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## **RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR: TECHNOLOGIES AND FORMS**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of the article is to analyse the use of political propaganda methods employed by the Russian Empire before and during the First World War, in particular, on the Ukrainian lands, which became a direct theatre of military operations and a field of confrontation between intelligence and counterintelligence services of belligerent powers, which exercised manipulative influence upon great masses of population and implemented special technologies for the formation of public opinion.

The research methodology is based on the principles of objectivity, systematicity, dialectics, historicism and interdisciplinarity. The study is grounded on problem-chronological, institutional and historical methods, as well as social psychology methods, used in propaganda practices.

Scientific novelty: on the basis of printed materials: brochures, First World War periodicals, published posters and woodcuts (lubki prints), as well as memoirs of people, involved in the organization of propaganda campaigns, certain objects, technologies and forms of propaganda, in particular, the involvement of intelligence officers of the Russian Imperial Army in manipulative technologies, were defined.

The widespread use of propaganda and counter-propaganda by the states that were the main players of the First World War, became a kind of hallmark of that war. In Russia, unlike other states, there were no special bodies and no such bodies were created later to influence public opinion in their own, hostile or neutral states. The peculiarity of the propaganda of the Russian Empire was the use of mainly constructive (positive) propaganda aimed at neutralizing social conflicts within the state, uniting the population and the authorities and their joint struggle against the enemy. The ideas of Pan-Slavism and Neo-Slavism were actively applied in the international realm. They were aimed at the unity of the Slavic world under the auspices of Russia as the defender of the Slavic peoples and the Orthodox Christian faith. The use of destructive propaganda technologies was aimed at creating the image of the “enemy” and uniting patriotic forces against it. At the same time, Russia failed to offer Slavic peoples of the empire, in particular Ukrainians, to realize their

political aspirations in resolving the national issue; it did not feel a change of mood and did not restructure the content of propaganda rhetoric, which eventually led to its defeat in the information and psychological space.

*Keywords:* information; propaganda; counter-propaganda; manipulation; information and psychological impacts; Pan-Slavism; Neo-Slavism; Moscovophilia; Ukrainophilia

## Introduction

Due to the increasing role of the media in contemporary society, there is a growing need to provide information security of the state and counter political propaganda as a manifestation of information and psychological operations, especially in pre-war and wartime period. Impact on the population of another state through dissemination of certain, primarily destructive information, aims not only to misinform, but also to disorganize the processes of state regulation within the enemy state. At the same time, the importance of manipulating the consciousness of their state's citizens is growing, not only in order to counter the enemy's propaganda, but also in order to unite citizens around ideas that are beneficial to the authorities.

The study of historical experience can provide some help in understanding the approaches to the use, selection of objects of impact and practical application of propaganda techniques. Thus, *the purpose of the work* is to analyze the use of political propaganda methods employed by the Russian Empire before and during the First World War, in particular, on the Ukrainian lands, which became a direct theatre of operations and a field of confrontation of enemy states' manipulative technologies.

**Methodology.** The methodological basis of research is a systemic approach to the study of the propaganda phenomenon. The specifics of the work led to the use of a wide range of special historical and general scientific methods. Among them, the most important are: problem-chronological, comparative-historical, retrospective methods, analysis, synthesis, deduction and induction.

The retrospective method was of particular importance in the study. Events, facts and phenomena related to information processes were considered in accordance with the then socio-political, socio-economic and military situation, which led to the formation of an objective author's position on the studied period of history.

The study proposes the issues of linguistic, visual, semantic analysis of the content of propaganda, determination of the importance of religious, cultural, technical factors in the process of information warfare in the early 20th century.

**Historiography.** The use of propaganda during the war began to attract the attention of scholars shortly after its end. One of the first researchers of this problem was American H. Lasswell, who outlined his views in the book "Propaganda Technique in the World War" in 1927 (Lasvel' 1929). The main theses of his research are no less relevant today. In particular, he emphasizes that in current conditions, war

cannot be waged only by military action. The author first distinguished propaganda as a separate type of weapon that affects the psychological state of the enemy and covers the military, economic and propaganda spheres. He defined the purpose of propaganda, its components, means of application, etc. (Lasvel' 1929, 28).

Many publications on the historiography of the Great War have been devoted to the use of manipulative influences on the public consciousness by state institutions and the military command. In particular, British historian M. Gilbert believes that during the Great War, in fact, there were two wars, one of which was measured in terms of military action, and the other was a war of ideologies and propaganda manipulations (Gilbert 2019, 11). American researcher S. Kingsbury studied the problem of manipulating the consciousness of the civilian population on the home front (Kingsbury 2010), German historian F. Schenck studied the mood of the German population at the beginning of the war and the influence of the media on them, etc.<sup>1)</sup>

One of the chapters of the monograph written by I. Panarin, Russian researcher, (Panarin 2012) is also devoted to the information confrontation in the First World War. Although the author analyzes primarily the propaganda of the allies of Russia and Germany, a general idea of the implementation of psychological influences on the public consciousness during the Great War emerges.

