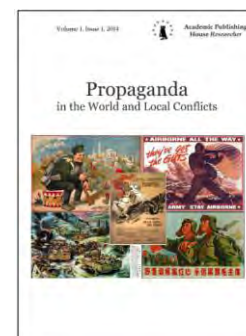


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## Caricature as a type of propaganda during World War I (as illustrated by materials published in the Ogoniok magazine)

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### Abstract

The paper analyzes caricature as a propaganda instrument utilized during World War I. The source used includes caricatures published in Ogoniok, a Russian magazine, in 1914–1916.

The systematization principle, applied in the study into the caricatures, helped to identify main topics that were a subject for debate in the periodical press. Importantly, the researcher also remains as neutral in their interpretation and assessment of the actual material in the study as possible.

At the end, the author concludes that the Ogoniok magazine focused its caricatures on the topic of Germany during World War I, while allies of Germany – Austria-Hungary and Turkey – were paid much less attention. The propaganda usually portrayed German allies in as dependent countries which were subordinate to Germany. In addition to the Entente's enemies, the caricature genre highlighted the military topic and the subject of the issued society faced in the rear.

**Keywords:** caricature, propaganda, Russian periodical press, World War I, Ogoniok magazine.

### 1. Introduction

Caricature is one of the most common genres made use of by the war propaganda both on the pages of leaflets and in the press. Caricatures are easy to perceive and most of them feature clear interpretations. This makes the caricature character one of the most powerful methods of shaping the required image in the general public.

In this article, we would like to review key topics of the caricature character in the period of World War I, published in a Russian magazine – Ogoniok.

Historical background of the Ogoniok magazine. Its first issue appeared December 9, 1899 as a weekly illustrated literary and art supplement to the Birzhevie vedomosti (Stock Exchange News) newspaper by publisher Stanislav Propper. The magazine was published in St. Petersburg (Petrograd). It had the A4 format. Its volume was 20 pages.

### 2. Materials and methods

2.1. The materials used included issues of the Russian magazine Ogoniok for 1914–1916, containing caricatures devoted to various events during World War I.

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2.2. The methods of the study were the principles of objectivity, historicism and systematization. The systematization principle, applied in the study into the caricatures, helped to identify main topics which became a subject for debate on pages of the periodical press. Importantly, the researcher also adopted as a neutral approach to the interpretation and assessment of the actual material in the study as possible.

### 3. Discussion

The caricature genre as a propaganda instrument during World War I came into focus in the late 20th – early 21st centuries. The world saw a significant number of works published in this period, which used caricature to reflect a wide range of topics related to the global confrontation.

The subject of World War I in satirical characters was reviewed by well-known experts, such as H. Jahn (Jahn, 1995; Jahn, 1998) and S. Norris (Norris, 2006). As to Russian authors, it is necessary to mention the works by A.G. Golikov and I.S. Rybachenok (Golikov, Rybachenok, 2010) and T.P. Nazarova (Nazarova, 2015). There were also works published on specific theaters of war. For example, the work by C. Finkel discussed the Ottoman Empire in the satirical form (Finkel, 2007). The topic was also considered by T.A. Filippova who used materials of the Russian satirical journalism (Filippova, 2015). Traditions of historical descriptions related to the Ottomans in many respects set up stereotypes which could be easily caricatured. The problem of Turkey's entering the war was highlighted by D.D. Vasiliev (Vasiliev, 2014).

