Mobilizing the Russian Nation

Despite the enormous literature that exists on the Russian revolution and its origins, very little is known about the ways in which ordinary Russians thought about and experienced the First World War. Melissa Kirschke Stockdale presents the first comprehensive study of the ways in which the Great War affected Russian notions of national identity and citizenship. The book examines the patriotic and nationalist organizations that emerged during the war, the role of the Russian Orthodox Church, the press, and the intelligentsia in mobilizing Russian society, the war’s impact on conceptions of citizenship, and the new, democratized ideas of Russian nationhood that appeared as a result both of the war and of the 1917 revolution. Russia’s war experience is revealed as a process that helped consolidate in the Russian population a sense of membership in a great national community, rather than being a test of patriotism that they failed.

MELISSA K. STOCKDALE is a Brian and Sandra O’Brien Presidential Professor and Professor of History at the University of Oklahoma, specializing in modern Russian history. Her previous publications include Paul Miliukov and the Quest for a Liberal Russia, 1880–1918 (1997) and, with Murray Frame, Boris Kolonitskii, and Steven G. Marks, Russian Culture in War and Revolution, 1914–1922 (2014).
In recent years the field of modern history has been enriched by the exploration of two parallel histories. These are the social and cultural history of armed conflict, and the impact of military events on social and cultural history.

**Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare** presents the fruits of this growing area of research, reflecting both the colonization of military history by cultural historians and the reciprocal interest of military historians in social and cultural history, to the benefit of both. The series offers the latest scholarship in European and non-European events from the 1850s to the present day.

*This is book 45 in the series, and a full list of titles in the series can be found at:* [www.cambridge.org/modernwarfare](http://www.cambridge.org/modernwarfare)
Mobilizing the Russian Nation: Patriotism and Citizenship in the First World War

Melissa Kirschke Stockdale

University of Oklahoma
Contents

List of Figures page vi
Acknowledgments x
Note on Usage and Translation xiii
Chronology xiv

Introduction Mobilizing a Nation: Patriotism and Citizenship in Russia’s Great War, 1914–1918 1

1 A Sacred Union: Patriotic Narratives and the Language of Inclusion 15
3 “On the Altar of the Fatherland”: The Orthodox Church and the Language of Sacrifice 75
4 “All for the War!”: War Relief and the Language of Citizenship 106
5 United in Gratitude: Honoring Soldiers and Defining the Nation 140
6 Fantasies of Treason: Sorting Out Membership in the Russian National Community 166
7 “For Freedom and the Fatherland”: Shaping Citizens in Revolutionary 1917 213

Conclusion 247

Select Bibliography 261
Index 277
Figures

1.1 On July 20, 1914, a diverse crowd of approximately 250,000 people gathered on Palace Square to see Tsar Nicholas II, following Germany’s declaration of war. Photo courtesy of Bettmann/Corbis.

1.2 Nicholas and Alexandra being greeted by throngs at the Kremlin in Moscow, August 1914. Photo reproduced from Letopis’ voiny, courtesy of Harvard University.

1.3 Some 20,000 people joined a patriotic demonstration in Moscow in front of the statue of Kuz’ma Minin and Prince Dmitrii Pozharskii, July 1914. Photo reproduced from Letopis’ voiny, courtesy of Harvard University.

1.4 A wartime session of the State Duma; in July 1914, the Duma symbolized the people’s patriotic transcendence of political, national, and religious differences. Photograph courtesy of Bettmann/Corbis.

2.1 “German atrocities at Kalisz,” 1914; depictions of a barbaric enemy were one means of promoting internal unity. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 374, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University.

2.2 A symbolic map of Russia and Europe, from 1915; mass editions of maps of Russia and the theaters of war were distributed throughout the war. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 780A, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University.

2.3 The slogan of this 1916 poster tells the viewer that buying into the war loan is “patriotic and profitable.” Its depiction of a handsome young worker making munitions conveys the all-class nature of the sacred union. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 1226, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University.
List of Figures

2.4 The legend of this 1916 war loan poster reads “Our cities, villages, and churches await liberation . . .” Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 1241, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 67

2.5 A lubok-style poster depicting the feat of heroic Cossack Koz'ma Kriuchkov, the first recipient of the St. George Cross for valor in the Great War. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 83, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 68

3.1 Crowds praying in front of Kazan Cathedral in Petrograd on the All-Russian Day of Prayer, July 8, 1915. Reproduced from Letopis’ voiny, RP9.L6255, Houghton Library, Harvard University. 83

3.2 “News from the War.” Peasants listen attentively as a young man reads aloud from a newspaper; secular and religious authorities were particularly concerned to keep rural Russians connected to the war effort. Drawing by N. Bogdanov-Bel’skii, from the popular illustrated magazine Niva. 84