Various aspects of the political sentiments of Russian society and information-psychological influences of the political strategies of the government and its opponents on them have been revealed in the studies by Russian authors M. Vasiliev (Vasil'ev 2015), A. Astashov (Astashov 2012), V. Aksenov (Aksenov 2020) M. Gorbacheva (Gorbacheva 2013), O. Senyavskaya (Senyavskaya 2006), T. Fillipova and P. Baratov (Fillipova & Baratov 2014), N. Yudin (Yudin 2017) etc.

Among Ukrainian scholars, the problem of implementing Pan-Slavic ideas in Austria-Hungary through the use of Muscovite organizations in Galicia and Bukovina to destructively influence the Western Ukrainian national liberation movement has been studied by V. Gaysenyuk (Gaysenyuk 2017), R. Kutsyk (Kutsyk 2015) and others.

In the academic Ukrainian publication devoted to the First World War, the articles of some authors also raise the issue of manipulative influences of the Russian military command on the enemy army and the Ukrainian population of Austria-Hungary (Velyka viina 2013).

## **Results and discussion**

The First World War was one of the turning points in world history. Representatives of both military-political blocs, which were in confrontation in this war from its very beginning, tried to solve two key interrelated issues in ways beneficial to them for propaganda purposes: to place the responsibility for the war on the enemy and to prove that war on their part was rightful and liberating. These

issues could be solved only taking into account the socio-political situation in the states whose population became the object of informational influences.

According to S. Kingsbury, American researcher, the Great War intensified the processes of society manipulation, and propaganda “turned from art into craft, and then - into science”, becoming “one of the important phenomena of the 20th century” (Kingsbury 2010, 17, 269).

The development of journalism, telegraph, photography, radio, cinema, etc. also contributed to the creation of the necessary information space.

Political propaganda in Russia was concentrated in the Press and Awareness Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). All the work consisted of compiling press reviews, gathering information about the Slavic population in neutral states etc. Already during the war, the intelligence departments of the General Staff, front and army headquarters of the Russian Imperial Army (RIA) joined the propaganda work.

The objects of propaganda were their own army and people, soldiers and the population of the enemy’s armies (primarily of Slavic origin) and the population of neutral states.

### **External propaganda**

In the information struggle, state institutions, in particular, Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary actively used the factor of polyethnicity, relying on the support of separatist sentiments on the territory of the enemy country.

The propaganda ideas that were used in peacetime began to “work” actively on the eve of the war. In the early XX century, the official state ideologies of the major players in the Great War were: Pan-Germanism and Pan-Turkism for Germany and Turkey respectively, colonialism for Great Britain, Austro-Slavism and various forms of Central European federalism for Austria-Hungary, imperial Pan-Slavism and the doctrine of the Messianic mission to protect the Slavs for Russia.

The cultivation of these ideologies had prepared the ground for propaganda operations in society.

The historical basis of the Pan-Slavism and messianism phenomena was the embodiment of the idea that Russia was the successor of the Byzantine Empire. And the implementation of this doctrine was to take place through the solution of the so-called “Eastern Question”: Russia’s struggle against the Ottoman Porte and Austria for the liberation of the Balkan Slavs, for access to the Black Sea Straits and the return of Constantinople to the Orthodox world.

In the XIX century, Slavic charitable societies in Moscow (1858), St. Petersburg (1867), Kyiv (1869), and Odessa became the center of Russian propaganda. Created at the initiative of Bulgarian emigrants, supported by Russian public figures, scientists, the military, the societies enjoyed the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the then Chancellor A. Gorchakov. They spent huge sums

of money to support Slavophile ideas among the “Slavic brothers” and to provide assistance to educational institutions of foreign Slavs: schools, libraries, literary and scientific societies, as well as to provide scholarships to young people who wanted to study at universities in the empire. Considerable funds were spent to support Bosnians and Herzegovinians after the anti-Turkish uprising in the Balkans in the summer of 1875, to produce quinine against the fever suffered by soldiers during the Russo-Turkish War (1877 – 1878), etc. (Kutsyk 2015). This formula was successfully exploited during the Russo-Turkish wars of the 19th century, presenting them as liberation from the “Ottoman yoke” (Yakubova 2018, 7).

