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**IMPERIAL PRACTICES OF NATION BUILDING UNDER
THE CONDITIONS OF THE 19th AND THEIR MODIFICATIONS
DURING WORLD WAR I: UKRAINIAN CONTEXT**

Abstract. The aim of the research. The purpose of the article is to study the influence of the practices of the Austrian / Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires, their “official” nationalisms during the

19th century and World War I on the processes of nation-building of the peoples oppressed by them, the formation of the Ukrainian national project. **The research methodology**, in addition to general scientific principles and methods, is primarily based on the approaches of modern national studies, intellectual history, and visual anthropology. **The scientific novelty** consists in the systematic analysis of the influence of the imperial situation of the 19th century, which was associated with national movements and nation-building of the so-called “oppressed peoples”, as well as “official” nationalisms, on the formation of the Ukrainian national project, which had different development trajectories under the conditions of two monarchies. It is argued that the situation provoked by World War I did not deepen the gap between the Ukrainians of the two empires, but contributed to the achievement of an understanding of their unity outside the imperial contexts. At the same time, the peculiarities of the formation of “official” nationalisms, which could not offer convincing options that would become an alternative to the nationalisms of the “outskirts”, have been considered. The challenges faced by intellectuals in search of their own identity have been analyzed. The content of propaganda products with a national subtext, as well as the role of famous artists in the formation of the image of the enemy during World War I have been elucidated. **The Conclusion.** Since the Ukrainians were subjects of the Romanov and Habsburg empires, they became a special object of attention and, accordingly, propaganda. In the Russian Empire, the formation of the foundations of “official nationalism” was influenced by the ideas of Pan-Slavism. The conditions of World War I intensified the struggle of the two imperial centers for the preservation of Ukrainian loyalty, which had positive consequences for the development of the Ukrainian national movement and nation-building, and led to the emergence of Ukrainian states. Despite the short duration of their existence in the interwar period, they had far-reaching political consequences.

Keywords: empires, nations, nation-building, Pan-Slavism, World War I, propaganda.

ІМПЕРСЬКІ ПРАКТИКИ НАЦІЄТВОРЕННЯ В УМОВАХ XIX ст. ТА ЇХ МОДИФІКАЦІЇ ПІД ЧАС ПЕРШОЇ СВІТОВОЇ ВІЙНИ: УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ КОНТЕКСТ

Анотація. Метою статті є дослідження впливу практик Австрійської / Австро-Угорської та Російської імперій, їх “офіційних” націоналізмів протягом XIX ст. і Першої світової війни на процеси націєтворення пригноблених ними народів, формування українського національного проєкту. **Методологія дослідження**, окрім загальнонаукових принципів і методів, базується на підходах сучасних національних студій, інтелектуальної історії та візуальної антропології. **Наукова новизна** полягає у системному аналізі впливу імперської ситуації XIX ст., що пов’язувалася із національними рухами і націєтворенням так званих “пригноблених народів”, а також “офіційних” націоналізмів на формування українського національного проєкту, який мав різні траєкторії розвитку в умовах двох монархій. Аргументовано, що ситуація, спровокована Першою світовою війною, не поглибила прірву між українцями двох імперій, а сприяла досягненню розуміння їх єдності поза імперськими контекстами. Проаналізовано виклики, перед якими постали інтелектуали у пошуках власної ідентичності. Досліджено зміст пропагандистської продукції із національним підтекстом, а також роль відомих митців у формуванні образу ворога під час Першої світової війни. **Висновки.** Оскільки українці були підданими двох імперій, вони перетворилися на особливий об’єкт уваги, її відповідно, пропаганди. У Російській імперії на формування засад “офіційного націоналізму” вплинули ідеї панславізму. Умови Першої світової війни максимально загострили боротьбу двох імперських центрів за збереження лояльності українців, що мало позитивні наслідки для розвитку українського національного руху та націєтворення, і призвело до появи українських держав. Попри нетривалість їх існування у міжвоєнний період, вони мали далекосяжні політичні наслідки.

Ключові слова: імперії, нації, націєтворення, панславізм, Перша світова війна, пропаганда.

The Problem Statement. In the 19th century in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, an active process of nation formation took place. World War I caused tectonic shifts in social, economic and identification processes. The destruction of continental empires and the emergence of new national states became the main results of this world clash. The

representatives of the Slavic peoples, who in various conditions were within the Habsburg and Romanov dynastic monarchies, faced the question of finding optimal ways for their further development.

