

# Introduction

## ENTANGLED HISTORIES IN THE AGE OF EXTREMES

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**T**HE NOTION OF THE *Sonderverhältnis*, or special relationship between Russia and Germany, is a distorting lens through which to look at relations between these countries—not to mention the broader cultures and civilizations they represented. This is true even for the period for which it was coined, when the fledgling Weimar Republic and the new Soviet regime began an uncomfortable alliance and period of intensive cultural and scientific interchange in the 1920s but in many realms were neither exclusive partners nor allies entirely by choice.<sup>1</sup> However, the notion of a special relationship is quite apt when thinking about the two fields of historical scholarship linked together in this book. Both national histories have put forward frameworks of a special path of historical development (the *Sonderweg* and *osobyi put'*) and have been pervasively shaped by notions of difference from the West. Both literatures have been overshadowed by the need to explain the roads to Stalinism and National Socialism; both have grappled in comparable ways with balancing the impact of circumstances and ideology (in the progression from intentionalism to functionalism and beyond, in the German case, and from totalitarianism to revisionism and beyond, in the Russian and Soviet case). Both Russian and German history challenge and complicate received notions about modernism and modernity. Moreover, the sheer breadth and

importance of the interactions and mutual perceptions between the countries from the eighteenth century on (surveyed by Dietrich Beyrau in his contribution to this edited volume) has fostered a distinct tradition of cross-fertilization between the fields, which after the “archival revolution” has accelerated with the growing ability of the Russian field to contribute to the exchange.

This edited volume marks a distinct moment in an ongoing shift in the scholarly terrain in two different ways. First, it furthers a move from comparative history, which has dominated the literature on totalitarianism, to the history of interactions and entanglements. Second, it places study of the Nazi and the Stalin periods into the broader era between World War I and World War II—certainly the most extreme half of the “age of extremes,” the moniker Eric Hobsbawm used for the “short twentieth century.” Arno Mayer used a more grandiloquent title: the “General Crisis and Thirty Years War of the twentieth century.”<sup>2</sup>

Only recently has investigation of cross-border exchange rather than comparisons become a major issue on the agenda of historians in the twentieth-century Russian and German fields. Comparative as opposed to transnational history has traditionally dominated the field of Stalinism and Nazism. Whether one approaches this particular comparison as a kind of “applied” totalitarianism theory, in order to establish parallels, or reacts by highlighting the divergences between the regimes, the complicated and sometimes concealed history of contact between them remains slighted.<sup>3</sup> Even attempts to challenge the comparative history of the totalitarianism mold, moreover, can end up replicating a good deal of its top-down, big-picture focus, which Karl Schlögel has called the “rule and system” matrix of analysis.<sup>4</sup> The comparative mode tends to smooth out complexity, because one must to a certain extent simplify in order to juxtapose; the transnational mode tends to revel in nuances and paradox. But they do complement one another because comparisons aid the study of interactions, and vice versa.<sup>5</sup>

Arguably, in this particular field, involving debates about Nazism and Stalinism, transnational approaches were undercut not merely because of the lack of sources but as a result of certain self-imposed impediments. One of the effects of the *Historikerstreit* that erupted in the late 1980s was that exploration of the *historical* nexus between communism and fascism may have appeared to help Ernst Nolte’s agenda to “establish a ‘causal nexus’ between the gulag and Auschwitz.”<sup>6</sup> Boiled down to its implications, crudely put, this causal nexus implied that Nazi crimes could be portrayed in some sense as a reaction to Bolshevism, which came first, threatened Germany, and thus provoked and provided a model for the trajectory of Nazism. Then

there came the “lesser evil” debate, which generated much heat, and perhaps not as much light. A number of leading prominent figures such as Stéphane Courtois, who wrote the introduction to the *Black Book of Communism*, argued that communism (encompassing all communist regimes) was more monstrous because it created more victims.<sup>7</sup> The resulting debate over the *Black Book* became, arguably, the Soviet field’s iteration of the *Historikerstreit*. As this suggests, high-profile political discussions of Nazism and Stalinism have had the tendency to exert a magnetic pull over the joint history of Russia and Germany in the first half of the twentieth century, pulling intellectual energy into their vortex.

