <i>Burgfrieden</i>	157
	Toward a civil society: liberal attempts to improve the style of political rhetoric	161
	The "politics of 4 August": Prussian suffrage reform	166
	The conservative image of the "spirit of 1914"	173
	The German Fatherland Party	178
7.	The myth of the "spirit of 1914" in German propaganda, 1916–1918	186
	The military's conceptualization of a "total war"	187
	The "spirit of 1914," 1916–1918	192
	The "spirit of 1914" in the revolution of 1918	202
8.	The "spirit of 1914," 1919–1945	206
	Remembering and commemorating the "August experiences" during the 1920s	207
	The <i>Volksgemeinschaft</i>	213
	The stab-in-the back legend (<i>Dolchstoßlegende</i>)	219
	The "spirit of 1914" in National Socialism	223
	The end of the myth of the "spirit of 1914"	228
	Conclusion: the myth of the "spirit of 1914" in German political culture, 1914–1945	231
	<i>Select bibliography</i>	239
	<i>Index</i>	262

Illustrations

1. Downtown Berlin in 1914 (Kiesling Verlag, 1919 edition, Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn (AdsD))	page 74
2. Troops marching through Düsseldorf in August 1914 on their way to the front (Landesarchiv Düsseldorf)	80
3. Drawing of troops marching to the front by R. Vogts for the <i>Berliner illustrierte Zeitung</i> , 6 September 1914, p. 651 (AdsD)	81
4. “Humorous” postcard by Louis Oppenheim from 1914 (AdsD)	104
5. Drawing of troops at a train station by Felix Schwormstädt for the <i>Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung</i> , 13 August 1914, reprinted in Paul Schreckenbach (ed.), <i>Der Weltbrand. illustrierte Geschichte aus großer Zeit mit zusammenhängendem Text</i> (Leipzig, 1920), vol. I, p. 21 (AdsD)	196
6. Graphics from the leaflet “To the German People (<i>An das Deutsche Volk</i>),” published by the government in December 1916 (AdsD)	197
7. “Through Hard Work to Victory. Through Victory to Peace.” Poster by A. M. Cay, published by the government in 1918 (AdsD)	199
8. “Help us Win. Subscribe to War Loans.” Poster by Fritz Erler for the sixth war-loan campaign in 1917 (AdsD)	200
9. “The Day-Dreams of a Reservist.” Poster by Ludwig Hohlwein for a film with this title from late 1914 (DHM)	233

Tables

1. The social background of volunteers in the Leipzig Artillery Regiment, no. 77	<i>page</i> 100
2. The social background of volunteers in the Stuttgart Tenth Infantry Regiment	100
3. Newspapers punished from the beginning of the war till 30 March 1916	145
4. Newspapers punished between 8 March 1916 and 15 May 1918	145
5. Newspapers punished from the beginning of the war until 15 May 1918 (tables 3 and 4)	146

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Abbreviations

Abt.	Abteilung
AdsD	Archiv der sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn
ADV	Alldeutscher Verband
AK	Armeekorps
BA	Bundesarchiv, Koblenz
BAL	Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde
BA–MA	Bundesarchiv–Militärarchiv, Freiburg
BdF	Bund deutscher Frauenverein
BLA	Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union
DDP	Deutsche Demokratische Partei
DHM	Deutsches Historisches Museum
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei
DVP	Deutsche Volkspartei
FVV	Freie Vaterländische Vereinigung
GhStAPK	Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz
HStA	Hauptstaatsarchiv
KP	Kriegspresseamt
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
KrA	Kriegsarchiv
KrM	Kriegsministerium
NSDAP	Nationale Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei
OHL	Oberste Heeresleitung
OK	Oberkommando
OZ	Oberzensurstelle
RLB	Reichslandbund
SA	Sturm-Abteilung
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
stellv. GK	Stellvertretendes Generalkommando
USPD	Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
VDA	Verein Deutscher Arbeitgeber
WUA	Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses