УДК 94(4/9)+355.4+323.2“194”
DOI: 10.33099/2707-1383-2025-56-2-64-75

Olesia KUTSKA
Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor
Hetman Petro Sahaidachnyi National Army Academy
(Lviv, Ukraine)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5595-2995
E-mail: kutska_o@yahoo.com

Anastasiia KMIN
Doctor of Philosophy
Hetman Petro Sahaidachnyi National Army Academy
(Lviv, Ukraine)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8158-2449
E-mail: anastasiakmin@gmail.com

Andrii SHCHEHLOV
PhD of Historical Sciences
Hetman Petro Sahaidachnyi National Army Academy
(Lviv, Ukraine)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6484-0864
Email: deepinfaith2202@gmail.com

SOVIET SPECIAL PROPAGANDA DURING WORLD WAR II: STRUCTURE, TECHNICAL MEANS AND ACTIVITIES

This article highlights the key stages in the development of the structure of the Red Army's special propaganda bodies during World War II. In particular, it examines the creation of specialized propaganda departments and their tasks aimed at influencing the enemy's morale. The study analyzes Soviet technical means used to impact the adversary during combat operations, including sound broadcasting stations, loudspeaker systems, propaganda aviation, and printed agitation materials. Special attention is given to the effectiveness of these means, their technical characteristics, and their limitations in combat conditions. The work of front-line propaganda departments is considered through the examples of the Crimean and Korsun-Shevchenko operations of the Red Army. Specifically, the article analyzes the methods of influence, including the use of leaflets, loudspeaker systems, and captivity propaganda, as well as their impact on the enemy's morale.

Keywords: *World War II, Red Army, operation, combat actions, special propaganda, leaflets, agitation materials.*

Introduction. Military propaganda is one of the key instruments of information and psychological warfare, which accompanies combat operations and affects the morale of both one's own troops and the enemy. The experience of World War II demonstrates the significant impact of Soviet propaganda on demoralizing the enemy, encouraging surrender, and creating divisions within enemy military groups. The successful use of agitation through printed materials, sound systems, and individual work with prisoners underscores the necessity of a deeper study of information influence methods in modern warfare.

The relevance of this issue is driven by the fact that contemporary military conflicts are increasingly taking on the characteristics of complex confrontations, where the informational component plays no less a role than traditional combat actions. In the context of high-tech advancements and the widespread use of digital communication tools, information and psychological operations have become even more influential. Studying the historical experience of Soviet propaganda allows for an assessment of its effectiveness, the identification of strengths and weaknesses, and the adaptation of the most successful methods to modern realities.

Analysis of research and publications related to this article. The issues selected for this study have been examined in specialized literature, primarily by M. Burtsev (the founder of the Red Army's special propaganda service) and D. Volkogonov (the head of the special propaganda department, later Deputy Chief of the Main Political Directorate (MPD) of the Soviet Army and Navy). These works are of interest as they were written by eyewitnesses of the era; however, they are overly ideological and do not fully cover all aspects that aroused our interest. At the end of the 20th century, publications on the history of propaganda emerged, including works by N. Volkovskii. This author studied the history of propaganda in general, so the amount of information specifically related to World War II events is relatively small. In our case, the work of I. Moshchanskii deserves attention, as it explores the structure of the Soviet propaganda apparatus and the functions of its various bodies, including those active during World War II.

Among periodicals, significant interest is presented by the article by V. Zharkov, in which the author focused on the challenges faced by Soviet propaganda agencies and the ways to overcome them, as well as the article by O. Kutska, which concentrated on the USSR's special propaganda efforts during combat operations in European countries, including specific aspects of the organization and equipment of the Red Army's propaganda apparatus.

At the intersection of documentary and periodical sources, we highlight the periodicals of the USSR Ministry of Defence: Informational Bulletin (*«Информационный бюллетень»*) and the Experience Bulletin (*«Опыт работы»*), which, at the time of their publication, contained classified information. Today, the restricted access status has been lifted. Due to obsolescence and the reforms of the Western Operational Command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2005, a few original copies and photocopies of these materials were provided to the author of this article (Kutska, O. 2013) and are currently kept in her personal library. In our opinion, the reliability of these materials is quite high, as they served as operational reports for the military-political leadership of the Soviet Union.

Thus, the historiographical foundation of the study is, on the one hand, exceptionally broad in terms of the directions of previous scholarly research, and on the other hand, characterized by the dispersion and fragmentary nature of facts, which require generalization and further examination. This, in turn, provides a basis for analysis, synthesis, and conclusions in the proposed study.

The aim of this article is to conduct a military-historical study of the development of the structure of the Red Army's special propaganda bodies, the technical means of its dissemination, and to provide examples of propaganda support for military operations on the territory of Ukraine.

Presentation of the main research material. *Structure of soviet special propaganda bodies and their tasks during the war.* At the beginning of the 1940s, the Red Army (RA) did not yet have a specialized political apparatus dedicated to working among the enemy's troops and civilian population. It was only on July 10, 1939, that, in accordance with the Order of the People's Commissar of Defence No. 0033 "On the Creation of Editorial Offices and Printing Houses for Foreign-Language Newspapers in Peacetime", a special group of political workers was formed. This order established a permanent peacetime staff for editorial offices and printing houses in Japanese, Chinese, German, Polish, and Finnish, consisting of four personnel each. Permanent staff positions for Korean, Mongolian, Estonian, Latvian, Romanian, Turkish, Afghan, and Iranian languages were planned with a composition of two personnel each (Zharkov, V. 2010, s. 68).

In the summer of the same year, editorial offices for foreign-language newspapers were formed at the political departments of military districts (as training centres) (Moshchanskii I. 2010). The staff of these editorial offices were tasked with improving their language skills, gathering information about the economy and culture of specific countries, and developing their journalistic craft in order to prepare and publish individual newspaper issues as training materials. In total, 24 foreign-language editorial offices were organized, taking into account the likely adversaries and allies of the USSR in the upcoming war (Volkovskii, M. 2003; Kutska, O. 2013).

A special instructor was appointed to lead the network of editorial offices for training newspapers within the Political Directorate (PD) of the RA, and later, a small group of instructor-translators was established. In April 1940, the group was reorganized into a special department for overseeing the printing of foreign-language newspapers. Each of its senior instructors was responsible for overseeing newspapers in a specific foreign language and studying the respective countries and their armies (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

However, out of the 27 foreign-language newspaper editorial offices that existed in the RA as of December 1940, only three were in German, with a total of just 15 specialists working in them. Only one

German-language newspaper editorial office in the Western Special Military District had its own printing press.

In July 1940, the PD of the RA was reorganized into the Main Political Propaganda Directorate (MPPD) of the RA. The following month, a special department for propaganda among enemy troops and civilians was established within its structure (Moshchanskii, I. 2010). Within it, two propaganda divisions were created: the first, the leading one, focused on Germany, and also included instructors from allied countries; the second was directed at the population of Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others, which had been occupied by Nazi forces (Volkovskii, N. 2003).

At the same time, the earlier combat experience from Lake Hassan, the Khalkhin-Gol River, and the Soviet-Finnish War demonstrated that military districts should have a special apparatus within their political organs to organize frontline propaganda among enemy troops. Therefore, in August 1940, following the creation of a department for propaganda among enemy troops and civilians within the MPPD of the RA, similar departments were established within the political propaganda directorates of the Baltic, Western, and Kyiv Special, Leningrad, Transcaucasian, Central Asian, Transbaikal, and Odesa military districts (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

For the first time, departments for working among enemy troops were formed, consisting of 7 people, with corresponding divisions of 6 personnel in the armies. Additionally, the positions of senior instructors for working among enemy troops were introduced into the staff of the political departments of infantry divisions (Repko, S. 1992, s. 10). Within the political departments of army groups, which operated, for example, against Finnish forces, divisions were formed to organize frontline propaganda among enemy troops. Additionally, the position of senior propaganda instructor was included in the staff of the political department of each division (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

According to the directive of the head of the MPPD of the RA (No. 0267, dated October 12, 1940), the departments (divisions) during peacetime were assigned the following tasks: systematically study the neighbouring districts of the country and their armies, accumulate factual material on these issues; compile monthly reviews of the political and moral state of the soldiers and junior officers of the likely enemy, as well as the civilian population; develop drafts of propaganda materials for the soldiers and population of the likely enemy (leaflets, slogans, posters); and publish training bulletins and newspapers (Zharkov, V. 2010).

During the war, the departments (divisions) were tasked with launching widespread political propaganda among the enemy's troops and civilian population.

The pre-war period is also characterized by the fact that reserve officers from among journalists, historians, and philologists were assigned to propaganda units, with preference given to employees of the Soviet Telegraph Agency (TASS) and publishers of foreign literature.

After the invasion of the USSR by the armies of the pro-German coalition states, propaganda influence on the enemy and the population in its rear was carried out by several agencies and public organizations. The main among them were the Bureau of Military-Political Propaganda and the MPD of the RA (Moshchanskii I. 2010). The Soviet Bureau of Military-Political Propaganda was established on June 25, 1941. The Department for Work among Enemy Troops of the MPD became its operational body (Isakov, P., Volkov, A. & Kolichev, V. 1984). The Bureau coordinated propaganda among the enemy's troops and population, as well as in the countries occupied by the Nazis.

The tasks of the aforementioned department of the MPD were: to inform the Bureau about the political and moral state of the enemy's troops; to report on changes occurring in their forces and rear; to develop propaganda documents aimed at the enemy's population and troops, as well as prisoners of war, upon the Bureau's instructions; to report at the Bureau's meetings on the work of the political propaganda organs of the fronts, armies, and divisions in their assigned sections of the front (Burtsev, M. 1981).

In addition, the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (PCIA), the Executive Committee of the Comintern, the Communist parties of the Soviet republics, the Communist Unions of Youth of the Soviet republics, and the All-Union Radio Committee were involved in the implementation of propaganda support for the combat operations of the Red Army. This work was coordinated by the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (CCVKP(B)) and the MPD of the RA (Kutska, O. 2013).

According to the decision of the Politburo of the CCVKP(B) dated July 16, 1941, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree titled "On the Reorganization of Political Propaganda Bodies and the Introduction of the Institution of Military Commissars in the RA". It is worth noting that

the institution of military commissars had been abolished twice: in August 1940 (reintroduced in July 1941), and again in October 1942, due to the establishment of complete unity of command in the army. Accordingly, the institution of commanders for political affairs was introduced. In accordance with this decree, the Main Directorate of Political Propaganda of the RA was transformed into the MPD of the RA (Kutska, O. 2013). This revision of the functions of the Red Army's Political Directorate, which even led to the renaming of this body, was primarily associated with the change in the level of ideological training of the Red Army's command staff, the majority of whom were members of the VKP(B) and were entirely under its control.

According to this decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, military commissars were introduced in all regiments, divisions, headquarters, military educational institutions, and establishments of the RA, while political officers were appointed in companies, batteries, and squadrons. As stated in the decree, the expansion of political work and the growing complexity of commanders' duties required increasing the role and responsibility of political officers in both political and military activities (Kutska, O. 2013). From that point on, political officers were no longer permitted to limit themselves to propaganda and agitation alone. They were required to act primarily as organizers of political and educational work, and were held accountable for the combat performance of their unit or subunit.