Already in the 20th century, on the eve of the Great War, the old ideas of Slavophilia were adapted to the ideology of Neo-Slavism, an ideological-political movement that espoused the historical and cultural closeness of the Slavs, “understanding “Slavdom” as a special ethnopolitical and ethnocultural community” (The attitude of the Russian people to the war, 1914). In practice, this was to be implemented in the rapprochement and cooperation of all Slavic peoples, as well as in the formation of a supranational all-Slavic program.

Moscophile organizations which operated under the “Slavic family” paradigm in Galicia were funded by the Russian government. In order to support the Moscovites of the Western Ukraine, the Galician-Russian Charity Society (GRCS) was established in St. Petersburg in 1902. In June 1909, it adopted a charter that allowed to promote the cultural unity of Galicians, Bukovinians and Ugro-Russians (Transcarpathian Ukrainians) with the Russian people and provide them with material assistance and moral support<sup>2</sup>.

The ideas of Neo-Slavism were embodied in the organization of the Prague Slavic Congress in July 1908, which proclaimed the idea of self-determination of the Slavic peoples within the existing states.

Thus, sophisticated propaganda aimed at forming a positive image of Russia as a defender of the “Slavic world” was conducted.

To some extent, the ideas of Neo-Slavism lost their relevance and attractiveness to the Slavic population as a result of the Balkan War (June 29, 1913 – August 10, 1913), when the Slavic states (Bulgaria on one side, and Serbia and Montenegro on the other) ended up on opposite sides of the armed confrontation. A similar problem arose during the war.

In Russian society, according to the ideology of Neo-Slavism, there were concerns that Bulgaria, “freed from slavery by Russian blood”, “raised its sword against its brother” and, “making a mockery of Slavic love”, chose an alliance with the Austrians, Ottomans and Germans. It acted like Cain and Judas. That is why it is “no longer in Slavdom for all Slavs” (Korinfskiy 1915, 836).

However, even under such conditions, when the main idea of Neo-Slavism was shaken, in May 1914, the leader of the Czech faction of the Austrian parliament, Dr. Karel Kramář, wrote to a Russian comrade about his vision of a “Slavic confederation

which will be ruled from St. Petersburg” after the fall of the Habsburg Empire as a consequence of the war between Russia and Austria (Gilbert 2019, 39 – 40).

Pan-Slavic rhetoric became especially important at the beginning of the First World War. The objects of communicative influences were, first of all, the soldiers of Austria-Hungary. Unlike the Ottoman army, where the Orthodox population was not subject to conscription, in the Austrian army 5,2% of its members were representatives of the national outlying territories – Slavs: Czechs, Croats, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Slovenes, Serbs, etc. At the same time, there were many representatives of the Slavic population among the officer corps of the empire’s army. In particular, the Czechs accounted for 10.6% of reserve officers, 14% of employees of the War Ministry, and the ministry itself was headed by the Czech Baron A. Krobotin from 1913 to 1917 (Rauchensteiner 2013, 57).

That is why, the slogan of the unity of all Slavs led by Russia towards the onslaught of “militant Germanism” became especially important for the formation of a “pro-Russian” camp, and also was the main message of official Russian propaganda. Soldiers and officers of the Austrian army distributed appeals to the “Slavic brothers” urging them to lay down their arms and not to fight against Russia.

The first appeal to the peoples of Austria-Hungary, signed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Imperial Army, Grand Duke Nikolai, appeared on August 4, 1914, and was published in ten languages, including “Ruthenian” and “Lemkiv”. It proclaimed “the will and freedom of all Slavs”, the creation of a new world on the basis of “peace, freedom, truth and humanity”<sup>3)</sup>.

Not only the content but also the form of presenting information played an important role in achieving this goal. Not only the content but also the form of presenting information played an important role in conveying propagandist ideas. In particular, two opposite modalities were used in the appeals. On the one hand, a positive image of Russia was portrayed, which “carried freedom and implementation of people’s aspirations”, respected national identity, and acted as a guarantor of “the precious achievements of parents – language and religion”. On the other hand, the image of Austria-Hungary as an “enemy”, “alien”, which “for centuries sowed ... discord and enmity”, was created<sup>4)</sup>.

Emotionality was provided by stylistic linguistic means: synonyms, comparisons, metaphors, hyperboles, so-called “ideal concepts” (freedom, faith, homeland, glory, honor), as well as neo-Slavic vocabulary about hostility of “German culture” towards Slavs, “Teutonic arrogance and impudence”, etc. Due to the fact that such appeals were emotionally charged, they had a rather strong manipulative influence on the population and the army.