The scientific understanding of how the imperial practices of the 19th and early 20th centuries, “official” nationalisms, and propagandistic opposition affected national movements and nationalization of the so-called “oppressed peoples”, the formation of the Ukrainian national project is an important task of modern historical science. Focusing attention on this fact, it should be noted that it is especially relevant in the conditions of Russia’s large-scale war against Ukraine.

The Analysis of Sources and Publications. To highlight the main points of the article, studies belonging to the “classic” category in the field of national and imperial studies were of great importance. First of all, these are the works of B. Anderson (Anderson, 2001), built on anthropological and constructivist approaches to understanding the phenomenon of the nation. Similar methodological approaches characterize E. Smith’s research on identity problems (Smit, 1994). E. Hobsbaum’s work in the field of national studies (Hobsbaum, 2010). It is primarily an approach based on the analysis of nations and the place of the national question in empires from the standpoint of various circumstances – political, economic, administrative, and even technical. The problems of Ukrainian nation-building and its imperial contexts were studied by such modern historians as T. Snyder (Snyder, 2003), A. Kappeler (Kappeler, 2005, 2022), S. Plokhii (Plokhii, 2016).

Among the Ukrainian scholars in the field of the history of the 19th century, and, accordingly, Ukrainian nation-building, we should mention first of all Ya. Hrytsak, who made one of the first attempts to consider the Ukrainian history of the 19th – 20th centuries in the context of Western theories of nations and nationalism (Hrytsak, 2019). The study of Ukraine through imperial and anthropological optics, destroying certain stereotypes, was proposed by V. Shandra and O. Arkusha (Shandra & Arkusha, 2022).

One of the imperial practices was the “appropriation” and fitting into the newly created historical context of the territories that became its property during the “long” 19th century. This happened due to wars, and southern Ukraine, whose lands were directly connected with the Cossack pages of history and controversial relations with the Turks and the Crimean Tatars, was no exception. The historical aspects of the imperial concept of “Novorossiya” and the level of its correlation with the realities of the life of the region’s population in the period under consideration are the subject of the article by M. Mykhailenko and O. Cheremisin (Mykhailenko & Cheremisin, 2020).

The article by M. Haliv is devoted to the comparative aspects of imperial studies (Haliv, 2018). Among the imperial practices that made them similar, the author highlights the desire to preserve monarchical institutions and create conditions for ensuring subjects’ loyalty to empires. Significant attention is also paid to the content of assimilation policies, which, despite certain differences, had much in common.

In national historiography, the issue of propaganda during World War I does not have a wide range of researchers. There are single works, among which there should be mentioned first of all the studies of O. Mosiienko’s (Mosiienko, 2014; 2019), devoted to the problem of forming the image of the enemy through propaganda of the warring parties. The article by R. Kutsyk (Kutsyk, 2022) offers an analysis of the visualisation of the enemy and World War I events on the Kyiv press pages, with a key focus on the openly pro-Russian, monarchist “Kyivlianyin”. The analysis of publications and visual materials in such journals allows us

to understand the overall direction and content of the imperial policy of self-preservation in war conditions.

A comparison of the effectiveness/efficiency of different national projects and situations helps to find answers to some of the questions outlined in the introduction. Like the Ukrainian and Jewish issue, the Polish issue united empires and made them similar in the national context. Despite the defeats of two uprisings in the 19th century, why did the current Polish project become possible under the conditions of World War I? The Polish researchers T. Sikorski and A. Wątor offer their version of the answer (Sikorski & Wątor, 2021). An extensive scientific, informational and propaganda campaign of Polish politicians and intellectuals in Western Europe on the eve of World War I yielded positive results. External support and willingness to accept the Poles outside of any imperial context played a leading role in recognizing its independence in November of 1918. It seems that the current president of Ukraine has taken into account the shortcomings of Ukrainian politicians of a century ago and has done everything possible, together with diplomats, representatives of civil society and the military, to ensure global support for our country in its struggle for freedom and independence.

The study of the imperial period in history is not possible without the works and documents related to it and presenting it, since the official records of the empire were conducted in Russian. Therefore, among the sources and literature used during the writing of the article, there are works of both historians of the imperial period (Pogodin, 2010) and modern researchers, whose works are based on the latest methodological approaches and were published before the beginning of the war (Vishlenkova, 2011). The article uses digitized archival materials presented on the websites of Russian libraries (*Spravka o polozenii voennoplennykh, 1914 – 1917*), as well as materials from Ukrainian archives (CSHAUK, 1916. f. 336, d. 4, c. 36, 107 p.; CSHAUL, f. 414, d. 1, c. 7, 98 p.).