### 4. Results

#### 4.1. The image of Germany, Austria and Turkey in the Russian periodical press

##### 4.1.1. Germany in World War I.

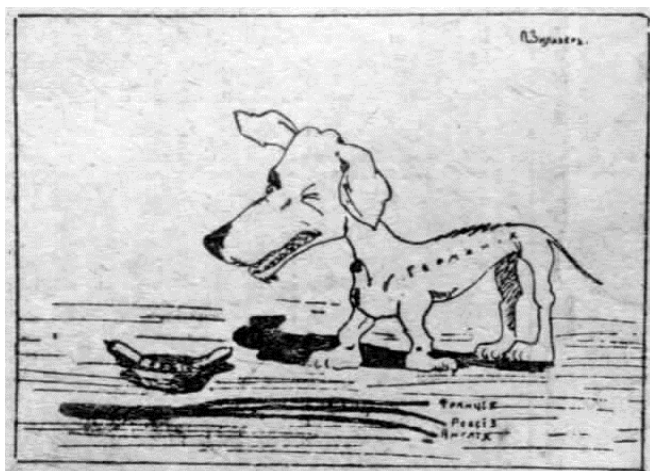
August 1914 witnessed the start of World War I. In the conflict that arose, the Entente (Russia, Britain and France) was confronted by Germany and Austria-Hungary. October 1914 saw Turkey entering the war on the side of Germany. As a result, the Russian press began to ridicule the image of the German Emperor and his allies already in November 1914 (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** "Formidable" triumvirate. Wilhelm: - Give way or I'll pull you to pieces, there are already three of us!  
 Drawn by P. Zapolsky-Dovnar (Ogoniok. 1914. No. 44)

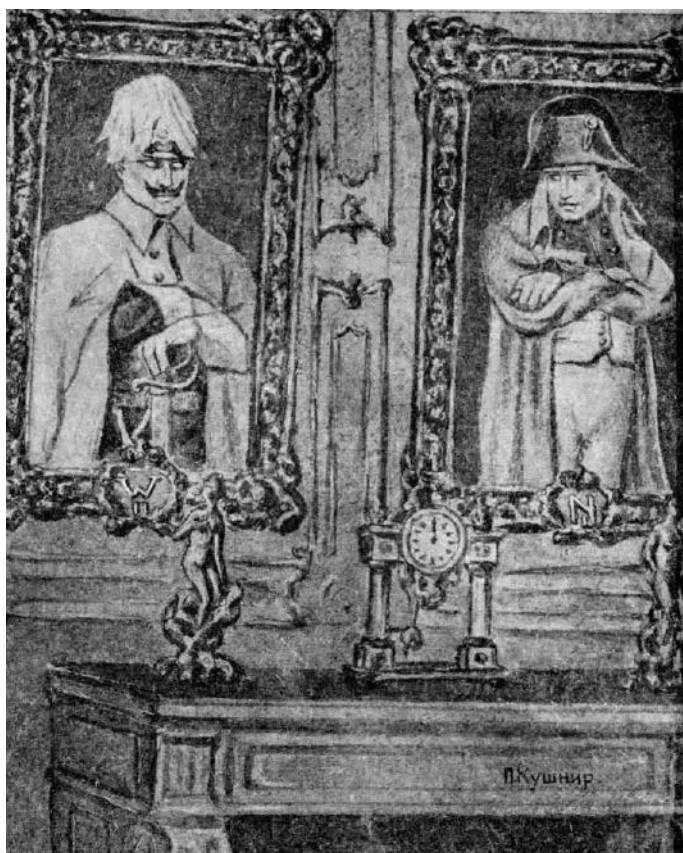
A major topic in the propaganda among the Russian population concerned the German aggression against Russia. We know that the war began with Germany's declaration of war. Following the act, Russian society received a moral right to defend itself from external aggression.

This circumstance distinguished radically World War I from the Russian-Japanese War and resulted into a powerful patriotic movement which emerged independently in the country. The topic of the German aggression was repeatedly raised in the Russian press (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2.** European equilibrium before the war.  
Caricature by P. Zilver (Ogoniok. 1914. No. 46)

After the German blitzkrieg failed to defeat France, the Russian periodical press viewed the destroyed military plans and intentions of the enemy as a clear victory. The magazine published a very original presentation of this topic in November 1914 (Fig. 3).