Propaganda materials for these categories of society were distributed through aviation and balloons. One such bullet could lift up to 2 kg of printed materials (from 500 to 1,000 copies of leaflets) into the air and drop into the location of

enemy military units. The flight range was regulated by the length of the match cord, which was ignited at launch.

Russian official propaganda was to spread among the civilian population of Austria-Hungary. Continuing the pre-war policy, with the support of the Southwestern Front command, “Carpatho-Russian Liberation Committee” (“KROK”)<sup>5</sup> was established in Kyiv in July (August) 1914.

Its purpose was to conduct propaganda work among the Slavs living outside the Russian Empire. In particular, the Committee resumed the publication of the “Prykarpatskaya Rus” newspaper, published in Lviv from 1909 to 1914 by the “Russian People’s Organization in Galicia”, a cultural and political association of so-called “Moscophiles-freshmen”, at the printing house of the Kyiv Military District headquarters.

In addition, the military censorship department of the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the South-Western Front armies developed a secret brochure: “Drop your weapons and surrender to the Orthodox army, which will accept you not as a prisoner of war, but as a brother returning from captivity under the roof of his native home. Throw your weapon so that in the great wave of liberation of Galician Rus the brother does not spill the blood of the brother”) (Zayonchkovskiy 2002, 243).

Russian agitators of Pan-Slavic ideas were active in all Slavic regions of the Austria-Hungary. They distributed leaflets, calling to help Russian troops in gathering military information and providing medical care to the wounded, to the local population.

As on the eve of the war, special attention was paid to the Ukrainians in Austria-Hungary. Promoting the idea of the natural and historical unity of the three fraternal peoples (Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians), the Russian authorities called for joining the “great cause of collecting Russian lands” (Kutsyk 2015, 55).

The slogans of “reunification with Greater Russia, the great Orthodox Church ...” became the leitmotif of the appeals to the “people of Hungarian (Transcarpathian) Russia” and the “Russian people of Galicia”. Appeals of public organizations, in particular, the Galician-Russian Charitable Society, the Carpatho-Russian Liberation Committee, etc., were drawn up in the same way.

As a result, during just the first two years of the war, the Austrians imposed 140 death sentences to Russian agitators within the state (Ronge 1993, 82).

Such agitation significantly affected the inhabitants of the Danube Monarchy. The local Slavic population formed armed detachments, which shelled a small number of military units, destroyed telegraph lines, and so on.

In the Austria-Hungary itself, there was a “fraternization” with Russian prisoners of war; recruits, not wanting to go to the front, went to the recruiting stations with mourning badges, the population avoided horse and transport supplies, etc. (Ronge 1993, 94).



“National kinship and intense agitation”, according to one of the leaders of the Austrian military intelligence M. Ronge, “created an atmosphere worse than which a pessimistic military authority even could dream of” (Ronge 1993, 73). The result of this propaganda was thousands of captured Slavs who refused to fight against Russia on the Southwestern Front (Batyushin 2002). Particularly unreliable were the Czech units, which at critical moments proved ineffective, massively surrendered. National Czech druzhinas<sup>6)</sup> (after the war they were called “Hussite legions”) were created on the basis of war prisoner in Russia, which also intensified anti-Austrian propaganda.

However, despite the pro-Russian rise at the beginning of the war, according to A. Astashov, no stable pro-Russian positions were created in Austria-Hungary. The reason for this was that in appeals to the Slavs who fought in the army of the Austria-Hungary, the issue of the promises of the Slavic world post-war system remained problematic. (Astashov 2012). In particular, in leaflets to the Poles dated August 1, 1914, they were offered freedom of “religion, language, and self-government” after the reunification of Poland “under the tsar’s scepter”. However, such promises about the postwar system were given only to Poles<sup>7)</sup>.

Addressing the “Russian people” of Galicia and “Hungarian Rus”, the propagandists never used the term “Ukrainians”. The multimillion people in Russia was not identified as an independent ethnic group. Ukrainians who were between two hostile states, Russia and Austria-Hungary, were “not noticed” in the empire. No Ukrainian national formation was created in the Russian army – about 4 million mobilized Ukrainians were scattered on all fronts. No Ukrainian national formation was created in the Russian army – about 4 million mobilized Ukrainians were scattered on all fronts.

The situation was worsened by the closure of popular Ukrainian-language newspapers and periodicals in Kyiv in the first days of the war: “Rada”, “Ukrainska Khata”, “Selo”. And on January 9, 1915, the Kyiv Governor banned all Ukrainian-language periodicals for the period of martial law by his order (Koliada 2013, 311).

At the same time, the Russian government intensified its repressive policy toward the Ukrainian national liberation government, which did not contribute at all to the consolidation of the local population of Galicia with its “elder brother”.

