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# Propaganda in the World and Local Conflicts

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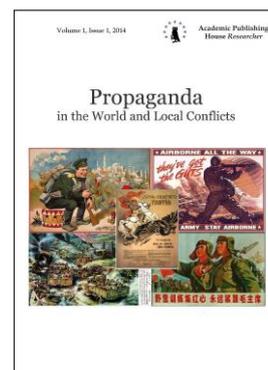
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## Articles and Statements

### Documentary Photography in the Don Periodical Press as an Element of Propaganda During World War I: the «Image of the Enemy» Visualization Features

Maria V. Bratolyubova<sup>a, \*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Southern Federal University, Russian Federation

#### Abstract

The article studies the shaping and evolution of the “image of the enemy” in documentary photos on the pages of Don newspapers as an element of military propaganda during World War I. The author found certain indicators of the increased “demand” for documentary photography during World War I.

Photography was rarely seen as a historical source, despite the fact that this kind of documentary material was often used for illustrations. The potential of photography is quite wide and photographic material can serve as an independent source in the history of World War I research.

The author determined the role of documentary photography in the World War I coverage and making the “image of the enemy”, analyzed the selected photographic material and revealed its artistic potential. Photos from the Don newspapers of 1915–1917, such as “Priazovskiy krai”, “Yuzhnyi telegraf”, “Taganrogskiy vestnik”, “Donskie oblasntye vedomosti” and others were selected as the objects of analysis.

In the research she follows the shaping process of the “image of the enemy” and points out that such factors as public thoughts on war, mass historical stereotypes and its role in practice of the imperial discourse had a big impact on it.

**Keywords:** World War I, propaganda, documentary photography, image of the enemy, Don periodical press.

#### 1. Introduction

The period of World War I of 1914-1918 was a turning point for the history of war visualization. It was the time of rapid development of the photography and it became an independent form of art swiftly, joining the visual culture of the world. The art of photography was associated with a fundamentally new way of reflecting reality. A photo was seen as a representation of reality and became an independent document while being a form of folk art. Military photography helped to shape the image of war as it was seen by the contemporaries and gradually it evolved into a collective memory as the artifacts of the “Great War”.

\* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [mvbratolyubova@sfedu.ru](mailto:mvbratolyubova@sfedu.ru) (M.V. Bratolyubova)

## 2. Materials and methods

Photography was rarely seen as a historical source, despite the fact that this kind of documentary material was often used for illustrations. The potential of photography is quite wide and photographic material can serve as an independent source in the history of World War I research.

We attempted to trace the “image of the enemy” visualization specifics in the newspaper documentary photography as well as to characterize the strategy of excluding “foes” from the Don periodical press as an element of military propaganda during World War I.

The author determined the role of documentary photography in the World War I coverage and making the “image of the enemy”, analyzed the selected photographic material and revealed its artistic potential. Photos from the Don newspapers of 1915–1917, such as “Priazovskiy krai”, “Yuzhnyi telegraf”, “Taganrogskiy vestnik”, “Donskie oblasntye vedomosti” and others were selected as the objects of our analysis.

## 3. Discussion

There is a plenty of publications on the history of World War I, but a number of subjects still remains insufficiently studied, for example, the newspaper documentary photography. Documentary photography only recently became an object of historical research. Historians rarely appeal to the theme of visual representation of World War I. Only several works are devoted to the study of specific historical periods (in particular, World War I) through the “mirror” of visual sources (Zherdeva, 2014; Kuptsova, 2008; Ryabov, 2006; Jahn, 1916; Nagornaya, 2008; Bratolyubova, Trut, 2017). The researches on photography that were published over the past decades are dedicated only to a small number of problems (Smorodina, 2000; Smorodina, 1999; Bratolyubova, 2017; Bratolyubova, 2017a; Legotina et al., 2015). The researchers of photography only mentioned some of the photographers of World War I in their studies (Turovtseva, 1995; Tukhendkholt, 1916) unlike the detailed studies of documentary photographs of the second half of the XIX century and World War II. This gap is not yet filled and the names of talented battlefield photographers were forgotten despite the fact that a huge number of photographic materials were saved after the war. There are practically no works that consider the variety of the “image of the enemy” demonstration in visual sources and its correspondence to reality.

## 4. Results

In the Don newspapers of 1914 – early 1915 one can find only a few battlefield photos due to the prevalence of the verbal information in the periodical press at the beginning of the war. Intense military actions of 1915 and the increased “information hunger” as well as the growing demand for a visual type of information led to an increase of photo publications, improvement of their quality, expansion of the covered topics and the filming types. The public’s attention shifted from the text to the photo. Photography became a valuable information tool that could replace the detailed verbal descriptions. Documentary photography in the newspaper not only illustrated the text, but became an independent source of information.

In Don liberal newspapers such as “Priazovskiy krai”, “Taganrogskiy vestnik” and “Yuzhnyi telegraf” one can find a complete visualization of disasters and horrors of the war. The problem of the consequences of the war was ignored on the pages of the official “Donskie oblastnye vedomosti”. There were no photo documents dedicated to the victims of World War I in the newspapers and one could only see photographs of the enemy losses in the official periodicals. “The Provisional Regulations on Military Censorship” of 1914 and government policy influenced this process. The new censorship restrictions concerned mainly the publication of various kinds of images and photography production.

Photo-documents that were reprinted from the central periodical press were special for the Don newspapers but had no references. The author’s name on the photographic documents was very rare to find. In our research, we found photographs taken by local photographers – A. Nordstein, P. V. Kalinin, P. A. Zolotaryov, M. Makeev and F. Politi.

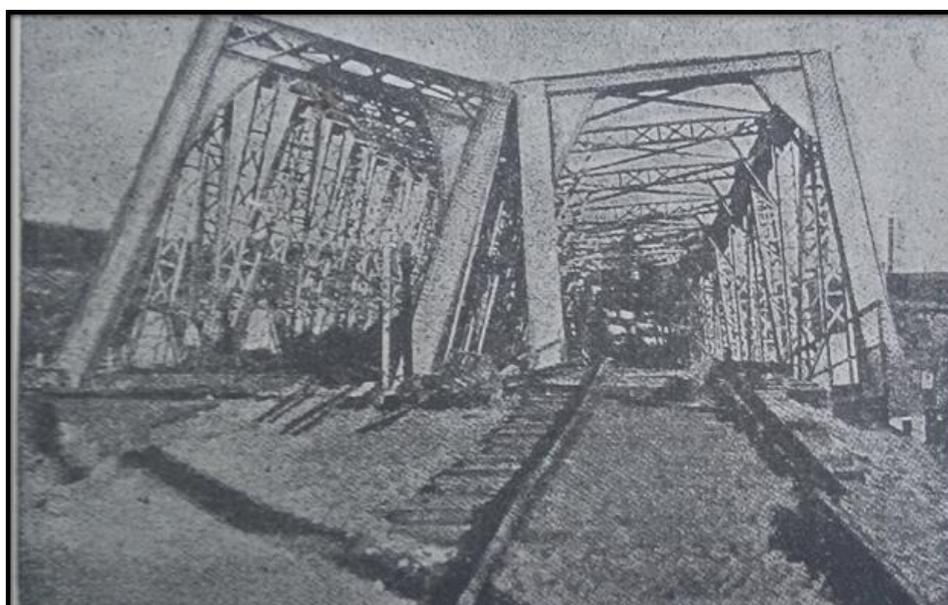
The process of shaping of the “friend” and “foe” images became an integral part of the war agitation propaganda. The “image of the enemy” visualization was a part of the general war information space, informing the rear about the events from the battlefield. The images of “friends” and “foes” were created through stereotypes and mythology of specific individuals and military

events. The formation of the “friends” group started with the designing of a heroic image of the Russian soldier in the Don region during World War I. Generally, “friends” had a strictly personalized character.

The image of a “friend” was opposed to the image of a “foe”. The appearance of this kind of publications during World War I is associated with a need to create a war information space, the need for self-identification and putting “friends” in a separate group through the method of opposition. One can distinguish several characteristic features of visual source groups of the “image of the enemy”: photo documents dedicated to the representatives of the Quadruple Union, leading military chiefs; publications of photos of destroyed buildings and cultural heritage; demonstration of human resources (photos of soldiers), as well as weapons and the publication of photo documents related to unconventional actions towards the deceased.

The goal of the information war was the embodiment of the “image of the enemy” - the topic that is most successfully represented by visual means. In the mass consciousness, the “image of the enemy” acquired more and more stereotyped and de-individualized features and was associated with such concepts as danger, threat and evil.

The Don periodicals widely used the method of the publication of pre-war images of places that were destroyed during the war. As a rule, they were accompanied by a text about the committed violence (Fig. 1).



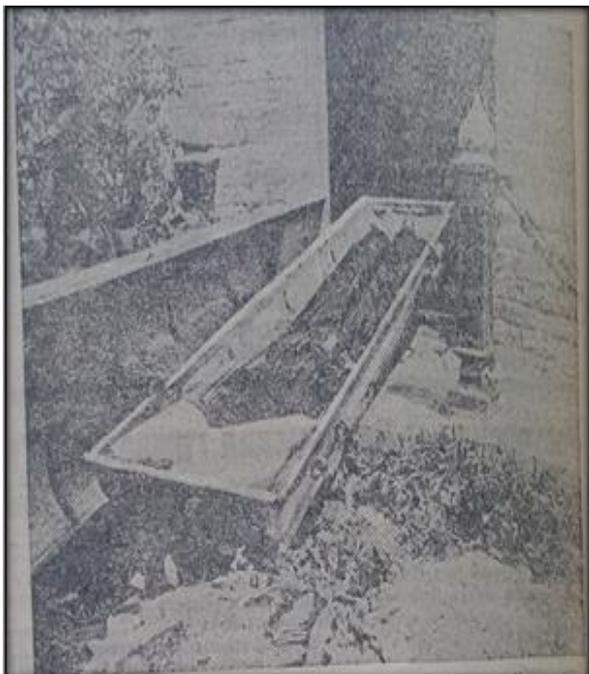
**Fig. 1.** “The railway bridge, blown up by the Germans during the retreat” (Priazovskiy krai. Newspaper supplement. № 16, 1915)

Another used method was opposing the enemy's destructive and atrocious activities to the allied forces' actions on the battlefield. Even the enemy's method of digging graves was the reason for pointing out the “atrociousness” of German military actions” (Zherdeva, 2014: 77). The “machine way” of burial became one of the main components in the negative “image of the enemy” shaping. Thus, “Priazovskiy krai” published an article with the title “Machinery war”: “The military correspondent of Daily Mail in Brussels saw a whole warehouse of all kinds of machines and devices used in the German army. There were even incendiary shells used by special teams of arsonists for destroying whole cities and villages. A trench digging machine shocked him most of all. The Germans use these to bury the dead and such automatic funeral makes a terrible impression. A plow-car goes ahead followed by a motor loaded with dead bodies, it throws the bodies into a moat dug by a plow; the third car covers the corpses with ground and the fourth car levels and rolls the ground... Thus, the mass grave, one verst long, is ready in a quarter of an hour” (Priazovskiy krai, 1914: 6 dekabrya) (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2.** “The mass grave in which the bodies of the Germans (killed in battle near Pyasechno, Warsaw Province) were buried using the “machine method” ([Priazovskiy krai. № 320. 1914](#))

The abuse of the human body was another topic of publications. “Priazovskiy krai” published an essay under the title “Bearers of culture” which stated: “In the city of Dubno, the Orthodox and Catholic cemeteries, as well as crypts, were destroyed by the Austrians who built their trenches there. Coffins and human bones were piled in a heap” ([Priazovskiy krai, 1916: 18 sentyabrya](#)). The publication was illustrated by two photos, vividly demonstrating atrocious and disrespectful abuse of the deceased ([Fig. 3, 4](#)).

