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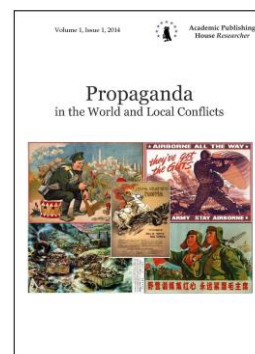
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## Articles

### At the Origins of the Don Military Propaganda: the Creative Work of M.Kh. Senyutkin

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#### Abstract

The paper explores a military patriotic component in the creative work of Mikhail Kh. Senyutkin, a person who, for the first time, organized structured military propaganda activities in the Don press in period of the Crimean War. The author shows that this was accomplished quite on the spur of the moment: M.Kh. Senyutkin, a trained lawyer, who built the major part of his career in the prosecutor's office and courts, found himself working as an editor of The Don Military Gazette (Donskiye Voyskovye Vedomosti) in the 1850s and, shortly after the outbreak of war, allowed to print military patriotic publications in the paper. Proceeding from M.Kh. Senyutkin's own oeuvre, the paper concludes that his efforts to systematize military propaganda were, nevertheless, meaningful – the Don lawyer viewed history as a study area of vital importance, which provided patriotic models to be followed. In his opinion, the history of Don Cossackdom was primarily shaped by its warfare legacy and essentially exemplified by the military exploits of Don units and particular Cossacks. At the same time, the paper shows that the oeuvre of M.Kh. Senyutkin was typical of the emerging Don military propaganda, and his reasoning gave explanations for some of its peculiarities, for example, the genre non-specificity of texts and authors' regular references to Russian poets, rather than professional historians.

**Keywords:** Don Cossack Host, Crimean War, military propaganda, Don Military Gazette, M.Kh. Senyutkin.

#### 1. Introduction

The name of M.Kh. Senyutkin is largely unknown both to the general public, and professional historians in comparison to other prominent Don figures. Even for those who pursue interest in the past of Don Cossacks, the author of the 19th century is pushed into the background by his more successful and talented contemporaries, such as V.D. Sukhorukov, Kh.I. Popov, A.A. Karasev, N.I. Krasnov or S.F. Nomikosov. However, when in the 1900s, the Ministry of War of the Russian Empire decided to commission someone to write the official history of the Cossack Host, General N.A. Maslakovets, speaking about “the importance of Cossacks for Russia”, chose the creative writing of none other than M.Kh. Senyutkin. The general cited a voluminous quote from the works

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of the Don author, a quote so eloquent that we will give it here verbatim: “Obedient to some instinctive fervent desire to defend the faith of Christ from the onslaught of Mohammedanism, these free warriors, being few in numbers, repel day and night, century after century, the primordial enemies of Russia, feeling neither exhaustion nor fatigue in their fight. Their eyes are unsleeping, and their ears never stop listening. They can sense it in the wind when the enemy approaches, pick up its smell and wend their way to it. The turbulent Azov, Black and Caspian Seas are unable to hamper them. Their barks sail as far as Sinop, Trebizond and Constantinople. These people are made of iron, whom, according to Frederick the Great, you can kill, but you can never defeat! Turks, Crimeans, Nogais and Circassians wanted to stop them. All in vain. Not only did Don Cossacks defeat them, but they wiped them out of their land. They are conquering vast expanses of Siberia, and eventually everything – and their victories, and glory, and life – bring to the Tsar of Russia, saying: We are your serfs, ready to serve, ready for the Orthodox faith and you, Sire!” (OR RNB. F. 1055. Ed. khr. 4. L. 29ob.-30).

The choice of M.Kh. Senyutkin's oeuvre, instead of one of the more distinguished Don historians, was not accidental when the authorities conceived to compile a formal historical work. M.Kh. Senyutkin's writing is pervaded with utmost patriotism and glorification of the service of Russian Cossacks. Moreover, it was he who was the founder of military propaganda on the Don: we showed in our previous articles that it was the period, when M.Kh. Senyutkin was the editor of The Don Military Gazette during the Crimean War, which marked first publications of patriotic texts in this only newspaper in the region, and quite in volume – eighteen publications in three years (Peretyatko, 2018: 44-45). And, since no professional studies into M.Kh. Senyutkin's creative activity has been done so far (except a very concise popular essay compiled by an amateur local historian N.F. Bichekhvost (Bichekhvost, 2012), which can be found on the Internet), our paper will be an attempt to review the military patriotic component in the Don author's writing, which proved to come at the right time.

## 2. Materials and methods

M.Kh. Senyutkin's greatest creation was a two-volume edition “Dontsy”, published in Moscow in 1866 (Senyutkin, 1866a; Senyutkin, 1866b). Speaking of its genre, it can be categorized rather as a collection of historical and journalistic articles, which is implied by the subtitle given by the author himself: “Historical sketches of military operations, biographies of the last century's military officers, stories from modern life and a perspective to the history of the Don Host” (Senyutkin, 1866a: flyleaf). In a brief foreword, M.Kh. Senyutkin wrote that he initially planned to create a comprehensive history of Don Cossacks – “from the time of Pugachev's rebellion” to the middle of the 19th century, but the intention was at first thwarted by the abundance of illegible sources in a poor state of preservation, and later by the author's eye disease and a fire in the archives (Senyutkin, 1866a). In the end, M.Kh. Senyutkin simply included in his book all the texts he created on historical topics and topics close to history. There also were two stories, published in 1858 in The Don Military Gazette: “An episode from the Crimean campaign” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 63-67) and “The old hunter in the war” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 68-79). The stories are also of interest because they crowned the surge in patriotic publishing activity, inspired by the Crimean War, in The Don Military Gazette. (Peretyatko, 2018: 46). In addition, M.Kh. Senyutkin published an extensive essay “A Look on the History of the Don Host” at the end of the second volume, which discussed, in particular, the military and patriotic role of historical texts (Senyutkin, 1866b: 157-194). The three minor works of the author, who was the initiator of the first attempt to systematize military propaganda in the Don region, enable a perspective on the goals he set in his activities, as well as on the means used. We should only analyze them using comparative and descriptive methods to build an understanding what the military propaganda, offered by M.Kh. Senyutkin, was like.

## 3. Discussion

The key source of the information we know of M.Kh. Senyutkin is a small essay in the classic treatise on the Cossack historiography – “Dontsy of the 19th century” (Dontsy, 2003: 439-440). With reference to the essay, it can be seen that M.Kh. Senyutkin was born in 1825, received his legal education at the Kharkov University, held various positions in the Don Host civil administration from 1848, retired in 1871 and died in 1879 (Dontsy, 2003: 439-440). Everything

suggests that he was not much of an influencer even during his lifetime. In a larger portion of his career (from 1858 to 1867), the Don author had important, but subordinate appointments in a variety of prosecutor's offices and courts: he was a district judge, deputy host prosecutor and vice chairman of the host commercial court (Dontsy, 2003: 440). The lawyer's attention to literature and history was more likely associated with his appointment as editor of The Don Military Gazette in 1851 (Dontsy, 2003: 440). Be that as it may, no information of M.Kh. Senyutkin's earlier literary efforts survived; moreover, after he left the editor position in 1858, there was a marked slump in his creative activity: in the 1850s, he was one of the most industrious authors in The Don Military Gazette unofficial section, while in the 1860s, he almost abandoned publications there (Dontsy, 2003: 440; Volvenko, 2015b: 97). Alexey A. Volvenko in his series of papers on the social confrontation between conservative-minded Cossacks and liberal progressists, which took place in the Don region in the early 1860s, almost does not mention M.Kh. Senyutkin, although some materials in the latter's book were written at that very time and were quite in line with a true spirit of Cossack-mania or so called Kazakomanstvo (Volvenko, 2015a; Volvenko, 2015b; Volvenko, 2015c).

A note should also be added to this that M.Kh. Senyutkin's two most fundamental works, which constituted the first volume of his "Dontsy", are devoted to a very peculiar topic that pre-revolutionary historiography did not explore. "Military activities of Don Cossacks against Devlet Giray and Pugachev" delivers a meticulous description of the Don Army history in 1773 and 1774, including its internal state as well as benefits and favors bestowed from above (Senyutkin, 1866a: 1-89). A note should be made that the work originally appeared in the metropolitan press, in the renown *Sovremennik* in 1854 (Senyutkin, 1854). In a brief introduction to the publication, M.Kh. Senyutkin wrote that his purpose was to "prove that Don Cossacks, always eager to die for the faith, the tsar and the fatherland, not only did display intolerance towards Pugachev and all villains like him, but even, we can state with confidence, were Tsaritsyn's salvagers from the devastation by Pugachev, the most crucial participants in the final defeat of this impostor at Cherny Yar and main heroes behind his capture and conveyance to the hands of the government" (Senyutkin, 1854: 45). Therefore, in essence, the work by M.Kh. Senyutkin communicated a patriotic message and could spur a patriotic upsurge among Cossacks during the Crimean War if delivered in a more skillful presentation. However, this prospect was impaired by the author's desire to remain a historian rather than a propagandist – M.Kh. Senyutkin made no references to contemporary events in his text, his style was rather ponderous, and descriptions contained too much detail for the general reader.

On the other hand, to write a superior historical treatise, M.Kh. Senyutkin should not only have had appropriate education, but he also was carried away by the all-or-nothing approach typical of a young age in achieving the set goal and proving Don Cossacks' devotion to the throne. For example, the better part of his preface concentrates on criticizing Alexander S. Pushkin's "A history of Pugachev's rebellion" for misrepresenting the role of Don Cossacks: "There are some places in his history, which are lacking in historical credibility, namely those where he described Don Cossacks' actions against Pugachev. The description he provided is so incomplete and inaccurate that, when comparing it with the official documents we have uncovered in the Host Archives, you do not know what the mistakes of the author, who was appreciated for his discretion and objectivity, can be ascribed to" (Senyutkin, 1854: 44). By praising the exploits of Cossacks with his youthful ardor, M.Kh. Senyutkin transformed his text into a kind of rhapsody in their favor. In this context, very indicative is the excessively panegyric portrayal of Ataman Semyen N. Sulin, which would have been overly exuberant even if taking a more prominent commander: "Not displaying much valor in his actions, Sulin had, however, enough courage to firmly withstand all the tribulations and adversaries that threatened his host. Where other chiefs, perhaps though their temerity or, on the contrary, through their weak-willed indecision, would have rocked the entire boat of the cause for the sake of the public good, Sulin showed prudent forethought in his orders; in no situation did he take risk haphazardly, against every danger from enemies did he take precautions and, what is more remarkable, he was able to handle matters in such a smart manner and with so few resources that enemy designs against the Don were ruined as if on their own accord, failing to accomplish their intended purpose" (Senyutkin, 1854: 48).

From our view point, a greater balance and a happier presentation in a purely historical aspect was achieved by M.Kh. Senyutkin in his second major work – "Military Activities of Don Cossacks against Nogai Tatars" (*Voyennye deystviya dontsov protiv nogayskikh tatar*) (Senyutkin,

1866a: 91-180). Its first edition also came out in the metropolitan press, in *Voenny Sbornik* (Military Collection), in 1860 (Senyutkin, 1860). Significantly, this time the Don author avoided prefacing his work with a declaration of patriotic goals. Instead, he emphasized its academic novelty in a small comment, pointing out that “main materials for this article” were “reports from the host archives”, part of which he published in *The Don Military Gazette*, and, of printed works, he primarily used first-hand accounts (Senyutkin, 1860: 345). M.Kh. Senyutkin no longer entered the fray with more competent researchers, and gave noticeably more reserved assessments to Don leaders. For comparison, we will quote the characterization he gave this time to a truly outstanding Don ataman, Alexey I. Ilovayskii: “It is hard to outline the character of a historical figure if you can only take few accounts of his contemporaries into consideration; but judging by the deeds that remained after Ilovayskii's administration and the important testimony about him made by Potemkin to the empress, we can beyond all doubt conclude that he was an energetic, pious, kind and honest man, with a devout allegiance to the throne and his homeland, accessible to all, being for that loved and respected by Cossacks” (Senyutkin, 1860: 349). It is even more interesting that further M.Kh. Senyutkin noted: the ataman achieved the successes not only thanks to these qualities, but also thanks to “frequent stays in the capital and refined demeanor” (Senyutkin, 1860: 349). We can state that, while retaining a clear patriotic focus, M.Kh. Senyutkin markedly progressed in his efforts, and if he had continued active historical studies, his history of the Don Host would have become an invaluable material, probably not in terms of the author's concepts and ideas, but as the work that introduced new archival sources and factual materials into scholarly research.

On the other hand, all the above offers a plausible explanation why M.Kh. Senyutkin and his works were almost forgotten within a short time. In a way, he was ahead of his epoch. In the middle of the 19th century, history was only an emerging subject on the Don with small popular articles and rather generalized historical and statistical descriptions as leading genres, and against this background, two main studies of M.Kh. Senyutkin, which relied on an archival basis and went into minute detail in describing periods in the Don Host history of minor importance, appeared simply irrelevant. The fact that the works were published in the capitals, also played against him, while other Don authors mainly targeted the local press. M.Kh. Senyutkin's closest contemporary, a renown Cossack statistician, N.I. Krasnov, compiled “An overview of the main sources” on the history of the Don Host in 1863, which made no mention at all of both metropolitan publications of the author we discuss here (Krasnov, 1863: 1-7). Nevertheless, “An overview” highly commended M.Kh. Senyutkin's articles on the fight of the Cossacks against Devlet Giray and Ye.I. Pugachev (“the latter of them is virtually the only material available to examine the influence of Pugachev's rebellion on Don Cossacks”) (Krasnov, 1863: 3). But M.Kh. Senyutkin's writing about the conflicts between Cossacks and Nogais, were either of no interest, or unknown to N.I. Krasnov. In 1884, S.F. Nomikosov, Secretary of the Don Statistical Committee, in a similar overview of works on the Don history, defined M.Kh. Senyutkin's “Dontsy” as a book that “deserved attention”, but only “partially” without anyhow clarifying this odd assessment and further ranking A.I. Rigelman's studies, for example, much higher (Nomikosov, 1884: 4). Finally, A.A. Kirillov, in his “Attempt in the bibliography of the Don history” in 1909, attributed some “Monograph on the Nogais” to M.Kh. Senyutkin, “where he also touched upon Pugachev's rebellion, depicting it only as an isolated episode in this story (which story the context didn't spell out exactly – A.P.)” (Kirillov, 1909: 20). All these give you impression that more recent Don amateur historians (and professional historians appeared on the Don only in the early 20th century) simply did not understand how to make use of M.Kh. Senyutkin's detailed and solid works largely dedicated to insignificant clashes of Cossacks with Tatars and Nogais. If researchers continued to show interest to his works, it was above all connected to their study of the Peasants' War 1773–75 and Pugachev's rebellion. A.A. Kirillov's mistake is particularly characteristic in this regard: it is clear that in all his explorations, M.Kh. Senyutkin invested most of his time and efforts into discovery of Don Cossacks' history, and he did not write any “Monograph on the Nogais”, but for the more recent historian the name of his predecessor was essentially associated with the study of Nogais. Add to this the relatively short duration of M.Kh. Senyutkin's exercises in history and the half-oblivion that befell his works will become quite understandable: a kind of the canon of the Don pre-revolutionary historiography encompassed the works of more prominent authors who studied the Don region all their lives and addressed more popular topics.

As a summary we can state that propaganda activity in M.Kh. Senyutkin's biography was rather a spontaneous, although not entirely random episode. Having received a legal education, he eventually opted for a judicial career over editorial and academic work. But even in his published works, the Don author made sincere efforts to be a scholar by caring about archival documents and insufficiently studied events, which was not typical of his generation. Except one thing – M.Kh. Senyutkin was a staunch patriot, and, looking at his principled criticism of A.S. Pushkin for him not characterizing the role of Don Cossacks in suppressing Pugachev's rebellion in a positive enough way, we can assert he was a Don patriot. Such sentiments were quite common in the general Cossack society. For example, I.S. Ul'yanov, who actively cooperated with The Don Military Gazette in their military patriotic propaganda undertakings during the Crimean War, similarly attacked N.M. Karamzin himself in his works: "The feats and mores of Yermak, as well as the feats and mores of the then Don Cossacks, have not yet been comprehended. The worst mistakes of the so-called historians, even of Karamzin himself, include, to name a few, the fact that this people and its amazing Ataman are judged by present standards, and some perhaps even by the Code of Laws, issued in 1834" (GARO. F. 243. Op. 1. D. 28. L. 41-41ob.). Years later, in the 1890s, A.A. Chigrintsev, Novocherkassk prosecutor, complained about Cossacks' "Don-specific patriotism": "We, Cossacks say, have served the Russian state with our blood for three hundred years, but... Cossack blood is only an inconsiderable part in the sea of Russian blood, and why should every drop of this blood be worth its weight in gold?!" (OR RNB. F. 1055. Ed. khr. 24. L. 3-3ob.). It was only natural that, being a patriot, a very conscientious person and a history lover, after the outbreak of the Crimean War, M.Kh. Senyutkin poured himself into publishing literary and historical texts with a patriotic bias, both about events of today and from Cossacks' past, on the pages of The Don Military Gazette he was entrusted to oversee. And it was just similarly natural that, soon after the end of the war, the Don author's enthusiasm about such military propaganda quickly waned, and later M.Kh. Senyutkin never returned to his attempts to revive it. And indeed, in his own creative activity, the patriotic line of literary texts was limited to two stories written in 1858 and dedicated to recent events, and his major historical works demonstrated his evolutionary trend towards deeper academic studies.

And it is good to mention and emphasize another very important detail. The majority of the 19th century Don authors, who were engaged in one way or another in military propaganda, left behind only patriotic articles and stories, not conceptual reflections on the role of such texts. Moreover, the authors were, as a rule, amateur writers, and their entire heritage only survived in one or two such works. In particular, it was during the Crimean War that a mathematics teacher in the Novocherkassk gymnasium, F.I. Anisimov wrote the poem "It's been roused, it's been stirred the Christian Quiet Don" (Vskolykhnuhsya, vzvolnovalsya pravoslavnyy Tikhiy Don), which later became the anthem of the Don Host and Rostov Region. However, very few other facts about F.I. Anisimov have made it to our days, and his other literary works are unknown. The only description of F.I. Anisimov, which has outlived the time to this day, characterized him as a teacher and was given by the administration of the Kharkov Educational District ("Demonstrates particular talents and love for mathematical sciences where he has already acquired very great knowledge and shows a considerable promise that over time he will become a useful scientist in this area") (Artinskii, 1907: 98). Against this background, M.Kh. Senyutkin's "A Look on the History of the Don Host", which is definitely a conceptual text that clearly reflects the author's approach to historical and patriotic works, sharply grows in importance. "A Look on the History of the Don Host" is illuminating in explaining why military patriotic propaganda and history were not just interwoven for M.Kh. Senyutkin, but constituted a coherent whole, and it was a duty of a historian to act as a propagandist.