One of the shortcomings in the organization of propaganda work in Russia during the war was that it (propaganda) was not regarded as a long-term factor, but only as a one-time action. This is evidenced by the number of address leaflets to the Slavic population. A total of 40 of them were prepared during the war. Of them, 29 were prepared in the first months of 1914, 1 – in 1915, 7 – in 1916, 3 – in 1917 (Astashov 2012).

And although they were issued in large numbers (in mid-August 1914 just about 48 thousand copies of appeals were sent from Kyiv to the population of Prykarpattia, 60 thousand copies in Polish – to the population and soldiers, etc.), their content did not change during the war.

One of the objects of informational influence was neutral countries, in which public opinion had to be sided with Russia. For this purpose, in 1915, the General Staff, together with the Headquarters, established telegraph agencies called “Nord-Süd” in Bucharest, Stockholm, and Copenhagen. Their goal was to provide the neutral press with information that was friendly to Russia. However, according to the employee of the General Staff V. Zvonarev, these structures, spending huge sums every month, did not justify their existence, and ceased their activities in May 1916 (Zvonarev 2005, 334 – 335).

Attempts were also made to publish propaganda brochures and proclamations in various languages. Although in 1915 several relevant brochures were published in Swedish and French (“Is there a Russian threat”, “Kaiser without a mask”, etc.), this work was not conducted systematically and was also discontinued.

Finally, shortcomings in the organization of information campaigns, ignoring the objective realities of the time, as well as a lack of understanding of the importance of propaganda led to the information loss of the empire.

### **Internal propaganda**

The beginning of the war was accompanied by an unprecedented patriotic uplift, which engulfed all the states participating in the military confrontation.

The beginning of the war was accompanied by an unprecedented patriotic uplift, which engulfed all the states participating in the military confrontation. According to Russian researcher N. Yudin, the extreme situation of a sharp transition from peace to war was a time of self-determination for the peoples of Europe, “their reassessment of their collective values and identities” (Yudin 2017), caused by external threats.

In Russia, the situation was ambiguous. On the one hand, the outward manifestation of patriotism was an unprecedented action, when on Palace Square in St. Petersburg, thousands of people knelt before the emperor and empress, when they went to the balcony of the Winter Palace. For the masses, the motto “For the Faith, King and Fatherland” became a certain worldview of war<sup>8)</sup>.

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On the other hand, both currents of the Social Democrats opposed the war, the State Duma voted against the allocation of funds for the war, and social unrest spread throughout the country.

In such circumstances, the government relied on the technology of patriotic propaganda. For Russia, where the revolutionary situation was brewing, the war became a lightning rod, which reduced social tensions in society. During mass

events (rallies, parades, patriotic marches), it was easy to influence the opinions or positions of a large number of people, manipulating the social consciousness.

The reprint in the newspaper “Russky Invalid”, an official organ of the War Ministry, and telegrams from periodicals in all regions of the empire showed the fighting spirit uplift: “Solemn prayers were held in all churches to grant the Russian army victory over the defiant enemy. The patriotic impulse that engulfed the entire population was manifested in countless grand patriotic demonstrations that took place everywhere. ... Troops sent to the front are the subject of enthusiastic applause. The solemn farewells were arranged for them”<sup>9)</sup>.

M. Bonch-Bruyevich, Major General of the Russian Imperial Army, on the eve of the war – colonel, who commanded the 176th Perevolochensky Regiment of the 21st Army Corps, recalled that after the mobilization he addressed the soldiers with a speech in which he explained the purpose of Russia’s participation in the war as a patronage of the “unjustly offended Slavic “brothers” – the Serbian people (Bonch-Bruyevich 1958, 123). Such patriotic appeals to soldiers were traditional in the Russian army. “Conversation with the people” in the spirit of “pseudo-Russian style”, moral “setting” of soldiers towards the war were seen as indicators of excellent combat training.

During the war, propaganda was spread among the masses through periodicals and pamphlets, and among undereducated or uneducated soldiers and peasants – through the distribution of satirical journals, leaflets, letters of prisoners of war, etc.

Lubki cards<sup>10)</sup> in folk style were popular among the soldiers: a man with a scythe in the traditional national costume or a woman with a pitchfork mowing down or stabbing soldiers of enemy armies. Another common plot was the image of the Cossack Kuzma Kryuchkov or other heroes who were victoriously fighting the enemy.

However, such images, according to Russian researcher M. Vasiliev, worked only in the first year of the war – during the greatest patriotic uplift (Vasil'ev 2015, 5).