The MPD of the RA, as before, included a department for work among enemy troops, which in 1941 was designated as the seventh department. To maintain secrecy, it was referred to as the "7th Department". At that time, its staff consisted of 25 people. Additionally, it engaged up to 30 foreign political émigrés, who were exclusively involved in propaganda throughout the war. Dedicated propaganda personnel responsible for enemy troops and the population in the enemy's rear were also present in the political departments of army-level formations. By analogy with the 7th Department of the MPD, most army-level propaganda units for work among enemy troops were given the code name "7th Section" in non-classified correspondence. However, on the Leningrad Front during 1941–1943, these army units were referred to as the "6th Section," and on some other fronts as the "4th Section." The variation in numbering can be explained by the departmental order within the army's political directorate, where such units held the 6th or 4th position, respectively (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

From 1941 to the end of 1942, the aforementioned section had a staff of six people, which was later increased to seven. Positions of senior instructors for work among enemy troops were introduced in the political departments of rifle corps, rifle and aviation divisions, separate brigades, and airborne battalions (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

In December 1941, this position was abolished in corps, and in August of the following year, 16 instructor positions in airborne battalions were eliminated. Slightly later, in the autumn of 1942, the political departments of the armies disbanded the sections responsible for work among the population of occupied territories, leaving only the position of senior instructor (Isakov, P., Volkov, A. & Kolichev, V. 1984; Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

On August 19, 1941, the MPD of the RA sent a directive entitled "On Work Among the Population of the Occupied Territories and Party-Political Leadership of the Partisan Movement" to all military councils and heads of political directorates at the front level (Volkovskii, N. 2003, s. 392). In accordance with this directive, corresponding departments were created within the MPD of the RA and the political directorates of the fronts, and sections were established within the political departments of the armies. They were tasked with overseeing propaganda among the population and partisans, as well as studying the experience of conducting such work. These bodies existed until September 1945, after which their functions were transferred to the partisan movement headquarters, which had been established slightly earlier (Kutska, O. 2013).

On May 30, 1942, the State Defence Committee (GKO) established the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement (CHPM) under the Supreme High Command. Four months later, the PD (department) was formed within the CHPM. The PD of the CHPM oversaw party and political work in partisan units, sending propaganda materials and technical equipment (radios, portable printing presses, documents, paper, ink, etc.) behind enemy lines, and deploying propagandists, journalists, typesetters, and printers (Volkovskii, N. 2003, s. 392; Kutska, O. 2013).

Returning to the year 1942, it is important to note that in June, the CCVKP(B) established the Council of Military-Political Propaganda (CMPP) under the MPD of the RA. The Council was tasked with summarizing the experience of all party-political activities within the troops and developing recommendations for their improvement (Moshchanskii, I. 2010). One of its most important areas of work was

the leadership of political operations among enemy troops and populations. In this way, ideological struggle with the enemy began to be viewed as an integral part of the broader political and organizational efforts of military councils and political bodies within the RA.

The creation of the CMPP marked a new stage in the development and refinement of special propaganda. The first major change in the structure of special propaganda occurred in October 1942, when it became necessary to strengthen the professionalism of front-line and army-level propaganda aimed at enemy forces. To address this need, editorial and publishing sections (EPS) were added to the 7th departments of the political directorates of the fronts. Within the 7th sections of army political departments, positions of instructor-writers were introduced, along with the attachment of mobile printing units (Moshchanskii, I. 2010). At the divisional level, political departments were permitted to form support groups from among soldiers and commanders who spoke the enemy's language, in order to assist the instructor in charge of special propaganda.

The linguistic training of personnel from the 7th Directorates was carried out with the involvement of the military faculty at the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, specific departments at the 2nd Moscow State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages (which in 1942 was transformed into the Military Institute of Foreign Languages of the RA), and the F. Engels Military-Political School in Leningrad. This led to the establishment of six-month courses where officers, sergeants, and enlisted men who had some familiarity with foreign languages were trained (Moshchanskii, I. 2010). The main goal of the courses was to teach students to communicate fluently in German, provide them with essential knowledge about the enemy, and pass on experience in special propaganda work. The curriculum was structured in such a way that 80 % of the time was dedicated to language study. The primary study materials were captured documents and propaganda publications intended for enemy troops and populations. In addition, students studied Soviet and foreign literature, official military information, materials from TASS and other agencies, which provided insights into the internal situation in Germany and the countries adjacent to Soviet military districts (Kutska, O. 2013).

To improve the political and professional qualifications of special propagandists, a system of briefings for young personnel was established. Highly qualified propagandists were assigned directly to armies and divisions, where they regularly reviewed propaganda documents, summarized and disseminated best practices, and conducted other similar activities.

Due to the growing scope of work and the need to improve leadership and support for the political organs of the fronts, the 7th Department of the MPD of the RA was reorganized into the 7th Directorate (Moshchanskii, I. 2010). According to some sources, in March 1943, the 7th Department of the MPD was transformed into an Information and Translation Section, which was subsequently reorganized into an Information Department in August of the same year (Kutska, O. 2013). According to other sources, however, this information may not be accurate. Nevertheless, an Information Department did exist within the structure of the 7th Directorate which also included the Inspectorate, departments for work among enemy troops, and among the populations of liberated countries. Under the management of the Directorate operated editorial boards of central military newspapers published in foreign languages.

In addition to regular staff within the political departments of the active army, from the summer of 1943 until the end of the war, propaganda prisoners of war trained by the NKVD camp operative departments were utilized. In 1943, their number amounted to 63 individuals, and by January 1945 it had exceeded 2 000. After the establishment of democratic unions of prisoners of war of various nationalities in the camps, the CCVKP(B) decided to allow them to form military units within the RA (Moshchanskii, I. 2010). According to a decree of the USSR People's Commissariat of Defence, each front was assigned a representative from the specially trained prisoners to serve as a Front Commissioner of the National Committee "Free Germany" (NKFD), an Army Representative, and a Divisional Assistant to the NKFD (Gintsberg, L. & Drabkin, Ya. 1961).

Soviet information and psychological warfare agencies also effectively used other organizations formed from prisoners of war: the "Union of German Officers", the "Austrian Anti-Nazi Union", the Romanian "National Bloc", the Italian "Garibaldian Union", and the National Committee "Free Hungary" (Gintsberg, L. & Drabkin, Ya. 1961). These POWs received provisions according to the standards of RA soldiers and were paid in rubles. Once they crossed the USSR border, they were paid in the currencies of the countries where Soviet troops were stationed.