The work of interest to us falls into a genre that stands out from the rest Don historiography. According to M.Kh. Senyutkin's own term, it is an "Epilogue" to the two-volume "Dontsy", but at the same time he provided a definition for the epilogue from antiquity: "the ancients called an epilogue a speech which one of the lead actors delivered directly to the audience at the end of a play and which typically contained some considerations related to the play and roles performed in it by actors" (Senyutkin, 1866b: 156). We would identify "A Look on the History of the Don Host" as a historical essay of a kind, a subjective expression of the thoughts that were supposed to be included in M.Kh. Senyutkin's history of Don Cossacks, which he never wrote. And, the first paragraph already made it clear that M.Kh. Senyutkin envisioned the history as a military patriotic account of

past events. He opened his reasoning with a crucial quote by N.M. Karamzin: “History is, in a sense, a sacred book for nations, an overarching, vital mirror of their existence and activity, an ancestral commandment to descendants, an extension to the present and an example for the future” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 157). Having thus delineating the significance of history as a singular model for actions to be undertaken today and tomorrow, M.Kh. Senyutkin stressed that the history of Don Cossacks remained obliterate: “Who of us knows the history of the Don Host? Who concerns themselves about it with enthusiasm and with pleasure?” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 157). And M.Kh. Senyutkin attached particular importance to saving Cossacks’ military history from forgetfulness: “Who appreciates Don Cossacks’ unfadable acts of courage, the likes of which are hard to come by in another history? <...>. Nowadays there are many among us who like amusing themselves with Don stories simply as a form of entertainment, out of sheer idleness, like with fairy tales about Yeruslan Lazarevich and Bova Korolevich; and even if they sometimes express surprise at the brave deeds of Don Cossacks, they do it so grudgingly and cold-bloodedly that they seem to be ready to immediately, for the benefit of others, switch their surprise to reproach” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 157-158). We can see, from M.Kh. Senyutkin’s viewpoint, the very exploration of Don history “as a form of entertainment”, not out of esteem for the “brave deeds of Don Cossacks” deserved condemnation, and, ultimately, a historian had to restore the “ancestral commandment to descendants”, the moral message of which, evidently, was to be permanently ready to perform these deeds.

Guided by such attitudes, M.Kh. Senyutkin further formulated the very definition of Cossacks’ importance for Russia, which later N.A. Maslakovets proposed integrating into the official Cossack history and which we cited at the beginning of our paper. Moreover, as the Don author admired the heroic conduct of historical Cossacks, he compared them with the legendary figures of ancient history. “The fate of the handful of Don Cossacks, triumphing over numerous enemies around them, seems to epitomize Moses’ prescient words: one would chase a thousand, and two would put tens thousand to flight” M.Kh. Senyutkin wrote (Senyutkin, 1866b: 160). After that, it elucidates why the works by Russian historians about Don Cossacks were unable to satisfy M.Kh. Senyutkin, and he once so strongly disapproved of A.S. Pushkin for his unsparing assessment of the Don Host’s operation during Ye.I. Pugachev’s rebellion. In “A Look on the History of the Don Host”, the Don researcher also denounced most of the studies into the Don past for being “bad compilations”, and contrasted historians... with the poets who managed to gain insight into the true nature of Cossack history: “Some of our famous poets, endowed with a better aesthetic sense than historians, were enraptured with the historical events on the Don and extolled Cossacks’ deeds of arms to the skies” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 158-160). Although M.Kh. Senyutkin’s selection of “our famous poets” was rather curious. It included Vasily A. Zhukovsky (with his poem about Platov: “Praise be to our storm of the ataman, / Leader of the invincible Platov! / Your enchanted lasso – / Terror of wretched foes”), Ivan I. Dmitriev (with his verse about Yermak: “But you, a great man, / You will march with demigods abreast / From generation to generation, from century to century!”) and D.P. Oznobishin (with his verse about Cossacks’ participation in the Patriotic War of 1812: “The Tsar cried out: ‘Where’s my Don, indeed?’ / And to feet thou sprang, Don, / And thine every son was a warrior. / Thou covered the steppes with ears of steel, / And in the Seine thou watered high-spirited steeds”) (Senyutkin, 1866b: 160-161). Understandably, to actually be listed in this selection, it was not a poet’s real significance and “aesthetic sense”, which mattered, but the fact that he created lines glorifying Cossacks: otherwise it is impossible to explain the absence of A.S. Pushkin with his excerpts in his classic book, “A History of Pugachev’s Rebellion”, which criticized the Don Host, and the presence of D.P. Oznobishin with his long-forgotten poem.

Still, these reasoning of M.Kh. Senyutkin explains very well the work of his contemporaries. For example, in his writings of the first half of the 19th century, I.S. Ul’yanov also compared Cossacks with the legendary figures of ancient history, although instead of personages from Moses’ prophecies, he chose Homeric characters: “Despite the motley apparels, which were punctured with bullets or showed traces of guerrilla raids and bivouac fire, despite their tanned faces, singed mustache and eyebrows, we seemed to see Homer’s legendary heroes in the Cossacks. The very swiftness, with which they closed round the common cauldron and extended their victorious hands to the dishes presented, proved the affinity of this comparison” (Ul’yanov, 1902: 58). In his writings, he also referred to the works of Russian poets as serious historical sources, and



interestingly, his references included V.A. Zhukovsky (with his verse about Cossacks' participation in the Patriotic War of 1812: "Hardly did they reach the wood – the wood has come to life, / Trees are shooting arrows! / Hardly to the bridge – the bridge has gone! / Hardly to the villages – the villages ablaze!" (GARO. F. 243. Op. 1. D. 28. L. 35ob.)). Moreover, we have shown in one of our previous papers, genre ambiguity and pretensions of propaganda texts to the status of being a piece of historical scholarship were in principle very characteristic of the patriotic Don authors of the 19th century (Peretyatko, 2019: 17). And with all in mind, we can say that central ideas in "A Look on the History of the Don Host" can be used as a key to analyze not only M.Kh. Senyutkin's creative work, but also that of other 19th century Don authors, at least for those whose works can be distinguished by the "Don-specific patriotism".

A more characteristic feature is, in our opinion, is fact that for M.Kh. Senyutkin, Don patriotism was a totally inherent part of Russian patriotism. He gave the following description of the relations between the Don region and Russia, which later were a stumbling block for many Cossack authors: "Does the Don Host itself not gravitate toward its great mother Russia as eternally as the moon toward the earth; in its movement, does it not in the same obey to her laws, producing the ebb and flow of masses of her people by its attraction?" (Senyutkin, 1866b: 161). And, strictly speaking, the underlying cause for M.Kh. Senyutkin's complaint against historians was precisely their alleged misunderstanding of Cossacks' fundamental nature. According to M.Kh. Senyutkin, two opinions prevailed among historians: one group denied Cossacks of Russian origin, while the other considered them to be descendants of Russian brigands (Senyutkin, 1866b: 162-166). However, from the very time they came into being, Don Cossacks actually were "warriors of Christ, who consecrated themselves to eternal war with Mohammedans for the faith of Christ, for Orthodox Russia" (Senyutkin, 1866b: 166).

As a summary, we can formulate a methodological framework M.Kh. Senyutkin relied on in his historical research. He believed that a Don historian's duty was to act as a patriot at all times, who explored the past of his home land through the lens of love for the heroic deeds of his ancestors and to pass on their positive experience to future generations. At the same time, the very subject of his study, Don Cossacks, was always represented by soldiers who laid down their lives to defending Christianity and Russia. Hence, it is not a chance coincidence by any means that the key focus in M.Kh. Senyutkin's works was made precisely the military history of Cossacks, and this history was by and large interpreted as a history of deeds of arms, which provided lessons to be learnt. Such ideas were not nearly original – their basic provisions were shared by many contemporaries of the Don author. However, it was the meticulous M.Kh. Senyutkin who stated them on paper, tried to distill them down to a coherent and comprehensive system of beliefs, and also maintained the most remarkable consistency in putting the theoretical views expressed into practice. In fact, this explains his scholarly attention to less obvious topics. M.Kh. Senyutkin's ambition, we know, was to write a history of Don Cossacks "from the time of Pugachev's rebellion", and, primarily interpreting it as a military history, he structured his work based on Cossacks' clashes with some or other enemy. But, since each feat of Cossacks played its role and deserved attention, he obviously planned not only to elaborate on milestone events, but highlight all such clashes. It then becomes clear that "Military Activities of Don Cossacks against Devlet Giray and Pugachev" and "Military Activities of Don Cossacks against Nogai Tatars" were the first two sections of the book he conceived. Unfortunately, in reality, the approach not only proved to be somewhat naive, but it suffered, as we showed above, from an internal contradiction: by packing his texts with historical facts and concentrating on less studied episodes, M.Kh. Senyutkin was not well-positioned to create patriotic works that could win popularity with general readers, and his idealized representation of Cossacks inhibited him from conducting a truly scholarly and objective study. But only an insight into M.Kh. Senyutkin's theoretical views on history will enable us to understand why military propaganda developed in the Don region in parallel with historical studies, often by some of the most prominent amateur historians, and their creations were often difficult to unambiguously categorize either as a research or propaganda genre.

The remainder of "A Look on the History of Don Cossacks", which interprets the history of Don Cossacks according to the views, as described above, is less interesting to us. We can simply state that attempts to idealize Cossacks and justify their shameful actions by military and religious motives are taken to extremes there. For example, the 18-19th century history was described by M.Kh. Senyutkin through the prism of wars and biographies of F.P. Denisov and M.I. Platov, and

the author employs the following maxim to characterize it: “In all the wars, they (Cossacks – A.P.) are at the forefront: they are the first to start and the last to finish engagements with the enemy” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 183). On the other hand, speaking about Cossack uprisings against the Russian state, M.Kh. Senyutkin writes: “Revolts have always been an anomaly in the life of the Cossacks who have been devoutly faithful to their tsars from time immemorial. Some historians, by distorting the true causes of the indignation, in vain exert themselves to find in them a pretext to make sweeping accusation against all Cossacks. History proves that Don Cossacks were never fond of such wrong phenomena of the public life and with admirable zeal they hurried to quench the flames as soon as possible, they break out” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 181). Even Cossacks’ propensity to plunder those who attacked the Don was justified by the author because they “were perhaps guided by the examples of Jews who conquered the once Promised Land” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 167).

Interestingly, this time M.Kh. Senyutkin came within touching distance of creating a full-fledged propaganda text. Some of the episodes he recounted were already suitable for full-fledged military patriotic propaganda of the early 20th century. For example, the picture of F.P. Denisov’s first battle thanks to its outright mythologization and dubious realism anticipates the descriptions of the acclaimed exploits of K.F. Kryuchkov during World War I. “Denisov, like fabulous Russian bogatyr Ilya Muromets, sat without stirring in his Pyatiizbyanskaya stanitsa for thirty years, as if summoning up his strength to amaze the world with his heroic prowess. <...>. Once Field Marshal Rumyantsev, when he looked through a spyglass at the sides fighting in a battle (this was the famous Battle of Larga), was surprised to notice some horseman, in a light blue caftan, on a white horse, striking each Turkish and Tatar warrior who ran into him, and wherever he turned, Turks and Tatars fled from him in terror! Marveling at the art and courage of the stranger, the count wished to know who it was, and when, after claiming the victory, the brave man in the blue caftan was introduced to him, the field marshal’s first question was: ‘Who are you?’ ‘I am Cossack Denisov’, the stranger answered”, M.Kh. Senyutkin wrote (Senyutkin, 1866b: 183-184). For comparison, here is an excerpt describing the military exploits of K.F. Kryuchkov from a 1914 brochure with undisguised propaganda contents: “Kozma Kryuchkov on his fast horse outdistanced his comrades and was the first to storm into the enemy detachment. The other Cossacks who drew up in time saw Kryuchkov for a moment, surrounded by the Prussians and chopping them right and left with his sabre. Then, people and horses – everything merged a close fight. <...>. At this time, two Prussians with pikes pounced on Kryuchkov, trying to throw him from the saddle, but Kryuchkov grabbed the enemy pikes with his hands, jerked at them, and unhorsed both Germans. After that, armed with a Prussian pike, Kryuchkov rushed into battle again” (Nelyubin, 1914: 13-14). With all dissimilar details of the of the two descriptions, the literary and journalistic similarity of their genre is of little doubt. Such passages would have certainly been incongruous in a research work.

Therefore, the main part of “A Look on the History of the Don Host” is a succinct description of the history of Don Cossacks, containing literary and journalistic features, which could have been leveraged as military propaganda with much greater success than M.Kh. Senyutkin’s previous works. However, the author himself considered the text exclusively as an epilogue to his collected writings, and, to our knowledge, never sought to publish it in a serial title that was more accessible to the general public. This explains why “A Look on the History of the Don Host” was actually forgotten (we only managed to uncover a reference to in the work by A.A. Kirillov, who insisted that this material “merits special attention of the Don historian”, the attention the author never received (Kirillov, 1909: 20).

As we are now acquainted with M.Kh. Senyutkin’s views on the role of history as an area of scholarly interest and on the importance of historical research, we can much better understand two of his patriotic stories, published in The Don Military Gazette soon after the end of the Crimean War. Although contemporaries considered them to be literary works, this is actually not quite right (Strukov, 1878: 53-54). In fact, the works reproduced accounts from the heroes of the Crimean and Caucasian wars – Pyotr Filin (“An Episode from the Crimean Campaign”) and Osip Zubov (“The Old Hunter in the War”), which had undergone ostensible literary adaptation. Again, we can emphasize the resemblance of the texts with the writings of other contemporaries: as we noted in previous papers, it was from the time of the Crimean War when Don patriotic literature developed a crucial plotline – a “panegyric for a historical or a living hero, with a claim to historical credibility, which in fact, however, will hardly lend itself to any verification and is founded on

hearsay and all kinds of stories, and sometimes even just the author's imagination ([Peretyatko, 2019: 17](#)).

However, M.Kh. Senyutkin's materials have salient features meaning that the author did not rush at all to believe in the accounts given by heroes of past wars; moreover, he made some attempts yet very tremulous to verify them. For example, he compared the story of P. Filin with the reports of two regimental commanders ([Senyutkin, 1866b: 205](#)). He checked the story related by O. Zubov with press articles about him ([Senyutkin, 1866b: 68](#)). So, it is likely that M.Kh. Senyutkin himself treated the works of his not as literary, but as historical writings, a kind of the original source publication. This sheds light on why he published the texts after the Crimean War ended, when they became no longer relevant in terms of military propaganda.

The plot and composition of "An Episode from the Crimean Campaign" and "The Old Hunter in the War" are constructed in the same way. The author happens upon a war hero, starts asking him and writes down the first-hand accounts, filled with admiration for the deed of arms. At the same time, "An Episode from the Crimean Campaign" is conceptually much cruder and less shallow in content. The narrator, P. Filin, was not provided with any characterization by the author, the latter only mentions that Filin was a gymnasium student before the war ([Senyutkin, 1866b: 63](#)). And the story itself is rather depersonalized. He describes only two episodes: a battle between Russians and Turks near Yevpatoria ([Senyutkin, 1866b: 63-66](#)) and the subsequent awarding of Cossacks ([Senyutkin, 1866b: 66-67](#)). In the battle, the key role is given not to P. Filin, but to his commander, Sergeant (uryadnik) Pismenskov, who not only led the detachment with courage and skill without panicking, but also delivered a speech before the battle, which bore surprising correspondence with M.Kh. Senyutkin's views: "Boys! We have now a chance to show our worth. Let us prove in practice that we are no cowards, that we, like our glorious ancestors, can defeat enemies and would rather die for our faith, our Tsar and our fatherland than turn tail" ([Senyutkin, 1866b: 64](#)). The very description of the battle is given in a very truncated manner: "Our hearts flared up... With a cry 'Attack!' we charged at the enemy... The Turks, after a short resistance, were beaten and fled" ([Senyutkin, 1866b: 64](#)). However, there is an interesting scene in P. Filin's story, which lends credibility and a kind of persuasive literary power to the whole account: the narrator himself got stuck in thick mud on a lake shore during the battle, his horse got bogged down in the ooze, and he describes in the greatest detail exactly how he struggled to free the horse while reinforcements arrived to the Turks and his own detachment already began to retreat ([Senyutkin, 1866b: 64](#)).

And yet, the combat description proper of "An Episode from the Crimean Campaign" is rather stereotyped with the gist running that a Cossack detachment, impressed by the patriotic speech of its commander, defeated a numerically superior detachment of Turks. Odd as it may seem, the second episode – the episode where the distinguished Cossacks are decorated for courage – is more thoughtful and speaks better about the author. We would like to give in full the part of the greatest conceptual significance. "Meanwhile, another joy awaited me. Hardly had I, upon arrival from the section, made myself comfortable for rest in the apartment of a friend of Cornet Khoperskov, then again I received an order – to present myself immediately to their Imperial Highnesses, Grand Dukes Nicholas and Michael Nikolaevich, who were in the Crimea at the time. Upon my arrival, Grand Duke Michael Nikolaevich asked me with kindness: 'Well, tell us how you distinguished yourself'. When I recounted to them in words how it all happened, His Highness went to his room, brought out a pocket watch with a gold chain, and, bestowing it on me, said: 'This is your reward from my brother and me, and besides, we will ask the commander-in-chief to award you a George'. Deeply moved by their benevolent attitude towards me, I bowed, unable then to find words to express my most heartfelt gratitude" ([Senyutkin, 1866b: 66](#)). This almost parodic veneration for the members of the imperial family and the delight of meeting them, combined with Sergeant Pismenskov's speech before the battle, allow us to more accurately interpret the underlying idea of "An Episode from the Crimean Campaign". As a reminder, M.Kh. Senyutkin considered it crucial to learn from historical examples, and from the story of P. Filin allows for an inference that victories are achieved by Cossacks not just thanks to their patriotism, but thanks to patriotism with a definite monarchical coloring.

The story "The Old Hunter in the War" is deeper and much more elaborate. The figure of the narrator, O. Zubov, is essential here as the man appears to personify perhaps even the ideal of an ordinary Cossack for the author. M.Kh. Senyutkin set a specific stress that in the outward

appearance of his character, “there was nothing noteworthy: small in stature, a lean old-looking face, gray eyes with a meek expression, a medium physique, a Cossack manner in movements” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 68). However, O. Zubov was notable for a silver cross he wore on his neck, granted by Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, and for the glory that his name won after the Crimean War (Senyutkin, 1866b: 68). The very encounter between M.Kh. Senyutkin and O. Zubov is key for understanding the idea of the story: a young official met an old hero on business, when the latter was delighted to learn that he was again assigned to serve in the theater of military operations, in the Caucasus, and, together with his colleagues, could not but ask him about past events (Senyutkin, 1866b: 68-69). O. Zubov described the past in detail, but without exaggeration, “sensing the value of his military feats, <but> not attaching too great importance to them” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 69). The old Cossack did not seek fame, but was eager to serve the throne and his home land, and even “was sorry that he had been the only one of all Don Cossacks, who happened to take part in sorties near Sevastopol” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 69).