**Fig. 3.** Legend has it that ancient castles and palaces witness portraits coming alive in the dead of night. Wilhelm is very surprised by Napoleon's symbolic gesture.  
Drawn by P. Kushnir (Ogoniok. 1914. No. 44)

Notably, the topic of the failed seizure of Paris was also covered in the Italian satirical press. So, one of the Ogoniok November issues republish two caricatures in its "Italian humor" section (Fig. 4, 5)



**Fig. 4.** Solemn march-in of German troops into Paris. Caricature by artist Jolia (Ogoniok. 1914. No. 46)

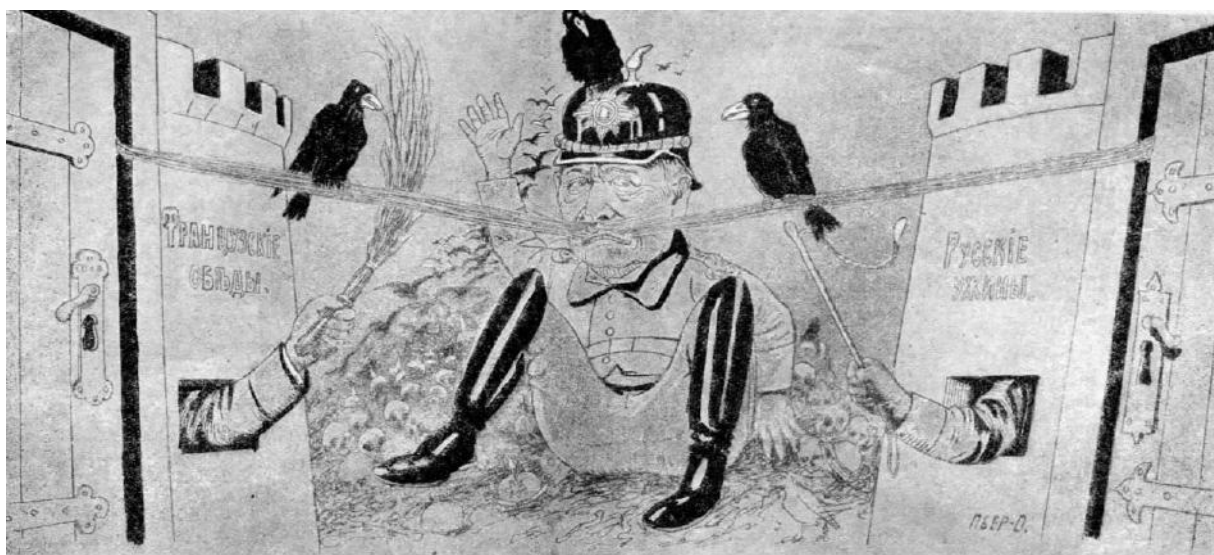


**Fig. 5.** Wilhelm in Paris  
"Where will we put the Kaiser."  
"Where? Um... well... I got it ... in the Pasteur Institute."  
Caricature by artist Prozdoccimi (Ogoniok. 1914. No. 46)

