

Olga Wasiuta, Sergiusz Wasiuta

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RUSSIAN MASS-MEDIA MANIPULATION OF INFORMATION IN HYBRID WARFARE AGAINST UKRAINE

PROF. OLGA WASIUTA, PH.D.

Pedagogical University in Cracow, POLAND

PROF. SERGIUSZ WASIUTA, PH.D.

Pedagogical University in Cracow, POLAND

ABSTRACT

The article concerns the mass-media manipulation of information in Russia about Russian-Ukrainian conflict with the help of the media controlled by government. The authors point out that the Kremlin has always manipulated the content of information and with the beginning of the Revolution of Dignity manipulation and disinformation has gained unimaginable momentum, treating Maidan as a negative event, as a coup. At the moment of aggression, in the network hundreds of websites and social network groups appeared, which „objectively” are informing about the events. The message of this campaign is to justify the uprising against the new, legitimate government in Kiev.

The propaganda potential is directed at presentation of the Russian version of events, and the overall aim is to diversify the public opinion. An important point of this strategy is to create an image of Russia as a victim of cynical game of Western establishment, accused on this occasion for a complete distortion of Putin’s image as well as the causes of Ukrainian conflict and its course.

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INTRODUCTION

Not a false, propaganda or manipulation can not destroy national memory. In order to eliminate the national consciousness, the invaders are destroying firstly the historical memory. Although the new rulers build castles, cities, churches, monuments, acquire or burn archives, historical memorabilia, to the next generation to impose own vision of history, but memory is always eluded them out of control. Collective memory is filled not so much with the historical truth but rather with the mythical tale of the former advantages or sufferings. For hundreds of years the invaders from the east tried to suppress the Ukrainian freedom, every time rewriting history. Does anyone now can say with certainty who was the Cossack Hetman Ivan Mazepa: a selfish traitor or a true patriot? And who among the ordinary citizens, and even some experts of history know that in 1659 in Pereyaslav no agreement was signed? Now we witness important historical events, and we understand that democracy is not just a freedom of choice, it is also a great responsibility. In 1659 Ukraine, but rather its part – Hetmanate – the tsarist government turned to an autonomous unit within the Russian Empire, which had been „secured” in „Pereyaslav Articles” in 1659¹.

Probably, there is no question in Russian history what was described in more biased and false manner, than the issue of „entry” of Ukraine to Russia. The strange lack of text of agreement between Ukraine and Russia created a large field for various abuses, such as the decision of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1954 that the Pereyaslav agreement was the culmination of an effort of centuries-old desire of Ukraine and Russia to unite and that it is this combination was the main aim of the war of liberation in 1648. What kind of „unification” can we talk about if Russia was formed much later than Kievan Rus’ fell apart?

In fact, only Moscow treated the Council of Pereyaslav and „1654 March Articles” as a pretext for the gradual absorption of Ukraine. Ukraine itself considered this agreement as a typical military alliance against external enemies, dictated by the moment, because life has shown that relying on alliance with the Crimea is not an option. After an agreement from 1654 a lot of documents clearly were referring to Ukraine as an independent state, not as slaves of the Moscow tsar. It was no surprise that Ukraine had

¹ І. Гирич, *Наслідки Переяславської Ради 1654 року: збірник статей*, Видавництво Смолоскип, Київ 2004, р. 476.

all the attributes of an independent state, conducted its own independent diplomacy, new agreements and alliances with other countries².

Russian historian V. Klyuchevsky called such a statement: “The history of Russia is the history of a country that colonizes itself”³. Under the slogan of „connecting” old Kievan Rus’ lands, starting from the 15th century Russia led expansion to near and distant neighbors. During 1462–1914 its territory increased by almost 1000 times: from 24 thousand km² to 23,8 million km², so it was increasing with a speed of 80 km² per day⁴. This expansion took place mostly under the pretext of „liberation of nations”, „connecting”, „joining” and „voluntary reunification”. F. Engels wrote about it: „Every annexed territory, all the oppressions, carried out under the pretext of enlightenment, liberalism, liberation of nations”⁵. Of course, none of those „unions” were not „voluntary”, served as a sophisticated policy of conquest. Presented scheme also applies to Ukraine, as exemplified by the policy carried out in several stages:

1. 1654–1783 – gradual attack on the rights and freedoms of Ukraine and its transformation from a country allied to a province of the empire,
2. 18th – 19th centuries: active involvement of the Russian government in order to russification Ukrainian people,
3. The beginning of 19th and 20th centuries: the tsarist policy of assimilation,
4. From the beginning till the end of 20th century: assimilation policy pursued by the Soviet Union; attempt to change the ethnic structure of Ukrainian population by the artificially induced famine, war and mass resettlement of the Ukrainian population,
5. The end of the 20th century – beginning of the 21st century: actively carried out propaganda, information war, manipulation of historical facts against Ukraine,
6. Beginning of the Revolution of Dignity (2013) – up until now: massive manipulations, as well as informational and propaganda war against Ukraine on the territory of Ukraine, Russia and in whole Europe.

It is on this last stage we will focus our analysis, which is characterized by manipulation conducted on a massive scale, propaganda and informational war.

² Н. Полонська-Василенко, *Історія України*, Видавництво Либідь, Київ 1992, р. 27.

³ В. О. Ключевский, *Русская история, Полный курс лекций*, ОЛМА Медиа Групп, 2004, р. 38.

⁴ О. Субтельний, *Україна: історія*, Видавництво Либідь, Київ 1992, р. 159.

⁵ К. Маркс, Ф. Енгельс, *Твори*, Т. 22. Київ 2001, р. 23.