And the stories of O. Zubov only intensified and complemented the image of an inconspicuous hero, created by M.Kh. Senyutkin right at the start of his narration. The renowned warrior began his recital with a statement that he “is not the same in words as he is in deeds”, and if he could have also “easily write”, he would have become an officer long ago (Senyutkin, 1866b: 69-70). Further, it turned out that the old Cossack joined the army as early as in 1823, took part in the Caucasian War and in the suppression of the Polish Uprising of 1830–1831, and already at that time “for his courage was one of the most reckless Cossacks”, but was passed over for awards and ranks (Senyutkin, 1866b: 70-71). Interestingly, the only award mentioned of the time was received by him not for a military feat, but for rescuing a woman and a child from a fire in a Polish village (Senyutkin, 1866b: 71-72). In 1845, O. Zubov retired by age, but the Crimean War broke out, and he could no longer sit idly in his home village: “I heard rumors that many peasants joined militia and set off to help the army – to defend their faith, their tsar and fatherland with all their might and main. It was then that I also felt a strong urge to go there. I thought to myself: Good God! My fatherland is being menaced by enemies, everyone, even peasants are arming themselves, but for me it is as if nothing had happened – I am sitting untroubled in my smithy and hammering iron” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 72). A certain anonymous Cossack, having learned about the old man’s wish to join the army, offered him 800 rubles and all his equipment as long as O. Zubov “replaces him on duty”, but the future hero rejected such an offer, regarding it as humiliating (Senyutkin, 1866b: 72).

Near Sevastopol, O. Zubov indeed showed himself as one of the true “warriors of Christ, who consecrated themselves to eternal war with Mohammedans for the faith of Christ, for Orthodox Russia”. He was even more in his element on the battlefield than in a peaceful village: “How well I kept out of misconduct, sir, when I was a soldier serving, so to say, on death’s doorstep! If you think, what life I lead here – only sins. And there, I will tell you in truth, not a single sin, not a single evil thought did ever come into my mind. I used to light an icon lampion before an icon in my dugout at night and pray, reading psalms from the psalter of prophet-king David. And I used to be so light of heart!” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 73). And again M.Kh. Senyutkin delivers idealized and conditional descriptions of actual combat operations, as he did in “An Episode from the Crimean Campaign” or in “A Look on the History of the Don Host”: “As we drew nearer to the battery, we unexpectedly with shouts ‘Charge!’ rushed at drowsy Brits; stabbed many of them and took six people prisoner with the gun” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 74-75). Still, interesting episodes of a soldier’s everyday life slip out now and then in the story, similar to that which occurred with P. Filin and his horse that got stuck in the mud. For example, O. Zubov recollected how he once escorted a captured Englishman to the Russian positions, and when they came under a fire storm, the Englishman cried something – it seemed to the Cossack that the prisoner was afraid to die from a friendly bullet and shouted ‘Hurry, Russ, Hurry, Russ!’” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 76). However, it turned out later that the captured English colonel could not speak Russian (Senyutkin, 1866b: 76).

Yet again, the final part of the story is most substantial to obtain an insight into the ideological core of the narration. The fact was that, when O. Zubov had returned from the Crimean War distinguished a hero to his village, he again very quickly got bored. “Nothing gratifies my heart. Without war, I seem to be orphaned at home. I don’t know what to put my hands to. To forge iron again – I already feel rather ashamed about it; to work in the field – my body got too frail for it, but to live in idleness is a sin” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 78). “Who is a true warrior, he will soon get

bored at home”, O. Zubov concluded and applied to be enlisted in the army field forces in the Caucasus (Senyutkin, 1866b: 78). And M.Kh. Senyutkin, when seeing off the “hero of Sevastopol”, thought what a “wonderful man” he was: “While many seek repose for themselves in their younger days, he is an eternal hunter on the war even in his old age” (Senyutkin, 1866b: 79).

It is clearly visible that O. Zubov really fitted well into the image of an ideal Cossack, reconstructed from other works of M.Kh. Senyutkin. A true warrior of Christ, who hunts for a battle, but fights mainly against infidel Muslims, Turks and Caucasian highlanders; a devout believer saying prayers in a dugout under enemy fire; devoted to the imperial family and wearing the cross given by the empress; and, for all that, he was no doubt a merciful person capable of rescuing the family of a Pole, a former enemy of the empire, from the blaze. We may perhaps say that for a character of serious literature, O. Zubov received an excessively idealized and smooth portrait. However, within the confines of the patriotic genre, his image looks very well-positioned, to our mind. Using the real story of the old Cossack as starting point, M.Kh. Senyutkin successfully created a figure of an inconspicuous hero, memorable and spirited, differing from characters in his other works. It is not fortuitous that in our days the story “The Old Hunter in the War” has suddenly emerged as relevant on the Internet: we found out several popular patriotic texts that either directly refer to it, or integrate word-for-word borrowings ([Legendarnyi uryadnik...](#); [Bichekhvost](#)). Therefore, in other circumstances, the patriotic stories of M.Kh. Senyutkin could have been duly appreciated and have given birth to the Don military propaganda. Alas, they were published too late already when the Crimean War had ended, and The Don Military Gazette began to wind down its propaganda activities. And, besides, the author himself positioned them not as propaganda, but as historical texts.

#### 4. Conclusion

We would like now to offer a summary for some of the findings from our analysis of the military patriotic component in M.Kh. Senyutkin’s creative work. They can be crystallized into the following points.

1) M.Kh. Senyutkin’s attention to military propaganda was spontaneous and prompted by external circumstances. Being a certified lawyer, with, obviously, a vocation for the job, he was not interested in literary writing and historical research until he was appointed editor of The Don Military Gazette, furthermore he was not engaged in military propaganda until the start of the Crimean War. It is most appropriate to consider his military agitation efforts as civil position exercising, as a reaction of a person with patriotic feelings towards Don Cossacks and the Russian Empire to a situation when his “fatherland is being menaced by enemies”. M.Kh. Senyutkin’s writings clearly show that in such a situation he considered it unacceptable to continue with his usual work “as if nothing had happened”. In these settings, having no combat experience, the Don author endeavored to serve the empire to the best of his capabilities and transformed The Don Military Gazette into a military propaganda mouthpiece by dramatically increasing the number of military patriotic publications in the medium.

2) M.Kh. Senyutkin did not look on his works as propaganda materials (he may not have known the word at all in the first place), but historical texts, and in this regard he estimated the military patriotic component as absolutely indispensable to historical research. Unlike most of his contemporaries, M.Kh. Senyutkin expressly framed his views on historical studies, as he wrote a work specifically on this issue, “A Look on the History of the Don Host”. It demonstrates that for the Don author, history was a model to take action in the present and in the future. As for the history of Don Cossacks, he regarded it mainly as a military history, a chronicle of feats that were to set an inspiring example for contemporary Cossacks. As a result, M.Kh. Senyutkin did not demarcate the borderline between history and military propaganda at all, and his own writings were characterized by genre ambiguity with a combination of historical research and literary journalism features.

3) The genre ambiguity of M.Kh. Senyutkin’s works negatively affected their quality and demand among readers. With regard to quality, the early works of the Don author are weakest of all, “Military Activities of Don Cossacks against Devlet Giray and Pugachev” in the first place, where the format of thorough research came into conflict with the undisguised patriotic content and intention of the work. Over time, M.Kh. Senyutkin improved his skills both as a scholar and as a propagandist, and, although he never overcame the genre ambiguity, his later works were visibly

dominated either by a scholarly (“Military Activities of Don Cossacks against Nogai Tatars”) or military patriotic (“A Look on the History of the Don Host”) component. Nevertheless, since the Don researcher did not separate historical and journalistic works, he chose very unsuitable places to print them – he published academic and highly specialized “Military Activities of Don Cossacks against Nogai Tatars” in a Russian national periodical intended for a general reading audience, and “A Look on the History of the Don Host” became an epilogue to a rare and not very popular book. And two patriotic texts, defined by contemporaries as short stories with a potential to create a foundation for the Don military propaganda, were viewed by M.Kh. Senyutkin as a publication of historical sources and came out too late, in 1858, when attention to the history of the Crimean War already started dwindling.

It is important to understand that M.Kh. Senyutkin was a typical figure for the Don patriotic propaganda in the period of the Crimean War. One of our previous papers showed that the authors of emerging propaganda texts in The Don Military Gazette were mainly people for whom the use of literature was spontaneous and was not so much a literary move, but a civil act (Peretyatko, 2018: 44-46). And in this paper, we found out that the genre ambiguity and several other more peculiar features brought M.Kh. Senyutkin’s texts closer to the works of his Don Cossack contemporaries. As a result, thanks to explanations provided by M.Kh. Senyutkin to underpin the specific features of his writings, we can understand why the Don propaganda during the Crimean War was precisely what it was and what the causes lay behind its strengths and shortcomings.

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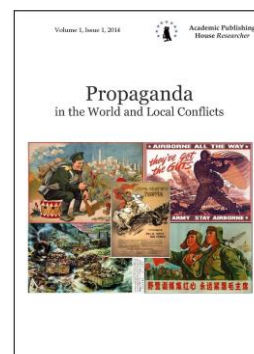
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## Literary Propaganda and Litterateurs during World War I

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### Abstract

This work examines the activity of litterateurs during World War I. It provides an insight into military propaganda in literature at the time, as well as the patriotic zeal of litterateurs in different countries who went to the front as volunteers.

Relevant materials employed in this paper include newspapers and magazines published in the participating countries during the World War I period.

In putting this work together, the author was guided by the historicism and systemicity principles. The historicism principle enabled the author to make as full use as possible of the materials available and depart from existing viewpoints on the subject. At the same time, the use of the systemicity principle helped the author gain an insight into the activity of litterateurs not only from the Entente nations, but those a party to the Triple Alliance as well.

The author's conclusion is that 1914 was a time of tremendous patriotic fervor in all the countries participating in World War I. Patriotism ran rampant across wide swathes of society, with writers being no exception. Literature in the participating countries was virtually in an instant placed on a war footing, with many magazines for home reading becoming patriotic, military publications. In addition, members of the literary intelligentsia took an active part as volunteers in warfare on the front lines of World War I. A substantial number of writers, as was the case in France, lost their lives during the confrontation period, with the death of the writers being presented to the public subsequently as a sacrificial exploit for the good of the country.

**Keywords:** literature, propaganda, writers, World War I, period 1914–1918, opposing sides.

### 1. Introduction

During World War I, in Germany alone litterateurs published nearly 3,000,000 patriotic poems. In addition to this, a significant number of social-political magazines were reorganized into military magazines. In fact, Germany was one of the first countries to be able to mobilize literature in a quick and effective manner for military purposes. This paper examines the contribution of literature and litterateurs to fostering patriotic sentiment in the countries that participated in World War I.

### 2. Materials and methods

Relevant materials employed in this paper include newspapers and magazines published in the participating countries during the World War I period.

In putting the work together, the author was guided by the historicism and systemicity principles. The historicism principle enabled the author to make as full use as possible of the

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materials available and depart from existing viewpoints on the subject. At the same time, the use of the systemicity principle helped the author gain an insight into the activity of *littérateurs* not only from the Entente nations, but those a party to the Triple Alliance as well.

### 3. Discussion

The historiography on literary propaganda is quite abundant. The subject has been explored by researchers from each of the countries that took part in the conflict. However, it has been researched the least in Russia. The key reasons behind this are the Russian Empire's revolutionary exit from the war, followed by the government's ideological ban on this subject being researched. To the extent that Soviet researchers explored it in any way, they viewed the war as imperialist and as the forerunner of a revolution. In this context, the year 1938 saw the publication of Orest Tsekhnovitser's 'Literature and a World War' (Tsekhnovitser, 1938).

Only after the disintegration of the USSR, the issue of literature and *littérateurs* during World War I gradually began to be revisited by Russian researchers. For instance, A.I. Ivanov has researched the political and ethical aspects of Russian literature (Ivanov, 2002). The same researcher has also explored Leo Tolstoy's pacifist ideas in Russian literature from the World War I period (Ivanov, 2004).

On the eve of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War I, there came out a whole host of articles on the popular culture of memory (Baranov, 2018), Russian propaganda during the war (Medyakov, 2018), and German military propaganda (Zoeller, 2018).

Scholars have also researched the American periodical press from the World War I period. Specifically, this subject has been explored by A.V. Savel'eva (Savel'eva, 2016). Issues relating to the militarization of the public consciousness have been investigated by G.R. Iskhakova (Iskhakova, 2014).

Some researchers have analyzed materials from the periodical press on certain narrowly specialized subjects. Specifically, a group of researchers led by A.A. Cherkasov has explored the subject of underage individuals running away to the front in the Russian Empire (Cherkasov et al., 2016). L.G. Polyakova has examined caricature, through the example of Ogoniok magazine, as a means of propaganda in wartime (Polyakova, 2016). The same subject has been investigated, through the example of the Don periodical press, by M.V. Bratolyubova and V.P. Trut (Bratolyubova, Trut, 2017).

### 4. Results

During World War I, the activity of *littérateurs* was multifaceted. On one hand, they did it professionally, and, on the other hand, many *littérateurs* went to the front as volunteers.

Below is an outline of this activity in each of the areas.

#### Literary activity

Inspiring one with patriotic spirit was a significant part of *littérateurs*' activity, and they did this with great fervor. It is especially during the initial period of the war that all of the participating countries witnessed a spontaneous outpouring of patriotic fervor across society and, of course, the literary community.

It is to be noted that *littérateurs* acted in quite a professional manner at the time. Consequently, on January 27, 1915, the birthday of Emperor Wilhelm II, 12 German writers were awarded in Germany the Order of the Red Eagle, the group including Richard Dehmel and Gerhart Hauptmann (Tsekhnovitser, 1938: 98).

Commendations were awarded to Russian *littérateurs* as well. Specifically, Leonid Andreyev received a formal commendation from the Belgian and Serbian Ministers.

French poet Théodore Botrel resolved to take his poems to the front lines to provide encouragement to soldiers. The military authorities granted him a pass to visit all of the army's combat troops and recite his patriotic poems to them. In addition, the authorities issued a special request to the army units that Botrel be treated well.

Of note is the fact that in terms of organizing literary propaganda the Russian Empire was well on par with France and Germany. *Littérateurs* did their job quite promptly. For instance, Vyacheslav Ivanov wrote a poem about the seizure of Przemyśl by the Russians the same day there came in information about the seizure of the Austrian fortress. There were many *littérateurs* with

no previous experience writing about military life who would become battle writers at the time. With the start of World War I in 1914, even *Niva*, a family magazine, would turn into a military magazine to carry military belles-lettres, outlooks on the war, and speculations about it. A special library, The Library of the Great War, was even established.



Fig. 1. Covers of three Russian magazines from the World War I period.



Fig. 2. Covers of two German and one French magazines from the World War I period.

In Russia, as in the other warring nations, they managed to mobilize the public consciousness. Well-known literary scholar and philosopher Mikhail Gershenzon noted that “Russia must win, and do so faster, which may require that we engage our collective consciousness and be continuously mindful of our joint responsibility as the only way to temporarily constrain, constrict, and bring under control the play of individual energies in an effort to achieve the objective as soon as possible. Not everybody can and not everybody is fit to be of actual help in wartime; yet we must be against loafing and irresponsible behavior; we must want every person to be indissolubly attached to the war in their minds and just bear in mind that it goes on day and night, that it is horrible by nature, and that it is fraught with enormous risk. The creation will naturally provide all that is needed. Those capable of taking action will become prepared to act,

while those incapable of doing so will be inspired with a sentiment that via a thousand miniscule means – microscopic actions, judgements and estimations expressed aloud, or even facial and eye expressions – will imbue society with a common focus on victory and a unity of natural common interests” (Gershenson, 1915: 3).

This kind of mobilization of the public consciousness was also spoken of by Leonid Andreev, who voiced the need to “be anxious, eager, and strong right now, this very minute; make happen what must happen”, i.e. strive for victory through the mobilization of collective strength and will (Andreev, 1915: 78).

### Volunteer movement

Filled with patriotic feeling, many *littérateurs* in Russia, Germany, and France joined the regular army as volunteers. For instance, in France one such *littérateur* was Editor of *Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine* magazine Charles Péguy. His example was followed by French *littérateur* Paul Adam, who approached the military authorities with the request of enlisting him in the regular army. Another *littérateur*, Pierre Loti, replaced the foreword to his collection of front line impressions and observations with a letter to the military authorities, in which he asked to be shifted from the rear to the front lines.

The spirit of patriotism pervaded *littérateurs* of all ages at the time. For instance, even 70-year-old French *littérateur* Anatole France approached the military authorities in request of enlisting him in the regular army. Eventually, the famed *littérateur*, who had to appear before a medical commission, was declared unfit for active service. The chair of the commission supported the *littérateur*’s patriotic fervor with the following words: “While denying you the sword, your country is counting on you to defend it with your pen, which in your hand is tantamount to a sword” (Tsekhnovitser, 1938: 101-102).

During the first days of the war, Belgian poet Maurice Maeterlinck wrote the King a letter requesting his enlistment in the regular army. The patriotic upsurge in mid-1915 left 95 writers, poets, and critics dead in France, with 87 wounded and 20 captured. By May 1916, the death toll was now nearly 300 writers, the group including a number of major poets, like Léon Gauthier-Ferrières. The war took the lives of Paul Drouot and Charles Péguy (Figure 3). Afterwards, a stamp was released commemorating Charles Péguy (Figure 4).



Fig. 3. Charles Péguy.



Fig. 4. Stamp commemorating Charles Péguy.

During the war, France lost an entire generation of *littérateurs*. Maximilian Voloshin says the following to this effect: “Today’s generation has been quartered and beheaded. One can speak of literature in France only by way of analysis of the lists of the dead and wounded” (Birzhevy vedomosti, 1915: 18 iyunya).