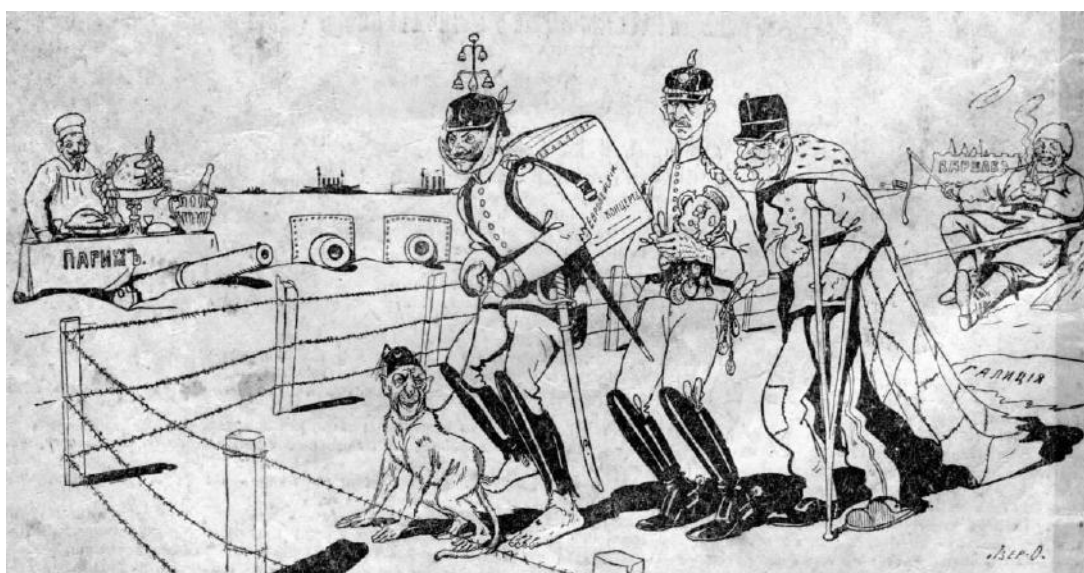


As it is known, an important role in World War I that broke out in August 1914 was assigned to the German blitzkrieg as it would subsequently help quickly remove France from the war and prevent a possible British deployment on the continent. After that, it was planned to start active operations against the Russian Empire. Attempts to seize Paris and a plan to occupy Warsaw were not successful for Germany and, as a result, beginning from December 1914, the Russian satire abounded with speculations on the topic of Germany's predicament (Fig. 6, 7).

"The Great Kaiser" on the path to eternal glory



**Fig. 6.** He was going to have dinner in Paris, he was going to have supper in Warsaw, and in the meantime he found himself in a critical situation  
Caricature by Pier – O (Ogoniok. 1914. No. 50).



**Fig. 7.** Knights Errant of the Rueful Countenance in a critical situation.  
Franz Joseph: "Oh, Willie, Willie. You promised a dinner in Paris and supper in Warsaw, and we did not even have a smell of it."  
Wilhelm: "Wait, old boy, maybe with this monkey someone will give alms to us."  
Well, Mahmud, do a somersault  
Drawn by Pier-O. (Ogoniok. 1914. No. 44)

In August 1915, despite the retreat of the Russian army and delayed prospects of the quick victory in World War I, the Russian press demonstrated that, notwithstanding the difficulties encountered, the enemy would certainly be broken. Sometimes this was expressed through the image of the toilet (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Where, despite all efforts, Germany would eventually find itself. Caricature for Ogoniok by A. Albo (Ogoniok. 1915. No. 31)

With the outbreak of World War I, all participating countries nationalized financial assets of business representing opposing states. In Russia, for example, the process took the form of the struggle against the "German predominance" (Tveritinov, 2014; Alishina, 2016). As for Germany, its authorities arrested business representatives of the Entente countries under the pretext of espionage. The French press published the following caricature in relation to this topic (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. As easy as pie  
 "And the one who was executed last, was a spy as well?"  
 "Worse than that, my friend – one of my major creditors!"  
 (Le Rire, Paris) (Ogoniok. 1915. No. 31)

Caricatures very often depicted Germany as the instigator of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. By this they showed that Austria-Hungary had a dependent position in the global conflict. We will give the following example (Fig. 10).





Doctor Willie: "Come, come, my dear Ferdinand, he is barely breathing, there is no pulse...."



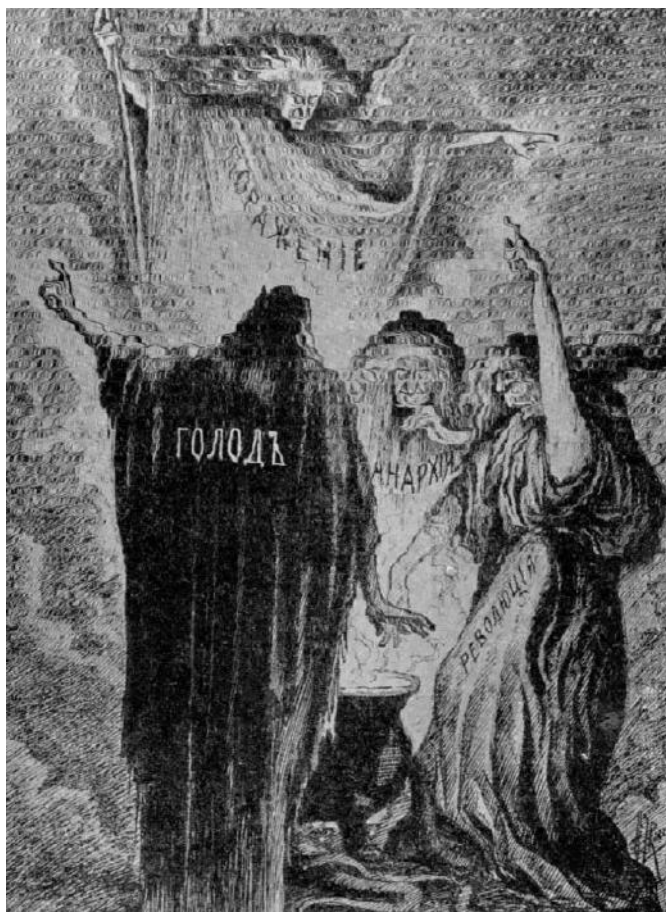
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**Fig. 10.** Ferdinand (Almost crying): "No pulse, no pulse..! I thought that there was a dead body in the bed and he is more alive than ever before...  
Caricature for Ogoniok by artist Borodata ([Ogoniok. 1916. No. 43](#))