Manipulation techniques are known to the world since the dawn of history, and more and more perverted world of media deliberately distort reality, using immoral practices such as stereotype, myth, rumor, propaganda, open lies, misinformation, hidden activities, camouflage, demarcating, black advertising and psychological war⁶. According to Bishop Adam Lepa „manipulation is deliberate and secretive operation, through which it is imposed to an individual or a group of people a false picture of reality. This distorted image does not refer to the whole reality, because that would exceed the possibilities of trustees and executors of manipulation”⁷.

Manipulator uses for example statistical data, information, facts to hide from recipient real objectives. Information reduces our ignorance about the actual phenomena, on the same time manipulation makes that it is not only we do not have the knowledge, but even that supplied knowledge is false. Everything is done with the purpose for the creator of the message (Russia) to achieve its objectives (excuse the annexation of Crimea, attempts to seize the territory of another country). The more simplifications, repetitions or symbols in a given transmission and at the same time correspondingly fewer facts, the more the creator manipulates the audience. Using false information to undermine the position and credibility of the nation, institution, organization or individual person. It aims to undermine the authority, credibility, image and goals.

RUSSIA’S MANIPULATION OF INFORMATION

Mass media which are using manipulation techniques are very powerful “weapon” in the political struggle. In Russia you cannot find any free media; hence the consequences of such actions are much more drastic for the Russians themselves. Russian mass media are discrediting everything that is valuable in Ukraine, discredit the leaders, disorganize social life through imaginary facts and events, ridicule European values, culture and tradition, demoralize society by promoting alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, pop culture, sexual promiscuity; penetrate Ukrainian elite searching for “sensation”, surveillance of journalists in order to find a “hook” on opponents.

Modern Russia is using various techniques of manipulation, including the propaganda and information war by disseminating certain sort of in-

⁶ S. Kizińczuk, *Techniki manipulacji. Poznaj techniki manipulacji i już nigdy nie daj się „wpuścić w kanał”*, Wyd. Złote Myśli, Gliwice 2015.

⁷ A. Lepa, *Świat manipulacji*, Biblioteka Niedzieli, Częstochowa 2011, p. 23.

formation. The object of the information war is both a collective and individual consciousness. This transfer of information can take place on the background of informational noise and in informational vacuum. This information includes distortion of the facts or relate to emotional perception which is comfortable for aggressor. Typically, methods of informational warfare are to release misinformation or provide information in a beneficial way for the aggressor. These methods allow for distortion assessment of what is happening, demoralizing citizens, and potentially ensuring the transition to the side of the aggressor.

Since the beginning of the 21st century Russia actively developed and implemented anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western propaganda⁸. Since Putin's another presidency (2013–2014) and the beginning of Dignity Revolution in Ukraine, Russian propaganda has developed very quickly and has become openly chauvinistic, aggressive and fascist, becoming a full-fledged informational warfare. It was aimed at preparing public opinion in Russia to external aggression and obtains the consent of the people towards Kremlin's aggressive actions against Ukraine. After military aggression, occupation and annexation of Crimea⁹, total disinformation has become the major method and technique of Russian propaganda¹⁰.

Depth analysis of the theory of the origin and development of information warfare in the modern world has made American Professor Philip M. Taylor, who in his book „Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media Since 1945”¹¹ proves that the rapid civilization development, new technologies of mass communication have a decisive influence on development of international relations in the modern world. „Starting from the 20th century mass media actually influence the development of a new history of the world” – says Philip M. Taylor¹².

⁸ Р. Демчак, *Як перемогти Росію в телевізори*, <http://www.epravda.com.ua/columns/2014/05/27/458096/>.

⁹ Р. Бабаев, *Принята Бакинская декларация Парламентской Ассамблеи ОБСЕ*, <http://interfax.az/view/613059>.

¹⁰ Т. Попова, *Як діє російська пропаганда*, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2014/06/21/7029684/>.

¹¹ P. M. Taylor, *Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media Since 1945 (The New International History)*, Routledge, New York and London 1997.

¹² Killen on Taylor, *Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media Since 1945*, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/9997/reviews/10434/killen-taylor-global-communications-international-affairs-and-media>.

In the hybrid war conducted by Russia there are a lot of propaganda and manipulation components. Most of the population is not prepared for such an activity, and Russia – is not only ready, but uses them well. Information warfare theory has a long tradition in Russia. The first who applied the information war was Peter I, who began the falsification of the history of his people. In 1701, he ordered the removal of all written documents of folk chronicles, chronographs, ancient historical records, church documents and archives among the conquered peoples. Particularly the Ukraine-Rus'. Based on those forgeries 22nd October 1721 Muscovy announced themselves to be “Russian empire” and Muscovites – to be Russians. That way Ukrainian historical name Rus' was stolen from its legitimate heirs – Ukrainians¹³.

Peter I invited many experts from Europe, including professional historians who were forced to write and falsify the history of the Muscovy. To do this, every foreigner who started working had to oath not to disclose national secrets and promised to not leave the state of Muscovy. At the same time the question arises, what national secrets could be while “writing the history of the state” of old days? In every civilized country in Europe, after 30–50 years, all archives are available for scientists. It is evident that Russian empire was afraid of the truth about it's past¹⁴.

An interesting research was presented by V. Belinsky in “*The country Moksel or Moscovia*”¹⁵, giving facts derived mainly from Russian historical sources, which indicates a radical distortion of the history of the Russian Empire, directed on the creation of historical mythology that Muscovy and Kievan Rus' have common historical roots, which means that Muscovy has a “right to inheritance” of history, culture and traditions of Kievan Rus'.