Since 1997, however, a promising wave of scholarship has set aside or transcended the most politicized dimensions in the discussion of Nazism and Stalinism. Excavation of connections and links are far more readily accepted as not necessarily implying causality or guilt; more dispassionate modes of analysis of the Russian-German problematic have come to the fore. Many scholars have begun to search for new ways of looking at the two fields that challenge or go beyond the older comparisons written in the vein of totalitarianism theory. One widely read study in this field, Timothy Snyder’s *Bloodlands*, simply set aside the lesser evil debate and treated Stalinism and Nazism as murderous in different ways—and, as I shall discuss below, interactive.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, if we take a longer view of the two countries’ history, scholarly focus on the history of Russo-German interactions is not at all new, and there is much inspiration to be taken from major contributions to this field before the advent of the age of extremes. It has long been known that post-Muscovite Russia’s road to Europe often led through Germany. Germans provided leading cadres in many areas of imperial Russian society, and the Romanov house continually intermarried with German dynasties. Germany supplied key inspirations for post-Petrine Russian conceptions of government, law, and economic development; German thought (and European thought mediated by Germans) profoundly influenced Russian intellectual life.<sup>9</sup> German Protestantism deeply influenced Russian Orthodoxy, and the German middle-class diaspora provided an important model for Russia’s emerging middle classes.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, for Germans ranging from millenarian Protestants in the Napoleonic era to conservative critics of capitalism later in the nineteenth century, Russia was a source of hope and inspiration.<sup>11</sup> When faced with troubling developments in Western Europe during the traumatic early stages of its transition to modernity—Jacobin radicalism, Napoleonic imperialism, early industrial capitalism—Russians and Germans found common ground in the search for alternatives.<sup>12</sup>

The interconnection between the countries acquired a more menacing dynamic by the turn of the twentieth century, when Germany and Russia developed into unstable pseudoconstitutional states with powerful extremist currents, and it became particularly fateful in the era of Iosif Stalin and Adolf Hitler. It is precisely this era that remains, despite advances of recent years, more weakly represented in the literature examining the patterns of interactions and exchanges between the countries. For example, in the introduction to *Beyond Totalitarianism*, Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick acknowledge the underdeveloped examination of “entanglements” as opposed to the now rather well-explored “image of the other.”<sup>13</sup>

Many new studies of German views of Russia/USSR after 1914 are not just based on images and ideas but discuss those in the context of discrete kinds of relations or encounters—from the treatment of POWs to the Comintern, from travel and travelogues to participation in war and genocide on the eastern front.<sup>14</sup> New documents on the relations between the states have brought the study of German *Russlandpolitik* and Soviet German policy to a new level.<sup>15</sup> Before 1991, there were fewer such works on the Soviet side, for study of Soviet approaches to Germany were often hampered by a lack of sources. However, since then, major studies have appeared that do balance out the picture, some of them written by German or Russian scholars on the basis of sources in both languages.<sup>16</sup> Katerina Clark’s *Moscow, the Fourth Rome* suggests how profound the cultural interpenetration between prominent German and Soviet intellectuals was. It also suggests how influential the hegemonic or “imperial” aspirations of Soviet cultural and intellectual figures with deep ties to the Germanophone world were for the evolution of Stalinist culture in the 1930s.<sup>17</sup>

As these developments suggest, the combination of new sources and the increasing centrality of forms of transnational history that put cross-border research at the center of historical analysis make the turn of the twenty-first century an exciting time to be studying Soviet-German interactions.<sup>18</sup> What is more rare in the existing literature and more difficult to capture in scholarship than merely transnational interactions, however, is encapsulated by a term used both in this introduction and the title of this book: “entanglements.” It appears likely that the use of “entanglements” in historical writing derives from a translation of the French *croisée*, but it has become detached from the specific desiderata of *histoire croisée*, or at least unencumbered by the occasionally opaque methodology of its theoretical exponents.<sup>19</sup> Rather, the term has come to imply not a simple borrowing or interaction but persistent and deep-seated reactions to the other side. In this sense, perhaps no other entanglements were as central to the age of extremes

as the ones between Germany and the Soviet Union, shaping as they did both the domestic directions of both states as well as their titanic clash on the eastern front. However, there is no archival file one can open that is labeled “entanglements.” Much of the mutual observation between Nazism and Stalinism was at the time covert or for obvious reasons taboo. Developing this mode of historical analysis in the study of communism and fascism therefore involves deep immersion into both sides; it involves grappling with the logics of both systems and their intersections.