3.3 “A Sign of the August Victory.” The image of the Mother of God and Christ Child appearing to Russian troops in 1914, prior to their success in Galicia, reinforces portrayal of the conflict as a “holy war.” Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 357, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 90

4.1 A map of the Russian empire in 1914; networks of war-relief organizations came into being across the country. Courtesy of the Drawing Office, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham. 111

4.2 A 1914 poster, “Moscow Aids the Wounded,” 1914, depicts how a caring and compassionate community looks after the country’s defenders. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 763, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 117

4.3 This poster, “War and the Press,” advertises a fundraising exhibit organized in 1914 by the Union of Cities; with 630 member towns, it constituted one of the largest war-relief networks. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 862, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 127
List of Figures

4.4 A poster depicting the heroic feat of Sister of Mercy Rimma Ivanovna during battle, in 1915; inspiring images of Sisters of Mercy were ubiquitous in wartime Russia. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 353, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 132

4.5 This 1916 calendar, passed out by a rural credit cooperative, features drawings of rural people aiding the war effort in a variety of ways, including making boots for the army and sending gifts to soldiers. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 1091, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 135

5.1 “Dear Unexpected Guest.” This poster conveys the esteem given the country’s defenders, depicting a soldier being wounded, cared for in a hospital, and awarded a St. George Cross for valor, then returning home to the surprise and delight of his peasant family. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 684, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 151

5.2 Crowds gather in Petrograd for the formal launch of the St. George Cavaliers traveling exhibition, July 1916, one of the more innovative wartime efforts to celebrate the country’s heroes. From Letopis’ voiny, courtesy of Harvard University. 152

6.1 A symbolic rendering of the rapprochement of the two Slavic “sisters,” Russia and Poland. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 854, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 174

6.2 “Down with the German Yoke!” Headlines on this 1914 poster trumpet “The Secrets of German Intrigues” and “German Provocations in Poland.” Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 1123, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 196

6.3 “A Letter Home.” An artist’s rendering of a widely reproduced photograph. Millions of letters passed between the front and home front during the war, attentively monitored by military censors. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 338, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 209

7.1 Russian soldiers take an oath of loyalty to the country and its new government in March 1917; their original oath pledged loyalty to the person of the tsar. Photo courtesy of Bettmann/Corbis. 215
List of Figures

7.2 Blinded veterans, led by a Sister of Mercy, demonstrate in support of continuing the war until victory, Petrograd, 1917; the great majority of soldiers did not share their sentiments. Photo courtesy of Bettmann/Corbis. 218

7.3 This poster for the 1917 liberty loan, by artist Boris Kustodiev, links continuing the war with defense of Russia’s newly won freedoms. Political Poster Collection, #RU/SU 1225, courtesy of Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University 228

7.4 Mariia “Yashka” Bochkareva and soldiers of the first Women’s Battalion of Death. In revolutionary 1917, “soldier-citizens” included as many as 6,000 women volunteers. From the Winifred Ramplee-Smith Collection, courtesy of the Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University. 237
Acknowledgments

It is truly a pleasure to acknowledge the abundant support and encouragement I have received for this project over the years. Funding was critical, making possible eight research trips to Russia as well as visits to collections in the United States, rights for and production of images, and much-valued time off for writing. I would like to thank the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Philosophical Society, the International Research and Exchange Board, the Fulbright–Hayes Program, the Kennan Institute, and the College of Arts and Sciences and the Research Council of the University of Oklahoma. I am also grateful for funding received through my Presidential Professorship at the University of Oklahoma, made possible by the generous endowment of Brian and Sandra O’Brien, and the Kinney–Sugg Outstanding Professor Award, thanks to the kind gift of Sandy Kinney and Mike Sugg.

I am particularly grateful for my year in residence as a Wilson Scholar, at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. This remarkable program not only provides time and space for writing, but folds participants into a stimulating, congenial, and supportive group of scholars, staff, and librarians. I thank Blair Ruble, Will Pomerantz, and Christian Ostermann; staffers Kim Connor, Lucy Jilka (now at the State Department), Liz Malinkin, the late Edmita Bulota, and Lindsay Collins; and my research assistant, Madeleine Bachuretz. The terrific scholars from whom I learned so much — and whose company I so enjoyed — include Martin Dimitrov, Boris Lanin, Philippa Strum, Oleksandr Merezhko, Bruce Parrott, Charles Maier, Liudmila Pravikova, Susan Carruthers, David Greenberg, Mel Leffler, and Evgenii Tsimbaev.

