

Russian propaganda and its role in the Russian foreign policy towards Ukraine. Russian-Ukrainian war case.**1. Introduction**

According to the survey conducted on 17th of February 2023 by the Russian independent institute Levada Center, almost 75% of the country's population supported war escalation against Ukraine. Propaganda is considered one of the most powerful tools to manipulate others' opinions and views. It took Hitler more than 7 years to build a strong Nazi statement to declare World War II. In this literature review, I plan to present key aspects of the building of Russian propaganda throughout history and its consequences and highlight that this topic should raise awareness of the bigger community to avoid future escalations and conflicts.

2. Literature review

It is essential to understand that the fundamentals of the rapacious will were developed hundreds of years ago. It is believed that Russia has inherited the reigning culture of the Golden Horde khan and the powerlessness of all other people, who are passive and totally dependent on the authorities by their own will (Lipinski, 1913). Mieliekiestsev and Temirova (2021) stated that the letter from the Russian queen, Catherine II, to the Russian general, Alexander Vyazemsky, in 1764, in which she insisted on the importance of the assimilation and destroying Ukraine as a state, may be considered as the beginning of Russia's ambitions to gain full control under Ukrainian's territories and nation. I would like to mention that the authors fail to provide an explanation for such decisions. Commonly, the main reasons were probably territory, resources, expanding of Orthodox Christianity.

Nevertheless, not only did those documents present the intentions about Ukraine, but similar claims were also addressed to Latvian, Bessarabia, and Belarussian territories. Moreover, the Russian Empire tried to appropriate their heritage and again used this strategy in the Soviet Union. Moroz et al. (2022) consider the so-called Putin's Munich Speech in 2007 the beginning point of "announcing the intentions to restore Russia's political influence after the fall of the Soviet Union" (Kovalska-Pavelko et al., 2022), after which the annexation of Abkhazia was conducted.

Consequently, the concept of "The Russian World" was introduced to complement those aims. It dictates the necessity for Eastern European countries to reunite with Russia as there is a background basis of common language, culture, church, and beliefs. It also ignores the right of nations to choose their own fate. For instance, in the information field, they often call Ukraine, Moldova, Estonia, and the other states "small brothers who lost their way in this world". At that moment, such manipulations are used by Putin, for example, to say that Ukraine was founded by Lenin. Moroz et al. (2022) believe that it is a "post-truth" phenomenon when facts and information can be misinterpreted because of the long repetition and the right emotional expression which is the main idea of Russian propaganda on television.

An example of it was used to justify the Russian Federation's illegal actions. After failed mission for the accession of Ukraine to the union with Russia through pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovich in 2014, it invaded Crimea was invaded and territories of Donetsk with Luhansk regions were occupied as well, which were later called "Novorossiia" ("New Russia"). To vindicate that, they proclaimed their wish to defend the Russian-speaking community from the genocide. They even tried to manipulate on people's attitude towards the Second World War, proclaiming that the Ukrainian government with President Volodymyr Zelenskiy were Nazis because they were actively promoting the Ukrainian language on the territory of Ukraine.

Fortuin (2022) develops this idea in the rhetorical frame called "Russophobic Nazi Ukraine government commits genocide on Russians" which "aims to destroy Russia and Russian culture". The researcher

believes this frame is successful because of its emotionally loaded words and connections with World War II. I would add that in Russia there is no free press, so it is pretty easy for the propaganda to share advantageous ideas which cannot be refuted. Additionally, the main point of it is to dehumanize the Ukrainian people with different fakes, created during the war.

Stănescu (2022) explains the modern tendency to post and share them without proper investigation and shows a few examples from the Russian-Ukrainian war, including the "Kyiv Ghost" case, the Bucha "made-up" massacre scenario and the deep fake video of V.Zelensky. The researcher believes in the significance of proper working with this problem as disinformation can now destabilize democracy in any country.

3. Conclusions

Taking everything into consideration, that is clearly visible that Russian foreign policy has always been aimed towards invading and gaining by justifying its actions. We should take that into account as the Ukrainian case may be not the last because there is a precise hint of Russia's future aggressive ambitions toward other Eastern European countries and its potential instruments. However, I believe that we cannot put all the blame on the aggressor's government as the people are guilty too of not checking and verifying the information but just accepting the given without proper investigation. Similarly, on September 30, 1946, it was clearly stated by International Military Tribunal at the Nuremberg Trials:

"The power of the Nazi Party was recognized and accepted by the great majority of the German people, and Germans were generally willing and content to leave the Nazi leaders to work out their plans. In this way, the German people became partners in the crimes which were committed. They cannot now escape responsibility by claiming that they were merely the unwilling instruments of the Nazi leaders"

4. Resources

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5. Putin's approval rating (2022). Levada-Center
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