In some counterintelligence departments (initially under the NKVD, later under RA SMERSH), so-called "anti-fascist schools" were established (a total

of six). These institutions trained prisoners of war to assist active army propagandists in conducting propaganda operations against the enemy. As a result, the total number of units engaged in propaganda targeting enemy troops, prisoners of war, and the population in the rear of the German-Romanian army ranged from 2 300 to 3 500 personnel (Gintsberg, L. & Drabkin, Ya. 1961; Moshchanskii, I. 2010). Specifically, for work in the active army from July 1943 to February 1944, the NKVD apparatus trained 21 propagandists from among Hungarian POWs and 15 from among Romanian POWs. Their training was conducted at "Special Facilities" No. 40, 41, and 42, under the non-secret name "Anti-Fascist School" located in the POW camps of Oransky, Yuzhsky, and Krasnogorsk. Each of these schools had a staff of 250 administrative personnel, instructors, and trainees. Prisoners studied there for three months according to a curriculum approved by the Main Political Directorate of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army (PU RKKA) (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

At the frontlines, along with prisoner-of-war propagandists, political departments also employed political émigrés – members of communist parties from foreign countries. Typically, they were organized into propaganda groups for operations within the active army. For example, on the 3rd Ukrainian Front in 1944, a Hungarian group carried out propaganda efforts targeting Hungarian divisions that were fighting against the 18th Army (Kutska, O. 2013).

New changes in the staffing of units responsible for work among enemy troops and populations occurred after the Red Army crossed the borders of Eastern European countries in 1944. In August of that year, the MPD of the RA (main PU RKKA) was reorganized. According to Order No. 0268 of the People's Commissariat of Defence dated August 4, 1944, a new directorate for work among enemy troops and populations was added to the existing directorates for personnel, agitation, and propaganda. Its total staff in August 1944 numbered 57 people, growing to 82 by January 1945. At the same time, new departments for work with the local population (staffed by 5–6 individuals) were introduced into the frontline departments that dealt with enemy troops. Similar units of 5–6 people were organized within the army political departments. According to a decree by the PU RKKA dated May 2, 1945, editorial offices were established within the political departments of the fronts to publish newspapers in foreign languages. Prisoner-of-war propagandists and members of foreign communist parties were involved in producing these publications (Kutska, O. 2013).

The PU RKKA continued to function until February 1946, when the People's Commissariat of Defence and the People's Commissariat of the Navy were merged into a single body – the USSR People's Commissariat of the Armed Forces. This merger resulted in the creation of a unified MPD. As of April 1958, according to a decree by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CCCPSU), it was renamed the MPD of the Soviet Army and Navy.

Thus, by 1944, the Soviet Union's wartime propaganda organs had fully developed, and influence over enemy troops and populations became a distinct type of combat support activity.

Technical Means of Soviet Special Propaganda during the War. In the realm of oral propaganda among enemy troops and on liberated territories, the Soviets employed sound broadcasting stations of various models, such as the PGU-39, PGU-44, PGU-3500 (PGU – powerful sound broadcasting unit), ZVS-100 (ZVS – sound broadcasting unit), and PZS-40 (PZS – powerful sound broadcasting unit). These were designed for both voice broadcasting and sound simulation. Frontline political agencies used these broadcasts for agitation and propaganda aimed at enemy forces across the front line. The above-mentioned equipment was part of the communication regiment's standard inventory and operated on the instructions of the 7th Department of the Front's Political Directorate. Sound simulation recordings were either stored with the units or in the front's political directorate depots (Kutskaya, O. & Dorozhkin, S. 2014).

The broadcasting equipment was mounted on vehicles, combat machines, and aircraft. As the war progressed, new factory-produced units were delivered, typically mounted in covered trucks. In urgent situations, broadcasts could be delivered directly from vehicles such as the GAZ-AAA or ZIS-5. Mobile PGUs proved more effective than stationary ones. During a single deployment to the frontline, 10 to 15 – and sometimes more – sound transmissions could be conducted (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

For example, according to a report by the 7th Department of the PD of the 4th Ukrainian Front dated July 19, 1944, a special audio broadcast was prepared for the 13th Romanian Division, which was defending the Chonhar Bridge (across the Syvash Bay between present-day Novooleksiivka and Dzhankoi). This broadcast was transmitted 15 times on the eve of the offensive over the course of two nights. The Romanians were warned: "If the bridge is destroyed and your command has received the order to do so all

officers and soldiers will be annihilated. We know the names of all officers and soldiers. Don't try to blame the Germans. You are the majority." Subsequent testimony from prisoners and reports by the political department of the Soviet unit operating against this Romanian group indicated that both commanders and soldiers had sabotaged the order to blow up the bridge, as they had all heard the aforementioned broadcasts (Protivnik o vliyanii sovetskoi propagandi… 1944, s. 50).

Given the significant role these sound broadcasting tools played in Soviet military operations, it is also important to mention their drawbacks. These included large physical dimensions, labour-intensive shelter construction, poor mobility, vulnerability to shrapnel and even bullets, and insufficient sound range. Moreover, mobile broadcasting stations mounted on vehicles could not approach the front too closely because the engine noise would give away the agitators' position. Additionally, these vehicles required relatively good roads, which were hard to locate at night without headlights (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

Depending on the mission, and in battles where the large PGUs could not pass due to technical limitations, it was proposed to use trench loudspeaker systems (OGU) mounted on tanks. These were employed, for instance, in the difficult terrain of the Karelian Isthmus. Tanks equipped with loudspeakers (several models were produced based on the T-20 "Komsomolets", T-26, and T-34-76) were typically deployed with advancing units during breakthroughs and used in raids behind enemy lines (Kutskaya, O. & Dorozhkin, S. 2014; Moshchanskii, I. 2010). The use of specially equipped tanks extended the reach of oral broadcasts aimed at retreating or counterattacking enemy forces and reserve garrisons located tens of kilometres behind the front line.