In October 1916, after the Brusilov Offensive and a number of victorious operations carried out by the Russian army in Turkey, it became evident that Germany and its allies were losing the war (Nazarova, 2015). Building up a picture of the economic situation in Germany, the Russian press turned its attention to irreversible processes that would lead to the defeat of Germany. It spoke about famine, anarchy and a looming revolution (Fig. 11)

Based on Macbeth



**Fig. 11.** Witches are preparing the fate of Germany  
The Montreal Star (Montreal) (Ogoniok. 1916. No. 43)

Summarizing the results, we can say that the Russian periodical press turned to three main topics to construct the image of Germany:

1. Germany is the aggressor responsible for the attack on Russia;
2. Germany instigates Austria-Hungary and Turkey to the conflict;
3. Germany will inevitably be defeated in World War I.



#### 4.1.2. Austria in World War I.

The image of toilet was one of the favorite instruments often used by Russian caricaturists. For example, the fact that the Austro-Hungarian Empire tried to wait until Russia first declared war on it, created the indecisive image of Austria-Hungary (Fig. 12).



**Fig. 12.** "And Franz Joseph is still checking the plumbing..."  
Drawn by P. Zapolsky-Dovnar ([Ogoniok. 1914. No. 44](#))

In August 1914, Russian troops entered Galicia in an attempt to prevent the Germans from occupying Paris. These events were immediately reflected in the Russian caricature (Fig. 13).



**Fig. 13.** An Austrian. "Why are you leaving my, my dear, I haven't granted you a divorce."  
Galicia. "I think my elder sister Russia will get you to agree to it."  
Caricature by S. Smirnov ([Ogoniok. 1914. No. 46](#))

Meanwhile, to portray Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph as a weak personality, Italian caricaturists employed the image of the double bass which anyone can play (Fig. 14).



**Fig. 14.** From ... to the mandolin to the double bass.  
L'Asino (Rome) (Ogoniok. 1916. No. 43)

Austria-Hungary was given a secondary role in the genre of caricature. It was viewed as a country which was drawn into the war almost against her will. Hence, the Russian society formed the image of Germany as a country which caused trouble to everyone – to opponents and allies alike.

#### 4.1.3. Turkey in World War I.

Turkey was an extremely poor fighter in World War I. After they went to the war in October 1914, Turkish troops were defeated already early in 1915 in cross-border operations mounted by the Russian army and began to retreat deep into their territory. Already in the summer of 1915, Russian periodicals started to promote the image of Turkey as a country which was bound to lose the war (Fig. 15, 16).



**Fig. 15.** Turkey's future... "It's real mess!"  
Caricature for Ogoniok by V. Denisov ([Ogoniok. 1915. No. 31](#))



**Fig. 16.** "Fooled."  
(From newspapers: Germans have become sole owners of the Turkish capital).  
Caricature for Ogoniok by V. Denisov ([Ogoniok. 1915. No. 28](#))



At the same time, there were publications in which Turkey appeared as a country betrayed by Germany. This is most clearly illustrated by the following caricature (Fig. 17).