The falsification of Russian history on an unprecedented scale took place in the late 18th century during the reign of Catherine II. Empress personally edited “History of Russia”, improving historical

¹³ Я. Дашкевич, *Як Московія привласнила історію Київської Русі*, <http://universum.lviv.ua/journal/2011/6/dashk.htm>; Я. Дашкевич, *Як Московія вкрала історію Київської Русі – Україні*, <http://sribnazemlja.org.ua/2014042913731/istoria/ukraina/2014-04-29-08-23-34-13731.html>.

¹⁴ Я. Дашкевич, *Як Московія привласнила історію Київської Русі*, [in:] *Українські реалії: негаразди, загрози, надії: публіцистика / упоряд.: О. К. Глушко, В. О. Карпенко*. Київ, Університет «Україна», 2013, р. 109.

¹⁵ В. Білінський, *Країна Моксель, або Московія. Роман-дослідження. W 3 Книгах*, Видавництво імені Олени Теліги, Київ 2008–2009.

documents, issuing orders to destruct numerous documents, forcing historians to counterfeiting.

Among the political objectives we can found directives leading to:

- Justify annexing different territories to Russia,
- In order to suppress the national liberation struggle of Belarusians and Ukrainians, it was necessary to come up with the myth, that they apparently always dreamed to be in the Russian zone,
- As part of this myth, another myth should be created – that the Moskal's are Slavs and Rus', rather than the population of Finnish-Muscovy,
- To cover all those tasks, they had massively conducted an audit of all the chronicles and historical documents in annexed territories, aiming to correct them or delete¹⁶.

In order to implement the abovementioned political purposes, it was banned to solve specific problems which contributed to the falsification of history:

- Create a myth that Kievan Rus' with the advent of the Tartars, suddenly started to consider Muscovy (moksha) to be part of Rus' (and even the center of Rus'), which was in the Golden Horde and 1,000 kilometers from Kievan Rus' populated by Finnish tribes and until then no one even called that territory as Rus',
- Create a myth of "Vladimir-Suzdal Rus'" existence, even though no one heard of this land prior to Catherine II,
- create a myth that Moscow was founded by the princes of Kievan Rus', but prior to Catherine II all historians knew that it was founded at the behest of the Tatar khan after 1257¹⁷ (back then Tatar-Mongolian Empire conducted in their northern Uluses a list of all the settlements and the overall population in that region in order to increase taxation and Moscow even did not exist back then),
- Create a myth that Muscovy – is a Rus', and Muscovites – are not Finns but Slavs,
- Create a myth of the "Horde yoke", although previously all historians believed that Muscovy for three centuries was a solid bastion of the Horde in a battle with Rus', and later Ivan the Terrible seized power in the Horde,

¹⁶ В. Ростов, *Фальсификация истории России*, <http://patent.net.ua/intellectus/intellectualisation/facts/1875/ua.html>.

¹⁷ Я. Дашкевич, *Учи неложними устами сказати правду*, Темпора, Київ 2011, р. 5.

- Create a myth that Dmitry Donskoy fought not with the Horde but against it.

All the key moments in the history of Muscovy were rewritten. Such falsification of history on such a large scale by the Moscovites, who usurped the history of Grand Duchy of Kiev and its people, struck a terrible blow to the Ukrainian ethnic group.

Moscow, and later on Tsars of Russia realized that without a great history they will not be able to create a great nation, a great empire. To do this, they had to arrange its historical past and even steal past from other nations. Therefore, Tsars of Moscow, starting from Ivan IVth “the Terrible” (1533–1584), decided to appropriate the history of Kievan Rus’, its glorious past and to create an official mythologies of the Russian empire¹⁸.

Over the centuries, especially in the early 16th century, they began to spread the ideology to convince others that:

- Russian state and the Russian people are originally from the Grand Duchy of Kiev,
- Kievan Rus’ – is the cradle of three fraternal nations –Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian,
- Russians by the law of “elder brother” have the right to inherit Kievan Rus’ and its history.

Such a pathetic lie is still being used by Russian historians and statesmen of Russia, as well as “fifth column” in Ukraine, which includes communists and almost all the representatives of the Party of Regions in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Formation of the so-called “velikoros” mentality coincided with borrowings of Tatar-Mongolian conqueror instinct, despots, whose main objective is the invasion, domination over the rest of the world. So, prior to the 16th century, a conqueror-kind of man created, cruel in its ignorance, anger and violence. These people do not need European culture and literature, as well as for such categories as morality, honesty, shame, dignity and historical memory. Many Tatar-Mongolians in the 13th–16th centuries became part of “velikoros”, which became the starting point for more than 25% of Russian nobility. Here are a few Tatars who have brought glory to the Empire: Arakcheyev, Bunin, Griboyedov, Derzhavin, Dostoevsky, Kuprin, Plekhanov, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Turgenev, Sheremetiev, Chaadayev and many others.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

To assign the history of a foreign lands and perpetuate the theft, the Russians had to destroy the Ukrainian people, to enslave them. Ukrainians, who emerged as a nation much earlier, they are described as “maloros” (which is a historic term for the residents of central Ukraine within the Russian Empire) and that ideology was introduced to the whole world. Representatives of Ukrainian intelligentsia were forced to work for the „velikoroses” (M. Gogol); or were sending them to the army for 25 years (T. Shevchenko). Such slavery lasted for more than 300 years.

The Soviet Era was particularly brutal. At that time, Ukraine has lost more than 25 million people who have died in wars in the interests of Russia, during collectivization (Holodomor), in the gulags. So the “big brother” forced “younger brother” in the cruel “hugs of love”¹⁹.