The authors also referred to the study of the problems of nation building and national identity in their publications. The role of language and education in the formation of national projects and the imperial practices of oppression and restrictions (Vengerska, 2019a), the problems of mental mapping associated with the formation of ideas about both imperial and national territories (Vengerska, 2019b). The historical and cultural foundations of the formation of the Ukrainian nation were also reflected in the relationship with the modern tasks of nation- and state-building (Kozlovets & Fedorenko, 2012).

The Purpose of the Article. The purpose of the article is to study the impact of the practices of the Habsburg and Romanov empires, their “official” nationalisms on the processes of nation-building of the peoples oppressed by them, the formation of the Ukrainian national project.

The Results of the Research. The process of forming nations took place during the “long 19th century”. Under the conditions of Eastern and Central Europe, a special role in this process belonged to the so-called “national awakeners”, first of all, historians and linguists, artists and representatives of the church. Despite their small number, they played a notable role in the formation of basic ideas about the content, ideological justification, structuring and vision of the political future of national movements.

The multi-ethnicity and multi-confessional nature of the empires, on the territory of which representatives of the Slavic peoples lived under different conditions, prompted the search of optimal ways of their further development. From the end of the 18th century federal projects gained the most popularity. The ideas of the Slavic unity and cultural community were developed by representatives of Western and Southern Slavs (Slovaks P. Shafarik and J. Kollar, Serb V. Karadzic, etc.) (Magocsi & Pop, 2005). Under the conditions of the

November Uprising of 1830 – 1831, Adam Mickiewicz proposed his version of pan-Slavism, which was based on the ideas of Polish messianism. These ideas were echoed in the programme documents of the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, but M. Kostomarov (their author) assigned the role of the messiah to the Ukrainians (Spysky, 1990).

The Russian official historians/ideologues suggested that the Russian Empire could be given the status of a leader in possible unification processes. The reasons for such a position were victories in a series of Russo-Turkish wars and the French-Russian war of 1812. The confrontation with Napoleon, also became an argument in favour of Russia. Participation in foreign campaigns, the suppression of the revolution in Hungary in 1849, further strengthen the status of Russia as a state that, fighting against the revolutions that that personified the conventional “West”, could offer its own path of development and provide protection to the Slavic “brothers”.

M. Pogodin as early as the 30s of the 19th century formulated ideas about the superiority of the Slavs over other peoples, the “hostility of the West” and declared the “vocation of Russia” to be the hegemon in the Slavic world. Defining the territories whose inhabitants, according to his estimations, “make up one living integrity with us, because they are connected with us by inseparable ties of blood and language” (sic!), M. Pogodin speaks of “middle Europe to the Rhine and the Adriatic Sea”. A similar right, in his opinion, is given by “the history of Russia, representative in a certain sense of the Slavic tribes”; it is “the most important part of European history, and, accordingly, of history as a whole” (Pogodin, 2010, p. 90). M. Pogodin actually performed a “missionary” function related to the promotion of not so much Pan-Slavist as Russophile and Muscophile ideas on the territory of Western Ukraine in the first half of the 19th century, which was part of the Austrian Empire at that time.

Since the beginning of World War I, the ideas of pan-Slavism received a new sound and were actively used in Russian propaganda. Instead, the Austrian Empire, owing to the reforms of Joseph II and Maria Theresa back in the 70–80s of the 18th century, turned a significant majority of representatives of national communities into completely loyal subjects. The Czech variant of Austroslavism reflected the positions of supporters of loyalist approaches in building relations with the empire. F. Palatskyi and his followers (Magocsi & Pop, 2005) substantiated the legality of building the future of the Slavs with an updated version of the Austrian Empire on a federal basis.

