

Caricature as one of the information mechanisms for constructing the image of Russia’s war against Ukraine: Based on the materials of “The Times” and “The Sunday Times”

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ABSTRACT

The article presents the author’s vision of the caricature as an informational mechanism for constructing the image of Russia’s war against Ukraine. The subject of the study is the satirical graphics of one of the most famous and authoritative publications in the world, namely the British newspaper “The Times” and its separate Sunday edition “The Sunday Times”. Chronologically, the work covers a small but revealing period: the first 7 days of Russia’s full-scale armed aggression. At this time, the world mass media literally “exploded” with information messages about events in Ukraine.

As a result of the research, it has been defined that from the first days of the full-scale war, the caricaturists of “The Times” and “The Sunday Times” took a clearly expressed pro-Ukrainian and anti-Russian position. The main object of their ridicule was V. Putin, a series of different images was attached to him: “Russian-Soviet leader”, “shirtless macho” and “dwarf”. With the increase in the number of rocket attacks on Ukrainian cities and killed civilians, the authors of the caricatures treated the image of the Russian president even more contemptuously, emphasizing the fact of his degradation as a “homo sapiens” kind. The positive image of the Ukrainian president became a direct controversy of the negative image of V. Putin. In front of the readers of “The Times” and “The Sunday Times”, V. Zelensky appears as a “great leader” who, personifying Ukraine and its people, courageously resists the offensive of the Russian army. Caricaturists also drew attention to the image of political leaders of the West, who were also criticized for their inability to successfully oppose Russia’s armed aggression. The policy of the British government regarding resolving the issue of the entry of Ukrainian refugees to the United Kingdom was separately ridiculed.

KEYWORDS

caricature, information mechanism, image construction, Russia’s war against Ukraine, full-scale invasion, newspaper, The Times, The Sunday Times

Introduction

Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 has been the biggest political disaster since World War II. An event of this scale caused a significant resonance in the world. Mass media literally “exploded” with news reports about Russia’s armed aggression against Ukraine. The oldest daily British newspaper “The Times” was no exception to this.

On February 25, the first column of the new issue printed a large-scale photograph of the injured Ukrainian Olena Kurylo, who managed to survive after the Russian missile attacks on the Kharkiv Region. There was an emotional headline in the center of the page, in large print: “A dark day for Europe”. At the same time, instead of the traditional version (black font on light paper), the name of the newspaper was printed on a black background (see image №1)¹.

The lion’s share of information content about events in Ukraine in modern mass media is made up of articles and photos.



Image №1.
Front page of “The Times”
issue of February 25, 2022.

¹ A dark day for Europe. (2022, February 25). *The Times*, 73716.

The latter, along with video materials, play one of the key roles in establishing certain images in society. At the same time, such type of image as a caricature can be found among the published materials. Despite the development of information technologies and various means of disseminating information, the caricature has not lost its relevance, as evidenced by the reactions of people in social networks. Being a product of human creativity, satirical graphics act both as a means of criticism and as a mechanism for establishing certain stereotypes and images in society. This aspect makes it necessary to study the caricature as one of the informational mechanisms for constructing the image of Russia's war against Ukraine.

Satirical graphics have repeatedly become the subject of study. The first special works in this direction appeared in the 19th and early 20th centuries (*Wright, 1865; Lynch, 1927*). In this context, scientists are most interested in periods of social upheaval: wars, famines, epidemics, economic crises, environmental disasters, etc. Modern historiography on the study of caricature as an informational tool of political agitation and propaganda is extremely extensive. Among the researchers whose works, in our opinion, are of the most relevant nature, the following should be noted: L. Streicher (1967), E. Demm (1993), H. Duccini (2001), M. Hewitson (2013), Ch. Gilbert (2021), L. Pytlova (2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2016a, 2016b), R. Kutsyk (2017), O. Salata (2013), O. Maievskiy (2018) and others. Among the latest qualitative studies that the world has seen is the collective work "Comic empires. Imperialism in cartoons, caricature, and satirical art" edited by R. Scully i A. Varnava (2020). A notable feature of the work is its wide geography, which made it possible to trace the regional features of the connection between imperialism and satirical graphics. At the same time, despite extensive modern historiography, the issue of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine and its reflection in political caricature remains outside the attention of the scientific community. To date, there are only a few developments in this context. Among them, the works of M. Yatsymirskaya (2015), V. Katola (2017), L. Pytlova (2019) and Y. Burakov (2019) should be noted. Thus, the research problem stated in the article is considered for the first time, which determines its relevance and scientific novelty.