From the first days of the seizure of power by the “Soviets” V. Lenin together with Soviet ideologists stood to create an “ideal” political system, economic and social, which humanity had not known. Construction of the new order was based primarily on the treatment of “human material from the capitalist era”²⁰. A columnist Maxim Gorki defined those actions as “Lenin worked as a chemist in his lab, with the difference that the chemist is working with dead materials..., and Lenin worked on alive”²¹. Revolutionist M. Gorki, said “He treated people like bad taught dogs and frogs, intended for cruel scientific experiments”²². Michal Heller was comparing those actions to trying to repeat Dr. Frankenstein’s experiment but on a gigantic scale and the creation of new man called “Homo Sovieticus” which is superior in every respect divine creation, which is “homo sapiens”²³.

Soviet ideologists began to build a new order, which was based primarily on new revalued society, composed of experimentally and artificially created persons known as “Homo Sovieticus”. “Homo Sovieticus” – which means soviet person, was developed model of social variable unit (although over the years, but always devoted to the state and society). Created long before the October Revolution, because in the sixties of 19th century,

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ Cyt. za M. Heller, *Maszyna i śrubki. Jak hartował się człowiek sowiecki*, Paryż 1988, p. 9.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ *Ibidem*. Other symptomatic opinion of Maxim Gorki on Lenin’s: “Working classes are for Lenin the same thing as minerals for metallurgist” („Klasy pracujące dla Lenina są tym, czym minerały dla metalurga”); R. Conquest, *Lenin. Prawda o wodzu rewolucji*, Warszawa – Chicago 1999, p. 35.

Homo Sovieticus took on the character starting from the revolutionary destroyer then industrial man and finally improved communist man. Despite of various forms, Soviet person had to fulfill one role – to be the basic building block of the communist system. Implementation of the utopian vision of the government, which was created in the minds of revolutionaries, required however more than just drawing an image of an ideal society, also demanded actions to create a basis for a new type of persons, but above all it was required to develop instruments to influence the person. The basis for the functioning of society was created by systemic reforms and social engineering function was assigned to propaganda. The main link of Soviet propaganda was created by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1920²⁴, which together with the existing military propaganda apparatus and additional points of agitation over the years of the totalitarian regime were shaping “little screws” (ordinary people)²⁵ which were parts of the Soviet Union machinery.

Information warfare carried out by Russia against Ukraine in the 21st century, can be considered as the way to indicate further direction of political events. Depending on the method of warfare (psychological and informational), we can determine the degree of interest Russia has, in the situation in Ukraine. While analyzing Russian web-pages it can be noted that in the period from October 2013 to November 2014, Russian news were devoted to the events in Ukraine for about 85–90%. Moscow kept an eye very closely to all the events in Ukraine, using propaganda, lies, manipulation and misinformation. All of this can be seen as active phase of the Kremlin information campaign.

²⁴ M. Jastrząb, *Mozolna budowa absurdu. Działalność wydziału propagandy warszawskiego Komitetu Wojewódzkiego PZPR w latach 1949–1953*, Warszawa 1999, p. 117.

²⁵ A „screw” is an ideal type of person, created by Stalin. By this concept a man should regard himself only as a little screw in the machinery of the state. During the reception to honor the participants in the victory parade in 1945, Stalin honored the Soviet society in the following words: “I propose a toast to the health of simple, ordinary, humble people, those little screws, which are necessary for the movement of the whole mechanism of our country” (“Wznoszę toast za zdrowie prostych, zwykłych, skromnych ludzi, tych małych śrubek, które są niezbędne dla ruchu całego mechanizmu naszego państwa”); M. Heller, A. Niekricz, *Utopia u władzy. Historia związku sowieckiego*, vol. 2, part IV, Respublica, Lublin 1988, trans. From Russian A. Mietkowski. Reprint form edition: Polonia, London 1987, p. 149.

Since December 2014 till the April 2015 Russian aggression in the information space weakened a little. The volume of news reports about the Ukrainian events has dropped to about 40%, which may be due to several reasons:

- The political ideology of the Kremlin concerning Ukrainian events was brought to Russian society,
- Russian government has achieved its objectives on the implementation of partial control over the political and economic situation in Ukraine,
- Change the vector of Russian foreign policy from Europe to Asia and Eastern countries changed the direction of the information flow,
- Sanctions of Western countries against Russia reached a level in which Russia may wanted to withdraw from the conflict in Ukraine, but for many reasons this cannot be done.

In the first half of May 2015, there was a small explosion of information activities of Russian media concerning the situation in Ukraine, which was connected with the reaction of Kiev at the ceremony in Moscow devoted to the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Throughout the whole 2014 and the first half of 2015 Russian TV channels have changed the tactics of moving from informing viewers about the events in Ukraine to imposing propaganda, incitement to hatred, dissemination of unverified rumors and lies, taking advantage of the various instruments: selectivity of facts and events; choice of preferred commentators and experts (usually paid)²⁶; quotes manipulation²⁷; subjective conclusions rather than objective facts.

For at least two years before the Revolution of Dignity, Russian special services with the help of press agencies, television stations and websites led

²⁶ Т. Назарук, *Рік фейків: як брехала російська пропаганда*, http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/ethics/manipulation/rik_feykiv_yak_brekhala_rosiyska_propaganda/.