**Fig. 17.** Reassurance.

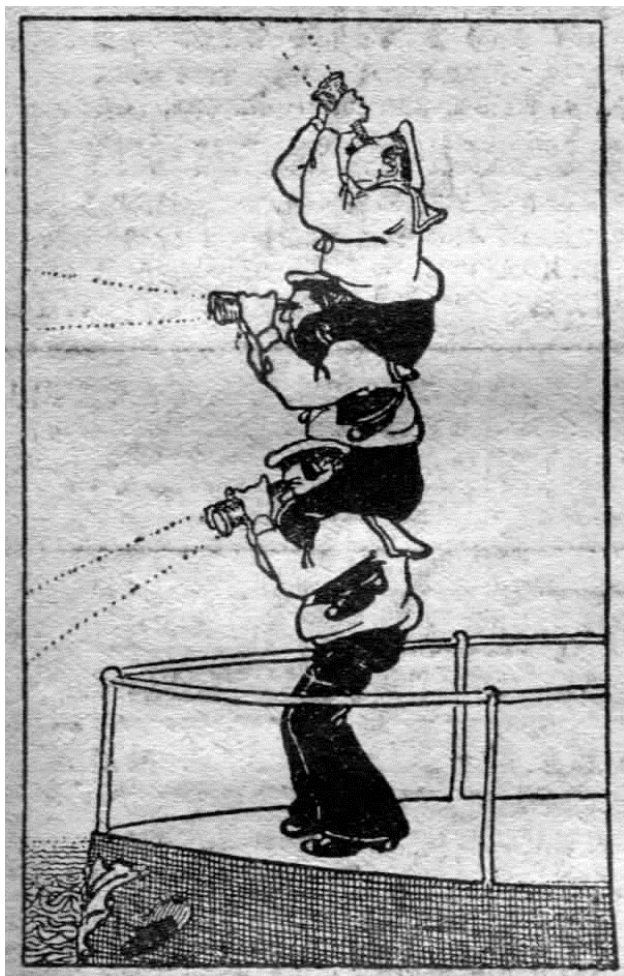
"Don't worry, my friend, go down, it's safe. Only three more arsheens and there is solid ground under you – the Crimea and the Caucasus. As soon as you go down, all will be yours."

Caricature for Ogoniok by Danilov (Ogoniok. 1915. No. 28)

Therefore, already in mid-1915, region-specific features of fighting against the Ottoman Empire contributed to the image of Turkey as a country that had lost the war. On the other hand, Turkey was represented as a country controlled by Germany rather than an independent player. This image was partly influenced by the Black Sea operations of the German Navy (cruisers Goeben and Breslau), as well as German military advisers and experts working in Istanbul.

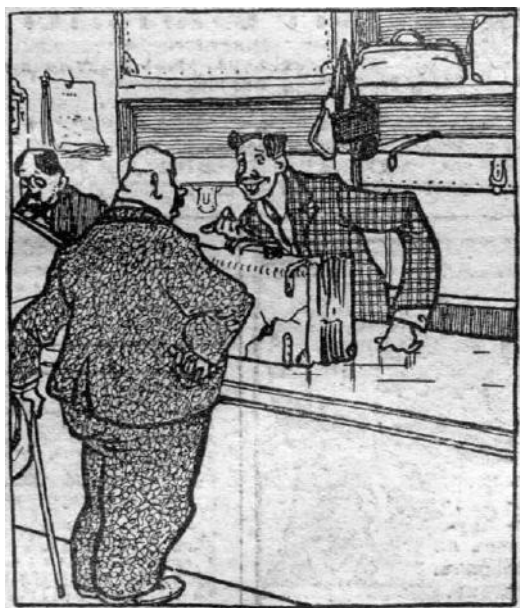
#### 4.2. The military theme in Russian caricature

The genre of caricature featured prominently various military subjects. It is a well-known fact that World War I provided a real-life testing environment for the massive use of the latest technology and weapons. A diverse array of warships used by opponents led to more complex surveillance techniques. For example, Ogoniok published a caricature of the modern sea warfare tactics in the summer of 1915 ([Fig. 18](#)).