Research methods

An important theoretical and methodological task of the work is to clarify the definition of "caricature" and its functional purpose. The word comes from the Italian verb "caricare" ("to load," "to surcharge" as with exaggerated detail) (*Ames, 2021*). The first definition of the concept was given by the British writer, philosopher and physician Thomas Browne in "Letter to a Friend" published as a pamphlet in 1690: "When men's faces are drawn with resemblance to some other animals, the Italians call it, to be drawn in caricature" (*Browne, 1835: 42*). That is, the term "caricature" primarily meant a distorted image of a person's face.

It should be noted that this version of the interpretation has become widely used in the English-speaking world. Thus, one of the most comprehensive and oldest encyclopedias in the world, "Britannica", provides the following definition: a caricature is a distorted image of a person, type or action; usually, the main feature or characteristic of the object is highlighted and exaggerated, or parts of the human body are replaced by features of ani-

mals, birds or plants, or an analogy is made with the actions of animals (*Ames, 2021*).

The word "cartoon" is also used along with the concept of "caricature" in English-language literature. Originally, it meant a full-size drawing template for creating a work of art. Since the mid-19th century, thanks to the politics of "Punch" magazine, "cartoon" began to mean an artistic parody or satirical drawing, the main focus of which is on a contemporary political event (*Ames, 2021*). So, a caricature is a satirical drawing that makes fun of a specific person and their features, while a "cartoon" is a full-fledged plot about certain events.

In the Ukrainian language tradition, only the concept of "caricature" is used to denote satirical graphics, which has a universal character and covers various types of humorous images, regardless of the object and plot of ridicule. Thus, the "Encyclopedia of Modern Ukraine" provides the following definition: it is a deliberate parody, satirical or humorous depiction (mostly graphic one) of an event or a person (*Savchuk, 2012*).

The editors of "The Times" and "The Sunday Times" use the term "cartoon" to denote satirical graphics, which is due to the nature of the illustrations. Most of the published humorous drawings are satires not so much on a specific person or their external features, but on an event or phenomenon as a whole. Due to the fact that the concept of "cartoon" has no counterpart in the Ukrainian-language narrative, the term "caricature" is used in the article for greater functionality, which refers to all types of satirical images, regardless of the object and plot of ridiculing.

The historical value of caricatures lies in their source science aspect. They are one of the means of recording surrounding events and processes. Researchers R. Scully and A. Varnava note that because of their emotional nature, relative immediacy and multi-layered meaning, caricatures are an excellent way to access the past. Acting as a kind of "clues" and markers of social and political dynamics, they are often better at revealing the "real" past than any written word (*Scully & Varnava, 2020: 5*).

It is worth noting that caricatures are not "passive reflectors" of reality and are also never "passively" perceived by readers. Rather, on the contrary, they help to crystallize the attitude and express the thinking of a wide segment of society (both past and present). It is this capacity for simplification and essence that makes caricature such a powerful art form (*Scully & Varnava, 2020: 5-6*). Thus, caricatures are not only a means of recording information, but also a transmitter of ideas and stereotypes of their creators and target audience, which is extremely important for research devoted to the study of individual and collective ideas about certain events, phenomena and processes.

At the same time, it should be understood that satirical graphics are not always a source of "truth". The level of truthfulness of its content depends on a number of factors, in particular: the environment (political regime, social upheavals), the customer (authority, organization, editorial office, person) and the pursued goal (dissemination of information, political agitation, propaganda, etc.). Thus, caricature was often used in history as one of the informational tools of propaganda and instilling in society images that are far from reality. Similar practices were actively used in the totalitarian empires in the 20th century. (the Soviet Union and the Third Reich). Today, this tradition continues to exist in those countries where the authoritarian political regime is preserved. This includes Russia, China, North Korea, etc.

Finally, it should be noted that it is difficult to trace cases in history where satirical graphics changed the political landscape, influenced voting patterns, or caused the overthrow of governments, but the examples of individual concerns can be mentioned that indicate the likelihood of its achieving such goals. Thus, at one time, caricature seemed so dangerous to the political regime of the French emperor Napoleon III that he launched a censorship apparatus specifically aimed at curbing its influence (Scully & Varnava, 2020: 6).