Research is possible only thanks to the expertise and aid of archivists and librarians. I sincerely thank Laurie Scrivener, Molly Murphy, and the interlibrary loan staff at the University of Oklahoma; archivists Carol Leadenham, Jani Vishnu, and Stephanie Stewart at the Hoover Institution; Tanya Chebotarev, Curator of the Bakhmeteff Archive of Columbia University; the archivists of the State Archive of the Russian
Acknowledgments

Federation ( Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiiskoi federatsii, GARF), and especially Nina Abdulatovna, head of the Reading Room, who has helped me countless times over the years; the librarians of Widener Library of Harvard University; the archivists and staff of the Russian State Military History Archive (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv, RGVIA); the archivists and staff of the Russian State History Archive (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv, RGIA); Janet Spikes, Dagne Gizaw, and Michelle Kamalich, librarians of the Wilson Center; the staff of the Slavic Division at the New York Public Library (sadly, a division that no longer exists); the librarians of the Russian National Library, particularly those of the wonderful “Gazetnyi zal” on the Fontanka; and the librarians of the Russian State Library, in Moscow, especially the amazing staff of the Military History Division.

Colleagues and friends have discussed with me Russian history, the First World War, nationalism, gender, and a host of other absorbing topics for many years, informing me, challenging me, pointing me toward sources, helping me refine ideas (and ditch a few along the way). In addition to the many colleagues—too numerous to list—who have commented on papers I have delivered at various scholarly conferences and workshops, I sincerely thank Brad Bradley, Kathy Brosnan, Jane Burbank, Laurie Burnham, Roger Chickering, Jennifer Davis Cline, Chris Ely, Cathy Ann Frierson, Rob Griswold, Nicky Gullace, Gary Hamburg, Pat Herlihy, Peter Holquist, Jill Irvine, Emily Johnson, David Levy, Norihito Naganawa, Colonel Brian Newberry, Josh Piker, Aleksandr Polunov, William Rosenberg, Tom Schwartz, Marsha Seifert, Alex Semyonov, Valentin Shelokhaev, Pavel Shcherbinin, Laurie Stoff, David Stone, Anastasia Tumanova, David Wrobel, and Oleg Zimarin.

My superb colleagues on the editorial board of “Russia’s Great War and Revolution” have been an unfailing source of inspiration, expertise, and just plain fun: I particularly thank Adele Lindenmeyr, David McDonald, Tony Heywood, John Steinberg, and, of course, the incomparable “Team Culture.”

I am especially indebted to the friends and colleagues who took the time to read and thoughtfully comment on chapters, or the two articles that became parts of chapters, greatly improving them in the process: Laurie Burnham, Murray Frame, Cathy Ann Frierson, Sandie Holguin, Cathy Kelley, Boris Kolotitskii, Judy Lewis, Adele Lindenmeyr, Steve Marks, Bob Rundstrom, Dan Snell, Linda Reese, Aviel Roshwald, Ted Weeks, Christine Worobec, and the anonymous readers for the American Historical Review. Equally, I thank the scholars who read the typescript for Cambridge University Press and offered detailed suggestions for its improvement, including Mark von Hagen and Karen Petrone, as well as
the reviewer who remains anonymous. Over the many years of this project I benefited in innumerable ways from the erudition and encouragement of the late Abbott “Tom” Gleason, my mentor and treasured friend. I greatly appreciate the support and expert advice of my editors at Cambridge, Michael Watson, Rosalyn Scott, and Claire Sissen, and copy-editor Karen Anderson Howes, as well as their patience with a number of missed deadlines.

Part of chapter five was first published as “‘United in Gratitude’: Honoring Soldiers and Defining the Nation in Russia’s Great War,” *Kritika, New Series*, vol 7, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 459–85; part of chapter seven was first published as “‘My Death for the Motherland is Happiness’: Women, Patriotism, and Solidering in Russia’s Great War, 1914–1917,” *American Historical Review* vol 109, no.1 (February 2004): 78–116. I gratefully acknowledge Slavica Publishers and Oxford University Press, respectively, for permission to republish this material.

Finally, there are the people who offered love, friendship, and encouragement, including critical support during two battles with breast cancer: I absolutely could not have completed this project without you. In addition to beloved friends named above, I thank Martha Skeeters, Amy “Arie” Storer, Andrea Zizzi, Jana Hutchins Brewer, Shmuel Galai, and my wonderful extended family. Above all, I thank my son, Nic Stockdale, my sister, Amy Helene Kirschke, and my mom, Jane Elizabeth Bruce, who make life good and for whom I am so grateful: I lovingly dedicate this book to you.
Note on Usage and Translation

I have used the Library of Congress transliteration system in this book, without diacritical marks. Proper names are also rendered according to this system, though not consistently: familiar names such as Nicholas II appear in their usual English form. Non-Russian names of citizens of the Russian empire are given in Russianized form – thus General Ianushkevich, not Januszkewicz – except in citations and bibliography, where the author’s name is rendered as it was published. Place names are especially tricky, since some have changed – sometimes multiple times – since 1914. For the most part, I use today’s place names – Helsinki, for example, instead of Helsingfors – for the convenience of nonspecialists.