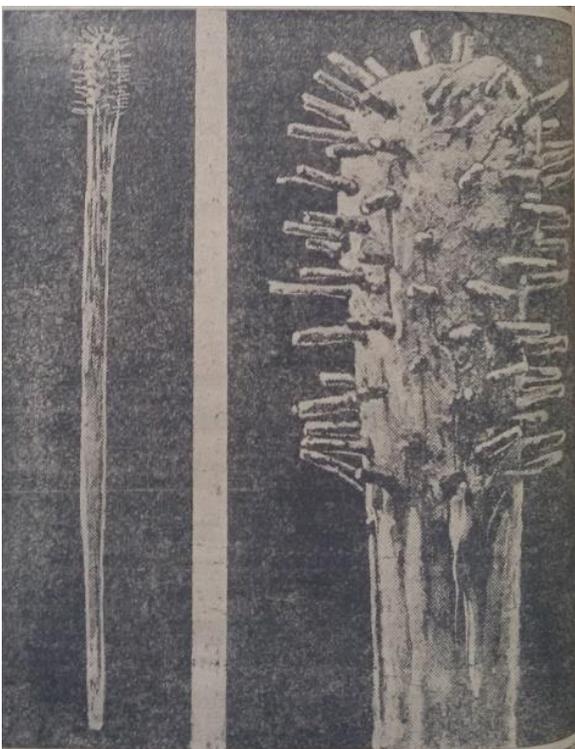


**Fig. 3.** “Zozul Coffin with the remains of a woman, taken from a crypt. One finger on the hand is cut off, possibly with a precious ring” ([Priazovskiy krai. № 246. 1916](#))



**Fig. 4.** “Corpses dug out by the Austrians stand exposed at the graveyard fence”  
(Priazovskiy krai. № 246. 1916)

The photos depicting actions of the Germans on the occupied territories were published, with a separate block of photo documents that illustrated the enemy’s weapons, their use of suffocating gases and electricity (Fig. 5).



**Fig. 5.** “A German “club” used for killing people poisoned by the suffocating gases”  
(Priazovskiy krai. № 11. 1916)

Beneath one of these photographs there was a note stating that “the Germans destroy the ancient relics of Reims with shells and the local population - with suffocating gases” and that “even the children wear special masks to protect them from suffocating gases on their way to school” (Priazovskiy krai, 1916: 20 fevralya).

The images of the German soldiers were very rare on the pages of Don newspapers (Fig. 6).



**Fig. 6.** “Germans in the trenches” (Priazovskiy krai. Newspaper supplement. № 16. 1915)

### 5. Conclusion

The “image of the enemy” was not canonical in the Russian visual culture. The artists of Don created a template for visual “ravaging” the enemy. After revealing the orientation of hostility rhetoric, it became clear that behind these processes there was, on the one hand, the intentional construction of phobias, and on the other the reproduction of the mass historical stereotypes. Those stereotypes affected the wartime “image of the enemy” as depicted through visual means.

In general, the Don press of this period was a collection of mythologies that corresponded to certain stereotypical ideas of the Russian Empire, as well as to the requests of the authorities. World War I documentary photography performed two main functions on the pages of the Don periodicals – propagandistic and informative. The authorities set the important goal of forming the image of “friends” and “foes”. The publication of photo documents didn’t always achieve the desired effect. The appearance of the increasing number of photos of casualties from both sides made the masses think about the inhumanity of war, its meaninglessness, about the possible defeat and greater losses to come.

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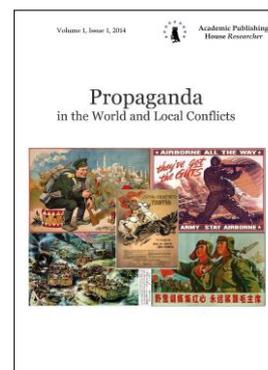
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## The Military and the Revolutionary Propaganda in the Russian Navy in the Period of Activities of the Provisional Government (February – October 1917)

Dmitry V. Liventsev<sup>a, \*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Voronezh Institute of Federal Service of Execution of Punishments of the Russian Federation, Russian Federation

### Abstract

The article discusses the confrontation between the military and anti-war propaganda in the Russian Navy in a key historical period: February – October 1917, special attention is paid to the sailor lynchings, the policy of the Provisional government and the activities of the Bolshevik party in the Russian Navy.

The article is written based on archival documents of the Russian State Navy Archives (RGA VMF), St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, publications in the *Morskoy Sbornik* (Sea Collection) journal as well as dissertations and published research papers.

Research problems were approach using both general scientific methods (analysis and synthesis, concretization, generalization) and traditional methods of historical analysis. The work applied the historical and situational method which implies the study of historical facts in the context of the period under study and in conjunction with related events and facts.

In conclusion, the author summarizes reasons that led to the failure of the official propaganda of the Provisional Government, calling the Navy to conduct the «war to the glorious end». At the same time the effectiveness of anti-war propaganda of the Bolshevik party in the Russian Navy in February – October 1917 was highlighted.

**Keywords:** navy, propaganda, the Provisional government, the Bolsheviks, the sailors and officers.

### 1. Introduction

Following the February Revolution of 1917, the official authorities tried to instill an idea in the mind of sailors and officers of the need to consolidate efforts to continue the First World War.

First, the *Morskoy Sbornik* journal publishes an editorial expressing hope for a beneficial revolutionary reinvention of the fleet's organization: “The Navy’s personnel have faced a lot of problems with the revolution. The most important issue is creating a new service organization on ships in ground crews, restructuring the service on a democratic basis.

\* Corresponding author  
E-mail addresses: [liva2006i@yandex.ru](mailto:liva2006i@yandex.ru) (D. V. Liventsev)

The old discipline has become a thing of the past along with the old system – it is necessary to create a new harmonious system that will be able to successfully replace the existing one and surpass it by results. This is a very challenging and demanding task. Russian Navy officers will be accountable to their homeland and history for the right or wrong solution for this issue” (Editorial, 1917).

It then published an article by an officer of the French Navy, Gallo. We would like to quote from it the following excerpt: “Discipline in the French Navy is not so straitened and strict in its outward manifestations, as the one that existed in Russia before the revolution... Relations between officers and sailors are the most cordial, even friendly, character. Sailors and officers are a real family on a ship... A sailor salutes his officer willingly and courteously... This is what voluntary discipline is; it does not have anything offensive or repugnant to the dignity of a citizen. ...Officers and sailors of free Russia, when they have made sure that certain strict discipline is the essential core at the might of the army and navy, will, submitting to this discipline, defend the great principles of justice and freedom which the barbarian “culture” of the Germans is trying to crush with their rough armor” (The captain, 1917).

## **2. Materials and methods**

The article is written based on archival documents of the Russian State Navy Archives (RGA VMF), St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, publications in the *Morskoy Sbornik* (Sea Collection) journal as well as dissertations and published research papers.

Research problems were approached using both general scientific methods (analysis and synthesis, concretization, generalization) and traditional methods of historical analysis. The work applied the historical and situational method which implies the study of historical facts in the context of the period under study and in conjunction with related events and facts.

## **3. Discussion and results**

In fact, the “real family” broke up already in the first days after the February Revolution. The reason behind the irreversible social split referred to the massacres of officers by Baltic Fleet sailors.

Until 1917, V.I. Lenin in his personal correspondence with A.M. Gorky repeatedly noted that sailors of the Baltic Fleet could become a driving force of revolutionary events in future. In 1916, Admiral Robert N. Viren, who held the post of Military Governor of Kronshtadt, repeatedly warned of the possibility of unrest among the lower ranks. However, in the face of growing discontent with the First World War in Russian society, no one took action against political organizations in the Baltic Fleet. The outcome was that following the publication of “Order No. 1” on March 2, 1917, massive sailors' lynchings of officers ensued. As a result, more than 600 officers of the Baltic Fleet were injured (Panova, 2011). Moreover, the lynchings of admirals and officers were often unmotivated (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** The funeral of a killed officer

The subject of funerals of numerous victims of the February Revolution was reflected in the periodical press (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2.** The funeral of the victims of the revolution on the Field of Mars in Petrograd

It was in this context that the Provisional Government had to initiate the construction of a “real family” of officers and sailors, whose duty was to successfully end World War I. Of course, no slogans of military propaganda produced any impact on Baltic Fleet sailors.

In this situation, Order No. 1 issued by the soon-removed tsarist Naval Minister, Admiral I.K. Grigorovich, on March 4, 1917, made no sense for all fleet units: “I propose to announce to crews on my behalf that joint efforts of the State Duma, officers, military commands and people are managing to restore order throughout Russia. Only through preserving the total order, the newly formed governmental power can guarantee the victory of our homeland. Without it, the victory is unthinkable, and instead of breaking the enemy, Russia itself may be brought to the brink of

destruction. Obey your superiors, who has recognized the coup d'etat accomplished by the people just as you have, and the victory is ours.

May these great days pave the way for a happy life of New Free Russia. Remember that every day of revolt further delays the desired day of our victory which will give our country a possibility of peaceful, happy and free labor arranged for the benefit of Russia" (Dybenko, 1958).

In period of the Emperor's abdication and sailor lynchings, the official mouthpiece, Morskoy Sbornik, publishes the article by the naval officer, N. Nordman entitled "Long live free Russia!" It expressed the following expectations: "... The Navy is faced with another challenge as well. To be able to hear the people's true voice, it is necessary to be close to the people. It is required that the Navy should not be something independent from it, but it should be its part, armed to protect our fatherland from sea threats. It is required that there should be no officer, soldier, worker, or peasant, but there should be a single people's family of equal citizens. But it has not existed so far. The people were alienated from its Navy, knew little or nothing of it. Let us channel all our efforts to eliminate this division, so that we, officers and sailors of the Russian people's navy can constantly draw strength from the inexhaustible treasure trove of the people's spirit" (Nordman, 1917).

It should be admitted that practically from first days of the February Revolution, the Navy was predominantly inspired by the struggle for freedom and independence from the authorities. March 23, 1917, Petrograd gave ultimate send-off to new revolutionary heroes, dead fighters for freedom. The crew of the cruiser "Aurora" buried sailor P. Osipenko, mortally wounded by the bullets of officers. There was a sailor peakless cap with the golden inscription "Aurora" lying on the coffin lid among flowers and pine branches. Sailors carried a poster: "Your death has lit the great torch of freedom." The mourning ceremony was attended by about 800 thousand people, and the Peter and Paul Fortress fired 184 volleys in memory of the fallen heroes.

Interesting highlights can be offered by Morskoy Sbornik's new weekly. August 19, 1917, it opened its publications with the following words: "This issue of our journal comes out under a new title "Svobodny flot" (Free Fleet). A free country, where all citizens are equal and free, must have a free army and a free fleet" (From the editors, 1917).

The same issue published a letter by P.A. Kropotkin to the sailors of the cruiser "Askold" in its dockage in England. In addition, the newspaper "Svobodny flot" introduces sailors to the history of the revolutionary movement in the publication "Essays on the history of the revolution in Russia" (Ocherki po istorii revolyutsii v Rossii). The Morskoy Sbornik journal, in turn, also publishes a study by a scientist D. White on the revolutionary movement of English sailors in the late 18th century (White, 1917).