Results and Discussion

The newspaper "The Times" was founded in 1785 by the editor and publisher John Walter. For the first three years, it was called the "Daily Universal Register" until it changed its name to "The Times" in 1788, thus becoming the first newspaper in the world to use the name "Times". In 1822, "The Sunday Times" was founded as a separate publication. In 1966, both editions were bought by Lord Roy Thomson. It was the first time that "The Times" and "The Sunday Times" were under the same ownership under the auspices of the newly formed company Times Newspapers Limited (TNL). In 1981, both newspapers were bought by the international media magnate Rupert Murdoch. Since that time, "The Times" and "The Sunday Times" have been part of one of the world's largest media companies, "News Corp UK & Ireland Limited" (better known as News UK or News International)².

For more than 200 years since its foundation, "The Times" has been published in the classic wide format for newspapers. However, from November 1, 2004, the newspaper switched to a tabloid version (Snoddy, 2004). This decision was determined by modern realities. In this regard, the British journalist Raymond Snoddy quite rightly commented in his article "Why the Times had to change" that:

"Newspapers are under the competitive cosh from the ever-expanding electronic media... The move, however unsettling it may be in the short term for traditional Times readers, is an important example of serious newspapers reinventing themselves for a more competitive media age" (Snoddy, 2004).

The decision to switch the newspaper to a tabloid version was truly revolutionary from the point of view of the newspaper industry, but even this did not guarantee the publication's competitiveness in the modern information market. The development of the Internet and social media dictated their conditions, and therefore "The Times" and "The Sunday Times" had to respond to them. The result of the new editorial policy was the creation of their own websites in 1996 (first *the-times.co.uk* and *sunday-times.co.uk*, and later *timesonline.co.uk*). In 2010, there were significant changes in the functioning of the electronic versions of both publications. In particular, News UK announced the creation of two new sites: *thetimes.co.uk* and *sundaytimes.co.uk*, access to which became paid. A paid weekly subscription for £2 or a day for £1 was introduced for users³. The informatization of "The Times" and "The Sunday Times" did not end there.

² About us. *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/static/about-us/>

³ The Times and The Sunday Times launch new look, pay to view websites. (2010, May 26). *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-and-the-sunday-times-launch-new-look-pay-to-view-websites-9wzp76ksmdp>

The intensive development of the Internet and web technologies in the early 2000s contributed to the emergence of such a phenomenon as "social media". The use of social network websites to display informational content and create one's own readership is meant under this term⁴. Today, the largest platforms in the world for social media are: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, etc. For many, especially the younger generation, they are the main source of news. Considering this circumstance, in 2014, a personal page of "The Times" and "The Sunday Times" was created on the Instagram⁵, social network, and the following year on Facebook⁶. As of August 19, 2022, the number of followers on the Instagram page reached almost one million and amounted to 954 thousand people. On Facebook, it is somewhat smaller and amounted to 856 thousand. Although both profiles have almost the same number of audiences, greater activity is observed in Instagram.

The content of "The Times" and "The Sunday Times" is quite diverse, covering almost all spheres of human activity. Since both publications are a classic type of tabloid, the lion's share of their content is precisely visual materials, among which a special place is given to satirical graphics. Thus, in each of the issues of both editions, in the "Comment" section, caricatures on the most pressing political, economic and sociocultural problems are systematically published. It is certain that the full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine caused significant interest among cartoonists.

The first caricature in this context was printed on the second day of active hostilities on February 25 (see image №2)⁷. On it, in one row, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the main theorists of Marxism, Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin, the communist leaders of the Soviet Union, and Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, are depicted. At the top of the illustration, the signature "Back in the USSR" is added. This kind of a plot of the caricature demonstrates the fact that the Russian leadership followed the Soviet model of behavior, the characteristic feature of which was the use of force and coercion to achieve the set goals, to the reader.

It is obvious that the series of armed aggressions of Russia against the former "Union Republics" in 2008, 2014 and 2022 is a direct evidence of the desire of the Kremlin leadership to reincarnate the USSR, where Moscow would again have the role of the governing center. Back in 2005, in his annual televised address to the Federal Assembly of Russia, V. Putin stated that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century (*Putin nazvav, 2005*).