Trench loudspeaker installations (OGU) became the primary tool for oral propaganda used by divisional political departments. These systems were either stationary (mounted on mobile platforms) or portable, operating on battery power. The output of such OGUs was 70 watts, with an effective range of 1–2 kilometres. In operational condition, each station consisted of seven components: an audio amplifier station, two six-cell battery packs, a power converter, two 600-meter spools of field telephone cable, and a speaker. Two spare battery packs were also included (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

In addition to the OGUs, trench sound broadcasting systems (OZS) were actively used for oral agitation. Under difficult terrain conditions, they proved to be more mobile, especially in divisions where they were transported as pack loads. It was noted, however, that the number of OZS broadcasts could have been significantly higher if the stations had been equipped with a second battery pack (Rabota politorganov 2-go Ukrainskogo fronta. 1944, s. 29). Without this additional battery set, the operation of OZS units was limited to the lifespan of the main batteries, which later needed recharging – a task not always feasible during bad weather or the rapid advance of Soviet forces.

An example of the effectiveness of these broadcasts can be found in the report from the 7th Department of the Political Directorate of the Southern Front dated October 15, 1943. It described how a vehicle arrived at the Soviet lines carrying four soldiers from the 1st Slovak Infantry Division who had deserted from the village of Voinka (now in the Perekop district of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea). They testified that "on August 4, they listened to Soviet radio calling on them to surrender or join the partisans" (Gruppovaya sdacha v plen…1944, s. 30–31).

In special cases, propaganda broadcasts were carried out via aircraft. L. Proksha, a wartime propaganda officer and later a retired lieutenant colonel, recalled that the loudspeaker system mounted on a plane looked as follows: "…on the left side of the navigator's cockpit was a radio transmitter with a laryngophone (instead of a microphone). A large speaker, like the ones used in city squares during peacetime, was mounted under the fuselage. The announcer would sit in the cockpit, put the laryngophone around his neck, turn on the transmitter, and test the equipment. In front of the announcer, under a glass panel (to prevent the wind from tearing it away), was a short text in German. It was easy to memorize: just one or two short sentences. The pilot would take off and head toward the enemy's front line. Upon reaching altitude, he would reduce the engine's RPM and begin a spiral descent. At that moment, the announcer would activate the equipment and begin the broadcast. Of course, this was always done at night, since the plane would be shot down immediately during daylight" (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

Enemy-oriented propaganda was also carried out using simple technical tools such as tin megaphones and hand-held loudhailers. These broadcasts were performed by soldiers trained to memorize 3–5 slogans in a foreign language. The quality of such propaganda was quite low due to the primitiveness of the slogans, crude pronunciation errors, and the speakers' heavy accents, often provoking ridicule

from enemy troops (Kutskaya, O. & Dorozhkin, S. 2014).

Throughout all front-line operations, systematic broadcasting was carried out using combat radios, ranging from high-power transmitters to regimental-level stations. Most often, defectors and prisoners of war acted as announcers. All broadcasts were conducted under the supervision of Soviet personnel fluent in the German language (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

Printed materials of general political content were developed in Moscow by the central apparatus of the RA responsible for operations among enemy troops. The fronts received both printed leaflets and matrices, which were used to reproduce propaganda materials. The fronts utilized their own printing infrastructure; the armies typically had mobile printing houses; while at the divisional level, leaflets were rarely produced independently (Volkovskii, N. 2003, s. 382).

For the direct production of propaganda materials, the fronts were equipped with their own printing facilities, typically housed in railway wagons or several truck vans. Army-level printing presses were usually located in a single vehicle. Across all military districts, there were approximately 20 high-powered loudspeaker systems of the PGU-1500 type (Kutskaya, O. & Dorozhkin, S. 2014).

Let us cite several examples of reactions from Wehrmacht servicemen regarding Soviet propaganda leaflets that reached them during the fighting in Ukraine. For instance, Corporal A. Witte from the 1st Company of the 83rd Engineer Battalion of the 3rd Mountain Infantry Division stated: "From the leaflets, we learned that the Russians had broken through 100 kilometres west of Kharkiv and were threatening Poltava...". Lieutenant Palen, adjutant to the commander of the 3rd Battalion, and Non-Commissioned Officer Klostermann from the 2nd Battalion, both from the 290th Infantry Regiment of the 98th Infantry Division, noted that the leaflets "The Last Winter" and "The Russians Beyond the Dnipro" made a strong impression, as they contained a number of irrefutable facts and lacked tendentious propaganda. Sergeant T. Gheorghe from the 4th Company of the 21st Battalion of the 3rd Mountain Infantry Division of the Romanian Army stated in February 1944: "Soldier Zamfirescu showed me a leaflet signed by Lieutenant Popescu [The leaflet had been published well before the Crimean operations – ed. bulletin]. The leaflet was written simply and clearly. Most likely, Zamfirescu had shown it not only to me. When we had discussions in a close circle about our position in Crimea, some soldiers repeated the same arguments and statements that were contained in this leaflet" (Protivnik o vliyanii sovetskoi propagandi… 1944, s. 6, 28, 29).

Continuing the topic of printing facilities, it should be noted that in addition to stationary ones, mobile printing presses were also used to supply printed materials to the troops. They were usually housed in two ZIS-5 trucks, where plywood structures accommodated the typesetting and printing workshops. Separately, in a GAZ-AA vehicle, there was a power generator. The editorial office was located in dugouts (Kutskaya, O. & Dorozhkin, S. 2014).

The absence of mobile printing facilities with the necessary equipment (typesetting units, power generators, photo laboratories, etc.) in the organizational structure of the armies and fronts hindered the work, preventing the production of the required quantity of leaflets.

As a result, some regiments and companies used glassographs (a printing device consisting of a piece of matte glass coated with an adhesive substance, onto which the original was imprinted – editor's note). These devices allowed the production of high-quality leaflets in units lacking proper printing infrastructure, utilizing chemicals that were commonly available to all front-line formations. The glassograph was capable of producing not only black-and-white, but also colour materials (Pechatane listovok na steklografe.1944, s. 22–23).