²⁷ In this way Russian media and blogs often use “quotation” form Otto von Bismarck that West allegedly had planes to “partite Russia”. In particular it is about the expression: “The power of Russia can be challenged only by the separation of Ukraine from it ... you have to not just to separate, but to oppose Ukraine Russia, you need to contact the heads of two parts of one nation and look like brother kills brother”. Of course Otto von Bismarck did not say anything like that, which was confirmed by the Bismarck’s foundation representatives; it sounds as if the quote was written by Russian ideologues in the 20th century, even in the 21st century, and not in the mid-19th century; Т. Назарук, *Російські ЗМІ використовують неіснуючу цитату Бісмарка*, http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/ethics/manipulation/rosiyski_zmi_vikoristovuyut_neisnuyuchu_tsitatu_bismarka/.

an aggressive propaganda campaign against Ukraine to disrupt the signing of an association agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, and after Viktor Yanukovich escaped from Ukraine – divide the country and set up an information basis for war with Ukraine. Images shown by Kremlin propagandists on Russian television and websites have taken over the last two years grotesque forms. Media manipulation using psychological and social techniques has become a very dangerous weapon in the fight against patriotism, identity and European values.

In the Russian mass media, social networks, as well as TV series, contain more and more anti-Ukrainian propaganda. For this purpose facts and photos manipulating are often used. In early March 2014, day before the referendum in Crimea, “First channel” – Russia’s state television, reported that Ukrainian citizens are massively becoming refugees and showed a string of cars crossing the border with Russia. This footage was to show avalanche wave of Ukrainian refugees seeking shelter in Russia. The representatives of the central authorities of the Russian Federation were saying about 600 thousand Ukrainian refugees, but in reality that video material was from the Medyka-Shehyni border checkpoint (between Ukraine and Poland)²⁸.

One of the reasons to start an attack on Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin has called the threat to the lives of Russian citizens in Crimea. And the Federation Council approved the request of Putin for military intervention in Ukraine. In order to maintain the myth of the dead people and extremists in the Crimea, Russian TV ran a story about the alleged shooting in Simferopol: men in black clothes, depicting Bandera, arrived to Crimea in buses with registration numbers and emblems of the Crimean company „Taigan” (lions zoo park), located in Belogorsk near Simferopol. Also, they were armed with the latest Russian automatic AK 100 series and RG-94 grenade launchers, which are in use only in the Russian army²⁹.

Explicit manipulations of information fuels the fire of conflict in which every day Ukrainians are killed: Ukrainians killed by the military and Ban-

²⁸ Як дезінформує «Перший канал»: польський КПП видають за російський, <http://www.unian.ua/politics/891927-yak-dezinformue-pershiy-kanal-polskiy-kpp-vidayut-za-rosiyskiy.html>.

²⁹ Информационная война: пять примеров российской пропаганды, http://news.liga.net/articles/politics/993677-informatsionnaya_voyna_pyat_primerov_rossiyskoy_propagandy.htm/section1/.

dera mobile groups, murders of children, bombed cities of Donbass and other horrors – these information and images constantly appearing in Russian mass media. All such messages are so terrible that it is hard to suspect their authors of lying. It is primarily a conscious tactic of persuasion in such a way that manipulated person should not be aware that he is the subject to manipulation.

The „Novoye Vremya” magazine gathered 20 of the most blatant examples of manipulation and lies in Russian media. To illustrate manipulation of the mass media we will present a few examples. On the website „Navigator” on 26th of May 2014 appeared a message that war zone is expanding over to Donetsk city, people are leaving their homes, there are a lot of burnt out cars and the number of injured people is constantly increasing. Messages were accompanied by pictures of fire near the Putilov’s bridge. In fact, the explosions and the smoke, which appeared in Donetsk on that picture was made in Photoshop. One more example: in Russian social network “VKontakte” Igor Strelkov, Minister of Defense in self-proclaimed People’s Republic of Donetsk, placed a photo of a burning armored transporter, but forgot to mention that the freighter was burned in China on 3rd of June 1989, near the Tiananmen Square. TV channel Rossiya-1, in evening news program “Vesti” on 16th of May 2014, speaking about the events in Sloviansk city, showed murdered man and for that scene they used the movie, which was filmed in 2012 in Russia – after anti-terrorist operation on the territory of Baksan district in the Kabardino-Balkar Republic. On 17th May 2014 Russian web site Rolitikus.ru published a message that Sloviansk morgue is full of corpses, allegedly of Ukrainian military, fighters of the National Guard of Ukraine and Right Sector. Messages were accompanied by photos of 18th of February 2009. But on the picture were bodies waiting for an autopsy in the morgue of Mexican city Ciudad Juarez³⁰.

Internet and social media are dominated by the manipulation of information with the task of misstatement of the current situation and changing attitude of Russian society against Ukrainians, Poles and inhabitants of the Baltic countries. Russians replace images and its messages, in order to lend credibility to their actions and discredit Ukraine. But telling this has not much in common with giving people real information. Propagan-

³⁰ *Топ-20 випадків нахабної брехні російської пропаганди*, <http://www.myvin.com.ua/ua/news/events/27599.html>.

dists are moving even to the extent that photos taken in 2009 in Chechnya describe as violent evidence of Ukrainian army actions.

PHOTOGRAPH #1 FROM BOSNIA HAVING TO PROVE THE BESTIALITY OF THE UKRAINIAN ARMY



Source: ТОП-10 маніпуляцій російських ЗМІ та соціальних мереж про Україну (ФОТО), http://texty.org.ua/pg/news/textynewseditor/read/54210/TOP10_manipulacij_rosijskyh_ZMI_ta_socialnyh_merezh; *Kłamstwa, manipulacja, przeróbka zdjęć. Tak rosyjska propaganda pokazuje wojnę na Ukrainie*, <http://niezalezna.pl/58108-klamstwa-manipulacja-przerobka-zdjec-tak-rosyjska-propaganda-pokazuje-wojne-na-ukrainie>.