⁴ Social media. (2022, June 13). *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-media>

⁵ "The Times and The Sunday Times". *Instagram*. <https://instagram.com/thetimes>

⁶ "The Times and The Sunday Times". *Facebook*. <https://www.facebook.com/timesandsundaytimes>

⁷ Brookes, P. (2022, February 25). Cartoon "Back in the USSR". *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/peter-brookes-times-cartoon-february-25-2022-n8wxk6037>



Image №2. Caricature №1: Peter Brookes, “Back in the USSR”, The Times, 2022, February 25

In the address dated February 21, 2022, in which the independence of the so-called separatist, puppet entities “DPR” and “LPR” was officially recognized, the Kremlin’s propaganda rhetoric reached its peak. In an almost hour-long speech, V. Putin voiced his own version of the history of Ukraine in the 20th and early 21st centuries, which can be reduced to three key theses: Ukraine was created by V. Lenin; historical Russia is the entire former Soviet Union; Ukraine has never had its own stable state tradition¹.

Undoubtedly, such rhetoric of V. Putin is informational propaganda designed to establish the idea of the weakness of Ukraine as an independent independent state in the public consciousness of Russians, and at the same time to justify his own plans to change the political map of Europe through armed aggression. Such practices cannot help but evoke associations with the actions of the former Soviet Union, as Peter Brookes’ caricature “Back in the USSR” directly indicates.

On February 26, “The Times” published a second caricature dedicated to the events in Ukraine (see image №3)². It depicts US President Joseph Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson trying to stop V. Putin driving a tank with symbolic gestures and flowers. The published illustration is a satire on the insufficient effectiveness of Western sanctions, which are unable to stop Russia’s armed aggression.

Morten Morland’s caricature published in “The Sunday Times” on February 27 (see image №4) is somewhat similar in its content³. The plot of the picture unfolds in an expensive restaurant. Visitors, sitting at their tables in classic dresses and suits, watch without undue concern as V. Putin, with a drunken bottle of vodka in his hands, attacks the President of Ukraine V. Zelensky. Among those present is also B. Johnson, who, regardless of the situation, calmly contemplates it, while continuing to eat at the same time. The author’s attempt to emphasize the phlegmatic nature of the actions and reaction of the government of the United Kingdom to Russia’s war against Ukraine is quite obvious.

The image of the Russian president, who is depicted half-naked in all caricatures, should be emphasized separately. This plot is related to the history of 2009. That year, leading Russian news agencies published a selection of official photos from V. Putin’s summer vacation in one of the remote regions of Siberia. In most of the pictures, the Russian Prime Minister is dressed in military clothes and boots, but in the *footage of him riding a horse, he is shirtless* (Rodgers, 2009). Since that time, the Russian president has had a sarcastic image of a “shirtless macho”, which has been systematically used by caricaturists around the world.

¹ Obrashchenie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii. (2022, February 21). *Ofitsialnii sait Prezidenta Rossii*. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828>

² Brookes, P. (2022, February 26). Cartoon “Sanctions”. *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/peter-brookes-times-cartoon-february-26-2022-cn3ll3wqj>

³ Morland, M. (2022, February 27). Cartoon. *The Sunday Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/morten-morland-sunday-times-cartoon-february-27-2022-2qv69mjbj>



Image №3. Caricature №2: Peter Brookes, "Sanctions", The Times, 2022, February 26



Image №4. Caricature №3: Morten Morland, The Sunday Times, 2022, February 27

At the same time, despite the ridicule, V. Putin occupies a dominant position and looks quite self-confident in the first three caricatures. Such a plot is determined by a number of circumstances. From the first days of the full-scale invasion of Russia, many had a key question: how long would Ukraine last. In terms of military power, the Russian army ranks second in the world after the United States. Therefore, from the point of view of the ratio of

military forces, Ukraine's confrontation with such a giant is equivalent to a loss. It was this opinion that was widespread in the early days among the international community. In March, information appeared in the mass media that on the day of the full-scale invasion, certain Western politicians gave Ukraine only a few hours, in particular, as noted by Ukrainian Ambassador Andriy Melnyk, this posi-

tion was expressed by German Finance Minister Christian Lindner (*U Berlini davaly*, 2022).