The layout and design of printed materials were accomplished both through standard typographic means (various typefaces and point sizes, rules, display type, etc.) and visual-narrative elements (documentary photographs, photomontage, illustrations, etc.), with the aim of achieving a distinctive and expressive style for each leaflet, brochure, or poster. If a unit had access to a zincography facility, clichés (printing plates) were most commonly used in leaflet production. If such facilities were unavailable, engravings (on wood, linoleum, or plastic) were used as an alternative. These methods did not require bulky specialized equipment, making the production of clichés feasible under any field conditions (Opit khudozhestvennogo oformleniya listovok… 1944, s. 18–19). In this way, printed materials were produced and delivered directly to military formations and units, where propagandists were responsible for disseminating them among enemy troops.

Over 80 % of propaganda materials were distributed by air. Aircraft of all types engaged in combat operations over enemy-held territory were used for delivery and dissemination: bombers, attack aircraft, fighters, reconnaissance planes, and liaison aircraft.

Propaganda materials issued by the MPD of the RA were transported to the frontlines by aircraft belonging to a special squadron (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

Artillery-based dissemination methods were precision tools. The most widely used was the 152-mm howitzer propaganda shell, which contained approximately 1 kilogram of leaflets (Moshchanskii, I. 2010). Beginning in 1944, the Soviet forces also began deploying a new 122-mm howitzer propaganda shell modelled after a German design (intended for use with the 1909/37, 1910/30 models and the M-30 howitzer) (Kutskaya, O. & Dorozhkin, S. 2014).

Propagandists of the RA employed the VAGI-42 rifle propaganda grenade (model of 1942), which was launched from an over-calibre mortar without sights. The fully loaded grenade weighed between 324 and 340 grams and had a range of 400–450 meters (Kutskaya, O. & Dorozhkin, S. 2014).

An 82-mm cast-iron propaganda mine (model AM-82, introduced in 1943) was also used for propaganda purposes. It had a firing range of 1,5 to 2 kilometres and could carry about 200 grams of leaflets (approximately 200 copies in 1/32 of a printing sheet) (Moshchanskii, I. 2010).

Thus, the front-line and army-level arsenals included a rather powerful and diverse range of equipment for that time, which allowed the execution of tasks aimed at exerting informational influence on the enemy.

Numerous examples illustrate the use of propaganda by Soviet special propaganda bodies during World War II. However, the Crimean and Korsun-Shevchenko operations of 1944 deserve special attention. These significant military campaigns, conducted on Ukrainian territory, serve as vivid examples of the effective implementation of propaganda measures aimed at demoralizing enemy forces and supporting the morale of Soviet troops.

Soviet propaganda among German-Romanian forces during the Crimean operation. Between April 8 and May 12, 1944, the forces of the 4th Ukrainian Front and the Separate Coastal Army carried out offensive operations, including breaching enemy defences, pursuing retreating units, and assaulting a besieged stronghold. The campaign concluded with the complete defeat of German-Romanian forces in Crimea. Alongside operational and strategic plans for conducting combat operations, a vision for their propagandistic support was also developed. The main focus was on critical directions: Syvash and Perekop (the northern part of Crimea) (Tyulpanov, S. 1944, s. 5).

Despite the fact that the entire enemy grouping had been completely encircled since November 1, 1943, German and Romanian soldiers and officers pinned their hopes on the Kherson fortified area and the Nikopol bridgehead. They likely expected a breakthrough either across the Dnipro to relieve the encircled forces or from Crimea to link up with divisions west of the river. These expectations had a calming effect on the morale of troops stationed in Crimea, at least until the RA captured key cities such as Mykolaiv and Ochakiv. This confidence was further reinforced by uninterrupted communications and transportation (both air and sea) with Odesa, sufficient food supplies, and the availability of leave (Tyulpanov, S. 1944, s. 5). Thus, the task before Soviet propagandists was to create a sense among enemy soldiers in Crimea that they were completely surrounded.

In the first stage of the Crimean operation, propaganda efforts focused on undermining the morale and combat resilience of enemy units. The key themes included: intimidation, through reminders of the lessons and experiences of Stalingrad; conveying the operational situation on the fronts and the developments in the Crimean operation; undermining confidence in the enemy grouping (highlighting the inexperience of young reinforcements and the unreliability of certain sectors); sowing discord among the enemy ranks (pointing out the unreliability of Romanians to Germans, and reminding Romanians of how Germans abandoned them at Stalingrad). At the same time, propaganda promoting surrender was widely disseminated (Tyulpanov, S. 1944, s. 8–10).

From November 1, 1943, to the beginning of the Soviet offensive on April 8, 1944, the Soviet forces issued 108 different leaflets for the troops of the encircled enemy group in Crimea, with a total circulation of 4 260 000 copies. Of these, 1 710 000 were in German, 1 900 000 in Romanian, 340 000 in both German and Romanian, and 310 000 in other languages (such as Slovak, Czech, etc.) (Tyulpanov, S. 1944, s. 10).

Immediately before the offensive, a number of measures were taken to ensure effective propaganda support for the Soviet troops. In particular, all available loudspeaker equipment was concentrated on the Crimean front: two PGU (Field Loudspeaker Units), one ZVS (Loudspeaker Broadcasting Station), and ten OGU (Mobile Loudspeaker Units), which operated continuously from morning to night. At the same time, nine special leaflets were issued to announce the beginning of the Red Army's offensive on Crimea. These leaflets were loaded into aircraft and

dropped together with bomb payloads on the enemy's front lines and rear positions immediately after artillery preparation. A stockpile of ultimatum-style leaflets was also created for distribution during the first two days of the offensive (Tyulpanov, S. 1944, s. 13–14).

During the rapid advance of the 4th Ukrainian Front, there arose a need for immediate notification of enemy soldiers about the capture of various localities: Tomashovka and Dzhankoi had been taken, Yevpatoria was in Red Army hands, Odesa had been liberated, and so on. The German-Romanian troops learned about the capture of Yalta even before the remnants of their defeated divisions reached the city. Alongside pre-prepared leaflets, from April 8 to May 10, a total of 110 new leaflets with different themes were developed and distributed, with a total circulation of more than 3 300 000 copies (Tyulpanov, S. 1944, s 16–17).