PHOTOGRAPH #2 LITTLE GIRL NEXT TO THE MURDERED WOMAN, DESCRIBE THEM AS AN EVIDENCE OF THE EVENTS IN DONBASS. MEANWHILE, THIS IS FRAME FROM RUSSIAN-BELARUSIAN WAR MOVIE "THE BREST FORTRESS" (2010).



Source: ТОП-10 маніпуляцій російських ЗМІ та соціальних мереж про Україну (ФОТО), http://texty.org.ua/pg/news/textynewseditor/read/54210/TOP10_manipulacij_rosijskych_ZMI_ta_socialnyh_merezh;Klamstwa_manipulacja_przerobka_zdjec_Tak_rosyjska_propaganda_pokazuje_wojne_na_Ukrainie, <http://niezalezna.pl/58108-klamstwa-manipulacja-przerobka-zdjec-tak-rosyjska-propaganda-pokazuje-wojne-na-ukrainie>.

PHOTOGRAPH #3 MADE IN 2009 IN CHECHNYA, SIGNED AS A DESCRIPTION OF UKRAINIAN ARMY ACTIVITIES



Source: ТОП-10 маніпуляцій російських ЗМІ та соціальних мереж про Україну (ФОТО), http://texty.org.ua/pg/news/textynewseditor/read/54210/TOP10_manipulacij_rosijskyh_ZMI_ta_socialnyh_merezh.

PHOTOGRAPH #4. RUSSIAN TV STATION “MIR 24” ON THEIR “FACEBOOK” PAGE SHOWED REFUGEES FROM KOSOVO IN 1999 AS REFUGEES BEING FROM UKRAINE IN 2014. THIS PHOTO HAS ALREADY BEEN REMOVED. EVEN BEFORE THAT, THIS PICTURE WAS USED ON THE WEBSITE OF “EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS” MAGAZINE³¹



Source: ТОП-10 маніпуляцій російських ЗМІ та соціальних мереж про Україну (ФОТО), http://texty.org.ua/pg/news/textynewseditor/read/54210/TOP10_manipulacij_rosijskyh_ZMI_ta_socialnyh_merezh.

³¹ *Ibidem.*

In an interview with “Le Monde” Russian writer Lyudmila Ulitskaya said that Russian mass media are manipulating the collective consciousness of Russian people. In particular, the author claims that television channels showed video materials from Syria and Venezuela, presenting them as events in Donetsk. The Russian intelligentsia cannot do anything about it because according to her words, freedom of speech in Russia does not exist. Ulitskaya believes that Russian mass media are manipulating events in Ukraine and already beat the “world record in lie”. Recently there have been reports about injured child and a woman lying in pools of blood, as shown by certain channels, and presented as proof of the barbarity of Ukrainian army in Donetsk, those scenes were actually filmed in Syria and Venezuela. In her opinion, the material shows specifically for incitement to hatred between Russians and Ukrainians. “Today we are witnessing an unprecedented manipulation of the collective consciousness. The responsibility of journalists has never been so high as it is now, especially those who are trying to observe objectivity, despite pressure from the government. Some news sites were closed, bloggers are controlled, and freedom of speech is suppressed as never in the past 20 years” – she said in the interview³².

The longer this conflict lasts, the more fanaticism and willingness is growing in Russia to uncritical faith in any kind of agitation and propaganda disinformation, confirming the stereotypical image of an enemy. In this undeclared war against Ukraine, Russia is actively using methods of psychological and information war³³, trying to destroy the morale of the Ukrainian soldiers and civilians. The so-called “journalists” of Russian TV stations like “Life News”, “Russia Today” and others are “weapons of dual-usage” serving to form the “right image” for propaganda purposes and for intelligence special services of Russia.

Unprecedented scale of informational manipulation is carried out in all areas of social life with the participation of different forces and means, through the creation and implementation of new information units. Web service Sobaka.ru published in February 2015 interesting confessions of former employees of a Russian “media agency”, whose task was flood-

³² Л. Улицкая, *Российские СМИ побили мировой рекорд по вранью*, <http://russian.rt.com/inotv/2014-06-12/Ulickaya-Rossijskie-SMI-pobili-mirovoj>.

³³ K. Liedel, *Bezpieczeństwo informacyjne w dobie terrorystycznych i innych zagrożeń bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2005, p. 23–24.

ing the Internet with lying information, manipulating information about Russia's armed conflict with Ukraine³⁴.

Propaganda agency, which conducts such activities, is called officially FAN (Federal Agency for Information) and is running at least from July 2013, and hides the actual purpose of their activities, and giving various excuses as an explanation and did not officially admit to being funded from the Russian pro-government sources. It brings together 12 other companies (various locations, including in Ukraine, for example the website "Anti-maidan") – most of them in one way or another preparing materials related to the conflict with Ukraine, Ukrainian policy or Russian policy concerning Ukraine, but they have to show the messages in a certain way, paying great attention to the positive role of Russia in "solving" Ukrainian conflict. They cannot write anything bad about Putin, Ukrainian separatists are not terrorists but rather heroes and their activities in eastern Ukraine presents itself as an armed resistance against the "illegal" government in Kiev, as well as they recognize the right of local people to self-determination, and they call Ukrainian partisans – fascist rebels. The main daily news on all those websites, and a lot of others, are about – Putin, Crimea, "Novorossiya".