A patriotic upsurge was observed among Russian *littérateurs* as well. For instance, during the first days of the war, among those who went to the front was Nikolay Gumilev (Figure 5), who

expressed the following thought: “Some people are born just for war. Russia does not have fewer of these than any other country. While they may be of no use as “civilians in this Northern state”, they must be indispensable to “its martial destiny” (Gumilev, 1916: 11 *yanvary*). Of note is the fact that Gumilev was awarded two Crosses of St. George for his service during World War I. Another Russian littérateur, Poruchik Aleksandr Kuprin (Figure 6), was even ashamed of being a writer. He wrote the following while serving on the Army Staff: “I still feel uncomfortable about being a writer and a civilian among my senior comrades, but I am doing my best to make up for it”.



**Fig. 5.** Nikolay Gumilev.



**Fig. 6.** Aleksandr Kuprin.

Another Russian littérateur whose views are of interest is Valery Bryusov. On January 18, 1915, during a banquet held for members of the Moscow Literary-Artistic Club in conjunction with Bryusov’s return from the front, where he worked as a reporter for the *Ruskiye Vedomosti* newspaper, the poet responded to the greeting with the following: “If I were ever forced to choose between poetry and my country, I would go for the demise of the poet and poetry and the triumph of great Russia; the country will triumph soon, and there will then appear a poet who is worthy of such a great moment” (Tsekhnovitser, 1938: 104).

Members of the Russian intelligentsia were convinced that their personal participation in the war would cure Russian littérateurs of the various malaises of then-modern life and inspire them to explore new topics. In late 1914, *Russkaya Mysl* magazine wrote of many of the writers being in the thick of the battle, united in a common heroic cause: “Judging by news of them making it into print and their own reports on the war, they are going through a whole lot over there, things unheard of and unseen before – a true baptism of fire for them, a new beginning. In a sense, they have already become different persons. There is some kind of a shift that has taken place in them... these members of the intelligentsia, who chose the battlefield over the study, have instantly come alive, having found for themselves in that bloody environment the very reviving elixir they had long yearned for” (Koltonovskaya, 1914: 133).

Littérateurs losing their lives on the front lines of World War I exemplified self-sacrifice, causing another outburst of patriotism in society. The names of the fallen were extolled as those of

national heroes, with a halo of sanctity and martyrdom created around them. For instance, Paul Fort wrote a special poem dedicated to young poet seminarian Olivier Hourcade, who was killed at the front: "I am weaving your laurel wreath, and it ought to be a tall one, Olivier! The noblest poetic heart of all pierced by a piece of shrapnel..."

The death of Charles Péguy in the Battle of the Marne sparked a whole wave of patriotic articles in the French periodical press, in which it was described as "a great sacrifice for the country", with greater significance imparted to his oeuvre thereby.

In England, a person who gained a special popularity was young poet Sublieutenant Rupert Brooke, who took part in the Royal Naval Division's Antwerp expedition in 1914. He died in 1915 at Gallipoli. In one year, starting in May 1915 (Brooke died in April), his poems went through 13 editions.

Thus, the writer's sacrificial fervor theme would continue to be employed in the countries that participated in World War I after the deaths of members of the literary intelligentsia as well.

## 5. Conclusion

The year 1914 was a time of tremendous patriotic fervor in all the countries participating in World War I. Patriotism ran rampant across wide swathes of society, with writers being no exception. Literature in the participating countries was virtually in an instant placed on a war footing, with many magazines for home reading becoming patriotic, military publications. In addition, members of the literary intelligentsia took an active part as volunteers in warfare on the front lines of World War I. A substantial number of writers, as was the case in France, lost their lives during the confrontation period, with the death of the writers being presented to the public subsequently as a sacrificial exploit for the good of the country.

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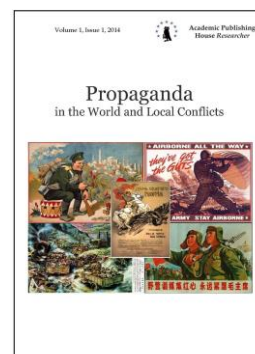
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## Influence of German Propaganda on the Combat Effectiveness of Soviet Units in 1942 (as illustrated by the 408th Rifle Division)

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### Abstract

The paper explores the effects German propaganda produced on the units of the 408th rifle division of the Red Army during World War II. The focus is made on the peculiar aspects characterizing the way the division was activated, as well as the methods of influence on the unit, used by the adversary.

The materials analyzed include archival documents from the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense, Podolsk, Russian Federation, as well as reminiscences of World War II, narrated by Soviet and German military leaders.

Summing up his findings, the author concludes that the 408th rifle division, which was formed in the Armenian SSR and had predominantly Armenian personnel, was deployed on the front line in September 1942, where it was engaged in combat operations against German troops. Germans capitalized on a comprehensive arsenal of psychological levers against the 408th Division, which were put in action by the Armenian Legions who fought on the side of the German army. Psychological influence was generated through the use of sound broadcasting, individual night conversations with Soviet patrols, as well as the use of printed propaganda – leaflets. With the retreat of Soviet troops and the quick abbreviated training of personnel before combat operations, all these factors resulted in mass defection of Red Army soldiers to the enemy, desertion and self-mutilation. In the end, the 408th Division was discontinued.

**Keywords:** 408th rifle division, Armenia, Georgia, anti-Soviet propaganda, methods of psychological influence, combat effectiveness.

### 1. Introduction

1941 marked the invasion of the Soviet Union by the German army. In the course of almost two consecutive years, Germany advanced with assault operations, first by Army Group Center, and then by Army Group South. Along with combat activities, psychological tactics of warfare were also leveraged on a wide scale to demoralize Soviet units and compel personnel either to desert or defect to the side of Germany.

The paper looks at anti-Soviet propaganda as it was employed by the German army, and illustrates this by the combat effectiveness of the 408th rifle division (hereinafter – rd). The 408th rd was activated in 1941 in the Armenian SSR with conscripted members of Caucasian ethnic groups.

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## 2. Materials and methods

The body of materials is comprised of an entire range of sources: 1) archival sources – the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (Podolsk, Russian Federation); 2) personal accounts – reminiscences of people involved in the events (for example: Degrell', 2012; Tike, 2015; Ernstkhauzen, 2012); 3) collections of published documents (for example: Diversanty..., 2008; Yampol'skii, 2008; Kollaboratsionizm..., 2014); 4) information and reference material (Osnovnye administrativno-territorial'nye..., 1986).

To address the research objectives, we used the principle of historicism, which enabled a comprehensive analysis of archival documents and personal accounts, which highlighted the influence of German propaganda on the combat effectiveness of the 408th rd units. Achieving the goal also entails utilizing a variety of other interconnected methods, i.e. problem-oriented chronological method, structured system method and comparative historical method.

## 3. Discussion

Analyzing historiography, it is necessary to take into account that Soviet ideology declared the existence of friendship amongst fraternal peoples in the USSR. For this reason, Soviet historiography paid almost no attention to collaborationist practices and voluntary defection of Red Army soldiers to Germany. As a result, works of Soviet researchers A.A. Grechko and E.I. Pyatigorskii (Grechko, 1969; Pyatigorskii, 1992) described combat activities of the 408th rd in the context of heroification. A similar perspective was given to the combat activity of the Georgian units in the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army by the study of I.L. Babalashvili (Babalashvili, 1977).

As the Soviet Union collapsed, there is no need any longer to adhere to the Soviet doctrine "On the unity of the Soviet people during the war". With military archives now opened, researchers received an opportunity to bring to light little-known events that took place during World War II. For example, S.I. Drobyazko and A.V. Karashchuk (Drobyazko, Karashchuk, 2000) offer a view of the activities carried on by Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian volunteer units that were involved in World War II as part of the German armed forces. The subject of collaboration was also covered by researchers such as A.A. Cherkasov (Cherkasov, 2003) and B.N. Kovalev (Kovalev, 2004; Kovalev, 2009). In addition, the work by V. Chernyavskii (Chernyavskii, 2004) presents a description of the system of Wehrmacht and SS commando units during World War II. Along with this, monographs by Russian authors A.V. Isaev and A.A. Cherkasov (Isaev, 2016; Cherkasov, 2008) delivered an analysis of military operations in the Crimea and the North Caucasus.

Foreign researchers from the post-Soviet countries also addressed the events of World War II. For example, E.A. Abramyan in his research works provided insight not only into the motives that contributed to the defection of Armenians in the Red Army to the German side, but also into the activities of the Armenian volunteer units formed by the Abwehr (Abramyan, 2002; Abramyan, 2005; Abramyan, 2006). A Georgian researcher, G.G. Mamulia focuses on the Georgian units in the German armed forces (Mamulia, 2007; Mamulia, 2011), while O.V. Romanko examined the service of Arabs, Hindus and USSR citizens of the Muslim faith in the German troops (Roman'ko, 2004).

## 4. Results

On July 25, 1942, the Wehrmacht launched a full-scale offensive in a southerly direction towards the Caucasus, and by middle of August, retreating Soviet forces took up the defensive of the mountain passes in the Main Caucasian Range. A series of organizational measures ensued as German troops threatened to reach the Black Sea coast of the North-Western Caucasus. A directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command renamed the NCF<sup>1</sup> into the BSGF<sup>2</sup> of the TCF<sup>3</sup> in early September. The period from the 1st to the 10th of September marked continued fighting of the Red Army units in the Novorossiysk direction against the Wehrmacht forces that occupied Anapa on August 31 and continued to advance with superior strength on Novorossiysk. Following fierce

<sup>1</sup> NCF – North Caucasian Front.

<sup>2</sup> BSGF – Black Sea Group of Forces.

<sup>3</sup> TCF – Transcaucasian Front.



battles on the night of September 10, units of the 47th A<sup>1</sup>, together with the ships of the Novorossiysk naval base, started evacuation from Novorossiysk (TsAMO. F. 47. Op. 1063. D. 179. L. 1).

On August 11, 1941, the 408th rd was formed in Yerevan, the capital of the Armenian SSR, with its personnel predominantly consisting of members of Caucasian ethnic groups, such as Armenians – 21 %, Azerbaijanis – 23 %, Georgians – 25 %, Slavs and other nationalities – 31 %. During the year, the 408th rd from time to time sent its best trained Red Army soldiers, who were replaced with locally-recruited conscripts – Armenians, to the front, and as a result, the number of Armenian soldiers increased by September 1942. As of the time the division was included into the BSGF, it had 11.6 thousand people (Pyatigorskii, 1992: 196).

In the middle of September 1942, units of the 408th division concentrated in the Gelendzhik area (TsAMO. F. 47. Op. 1063. D. 194. L. 272).

On September 28, the commander of the 408th rd received an order to redeploy by sea two regiments (663rd and 670th ones) from Gelendzhik to Tuapse, without the 672nd rifle regiment (hereinafter – rr), one division of the 963rd ar<sup>2</sup> and a training battalion (TsAMO. F. 1732. Op. 1. D. 3. L. 40b.).

The 672nd rr of the 408th rd with one division of the 963rd ar remained at that time at the disposal of the army commander. The regiment stood on defensive positions in the area of Hill 170.7, Krasnaya Pobeda (west), Lindarov. On the night of September 28-29, 89 Red Army soldiers from the 2nd company of the regiment (Krasnaya Pobeda area, east) went over to the enemy. On October 1, Wehrmacht forces pushed forward to the attack, delivering a strike with 10 tanks in the course of Krasnaya Pobeda. Units of the 672nd rr, having failed to withstand the assault and swept by the artillery and mortar fire, relinquished their positions and fled. By the evening of October 5, 170 people were rallied. According to preliminary information, the casualties amounted to: the killed – 38 people, the wounded – 279 people, the missing, i.e. those who actually sided with the Wehrmacht, 1,051 (TsAMO. F. 371. Op. 6367. D. 76. L. 38).

The investigation into the reasons behind the massive defection of Red Army soldiers to the enemy uncovered that while the 672nd rr was in close contact with Wehrmacht units on the front line, dialogues took place between Soviet and German soldiers in the Armenian language (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 85).

To drive impactful anti-Soviet propaganda designed to damage combat effectiveness of Soviet units in the defensive sector of the 672nd rr, the German command could make use of volunteers from the Armenian national regiment, stationed in Simferopol and formed from prisoners of war (POW) (Yampol'skii, 2008: 253, 262).

The defeat of the Soviet forces by the Wehrmacht on the Crimean Peninsula in May and in the summer of 1942 resulted in more than 100,000 Red Army soldiers taken prisoner by Germans. Importantly, even before the Crimean offensive, the German command kept an eye open for numerous prisoners and defectors of Caucasian nationalities from Soviet divisions in areas near Sevastopol and Kerch. As an explanation, the share of Caucasus natives reached 80% in Red Army divisions in the sector of the front line (Yampol'skii, 2008: 250).

For example, the 386th and 388th rifle divisions were created in Georgia and almost totally consisted of personnel of Caucasian decent, mainly Georgians (Babalashvili, 1977: 157-158; Isaev, 2016: 60).

Combat activities between December 17 and 27, 1941 killed, wounded and made missing 6,452 people from the 388th rd – the unit retained only 4,370 people as its personnel (TsAMO. F. 1711. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 6). It meant that the division's actual losses amounted to 2/3 in 10 days of combat operations. Without providing precise figures of the losses in his report, Divisional Commander Monakhov disguised the number of Red Army soldiers who voluntarily switched to the enemy.

The Wehrmacht command took advantage of the favorable preconditions for carrying out anti-Soviet propaganda campaigns among Caucasus natives in the Red Army, which was expected to transform into an active struggle against communism in the future. It considered the military potential of using prisoners of war of Caucasian decent, who had to be subjected to propaganda indoctrination. Propaganda activities were to be implemented by anti-Soviet Caucasians in various

<sup>1</sup> A – army.

<sup>2</sup> ar – artillery regiment.

training camps arranged for the purpose. The German command began to man Armenian national units in early 1942, assisted by Dashnak émigrés led by Dro Kanayan, the head of the notorious reconnaissance group “Dromedar”. Armenian national units were aimed to be used against regular Soviet forces, for anti-partisan operations, as well as reconnaissance and subversion missions. (Yampol'skii, 2008: 250-251, 262).

On the front line of the TCF NGF (Northern Group of Forces), the German command also leveraged Caucasian volunteers of the special group “Bergmann” to carry out anti-Soviet propaganda activities. The sector of the 89th (Armenian) rd was the target of distribution of leaflets in Armenian, which urged Red Army soldiers with weapons to go over to the Wehrmacht and together with units of the German army, proposed to liberate Armenia from Soviet invaders. They informed that an Armenian unit of the “Bergmann” battalion was deployed opposite the 89th rd. In the evenings, music and songs in Armenian were audible from the direction of German units. As a result, from September 26 to September 30, 1942, more than 300 people switched over to the German forces, and this forced the Soviet command to redeploy the 89th rd from the front line to the rear (Abramyan, 2006: 109-110).

It is known from the war diary of the 370th rr of the 89th rd that the regiment suffered losses within 3 days at the end of September 1942: 69 people were killed, 412 wounded, 673 people reported missing (TsAMO. F. 7023. Op. 210173. D. 1. L. 13). Once again, the number of missing persons stand for soldiers who defected to the enemy.

Around the same time (September 1942), at the front, in the defensive sector of the 414th rd, which was formed from Georgians, the German command engaged Georgian volunteers to carry out anti-Soviet propaganda argumentation and agitation in Georgian using loudspeakers. As a consequence, almost the entire 3rd battalion of the 375th rr of the 414th rd and the personnel of an artillery battery defected to Germans, and in this context the 414th rd was removed from the front and dispatched to the rear (Abramyan, 2006: 110).

With anti-Soviet propaganda campaigns and large-scale defection of Red Army soldiers of the Caucasian decent to Germans, the German command managed to activate the second point of the “Dromedar” Abwehr commando group in the Krasnodar area, and its backbone was build on nearly 70 Armenians from Sochi and Armavir. The leader of the group was Arutyun Arutyunyan. Armenian volunteers were trained to be infiltrated to the areas outside Tuapse, Sochi and other settlements on the Black Sea coast. In addition, a special-purpose camp was set up near Krasnodar, in which around 1,000 defected Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis and North Caucasians were kept. On September 29, 1942, the German command made a decision to form four army companies from the volunteers. The newly formed North Caucasus units were assigned to mount anti-partisan operations (Abramyan, 2006: 69-71, 144).

The voluntary units had failures in their activities as well. In May 1942, Armenian POWs were used to create the 808th Armenian infantry battalion that arrived in Neftegor'sk in September (80 km southeast of Maikop), where it was disarmed by Germans for its sympathy with the Soviet regime as the legionnaires were inclined to return to the Red Army. The command staff were executed by shooting, the battalion renamed into the 808th road construction battalion, in which 180 people were allowed to remain, and the rest of the personnel (up to 800 people) were sent to France as insecure elements (TsAMO. F. 47. Op. 1063. D. 199. L. 134-135).

At any rate, anti-Soviet propaganda dealt serious blows to the combat effectiveness of Red Army units. The successful agitation among Red Army soldiers of Armenian nationality was driven by the position of the German government. For example, even before the start of the war against the USSR, Adolf Hitler considered the possibility of establishing a Caucasian federal state and supporting the culture and ethnic identity of Caucasian peoples (Yampol'skii, 2008: 92, 97).

Meeting objectives in the new circumstances of the war with the Soviet Union required a different approach to the members of Caucasian nationalities. At the end of November 1941, A. Hitler signed an order to form four Caucasian legions. The plan was to install separate states in the occupied Caucasus territory – Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, whose representatives formed national liberation committees that were granted the status of equal allies with Germany on April 15, 1942. The consolidated struggle was targeted against the Soviet Union, which Armenians associated with the Ottoman Empire. In the summer of 1942, as soon as they celebrated victory over the Bolsheviks, Georgia and Armenia were planned to take part in the war against Turkey that would later be divided. Armenia was promised a resolution for the so-called “Armenian issue” –

a return of Karabakh, Kars and Nakhichevan territories, and Georgia was promised to be given the Zagatala and Sochi districts. Note should be made that until the end of 1944, J. Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda published the "Hajastan ("Armenien") weekly for Armenian legionnaires, which came out in Armenian and German (Abramyan, 2006: 27, 33, 41, 45-50, 74).

The TCF BSGF command was unable to take immediate measures to investigate the causes of Armenian Red Army soldiers' defection to the enemy. The reason was the German offensive on Tuapse, which was launched on September 23, 1942 (Tike, 2005: 164).

The virtually capable 672nd rr was brought back by the TCF BSGF Command to the 408th rd, i.e. the regiment was redeployed from Novorossiysk to the Tuapse area (TsAMO. F. 371. Op. 6367. D. 76. L. 38).

At this time, in the Tuapse direction, the 408 rd with two regiments (663 and 670 rr) was concentrated in the Goitkh, Perevalnii, Altubinal area by 10 a.m. on October 5, 1942 and commenced installing a defense line (TsAMO. F. 371. Op. 6367. D. 102. L. 143, 144).