Against the backdrop of the Red Army's successful combat operations, Soviet propaganda caused a moral breakdown in enemy forces, leading to the surrender of numerous enemy groups. Eighteen such group surrenders were recorded (Tyulpanov, S. 1944, s. 17).

However, by April 15–16, the situation changed drastically. German and Romanian troops retreated to a fortified line around Sevastopol. The beginning of their evacuation and the transfer of "fresh" units to the area renewed their hopes of salvation. In this situation, several main propaganda themes were chosen: to destroy the enemy's hope for evacuation ("we'll sink the ships, we'll shoot down the planes"), to emphasize that the RA continued to firmly hold the initiative on the front, and to encourage surrender (Tyulpanov, S. 1944, s. 17).

Loudspeaker propaganda gained significant momentum in this phase, primarily involving captured enemy soldiers. It was not uncommon for a prisoner of war to speak into a microphone just two or three hours after capture (Tyulpanov, S. 1944, s. 19).

Of course, the decisive factor in the total demoralization of the remaining German forces in Sevastopol was the Red Army's assault and the hopelessness of the enemy's position, especially when evacuation became impossible. Nevertheless, it is known that German soldiers often continued to fight to the end, even under desperate conditions. However, no such cases were recorded in the area of Cape Khersones (the western part of Sevastopol) (Tyulpanov, S. 1944, s. 21).

Let us consider another example – the operations of the VII Department of the 1st Ukrainian Front during the encirclement of Hitler's forces in the Korsun-Shevchenko area. The VII Department of the 1st Ukrainian Front developed a draft ultimatum on behalf of the RA command, which was presented to the command of the encircled troops in the Korsun area on February 8, 1944. The PD selected a translator and a bugler, and carried out all the necessary preparations to ensure the parliamentarians could cross the front line (Rabota sredi voisk protivnika… 1944, s. 10–11).

Simultaneously with the delivery of the ultimatum through the parliamentarians, its text was printed in a leaflet with a circulation of 138 000 copies and distributed in the enemy's area. The content of the ultimatum was also broadcast via loudspeaker systems (Rabota sredi voisk protivnika… 1944, s. 15).

Between January 31 and February 8, 1944, the VII Department of the 1st Ukrainian Front issued 13 different leaflets to the encircled troops, with a total circulation of 1 213 000 copies. Over the entire encirclement period, from January 31 to February 17, the front issued 24 different leaflets with a total circulation of 6 343 000 copies (Rabota sredi voisk protivnika… 1944, s. 16).

To enhance propaganda efforts among the encircled troops, three PGUs (Field Loudspeaker Units) were relocated to the area. However, due to poor roads and muddy terrain, they could not be properly deployed and worked only for one night. All OGU (Mobile Loudspeaker Units), however, operated intensively starting February 8. Additionally, 45 loudspeakers were used within two army units. The content of these broadcasts included: the ultimatum's message, the announcement of the arrival of Seydlitz (Walther Kurt von Seydlitz-Kurzbach, a German military figure and artillery general), his address to the encircled troops, explanations of the hopelessness of their position, calls to surrender, and information about the conditions of life in captivity (Rabota sredi voisk protivnika … 1944, s. 17–18).

Despite the efforts to demoralize enemy troops, a report from the VII Department of the 1st Ukrainian Front noted that, although the encircled units were in a depressed state, they still believed in possible rescue. This was due to two main factors: first, there was still movement from the pocket to the southeast; and second, Colonel General Hans-Valentin Hube of the Wehrmacht, who was advancing in support of the encircled troops, had raised their spirits through radio messages promising the approach of help (Rabota sredi voisk protivnika … 1944, s. 18). This belief lasted until February 17 – the day of the catastrophe at Shanderivka (present-day village in Zvenyhorodka

Area, Cherkasy Region), when most of the encircled troops were either destroyed or captured.

Thus, both of the aforementioned RA operations demonstrated the effectiveness of a comprehensive approach, in which military actions were accompanied by targeted information warfare. As a result, a significant portion of enemy troops surrendered, allowing the Soviet command to reduce losses and accelerate the conclusion of combat operations.

Conclusion. The establishment and reorganization of the MPD throughout the war reflects the growing importance of ideological work within the military structures of the USSR. By 1944, Soviet military propaganda had taken its final shape, and informational influence on the troops became a distinct area of combat support.

The technical means available in the RA for the production and dissemination of special propaganda were generally sufficient to conduct agitation among enemy forces at an appropriate level. The combination of oral and printed agitation, along with various methods of distributing propaganda materials, ensured timely informational support for RA operations.

Soviet propaganda played a key role in undermining the morale of German and Romanian troops during both the Crimean and the Korsun-Shevchenko operations of 1944. Despite enemy efforts to maintain fighting spirit, systematic informational pressure, combined with the military successes of the RA, led to mass surrenders. The experience of these operations confirms the effectiveness of informational and psychological influence as a vital component of modern warfare.

Promising directions for further research include: in-depth analysis of propaganda support for RA operations on the territory of Ukraine; interaction between Soviet military propagandists and operational headquarters; and investigation of factors that influenced the speed of enemy morale collapse.

REFERENCES

Burtsev, M. (1981). *Prozrenie* [Revelation]. Moskva: Voenizdat, 320 s. [in Russian].

Gintsberg, L. & Drabkin, Ya. (1961). *Nemetskie antifashisti v borbe protiv gitlerovskoi diktaturi* [German anti-fascists in the struggle against the Hitler dictatorship]. Moskva: Akademia nauk SSSR, 152 s. [in Russian].

Gruppovaya sdacha v plen nemetskikh soldat pod vliyaniem nashei agitatsii. (1943). [Mass surrender of German soldiers under the influence of our agitation]. *Informatsionnii byuleten.* № 98 (268), 36 s. [in Russian].

