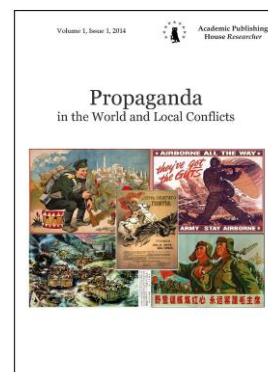


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Letter to the Editor

“Soldier’s Greetings” Lubok Print as a Historical Source of the Period of the Russo-Japanese War

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Abstract

The article analyzes the historical source – “the Soldier’s greetings” lubok print. The attention is paid to the internal and external criticism of the source.

The material is a two-sided lubok picture “Soldier’s greetings”, printed in St. Petersburg, compiled by G. Bayturov. Lithograph of T. Kibbel. Currently, this lubok is a rarity. It was found in an antique shop in Chisinau (Republic of Moldova) in 2018.

In conclusion, the author notes that the presented lubok picture is attributed to the period of the Russo-Japanese War. This picture was distinguished by simplicity and plain text, since the main readers of lubok prints were servicemen and their family members, as well as the civil population. The main propaganda messages were: the Soldier’s service is difficult, but honorable; the future prosperity of the country depends on the soldier; in faithful service there are no big difficulties, the soldier just needs to follow the oath, and also about the unity of the Tzar with the people.

Keywords: lubok print, Russo-Japanese War, historical source, “Soldier’s greetings”, military oath.

1. Introduction

The Lubok art was an important part of military propaganda of the early twentieth century. Lubok was a popular print, a leaflet with a joke. Lubok is a kind of graphics, an image with a caption distinguished by the simplicity and accessibility. Originally it was a kind of folk art. At the beginning of the 20th century, due to the development of book printing it became more professional, elegant and informative. In this respect, an interesting lubok called “Soldier’s greetings”, printed during the Russo-Japanese War draws our attention.

2. Materials and methods

The material is a two-sided popular picture “Soldier’s greetings” (Figure 1), printed in St. Petersburg, compiled by G. Bayturov. Lithograph of T. Kibbel. There also is information about the publisher, part of it is lost, it reads “Publ ... turov”. We can assume it was published by G. Bayturov.

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Currently, this lubok is a rarity. It was found in an antique shop in Chisinau (Republic of Moldova) in 2018.



Fig. 1. “Soldier’s greetings” lubok print.

The methodological basis of the research was the traditional historiography principles of historicism, scientific objectivity and systematic. Methods of working with historical sources, as well as internal and external criticism, have been used.

3. Results

External criticism of the source

The dimensions of the print are 19.5 cm tall and 12.5 cm wide. The paper is about 500 g/m. Central medallion – a portrait of Emperor Nicholas II pressed by the contour. Multicolor printing. At the bottom in the center there is a partial loss of lubok, which, however, is not significant. Lubok has obvious signs of usage and stains. The degree of preservation and the method of printing of the paper clearly indicate that it was created in the early twentieth century. This indicates that the source is authentic and original.

The reasons for which we determined that the source was created during the period of the Russo-Japanese, and not in the First World War are the following:

1. In the First World War, St. Petersburg was renamed Petrograd;
2. At the lithography, the emperor is of an age, as well as has a set of awards characteristic for the early twentieth century.

For comparison, we can give the following examples (Figure 2)



Fig. 2. Emperor Nicholas II: a – at the end of the XIX century, b – at the beginning of the XX century, c- In the 1910's.

Internal criticism of the text

A portrait of Emperor Nicholas II with the signature "His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich" is on the front side of the postcard. Below in the center there is an officer's order of St. George on the St. George ribbon in a wreath. A patriotic poem "Soldier's greetings" is on both sides of the image.

"The whole world
 Knows the Russian soldier!
 Let us sing, fellows
 Our greetings to the sun!
 The Tzar,
 The White Russian Tzar,
 Is the Head of everyone,
 Our First Emperor!
 You just say the word,
 You only glance,
 We are willing to die,
 Even if You lead us right away!
 And just like before, again,
 For You, our dear,
 With fidelity
 We will be ahead!