Importantly, as soon as the regiments of the 408th rd faced off with Wehrmacht units, Armenian Red Army soldiers were subjected to anti-Soviet agitation by the enemy. The anti-Soviet propaganda primarily focused on the call to switch over to Germans and together fight against the "Red Plague" for the liberation of Armenia (Abramyan, 2002: 8).

To maintain anti-Soviet propaganda, Wehrmacht forces in the Tuapse area had volunteers from the 813th battalion of the Armenian Legion, which was transported to the Apsheron sky workers' settlement together with a battalion of the Georgian Legion (Abramyan, 2006: 253).

The German command had not only Armenian volunteers at its disposal. Léon Degrelle, a Belgian, who fought for Germans in the "Walloon" battalion in the Tuapse axis in August 1942, noted: *"... People who lived the villages located in the fields vehemently opposed Bolsheviks. Some of our Armenian peasants went 15-30 kilometers from Kubano-Armenyanskii. A couple of days later, they reappeared with detailed intelligence on the Reds. The hatred of these peasants against the Soviet regime was astonishing to us. Poor, even destitute people, they were to yield to the temptation of Bolshevism. Instead, they felt so much terror of the Bolsheviks that they risked their lives every day to help us. The old gray-haired peasants, whom the Reds had forced to work for many years, were filled with particularly intense hatred for them. Wearing light leather sandals, they could sneak anywhere and led our patrols. Some of our Armenian guides fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks and were killed. But this did not shake the commitment of the village"* (Degrell', 2012: 87-88).

Along with Wehrmacht forces, which claimed allegiance of Armenian volunteers, the 408th rd was also in contact with the local Armenian population that was deeply discontented with the Soviet regime and voluntarily collaborated with Germans. The combat zone of the 408th rd was located in the Armenian district, Krasnodar Krai, with the district center in the village of Shaumyan. The Armenian district incorporated the following rural councils (soviets): Goitkhskii, Gunayskii, Kubano-Armyanskii, Rezhetskii, Sadovskii, Tubinskii, Chernigovskii and Shaumyanovskii (Osnovnye administrativno-territorial'nye..., 1986: 118).

The Kubano-Armyanskii khutor (small rural settlement) was located 50 km from the front, where Red Army soldiers of the 408th rd stood on the defensive, and Germans appointed an Armenian Odisyian as the head of the locality. Not only Armenians, but members of other ethnic groups collaborated with Germans in the occupied territory of the Krasnodar Krai.

Gradually, anti-Soviet propaganda in the 408th rd units started paying off. On October 8, at 04-00 p.m., the division headquarters received a report from Senior Lieutenant Kovalev, the 670th rr Chief of Staff, that a Red Army soldier of the 7th rifle company, Minas O. Khloyan, shot his left arm (TsAMO. F. 1732. Op. 1. D. 4. L. 245). Self-wounding was not only practiced by ordinary Red Army soldiers. In the period between October 1 and 19, the division's special department recorded 14 cases of self-wounding, which included incidents with the Second-in-Command of the 1st battalion of the 663rd rr, Lieutenant Davtyan, and commander of the 3rd rifle company of the same regiment, Lieutenant Manukyan, who were handed over to the military tribunal (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 84).

There were other noteworthy cases as well. For example, Babken Mkrtchyan, the political officer of the 4th rifle company of the 670th rr, after having killed the company commander, abandoned his unit on the battlefield and fled. The result was almost complete destruction of the 4th company by the enemy. Subsequently, Mkrtchyan was handed over to the military tribunal.

In addition, from October 9 to 11, 20 people deserted from the 76-mm battery of the 663rd rr, led by communist Lieutenant Khachatryan (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 84).

On the night of October 13, Senior Lieutenant Pindyurin (candidate member of the VKPb<sup>1</sup>), Chief of Staff, with his two assistants for accounts and communications disappeared from the rear of the 663rd rr, taking with them secret documents and a situation map (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 84). On the third day after Pindyurin and his assistant officers' desertion, the enemy threw fire on the division command post (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 85ob.).

Therefore, defections to the German forces were practiced not only by Armenians, but Russian commanders as well. In its anti-Soviet agitation efforts, the German command, among other things, distributed leaflets in Russian among Red Army soldiers. Planes dropped leaflets at the positions of Soviet units, which read as follows: "Come over to our side! No passes required! Everyone will receive good treatment!" (Cherkasov, 2008: 168).

Despite Red Army soldiers' systematic defections to the enemy, aggravated by combat losses, the units of the 408th rd continued to hold the defensive in their sectors. On October 12, a group of Red Army soldiers from a battalion of the 670th rr switched over to the enemy (TsAMO. F. 1732. Op. 1. D. 4. L. 283-283ob., 342).

Meanwhile, Red Army soldiers continued to communicate with the enemy and received responses in Armenian (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 85). In parallel with this, the combat effectiveness of the 408th rd, bulwarked by the 963d ar (artillery regiment), continued to go down because of systematic defections of Red Army soldiers to Germans. On October 14, the 963d ar command reported that the morale of the personnel was high, and instantly pointed out an emergency: "The commander of the 6th battery, Lieutenant E.M. Mirakyan and 5 Red Army soldiers abandoned the observation point on October 13 and nothing has been known of them to this day. The search is being conducted" (TsAMO. F. 1732. Op. 1. D. 4. L. 293).

Combat reports by the 963d ar command consistently informed that the morale of the personnel was high, and in the meantime, Red Army soldiers, commanders and political officers left the artillery regiment and went over to the enemy on a regular basis. On October 16, 10 people deserted from a separate mortar battalion, led by the deputy political officer, Shakhramanov, who was also a Communist Party organizer (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 84).

Influenced by German propaganda, another case of desertion took place on the night of October 18: led by Junior Lieutenant Ambartsumyan (a VKPb member), the commander of fire platoon, 2nd battery, 1st battalion of the 963d ar, 16 Red Army soldiers and junior commanders of the same battery left with weapons in an unknown direction (TsAMO. F. 1732. Op. 1. D. 4. L. 331; TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 84).

The head of the political department in the 408th rr, Senior Battalion Commissar Sarkisyan, reported on November 15 in his final report on the morale in the division's units:

*"Party member Aram Khachaturovich Airapetyan – a Red Army soldier of 670th rr – left his party card and service record book of the Red Army soldier in the trench on the fighting ground and went over to the enemy.*

*In addition, there are numerous facts when groups of soldiers and commanders disappear during combat missions. For example, in the 663rd rr, during a combat mission, the deputy commander for political affairs of the 3rd company – political officer Simonyan together with 15 soldiers went missing, an assumption is that the whole group betrayed their motherland.*

*On October 18, the commander of the 2nd battalion, 663rd rr, Senior Lieutenant Manukyan, reported that one 6-strong squad from the antitank rifle company, assigned to the regiment, killed their sergeant at night and went over to the enemy, leaving weapons behind them.*

*There are numerous cases when Red Army soldiers, led by their commanders, have hidden in gorges in the rear of their regiment's battle dispositions, absolutely deliberately avoiding combat.*

*It is not untypical for division and army anti-retreat units to detain groups of idlers, cowards and scaremongers in the rear and send them to the front.*

*Along with this, there are such types of treason, practiced in the division units, as self-wounding, abandoning the fighting ground, cowardice and scaremongering...*

<sup>1</sup> VKP(b) – All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) (author's note).

*27 people have been arrested by the division's Special NKVD Department, who abandoned the fighting ground and shamefully fled, of which 5 people have been shot...*

*...The number of facts of accidents, cowardice, scaremongering, self-wounding in the division units is much greater, and they have created an alarming situation" (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 84).*

On October 17, 1942, the 408th rd continued to defend the same line with what remained of its units. It is known from the report of the 408th rd's commander that in the period of action, from September 25 to October 16, the division lost: 447 people killed, 1,404 wounded, 2,162 missing, 495 put out due to illness. As of October 16, the personnel of the division numbered 5,638 people (TsAMO. F. 371. Op. 6367. D. 102. L. 149).

On October 21, German forces overran Perevalnii and Goitkh, and following this, individual units of the 408th rd defected to the enemy (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 28. L. 126).

While being deployed in the Tuapse area, the command of the 408th division investigated into the reasons for the low combat effectiveness of the personnel and revealed a number of deficiencies. The area, where the rifle division was formed, (Armenian SSR), was predominantly populated by Armenians, many of whom lived abroad. The personnel included Red Army soldiers who lived in France from 1917 to 1934. The 76-mm battery of the 663rd rr suffered the desertion of 20 people, among whom Dashitonyan had 2 brothers repressed by the NKVD. Conversations in Armenian between Red Army soldiers and the enemy systematically took place along the line of contact. Cases of self-wounding and desertion were not uncommon. While Red Army soldiers complained of poor meals, the detained 5 deserters were found to have 15-day supply of food; they threw their weapons into the river (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 85-86).

Over the week, Colonel Shapovalov scrutinized internal conditions in the division and submitted a corresponding reported to the commander of the Tuapse defense area, Major General Petrakovskii on November 15:

*"The 408th rifle division, activated in Yerevan in September 1941, started combat training only in March 1942, having the personnel with which the division was integrated into the army.*

*The division personnel were staffed from the Armenian SSR population, and its ethnic composition comprises Armenians.*

*The combat training of the division's personnel was conducted according to the intensified combat training program with one-month drilling exercises, beginning in June of this year it started a three-month program that was fully covered by the personnel due to the following reasons:*

*a/ sending up to 50 % of the personnel for defensive organization work;*

*b/ strengthening the protection of the border with the neighboring state – Turkey with up to 1/3 of the division's personnel, hence the complete combat training program was taken by no more than 30 % of the division's personnel;*

*The training of the division's units was provided not at a high level of quality, and the reasons were:*

*a/ personal inappropriate expertise of commanding officers, as well as poor qualification in specific areas;*

*b/ grossly inadequate provision of material needs for the training process, etc.;*

*In the course of the division' combat training, there were cases of immoral behaviors, such as:*

*a/ desertion (by groups and individuals);*

*b/ self-wounding;*

*During combat action, the number and range of immoral behaviors rose in the division which is attributable to:*

*a/ very low moral stamina of the personnel in combat;*

*b/ mass desertion from the fighting ground;*

*c/ group defections to the enemy and its agitation for defection;*

*d/ an instance that totally goes beyond the boundaries of all the listed immoral behaviors – is group desertion from the fighting ground, with most deserters being party members.*

*Cowardice and scaremongering are a widespread phenomenon, and it pervades the rank and file and junior commanding officers.*

*As of October 21, 1942, the division has no more than 600 or 800 combat-fit manpower, and this is bearing in mind that the division did not conduct tough combat action with the enemy.*

*My understanding is that the division, considering all of the above, is not combat-ready, is morally disturbed and wants changes in its composition, should be remanned and withdrawn to the rear” (TsAMO. F. 276. Op. 811. D. 27. L. 88).*

Colonel Shapovalov’s findings about the division’s combat effectiveness were taken into account by the BSGF command. As a result, according to the order for the front troops, dated November 18, the 408th Infantry Division was inactivated on November 25, 1942 (TsAMO. F. 2354. Op. 1. D. 19. L. 32).

## 5. Conclusion

Summing up, the 408th rifle division, which was formed in the Armenian SSR and had predominantly Armenian personnel, was deployed on the front line in September 1942, where it was engaged in combat operations against German troops. Germans capitalized on a comprehensive arsenal of psychological levers against the 408th Division, which were put in action by the Armenian Legions who fought on the side of the German army. Psychological influence was generated through the use of sound broadcasting, individual night conversations with Soviet patrols, as well as the use of printed propaganda – leaflets. With the retreat of Soviet troops and the quick abbreviated training of personnel before combat operations, all these factors resulted in mass defection of Red Army soldiers to the enemy, desertion and self-mutilation. In the end, the 408th Division was discontinued.

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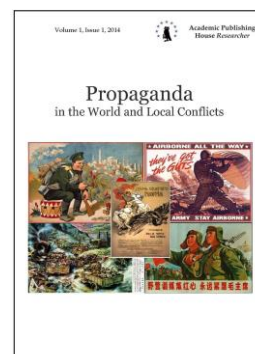
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## Charles de Gaulle and the Coverage of the Algerian Crisis of 1958–1962 in the Soviet Periodical Press

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### Abstract

This paper looks into the coverage of the Algerian crisis of 1958–1962 in the Soviet periodical press. It analyzes various newspaper and magazine articles to assess the actions of the French government during the Algerian War. The author examines the key stages in the conflict and the reaction of the USSR's major periodicals to the events, i.e. the way the events were actually being presented to the reader by the Soviet press. The work's scholarly novelty lies in that it ventures into a previously unexplored topic – the analysis of the judgment and coverage of events associated with France's foreign policy in the Soviet periodical press during the presidency of Charles de Gaulle.

The author's conclusion is that the Soviet periodical press was functioning at the time as a critical medium for shaping public opinion and a mechanism for manipulating political consciousness, with virtually all events presented in the media interpreted through the prism of Soviet ideology. The Algerian War, one of France's last colonial wars, was judged in major Soviet newspaper publications in a negative manner, with a primary emphasis on wrongful acts by the French government and the desire of Charles de Gaulle to keep the territories in a state of dependency.

**Keywords:** Algeria, Soviet periodical press, Charles de Gaulle, France, Fifth French Republic, war, Évian Accords.

### 1. Introduction

Present-day France is, in large part, living the political legacy left by the founder of the Fifth Republic, Charles de Gaulle. Worthy of special consideration is the president's foreign policy, which was characterized by an aspiration for independence and harmonious relations with France's eastern neighbors. In fact, it is under de Gaulle that a détente was achieved in Soviet-French relations, with the two nations witnessing the development of closer political, economic, and cultural ties between each other. As a consequence, the positive image of the French president, formed in large part by the Soviet periodical press, has stayed in people's consciousness to this day. Yet the origins of the Fifth Republic in France appear to be linked with the Algerian crisis. This long conflict had been a major concern for the entire international community. To this day, the memory of it continues to create difficulties for political dialogue between the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and the French Republic.

### 2. Materials and methods

In putting this work together, the author drew upon materials from the Soviet newspapers Pravda, Izvestia, and Literaturnaya Gazeta and the Soviet weekly magazine Za Rubezhom

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published between 1958 and 1962. The work's methodological basis was grounded in comparative analysis, a set of general historical principles (historicism, scholarly rigor, objectivism, and systemicity), and content analysis. The use of content analysis helped analyze publication trends and determine the numbers of neutral, positive, and negative articles in the Soviet periodical press across the period under review.

### 3. Discussion and results

The collapse of the French colonial empire is discussed in detail in a book by P.P. Cherkasov, 'The Fate of an Empire: An Essay on France's Colonial Expansion in the Period from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries' (Cherkasov, 1983). A valuable insight into the events of the war in Algeria is provided by a number of scholars, including M.Ts. Arzakanyan (Arzakanyan, 2012), N.N. Molchanov (Molchanov, 1988), and A. Landau (Landau, 2016). Yet, up to now, no study has explored the way the subject was actually covered in the Soviet periodical press at the time.

The postwar period witnessed the collapse of the colonial system around the world. This process had an effect on France as well. To Charles de Gaulle, keeping France's colonial possessions was crucial to reinforcing its status as an international superpower. However, the increasing momentum of the liberation movement was signaling the inevitability of the collapse of colonialism. There, accordingly, was a need to shift away from exploitation and military-administrative methods and toward a more modern concept – the concept of neocolonialism, i.e. switch to the use of sophisticated methods for influencing the territories. Thus, while granting independence to France's overseas territories was an unavoidable measure, it was also a progressive one (Koloskov, 1976: 73).

Charles de Gaulle initiated the transformation of the French Union into the French Community. The fundamentals of the new form of interaction with France's former colonies were detailed in the Constitution of 1958. A territory that approved the Constitution was to be empowered to retain its former status, assume the status of an overseas department, or join the Community as an autonomous state (Goll', 1957: 174). That being said, the metropole was to retain exclusive prerogatives in crucial areas such as foreign policy, defense, finance, and economics. In addition, all top leadership posts in the Community, like its president and top ministers, were to be held by the French.

Despite the fact that the Constitution of the French Community was approved by referendum in most of the Community's member states, there remained a few territories that were demanding full political independence. As there arose a danger of France losing all of its influence in the region, in May 1960 an amendment was made to the Community's Constitution that made it possible for politically independent countries to be part of the Community (Arzakanyan, 2012: 126). In August 1960, independence was gained by virtually all French colonies in tropical Africa via the signing of bilateral "friendship and cooperation" agreements. In addition, France entered with several nations into inequitable "mutual defense support" treaties, whereby France was empowered to keep its troops and interfere militarily in the area – this would make it possible for France to maintain its military-strategic position in tropical Africa (Koloskov, 1976: 75).

However, the Algerian situation remained complicated. In this colony, since as early as November 1954 war had been waged with the local forces of the national-liberation movement, although many territories, including Tunisia and Morocco, had already gained independence. Algeria was highly important to France for a number of reasons. Firstly, over the 130 years of French colonial rule in Algeria, French individuals had come to account for a tenth of its population, with the French having held all the key positions in its socio-political and economic life. Secondly, Algeria was a large colonial market, accounting for over half of France's exports to the Franc Zone. Thirdly, in the mid-1950s they discovered oil and gas deposits in the Sahara. Fourthly, this was a strategic territory in a military sense, as it housed a large number of French military and naval bases, and its good geographical location made Algeria a key base of operations in the Mediterranean (Cherkasov, 1983: 192). In the consciousness of the majority of French people, Algeria was regarded as an indissoluble part of France – in fact, formally the territory was part of the French Republic in the form of three "départements" (Oran, Alger, and Constantine).

The Algerian War was one of the key causes behind the collapse of the Fourth Republic, and it paved the way for Charles de Gaulle's coming to power. The war required enormous expenditure, in terms of both material and human resources, amplified political instability in society, and led to

the isolation of France at the international level. By the time the Fifth Republic was established in France, it had become clear that this was an issue of cardinal importance. Despite the fact that it was France's far-right forces that facilitated Charles de Gaulle's coming to power, he assumed office with a clear-cut objective in view – freeing France from the burdens of a dead-end war, while retaining its influence in the region (Landau, 2016: 352). On October 3, 1958, Charles de Gaulle gave a speech in the Algerian city of Constantine, unveiling plans for sweeping reforms to Algeria's socio-economic sphere aimed at improving the wellbeing of the local population, a measure undertaken to keep Algeria under French control (Podgornova, 2015: 104).

The French government did not confine itself to verbal communication solely, and between February 1959 and the spring of 1960 it undertook a large-scale military operation aimed at destroying the major forces of the National Liberation Front (FLN). Thanks to their effective mop-up tactics, based on the box method, the French managed to inflict considerable damage on members of Algeria's nationalist movement. With France's position reinforced, Charles de Gaulle was now prepared to commence negotiations with representatives of the FLN (Landau, 2016: 488).