Already in May 1915, the enthusiasm of the first months of the war gave way to the aggravation of socio-economic problems within the states. The retreat of Russian troops in 1915 and the protracted battles of the trench war in 1916 – 1917 so undermined the morale of the Russian army that such pictures began to be perceived by soldiers as a mockery and a manifestation of cynicism (Vasil'ev 2015, 17). The military command did not notice a change in the psychological state of the army, which was a major blunder by Russian propaganda.

Propaganda entered the daily life of everyone at the front and in the rear. Political, cultural and religious figures were actively involved in the propaganda war.

One of the forms of propaganda that was actively used during the war was the press. It was thanks to the media that the myth of the unity of power and society spread.

An important place in the periodical was given to materials about the decisions and actions of the Tsar and the government: about the opening of a hospital in the Winter Palace, where the Empress and her daughters worked as sisters of charity<sup>11)</sup>; about the development of a project in the Ministry of Education on exemption from tuition fees for children whose parents went to the front<sup>12)</sup>, the creation of “shelters” for children whose parents were injured or killed in the war<sup>13)</sup> etc.

Much attention was paid to the emperor’s visits to the front, his visits to the wounded in hospitals and the presentation of awards<sup>14)</sup>.

The illustrated journal “Niva”<sup>15)</sup>, positioning itself as a family reading journal and focusing mainly on the average person, was extremely popular. It was on its pages that many propaganda materials were published, aimed at raising the fighting spirit of soldiers and uniting the people with the army, etc. Photographs of students, workers, and even monks making shells for the army were published from issue to issue.

Materials about the opening of courses for the sisters of charity, about collecting voluntary donations to the fund of war-affected, decision of the owners of restaurants and pubs in Petrograd to organize free lunches for the families of soldiers who fought on the fronts were also published on the pages of “Russky Invalid”, “Niva”, “Voyennaya Letopis”, etc. (Servant Women, 1915, 30: 78; Niva, 1915, 33 (2), 621, 624).

The glorification of war and unity in the victory and grief of the army and the population of the empire was to be promoted by publications in the media with eloquent titles “The feat of the priest”, “The heroic feat of the Don Cossack Kryuchkov”, “The heroic feat of the Kubans”, “Selfless feat of a Russian soldier”; photos of officers and ensigns awarded with St. George’s weapons and killed on the fronts of the war, stories about the heroic everyday life of Russian soldiers and officers, etc. (Niva. 1914, 34: 3; 37: 4; 39: 3).

New columns “Eternal memory, eternal glory” appeared in periodicals, in which photos with the names and ranks of the killed officers and ensigns were published (Niva, 1915, 29: 569; 37: 688; 38: 712).

In the pages of the Russian press, the question of the unity of the Slavic world was raised in the artistic form by poets and prose writers: A. Korynfskiy, S. Gorodetskiy, Z. Bukharova and others.

However, as with visual propaganda (posters, lubki prints), the organizers of such events did not take into account the change in mood among the Russian army due to the defeats and the protracted nature of the war. The enthusiasm of the first months, the desire to defend the Slavic brothers were replaced by the growing dissatisfaction of the general population and the army, connected with the intensification of socio-economic contradictions in society. Patriotic publications ceased to have an adequate effect on both the troops and the population of the empire.

In addition to the positive technologies, Russian pro-government propaganda used the technology of negative, destructive propaganda aimed at exposing the horrors of war and demonizing the enemy.

As in case of positive propaganda, great importance was attached to visual images. The government considered the visual types created by satirical printed materials an effective means of constructing the image of the enemy, according to Russian researchers T. Filipova and P. Baratov (Fillipova & Baratov 2014, 10).

The pages of satirical journals outlined the general features and characteristics of the images of Germans, Austrians or Turks. In particular, Austria-Hungary was portrayed as a weak, frail old man, “in whom the reader could easily see the Emperor Franz Joseph” (Fillipova & Baratov 2014, 41). Turkey was presented as a “sick”, “miserable and deceived man who entered the war not of his own volition, but of someone else’s” (Fillipova & Baratov 2014, 119, 150).

It was more difficult to form a negative image of Slavic Orthodox Bulgaria. The way out was found by opposing the Bulgarian people and the official authorities. Thus, Bulgaria was represented by a caricature of Tsar Ferdinand I of Coburg with a “big nose” (Fillipova & Baratov 2014, 82).

Difficulties arose with the formation of a negative image of Germany, because in Russia there were strong pro-German sympathies, and the Empress herself was a German by birth. To depict the image of not “own” but “alien” German, “cockroach”, “Teutonic”, “aggressor”, stories “about German atrocities” against civilians and the military were used (Kingsbury 2010, 106).