However, the newspaper "Svobodny flot," first of all, contains official materials. For example, it publishes S. Lukashevich's article "In memory of Admiral N.O. Essen" (Pamyati admirala N.O. Essena) in September 1917 (Lukashevich, 1917). It should be noted that the late commander of the Baltic Fleet could not be considered an ardent supporter of the revolutionary ideas. He strongly disapproved the sailors who were suspected of being involved in revolutionary activity and distribution of leaflets on the ships, calling for the overthrow of the autocracy (RGA VMF. F. 757. Op. 1. D. 126. L. 11). N.O. Essen regarded them as persons undermining military discipline on the ship, fleet combat efficiency and the autocracy's pillars (RGA VMF. F. 757. Op. 1. D. 132. L. 78). This attitude to sailors was particularly clearly displayed in 1912 when an investigation uncovered an organization that orchestrated an uprising Baltic Fleet ships (RGA VMF. F. 1345. Op. 1. D. 150. L. 24). As Fleet Commander N.O. Essen directly participated in mass arrests of sailors of the Baltic Squadron. This act could not but affect his reputation and authority not only in the eyes of sailors, but also in the perception of forward-minded and progressive officers of the Baltic Fleet, who sympathized with revolutionary inclined sailors and felt sorry that they were subjected to arrests and subsequent proceedings by military court that passed cruel sentences. Nor did Admiral N.O. Essen change his political position in battles with the German fleet (RGA VMF. F. 757. Op. 1. D. 147. L. 90). By the way, this fact in the admiral's biography influenced the attitude to his legendary personality, adopted by Soviet military historians who consigned N.O. Essen's name to oblivion in most of their works (Zolotarev, Kozlov, 1998).

The central issue discussed on the pages of the "Svobodny flot" newspaper becomes the agitation for continued military operations: "We have written and spoken a lot about defeatists and defencists. It has been repeatedly spotlighted that an average person, who does not in fact belong to

any of the above groups, follows, depending on various circumstance, now one group, now the other” ([The hold-outs, 1917](#)).

Meanwhile, the article by J. Trumpeldor “Blood intoxicates” (Krov opyanyayet) discusses the possibility of a peaceful path for the revolution's progression in Russia: “The only right path is the path of peaceful revolutionary creativity of democracy and collaboration with all other classes in the Russian Republic. In the terrible hour of unseen ordeals, all those who love their homeland must unite for its deliverance” ([Trumpeldor, 1917](#)). In his work, the author constantly draws analogies between events in Russia and the Great French Revolution, focusing on the issues of the collapse of the system of public administration. The topic of the plight of the Russian state was continued in V. Bykhovsky's article “Anarchy and local authorities” (Anarkhiya i vlast na mestakh) ([Bykhovsky, 1917](#)).

Separately, the “Svobodny flot” newspaper strives to protect officers from sailors' arbitrary actions. Here is an excerpt from V. Lebedev's article titled “Take care of officers” (Beregite ofitserov): “Resolutions alone do not save the day. It is necessary that special commissions, officials, commissars go to ships. Otherwise, the Russian Navy will share the fate of the French fleet, which was unable to recover for decades from the impact taken by it from a similar attitude shown by sailors to the command personnel during the Great French Revolution” ([Lebedev, 1917](#)).

March 15, 1917, a special commission began to work to establish a mutual understanding between officers and lower ranks, chaired by N.V. Savich ([RGA VMF. F. 27. Op. 1. D. 11. L. 87](#)). This bureaucratic body made efforts to devise efficient measures to create a “new combat family.” Its members kept documentation on the duties and rights of elected committees, tried to organize business relations between enlisted ranks and command personnel ([RGA VMF. F. 27. Op. 1. D. 12. L. 17](#)). Unfortunately, the key goal of the “Special Commission” – to build new relations between officers, conductors and sailors – was virtually unattainable in the historical conditions that existed at the time.

In addition, a commission was established to formulate “Provisional Regulations on the Judicial System and Judicial Proceedings in the Maritime Department”, headed by Major-General V.A. Yurovsky. Continuing to implement steps to organize naval forces, the Provisional Government announces the release of new “Regulations on the Navy” May 22, 1917 ([Krasavin, Smuglin, 2004](#)).

The effect was that the principal lines in the military propaganda launched by the Provisional Government were the unity of the fleet and the state, the pernicious lack of discipline and, as a consequence, the end of World War I among victorious countries. All the above mentioned arguments were countered by the propaganda of multiple political parties and movements, which had much greater success.

Following sailors' lynchings, Kronshtadt became a kind of “state within a state,” governed by the principles of the free will exercised by ship crews. With their political speeches and rallies, Kronshtadt sailors regularly made metropolitan inhabitants experience fear. At the same time, the number of Bolsheviks among sailors increased. By the initiative of S.G. Roshal and B.A. Zhemchuzhin, Baltic Bolsheviks separated from Mensheviks and formed an independent political force. The newspapers “Volna” (The Wave), “Golos pravdy” (Voice of Truth) and “Utro pravdy” (Morning of Truth) continuously communicated propaganda of the Bolshevik program at all major fleet bases. The idea of the necessity to end World War I was ceaselessly repeated.

July 7, 1917, A.F. Kerensky made an attempt to dissolve the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet (Tsentrobalt) and brought anti-war agitators to trial in Petrograd ([RGA VMF. F. 137. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 10](#)). After July 12, 1917, a resolution was approved restoring the death penalty for desertion in the army and navy. As a consequence, Tsentrobalt ceased to comply with the orders of the Provisional Government, and the officers who were suspected of supporting L.G. Kornilov, were subjected to spontaneous sailors' lynchings. By the time, V.I. Lenin already called Baltic sailors “the most tenacious revolutionary elements” ([Fig. 3](#)).



**Fig. 3.** Poster “Long live the vanguard of the revolution – the Red Fleet”

The remote location of the Black Sea from the Baltic enabled the Provisional Government to achieve more successes in the area. A considerable share in the progress belonged to Vice Admiral A.V. Kolchak who increased the number of combat missions for ships and isolated crews from anti-war propaganda for a short time. April 1, 1917, the Provisional Government was informed that the Black Sea Fleet was fully operational as compared with the Baltic. A.V. Kolchak, who recognized the power of the Provisional Government and enforced “Order No. 1,” fiercely attacked deserters and disintegrating discipline. Moreover, he managed to keep masses of sailors in obedience for a while. However, already in April and May 1917, the main base of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol was visited by a delegation of Baltic Bolshevik agitators (Lenin, 1975).

Eventually, the fate of discipline in the Baltic Fleet was sealed. Sailors perpetrated local lynchings, while officers fell under growing suspicions. No “combat family” was created as well after the triumph of the anti-war propaganda in the Black Sea Fleet. A.V. Kolchak himself admitted that he was totally paralyzed in the following telegram: “Today, the delegate meeting made a decision to take away all weapons from officers, and the decision was fulfilled by ship and regiment committees, the same requirement was imposed on me and the entire officer corps, disagreement and discord are being stirred in the armed force. I believe that my further work in the Black Sea, as well as the work of the chief of my staff, can no longer be useful, and for the good of our Fatherland, it is necessary to immediately appoint a new fleet commander and a new chief of staff” (Essays, 1917).

#### 4. Conclusion

In the period between February and October 1917, the military propaganda of the Provisional Government was inflicted a crushing defeat in the Navy. The ideas of building armed forces on the basis of democratic freedoms were perceived by sailors only in terms of complete anarchy, arbitrariness and lack of discipline. Appeals “to fight the war to its glorious conclusion,” “to take care of officers,” “to follow chain of command” completely contradicted established ship committees and declared equality of all ranks. Even Vice Admiral A.V. Kolchak with all his authority failed to turn concentration of lower ranks on combat feats and distract them from participating in revolutionary events. It was the inconsistent internal policy carried out by the

Provisional Government that contributed to the success of the Bolshevik agitation and the failure of all efforts by military propaganda.

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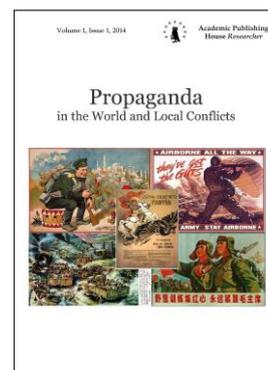
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## Russian Liberation Army during World War II: Promotional Activities Outcome

Anvar M. Mamadaliev<sup>a, b, \*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> International Network Center for Fundamental and Applied Research, Russian Federation

<sup>b</sup> East European History Society, Russian Federation

### Abstract

The article examines some of the promotional activities of the Russian Liberation Army during World War II. The author studies the formation process of the Russian liberation movement, its political structure and first appeals to the Red Army soldiers and officers. The process of creating press materials, namely leaflets and newspapers is of a great importance. The article also reflects a political organization headed by General A.A. Vlasov, the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, and its establishment in November 1944.

Russian historiography on the studied topic was used as the materials for the research as well as the published documents, for example, the proclamations of the Russian liberation movement.

In conclusion, the author notes that during the period of 1942–1944, The Russian liberation movement had a long way from its inception to the establishment of a mass organization. However, at the end of 1944 the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia already could not have any influence on the events on the Eastern Front. Time was irretrievably lost.

**Keywords:** Russian liberation army, propaganda, special operations, leaflets, World War II.

### 1. Introduction

The Russian Liberation Army was destined to become the largest military unit of the eastern troops of the Third Reich. By April 1945, its units consisted of 130 thousand soldiers and officers, included 8 divisions, several brigades and smaller units. The creation of this army is connected with name of one of the heroes of the battle near Moscow, the Red Army Lieutenant-General, Andrei Andreevich Vlasov. He was the Deputy Commander of the Volkhov Front and the Acting Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Shock Army. He became a German war prisoner on July 11, 1942. Only 9,000 soldiers and officers remained alive at that time; 60,000 soldiers and officers were killed or missing.

\* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [anvarm@mail.ru](mailto:anvarm@mail.ru) (A. Mamadaliev)



**Fig. 1.** General A.A. Vlasov

## **2. Materials and methods**

Russian historiography on the studied topic was used as the materials for the research as well as the published documents, for example, the proclamations of the Russian liberation movement.

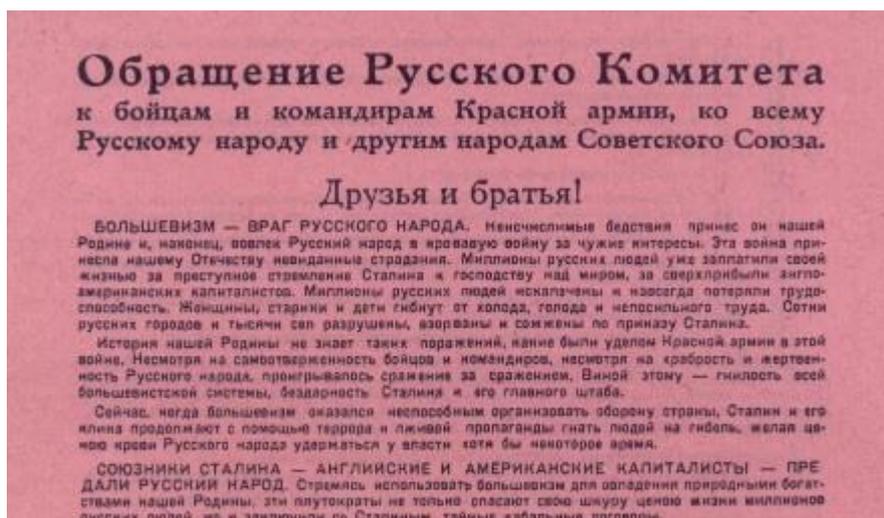
The methodological base of the paper is formed by principles of historicism and objectivity, customary for this kind of research, as well as analytical, probabilistic, statistical and comparative methods.

## **3. Discussion and results**

Vlasov played the tragic and ungrateful role of the Commander of the Russian Liberation Army. On August 3, 1942, Vlasov sent a letter to Hitler from the prisoner of war camp. In his letter he proposed the creation of the Russian Liberation Army (ROA).

*“To achieve victory over the Soviet Union,” Vlasov wrote, “you need to bring in the prisoners of war against the Red Army troops. Nothing will affect Red Army soldiers as much as the Russian units fighting alongside with the German troops ...”* (Sushinskiy, 2015).