In contrast to the Romanov empire, representatives of the Habsburg dynasty did not try to impose a single official language and define a “title” nation. The key idea of their rule and maintaining the authority of the government was based on the attempt to create a common home for all subjects of different nationalities under the protection of the crown. Political institutions, as well as periodicals (such, for example, as “Zoria Halytska”) stimulated the development of the Ukrainian movement and its representation in the social and political life of the empire. The new historical narrative of M. Hrushevskyi struck a devastating blow to the approaches that had been entrenched in Russian official historiography for a century. The appearance of “History of Ukraine-Rus” for the first time separated Ukrainian history from all-Russian history and undermined its existing version. However, as noted O. Arkusha and V. Shandra, “the concept of “East Tyroleans” did not go beyond politeness, and the actual actions of the Austrian government towards the Ukrainians were mostly dictated by Russian-Austrian and Polish-Austrian relations” (Shandra & Arkusha, 2022, p. 168).

Under the conditions of the Russian Empire, the ideas of pan-Slavism, which on the eve of World War I were transformed into “neo-Slavism”, turned into an inhibiting factor in the formation of the so-called “official nationalism”. The formation of concepts of “official”

nationalisms, which, among other things, included financial support for separatist movements on the territory of neighbours, became a kind of stumbling block, the beginning of the end of the world system of the 19th century (Venherska, 2013, p. 17). Their formation also depended on historians, who, as in the case of Pan-Slavism, suggested their own approaches to solving this problem. The reconciliation of imperial and national components, the problematic of “seeing Russian” (Vishlenkova, 2011) became a significant challenge for them.

The development and spread of the Ukrainian movement and its historical justification posed a problem for representatives of the Russian intellectual elite and politicians, which destroyed the scheme of the “three-unit” people. One of the well-known representatives of this environment, P. Struve, expressed his attitude towards Ukrainism in the following way: “Energetically and without any ambiguities and relaxations to enter into an ideological struggle with Ukrainism, how to weaken the tendency and even to cancel the great heritage of our history – all-Russian history”. The idea of trinity, in his opinion, overshadowed the importance of the existence of the Ruska (Ruthenian) nation and culture (*Zapyska pro ukrainskyi rukh*, 1916).

The position of P. Struve did not go unnoticed by representatives of the Ukrainian movement. In response to his statements, an anonymous letter signed “Mazepyntsi” appears. It speaks of the inability “on the part of the weakened and deeply demoralized syphilitic Great Russian tribe” to “penetrate the ideas of Struve”, for the implementation of which “the strength, freshness, enthusiasm of a reviving nation is needed ... makes clear the truth that with the Great Russians (more precisely, Muscovites), no agreement is possible” (*Zapyska pro ukrainskyi rukh*, 1916). According to the authors of the letter, “Russia cannot become progressive, it is going into decline, rotting and decaying.” (*Zapyska pro ukrainskyi rukh*, 1916).

The war intensified the confrontation between the empires to gain the loyalty of the Ukrainians. Vadym Levandovsky, researching the views of British scholars of the beginning of the 20th century, focuses on the analysis of the views of R. Seton-Watson. It was he, owing to contacts with representatives of the Ukrainian movement in Galicia, first of all, with A. Sheptytskyi and M. Hrushevskyi, who emphasized that the “Ukrainian issue” became one of the main reasons that led to World War I. The “Ukrainian issue” is not a recent invention, but an old European problem, “as evidenced by the numerous books devoted to Ukrainian events, which were printed in English starting from the 17th century” (Levandovsky, 1996).

World War I brought the problem of empires to the fore. Friends-enemies, who for a century supported separatist movements on the field of the “adversary”, actually created situations of inevitability of departure for national apartments with their own hands. Before the war, espionage hysteria was intensifying in the empires and an atmosphere of well-founded suspicions was being fueled.

With the beginning of the war, the Muscophile/Russophile movement in Western Ukraine and its representatives automatically turned into spies in the eyes of the Austrian authorities. As well as members of Ukrainophile movements in the Russian Empire. Similar installations were actively supported by neighbouring countries during the 19th century. The Austrian authorities began to persecute Russophiles for the smallest, often hypothetical crimes. These included: membership in public organizations, such as the society named after Kachkovsky, or membership in the reading room of this organization (Vendland, 2015, pp. 559–574). The labelling of the Ukrainians as “Mazepyntsi” enters a new phase in the Russian Empire.

The Austrian and German governments supported the project of a group of Ukrainian social democrats who emigrated from the Russian Empire to Austria-Hungary at the beginning of the war. It is about the creation of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU)

(M. Melenevskiy, O. Skoropys-Yoltukhovskiy, V. Doroshenko, A. Zhuk, etc.). Owing to the financial support of Germany and Austria, the “beautifully laid out, illustrated publication” “Visnyk SVU” (“Herald of SVU”) was launched. During the period of 1914 – 1916, 90 the magazine issues were published. The “Manifesto of the Main Ukrainian Council” was already published in No. 2 of “Visnyk SVU”, the key message of which was embodied in the call “Let the sun of free Ukraine rise on the ruins of the Russian tsarist empire!” (Zapyska pro ukrainskyi rukh, 1916).