In the Russian camp, the problem of the atrocities of the German and Austrian armies was raised by Colonel A. Rezanov, military prosecutor assistant and author of books on German espionage. His work, compiled for propaganda purposes as a collection of documents (accounts of eyewitness and victims of vandalism) about crimes of the German military, played an important role in shaping the image of the enemy among the general public of Russian society. And in the second edition, when the German army had already sufficiently demonstrated its attitude to the population of the occupied territories and Russian subjects who were in Germany, A. Rezanov allowed himself to use rather harsh statements about “cannibal warriors” and “Teutonic barbarism”, arguing that the medieval savagery was deliberately reduced to the level of public policy (Rezanov 1915).

The Emergency Inquiry Commission to Investigate Violations of the Laws and Customs of War (based on the Geneva Convention of 1864, the Declaration of Saint Petersburg of 1868, the Hague Convention of 1907, the Declaration of London of 1909) by Austro-Hungarian and German troops was established to bring war crimes to the international community and bring war crimes to the judgement of history (Egert 1914). During 1916 – 1917, the Commission prepared several printed journals, which contained officially approved investigations of such facts (Rossiya. Chrezvychaynaya sledstvennaya komissiya 1916).

Even the titles of the chapters of these collections (“The use of explosive bullets”, “Shooting with incendiary bombs”, “The use of acids”, “Scattering of explosives and poisonous substances, water poisoning, the use of poisoned bayonets, etc.” and so on) were to contribute to the formation of the image of the enemy in the army and Russian society.

In addition, the use by opponents of weapons prohibited by international conventions should have emphasized the positive image of Russia, which by the “Supreme Order about the Rules of War” of July 28, 1914 undertook not to use particularly dangerous weapons, including suffocating and harmful gases<sup>16</sup>.

The “media products of hostility” (Filippova & Baratov 2014). were used to inform the general population, who did not have access to A. Rezanov’s publications and materials of the Emergency Inquiry Commission, about the facts of violence and crimes committed by German and Austrian troops.

The brutal routine of the war was published by the media through the images of destroyed settlements, stories of prisoners of war and military correspondents about crimes committed by German or Austrian soldiers, thus giving an emotional color to the official Russian propaganda.

On the pages of the already mentioned illustrated journal “Niva”, it was started to write about the atrocities of the German army, beginning from №41 in 1915. The essay with the eloquent title “Against the Law of God and Man” (without the author’s name) cited the facts of abuse with the names of the victims.

To enhance the emotional coloring, religious and church vocabulary was used in the essay: the victims were called “martyrs”, and their biographies – “lives”. The words that those people accepted the suffering without violating “their military duty and love for the homeland” were also imbued with a sense of patriotism (Protiv zakona Bozh'ego, 1914, 36: 3; 1915, 41: 751; Bukharova, 1915, 27: 525).

To create a brighter image of the enemy, such a technique was used as the transfer of analogies from the past to the present. Negative stereotypes “cannibal warriors”, “Teutonic barbarism”) were used, and the atrocities of the Germans were compared to “the tortures of pagan Rome”.

One of the technologies used by the authorities was the publication of the results of the work of the so-called “General M. Batiushin’s Commission”<sup>17</sup>). However, high-profile cases of betrayal in the highest echelons of power, which thus tried to explain their own failures at the front by the activities of traitors, led to the opposite of the expected result. The “spy mania” that has always accompanied wars and the fears it has generated, instead of uniting society around power, led to growing dissatisfaction with the ruling elite. “The realization that the cause of all our troubles is betrayal ... has penetrated the entire population”, the Police Department reported on the situation in Poltava Province (Aksenov 2020).

The censorship policy applied by the empire also became a kind of counter-propaganda for it. The front pages in the newspapers, which were to be replaced

by materials that were blocked by state censors at the last minute, turned society against the government.

### **Conclusions**

Thus, the First World War was not only the first destructive event in human history, which involved dozens of countries in the armed confrontation and claimed millions of lives and maimed millions of people. It caused the most cynical manipulation of millions of people's consciousness in the history of wars.

On the eve of and during the Great War, Russian official propaganda was based on the teachings of the ideologies of Pan-Slavism and Neo-Slavism, the main leitmotif of which was the perception of Russia as the defender of the entire Slavic and Orthodox world.

The manipulative effects of imperial propaganda were directed at both external and internal imperial objects.

The main technologies were the dissemination of arguments and statements of both constructive (positive) and destructive (negative) propaganda. Constructive propaganda, aimed at the army and the population of the empire, was to form a stable positive image of own state and army, to deflect people's attention from internal problems within the state that caused the revolutionary movement, to demonstrate the unity of authorities and masses, heroism and courage of soldiers and inhabitants of the rear, which worked for victory.