This requirement explains why an influential (yet today perhaps, to some, only dimly recalled) precursor to today’s study of entanglements can be located in Walter Laqueur’s classic 1965 work, *Russia and Germany: A Century of Conflict*. Laqueur aims not for a “systematic diplomatic history” but to explore what he called the “metapolitics of Russian-German relations.” As he explains in more detail, “One should know as much as possible about the diplomatic negotiations between these two countries; but the more I studied the period, the more I became convinced that this was not really the most important aspect of German-Russian relations. . . . It is my conviction that what Germans and Russians thought about each other, their civilizations, ways of life, and political systems mattered much more in the long run than all the diplomatic reports.” Laqueur describes his work as a study of how “‘ideological’ factors (in the widest sense)” informed a history of “mutual misunderstanding.”<sup>20</sup> It is interesting to reflect upon Laqueur’s formulation circa 1965. After all, the fateful way in which Germans and Russians (Soviets) looked externally to the other side, and perceived an entire system or way of life, profoundly affected the course of their own histories. It is precisely this dynamic in measuring or reacting to the other side over time, moreover, that appears central to the contemporary investigation of entanglements. Clearly, any such process had cultural, intellectual, economic, and other dimensions to it acting alongside or in addition to ideology, something to which Laqueur pointed with an expansive understanding of the ideological. The word “entanglement” may be new in scholarship, but the approach and impetus behind the tendency is not without its roots.

In recent studies of entanglements, it is not surprising that much attention has focused on the titanic clash on the eastern front of World War II. This was where the radicalism of Nazism, directed outward toward racial domination, achieved its ultimate expression; this is where, in the case of Stalinism, the “cadres of totalitarian violence who had been ready for the war all along were no longer alone.” Mark Edele and Michael Geyer conceptualize the eastern front as a “system of violence” involving both sides, a system that triggered a “relentless process of escalation that was near impossible to stop.”<sup>21</sup> Edele and

Geyer's theory of this entanglement, in which both sides learned from each other, provoked the skepticism of John Connelly: "the 'interrelationship' of these two states did not lead to the devastation of war; rather, war was a consequence of a decision of the German leadership" with its genocidal ideology and intent.<sup>22</sup>

Timothy Snyder's treatment of World War II in the lands between Hitler and Stalin also discusses the phenomenon of escalating barbarization. But Snyder not only eschews grand theories but also never employs the word "entanglements." "For the time being, Europe's epoch of mass killing is overtheorized and misunderstood," Snyder declares, adding in a Rankian turn of phrase, "Before we draw such theoretical conclusions, about modernity or anything else, we must understand what actually happened." However, as I have argued elsewhere, the master theme of *Bloodlands* does, in fact, revolve around entanglements.<sup>23</sup> The novelty of Snyder's synthesis is a narrative that intertwines the two dictators and their murderous regimes over time, at least in terms of the book's specific focus on deliberate mass killings. The Nazi plan to de-industrialize the Soviet Union and turn it into a vast agrarian colony of the Reich, so crucial to the unfolding of the Holocaust and mass murder of Soviet POWs and so many others on the eastern front, was in Snyder's description a direct attempt to play Stalinism in reverse and undo the Stalin revolution. Furthermore, the book's treatment of the collusions between the regimes, most notably during the carving up of Poland in "Molotov-Ribbentrop Europe" and later during the Warsaw Uprising, leads to the conclusion that many victims of mass killing in the territories between Germany and the USSR can or should be counted as victims of both fascism and communism. Finally, the book is in key places throughout structured around narrating the mutual political logics of both regimes, albeit too frequently through the minds or putative thoughts of Hitler and Stalin.

In fact, there is a middle ground between the sweeping, theoretically driven formulations of Geyer and Edele and Snyder's theory-averse narrative, which often only makes implicit what are, in fact, strong stands on historiography and approach. The chapters in the present edited volume exemplify the sort of midlevel conceptualizations that are particularly valuable in contentious, politicized, and emerging fields. The contributions here are mindful of the bigger issues raised by entanglements—how the apprehension of the "other" affects the self—while fully participating in transnational history's emphasis on scrutinizing the dynamics and meanings of cross-border interactions. How some concrete form of direct engagement affected relations that were

political, cultural, and ideological in nature is central to the contribution of each and every one of this collection's authors.