Despite the pessimistic attitudes of Western politicians, the nature of events in Ukraine took an unexpected turn. The first days of the war demonstrated the weakness and chaotic actions of the Russian army. The plan to capture Kyiv failed in a few days. Thus, a new reality emerged, in which Ukraine demonstrated its ability to actively oppose the Kremlin's aggressive plans. This course of events had a significant impact on the skeptical attitudes of Western politicians and analysts, and at the same time, it had a positive effect on the image of Ukraine.

The changes concerned not only the general image of Ukraine, but also individual political leaders. In this context, the image of V. Zelensky underwent the most drastic transformation. His participation in the election campaign in Ukraine in 2019, his entry into the second round and his absolute victory (73.22%) caused considerable resonance abroad. The columns of authoritative publications were filled with articles with the following headlines: "Hoping for peace, Ukraine's voters appear likely to elect a comedian as president" (*Troianovski*, 2019); "I've come to break the system, says comedian leading polls for Ukraine's presidential election" (*Parfitt*, 2019); "Ukraine Election: Volodymyr Zelensky, TV Comedian, Trounces President" (*Higgins & Mendel*, 2019); "Comedian wins landslide victory in Ukrainian presidential election" (*Walker*, 2019); "Ukraine election: Comedian Zelensky wins presidency by landslide" (2019).

In all publications, the attribution "comedian" was added to V. Zelensky's last name. It is obvious that Western observers were very skeptical about the choice of Ukraine. Such rhetoric was determined by three key factors: V. Zelensky's former comic activity, lack of political experience and a concrete plan of action. In this regard, "The Guardian" wrote: "His campaign blurred the lines between the real-life Zelenskiy and his on-screen persona. Like the fictional president of his television series, Zelenskiy has promised to clean up politics and end the stranglehold of the oligarchy over Ukraine, but he has offered little by way of specifics" (*Walker*, 2019).

The full-scale invasion of Russia on February 24, 2022 had a significant impact on the general image of V. Zelensky, who transformed from a "president-comic" to a "president-leader". According to the results of a survey conducted by the Sociological Group "Rating" as of February 26-27, 91% of Ukrainians supported the president's actions¹. V. Zelensky's decisive position to stay in Ukraine and continue the struggle also drew approval from Western leaders and the media. In this regard, "The Washington Post" wrote:

"Just a few years ago, Volodymyr Zelensky was a comedian and actor playing Ukraine's president on television. Now, he's a real-life wartime leader directing his country in its fight against a Russian invasion. ...he has earned the respect of much of the Ukrainian public by refusing to flee the capital. Instead, he has walked the streets of Kyiv and urged Ukrainians to resist, while crafting a successful communications strategy that has won the hearts and minds of European leaders and voters" (*Pietsch & Westfall*, 2022).

¹ Zahalnonatsionalne opytuvannya: Ukraina v umovakh viiny (26–27 liutoho 2022). (2022, February 28). *Sotsiologichna hrupa "Reitynh"*. <https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/obschenatsionalnyy-opros-ukraina-v-usloviyah-voiny-26-27-fevralya-2022-goda.html> (In Ukrainian).

Such a radical transformation of the image of President V. Zelensky could not escape the attention of caricaturists. On March 1, "The Times" published a thematic caricature in this context, the author of which is M. Morland (see image №5)². The picture depicts V. Zelensky in an olive-colored military uniform with his hands clenched in fists. Opposite him, on top of a pile of broken Russian equipment, stands V. Putin, who reads out his demands. The main leitmotif of the work is focusing attention on the size ratio between both politicians. V. Zelensky appears in the image of a "great leader" who confidently, without unnecessary hesitation, restrains the onslaught of Russian troops. Instead, V. Putin is depicted as a small "dwarf" who, regardless of the situation at the front, namely significant losses of personnel and military equipment, continues to put forward his demands. Such a plot of the caricature emphasizes the fact of the failure of the Kremlin's top leadership's plan to seize Ukraine quickly. In the future, with each day of the war, the image of the Ukrainian president only strengthened. He acquired a symbolic meaning, acting as a personification of high moral qualities and democratic values. Instead, the image of the Russian president increasingly acquired a negative, immoral tone, which was caused by the barbaric behavior of the Russian army and mass shelling of peaceful Ukrainian cities. On March 1, Russia carried out another series of missile attacks on Ukraine. Around 8 a.m., the center of Kharkiv came under heavy shelling. Two rockets fell on Freedom Square and the building of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration (*Ukraine conflict: Russia bombs*, 2022). On the same day, in the afternoon, an attack was made on the Kyiv TV tower, which is located near the Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center. As a result of the explosion, five members of a family who were passing by were burned alive (*Philp & Charter*, 2022). This event caused considerable outrage of the public and Holocaust memorial centers in various parts of the world. On this occasion, the chief rabbi of Ukraine Yaakov Bleich emotionally noted: "The Nazi who should be de-Nazified is one man – and his name is Putin" (*Philp*, 2022).