In December 1942 the “Russian Committee” was formed under the command of Vlasov, and its official name was the “Eastern Special Purpose Propaganda Battalion”. This battalion also consisted of Vlasov's office and the propagandists' school. V.F. Malyshev, G.N. Zhilenkov and M.F. Zykov took up their positions in this committee. The committee's activities began on December 27 with the release of an appeal to the soldiers and commanders of the Red Army, to everything that was Russian and other peoples (Pal'chikov, 1993: 132).



**Fig. 2.** The appeal of the Vlasov's "Russian Committee"

The leaflet states:

**"FRIENDS AND BROTHERS!**

**BOLSHEVISM IS THE ENEMY OF THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE.** It brought incalculable disasters to our Motherland and involved the Russian people in a bloody war for the interests of others. This war brought unprecedented sufferings to our Homeland. Millions of Russian people have already paid with their lives for Stalin's criminal desire to dominate the world and for the super-profits of Anglo-American capitalists. Millions of Russian people are disabled and permanently lost their ability to work. Women, old people and children are dying from cold, hunger and overwork. Hundreds of Russian cities and thousands of villages were destroyed, blown up and burnt by Stalin's orders.

Such defeats as the defeats of the Red Army during this war never happened in the history of our Motherland. Despite the dedication of the fighters and commanders, despite the courage and sacrifice of the Russian people, they lost battle after battle. The blame for this is in the rottenness of the entire Bolshevik system, the lack of talent of Stalin and his chief staff.

Now that Bolshevism is unable to organize the defense of the country, Stalin and his clique continue to drive people to death with the help of terror and deceitful propaganda, desiring to stay in power for some more time at the cost of the blood of the Russian people.

**STALIN'S ALLIES - ENGLISH AND AMERICAN CAPITALISTS — BETRAYED THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE.** Seeking to use Bolshevism to own the natural wealth of our Motherland, these plutocrats not only save their lives at the cost of the lives of millions of Russian people, but they also made secret and bonded contracts with Stalin.

At the same time, Germany is not waging war against the Russian people and its homeland, but only against Bolshevism. Germany does not encroach on the living space of the Russian people and its national-political freedom.

Adolf Hitler's National Socialist Germany sets as its task the organization of a New Europe without Bolsheviks and capitalists, in which every nation has an honorable place.

The place of the Russian people in the family of European nations, its place in the New Europe WILL DEPEND ON ITS' PARTICIPATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BOLSHEVISM, for the destruction of the bloody power of Stalin and his criminal clique is IN THE FIRST PLACE THE MATTER OF THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE.

For the unification of the Russian people and the leadership of its struggle against the hated regime, for the cooperation with Germany in the struggle against Bolshevism for the building of a New Europe, we, the sons of our people and patriots of our Fatherland, established the **RUSSIAN COMMITTEE.**

*RUSSIAN COMMITTEE sets the following goals:*

- a. The overthrow of Stalin and his clique, the destruction of Bolshevism.*
- b. An honorable peace with Germany.*
- c. Creation of a New Russia without Bolsheviks and capitalists in cooperation with Germany and other peoples of Europe.*

*The RUSSIAN COMMITTEE puts the following main principles in the basis of the construction of New Russia:*

- 1. Elimination of forced labor and providing the worker with a valid right to work that creates his material well-being;*
- 2. Elimination of collective farms and systematic land transfer to peasants for private ownership;*
- 3. Restoration of trade and handicrafts, restoration of the private initiative's possibility to participate in the economic life of the country;*
- 4. Allowing the intelligentsia to freely create for the good of their people;*
- 5. Ensuring social justice and protecting workers from exploitation;*
- 6. Introduction of the real right to study, to rest and secure old age for the workers;*
- 7. Destructing the regime of terror and violence; introduction of real freedom of religion, conscience, speech, assembly, and press. Guarantee of the inviolability of the person and his home;*
- 8. Right of the national freedom;*
- 9. Liberation of political prisoners of Bolshevism and releasing all those subjected to repression for their struggle against Bolshevism to their homeland;*
- 10. Reconstruction of towns and villages destroyed during the war, on the expenses of the state;*
- 11. Restoration of state-owned factories and plants destroyed during the war;*
- 12. Refusal to pay any cable contracts that Stalin signed with the Anglo-American capitalists;*
- 13. Providing a living wage to disabled veterans and their families.*

*Firmly believing that on the basis of these principles we can and should build a happy future of the Russian people. The Russian Committee calls upon all Russian people who are in the liberated regions and in areas that are still occupied by Bolsheviks - workers, peasants, intelligentsia, soldiers, commanders, party representatives - TO UNITE AND STRUGGLE AGAINST THE EVIL ENEMY OF OUR MOTHERLAND - BOLSHEVISM.*

*The Russian Committee declares Stalin and his clique the enemies of the people.*

*The Russian Committee declares the enemies of the people all those who voluntarily serves in the punitive organs of Bolshevism - the Special Departments, the NKVD and the detachments.*

*The Russian Committee declares those who destroy the values that belong to the Russians the enemies of the people.*

*The duty of every decent son of his people is to destroy these enemies who push our homeland into new misfortunes. The Russian Committee calls on all Russian people to fulfill this duty.*

*The Russian Committee calls on the soldiers and commanders of the Red Army, all Russian people, to join Germany in alliance with the **Russian Liberation Army**. All those who took part in the struggle against Bolshevism are guaranteed inviolability and life, regardless of their previous activities and positions.*

*The Russian Committee calls on the Russian people to struggle against the hated Bolshevism, create partisan liberation groups and turn their weapons against the oppressors of the people - Stalin and his henchmen.*

*RUSSIAN PEOPLE! FRIENDS AND BROTHERS!*

*Enough of the people's blood! Enough of widows and orphans! Enough hunger, forced labor and torment in the Bolshevik torture chambers! Rise and fight for freedom!*

*Fight for the bright cause of our country! Fight to the death for the happiness of the Russian people! Long live the honorable peace with Germany, laying the foundation for the eternal fellowship of the German and Russian peoples!*

*Long live the Russian people, an equal member of the family of the peoples of New Europe!*  
*Chairman of the Russian Committee*

*Lieutenant-General (Vlasov A. A.)  
Secretary of the Russian Committee  
Major General (Malyshkin V. F.).  
27<sup>th</sup> of December, 1942  
Smolensk* (From the published, 1990: 62-64).

From the beginning of 1943 the Russian Committee intensified its activities by organizing the production of newspapers “Dobrovolets” and “Zarya” with a total number of about 120,000 copies. They also started propagandists training courses (Pal’chikov, 1993: 133).

Vlasov sent his leaflets with an appeal to the Russian people in a short period of time. In his proclamations, the General drew attention to the crimes of the Stalin regime, the colossal numbers of victims and the destitute, advocating a free and democratic Russia. It is clear that such propaganda found a response in the hearts of Red Army soldiers. In January 1943, leaflets with an appeal to the Russian people were dropped for Soviet troops near Smolensk. As a result, several hundred deserters crossed the front line, they all wanted to join Vlasov’s Liberation Army. In the summer of 1943, 13,000 soldiers and commanders of the Red Army fled to the Germans with Vlasov leaflets, in 1944 this figure dropped to 2,000 in the first two months (Commanders of World War II, 1998: 291).

It should also be noted that the first edition of the Vlasov’s leaflet of January 1943 was distributed on the Soviet territory in several million copies, and the number of copies was increasing to the last day of war (Kirchner, 1997: 74).

In the spring of 1943, in the interests of psychological support for Operation Citadel, an offensive in the Kursk area, the Wehrmacht headquarters planned the first large-scale psychological operation, code-named “Silver Stripe”. Its main task was to force as many Soviet soldiers as possible not to resist but to surrender with the beginning of the German offensive. A special interest was placed on the formation of the Russian Liberation Army. Therefore, the main slogan of the operation was: “The Russians flee to the Russians”. For example, the “Za Svobodu!” newspaper was published weekly for the units of the Russian National Army in Smolensk, the ROA field department of propaganda published the “K Pobede!” newspaper. There were also publications for Soviet prisoners of war, for example, the “Klich” newspaper. All this propaganda produced definite results.

By the summer of 1943, Soviet partisans reported about large Vlasov units in the German rear. For example, on June 14, the Estonian headquarters of the partisan movement in the Dyatkovo district reported about the 3rd Rifle Division of ROA. On 5<sup>th</sup> of August, the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement en route from Khotimsk to Belynkovich reported about the 5th Wild Division of ROA. On 15<sup>th</sup> of September The Smolensk headquarters of the Partisan Movement in the Kletnya region recorded a battalion of the 1st ROA Panzer Division and others (Semiryaga, 2000: 845-846).

Gradually, the attitude towards the prisoners of war changed. A number of benefits was promised to all the Soviet servicemen who declared themselves enemies of the Soviet government, for the period of their captivity. Those benefits were fixed by the order of the High Command of the Wehrmacht No. 13 “On the Red Army soldiers who voluntarily transferred to the side of the German Army”. The order stressed that every serviceman of the Red Army, that left his unit and came to the Germans on his own initiative, was “to be considered not a prisoner of war, but a voluntarily transferred to the German army”. Soviet officers who voluntarily transferred were promised, in addition to a plentiful food ration and kind treatment: up to the Captain rank, including the Captain rank, – one servant for three, from the Major rank and above – one servant for two, and a servant for each General (Krys’ko, 1999: 361-362).

The German leadership decided to form the ROA only in the autumn of 1944, when the outcome of the war became clear to all. However, it was not possible to create a million-people army that General Vlasov dreamed of out of the prisoners of war, “eastern workers” and soldiers of voluntary formations. The situation at the front line neither allowed the far eastern battalions to be withdrawn and concentrated under one command, nor it was possible to carry out the transfer of thousands of Slavs engaged in forced labor. In September 1944, at a meeting between Himmler and Vlasov, the chief of the SS expressed the desire to “unite all anti-Soviet organizations and create a political center for their leadership”. Soon Vlasov received a telegram from Reichsführer Himmler

in which it was noted that the Führer appointed Vlasov the Commander of the 600<sup>th</sup> and 700<sup>th</sup> Russian divisions with the right to be promoted to the Officer rank, up to Lieutenant Colonel (Katusev, Oppokov, 1991: 19).

General Vlasov did not take long and the constituent congress of the Committee of the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia took place on November 14, 1944 in Prague (KONR). It was attended by 500 delegates from 49 committees, representing mostly old and new emigrations and national formations. The Manifesto of the Committee of the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia was adopted at the congress, a political platform of the ROA, and the governing body of KONR was elected. A. A. Vlasov was elected the Chairman of the Committee and V. F. Malyshkin (former Major General of the Red Army, Chief of Staff of the 19th Army of the Western Front) became his deputy and the Head of the organizational management. Members of the Presidium were: F. I. Trukhin, (former Major General of the Red Army, Chief of the operational headquarters of the North-Western Front), D. E. Zakutny (former Major General of the Red Army, commander of the 21<sup>st</sup> Rifle Corps. Zakutny took another post of the Head of the Main Directorate for Civil Affairs in KONR. His task was to ensure the influx of people to KONR from the Soviet citizens who were brought as forced labor) and G. N. Zhilenkov (former brigade commissar of the Red Army, member of the Military Council of the 32nd Army). The head of the artillery department of the KONR Headquarters was M. V. Bogdanov, former brigade commander of the Red Army, chief of artillery of the 8th Rifle Corps. I.A. Blagoveshchensky (former head of the Libava Naval School of the coastal defense of the Red Army), became the Head of the Department of Propaganda. In addition to these people, in accordance with the international etiquette, the congress was attended by diplomatic representatives of countries allied with Germany and foreign correspondents. The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs considered the creation of KONR as a foreign policy act, and on April 28, 1945, the armed forces of KONR (though many continued to call them the ROA) were declared an army of the allied to Germany state. The flag of the commander-in-chief of this army depicted the image of St. George the Victorious. The official anthem was “If our Lord is glorious in Zion” (Nazarov, 1997: 79).