Since the beginning of the war, a significant number of openly propagandistic texts had appeared. The propagandists especially emphasized the “brotherhood” of the Russians, who “brought freedom to the Orthodox Galician-Russian people”. The Russian propagandists emphasized the massiveness of the Russophile movement and the number of its representatives: “thousands of the best sons of the long-suffering Galicia” and the dangers faced by its supporters, “...partly imprisoned in Austrian and Hungarian prisons, partly executed or hanged without trial or investigation” (Izvestiya i zametki, 1915, p. 2).

The realities of the Russian occupation of Galicia were far from the “brotherly” love depicted in propaganda texts. The number of people who unexpectedly found themselves on the territory of the camps that dotted the border towns and cities grew rapidly with each day of the war. The beginning of the war, the offensive of the Russian army in Galicia provoked the repression of the Austrian and Hungarian authorities against the Ruthenians of Galicia, Bukovyna and Transcarpathia. Residents of Lemkos villages, who were suspected of sympathizing with Russia, were among those affected by the repressive measures of the authorities. The camp in Thalerhof became the first camp, on the territory of which several thousand Ruthenians and Lemkos, who were accused of Muscovite orientation, and were in terrible conditions there. (Makovskiy, 1935, p. 48).

A similar situation of “rejection” from both political centres worked in favour of the Ukrainian project. Having found themselves in the position of “strangers”, the Ukrainians were forced to feel their own “otherness”. The war provoked the movement of large numbers of people from different regions within empires and to other empires. Prisoners of war became another category of war victims who needed attention from the imperial authorities. At the same time, they were considered as a resource in the information confrontation. The camps became the sites where the propaganda and subversive tools of the 20th century were put to work for the first time.

On the territory of the camps, among prisoners of war, refugees, and displaced persons, various educational structures and printing houses functioned, which produced campaigning and propaganda materials and carried out significant cultural and educational work that contributed to the formation of national identity. Thus, in one of the camps, which was located in the city of Gmind (Austria), a branch of “Prosvita” functioned with reading rooms and libraries, educational institutions for boys and girls aged 10-15 were opened, similar to vocational schools, but of a paramilitary type (Makovskiy, 1935, p. 67). For captured Ukrainians who served in the Russian army, in 1916, a weekly Russian-language newspaper “Niedielia” was published in Vienna, which was distributed among prisoners of war and had active employees who maintained correspondence with prisoners of war (CSHAUL, f. 414, d. 1, c. 7, 98 p.).

The conditions of the long stay of soldiers in the war, which over time received the characteristic of “trench”, had rather unexpected consequences: such a situation stimulated the development of elementary literacy among ordinary soldiers, and the need to communicate with relatives led to the popularization of another type of propaganda products with a limited

sphere of influence – postal postcards (CSHAUL, f. 414, d. 1, c. 7, pp. 34–38). Among soldiers, as well as prisoners of war, significant cultural and educational work is carried out aimed at the formation of national identity. Prisoners were given the opportunity to get an elementary level education. The ability to read and write expanded the influence of printed propaganda.

The national and cultural work of the members of the SVU and the division of prisoners by nationality were for the Austrian military command a means of recruiting volunteers for front-line propaganda. The Russian authorities, despite the signing of the agreement on the creation of proper conditions for prisoners of war, did not concern themselves with these issues. Documents from the period of World War I, digitized and presented on the websites of certain Russian libraries, confirm the lack of proper conditions of stay in the camps or in prison for Austrian prisoners of war. Observers confirmed the fact that the majority of prisoners were actually starving. In addition to inadequate food, the practical absence of a minimum financial support even for officers was emphasized. Of course, under such conditions it is difficult to imagine attempts to create and operate cultural and educational institutions like those that existed in camps for prisoners of war of the Russian army in Austria and Germany (Spravka o polozhzhii voennoplennyih, 1914 – 1917).