Until February 1, 1918 (when the Soviet regime changed the Russian calendar), Russia used the Julian calendar, which lagged behind the Western, Gregorian calendar by thirteen days in the twentieth century; this means that the outbreak of the First World War in Russia was on July 19, 1914, rather than August 1. Because my texts often invoke these, I have given dates prior to 1918 in the “old style.”

All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.
## Chronology

### 1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 4–13</td>
<td>Massive political strikes in St. Petersburg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 16/17</td>
<td>General mobilization declared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 19</td>
<td>Germany declares war on Russia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>Nicholas issues manifesto on war, greets crowd on Senate Square.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 26</td>
<td>One-day special session of the legislative chambers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Formation of Union of Zemstvos and Union of Cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Manifesto promising autonomy to Poland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 19</td>
<td>St. Petersburg renamed Petrograd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Prohibition extended for duration of war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>Bolshevik Duma deputies arrested on treason charges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1915

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 27–29</td>
<td>Three-day special session of legislative chambers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February–December</td>
<td>Decrees limiting property ownership in Russia by enemy aliens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Miasoeedev espionage scandal breaks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Germans begin breakthrough of Russian lines at Gorlice, which will become the “Great Retreat.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 27–29</td>
<td>Anti-German riots in Moscow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 19</td>
<td>Legislative chambers reconvene (first anniversary of war).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 4</td>
<td>De facto abolition of Jewish Pale of Settlement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chronology

August 22
Creation and program of Duma’s Progressive Bloc announced; Nicholas II decides to assume supreme command of army.

September 3
Unexpected prorogation of legislative chambers; more moderate ministers are replaced with conservatives in Council of Ministers.

1916

January 20
Goremykin removed as premier; replaced by Shtiurmer.

February 9
Legislative chambers reconvened, remain in session until summer recess.

March 5
Announcement of fifth internal war loan, launch of massive publicity campaign.

Spring
Provisioning problems and inflation becoming dominant topic in press.

May 22
Brusilov offensive opens, enjoys initial success.

June 19
State Duma passes “peasant bill.”

Summer
Massive uprisings over labor requisitions in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

October–January 1917
Isolated mutinies in some frontline units.

November 1
Legislative chambers reconvene; Miliukov’s “stupidity or treason” speech.

December 16/17
Murder of Rasputin.

1917

February 23
Beginning of massive bread riots, protests, and strikes in Petrograd.

February 26
Closure of Duma announced; troops ordered to fire on crowds.

February 27
Troops of Petrograd garrison go over to strikers; ministers arrested; Soviet of Soldiers’ and Workers’ Deputies and Temporary Committee of Duma formed.

March 2/3
Nicholas II abdicates.
### Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Announcement of creation of Provisional Government, to govern until a constituent assembly can be elected and convened; Duma is not reconvened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>Formation of coalition Provisional Government, following antigovernment protests concerning war aims; socialists join government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>Ukrainian Rada declares autonomy of Ukraine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 18</td>
<td>Opening of Kerenskii offensive; by early July, Russian army is retreating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3–5</td>
<td>“July Crisis”: uprising against Provisional Government in Petrograd subdued by force; Bolshevik leaders arrested, flee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td>Women's Battalion of Death enters combat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>Second coalition Provisional Government formed, headed by Kerenskii.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 25/26</td>
<td>Provisional Government is overthrown; formation of new temporary Soviet government by Bolsheviks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 26</td>
<td>Decree on Peace, announcing intention to seek negotiated end to war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 27</td>
<td>Decree on Press authorizes closure of oppositional (“counterrevolutionary”) press.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 10</td>
<td>Demobilization of part of Russian army begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 23</td>
<td>Finland declares independence from Russia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>Armistice signed between Soviet and German governments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Formation of anti-Bolshevik Volunteer Army begins in southern Russia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1918**

<p>| January 5  | Constituent Assembly opens, is disbanded by Soviet authorities after one day. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 14</td>
<td>Ukrainian Rada declares independence of Ukraine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Decree on “Formation of Worker–Peasant Red Army.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 25/February 9</td>
<td>Representatives of Ukraine conclude separate peace with Central Powers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 28/February 11, February 21</td>
<td>Peace negotiations break down; Soviet government issues decree “The Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Peace treaty concluded with Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk; Russia exits war.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>