The next day after the opening of the KONR Constituent Assembly, the highest leadership of the SS ordered to recruit volunteers for the KONR's armed forces, and stated that recruitment was an urgent matter and should be conducted by specially trained propagandists. It was the duty of every propagandist to accept an application for admission to the Armed Forces in writing and to place a volunteer on the list, which indicated the surname, name, date of birth and his number as a prisoner of war (Katusev, Oppokov, 1991a: 48).

In the first week after the creation of KONR, 60,000 applications were received from volunteers with the request to enlist them in the armed forces of the Committee of the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia (Korenyuk, 1990: 31).

#### 4. Conclusion

Thus, during the period of 1942–1944, The Russian liberation movement had a long way from its inception to a mass organization. However, at the end of 1944 the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia could not have any influence on the events on the Eastern Front. Time was irretrievably lost.

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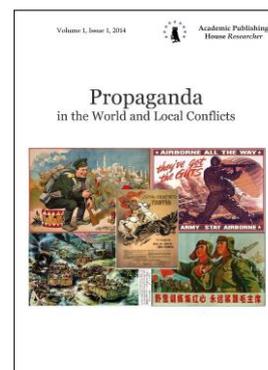
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## Krasnodar Open Trials of the 1960s: Mediatization of the Topic of Punishment for War Crimes in the Context of the Foreign Policy of the USSR

Irina G. Tazhidinova <sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Kuban State University, Russian Federation

### Abstract

The article deals with the mediatization processes that accompanied the trials of collaborators in the USSR. As an example, open courts were held in Krasnodar in 1962, 1963, 1965. Content-analytical research publications in the regional newspaper *Sovetskaya Kuban* allowed to establish general trends of these processes, largely related to the foreign policy context.

The campaign to cover the Krasnodar processes in 1962–1965 in the local periodical press is systematic and consistent. But in the central press courts received minimal coverage. It can be concluded that mediation was more aimed at Soviet citizens. Thus, the population was explained the difference in approaches to war criminals in the USSR and the capitalist West, the cardinal difference between the two socio-political systems.

**Keywords:** The Soviet Union, open trials of the 1960s, crimes, fascist invaders, collaborators, Soviet newspapers, mediatization, international politics, revanchism, content analysis.

### 1. Introduction

The wave of open trials of German fascist invaders and their accomplices in the USSR, which started with the Krasnodar process July 14–17, 1943, is now referred to using the symbolic title “Soviet Nuremberg.” A number of researchers with good reason believe that these court proceedings that took place in the Soviet Union for several decades, were overshadowed by the Nuremberg Tribunal (Astashkin, 2015: 98). It is also obvious that the open trials that took place in the period long after the war have been much less comprehensively studied than those that swept the country in the war and first post-war years (Lebedeva, 1975; Tazhidinova, 2016).

The Krasnodar open trial of 1943 was not a single event in the history of the region, but continued with a series of new court proceedings over collaborators (March 5-7, 1959, July 16-24, 1962, October 10-24, 1963; June 1-8, 1965, 1974) (Stepanenko, 2010: 161-165). In this connection, it is important to analyze the links between these activities (their circumstances, progress, decisions, social effects). Pursuing this line of action, we explored three high-profile processes that took place in Krasnodar in the 1960s. We believe they have certain common features and interrelate, largely due to the foreign policy context. Identifying goals and techniques of selective mediatization makes this commonality more transparent (Sharonov, 2008, 2008: 235-236).

\* Corresponding author  
E-mail addresses: [tajidinova@yandex.ru](mailto:tajidinova@yandex.ru) (I.G. Tazhidinova)

Regarding extent to which the subject is studied, there are several reasons why the course and results of the Soviet Nuremberg failed to attract much attention from the Russian historical community for a long time. This failure can be explained by scarce and mainly similar sources, as well as by the ideological factor which made it impossible to deliver a balanced picture of collaborationism issues. The study of the Krasnodar processes was not an exception from this perspective. Although these processes were covered in the paper by G.S. Stepanenko (Stepanenko, 2010: 164–165), which focused on the legal aspect of the subject, but this work is descriptive and fails to provide deep insights into the problem.

As for foreign scholars, the range of the issues raised by the Krasnodar tribunals was specifically addressed by I. Bourtman (Bourtman, 2008) and V. Voisen (Voisen, 2012). A particularly valuable source is the paper by a French researcher Vanessa Voisin, which analyzes the Krasnodar trial of nine executioners from Sonderkommando 10-a (October 1963) on the basis of a forty-minute documentary by L. Mazrukho (director) and L. Ginzburg (screenwriter) “In the Name of the Living” (Vo Imya Zhivykh).

## 2. Materials and methods

The study into propaganda materials on trials of war criminals makes an integrated use of the content analysis of Soviet media texts. The units of analysis in our study included articles, reports, news items in the newspaper *Sovetskaya Kuban*, a printed medium of the Krasnodar Territory and City Committees of the CPSU, the Council of Working People's Deputies for the Krasnodar Territory, which spotlight the progression and outcome of open trials held in Krasnodar in the 1960s (July 16–24, 1962, October 10–24, 1963, June 1–8, 1965). Additionally, the study used individual materials from the central press (from the newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia*).

The methodological foundation of the study was formed by the principles of objectivity and historicism, which imply an unbiased approach to the analysis of problems under review and a critical attitude to sources, as well as mean considering phenomena in the corresponding historical environment. The comparative and historical method helped compare the trials of war criminals, held in different historical periods.

## 3. Results and discussion

The values of the above paper by V. Voisin include the author's consideration of the international context which was sensitive to the fact that the Soviet Union resumed the widely publicized proceedings against collaborators in the early 1960s. The situation of the Cold War (still fresh memories of the Berlin Crisis of 1961 and the Caribbean crisis of 1962) fuelled the confrontation between the USSR and nations of the capitalist West and raised the propaganda fever pitch on both sides. Voisin notes: “The persecution and conviction of Nazi criminals comes to the forefront of the political agenda, as both camps struggle to prove that they are true to international law and champion the noblest humanistic principles. In the late 1950's, numerous trials, which were held in the West, of major war criminals demonstrated how cleansing and denazification of the first post-war years were selective and inconsistent. <...> The Soviet authorities were probably concerned about the slow Western justice, or at least used this argument to criticize the capitalist camp.” Referring to the material of Soviet “newsreels or even specially shot documentaries” (about the Krasnodar trial in 1963, Mineralnye Vody trial in 1966, Gomel trial in 1967, and the later trial in Rostov in 1973), Voisin arrives at a conclusion about “a whole campaign, undoubtedly initiated from above” (Voisen, 2012: 153). With other media sources taken into account, we should reflect on what scale this campaign had in the printed periodicals in the USSR in 1962–1965.

On July 16–24, 1962, an open Krasnodar court session convicted participants of punitive operations from the Radom SS squad (six were sentenced to death, and three to 15 years of imprisonment). The newspaper *Sovetskaya Kuban* (recently renamed from *Bolshevik*), which was a printed medium of the Krasnodar Territory and City Committees of the CPSU, the Council of Working People's Deputies for the Krasnodar Territory, covered the process daily. All seven articles were placed on the fourth (last) page of the newspaper in the section “From the courtroom,” and were of a medium size with no authorship indicated. The fact that articles had neither mentions of authors, as well as nor exclamation marks in the headlines or special slogans/calls in their texts,

perhaps added formality to the trial publications – highly emotional presentation of materials on the 1943 trial by the newspaper definitely remained in the war past.

The very titles of the articles are already indicative of the logic of the trial and, at the same time, of the mediatization vector. Here are quotations of the titles: “Butchers brought to justice,” “Chain of atrocities,” “No, this can’t be concealed,” “Traitor changes masters,” “Murderers unmask each other,” “Witnesses make accusations,” “In the name of the people.” Hence, in one way or another, readers were introduced to all phases of the “story” that ended with in court: turning points and trouble of tracking down the traitors by the state security agencies, bringing charges against them (mainly those relating to the crimes in “death camps” in Poland), interrogations of defendants (with particular emphasis on punitive executioners exposing each other), testimony of witnesses, and finally, a verdict.

Based on the selected topic, we should have a closer look at the significant point, and, judging by the place given to it, that is the key message of several of the publications reviewed. It states that “fascist hirelings” (this is the term most often used to denote defendants) did not wait long to change their “masters” after the war, i.e. they were recruited by Americans. For example, an article, devoted entirely to the guilt of defendant N.F. Pashchenko, depicts his biography as a traitor: captivity and enlisting in Hitler's SS troops, crimes in Majdanek and Treblinka, service in Vlasov's Russian Liberation Army, escape to the US occupation zone, life in the FRG, recruitment by the US intelligence agency and, finally, return to his native Tuapse region with the purpose of carrying on espionage activities ([Sovetskaja Kuban', 1962: July 20](#)). Despite its title, the article “Witnesses make accusations” devotes 2/3 of its content to the disclosure of methods of recruiting personnel from among Nazis and their accomplices (“handouts from the so-called “Tolstoy Foundation,” blackmail, inebriation, bribery, and murders). A Cold War style summary concludes: “Oversees atomic scientists are brandishing their weapons again, threatening humanity with an even more terrible war” ([Sovetskaja Kuban', 1962: July 22](#)).

The publications on the Krasnodar legal process of 1962 attached an important foreign policy emphasis as they described how fascist criminals “safely live in the Federative Republic of Germany, in other capitalist countries, enjoying every kind of support from certain circles.” “The executioners who killed US citizens are now recruited by American intelligence,” one of the articles writes with indignation. “Imperialists are training these thugs for new mass crimes and murders” ([Sovetskaja Kuban', 1962: July 17](#)).

At the turn of 1963, the Directorate of the Committee for State Security for the Krasnodar Territory arrested another nine people in various cities across the USSR. On October 10–24, 1963, cases charging their punitive activities and personal participation in killings of civilians were heard by the Military Tribunal of the North Caucasian Military District in Krasnodar. All the accused served as punitive executioners in Sonderkommando SS-10a, later renamed as the “Caucasian Company.” The court examined their crimes committed not only in numerous settlements in the Kuban region, but also in the Crimea, Rostov region, Belarus, Poland, and Yugoslavia. Eight defendants were sentenced to death, one – to 15 years in maximum security correctional camp.

For two weeks, while the trial proceeded, the newspaper *Sovetskaya Kuban* covered it regularly every 2 days, and this means that it published seven articles in total as it was the case in the Krasnodar process of 1962. They were still located on the last page of the issues in the “From the courtroom” section, but, what is noteworthy, they had authors, and this added to the emotional tone of voice used in the texts (2 of 7 articles had even exclamation marks in their headlines). The authors were the newspaper's special correspondents R. Zakiev and Ch. Shakhmaliev. On the other hand, it immediately strikes that the headlines of the articles on the 1963 trial are very similar to those that appeared in the publications on the 1962 process (“Monsters brought to justice,” “Witnesses brand murderers”), and the final article on the outcome of the tribunal had a title identical to the final article published last year – “In the name of the people.”