Propaganda aimed at neutral countries and the Slavic population of the opposing states was also to unite the Slavic world and present Russia as a defender of the Slavic peoples and Christian values.

Within the empire, destructive propaganda technologies were used primarily to create the "image of the enemy". The propaganda focused on war crimes committed by the enemy, the use of prohibited weapons, violations of international conventions etc. Finally, the ultimate goal of using such technology was to unite the masses around the authorities by inciting hatred against the enemy. The most common forms of propaganda were printed materials, especially the press, as well as brochures, posters, leaflets, etc.

However, the effectiveness of propaganda manipulations, especially at the beginning and in the first months of the war, did not bring it to the level of state institutionalization and did not contribute to improving the content of propaganda ideas, technologies and forms of organization.

### **NOTES**

1. Shenk, F., 2012. 'Avgustovskoye perezhivaniye': nachalo pervoy mirovoy voyny kak povorotnyy punkt nemetskoy istorii ["The August Experience": the

- beginning of the First World War as a turning point in German history]. NLO, 4. Available from: <https://magazines.gorky.media/nlo/2012/4/avgustovskoe-perezhivanie-nachalo-pervoj-mirovoj-vojni-kak-povorotnyj-punkt-nemeczkoj-istorii.html>. [in Russian].
2. In 1913, after the appointment of W. Korytowski, a supporter of the Austrian state idea and support of the Catholic Church, as the governor of the region, the persecution of Moscovites began in Galicia. In the first months of the First World War, members of the GRCS held some positions in the administration of the Russian-occupied Galicia and Bukovina. GRCS ceased its activities in late 1917.
  3. Vozzvaniye Glavnokomanduyushchego Ego Imperatorskogo Vyschestva Velikogo Knyazya Nikolaya Nikolayevicha. 4 avgusta 1914 goda, 1914. [Appeal of the Commander-in-Chief of His Imperial Highness Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, August 4, 1914]. *Niva*. 37, 714. [in Russian]
  4. Ibid.
  5. In September 1914, the Committee dissolved itself, delegating authority to the “Russian People’s Sonnet of Carpathian Rus”.
  6. At the end of 1916, there were up to 20,000 Czech volunteers in the Russian army (Czech troops included Czech prisoners of war from the Austro-Hungarian army, Czechs from the Russian Empire, and even Czechs from the United States).
  7. Obrashcheniye verkhovnogo glavnokomanduyushchego k polyakam. 1/14 avgusta 1914 goda, 1914 [Address of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief to the Poles, August 1/14, 1914]. *Niva*. 33, 641. [in Russian]
  8. Photos of this event were published in journal “Niva” (1914, № 31, pp. 617 – 619).
  9. Telegrams. St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency. *Russky Invalid*. 1914. 159, July 22. <http://elib.shpl.ru/ru/nodes/32250-159-22-iyulya#mode/inspect/page/4/zoom/9>
  10. Photos of this event were published in journal “Niva” (1914, № 31, pp. 617 – 619).
  11. Edineniye tsarya s narodom, 1914 [*Unity of the Tsar with the people*]. *Niva*, 32, 639 – 640 [in Russian].
  12. Ot Aleksandrovskogo komiteta o ranenyykh, 1914. [From the Alexander Committee on the wounded]. *Niva*, 31, 1. [in Russian]
  13. Monarshaya zabota o detyakh zashchitnikov rodiny. Imennoy vysochayshiy ukaz pravitelstvennomu senatu. 7 iyulya 1915 g., 1915 [*Monarchic care for the children of the defenders of the homeland. Nominal Supreme Decree to the Government Senate. July 7, 1915*]. *Niva*. 31, 2 – 3 [in Russian].
  14. Ego Imperatorskoye Velichestvo Gosudar Imperator Nikolay Aleksandrovich V Deystvuyushchey Armii, 1915. [*His Imperial Majesty Emperor Nikolai*



- Alexandrovich in the army*]. Compiled by Major General Dubensky. *Niva*, 27, 523 – 525. [in Russian]
15. The journal was published in 1870 – 1918.
16. Vysochayshiy Ukaz o pravilakh vedeniya voyny Rossiyei, 1914. [*The Supreme Decree on the rules of warfare by Russia*]. *Niva*, 33, 652. [in Russian]
17. Established in 1916 by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief's Squad to combat espionage and speculation. The commission investigated the involvement of prominent politicians and businessmen in espionage for Germany. Gendarmerie colonel S. Myasoyedov, head of the Revel military shipyard K. Shpan, Minister of War V. Sukhomlinov, banker D. Rubinstein, businessman O. Guchkov, former secretary S. Witte, I. Manuilov, and a number of Little Russian sugar factories were accused of espionage.

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