The historical and ethnic features of the border regions of Galicia, Volhynia and Podillia were also reflected in the propaganda confrontation between the two empires, which was intensified from the beginning of World War I and acquired new features and dimensions with each passing year. The Russian Orthodox Church played a prominent role in the propaganda confrontation during the war. Periodicals published under its patronage actively published materials of a frankly propagandistic nature, emphasizing that from the 13th century “the centuries-long suffering of the Galician-Russian people, centuries-long abuse of them by the Polish kings, lords and, in particular, by the Polish Catholic clergy” (Izvestiya i zametki, 1915, p. 2).

Representatives of the Ukrainian movement denied these statements, citing the following facts of the occupation of Galicia: “The Russian troops are robbing and terrorizing the population, raping women. They plundered Jaroslaw and other centres of Galicia. The famous Lviv Museum was destroyed, one of the best libraries in Austria, “The Scientific Society” library, was burned down. The Russian language is being introduced in management. The slightest attempt at resistance is suppressed by the execution of Galicians” (CSHAUK, f. 336, d. 4, c. 36, p. 28). The conclusion of the authors of the appeal is consistent with the current situation: “The Russian government has decided to destroy the Ukrainian nation” (CSHAUK, f. 336, d. 4, c. 36, p. 29).

During World War I, propaganda reached a new level. Artists who represented various directions of culture were actively involved in this activity. Over time, as in the case of K. Malevich and A. Lentukhov, representatives of avantgarde in fine arts, and futurism in poetry, V. Mayakovsky, their fame went far beyond the propaganda genre. It is noteworthy that V. Mayakovsky wrote poetic captions for posters authored by K. Malevich (Lubochna propaganda... , 2014). According to the researchers, V. Mayakovsky acted not only as the author of texts for the drawings of other artists, but also offered his own graphic images (Mikhalchuk, 2015).

The theme of the so-called Russian “liberation” of Western Ukrainian lands was popular in such a type of propaganda material as the lithographic lubok. They were made for an unpretentious, poorly educated consumer of similar products and gained particular popularity during the war. There was a series of luboks depicting the battles for Jaroslaw, Lviv, the cities of Podillia and western Volyn. The key motive is the victory of the Russian army and the helplessness of the Austro-German troops (Kryzhanivska, 2019).

The plot with the zeppelin, which became a kind of personification of the German-Austrian alliance and the struggle against it by the Ukrainians against Russia, was particularly popular among the Russian propagandists. There are several scenes depicting women against the background of a blue sky, a rye field, a mudflat with sunflowers and children in cabbages, who almost with their bare hands defeated and neutralized the Austrian officers who were in the aircraft. The Cossack Danylo Dykyi and his wife Polina, who “sewed zeppelin pants for her husband” (Lubochnaya propaganda, 2014) were also characters in K. Malevich’s luboks. Despite the general “Ukrainian” entourage, the woman in the centre of the picture is depicted in a red dress, atypical of Ukrainian women, similar to a Russian sundress, but with a wreath on her head. The authors of the posters made efforts to visualize the idea of Ukrainian loyalty to Russia through a graphic folklore and ethnographic presentation. We can assume that in the case of the figure of K. Malevich, a similar visualization, reflected the search of his own identity.

Therefore, Ukrainian topics were actively used in Russian propaganda. Some representatives of Russian liberal society, including artists, supported the positions of the empires of which they were subjects.

The Conclusion. The search for one’s own identity, as well as the formation of modern versions of nationalisms and nations, became defining features of the “long” 19th century. The mentioned processes acquired a special resonance under the conditions of World War I, which contributed to the formation of modern nations and caused tectonic shifts in the processes related to national self-determination. An important role in both the self-destruction of dynastic monarchies and the destruction of the enemy belonged to the propaganda confrontation. The political elites of the empires and their “troubadours” could not offer an alternative to dynastic loyalty, convincing options that would become an alternative to the nationalisms of the “outskirts”, and in fact lost their struggle for history. In the Russian case, attempts to propose a “scheme” of their own history faced opposition from the Ukrainians, whose “emergence” was called, under different circumstances, either the result of Polish or Austrian intrigue. The situation provoked by World War I did not deepen the gap between the Ukrainians of the two empires, but contributed to the achievement of an understanding of their unity outside the imperial contexts. The development of the Ukrainian project fully corresponded to general European trends.

Such an aspect of World War I as the unofficial support of the Bolsheviks by the German government, financing of their active propaganda activities among soldiers, as well as the content of the correspondence of soldiers, who during the war years were forced to learn literacy in the trenches and think about issues of self-identification, need further research.

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