On September 16, 1959, de Gaulle gave a speech on Algeria, in which he recognized the Algerian people's right to self-determination (Koloskov, 1976: 66). The president offered the people of Algeria three choices for the future: secession, complete integration, and self-government (Cherkasov, 1983: 205). However, Algeria could enjoy this right only in the event of the success of the policy of peaceful pacification, which envisaged the continuation of hostilities for another several years. This position resulted in a clear-cut divide in public opinion. On the one hand, it was met favorably by the absolute majority of the metropole's population, and, on the other, it brought about a negative attitude toward the president on the part of his former supporters from among the Pieds-Noirs and France's far-right forces, the camp including the country's top brass and certain members of its top leadership.

Over the course of 1960, the French government and the provisional government of the Algerian Republic made a number of attempts to reach an agreement, but to no avail, as the Algerian leadership would make no concessions in the negotiations. At that juncture, Charles de Gaulle resorted to a well-loved medium: a French nationwide referendum on ways to resolve the Algerian issues was slated for early 1961 (Molchanov, 1988: 352). Based on the referendum results, 75.2 % of the French voted for granting Algeria full independence. Consequently, contact between the French government and the provisional government of the Algerian Republic resumed. On April 7, 1961, the two sides started Algeria ceasefire talks at Évian-les-Bains (Podgornova, 2015: 117).

Around the same time, four generals – M. Challe, A. Zeller, R. Salan, and E. Jouhaud – organized a coup in an attempt to depose de Gaulle. The coup ended in failure, subjecting the colonialists to moral isolation. The suppression of the April putsch accelerated the progress of the negotiations, while, on the other hand, France witnessed a rise in the activity of the Secret Army Organization (OAS), a right-wing French dissident paramilitary organization created in the spring of 1961 (Cherkasov, 1983: 203). There were terrorist attempts on the lives of the president, Communist Party activists, and other proponents of ending the war in Algeria.

The final, fourth, round of the talks began in March 1962. Charles de Gaulle wrote the following in this respect: "The object of the negotiations, as far as we were concerned, was to persuade the FLN to accept the provisions which were essential, on the one hand for a satisfactory procedure for Algeria's accession to independence, and on the other hand for an effective association between the new State and France. Failing this, we should be driven to a total breach" (Goll', 1957: 108). The Algerian representatives seeking full independence for their country and striving to prevent the possibility of interference in its affairs on the part of France stretched the negotiations to nine months. Nevertheless, On March 18, 1962, the two sides signed the Évian Accords, which covered the following: cease-fire arrangements; recognition of Algeria's full sovereignty; creation of a close association between the two states in the economic and financial spheres; privileged status for citizens of one side in the territory of the other side; benefits for the French in oil extraction in the Sahara; right to maintain the French army in Algeria for three years; right to maintain the naval base at Mers El Kébir for 15 years and maintain other military bases and airfields in Algeria over a five-year period. The Accords were approved in a referendum held in France on April 8, 1962. In the second referendum, held on July 1, 1962, in Algeria, 99.72 % voted in favor of Algeria becoming an independent state (Cherkasov, 1983: 206).

Thus, by 1962 the huge French colonial empire had virtually disintegrated. The cessation of the war in Algeria facilitated the reorientation of the government's policy to focus on bolstering France's international position and driving its economic development.

An analysis of the Soviet press indicates that the war in Algeria was covered in numerous Soviet publications at the time. The topic owed its popularity in the periodical press to the USSR's wide support for the struggle for independence in colonial countries, so the activity of Charles de Gaulle in this area was, for the most part, covered in a negative light.

Specifically, in May 1958 the Soviet press was all over the Algerian military putsch. It condemned the intentions of General Charles de Gaulle to assume the reins to the Republic as a threat of a military dictatorship being established (Figure 1). The Soviet newspaper Pravda wrote the following on May 16: "As soon as the mutineers in Algeria seized power in the major cities, and they were openly joined by members of the Supreme Command of the French army there, Charles de Gaulle stepped forward as a candidate for the military dictator. The general idea of the collusion plan became clear to everybody" (Bor'ba v zashchitu..., 1958: 3). The ideas of the dangers of a military dictatorship being established and of the active resistance by the French people were disseminated in the Soviet press at the time by way of caricature drawings as well (Figure 2).

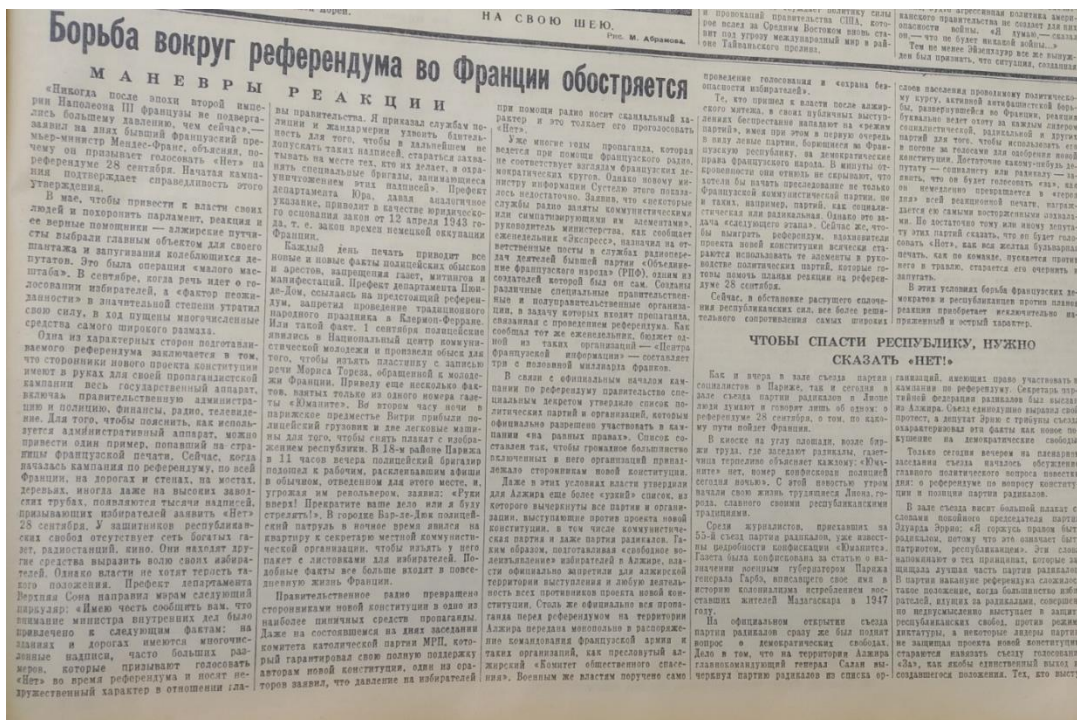


Fig. 1. Pravda. 1958. May 16



Fig. 2. Pravda. 1958. May 18

The condemnation in the press over Charles de Gaulle's policy in Algeria continued throughout 1958. It had to do with the creation of the "public safety committees", which, as suggested by Jacques Duclos, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France, were intended to "create a mass deGaullist movement" and, "similar to Mussolini's fascist organizations, would seek to deploy Charles de Gaulle's agents in localities and in enterprises" (K novomu pod"emu..., 1958: 3).

A subject of particular interest in the Soviet press was the referendum slated for September 28, 1958. In his article 'Thoughts of France', I.G. Ehrenburg describes the events as follows: "The Algerian referendum was being arranged as a military operation rather than a voting activity. While Le Monde staff member Pierre-Henri Simon is supportive of General Charles de Gaulle, he is pretty outspoken about what he really thinks: "When I learn from a General Staff report that agitating for the 'yes' vote has been ordered to be done by the brass band of the 20<sup>th</sup> Division, dismay takes over me". Among those engaged in the agitation activities are not only trumpet-players but executioners as well" (Erenburg, 1958: 2).

In September 1959, Charles de Gaulle made a public statement about the need to grant Algeria independence. This was met in the Soviet press with positive feedback. However, since Charles de Gaulle's words had virtually no effect on the situation in Algeria, all press material on the subject remained negative.

In that climate, the mutiny of French ultra-colonists on January 24, 1960 was regarded in the press as an attempt to bring direct pressure to bear on the government to urge it to undertake more resolute action in the Algerian War and retract the statement of September 16, 1959 (Efimov, 1960: 4). The Soviet periodical press accentuated that the mutiny was perpetrated by the same forces that

did it on May 13, 1958, when Charles de Gaulle came to power. The January articles on the event provide numerous testimonies to inaction on the part of the supreme military leadership in Algeria, which let the far-right forces get stronger (Prigozhin, 1960: 4). Pravda stated the following on this on January 28, 1960: “With overt and tacit approval by many generals and regular officers, hundreds of fascists have been arming themselves unhindered”, strengthening their organization, and growing increasingly impudent. Nothing has been done to stop them. In fact, far-right extremist de Sérigny stated yesterday that Delouvrier had assured him the army would not shoot...” (Pokonchit' s fashistskim..., 1960: 3).

Charles de Gaulle's address delivered on January 30, 1960, in which he confirmed the commitment to self-determination for the Algerian people and condemned the actions of the mutineers, was generally met with positive reaction in the press, which, however, *did* note that the president had not spoken of any specific measures to be undertaken against the mutineers and those who supported them (Efimov, 1960a: 3).

Each of the publications under analysis covered in an almost entirely similar manner the events associated with France's policy in Algeria. Most of Charles de Gaulle's actions, including those aimed at freeing Algeria from the status of a colony, were judged negatively, as they were viewed as underpinned by covert venal motives. For instance, the articles in Literaturnaya Gazeta (Molchanov, 1960: 4) and Pravda (Ratiani, 1960: 3) discussing Charles de Gaulle's statement about the holding of a referendum on granting Algeria the right to self-determination used similar arguments to explain to the reader the president's real intentions – i.e., to ensure by all means that France retained control of Algeria via a military solution to the problem. To this end, Charles de Gaulle rejected political talks with representatives of the provisional government of the Algerian Republic, insisting on their capitulation, while also doing his best to thwart the discussion of the issue by the UN. “In 1958, to prevent the discussion of France's actions by the UN, an uproar was raised over the so-called “Constantine Plan”, a subject of much demagoguery. In 1959, on the eve of a General Assembly session, to this end they used the recognition of Algeria's right to self-determination... This time... we are talking about an attempt to replicate the famed Bao Dai experiment”, wrote N.N. Molchanov. On a side note, Bao Dai was a puppet emperor whom the French leadership opposed to the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam; appointing Bao Dai resulted in the prolongation of the Indo-China War. G.M. Ratiani states the following in his article: “The French government is intending to carry out a “baodaization” in Algeria. Algeria's “reorganized leadership” will be composed of members of the groups of the local Muslim population that collaborate with the French administration”. An article of a similar nature appeared in the weekly magazine Za Rubezhom (Zykov, 1960: 10). S.P. Zykov, likewise, wrote about the “Charles de Gaulle plan”, which envisaged the creation of the Algerian Republic, although only in the distant future. This would require creating “Algerian Algeria” first as a state that would be economically and politically subordinate to the French government. This is what the then-upcoming referendum was aimed at – leaving the voters no leg to stand upon, as there were as many as two proposed referendum questions: whether or not the voters approve the granting to Algeria of the right to self-determination and whether or not they approve the plan for organizing a new system of governance in Algeria.

This kind of sentiment in the Soviet press persisted into the period 1960-1961. Every week there came out articles of a similar nature, like ‘Bloody Sunday in Algeria’ (Ratiani, 1960a: 4), ‘Algeria on Fire’ (Alzhir v ogne, 1960: 4), and ‘Blood of Algeria’ (Stil', 1960: 3), relating the story of how during Charles de Gaulle trip to Algeria fire was opened on a group of Muslim Algerian demonstrators who were demanding talks with the provisional government. Thus, it was argued in the Soviet press that the referendum was not popular among the population, as it did nothing to resolve the issues of the war. In this regard, the results of the referendum, in which the affirmative answer was given by 55.89 % of the voters, were interpreted in Literaturnaya Gazeta from a standpoint of “the French people's great aspiration for peace”, while it was stated that “the 1961 referendum caused very serious damage to Charles de Gaulle's prestige” (Uroki referendum, 1961: 1).

In the spring of 1961, the French government voiced its willingness to hold official talks with the provisional government of the Algerian Republic. The talks were slated for April 7, 1961, to be held at Évian-les-Bains, a spa town in France (Mir i svobodu..., 1961: 3). Having said that, the Soviet periodical press noted that the Algerian War was far from being over, as right on the event's eve the world witnessed another mutiny by the Ultras, the third one overall.

In this regard, the events that took place between April and May 1961 were judged negatively. Many of the articles that covered the new mutiny in Algeria argued that the conspiring generals would not have been able to set objectives such as “marching on France” or altering the existing system of governing the country without the backing of influential political and economic circles (Trudnye dni..., 1961: 5). In addition, many of the sources spoke of a link between the mutineers and the US and argued that NATO was trying to make the Algerian War continue: “... military spending on Algeria is regarded as a part of France’s contribution to “the common defense”. This fact... indicates the seriousness of NATO’s responsibility with regard to the war in Algeria” (Drug kolonizatorov..., 1961: 3).



Fig. 3. Izvestia. 1961. May 23

In spite of the April events, the French-Algerian talks began on May 20, 1961. The two sides were unable to reach an agreement, with the talks hitting a dead end and getting interrupted. The Soviet periodical press was floating the idea that the French “plan to decolonize Algeria” and

the actions of the very Charles de Gaulle, with his belief of the Sahara being a French territory, were “sabotaging peace” (Stil', 1961: 4). An Izvestia correspondent wrote directly that “... it looks like to Charles de Gaulle the sole purpose behind the meeting at Évian-les-Bains is to prove to public opinion the impossibility of negotiating with the mutineers” (Zykov, 1961: 2). Figure 3 represents a caricature drawing of the maneuvers of the French side focused on the proposition of disadvantageous terms governing Algeria’s self-determination. France’s take-it-or-leave-it approach was condemned by the Pravda newspaper too: “Essentially, both take-it-or-leave-it “choices” meant the continuation of the war, as none of them opened the way to freedom and independence for a united Algeria, which the Algerian people have fought for over a seven-year period” (Ratiani, 1961: 5).



Fig. 4. Pravda. 1962. May 18

The entire following year, the general tone of sentiment in the Soviet press regarding France’s Algerian policy remained negative – up until the final stage of the French-Algerian talks. Starting in March 1962, the Soviet media adopted a more “liberal” attitude toward Charles de Gaulle’s policy in Algeria. Describing the start of the talks at Évian-les-Bains, which opened on March 7,

1962, a staff writer at *Za Rubezhom* argued that “the French side had to assume a more realistic stance” and that peace was “becoming more visible” (Evian..., 1962: 7-8). Nevertheless, most of the articles were still focused on the incessant terrorist activity of the OAS and the devil-may-care policy of the French government (Ratiani, 1962: 3). To reinforce the image of a French government linked with the nationalist organization, wide use was also made of caricature drawings (Figure 4). An article published in *Izvestiya* on February 2, 1962, stated the following on the subject: ““The birthmark” of today’s fascism in France is that it has been fed by the colonial war in Algeria, which is being waged by the French monopolies standing behind the personal power regime” (Sedykh, 1962: 4).

The ceasefire in Algeria and the signing of the Évian Accords on March 19, 1962, between the provisional government of the Algerian Republic and the French were met in the Soviet periodical press with mass publications supporting the Algerian people and approving the cessation of the long colonial war. However, in respect of the French side, the Soviet press remained true to its former position. An article published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* on March 24, 1962, wrote the following in this respect: “This step by France exemplifies a peace that can be best illustrated using the following words of La Rochefoucauld: “Reconciliation with our enemies is simply a desire to better our condition, a weariness of war, or the fear of some unlucky thing occurring”” (Molchanov, 1962: 4).

It is also worth noting that the Soviet periodical press persistently drew a line between the will of the French people and the actions of France’s ruling circles. For instance, an article in *Za Rubezhom* covering the April 8 referendum on approving the Évian Accords argued that the accords “were the result of a hard struggle of the people for peace”. It stated the following: “The masses of voters rightly regarding the cessation of the war as their victory answered ‘yes’ in the referendum. Yet that does not necessarily mean their overall approval of the policy of the government and President Charles de Gaulle” (Frantsuzy golosuyut..., 1962: 2).

#### 4. Conclusion

The treatment by the Soviet periodical press of France’s policy toward the Algerian Republic in the period 1958–1962 was overall negative. The colonial war, terrorist attacks and insurrections by the far-right OAS, and maneuvers by the French leadership during the talks at Évian-les-Bains are among the key topics covered in the press at the time. Algeria being an important territory for France, the French leadership was seeking to bolster its political, military-strategic, and economic influence in the region after its gaining independence too. However, this kind of policy was never backed by the USSR, with the Soviet periodical press tending to overall criticize the actions of the French government.

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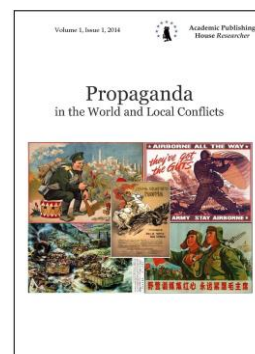
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## Military Propaganda at the First Stage of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War (September 27 – October 11): Official Materials of Armenia and Azerbaijan Defense Ministries

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### Abstract

The series of papers spotlights the relevant issue – propaganda around the next, yet very fierce development from September 27 to November 10, 2020 in the Nagorny Karabakh conflict that over the past two and a half decades not only has altered the balance of regional forces, but also predetermined major territorial changes; the outcome of this, without any exaggeration, full-scale war between the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan and Artsakh Defence Army is the victory by Azerbaijan. However, the balance of forces, legal aspects behind the involvement of third parties (Armenia, Turkey, Russia and others) and aftermath of the conflict are of no interest to us, but we would like to have a closer look at the forms, methods and content of the propaganda war that was no less bitter than action on the front; this war “flared up” in the media not only of the opposing sides – Armenia (de facto) and Azerbaijan – but also of other countries, primarily Russia and Turkey.

The paper suggests a periodization of the 27.09.2020–10.11.2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and analyzes the official messages of the Armenia and Azerbaijan Defense Ministries in the period from 27.09.20 to 11.10.20 based on the propaganda sources classification proposed in the first part of our work.