In the context of our subject, it is essential that the 1963 articles continued the line aimed to expose the unlawful protection by Europe and the US of Nazi criminals. Zakiev with indignation ascertains that many Sonderkommando SS-10-a leaders escaped retaliation and “are still alive under the wing of the Bonn revanchists,” meaning Kurt Christmann, Heinrich Goertz, and SS officers infamous for their crimes in the Kuban ([Sovetskaja Kuban', 1963: October 11](#)). We should note that although Zakiev and Shakhmaliev make almost no references to the Krasnodar process 20 years ago, it is this motif of the Nazis’ escape from just retribution that is most difficult to

accept. After all, journalists, who worked at the Krasnodar trial in 1943, wrote that collaborators' leaders and masterminds Christmann, Goertz and others were invisibly present among those sitting in the prisoners' dock, and that in Krasnodar in July 1943 international justice, in a sense, began to be done for their crimes. This incomplete act of justice, largely caused by the international situation that existed at the time, is highlighted by one of the state prosecutors. His words are cited by the article that sums up the results of the tribunal: "The significance of this process implies that, by uncovering the specific guilt of the accused and bringing fascist atrocities back to memory, it is a different, yet another trial over fascism, over the ideology and practice of imperialism, which were embodied in Hitler's outrages. The materials of this process shall once again remind everyone of the bestial face of German imperialism, the face that, to the fullest extent, although under a new disguise, is preserved by the Bonn Bundeswehr. The trial of the executioners reveals the need to enhance vigilance against imperialist intrigues, stay constantly alert and tirelessly build up the power and defense capacity of our Motherland and the entire socialist camp" (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1963: October 26).

The open trial of 1965, which was held at the Cultural Center of the Krasnodar Electrical Measuring Instruments Plant June 1–8, was as systematically covered by *Sovetskaya Kuban* as the previous ones. Eight publications followed one another in the eight issues of the newspaper; all of them were located in the "From the courtroom" section on the 4th (last) page, and their authors invariably were correspondents working in tandem, this time I. Mutovin and A. Marakushev. If we compare it with the 1962–1963 experience, the headlines of the articles, spotlighting the 1965 process, look more emotional and verbose, but, on the other hand, there were again some coincidences in headlines.

The opening article "Ashes of Victims Cries to the Hearts of the Living" even got ahead of the process, as it was published on the day it started. Although it already names the six accomplices, who are to face the dock, but the central place is given to exposing the SS men "who stood behind their backs," and who "will be invisibly present [there] to be brought to justice" (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 1). As a reminder, this image was once captured by a *Pravda* correspondent, Elena Kononenko, who worked at the Krasnodar process in 1943, and was then employed by another Moscow journalist Martyn Merzhanov (*Tazhidinova*, 2016: 84). Since over the past 2 decades the problem of bringing German war criminals to justice remained on the table, it became the leitmotif of the first article on the Krasnodar process in 1965. This publication spared only few words about accomplices and complicity. There is little doubt that its purport was aimed against a more immediate enemy. "Those present at the trial will once again make sure that fascism has been crushed, but not finished off – it has crawled to the West and is now emerging in a new guise – revanchism," predicted Mutovin and Marakushev (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 1).

*Sovetskaya Kuban* then published a series of articles with variations in headlines already highlighted by us in the 1962-1963 mediatization: "Executioners in the dock," "Their doings are inexcusable," "Chain of crimes," "Face to face," "Murderers not to escape justice," "Trial of human conscience has no mercy," "Retribution to executioners." These publications enable us to formulate an idea of the process and its characteristic features.

There was less than half a kilometer between the Cultural Center, where the tribunal met, and the place of mass killings of the civilian population of Krasnodar in the period of its occupation (August 9, 1942 – February 12, 1943), and the authors of articles found this fact to be both symbolic and logical. The court sessions were attended by workers of Krasnodar enterprises, university students, doctors, teachers, and collective farmers. Journalists point out that all eight hundred seats available in the Center were taken, and there was not enough room in the hall for everyone who wanted to be present at the legal process. Representatives of the teams in which three of the six defendants worked also came to the open trial. There were participants of the Great Patriotic War, who lived in the Kuban, in the hall as well as prisoners of the "death camps" – Buchenwald, Auschwitz, Sobibor, and Belzec – who specifically came for the purpose. According to the article "Face to face," 44 witnesses were summoned to the court, including citizens of the Polish People's Republic, former prisoners of fascist concentration camps (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 5). The court of the military tribunal of the North Caucasus Military District was chaired by Major General of Justice G.T. Nafikov. The publications also mention prosecutors for the community: driver A. P. Sharov, a Krasnodar resident who survived Auschwitz, a school teacher from Yeisk S. Ye. Kravtsov, a former Buchenwald prisoner, and agronomist at one of the Kuban state farms

N. V. Makarenko, who prosecuted defendant V.E. Podenok on behalf of people living the Podgornaya village) (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 1; June 8).

The description of those who were “behind the barrier” (in the dock), is concise and devoid of any sympathy. “They are hiding their eyes from people, hunching and sinking their head in their shoulders. No, they do not have the appearance of monsters. Those who do not know them may at first think that these are meek, “ordinary” people. But this impression is deceptive,” journalists wrote (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 2). They also drew the audience's attention to the motives that inspired them to betray their Motherland and serve the invaders, and offered for them quite a categorical formulation: “villainy and base considerations,” “greed and cowardice,” “mindset of murderers,” “self-love” (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 2; June 3; June 5).

As in the Krasnodar process of 1943, no pictures of the defendants (or caricatures of them) were published. However, the newspaper still depicted some features of the collaborators' appearance. “The first one is Matvienko N.G. who is tentatively coming up to the microphone. A short man of 43. He has a grim cheekbone face and narrow, dull eyes. He hides his long hands behind his back. These hands does not belong to a worker, but to an executioner. They are stained with human blood” – this was how the journalists described the beginning of the interrogation procedure that was started by the Military Tribunal of the North Caucasus Military District on June 2. From the authors' perspective, Matvienko deliberately spoke monotonously and dwelt on inessential details so as to try to add a normal view and credibility to the facts of his career with Germans. Journalists quoted one of the passages slipped in his speech: “There was a good time when I took part in the killing of two hundred people near Lublin” (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 3). While the authors of the article call Matvienko “a miserable figure”, they classify Podenok as “the most disgusting figure of this sinister six.” At the same time, they are particularly struck by the fact that Podenok's three brothers served in the Red Army during the Great Patriotic War, and the fourth brother was a fighter in a guerilla party (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 8).

An analysis of the texts in the articles reveals that the 1965 trial repeated an already familiar situation when the guilt of specific defendants “was overshadowed” by the common guilt of all participants in the Hitler terror operations. This is evidenced by the following quotes: “10,000 people were killed with the participation of Matvienko”; “Zaitsev took part in gassing five hundred thousand people” (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 3; June 8). Additionally, the journalists themselves quite haphazardly detailed the words that they heard at the trial. In our opinion, the staggering information on the scale of killings was sometimes not consistently and professionally mixed with “stories” about the practices adopted by German “executioners,” which were no directly related to the cases of the six defendants. As an illustration, here is an excerpt from the final and the largest article covering the process: “Nazis of the Third Reich killed 12 million people. They killed in cold blood with the rapture of sadists. In their experiments, German fascist doctors forced inmates of concentration camps to drink sea water until they went crazy. In Auschwitz, they forced a father to drown his son” (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 8).

The unprofessional way that was used to present the information on the process did not prevent the article from accomplishing the task that the mediatization was evidently aimed at in the first place. It appears that the above welter even contributed to it because fanned the flames of sentiments not against “six” specific collaborators (in fact, “pawns” in the policy of terror carried out by the Hitlerites), but in relation to the more salient figures involved in the large-scale case of massacres of civilian population during World War II. The first article, which opened the coverage of the 1965 Krasnodar process, already underlined the fact that SS executioners had escaped to West Germany, received asylum there and in other countries, such as Chile, and changed “helmets to hats” (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 1).

In Mutovin and Marakushev's subsequent articles, the theme of the change of “masters” by criminals and the denunciation of revanchism actually became a leading line. Conclusions of this kind are particularly visible in the large final publication that summarizes the process results just before sentences were pronounced (*Sovetskaja Kuban'*, 1965: June 8). In this publication, the authors invite readers to discuss “the lessons learned from the process.” To this end, they emphasize over and over again that the solemn declarations on the compulsory punishment of all Nazi criminals, made by leaders of the anti-Hitler coalition during World War II, “were at variance with reality.” To confirm this, they provide a number of specific examples showing that some SS men suffered no punishment at all but moreover led a prosperous life in the West, and even serve

in American and West German intelligence, in other words, they are engaged in activities hostile to the USSR ([Sovetskaja Kuban', 1965: June 8](#)).

#### 4. Conclusion

Thus, it is necessary to admit that although the coverage of the Krasnodar processes in 1962–1965 by the local periodical press was not a high-profile campaign (it is absolutely impossible to compare it with the scale and emotional intensity of the presentation of the Krasnodar process in 1943), it was systematic and consistent. Speaking of the central press, the response was minutest here. For example, *Izvestia* did not react to these events at all. A single article in *Pravda* summed up the results of the 1963 tribunal in detail (“34 volumes, more than 9,000 pages!”), including personal biographical data of collaborators and caustic comments on “Bonn revanchists,” but was modestly located on the very last page of the issue ([Pravda, 1963: October 25](#)). The situation was repeated in 1965, when *Pravda* highlighted the new Krasnodar process only in one publication (and again it was placed on the last page of the issue). The material “Retribution comes,” the supplied a detailed account of the beginning of the process received “from Krasnodar by phone,” and, characteristically, the information on the guilt of the defendants still lacked specificity. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that along with the names of the six defendants, it named nine SS officers who “...following the defeat of Germany, fled to the Federal Republic of Germany and settled down under the wing of the Bonn authorities.” The closing part of *Pravda*'s article promises an inevitable and “just retribution” exactly to these war criminals ([Pravda, 1965: June 2](#)).

As a result, in a comparative perspective, we lean towards a conclusion that the information message implied by the Krasnodar processes of 1962–1965 was much more targeted at Soviet people (raising their awareness about the different approaches to war criminals, taken in the USSR and in the capitalist West, which once again shows the fundamental discrepancy between the two systems) rather than sought to influence the international community. It is this aspect that can be viewed as a key feature distinguishing the objectives of the mediatization that accompanied the Krasnodar Tribunal of 1943.

On the other hand, it is significant that the account of the 1962–1965 processes in *Sovetskaya Kuban* was always printed on the last page of the newspaper, which was mainly devoted to the “International Life” section. It means that articles on tribunals over traitors to the Soviet homeland were virtually surrounded by information on the life abroad, and in some cases, were literally wedged into it. The issue of collaborationism, as it were, was communicated “abroad” in such a sophisticated manner. Considering the criticism of Western imperialists, which was expressed by almost half of the articles on the trials, published by *Sovetskaya Kuban*, the population had increasingly less reasons to perceive this problem as an internal issue.

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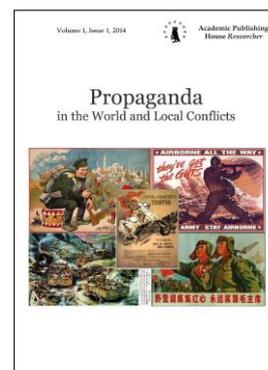
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## Technical Means of Propagandists

### The Flagship of the Soviet Political Agitation Squadron

Yuri F. Katorin <sup>a, \*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Admiral Makarov State University of Maritime and Inland Shipping, Russian Federation

#### Abstract

This article describes the flagship of the special propaganda squadron, the ANT-20 “Maxim Gorky”, the largest civil plane in the world at that time. The article deals with the story of its construction, its main characteristics and describes the structure of this unique machine.

The documents of the Russian State Historical Archive, as well as Russian and foreign specialized historiography and reference literature were used as the materials for this research. In his analysis of sources and literature the author strives for scientific objectivity, the indispensable condition of which is the fundamental methodological principle of historicism, as well as in the conclusions that are the result of this research.

The author considers some versions of the tragedy that occurred on 18<sup>th</sup> of May, 1935.