The appearance of another thematic caricature (see image №6)³ in "The Times" on March 2 was a reaction to the rocket attacks on Ukrainian cities. It was created based on the eponymous illustration "The March of Progress" (originally titled "The Road to Homo Sapiens"), made by the artist Rudolph Zallinger and first published in 1965 in the book "Early Man" (*Howell et al.*, 1965). The image has been imitated and parodied many times to illustrate different kinds of progress. P. Brookes decided to resort to it as well.

² Morland, M. (2022, March 01). Cartoon "My demands". *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/morten-morland-times-cartoon-march-1-2022-t1vcrpmb>

³ Brookes, P. (2022, March 02). Cartoon. *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/peter-brookes-times-cartoon-march-2-2022-mcnwwb6xs>



Image №5. Caricature №4: Morten Morland, "My demands", The Times, 2022, March 01



Image №6. Caricature №5: Peter Brookes, The Times, 2022, March 02

The caricature depicts representatives of various types of hominids gradually evolving into homo sapiens. At the same time, stepping forward, they look indignantly at V. Putin, who, contrary to progress, is moving in the opposite direction. At the same time, the Russian president holds missiles in his hands and leaves behind a bloody trail. This content of the caricature not only emphasizes the criminal and immoral nature of V. Putin's actions, but also demonstrates the fact of his personal degradation as a species of "Homo sapiens".

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine triggered one of the biggest migration crises since World War II. Millions of Ukrainians were forced to leave their homes and move west in search of shelter. Only in the first month of the war, more than 3.6 million refugees left Ukraine and went abroad. An additional 6.5 million people were internally displaced¹.

¹ Ukraine situation: Flash Update №5 (2022, March 24). *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91589>



Image №7. Caricature №6: Morten Morland,
“I said, are you willing to pick fruit?!”, The Times, 2022, February 28

It is clear that such a global crisis has become one of the main topics for discussion in the mass media. In this regard, on February 28, “The Times” published a thematic caricature (see image №7)¹. It shows the United Kingdom Home Secretary Priti Patel, who, despite the difficult situation and the fire, asks a mother and her child the question “are you willing to pick fruit?!”. Asking such an apparently absurd question is no accident.

Among European countries, Great Britain is among those with strict visa requirements. Therefore, in the first days of the war and migration crisis, only close family members of citizens of the United Kingdom could enter the country. On 26 February, in a tweet (later deleted), Immigration Minister Kevin Foster, offered Ukrainians another way to enter the UK: to apply under the seasonal fruit and vegetable picker scheme (Wheeler, et al., 2022). It was this statement that became the main reason for the appearance of M. Morland’s caricature, as the minister’s words caused significant criticism from British society and politicians. On this occasion, shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper emotionally noted:

“My God. People are fleeing war in Europe, the like we haven’t seen in generations, in search of swift sanctuary. Yet the immigration minister says the answer is they should put in an application to pick Britain’s fruit & veg”².

¹ Morland, M. (2022, February 28). Cartoon “I said, are you willing to pick fruit?!”. *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/morten-morland-times-cartoon-february-28-2022-mjntmfc9>

² Yvette Cooper. *Twitter*. <https://twitter.com/yvettecoopermp/status/1497696784809746435>

Despite criticism, the British government did not manage to quickly solve the problem of Ukrainian refugees entering the country. One of the main reasons was security. Home Secretary Priti Patel noted that visas were critical to preventing Russian troops and extremists from coming to Britain (Dathan & Zeffman, 2022).