**Fig. 18.** A modern technique of the naval warfare  
A triple observation post: for airplanes, for battleships and submarines  
Caricature for Ogoniok by A.I. Tavitsa ([Ogoniok. 1915. No. 31](#))

Caricatures on the military theme also reflected everyday life in the rear. For example, the motif of bursting "suitcases" was played with in the following caricature. The "suitcase" was an informal name for heavy shells of the German artillery during the war (Fig. 19).



**Fig. 19.** A little bit of politics

Customer: "Damn you... What suitcase have you sold to me! I bought it only yesterday, and it has already broken..."

Salesman: "It is obvious that you are a Russian; a German is pleased if his "suitcases" are broken."  
 Caricature for Ogoniok by A.I. T-tsa (Ogoniok. 1915. No. 31)

The theme of fighting in the Dardanelles Strait was referred to by Russian cartoonists in the summer of 1915. This formed the idea that not only Russia fought the enemy, but its allies as well (Fig. 20).



**Fig. 20.** French style Kebab.

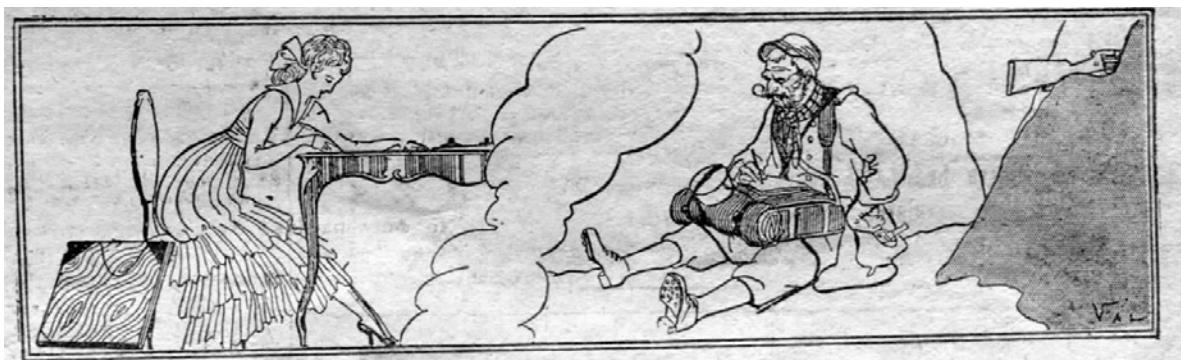
"It is almost ready..."

Caricature for Ogoniok by Yatak (Ogoniok. 1915. No. 28)

An essential part of measures was aimed at improving harsh conditions of life at the front. One of the methods was intensive correspondence that was sent from military positions to good-hearted women deep in the rear. These letters often failed to reach the addressee that soldiers drew in their imagination (Fig. 21).



Correspondence between military positions and the rear



She: "Fine, brave warrior! What is your life like on the front? What gift could I send to you?"

He: "A clay pipe, for God's sake! Damn Germans have smashed mine to pieces."



".....?" "A rose from your breast."



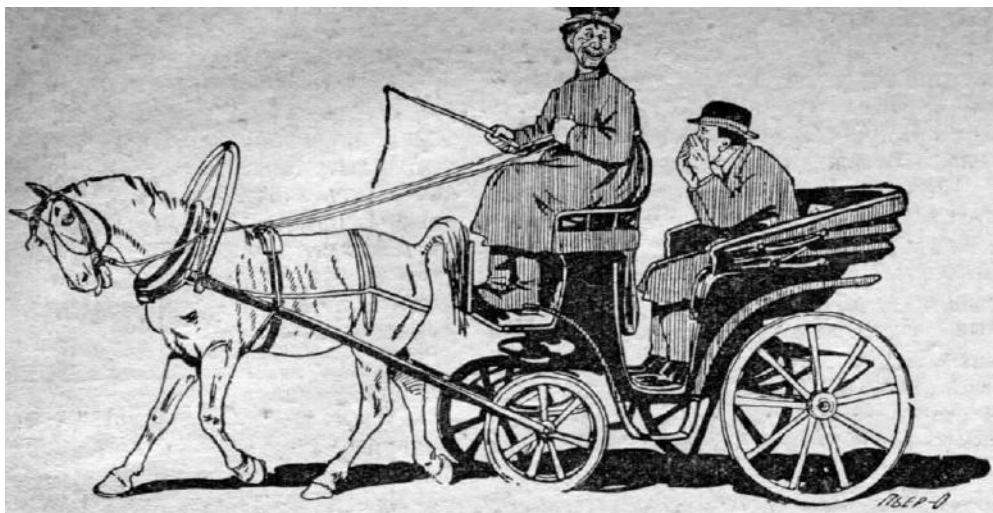
".....?" "A complete collection of Virgil and Bossuet. It is impossible to get it here."