**Keywords:** Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from September 27 to November 10, 2020, propaganda, military propaganda, propaganda campaigns in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

### 1. Introduction

As it is known, the “acute phase” of the Karabakh conflict, which has been ongoing for decades, escalated into yet another tragic event in 2020 with both official sources and media of the warring sides – Azerbaijan and, perhaps, it would be fair to say, Armenia – waging an all-or-nothing ideological war. The media of other countries immediately joined the propaganda fray (especially Russia, because the opposing states are its allies under the CSTO treaty (Armenia)<sup>1</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> The CSTO or the Collective Security Treaty Organization is a regional intergovernmental organization acting on the basis of the Tashkent Treaty of May 15, 1992, and constitutes a military alliance of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. Azerbaijan withdrew from the treaty in 1999.

under the CIS treaty<sup>1</sup> (Azerbaijan)). The forms and techniques of the propaganda “war” can be insightful not only in terms of their historical value but also in terms of political significance.

The chronological framework of the work is confined to the first stage of the “acute” phase (except for the war day 1 – September 27, 2020), that is from September 28 to October 11, 2020.

Clearly, with paper size limitations, we have no possibility to cover all information messages of the Azerbaijani and Armenian military agencies, and so we selected those that provide the most accurate illustration for the forms of “ideological war” under review. Needless to say, “official” sources carry much more considerable clout than the media, and besides the latter always make references to the former.

We should also define the concepts of “conflict”/“war”/“local war”, used in the work in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict of the autumn 2020.

In sociology and political science, the term “conflict” (from the Latin *conflictus* – from the past participle of *confligere* ‘to strike together’) means the most active way of resolving clashes of interests, goals or views, which occurs in the process of social interaction, implies the opposition of the entities in this interaction and typically goes along with negative emotions (see e.g. [Antsupov, Shipilov, 1999: 81](#)). Certainly, “conflict” is an umbrella concept and includes the concept of “war”, which is one of the types of conflict.

The term “war” usually denotes “a conflict as between political entities, such as nations, tribes, political groups, etc., carried on due to discordant claims in the form of the armed confrontation and military (combat) action by their armed forces” (see e.g. [Slovar', 1999](#)) or “armed fighting between countries, ethnic groups or hostile parties within a country as to restore, reserve or acquire disputed rights and interests, in short, to compel one side to obey the will of the other” ([Brokgauz, Efron, 1892: 937](#)). Moreover, Azerbaijani official sources define the conflict as the Patriotic War (see e.g. [Provodyatsya podgotovitel'nye trenirovki..., 2020](#)).

Both research and popular literature widely use the concept of “local war”, meaning “armed engagement between two or more countries, with respect to political goals limited by the interests of those involved in the military (combat) action between the countries, and with respect to territory – by a small geographical region, located, as a rule, within the borders of one of the warring sides” ([Baryn'kin, 1994: 7](#)).

As is seen from above, the autumn conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 generally fits all three definitions because it has systemic elements of each of the concept, in particular: a) clash of interests; b) combat action between polities, c) the armed confrontation motivated by political interests. Hence, this work will deem the terms “conflict”/“war”/“local war” with respect to the confrontation between the Azerbaijani and Armenian/self-defense forces of Nagorno-Karabakh on September 27 – November 10, 2020 as synonyms.

## 2. Materials and methods

For sources, the paper proceeds from official publications by the Armenian and Azerbaijani Defense Ministries within the specified chronological timeframe.

A classification of sources is highlighted in a separate publication (see [Mamadaliyev, 2020](#)); we will only point out here that based on the sides involved in the conflict, we break down the sources into Armenian<sup>2</sup> and Azerbaijani ones; based on the message form – official statements of the sides, front-line “status reports”, information messages; based on the genre – use of traditional propaganda techniques, art techniques and mass communication techniques. As emphasized above, we will analyze only one “genre”, namely the official messages of the sides’ military departments, published on the Internet.

The methodological basis of the research is comprised by both specialized historical and general research methods. The specialized conventional historical methods used include:

<sup>1</sup> The CIS or the Commonwealth of Independent States is an international organization acting on the basis of the Belovezh Treaty of December 8, 1991, aimed to regulate trade, economic and foreign policies of the nine member states, most of which are the USSR former national republics (out of fifteen states, six did not join the CIS).

<sup>2</sup> Legally, the Republic of Armenia was not a side in the conflict, however, with the tremendous scope of military, ideological and economic support, provided to the armed forces of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, researchers and politicians quite rightly have to view Armenia as a side opposing to Azerbaijan.

a) historical systematization: sources were reviewed in tactical/situational (situation at the front, socio-economic situation in front cities, hardships faced by non-combatants/civilians, etc.) and strategic (history of the conflict) contexts.

b) historical comparison: in particular, sources were compared in terms of chronology (the rhetoric of the sources altered even in this very short time frame under study) and through the lens of the warring sides, etc. The latter method can be considered the primary tool for the work because it directly compares the “propaganda machines” of Armenia’s and Azerbaijan’s official agencies.

c) historical genetics (the impact of the front and political situations on the forms and techniques of propaganda).

In addition, general research methods such as synthesis, analysis, generalization, classification and categorization were employed.

### 3. Discussion

As for the issue of the theoretical justification of propaganda, academic and popular literature feature many works ranging from fundamental treatises to very concise pieces. One of our previous papers ([Mamadaliyev, 2020](#)) described three theories of propaganda: Harold D. Lasswell’s (see e.g. [Lasswell, 1927](#)), who was the first to substantiate the effectiveness of the phenomenon of the enemy’s “demonization” ([Lasswell, 1938: 71-100](#)), Walter Lippmann’s (see e.g. [Lippmann, 1922](#)) and John Dewey’s (see e.g. [D’yui, 2000](#); [D’yui, 2002](#)).

As this work will directly dissect sources, we think it is inexpedient to disperse our attention to other theoretical treatises and papers dedicated to propaganda mechanisms.

For an objective understanding of the conflict roots, we believe the works on the history of Azerbaijan (see e.g. [Istoriya Azerbaidzhana, 1960a](#); [Istoriya Azerbaidzhana, 1960b](#)) and Armenia (see e.g. [Istoriya armyanskogo naroda, 1980](#)) to be of great value.

Of course, we did not overlook the writings focusing directly on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its history (in particular, [Dashdamirov, 2005](#); [Kornell](#), etc.). Special mention should be made about reminiscences by Vladimir Semichastny, Colonel General (translator’s note: in the Soviet Army, “Colonel General” was a three-star general rank whose paygrade was equivalent to, for example, Lieutenant General in the U.S. Army) of the KGB of the USSR, who devoted a considerable part of his memoirs to the tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the 20th century in the late 50s, when the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (1923–1991) was part of the Azerbaijan SSR ([Semichastnyi, 2002](#)).

Publications by senior officials are also of interest in the context of our subject, although the works should be regarded not so much as research efforts but as propaganda communications (see, in particular, [Aliyev, 2020](#)).

### 4. Results

We should determine the conflict periodization in the first place, which we will rely on in this and subsequent papers.

As it is known, the historical process this way or another is temporally extended so that it is quite practical to divide it into stages by laying down some criterion. Each war is typically characterized by its own periodization; moreover, the division often depends on the criteria adopted by a particular researcher, and as a result the same war may be divided into varying discrete blocks in the works of different authors. However, some criteria are “generally accepted”, including “a turning point in the war”, “changing from the offensive strategy to the defensive one”, “major battles that pushed the command into changing its tactics/strategy”, etc. We regard the so-called “turning point in the war” as a universal criterion, when any of the warring sides gains the initiative or decisive military, technological, political (e.g. a revolution/coup inside the enemy’s nation and its withdrawal from the war) advantage. The entire range of the elements specified may not always be present – we mean obtaining a true decisive advantage that eventually led to victory.

Bearing this in mind, it is helpful to discriminate between two stages in the September–November 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict:

a) stage 1 – from September 27 to October 11, 2020 – is a period in which the “parity” combat action took place as it can be conditionally termed, i.e. when the Azerbaijani forces had no obvious

advantage in their offensive, and the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army predominantly held the borders of the area under their control.<sup>1</sup> The end of the stage (and to a larger extent, we think, a kind of “red line” for the Azerbaijani side) was marked by a tragedy that occurred on October 11, 2020, when a residential building in Ganja was hit by a high-power ballistic missile, presumably from the Elbrus OTRK<sup>2</sup> system. The explosion killed 10 civilians and injured 34 people. Although on October 17, fire was again targeted at Ganja’s residential neighborhoods, outside which the Azerbaijani Armed Forces were deployed<sup>3</sup>, and the number of civilian casualties was even greater (13 dead, including three children, and 53 wounded), it is the “October 11 tragedy”, in our opinion, that propelled the command of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces into mounting the most active action.

b) stage 2 – from October 12 to November 10, 2020 – marks active advance of the Azerbaijani forces into the Nagorno-Karabakh territory, seizure of control over the Shusha town, which, according to some authors, decided the outcome of the conflict (see e.g. [Pochemu Azerbaidzhan vyigral voynu...](#), 2020).

There is little doubt that certain elements in the periodization we have proposed are debatable; despite this, it is very instrumental for our research, i.e. for the analysis of the sides’ propaganda campaigns.

### **Statements made by the sides (28.09.20-11.10.20).**

#### **Statements of the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Armenia.**

The official statements of the sides were delivered basically on the conflict’s day 1 (and the most crucial day in terms of propaganda) – September 27, 2020, and we scrupulously reviewed them in the previous part of our work.

This paper will only give prominence to the statements that we found particularly interesting from the ideological point of view and/or those that proved to be an “unconventional” propaganda vehicle.

Taking the official website of Armenia’s military agency, one of such unconventional (in terms of propaganda techniques) statements was an article inconspicuously entitled “Announcement” ([Ob"yavlenie...](#), 2020). Considering the article’s heading and, in part, content, it should be categorized as an information message; however, the RA<sup>4</sup> Defense Ministry’s staff defined it a statement, and so we as well will follow their example. Here is the text: “The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia receives numerous letters, telephone calls from the organizations and individuals, offering to donate material items and food products for the needs of the Armed Forces ...In order to regulate the process and specify the information about the necessary material resources in Yerevan, we suggest to apply to... The donated means must be classified according to the material and food groups and they must have a description of the product units (type, quantity, etc.). ...The products according to their types should be sent accordingly: ...To the material items warehouse, responsible... To the food products storeroom, responsible...” ([Ob"yavlenie...](#), 2020). On the face of it, the “announcement” appears to be intended for information purposes only. However, the RA DM’s<sup>5</sup> employees did not arbitrarily identify it as a

<sup>1</sup> We will not review the controversial issue of annexing the Hadrut town, a major locality, of which Azerbaijan announced on October 9, as the issue lies beyond the scope of our study. In our paper, we will stick exclusively to the facts that are known for certain (and “accepted” by both sides in the conflict).

<sup>2</sup> OTRK is a Russian abbreviation for a mobile short-range ballistic missile system.

<sup>3</sup> Ganja, an Azerbaijani city on the border with the combat zone, was shelled several times (in particular, on October 4, 8, 11 and 17), of the attacks the last two inflict heavy casualties among civilians. The Armenian Armed Forces and the “Defence Army of the Republic of Artsakh” under their control say that the strike was unintentional and was only targeted at enemy servicepeople who were deployed in the close vicinity of residential neighborhoods. Considering the fact that the CEP (circular error probable means the uncontrolled measure of a weapon system’s precision/ projectile dispersion) of the warhead of a R-17 ballistic missile, which is the standard ammunition for the Elbrus OTRK system and was introduced in service in the USSR as early as in 1962, achieves nearly half a kilometer, the suggested explanation of an unintentional hit looks quite plausible, a number of military experts believe (see e.g. [Armenia: Unlawful Rocket...](#), 2020). At the same time, the authors of the article insist that the tragedies could have been avoided if the Armenian military had taken into account tactical and technical performance of the missiles used, i.e. in legal terms, they are charged with indirect intent.

<sup>4</sup> Republic of Armenia.

<sup>5</sup> Defense Ministry.

statement, because it not only contains information on economic matters (collection of donated sustenance goods and products), but also indirectly communicates a considerable veiled/'subtle' ideological message, devised above all to rekindle the subconscious patriotism in citizens, in particular, it emphasizes the 'numerous' letters and calls received. Interestingly, we did not find similar messages on the website of Azerbaijan's military agency.

A frequent type of statement is the so-called "denials", in particular those concerning the use of Tochka-U OTRK missile system: "The Defense Ministry of Armenia officially announces that the information actively disseminated by the Azerbaijani media that today the Armenian side allegedly used Tochka-U tactical missile system is a blatant lie and is not consistent with the reality. ... At the same time, we strictly warn that if the Azerbaijani side intends to use the pretext of this disinformation for retaliating by using a similar or larger and longer-range missile systems, the response will be instant, powerful and extremely destructive" ([Zayavlenie MO RA, 2020](#)).

### **Statements of the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Azerbaijan.**

The news item under the heading "President Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva met with wounded servicemen undergoing treatment at Central Military Clinical Hospital of Defense Ministry – VIDEO", released September 30, 2020 ([Prezident Il'kham Aliev i pervaya ledi..., 2020](#)), should be categorized not only and not so much among information messages, but among statements of a senior official (the President and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief) in the first place, because the meeting transcript includes an ample speech with a salient ideological component. From the very beginning, I. Aliyev accentuated patriotic sentiments ("...According to the information provided to me, all our wounded soldiers and officers live with the desire to recover soon and go back to the military operations zone, to continue to wage the just war for the Motherland..."), sense of justice ("...Ours is the cause of justice, we are fighting on our lands, and we are fighting for the Motherland. We are fighting for a fair cause, and I am sure that in this conflict we will achieve what we want. Justice will be served and Azerbaijan will restore its territorial integrity. Our compatriots who have been living as IDPs for many years will also return to their native lands..."), demonstration of the efforts by the government and personally by the President to improve social situation for combatants ("...As you know, special attention is paid to the families of martyrs<sup>1</sup> in our country, and government takes care of everything. I should say that Azerbaijan can be considered an exemplary country in the world in terms of attention to the families of martyrs. You know that on my instructions, government provides all the families of martyrs with apartments and houses. This year alone, 1,500 families of martyrs will be provided with housing by the government. In the next two to three years, the families of our heroic sons who perished in the first Karabakh war will be fully provided with houses and apartments. We continue to have martyrs as we speak. We have had martyrs in the battles for the Motherland..."; "...At the same time, the government provides the Karabakh veterans with necessary support. Their day-to-day problems are addressed. You can also be sure that the government will be by your side, the doctors are doing and will do everything possible for you to recover here as soon as possible and return to normal life..."). The address also arouses religious feelings ("...May Allah rest their souls in peace, may Allah give patience to their families and relatives. Shedding of their blood will not go unpunished. The enemy is seeing a fitting rebuff..."), hatred ("...Our soldiers are saviors, while Armenian soldiers are occupiers. That is the difference. We are fighting on our own lands, while an Armenian soldier dies on the land of another state – Azerbaijan..."), as well as forbearance to "ordinary" soldiers and people ("...I call on the Armenian people and urge them not to become hostages of the sordid deeds of their leadership..."). An effort is also put in to drive home the fact of the "irrelevance and unfairness" of the hostilities to the Armenian side (as a method to provoke internal contradictions in the enemy's camp): "... Let them hold their government accountable today. They should not send their children to Azerbaijan. What is the Armenian soldier doing in Azerbaijan? We are fighting on our own lands. Our soldiers and officers are dying on their own lands, are getting wounded on their own lands, and we are liberating our own lands..."; "...If the Armenian people want to live in peace, they should hold their government accountable. Because the misfortune of the Armenian people lies in the fact that for many years they were governed by a crooked criminal regime, the regime that committed genocide against

<sup>1</sup> Shehid (or Shahid) is a Muslim who dies as a martyr for their religious faith (see e.g. [Ali-zade, 2007](#)), "religious martyr" (see e.g. [Gritsanov, Sinilo, 2007](#))

the Azerbaijanis only for personal gains and keeps our lands under occupation. I am sure that the Armenian people will understand my words correctly. We have nothing against the Armenian people. Azerbaijan is a multinational state; many nations live here in peace and tranquility, including the Armenian people. Thousands of Armenians live in Azerbaijan. There are not pushed around because they are our citizens. Therefore, our struggle is a struggle for a just cause...” ([Prezident İl'həm Əliyev i pervaya ledi..., 2020](#)).

Statements by other senior officials, such as those by Azerbaijan’s Defense Minister Z. Hasanov, also draw attention to the “illegal” actions of the enemy: “Minister of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan Colonel General Zakir Hasanov: ‘Delivering fire on the territory of Azerbaijan from the territory of Armenia is clearly provocative and expands the zone of hostilities...’” ([Zayavlenie Ministra Oborony, 2020](#)).

I. Aliyev’s speech “President İlham Aliyev addressed the nation” on 09.10.2020 appealed to the people” should not go without mention as well as again resorts to the entire range of propaganda techniques. We believe it is not practical to provide supporting quotations for each method. It makes sense to quote previously unused techniques, such as “humiliating” one’s counterpart – Armenian Prime Minister N. Pashinyan: “...I think that today’s meeting in Moscow will clarify many things. They must accept the basic principles. However, Pashinyan said he did not accept them. He said that he would not give back an inch of land to Azerbaijan. What happened?! Why can’t you hold on to these lands? Why can’t you? What happened? Why did you run away? Now you are kneeling before others, humiliating yourself and humiliating your people. You have brought your country to level zero. He said he would not give back these lands. Who is even going to ask you whether you will give it back or not?! We came and took it, and that is all. We will take as much as we need, if we want, we will take more. As we could have done in July. I have talked about that. In July, we could easily move into the territory of Armenia and occupy lands. No-one could have stopped us. These battles are proving that. We didn’t do that. I didn’t! However, our army was ready for that. I did not let them because there is a political will. We act within the law. We don’t set our sight on the lands of other countries but we will not give our land to anyone either. So what happened, Pashinyan? You said that the ‘Nagorno-Karabakh republic’ covers all the occupied territories. So come and defend them now. Why are you running to Moscow? Why do you keep calling and annoying world leaders? Who did you not call? Who did you not annoy? I would advise him to call shamans. Let them help him. Or call a chief of a tribe living on a remote island and he will save his life. As they say, he has become a joke character. Open up and scroll through social networks. People are making fun of you and circulating jokes. There has never been anyone in the world who would humiliate his country so much. Why? Because he cannot come and sit on someone else’s land and keep it” ([Prezident İl'həm Əliyev i pervaya ledi..., 2020](#)).

Summing up, we should say that in the conflict, the Azerbaijani side wielded the technique of making statements much more frequently than the Armenian side. However, legally, Armenia was not a side in the conflict, and this, in our opinion, explains why they avoided statements. So, the “abundance” of statements by senior officials should be rated as a strength of the propaganda campaign launched by the RA MD.