Conclusions

Thus, the British editions “The Times” and “The Sunday Times” closely followed the full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine from the first days. Various materials were published on their pages, among which a special place was given to satirical graphics. Despite the massive informatization of society, the emergence of new media, competition from video and photo materials, the satirical graphics has not lost its relevance, as evidenced by thousands of likes in social networks. Analysis of the content of the caricatures showed that “The Times” artists took a pronounced pro-Ukrainian and anti-Russian position. In this regard, two main images are clearly distinguished: positive image of Ukrainian, and negative image of Russian. One of the features of the analyzed caricatures of “The Times” and “The Sunday Times” is their personified character: upon getting acquainted with them, the reader immediately understands who is depicted and who exactly is nominated for the role of the main “culprit”. At the same time, each of the heroes is a collective image. Thus, V. Zelensky is the personification of Ukraine and Ukrainians, V. Putin – of Russia and Russians, the group of J. Biden, B. Johnson, E. Macron – of the allied West.

Since the caricaturists of “The Times” and “The Sunday Times” took an anti-Russian position, the main object of ridicule was V. Putin, who was attached to a

series of different images. The first of them shows the Russian president as a “Soviet leader” and a successor to the policies of V. Lenin and Y. Stalin. The second has an exclusively stylistic and external expression and depicts V. Putin as a “shirtless macho” confidently riding a tank. The third image is represented in the context of the rivalry with the Ukrainian president. V. Putin appears in the form of a “dwarf”, while V. Zelensky is depicted as a “great leader” who, personifying Ukraine and its people, courageously resists the attack of the Russian army. With the increase in the number of rocket attacks on Ukrainian cities and the number of civilians killed, caricaturists have treated the image of the Russian president even more contemptuously, emphasizing his personal degradation as a species of “Homo sapiens”. Political leaders of the West were also criticized, whose response to Russia's armed aggression, according to the authors of the caricatures, was too weak and passive. The failed policy of the British government regarding the quick solution to the problem of the entry of Ukrainian refugees into the United Kingdom was ridiculed separately.

Gratitude

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Krzysztof Skubiszewski Foundation (Polish: Fundacja imienia Krzysztofa Skubiszewskiego), which helps to preserve the scientific potential of Ukraine in such a difficult time for Ukrainian scientists. It was thanks to its grant financial assistance that it became possible to write this work. Special thanks to Manchester University Press, who kindly provided free access to the electronic version of the collective scientific work “Comic empires: Imperialism in cartoons, caricature, and satirical art” edited by Richard Scully and Andrekos Varnava. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the editors of the “Skhid” journal for their cooperation and publication of the article.

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Карикатура як один із інформаційних механізмів конструювання образу війни Росії проти України: за матеріалами “The Times” і “The Sunday Times”

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У статті подано авторське бачення щодо карикатури як інформаційного механізму конструювання образу війни Росії проти України. Предметом дослідження стала сатирична графіка одного із найбільш відомих та авторитетних видань у світі – британської газети “The Times” та її окремого недільного видання “The Sunday Times”. Хронологічно робота охоплює невеликий, але показовий період: перших 7 днів повномасштабної збройної агресії Росії. В цей час світові масмедіа у буквальному сенсі “вибухнули” інформаційними повідомленнями про події в Україні.

У результаті дослідження встановлено, що з перших днів повномасштабної війни карикатуристи “The Times” і “The Sunday Times” зайняли чітко виражену проукраїнську та антиросійську позицію. Головним об’єктом їхнього висміювання став В. Путін, за яким було закріплено серію різних образів: “російсько-радянський вождь”, “напівголий мачо” та “карлик”. Зі збільшенням кількості ракетних обстрілів українських міст та вбитих мирних жителів, автори карикатур ще більш зневажливо поставилися до образу російського президента, підкреслюючи факт його деградації як виду “Людини розумної”. Прямою контроверсією негативного образу В. Путіна став позитивний образ українського президента. Перед читачами “The Times” і “The Sunday Times” В. Зеленський постає у вигляді “великого лідера”, який, уособлюючи Україну та її народ, мужньо протистоїть наступу російської армії. Звернули увагу карикатуристи й на образ політичних лідерів Заходу, які також піддані критиці через неспроможність успішно протидіяти збройній агресії Росії. Окремо висміяно політику британського уряду щодо врегулювання питання в’їзду українських біженців до Сполученого Королівства.

Keywords: карикатура, інформаційний механізм, конструювання образу, війна Росії проти України, повномасштабне вторгнення, газета, The Times, The Sunday Times.

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