Entanglements, moreover, need not be explicated only in the context of World War II or Stalinism and Nazism. Taking the entire interwar period has the great advantage of not reducing patterns present in many cases over longer periods, and particularly after the advent of total war in 1914, to Stalin and Hitler, or the post-1929 and post-1933 regimes they led—despite the fact that in many ways they were unprecedented. However, if entanglements can be understood as recurring or deep-seated international engagements that have profound domestic ramifications, it must be admitted that it is no small task to cover or even point to the many entanglements between Germany and Russia in the interwar period, especially in short scholarly works such as book chapters. This edited volume, as a result, is an attempt to assemble a collage of investigations that suggest more than the sum of their parts and stimulate further investigations along these lines.



In contrast to the dominant comparative focus on Stalinism and Nazism, the chapters in this book are framed by considerations of World War I and World War II. The chapters by Oksana Nagornaya and Laura Engelstein, which center on POWs and the depiction of war atrocities in World War I, respectively, both deal not only with aspects of total war, but also the manner by which total war made the image and practices of the other crucial to mass audiences. These chapters should be set alongside and contrasted with the treatments of World War II by Jochen Hellbeck, Katerina Clark, and Oleg Budnitskii. The book as a whole thus might be taken as an impetus toward further interrogation of the continuities and divergences between the world wars, which in the Russian and Soviet fields have been surprisingly understudied outside the realm of military history.

When Laqueur pointed to misunderstandings between Germany and Russia, he was emphasizing the negative and hostile reactions that seemed so overwhelming in light of the Nazi-Soviet war. Of course, the monumental enmity between the belligerents overshadows the relations between the sides, despite the cooperation in the wake of Versailles and Rappallo in the 1920s. But the title of the present book points also to the opposite side of the coin, to fascination—which can occur without enmity or alongside it. In the German case, a long-established tradition of looking at the East as backward and inferior or, in the case of the scholarship on the Nazis, at the *Feindbild* of “Judeo-Bolshevism” has given way to a vigorous, ongoing investigation of German Russophilia and, in the 1920s and even after, attraction to certain

features of the Soviet order. For example, a new literature has emerged on the fascination as well as enmity within the German “conservative revolution,” including figures within the Nazi Party, for Russia, Bolshevism, and Stalinism.<sup>24</sup> It is now better understood how, for Germans “from the extreme left to the extreme right” before 1933, “Soviet Russia was, in many ways, a projection screen for fantasizing about a new Germany.”<sup>25</sup>

The contributions here from Behrends and Fritzsche both use the term “National Bolshevism” to refer to one important type of German fascination. Dietrich Beyrau, for his part, cites the landmark works on National Bolshevism in the context of Weimar-era “conservative revolutionaries” who admired elements of Bolshevism and “are counted as intellectual precursors of National Socialism.” The concept of National Bolshevism, and just as crucially the entanglement it encapsulates, is an illuminating topic. German National Bolshevism as a phenomenon might be seen as mating the fin-de-siècle Russophilia within German culture and intellectual life with the Weimar era’s powerful engagement with the Bolshevik revolution. Two towering figures behind the birth of the German new nationalism, for example, Oswald Spengler and Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, were marked by earlier immersion in Dostoevskii and the allure of the Russian soul. After 1917 both did much to shape the ideological direction of the conservative revolution. Spengler’s 1919 *Preussentum und Sozialismus* talked about the dictatorship of the German state, not the proletariat, while Moeller’s 1923 *Das Dritte Reich* was built on a fantastic “Eastern ideology” (*Ostideologie*), in which a spiritual “community of fate” (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*) of the “young nations” against the decadent, liberal West would correspond to an alliance of Communists and nationalists against republicans at home.<sup>26</sup>

The term “National Bolshevism” became current in German politics beginning in 1919, when Paul Eltzbacher of the German-National Party called for a German Bolshevism—essentially soviets and social ownership of the means of production for the advancement of the nation. This was first termed *nationaler Bolschewismus* by the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*. At the same time, the Hamburg Circle of the German Communist Party (KPD, led by Heinrich Laufenberg and Fritz Wolffheim) came out for national communism—a proletarian revolution that aimed to resurrect a German great power, a stance that prompted Karl Radek to dub them “national *Bolsheviki*.”<sup>27</sup>