**Keywords:** campaigning, special propaganda squadron, the gigantic aircraft “Maxim Gorky”, the crash of ANT-20, pilot N.P. Blagin.

#### 1. Introduction

Political ideologies began to take shape during the New Age as a result of the crisis of religious doctrines and the formation of national states, becoming the framework of the Westphalian model of international relations. Over the past 300 years, political ideologies have met the interests of new social groups and national states that were taking shape.

Political ideology can be viewed as a system through a multitude of elements and interrelations that form a kind of integrity or a structure that is immersed in a certain external environment and has a specific purpose to exist. Each of the characteristics of a political system is a factor in its self-development and transformation. Political agitation and propaganda are used to impart ideological stability to the state. Agitation (Latin *agitatio*-putting into motion) is an oral, printed or visual political activity that influences the consciousness and mood of people in order to induce them to political or other actions.

Political agitation is carried out by spreading certain ideas and slogans through various means: through the press (newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, leaflets, appeals, etc.), oral

\* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [katorin@mail.ru](mailto:katorin@mail.ru) (Yu.F. Katorin)

presentations (reports, talks, reading newspapers, etc.), radio, television, cinema, theater, visual arts (posters, diagrams, cartoons, etc.), fictional and political literature. Its main goal is the dissemination of political ideas and slogans in order to influence the consciousness and moods of the broad masses. Direct communication with the public was the main form of political agitation before the development of electronic media. For this purpose each country created different structures. We would like to highlight the political agitation squadron, organized in the USSR in the 30s of the XX century.

## 2. Materials and methods

2.1. The documents of the Russian State Historical Archive, as well as Russian and foreign specialized historiography and reference literature were used as the materials for this research. In his analysis of sources and literature the author strives for scientific objectivity, the indispensable condition of which is the fundamental methodological principle of historicism, as well as in the conclusions that are the result of this research.

2.2. The methodological basis of this research is made by logical methods, definitions, descriptions, analysis and synthesis. A general scientific method of analysis has also been used. In addition, the historical-descriptive method was widely used in the methodology, as well as the method of historical and comparative analysis.

## 3. Discussion

The Special political Agitation Squadron was formed because of the huge size of the country and the poor development of the road network. Collection of funds for the formation of the political agitation squadron named after Maxim Gorky, (Alexei Maximovich Gorky (1868–1936), began in October 1932 on the initiative of the “Ogonyok” magazine. By the order of March 17, 1933, the formation of an agitation squadron was announced, and on May 5 (Day of Printing) in 1933 its regular work began. The squadron fleet consisted of airplanes (mostly U-2), auto-gyro TSAGI 2-EA and the V-3 “Krasnaya Zvezda” (“Red Star”) zeppelin. The squadron aircrafts carried agitators, newspapers and literature to remote settlements. However, it lacked something outstanding.

The idea of creating the giant “Maxim Gorky” aircraft belonged to the young, but already well-known journalist, a favorite of Stalin, Mikhail Koltsov (né Moisey Fridlyand; 1898–1940). In September 1932, the Soviet Union solemnly celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the literary activity of the great proletarian writer Maxim Gorky. As a present to the writer, Koltsov proposed to start fundraising for the construction of the world’s largest aircraft, which would bear his name. It was to become the special squadron flagship for political agitation and propaganda of Bolshevik ideas (Rigmant, 1997: 22).

“The construction of a giant airplane-agitator should become the basis for updating and reconstructing the methods of all our agitational and mass political work, in applying the high technical level to which our country is now moving to... Soviet designers, technicians, inventors, political workers, writers - all must contribute to the creation of the giant aircraft not only materially, but also give their thoughts, ideas, experience and knowledge”, – Koltsov wrote in the “Ogonyok” magazine (Kol'tsov, 1932: 12). Back then, aviation was very popular in the USSR, and Maxim Gorky was loved by people, thus, in a year it was possible to raise six million rubles.

The team of Andrei Nikolayevich Tupolev (1888-1972) started the construction of the ANT-20 aircraft (a further update of the TB-4 six-engine bomber, which was huge but too slow for its military application) in 1931. However, at the end of 1932, with the decision to prioritize the creation of a special political agitation aircraft, the purpose of ANT-20 was changed. The technical requirements for this aircraft, approved in early 1933, provided for the possibility of using it as a passenger and transport aircraft, a heavy bomber and a flying HQ for the high military command. Like all the previous Tupolev types of planes, the “Maxim Gorky” was made of duralumin and had corrugated (wavy) plating (Andreev, 1972: 22).



**Fig. 1.** Construction of the “Maxim Gorky”

It was necessary to place the equipment and means of agitation on the board of the aircraft: a printing unit, a photo lab, a cinema projector, a loud-speaker "Voice from the sky" and several radio stations. The aircraft was to be operated from relatively small airfields; its take-off distance should not exceed 400 m (TB-4 had an 800 m distance). This required designing a wing with a larger area and length. Accordingly, eight gear-motors M-34FRN should be used for the power engine with a total capacity of 7200 horsepower. Six engines were located in the toe of the wing and a couple of engines (the same as on TB-4) were placed in a tandem unit above the fuselage. The crew could approach the engines through the aisles in the wing in order to correct possible malfunctions during the flight. It was possible to continue horizontal flight without the function of any two engines. On-board compressor unit ensured the launch of all aircraft engines within three minutes (Kollektiv avtorov, 1994; 348).

According to its flight weight (42 000 kg), the “Maxim Gorky” airplane was the largest civil land plane in the world before the 1950s. It featured a payload of fourteen tons, wing span of 63 m and the diameter of the wheel was two meters. The full metal aircraft had a fuselage length of 32.5 m, a width of 3.5 and a height of 2.5 m. The maximum speed of the aircraft was 260 km / h. (Shavrov, 2002: 428-429).

The interior of the “Maxim Gorky” was magnificent! The area of its internal premises was 100 square meters: it could take up to 70 passengers. Carpets, spacious armchairs, curtains on the windows, tables with lamps were provided in the passenger compartments. There were also sleeping cabins (in the wings there were two-level beds), an electrified buffet with hot and cold snacks, a storage room, luggage space, washbasins and toilets. The airliner was equipped with a ladder, which, when folded, was a part of the floor. For the first time, the experts used an electric remote control system in a massive airplane. The navigation and aerobatic rigging of the ANT-20 ensured its use both during the day and night. It also could land on unprepared terrain and was equipped with an autopilot (Kollektiv avtorov, 1994: 349-350).

A variety of “political agitation tools” were placed on board of the “Maxim Gorky”, including a cinema projector for displaying propaganda films right at the airport (at first it was planned to project the image on the clouds during the flight, using them as a giant screen, but this venture

proved technically impossible). There was a powerful radio station called “Voice from the Sky”, a printing unit capable of printing up to 10,000 illustrated flyers, radio transmitters, a photo lab, a library, etc. The novelty aircraft was equipped with pneumatic mail system, which allowed the commander to exchange notes with the radio operator and journalists on board (Kollektiv avtorov, 1994: 352).

A special power station was installed on board to ensure the operation of this equipment. ANT-20 had a system of electric supply with alternating current of 120 V, 50 Hz. This innovation was used for the first time in national practice. The onboard power station consisted of two gasoline engines and four generators. Two generators (3 and 5.5 kW) conducted alternating current and two more generators (3 and 5.8 kW) provided constant voltage of 27 V. The plane could be disassembled and transported by the railway if necessary (Shavrov, 2002: 430).

#### 4. Results

On April 1, 1934 the construction of the “Maxim Gorky” was completed at the TSAGI Experimental Construction Plant. Parts of the giant aircraft were transported to the Central Aerodrome named after M. V. Frunze, where it was assembled and tested. In mid-June 1934, the “Maxim Gorky” airplane took off for the first time, piloted by the TSAGI chief pilot Mikhail Mikhailovich Gromov (1899-1985). He said the following about the new aircraft: “It is an amazing plane; it is exceptional in its flight characteristics and aerodynamics. The machine has an impeccable steering. It is extremely convenient and simple to fly the world's largest aircraft” (Kotov, 2007: 28-29).

The plane was so reliable that on the third day of the flight tests, June 19, 1934, it took part in the parade organized in honor of the first Heroes of the Soviet Union (the returned “Chelyuskinites” and the pilots who rescued them). Thousands of leaflets were scattered over Moscow. Regular flights of a unique airplane began. Soon new world records of carrying capacity were set on it – ten and fifteen tons were raised to the height of 5000 m. By August 1934, the air giant became the flagship of M. Gorky's political agitation squadron (Kotov, 2007: 32).

Indeed, it was a flagship worthy more than just one squadron! Any largest aircraft of the world aviation could be envious of the size and weight of the “Maxim Gorky”. Shortly, the agitators turned out to have not only means for broadcasting and issuing volatile newspapers and leaflets, but also something not less effective - a modern aircraft built at a Soviet factory from Soviet materials. Needless to say that such a unique machine inspired the young Soviet industry. After the flight over Red Square, the world press immediately reacted to such a significant event, noting that the USSR became a strong world aviation power capable of building the most up-to-date aircraft, such as the giant “Maxim Gorky”, which was impossible without a good scientific base and talented designers (Matulevich, 1994: 39).

Meanwhile, the agitation squadron coped with routine work; the material part of the unique aircraft worked flawlessly for more than a year. May Day holiday of 1935, when the “Maxim Gorky” led the air parade of Soviet cruise vehicles over Red Square was a joyful day for the political agitation squad. The loudspeaker greeted thousands of Muscovites gathered for the holiday. On weekdays the “Maxim Gorky” made regular flights over Moscow and conducted “air baptism” of the foremost workers of Moscow enterprises (Rigmant, 1997: 68).

Unfortunately, the unexpected happened. In the middle of the day on May 18, 1935, the plane rose above Moscow, piloted by I. Mikheyev and I. Zhurov. The “Maxim Gorky” was escorted by light aircrafts I-5 and P-5, with a cameraman on board (Muromov, 2003: 71). The events of that day are described in the compilation of TSAGI and the Scientific and Memorial Museum of N.E. Zhukovsky “Aircraft construction in the USSR. 1917-1945”: “... accompanying the “Maxim Gorky” on the I-5 fighter plane, pilot N. P. Blagin began to perform aerobatic figures near the giant aircraft, which were not in the flight assignment. Trying to make a loop around the wing of the plane, he lost speed at the top point, and his uncontrolled aircraft fell on the wing of the “Maxim Gorky” (Kollektiv avtorov, 1994: 374–376).



**Fig. 2.** The "Maxim Gorky" at the parade on May 1, 1935

29 passengers, 11 crew members and pilot Nikolai Pavlovich Blagin (1896–1935) died in this accident. The absurd catastrophe claimed dozens of human lives and destroyed a unique airplane. As for the crash of the giant “Maxim Gorky” aircraft, many articles with various versions of the tragedy appeared in the media. For example, there was a theory that Blagin was envious of Valery Chkalov, and at his own risk decided to “twist” the “dead loop” around the wing of the “Maxim Gorky”. There was also frank informational sabotage - on September 12, 1935 the Russian emigrants' Polish media "Mech" claimed that Blagin deliberately rammed the giant airplane. The paper contained a letter, allegedly written by Blagin on the eve of the tragic event. Stylistically the letter was an anti-communist appeal to the citizens of Russia. Even a superficial analysis shows that the letter had obvious absurdities, showing that the letter is fake, and that it was made up only for a sensation (Muromov, 2003: 72-73).



**Fig. 3.** Catastrophe of ANT-20

The conjecture completely refutes the fact that Blagin was buried along with the others, and that the funeral of the victims was attended by I. V. Stalin. He stood in the guard of honor at the urns with the ashes in the Hall of Columns. The members of the highest party leadership in Moscow brought the urns in the hall. The widow and daughter of N. Blagin were assigned personal pensions and the daughter went to a prestigious university after school. Thus, proceeding from the hypothesis of a willful ram, there is no way to explain that the family of the "terrorist" was not arrested, and even received an increased pension. Secondly, the circumstances of the disaster indicate that it was more likely an accident than a deliberate act (Muromov, 2003: 76-77; Ivanov, 1997).