They offer an attractive salary (for local conditions) – 45 000 rubles (approx. 650–670 EUR). They employ those who do not ask questions "why?", This is how "work" looks like for Russian internet trolls, paid by Moscow. Every day they have to create at least 20 pieces of information (articles, news, etc.) and publish them on web pages controlled by the agency. Since most employees are quite intelligent, educated, who came from different cities, where they could not find a job, they are well aware what they are doing. Therefore, as one of former trolls says, as a rule they can be divided into 3 groups:

- they pay me, so I do not care about anything else. I do not care who my employer is,
- I know that my employer is pro-Russian "troll factory", but they pay me, so it is OK,
- I am fighting online against fascist rebels.

But people from the last category are a substantial minority. Former troll counted only 2 people out of 30 person team with such orthodox

³⁴ Городской типаж: блогер-пропагандист, <http://www.sobaka.ru/city/city/32942/>.

views³⁵. Apparently they are taking all those who speak and write correctly Russian language. After an interview, you might be assigned to several teams:

- Content Managers – people “rewriting again” true agency news, by doing this however, so that their tone was pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian. Next publish those newly rewritten news on the websites controlled by an agency,
- Bloggers – people who create records in social media and blog/vlog platforms,
- Illustrators – people who create demotivational posters,
- SEO specialists – those who simply spamming links to content on other web sites (Behind the scenes work of Russian, pro-government internet trolls).

According to calculations made by an analytical expert in information security – V. Gusarov from “Information Resistance”, which is a non-governmental project that aims to counteract external threats to the informational space of Ukraine in the main areas of military, economic, and energy, as well as the sphere of informational security, Russia annually spends on information war against Ukraine not less than \$3,5 billion dollars. We should not forget that the Russian “information machine” runs at full speed for the last three years.

Institutional collapse created great conditions to spread hybrid war on the territory of Ukraine, which has consistently led foreign forces in recent years. Maidan in its essence became the culmination of delegitimization of the authorities, which with an unbridled lust for enrichment, corruption, controversial policy, ruled based on primitive populism rather than on a development strategy.

Russia’s aggression has become possible mainly not because of the alleged lack of legitimacy of the post-revolutionary authorities in Kiev but rather because of its inability to adequately confront Russian attacks in the form of informational and propaganda aggression. The primary hybrid war goal was to use the eastern part of Ukraine as a center of instability for the ultimate destruction of Ukrainian investment attractiveness in order to maintain permanent social conflict, to inflict maximum damage to the economy and lead to a profound destabilization in order to create the necessary conditions for a return into the “bosom” of “Putin’s Russkij

³⁵ *Ibidem.*

Mir” (which is an ethnic-centered concept of Russian world) and more prosaically – to the Customs Union, creating on the territory of Ukraine various puppet “mini-states” based on Abkhazia and Transnistrian Moldovan Republic models.

However, Putin did not expect that Ukrainians themselves and the entire civilized world will be on the side of democratic values. The Kremlin expected that, the same way as in the Crimea, the destabilization of the central and local authorities, using deliberate disinformation of society, annexation was presented as legitimate. In the Donbas region, transformation of Anti-Maidan protests to pro-Russian movement on the large scale has not been successful. With the development of the situation in the Donbas region, small groups were breaking down or were destroyed by Russian secret services³⁶. January 2, 2015 as a result of military battle between pro-Russian gangs, one of the leaders of the so called “Luhansk People’s Republic” (LPR) – Alexander Bednov, known as „Batman”, was killed and his accomplices were burned alive in the car³⁷. At the same time, the co-chairman of the public initiative „Right Cause”, coordinator of the National Bloc of Lugansk Forces – Dmitry Snegirev said on his Facebook page that “Chief of Staff of the Fourth Brigade” Alexander Bednov, under the leadership of which there was about 1 500 fighters, was eliminated by Russian special forces³⁸.

Such a situation totally depoliticize war-weary civilians (no matter who, just willing to live in peace), but certainly it is not conducive to the reorganization of regional authorities. Direct military intervention that was needed to sustain the self-proclaimed “republics” led to the fact that some military groups are constantly fighting between themselves for influence in the region and the Russian financial inflows. At the same time

³⁶ Гиркин призвал боевиков покинуть Донбасс после убийства „Бэтмена”, http://news.liga.net/news/politics/4637129-girkin_prizval_boevikov_pokinut_donbass_posle_ubiystva_betmena.htm.

³⁷ Боевики Плотницкого отчитались о ликвидации террориста „Бэтмена”, http://news.liga.net/news/politics/4615713-boeviki_plotnitskogo_otchitalis_o_likvidatsii_terrorista_.htm.

³⁸ Д. Снегирев, *Что на самом деле случилось с полевым командиром ЛНР «Бетменом»*, <http://hvylya.net/analytics/politics/chto-na-samom-dele-sluchilos-s-polevyim-komandiro-m-lnr-betmenom.html>; *В Луганске российские спецназовцы добивают остатки отряда Бэтмена*, <http://ru.tsn.ua/ukrayina/v-luganske-rossiyskie-spcnazovcy-dobivayut-ostatki-otryada-betmena-istochnik-403753.html>.

the inability/unwillingness to implement Minsk agreements by terrorists, as well as Russia itself – is a clear proof that hybrid warfare against Ukraine rises in a deadlock. Illegal “elections” made by self-proclaimed authorities in Donbas region were intended to show the legality of these elections, but were quite useless in terms of centralizing control in the occupied territories.