### **Front-line status reports (28.09.20-11.10.20).**

#### **Front-line status reports by the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Armenia**

Front-line status reports by the RA DM in the initial days of the war do not offer much detail on the number and type of enemy units eliminated; they feature, however, video materials. The status reports are “generalized” messages, in particular: “The army of the Republic of Artsakh continues to inflict huge losses on the Azerbaijani army. The tanks and armoured fighting vehicles of the opponent are always under the target of the Armenian Armed Forces and they are hit with accurate fire” ([Armyanskije voiska..., 2020](#)). In other cases, news items only contain videos without any description (see e.g. [Ocherednye porazheniya..., 2020](#)).

#### **Front-line status reports by the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

Front-line status reports by the Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan usually provide a plethora of video materials in line with the principle: “Demonstration of facts is the best evidence”. It is difficult to argue against the approach. In addition to the news item headline, video footage is now and then complemented with a brief, usually clarifying text (see e.g. [Pushki protivnika..., 2020](#); [Boevaya tekhnika protivnika..., 2020](#) and others). Front-line status reports without photo and

video documents are also used (see e.g. [Unichtozheny rezervnye sily protivnika..., 2020](#)); some of them do not relish an opportunity to discriminatory assessments of the enemy's combat capabilities: "Earlier, the Armenian armed forces used the "Tochka-U" high-precision tactical missile system... Due to the unsuitability and poor quality of the enemy's military equipment, three of the missiles fired did not explode" (see e.g. [Armeniya primenila..., 2020](#)).

So, front-line status reports of the warring sides have a number of common features. Each of them does its best to support texts with photo and video evidence. The quantity of such messages issued by the RA DM is much larger, and video footage is not even supplemented with a text (the publication has only a headline).

### **Information messages (28.09.20-11.10.20).**

#### **Information messages by the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Armenia**

Informational messages of the RA DM can be characterized by a reserved and minimalistic style with dry enumerations of "essential" facts. With respect formal peculiarities, the most widely used type of message is the following: "According to the information received from the Defence Army of Artsakh, on the night of October 11-12, the relatively stable tension was maintained in all the directions of the frontline. The opponent was active especially in the northern, northeastern and southern directions... All the attempts of the enemy forces to change the operative-tactical situation in their favor were stopped by the Defence Army units. The opponent suffered heavy losses of manpower and military equipment... In the morning, the opponent resumed shelling, accompanied by the artillery fire, which was suppressed as a result of the equivalent actions taken by the Defence Army units" ([Soobshchenie dlya pressy, 2020](#)).

#### **Information messages by the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

The article "The Armenian side is trying to conceal its losses by spreading misinformation", dated 28.09.20 ([Rasprostranyaya dezinformatsiyu..., 2020](#)) and posted at 00:35 Moscow time, is devised to breed mistrust of the enemy's information sources among Azerbaijani citizens and at the same time make the population aware of their own successes: "The information spread by Armenian Defense Ministry officials on the number of casualties about Azerbaijan Army is baseless and does not reflect reality. This is aimed at reducing to some extent anxiety among the Armenian population and chaos in the army, in the face of Azerbaijan army successes..."; "...Due to the large number of wounded in the enemy's army, there is a shortage of beds in military and civilian hospitals and reserve blood deficiency in the blood bank... As always, the Armenian side hides the real number of combat casualties in its army from the public...". As it is seen, "standard clichés" are also leveraged to rebut information from the sources of the opposing side and downgrade the combat effectiveness its armed forces, as well as underline "systemic" and "situational" problems the rear is beset with.

We mentioned above that propaganda delivers value only if buttress with "factual evidence": "...According to intelligence information obtained at the end of the day, the Armenian army suffered serious losses as a result of the combat operations. Thus, 22 enemy tanks and other armored vehicles, 15 OSA anti-aircraft missile systems, 18 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), 8 artillery pieces were destroyed. The enemy suffered more than 550 casualties, including dead and wounded. 3 weapons and ammunition depots have been destroyed in different directions...". The "factual knowledge" is supported by items with videos that is captioned with minimalist comments such as "...Units of the Azerbaijan Army continue to destroy the enemy's military equipment with precise fire", "...As a result of the steps taken to prevent the active combat activity of the enemy, 2 more Armenian Armed Forces tanks were destroyed by precise fire of our units", "...A large number of enemy forces have been killed" and other examples (see in particular [Nashi podrazdeleniya..., 2020](#); [Unichtozheno eshche dva tanka..., 2020](#); [Vygodnye vysoty vokrug..., 2020](#), etc.). It would be correct to identify this type of message as front-line status reports, but they were given in the context of rebutting the enemy's information (as confirmation), and hence we referred them to the "category" of information messages.

The initial phase of the conflict always includes a message about a "final warning", which produces the outward effect of compulsion to justify the use of tough action before a side's own population: "The city of Tartar has been under fire from the Armenian armed forces units since the morning of September 28... Ministry of Defense's leadership warns the other side for the last time that we will take adequate response measures against them" ([Vrag preduprezhdaetsya..., 2020](#)). The method can also be regarded as one of propaganda clichés.



On the other hand, even at the onset of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, the official military sources of Azerbaijan also released “purely informational” messages having no aggressive propaganda, in particular the item “Foreign military attachés and representatives of international organizations in our country were informed about the operational situation – VIDEO”, dated September 28 ([Inostrannye voennye attashe..., 2020](#)), contains almost no trite propaganda clichés.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted, we can sum up and formulate the following findings:

1. In the propaganda “war”, the defense ministries of the warring sides give priority to front-line status reports; the majority of the messages on the military agencies’ official websites belongs to this type. However, there are some distinctions between the sources: for example, the Armenian Defense Ministry more frequently resorts to so-called statements; the content items of the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry are generally dominated by front-line status reports. Informative and other “clarifying” messages were much more broadly posted by the Armenian Defense Ministry.

2. The sources of each side are invariably characterized by clichés aimed to “derogate the dignity” of its enemy. Certainly, they are much “subtler” and “thinly disguised” than, for example, Soviet and German clichés during World War II, but they are still present, amplifying the propaganda impact on the unsophisticated part of the population.

3. The articles by the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry occasionally include information messages that do not use any propaganda techniques at all. This situation is not typical of the “deadly enmity” background and, from our perspective, may well strengthen, rather than weaken the propaganda effect by adding a “tone of objectivity” to the presentation of facts.

4. The average number of daily messages by the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry is considerably larger than that of the Armenian Defense Ministry. Our suggestion is that the main reason is Azerbaijan’s more thorough approach to its propaganda efforts. Moreover, Azerbaijan’s official military source did not “silence down” the events when its own territory was shelled (see e.g. [Territoriya Mingyachevira i..., 2020](#); [Territoriya Bardinskogo i..., 2020](#), etc.).

5. Azerbaijan’s senior officials made addresses to the people on overwhelmingly more occasions. We believe the fact that Armenia was not legally involved in the conflict pressed to refrain from such actions. Our review did not cover the websites of the Artsakh military departments and only focused on the agencies of the warring nations recognized by the most of the global community (these only include Armenia and Azerbaijan).

6. Front-line status reports by the warring sides have similarities in form and content, as they both strive to support their materials with photo and video evidence, above of all. However, such messages were predominantly capitalized on by the RA DM, and more than once the video footage even has no text attached to it (only headlines).

7. The information messages of the sides often employ no “propaganda techniques” and can be described as reserved and objective. The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry uses a more “emotional” tone of voice in messages of the type with the “ideological” components often embedded in them.

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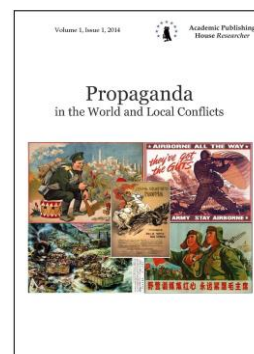
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## Weapons of Propagandists

### The Use of Leaflets as a Propagandist's Weapon in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

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#### Abstract

This paper examines the use of leaflets as a propagandist's weapon in 20<sup>th</sup> century military conflicts. Consideration is given to both the external (paper and special paints) and internal (text) characteristics of leaflets.

In conducting the research reported in this paper, use was made of specialized works on the history of military propaganda, as well as the history of collaborationism.

The study employed the principles of objectivity and historicism, which made it possible to examine the events in question in an unbiased manner and explore various related phenomena in the context of the historical situation. For instance, an analysis of several related historical facts helped come up with a new assessment of the underlying causes behind the low effectiveness of Soviet propaganda in 1941.

The author's conclusion is that careful consideration was given by 20<sup>th</sup> century specialists in the area of psychological warfare to both the external and internal characteristics of the leaflet. The design of leaflets was to be thought out down to the last detail, both in terms of text and physical appearance, while, in terms of the ideological message, each set of leaflets was to be targeted to an audience that largely represented the opposing army. In addition, of special significance was the timing of agitation activities, for it was understood that work of this kind must not be spontaneous and detached from the real situation in the combat zone.

**Keywords:** propaganda, leaflets, internal and external criticism, local conflicts, 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 1. Introduction

For 20<sup>th</sup> century military propagandists the use of leaflets was an effective means of influencing the opposing side psychologically. For instance, during World War II in the second half of 1942 alone an estimated 60,000 Soviet military personnel joined the opposing, German, army on the Eastern Front (Semiryaga, 2000: 454). This is comparable to six full-fledged rifle divisions of the Red Army.

It, therefore, is no wonder that the use of leaflets occupied an important part in influencing the opposing side psychologically. Circulating in millions of copies, propaganda leaflets were delivered by aircraft and distributed by diversionist units and local residents (Mamadaliyev, 2015: 59). According to V. Chuprin, in the war's first year alone the Soviets used an estimated 650 million leaflets on the front line (Chuprin, 2020).

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## 2. Materials and methods

In conducting the research reported in this paper, use was made of specialized works on the history of military propaganda, as well as the history of collaborationism.

The study employed the principles of objectivity and historicism, which made it possible to examine the events in question in an unbiased manner and explore various related phenomena in the context of the historical situation. For instance, an analysis of several related historical facts helped come up with a new assessment of the underlying causes behind the low effectiveness of Soviet propaganda in 1941.

## 3. Results

### *External criticism*

It would seem that we already know everything there is to know about the use of propaganda leaflets owing to the experience with it in World War I, except just for text content, but there appears to be more to it. Here is just one example. During World War II, soldiers in the Red Army did not receive cigarettes – they were given only tobacco. At that time, it was hard to provide rolling paper for Soviet military personnel, as most of the time it was out of stock. Quite unexpectedly, a “helping hand” with rolling paper was “extended” to the Russians by Third Reich propagandists, who had started to print leaflets on this kind of paper designed to call on opposing military personnel to surrender and come over to the German side. Despite the fact that a Soviet soldier found to be in possession of such leaflets could face a court martial, just about everyone in the Red Army had it.

Another example is the use of leaflets by the anti-Iraq coalition in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century during Operation Desert Storm, when leaflets were printed on special paper protected against humidity and sunlight. In the peculiar conditions of that conflict, the use of this kind of paper was definitely timely (Tokov, Kasyuk, 1996).

### *Internal criticism*

Normally, the text content of front-line leaflets was quite simple and easy-to-understand, with Third Reich propagandists relying in their line of work on a special directive from the High Command of the Wehrmacht. The document discouraged using in front-line propaganda complex, convoluted, and artificially constructed texts (Figure 1), stressing that the simpler, clearer, and more natural the content was, the more effective it would be (Mamadaliyev, 2015: 59). Of importance in this respect was also the circumstance that the majority of military personnel in the Red Army were of little education, with most having completed just four grades in school.

However, the use of leaflets could also work the other way and cause problems if done in an incompetent or untimely manner. A classic example of this is Soviet military propaganda in the period 1938–1941. This body of propaganda was underpinned by the Comintern’s guiding idea – ‘Workers and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!’ Between 1938 and 1939, class propaganda was employed in the Battle of Lake Khasan and the Battles of Khalkhin Gol. To conduct propaganda in this local conflict, use was made of an agit-train of the First Independent Division of the Red Army, which operated a small printery that carried Japanese, Chinese, and Korean fonts. However, the Russians’ reliance on the idea ‘Generals and the rich are the only ones who crave war’ did not work. Out of roughly 60,000 Japanese military personnel who took part in the Battles of Khalkhin Gol, only 90 were captured, with only four of these joining the Russian side willingly after falling for its propaganda (Chuprin, 2020).

The Soviets’ second attempt to employ the same cliché was undertaken during the Russo-Finnish War of 1939–1940. Specialists at the Comintern had suggested taking advantage of the enmity between proletarian soldiers and bourgeois officers. However, the important point that was overlooked was that the difference in standard of living was not great in Finland at the time. As a result, this propaganda effort failed too.

Subsequent to Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union, Soviet leaflet propaganda failed big several times in 1941 – a fact recognized by several contemporary Russian researchers. Below is an outline of three such cases.

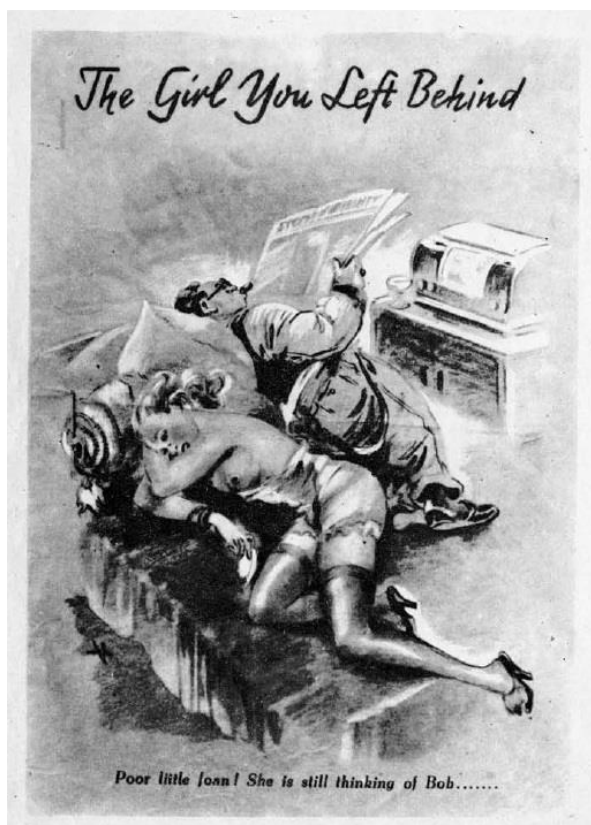


**Fig. 1.** German ‘Come Over to Us!’ leaflet

Following Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the Political Administration of the Red Army undertook a “class propaganda” campaign. The agitators used leaflets to call on German proletarian military personnel to topple the Nazi regime and join the “brotherhood of workers and peasants”. According to researcher V.G. Krysko, it was a preposterous thing to do at that point in time, considering that the Red Army was retreating (Krysko, 1999: 49).

It is important to note that (linguistic or stylistic) mistakes in the internal content of leaflets could also reduce the quality of psychological impact, so no improvisation was allowed, as it could lead to inverse results, i.e. a boomerang effect.

The Soviets’ second major mistake in handling their propaganda targeted at the opposing military forces in early 1941, which eventually would do them lasting damage and undermine their reputation, was to follow a directive from the chief of the Main Political Administration of the Red Army, L.Z. Mekhlis, and publish sexually-oriented leaflets. Normally, such leaflets contained a photograph of a naked woman in bed with a man, accompanied by an inscription of the following kind: “See what your wife is up to while you are at the front”. It is to be noted that while erotic propaganda was employed by different nations both in World War I and in World War II (Figure 2), this was done only in cases where the opposing side had lost the lead and suffered extensive losses. In 1941, the use of such leaflets by the Soviets led the German side to term it “class-pornographic propaganda” (Krysko, 1999: 59). This kind of propaganda “masterpieces” by the Soviets not only failed to undermine the morale of German units – just on the contrary, they sparked excitement and buoyancy among German soldiers, who would collect such leaflets as erotic cards.



**Fig. 2.** German 'Poor Little John' leaflet

Finally, we learn from V. Chuprin that on June 27, just five days into the war, the Soviets released their first 'To the German Soldiers!' leaflet, which called on the Germans to end the senseless war and come over to the Red Army (Chuprin, 2020). Obviously, one should hardly have expected a leaflet like that to be highly efficient just five days into the war.

Let us do some summing up. There is one pattern that cuts across all Soviet propaganda initiatives undertaken in 1941 – the untimeliness of the start of propaganda activities. The use of such leaflets could have been a lot more effective had they been used between 1944 and 1945. However, it is not quite right to accuse the Main Political Administration and the Comintern of unprofessionalism, for the World War I experience must have been studied by the Soviets during the prewar period quite meticulously. It may be argued that all of those leaflets had been printed in the USSR prior to the German invasion, with the conflict having been presented to Soviet military propaganda specialists as an offensive operation of the Red Army aimed at getting the opposing side to lose the lead, defend, and suffer extensive losses. This appears to be the only scenario where it would have made sense for the Soviet leadership to undertake the propagandist initiatives it did in 1941.

There were some even more substantial propaganda failures of the Soviet leadership. Military writer K.M. Simonov mentions the fact that in the summer of 1941 the Soviet Air Force engaged for some time in dropping leaflets on areas controlled by the opposing side. The leaflets were intended for compatriots and meant to warn them of an air attack planned for the following day. The air strike was going to be targeted at the German military personnel. For this reason, the civilian population was advised to evacuate themselves to a different location or hide – apparently, in the hope that opposing military personnel would be huddled up on the surface and its assembly points would be easier to target. As well-intended as these initiatives were, they also, however, worked the other way, with the Germans, quite naturally, becoming keen to have pulled all of their available air-defense systems and fighter aircraft into the area by the scheduled time. As a result, hardly any of the Soviet bombers would make it back to its airdrome (Pyriev, Reznichenko, 2001: 244).

The physical damage from such agitation campaigns was significant (e.g., wasteful use of the leaflet stock (nearly 650 million leaflets printed in 1941 alone); bombers being used to deliver leaflets instead of being of real help to the retreating Soviet troops; Soviet air units being directly

hurt through suffering more extensive losses as a result of the opposing side learning of upcoming air strikes). Add to this the possibility of reputational damage, for there is hardly anything more morale-boosting to a soldier than realizing that you are fighting a bunch of dilettantes.

#### 4. Conclusion

Careful consideration was given by 20<sup>th</sup> century specialists in the area of psychological warfare to both the external and internal characteristics of the leaflet. The design of leaflets was to be thought out down to the last detail, both in terms of text and physical appearance, while, in terms of the ideological message, each set of leaflets was to be targeted to an audience that largely represented the opposing army. In addition, of special significance was the timing of agitation activities, for it was understood that work of this kind must not be spontaneous and detached from the real situation in the combat zone.

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