Only in 2010 it became known that the NKVD officers conducted an investigation determining that an hour and a half before the flight, military documentary film-makers V. G. Ryazhsky and A. A. Pullin met the pilots. They were not interested in the giant aircraft, but wanted a sensation. The sanction of the senior leadership of the Air Force allowed them to insist on changing the flight scenario. As a result, the pilots, without coordinating with the head of the flight and their superiors, were forced to agree. The documentary film-makers pursued the goal of filming of aerial tricks near the "Maxim Gorky" for an agitation campaign. Ryazhsky and Pullin were arrested after the tragedy (Muromov, 2003: 77).

## 5. Conclusion

There are only a few constructed in one copy and maintained for only a year aircrafts which took an honorable place in the history of aviation without setting any official records and without performing any heroic combat raids. The "Maxim Gorky" (ANT-20) was one of them. It took off on its first flight on 17<sup>th</sup> of June, 1934, and on its last one - on 18<sup>th</sup> of May, 1935.

The idea justified itself, despite the tragedy of the flagship. Several hundred agitation flights were carried out, 3.2 thousand meetings were held, 5 thousand various reports and lectures were held during the five years of the existence of the squadron. The squadron flew 55 million kilometers, covered more than 10 million people with various events. Every arrival of the aircraft (especially to remote areas) was used to show it to people, to take as many passengers as possible, and most importantly – to make the people feel that the air fleet was the success of the Soviets, obtained by sweat and blood (Kotel'nikov, 2004: 22).

The agitation squadron was formed not only for the purpose of agitation, but also for reasons of industrial necessity. It was necessary to deliver urgently the newspaper matrices to the cities where the central newspapers began to be printed, first and foremost, "Pravda" newspaper. For the first time, newspaper strip matrices began to be transported by airplanes. First they were taken to Leningrad and then to other major centers of the country. By the way, the most intelligent and quick correspondents began to use passing aircrafts with matrices to fulfill urgent assignments of the editorial staff (Kotov, 2007: 24).

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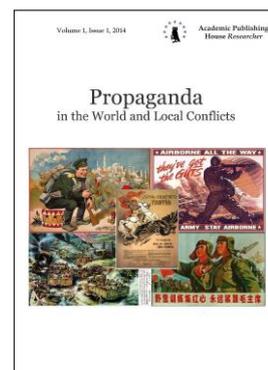
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## Letters to the Editor

### Military Agitation Campaign on the Territory of Carpatho-Ukraine in 1945

Anton Sebyshev <sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Academy of Basic Research, Moscow, Russian Federation

#### Abstract

The article examines Soviet military propagandists activities on the territory of Carpatho-Ukraine in 1945. The forms of work and types of agitation as well as some attempts of the Ukrainian nationalists to counter Soviet propaganda were reflected in the article. It is noted that military propagandists actively used meetings, rallies, reading sessions, as well as collective and individual conversations in their work. Different kind of activities also took place – creating slogans and holding concerts. As a result, a significant number of defectors stopped supporting rebel ideas in the area of propaganda campaign.

**Keywords:** special propaganda brigades, military agitation, 1945, Carpatho-Ukraine, Ukrainian nationalists.

#### 1. Introduction

After Germany's defeat in World War II, the situation on the territory of the Carpathian Ukraine still was very difficult. A large number of rebel Ukrainian nationalists remained in the forest zones of the region. These units, equipped with light and heavy weapons, were a significant problem for the Soviets (Cherkasov et al., 2015).

The first clashes between the Soviet army and the rebels showed that the victory won't be achieved easily. As a result, a whole range of measures was developed to reduce insurgent activity in 1945 with propaganda as a key role. Let us have a close look at the army propagandists' activity. Special propaganda brigades were organized in accordance with the general planning, for the first time in the practice of army operations. Only those officers, communists and Komsomol members who knew the Ukrainian language perfectly as well as local customs, got an appropriate political and general education and had operational work skills were selected for this job. Agitators from the special propaganda brigades were to expose the provocative rumors spread by Ukrainian nationalists, assist the district authorities in strengthening Soviet power in the villages, elect the members of the rural councils and their chairmen.

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\* Corresponding author  
E-mail addresses: [ased@mail.ru](mailto:ased@mail.ru) (A. Sebyshev)

## 2. Materials

The archival documents of the Central Archive of Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia served as materials for this article.

## 3. Discussion and results

An epidemic of typhus broke out on the territory of the Carpatho-Ukraine in 1945 making a large-scale mass work and meetings with a big number of participants impossible. Thus, the main emphasis was placed on individual conversations in families and meetings of representatives from 3-5 families. The following data indicates the scale of agitation work and its intensity.

The agitators of the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade held 257 meetings, rallies, talks, 38 reports and other activities during the operation in the Carpathian settlements (TSAVV. F. 240. Op. 1.s. D. 64. L. 207, 220).

The subjects of these activities according to the documents were as follows:

1. What did Soviet power give to the peoples of the USSR?
2. The Red Army is the liberator of the peoples of Western Ukraine;
3. Who are the Ukrainian-German nationalists?
4. The Ukrainian people in the fight against the German invaders;
5. What will Poland and its borders look like?

The agitators explained to the villagers the content of the decisions of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine on taking measures to restore and develop the national economy in Western Ukraine.

Active work among the local population quickly gave positive results, according to the documents. Many accomplices of the nationalists returned to the settlements, hundreds of local citizens, intimidated by the OUN members and hiding in the underground, came out from their hiding places. The number of people who returned voluntarily significantly increased.

27 citizens of draft age came to the Commander of the mortar company Lieutenant V. I. Zgonik in the village of Struten Nizhny in Rozhnyatovsky district on 9<sup>th</sup> of April. 20 of them came late in the evening and even at night, not to be seen by anyone. In addition, the newly arrived gave valuable operational information about the two brothers from the "security service"<sup>1</sup> living in the village. Early in the morning the Company Commander organized a search and, using the probes, discovered a hiding place on the outskirts of the village. There were four people, showing desperate armed resistance. Soldiers threw grenades in the hiding place and destroyed the resisting. The corpses of the terrorists were taken to the village square and laid on the ground. As the agitators noted in the report: "when they looked at the corpses, the villagers sighed with relief, as they recognized the fierce Bandera men, who threatened the whole village" (TSAVV. F. 240. Op. 1.s. D. 64. L. 221).

Two days later, Praskovya V., resident of Richka village, Kosivsky district, came to the command post of the 207<sup>th</sup> OSB and reported that two brothers Ivan and Nikolai P., as well as Ilya A., were the members of a local "village fighting group". A month ago they took away her son and two daughters. Praskovya pointed out the fighters' hiding place and the group was eliminated (TSAVV. F. 240. Op. 1.s. D. 64. L. 222).

However, most of the volunteers feared persecution by the leaders of the nationalist "security service" and asked to keep their names in secret.

The ideologists of the insurgents very quickly assessed the effectiveness of the special military propaganda and took urgent countermeasures. They focused their agitation activities on covering the international events, making them look favorable for themselves. So, in Goshchan, Mlynivsky, Ostrogsky and other regions, Ukrainian-German ideologists spread the rumor that at the international conference in San Francisco the former allies demanded from the USSR the obligatory participation of the delegation from Carpatho-Ukraine. They stated that such a delegation, along with another delegation from the "independent Ukraine" participated in the

<sup>1</sup> OUN Security service.

conference<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the insurgents spread their activity to neighboring territories, for example, Slovakia (Šmigel, Cherkasov, 2013).

It should be noted that OUN's agitation had considerable means of propaganda, including a powerful printing press. Freshly printed leaflets, proclamations, newspapers and other printed materials spread over the villages at night.

The course of the operation showed that the activities conducted by the task forces in the daytime were not effective. By questioning the captured guerrillas they found out that during the day militants go into the woods and hide in carefully disguised and well-equipped hiding places. At nightfall, they return to the farmsteads and villages, collect food, distribute leaflets, conduct verbal propaganda and punish those who sympathize with the Soviet authorities or cooperate with the NKVD.

In this regard, the Head of the operation ordered to organize individual night operating units consisting of at least a platoon. Changing troop tactics did not mean a change in the general operation plan. Thorough area purge continued in the afternoon as well. A special task was set for the 2<sup>nd</sup> infantry company of the 218<sup>th</sup> OSB (under the command of Lieutenant K. A. Selyodkin) – search and capture of the printing house. Three units of 20 people each were formed. According to the operative data, the printing house could be located in Oneginsky district, since it was the first district to receive the fresh printed materials. The area was divided into squares. All groups started their search simultaneously. Secretly making their way to the villages and buildings, strictly observing the rules of masking and precautions, soldiers probed straw stacks, piles of manure and all the buildings attached to the area. Along with the search, the personnel conducted reconnaissance work by interviewing local residents. On May 24, 1945, Sergeant Borodin, acting with a metal probe, discovered a carefully disguised hiding place on a depth of one and a half meters with two rebels inside. This was a signal for further actions to be taken. In the next three days, twelve more hiding places were discovered, but they were all empty. Continuing the cleaning, Sergeant Klychikhin's group drew attention to the traces of the passing wagons coming out of the barn and leading towards the forest. To find out where the tracks were going, the Sergeant sent a three-man watch. Half an hour later, the sentinels found freshly dug ground in the forest and its volume allowed to assume that there was a hiding place for 15-20 people in the barn. The Red Army soldier Davidov probing the ground in the barn at great depth, discovered the ceiling boards of the hiding place, and later its entrance. The Commander ordered the rebels inside to surrender, but they didn't give out their presence. The soldiers threw two grenades before examining the hiding place, but they did not hurt the people inside. The rebels opened fire from a shotgun and a machine-gun and the soldiers opened fire from a machine gun in response. As a result, the barn burst into flames. By this time, the second search group led by the platoon commander, junior lieutenant O.P. Khakimov arrived. The farm was cordoned off and observation posts were put up. The owner of the farm was detained and interrogated. She told that on May 18 two unknown people arrived at night and stated that they would set up a hiding place in her barn. Two hours later, 8 more people arrived; they took carts from the locals and began equipping the shelter. During their work the owner heard that the Central OUN representatives and 3 people from the printing house will be hiding there. After the fire, the burned corpses and the printing station with all the equipment were found underground. According to the documents, a member of the Central OUN, the "Ukrainian Head Rada" (UGVR) representative (alias "Kolya") and the editor (alias "Verlon") were among the burnt rebels.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, it should be noted that the actions of the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade in the Carpathian region were distinguished by an unprecedented scale of work with the local population. During the period from May 12 to May 26, 1945, 39 meetings were held by the Brigade agitators (attended by about 2 thousand people) and 256 group interviews of about 2.5 thousand people were conducted. More than a thousand individual interviews took place, 960 slogans were written

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<sup>1</sup> The San Francisco Conference was held in June 1945. Representatives of the governments of 50 states took part in the drafting of the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter became the constituent document of the OUN.

and 18 concerts were given, attended by almost 1,5 thousand people (TSAVV. F. 240. Op. 1.s. D. 64. L. 210).

As a result of the operation, 47 partisans were killed, 287 people were captured, 7 deserters, 190 accomplices, 45 citizens evading mobilization and 135 people requiring “filtration” were detained (TSAVV. F. 240. Op. 1.s. D. 64. L. 210).

For the second quarter of 1945, 1734 people voluntarily came to the Brigade Command posts (TSAVV. F. 240. Op. 1.s. D. 64. L. 233).

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