Erik van Ree, following the French scholar Louis Dupeaux, pleads for a restrictive definition of German National Bolshevism. In his view, genuine National Bolsheviks were few and far between, consisting of “diehards” who subscribed to the original mix of nationalism and a genuinely Bolshevik economic program of nationalization. Following this definition, van Ree



identifies one of the few actual National Bolsheviks as Ernst Niekisch. Like several other revolutionaries of the Right, Niekisch had a background in revolutionary Social Democracy, including most notably his short-lived chairmanship of the Bavarian Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Soviet in Munich in 1919. The occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 prompted his conversion to hardcore nationalism and *völkisch* sanction for all means necessary to destroy the Western world of Versailles. The *Widerstand* (Resistance) circle, which Niekisch founded in 1925, took its name in opposition to the Western great powers: he called his fusion of revolutionary nationalism with elements of revolutionary Social Democracy first "proletarian nationalism" and then "Prussian Bolshevism," a concept that glorified a putative line from early modern Prussian military absolutism in Potsdam to the total state in Moscow, and back again to a future Berlin.<sup>28</sup>

In economic terms, Niekisch's anticapitalism and overt rejection of private property remained a strong feature of his thinking, something unusual when compared to the major ideologues of the conservative revolution, from Spengler and Moeller at the outset to Niekisch's friend and confidant Ernst Jünger in the later phases. As van Ree points out, even most of those figures labeled National Bolshevik in the 1920s supported a geopolitical eastern orientation and a strong state, but their anticapitalism was "mainly political and cultural in orientation" rather than an endorsement of nationalizing the means of production. In Niekisch's revolutionary nationalism after 1926, by contrast, German emancipation from the colonial dominance of the West depended on the mobilization of all weapons—including rejection of the capitalist economic order.<sup>29</sup>

However, the interesting thing is that Niekisch—the paradigmatic National Bolshevik for van Ree and many others—never adopted the term or applied it to himself. He was trying to fuse nationalism and socialism in a third way between communism and fascism. But, of course, the National Socialists already owned the most appropriate label, so he and others in this radical, Far-Right, non-Nazi, and in certain respects regularly philo-Soviet camp became known as "revolutionary nationalists." Thus, the term "National Bolshevik," which has shaped historians' investigations, was in effect a leftist epithet of condemnation against a nationalist deviation that gained broader currency. As is often the case with terms of opprobrium, it was later adopted by some of those who desired to be known by the label, but this occurred only among some minor figures of the national revolutionary camp, such as Karl Otto Paetel, who featured the term in his journal.<sup>30</sup>

This excursion into the history of *Nationalbolschewismus* suggests several conclusions relevant for a discussion of German-Soviet entanglements.

For the historian of concepts as well as for the student of entanglements, both terminology and the ideological currents to which it was attached are significant. This is because the concept of National Bolshevism reflects a broader—if often episodic, intellectually inconsistent, or strategic—interest in Bolshevism and Stalinism on the German *völkisch* Right. Van Ree’s point is well taken; episodic fascination with Soviet communism or instrumental willingness to ally with the Left should not be seen as a fully codified or distinguishable ideology. However, van Ree’s attempt was to impose definitional clarity from the point of view of the analysis of political ideologies; the historian of entanglements has more grounds to excavate rather than delimit the concept. Second, Niekisch’s own rejection of the label National Bolshevik, even as so many have seen him as its quintessence, points to the significance of his search for a third-way revolutionary nationalism instead. This was a non-Nazi, Far-Right combination of nationalism and socialism, and Niekisch was its most consistently philo-Bolshevik exponent. In his very *nec plus ultra* position, Niekisch exemplifies a broader phenomenon: how multiple exchanges, hybrid fusions, and crossovers between Left and Right informed views of the USSR in the splinter groups, paramilitary organizations, and circles of the conservative revolution.<sup>31</sup> Finally, a number of Far-Right figures had direct contact with the Soviets. Niekisch, for example, traveled to the Soviet Union in 1932, where he met with Karl Radek. The German concept of National Bolshevism was internationalized, in the sense that Soviet analysts used it when attempting to identify revolutionaries of the Right such as Niekisch to convert and influence in the early 1930s.<sup>32</sup>