**Fig. 21.** This served as a basis for many humorous anecdotes that provided a theme for caricatures by artist Valdes (The Sketca), shown below (Ogoniok. 1915. No. 28)

#### 4.3. Caricatures as a means of explaining the issues faced by society in the rear

In 1915, when the rear started having problems with the food supply and high prices, Ogoniok also began to publish caricatures on this urgent topic. For example, the problem of high prices was addressed in the caricature A Coachman in Wartime (Fig. 22).



**Fig. 22.** A coachman in wartime

"Why, Vanya, you've fleeced me out of half of the ruble, and are barely crawling now..?"

"Do you know that we're now paying 20 rubles per sack of oats?.."

"And why is your horse passing such stinking gas?.."

"And this is from barley because oats are too expensive and we feed it with barley"

Caricature for Ogoniok by Pier-O. (Ogoniok. 1915. No. 28)

The topic of the English humorous perception of the First World War events was also reflected in caricatures (Fig. 23, 24).

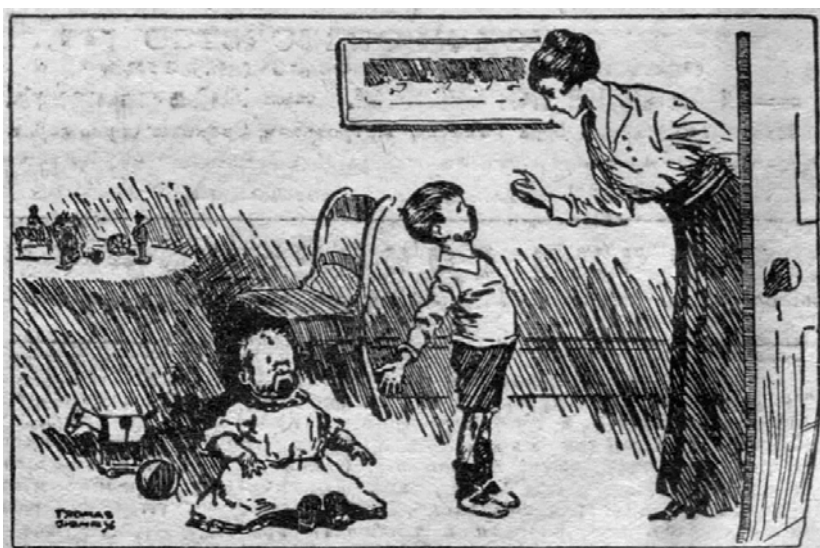


**Fig. 23.** Information for volunteer workers from the London aristocracy

Avoid going directly to your living room, when you come back from the factory, without first asking your maid. You may compromise yourself in the eyes of your guests.

(Sketch, London) (Ogoniok. 1915. No. 31)





**Fig. 24.** Mother: "Naughty boy! You've beaten your little brother again!"  
 Bobby: "He is babbling something in German all the time, I can't understand him at all!"  
 (Sketch, London) (Ogoniok. 1915. No. 31)

## 5. Conclusion

Summing up our review, we should conclude that the Ogoniok magazine focused its caricatures on the topic of Germany during World War I, while allies of Germany – Austria-Hungary and Turkey – were paid much less attention. The propaganda usually portrayed German allies in as puppet countries which were subordinate to Germany. In addition to the subject of the Entente's opponents, the periodical press also used the genre of caricature to address such themes as new military technologies and problems that society in the rear had to deal with.

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