Isakov, P., Volkov, A. & Kolichev, V. (1984). *Politorgani Sovetskikh Vooruzhennikh Sil: Istoriko-teoreticheskii ocherk* [Political organs of the Soviet Armed Forces: A historical and theoretical essay]. Moskva: Voenizdat, 400 s. [in Russian].

Kutska, O. (2013). Radianski orhany propahandy ta yikh funktsii v period Velykoi Vitchyznianoi Viiny (1941–1945rr) [Soviet propaganda organs and their functions during the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945)]. *Naukovi zapysky*. Vyp. 20, s. 122–129. [in Ukrainian].

Kutskaya, O. & Dorozhkin, S. (2014). Sovetskie tekhnicheskie sredstva propagandi v period boevikh deistvii Krasnoi Armii na territorii Yevropi v godi Vtoroi mirovoi voini [Soviet propaganda technical means during the combat operations of the Red Army on the territory of Europe in World War II]. *Revista Militară.* № 1 (11), s. 145–157. [in Russian].

Moshchanskii, I. (2010). *Informatsionnaya voina: Organi spetspropagandi Krasnoi armii* [Information Warfare: Special Propaganda Bodies of the Red Army]. Moskva: Veche, 406 s. [in Russian].

Opit khudozhestvennogo oformleniya listovok sredstvami otdeleniya. (1944). [Experience of Artistic Design of Leaflets Using the Resources of the Department]. *Opit raboti sredi voisk protivnika.* № 6 (15), s. 17–22. [in Russian].

Pechatane listovok na steklografe. (1944). [Printing Leaflets on a Cyclograph]. *Opit raboti sredi voisk protivnika*. № 6 (15), s. 22–24. [in Russian].

Protivnik o vliyanii sovetskoi propagandi na nemetskuyu armiyu. (1944). [The Enemy on the Influence of Soviet Propaganda on the German Army]. *Informatsionnii byuleten*. № 12 (282), 111 s. [in Russian].

Rabota politorganov 2-go Ukrainskogo fronta. (1944). [The Work of Political Departments of the 2nd Ukrainian Front]. *Opit raboti sredi voisk protivnika.* № 4 (13), s. 20–31. [in Russian].

Rabota sredi voisk protivnika, okruzhennikh v raione Korsun-Shevchenkovskii. (1944). [Work Among Enemy Troops Encircled in the Korsun-Shevchenko Area]. *Opit raboti sredi voisk protivnika.* № 4 (13), 108 s. [in Russian].

Repko, S. (1992). Tsena illyuzii [The Price of Illusions]. *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal.* № 11, s. 8–15. [in Russian].

Tyulpanov, S. (1944). Propaganda sredi nemetsko-ruminskikh voisk v period Krimskoi operatsii [Propaganda Among German-Romanian Troops During the Crimean Operation]. *Opit raboti sredi voisk i naseleniya protivnika.* № 9 (18), s. 5–24. [in Russian].

Volkovskii, N. (2003). *Istoriya informatsionnyh voin* [History of Information Wars]. Sankt Peterburg: Poligon, Ch. 2, 792 s. [in Russian].

Zharkov, V. (2010). Organizatsionno-ideologicheskaya rabota v RKKA v 1939–1941 gg. [Organizational and ideological work in the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army (RKKA) in 1939–1941]. *Yaroslavskii pedagogicheskii vestnik.* № 2, s. 66–70. [in Russian].

Олеся КУЦЬКА
доктор історичних наук, професор
Національна академія сухопутних військ
імені гетьмана Петра Сагайдачного
(Львів, Україна)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5595-2995

Анастасія КМІН
доктор філософії
Національна академія сухопутних військ
імені гетьмана Петра Сагайдачного
(Львів, Україна)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8158-2449

Андрій ЩЕГЛОВ
кандидат історичних наук
Національна академія сухопутних військ
імені гетьмана Петра Сагайдачного
(Львів, Україна)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6484-0864

РАДЯНСЬКА СПЕЦПРОПАГАНДА В РОКИ ДРУГОЇ СВІТОВОЇ ВІЙНИ: СТРУКТУРА, ТЕХНІЧНІ ЗАСОБИ ТА ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ

У статті висвітлено основні віхи розвитку структури органів спецпропаганди Червоної армії під час Другої світової війни, зокрема створення спеціальних пропагандистських відділів та їх завдання щодо впливу на моральний стан противника. Проаналізовано радянські технічні засоби впливу під час забезпечення бойових дій, описано звукомовні станції, гучномовні установки, пропагандистську авіацію, а також друковані засоби агітації. Особлива увага приділена ефективності цих засобів, їх технічним характеристикам та обмеженням у бойових умовах. На прикладі Кримської та Корсунь-Шевченківської операцій Червоної армії розглянуто роботу фронтових відділів пропаганди. Зокрема, проаналізовано методи впливу, включаючи використання листівок, звукомовних установок та пропаганди полону, а також їх вплив на моральний стан противника. Встановлено, що до 1944 р. радянська воєнна пропаганда остаточно сформувалася, а інформаційний вплив на війська став окремим напрямом забезпечення бойових дій. Наявні у Червоній армії технічні засоби виготовлення та розповсюдження спецпропаганди (гучномовні станції, друкарні, агітаційні снаряди тощо) у цілому дозволяли на належному рівні вести агітацію серед військ противника. Поєднання усної та друкованої агітації, можливості різних способів розповсюдження агітаційних матеріалів забезпечувало своєчасну інформаційну підтримку операцій Червоної армії. Попри спроби противника зберегти бойовий дух, систематичний інформаційний тиск у поєднанні з воєнними успіхами Червоної армії призвів до масових випадків здачі у полон під час Кримської та Корсунь-Шевченківської операцій радянських військ 1944 року. Викладена у статті інформація допоможе у вирішенні актуальних військово-практичних завдань в умовах сучасних гібридних конфліктів.

***Ключові слова**: Друга світова війна, Червона армія, операція, бойові дії, спецпропаганда, листівки, агітаційні матеріали.*