Shortly after the Nazis came to power in 1933, of course, they submerged, censored, or brutally suppressed both national revolutionaries and “Left Nazis” who took the “socialism” in national socialism seriously. But traces of a more unsystematic brand of National Bolshevism lingered on in other ways. Jan Behrend’s treatment of Joseph Goebbels and the “anti-fellow-travelers” of the Nibelungen Verlag campaign against “Jewish Bolshevism” in the mid- to late 1930s clearly suggests how borrowing from Soviet propaganda techniques followed from a long-standing interest in the Soviet Union. Peter Fritzsche dissects the remarkable evolution of Erich Edwin Dwingler, whose works informed mass German audiences about Russia on the eve of Operation Barbarossa—and provided an extraordinary, chilling advance playbook for the Holocaust when they were read in political education seminars by SS troops. Fritzsche’s discussion also reflects the long arm of these more subtle forms of philo-Sovietism on the Far Right even during the catastrophic end game of the racial state.

The flip, Russian-Soviet side of this coin is the often covert preoccupation

with Germany as a part of the West—with its economic prosperity, technological advance, cultural traditions, models of modernity, and, *inter alia*, luxury goods—that was present even at the apogee of Stalin-era ideological nostrums about total Soviet superiority.<sup>33</sup> Oleg Budnitskii gets at this issue when he unpacks the intricate mixture of sentiments and experiences recorded in personal documents by Soviet Jewish and Red Army intellectuals as they entered Germany in 1945. After discussion of retribution, Red Army atrocities, and mass rape, Budnitskii gets to material culture: “The luxury of the situation was indescribable; the richness and elegance of all the property was striking,” recorded one of Budnitskii’s diarists, Vladimir Gel’fand. Budnitskii’s analysis of these reactions to the relative yet-unheard-of prosperity Soviets witnessed leads directly to a discussion of the dangerous “air of freedom” Soviets paradoxically experienced in occupied Germany. In this story, a degree of admiration appeared in the midst of one of the most intense enmities imaginable. By the same token, Katerina Clark’s examination of the cosmopolitan or European perspective in the works of Vasilii Grossman and Ilya Ehrenburg—suggestive of the much broader international aspirations and interactions of Soviet culture even in the Stalin era—demonstrates as one of its main points that the cosmopolitan and the patriotic are “two categories that are far from always distinct.” Is it also stretching interpretation too far to suggest that Ehrenburg’s skilled use of captured German soldiers’ letters, as depicted in Jochen Hellbeck’s chapter, and perhaps the way Ehrenburg saw the top Nazi leadership as one key audience, reflect a certain fascination even in the midst of repulsion and horror? Enmity and fascination, to extend Clark’s argument, are two categories that are far from distinct.

This edited volume does not attempt to impose any model or method for the examinations of transnational links and entanglements between the countries examined here, and deliberately so. For the particular way each individual treatment balances ideas, stereotypes, and images; experiences such as travel and time spent abroad; and contextual factors such as institutions, policies, and cultures depends directly on the sources used and the differing disciplinary perspectives of the authors.

For example, Bert Hoppe examines the political culture and different socializations of German Communists operating in the constitutional culture of Weimar and leading Stalinists and Comintern officials inculcating the traditions of the Bolshevik underground, and he does so by culling documents from a wide range of situations in what he calls the political everyday. In similar fashion, Oksana Nagornaya draws on a large number of policy documents and other archival sources generated by Russian POWs

in Germany in order to look at the “colonialist stereotypes” of the captured “eastern” peoples not as isolated tropes but as generated by particular practices and contexts. A different approach comes from Laura Engelstein when she exhaustively analyzes press reports of the sack of Kalisz not only to trace the international resonance and dynamics of the propaganda war but also to establish what actually happened in 1914. Engelstein’s sources and approach are quite different from, for example, Budnitskii’s focus on diaries and memoirs of Soviet intellectuals and Jewish officers in Germany. By the same token, Hellbeck examines soldiers’ letters and their uses on both sides of the ideological war on the eastern front, whereas Clark, Behrends, and Fritzsche examine fictional or fictionalized documentary texts generated by writers on one side of the encounter. Despite this almost inevitable heterogeneity, when the chapters of this book are taken together they add up to a more robust understanding of entanglements in general and, in particular, Russia and Germany as entangled histories.