8 patriotic slogans and a military oath are printed on the reverse side. The text of the military oath to Emperor Nicholas II and the Motherland might have been published quite often, but at the present time it is rare to find. The text of the oath takes the central place of the card and moves to the reverse side. The text of the oath is as follows:

"Military oath of allegiance to the Tzar and the Motherland.

I, hereinafter named, promise and swear by Almighty God, before His Holy Gospel, in what I want and owe to His Imperial Majesty, my true and natural All-Merciful Great Emperor Nikolai Alexandrovich, the autocrat of the All-Russian and legitimate Imperial Majesty of the All-Russian Throne, the Heir, to serve truly and unfeigned, not to spare my life, to the last drop of blood. And all to His High Imperial Majesty's Autocracy, to the power belonging to the rights and advantages, legitimized and further legitimized, at the extreme understanding, power and opportunity, to fulfill, His Imperial Majesty the State and the lands of his enemies, in body and blood, in the field and in fortresses, in water and dry way, in battles, in parties, sieges and assaults and in other military

cases, brave and strong to rebuild resistance and to try to help that to His Imperial Majesty faithful service and benefit of the state in any case may concern. On the damage to His Majesty's interest, harm and loss, as soon as I know about it, not just to announce it in time, but also by any measures to ward off and not to be allowed to be stolen, and I will firmly keep any entrusted secrecy, and to the appointed home-based superiors in everything that is useful and service of the State will concern, properly maintain obedience and all in the conscience. And for my self-interest, property, friendship and enmity against service and oath not to act, from the team and the banner where I belong, although in the field, the convoy or the garrison, I never leave, but for that, while alive, I will follow and in everything behave and act as an honest, faithful, obedient, brave and agile soldier. In what ways does the Lord God Almighty help me. In the conclusion of this oath I kiss the words and the cross of my Savior. Amen”.

The image of the slogans as follows (Figure 3)



Fig. 3. Numbering of slogans

According to Figure 3 we can see a slogan No. 1 above the military oath, interspersed with the monogram of Nicholas II: “The soldier will not falter in a terrible hour: He is sworn in oath: In it, God and Tzar’s orders are: Win or die” (Figure 4).



Fig. 4. Slogan № 1, interspersed in the monogram of Nicholas II

Below the oath is the text of the slogan the No. 2. It is partially lost, but readable: “The royal servants are such men, They will not forget the oath, They may be without a head, but they cannot be without honor!”

On the left side of the oath are three verbal statements (Nos. 3-5):

No. 3. “Soldier, forget your desire: Oath is the will of Amen”;

No. 4 “Soldier needs hardness most of all: even on the bottom of the sea he is with it!”;

№ 5. “In the Tzar's hand, the army is a sword, So that the Tzar can protect the truth!”.

On the right side of the oath, three slogans (Nos. 6-8) are also presented:

№ 6. “The soldier will die, but he will not betray, For this the Tzar appreciates the soldier”;

No. 7. “To scare the enemy, All Russia is given to the soldier for keeping it safe”;

No. 8. “He who is sworn in with an oath, is straightforward”.

As expected, this picture has simple and clear texts. The target readers of lubok were to be among the servicemen and their family members, as well as the civil population. The main message that this propaganda material conveys is that the soldier's service is difficult, but honorable (Slogan № 2) and that the future prosperity of the country depends on the soldier (Slogan № 7). At the same time, attention is focused on the fact that there are no big difficulties in the faithful service, the soldier just needs to follow the oath (Slogans № 3, 8). The connection of the Tzar with the people is also important. This message is found in the slogans № 1, 2, 5, 6.

4. Conclusion

Summing up, we would like to note that the presented lubok picture is attributed as a source of the period of the Russo-Japanese War. As expected, this picture has simple and straightforward texts. The target readers of lubok were to be among the servicemen and their family members, as well as the civil population. The main propaganda messages were: the Soldier's service is difficult, but honorable; the future prosperity of the country depends on the soldier; in a faithful service there are no big difficulties, the soldier just needs to follow the oath, as well as the unity of the Tzar with his people.