This war is also based on civilian’s usage for mass hysteria and opposition to legitimate authority as well as “human shields” to cover armed fighters from Russia. In this way mass media plays if not the most important role in creating the “proper”, from aggressor’s point of view, image of the victims in this war, which is much more important than the actual victory itself. Murdering of foreign troops is no longer the main objective – during hybrid warfare, it is enough to kill their own soldiers and at the same time provide the necessary information support.

“For months we are talking about the conflict instead of honestly to tell that it is a war. We are talking about the pro-Russian separatists instead of the Russian military intervention and terrorists, about plane crash instead of shoot-down. Terminology being used is tempered, being used euphemisms and thus reaction is tempered to the events and lulls the awareness of the seriousness of this whole situation. The circle closes, we become (figuratively and literally) victims of our own glitches or false sense of diplomatic conventions. ... We must openly confront, also in the sphere of language, with reality, realistically report and evaluate, because language in the information warfare is of great importance and cannot be overestimated, it could be both a weapon and a shield. If we are going to continue arguing against the facts, that this is not a war and that those anonymous “little green men” were not sent by Russia with sophisticated weapons – we can expect more victims in eastern Ukraine and still not responding adequately, in relation to the seriousness of the situation³⁹.

CONCLUSIONS

Propaganda during 20th century was very strong and influential, but 21st century propaganda – in accordance to George Orwell – “a victim in the eyes of consumers of information is transformed into the aggressor, and

³⁹ J. Saryusz-Wolski, *Czy słowa mogą zabijać?*, <http://wszystkoconajwazniejsze.pl/jacek-saryusz-wolski-czy-slowa-moga-zabijac/>.

the aggressor – in just an avenger. In fact, information contamination is carried out”⁴⁰.

Every attempt of negotiations and ceasefire process meets with the escalation of the conflict with Moscow. Kremlin propaganda is based on the transmission of information, every time two arguments, both of which are false and mutually exclusive. However, citizens have to believe in: “Russia must invade the Ukraine, because it is a repressive country”; “Russia should intervene in Ukraine, because it does not exist as a state/nation”.

Russian information warfare has been held for a long time and takes place on two fronts. One of them – within the state, another – abroad. Anti-Ukrainian propaganda in Europe, on which Russia spends unprecedented amounts of money, for a long time has a dangerous momentum. In 2012, Russia (according to the state media) took first place in the world in financing of propaganda, spending \$1,6 billion – more than China and any other countries⁴¹. But even those \$1,6 billion only applies to some state media. Since 2011 in Russia, new Putin’s unprecedented state program called “Information Society (2011–2020)” is running, developed by the Ministry of Communications and Mass Media and the Ministry of Economic Development with a value of \$40,6 billion, or about \$4 billion per year. The program objectives can be defined as absolute coverage of the Russian-speaking population of the world by public and private media, which support the state strategy of the Russian Federation. There are also a number of branches of Kremlin internet-trolls, which aggressively promote Putin’s vision of the world. Geography and scale of their activities affect the content of such influential western informational agencies as *The Washington Post*⁴², *The Guardian*⁴³,

⁴⁰ B. Grenda, *Cyber-bezpieczeństwo operacji powietrznych NATO*. W: *NATO wobec wyzwań współczesnego świata 2013*, R. Czulda, R. Łoś, J. Regina-Zacharski (eds.), Warszawa- Łódź 2013, p. 189–201.

⁴¹ Г. Каневський, *Машина пропаганди Путіна та інформаційна недолугість України*, <http://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2014/04/1/433089/>.

⁴² C. Dewey, *Hunting for paid Russian trolls in the Washington Post comments section*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/06/04/hunting-for-paid-russian-trolls-in-the-washington-post-comments-section/>.

⁴³ *The Guardian* *обеспокоена напливом коментариев проросійського характера*, <http://www.dw.de/the-guardian>.

The New York Times, CNN⁴⁴ and a lot of others⁴⁵. Till the end of 2014 the amount of public funds spent on propaganda of the “Russian values” should have increased to \$16,5 billion⁴⁶.

Ukraine should use all the ways to fight, inside the country, with national consciousness in different areas, and outside of Ukraine should effectively communicate its position and debunk false news and versions of events.

The intensity and aggressiveness of Russian propaganda nowadays exceeded the propaganda during the Cold War. The consequences of such propaganda for Russia and Ukraine are simply disastrous, and in order to restore the mutual trust we will need to wait for generations. It should be noted that throughout Ukraine, Russian aggression led to the opposite result than Kremlin was waiting for. Powerful patriotic principles have been formed, which under the conditions of inflation, weakening of the hryvnia, rising unemployment – are trying to live, grow and build a European democratic country.

To sum up, it must be emphasized that international diplomacy had slept through the awakening of bloodthirsty bear with imperial sentiment, which is very reminiscent of Nazi Germany, once the entire world was wondering, how so clever German people supported the bloody dictator. Here is the answer: a great machine of propaganda and manipulation, which is now being used in Russia, and all citizens of the world, uncritically watching the Russian mass media.

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⁴⁵ *Документи показали, як армія російських „тролів” атакує Америку*, http://dt.ua/WORLD/dokumenty-pokazali-yak-armiya-rosiyskih-troliv-atakuye-ameriku-144473_.html.

⁴⁶ Г. Каневський, *Машина пропаганди Путіна та інформаційна недолугість України*, <http://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2014/04/1/433089/>.

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LIST OF PHOTOS

Photograph #1 from Bosnia having to prove the bestiality of the Ukrainian army

Photograph #2 little girl next to the murdered woman

Photograph #3 made in 2009 in Chechnya, signed as a description of Ukrainian army activities

Photograph #4. From Russian TV station “Mir 24”

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