

The Great Patriotic War in the Propaganda of “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Argumenty i Fakty” in the Years 2014-2022

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Abstract. *This work presents my doctoral project, which is currently in progress. Using the example of two Russian weekly newspapers - "Komsomolskaya Pravda" and "Arguments and Facts" - the project will provide a detailed description of the materials related to the Great Patriotic War, how they are used, to what extent, and in what ways they are used in Russian propaganda to promote and justify imperial patriotism of Russian society and the imperial policy of the Russian state.*

Keywords. Propaganda, Russia, ideology, war, media

1 Introduction

In the 1990s, the new Russian state that emerged after the collapse of the USSR faced a radical modernization of its political system. The democratization of the system had to lead to the transformation of Russia into a modern state, which meant, among other things, weakening the central power and warming up relations between Moscow and the West. The shift towards a liberal system became an alternative way of exercising power, moving away from Russia's traditional imperialist policy of expanding its territory by annexing new areas that did not belong to it.

However, as a result of Yeltsin's liberalisation, it became apparent that the Russian state and its citizens were not ready for such political modernization. Vladimir Putin's ascension to power marked a new stage in Russia's history: real political compe

titution was eliminated, the media space was subordinated to executive power, and the powers of local authorities were restricted. President Putin aimed to restore Russia's strong position on the international stage and continue its imperialist tradition. To achieve these goals, it was necessary to find a source that would serve as the foundation for a new Russian ideology. The Great Patriotic war became that source.

The term „Great Patriotic War” has been historically used in the USSR's historiography, and it continues to be employed by the Russian Federation to describe the German-Soviet war of 1941-1945 as part of World War II. Although the term “Great Patriotic War” may not be universally recognized or understood in all academic contexts, but it would be appropriate to use the term in my project. By doing so, I aim to emphasize the specific historical and cultural context of propaganda.

2 Background

Research on the topic of the Great Patriotic war has so far focused mainly on analyzing the Great Patriotic war as a factor shaping the collective consciousness of Russian citizens [1][2]. The topic of the Great Patriotic war has also appeared in research on the image of the Great Patriotic war in Russian history textbooks in the context of the historical policy of the Russian Federation [3]. In addition, in scientific studies, the subject of the Great Patriotic war has been examined in order to explore and describe the impact of the militarization of the Russian state and the mythologization of the Great Patriotic War on Russian politics and geopolitics, as well as foreign policy [4]. Despite the growing research activity in this area, the topic of the Great Patriotic war in Russian propaganda, including weekly newspapers, is still an original and interesting research area, as previous research results have mainly focused on analyzing the Great Patriotic war as a direction of historical policy. Therefore, research on this topic in the field of media and social communication is still fragmented, and many research questions remain open.

The purpose of this research project is to conduct an analysis of the propaganda content of “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Argumenty i Fakty”.

3 The Materials and Methods

The research focuses on the content, extent, and methods of utilizing Great Patriotic War-related content in Russian propaganda, specifically analyzing two weekly newspapers, “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Argumenty i Fakty”.

Main research objective: To conduct a content analysis of the propaganda content in “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Argumenty i Fakty”, enabling the discussion of identified research problems and verification of research hypotheses.

Main research hypothesis: The propaganda content related to the Great Patriotic War published in “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Argumenty i Fakty” promotes and justifies Russian patriotism, authoritarianism, and imperialism.

Main research questions:

- How did the cult of the Great Patriotic War originate, and what are its main characteristics?
- Under what conditions and to what objectives do Russian media carry out propaganda?
- What Great Patriotic War-related content is used in the propaganda of “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Argumenty i Fakty”, to what extent, and in what manner, for the promotion and justification of patriotism within Russian society?
- What Great Patriotic War-related content is used in the propaganda of “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Argumenty i Fakty”, to what extent, and in what manner, for the promotion and justification of authoritarian rule in Russia?
- What Great Patriotic War-related content is used in the propaganda of “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Argumenty i Fakty”, to what extent, and in what manner, for the promotion and justification of Russia's imperial foreign policy towards neighboring countries and the West?

The main research method will be qualitative analysis of propaganda discourse. To achieve the research objective, the analysis of semantic field has been chosen as the method for interpreting the discourse. This will allow for a detailed qualitative analysis of how and to what extent the propaganda content related to the Great Patriotic War, published in “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Argumenty i Fakty”, promotes and justifies imperial patriotism within Russian society, as well as the imperial policy of the Russian state.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

Analyzing scholarly works on the content, forms and goals of propaganda of the Russian Federation, it can be concluded that so far the connection between the Great Patriotic War and the promotion and justification of the formation of patriotism in Russian society and imperial foreign policy in Russian society in the main Russian mass media has not been sufficiently substantiated and explained. Fragmentarily, to a greater or lesser extent, certain aspects of the selected research topic have been addressed in many scientific studies. Therefore, undertaking the research problem specified in the title of this paper is justified not only by the importance of the issue, but also by the paucity of existing studies. This will

allow a thorough qualitative analysis of how and to what extent the propaganda content on the Great Patriotic war featured in “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Argumenty i Fakty” promotes and justifies the imperial patriotism of Russian society and the imperial policy of the Russian state.

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