

The “German Intrigue” as an Element of the Anti-Ukrainian Campaign: A Case Study of Kyiv’s Russian Language Press, 1914-18

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Abstract: World War I proved to be a powerful catalyst for latent national movements on non-Russian frontiers of the multi-ethnic Romanov Empire. Based on original sources in Kyiv’s Russian language press, this article uncovers the attitude of the Russian media toward Ukrainian national self-determination in Southwestern Krai, the Empire’s borderland. Particularly, the study investigates the anti-Ukrainian campaign of the alleged “German intrigue.” Prejudice against the Ukrainian “foreign intrigue” originated in the media as a response to Russia’s pre-war controversy with neighbouring Austria-Hungarian and German empires. During World War I, such prejudice developed into a prominent defamatory technique. This research illustrates how a pre-war concern about a separate Ukrainian identity evolved into full-scale Russian hostility toward the newly established Ukrainian state by the end of 1918. In essence, the anti-Ukrainian campaign reflected the press’s worldview. Regardless of political affiliations, Russian newspapers unanimously professed state patriotism. Despite the emergence of a mass Ukrainian national movement in 1917, newspapers continued to assert the paradigm of the single all-Russian nation. In general, this attitude should be evaluated as a historic example of a clash between Russian and Ukrainian national projects.

Keywords: Ukrainian question, Russian press, nationalism, World War I, image of the Germans.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a separate Ukrainian identity remained a subject of bitter dispute between the Ukrainian movement activists and state-supported advocates of an all-Russian nation. Along with other national movements in the Russian Empire’s western borderland, the Ukrainian question of national self-determination presented a challenge to the integrity of the Russian state (Kappeler 338-39). On the eve of the World War I, the problem of Ukrainian self-determination became a part of the political controversy between the Russian Empire and its Central European neighbours. Consequently, the Ukrainian movement acquired a new connotation of vicious foreign intrigue (Kuraiev 21-30). This prejudice only strengthened in the course of

the Great War of 1914-18, as the belligerent powers attempted to utilize the Ukrainian question of national self-determination to their advantage.¹

This research addresses the anti-Ukrainian campaign of the alleged “German intrigue” conducted by the Russian language press of Kyiv during 1914-18. The study covers the time of World War I, implying that it became a catalyst for national self-determination and decolonization in the Russian Empire (Lohr, “War Nationalism,” 91-93; Sanborn 14; Roshwald 218-21). In the Ukrainian case, the war opened up possibilities for the foundation of a mass national movement and, ultimately, led to the creation of an independent Ukrainian state (Hrytsak 259-60; Hausmann 189-90). Geographically, the survey focuses on the Russian Empire’s vast borderland province of Southwestern Krai. Its administrative, economic, and cultural centre was the city of Kyiv. It was also the major locus of print media, traditionally covering the region’s information demand (Molchanov 181-82). Although ethnically diverse, Kyiv city functioned as a stronghold of Russian identity,² broadcasting it onto Southwestern Krai’s population, which contained a Ukrainian majority.³ Russian state ideology referred to Ukrainians as the “the Little Russians” in the single all-Russian nation (Miller, *The Romanov Empire* 161-81).

The present survey addresses issues of nationalism and mass communication; it proceeds from Benedict Anderson’s concept of a nation as an imagined political community (5-7). Anderson argues that since the nineteenth century a national language in Europe has become an attribute of community self-identification. He credits the rapid development of press and book printing for the establishment of a strong imagined bond among the audience of native speakers (Anderson 83-88). In its last decade (1907-17), the Russian Empire reached a literacy rate sufficient to support a mass consumption of print (Brooks 351-52). Media studies acknowledge the role of mass communication in the dissemination of ideas. Walter Lippmann was one of the first to point out that the press simultaneously influences and reflects public opinion (324-33). Denis McQuail describes mass media as “the primary source of definitions and images of social reality and the most ubiquitous expression of shared identity” (4). Relying on this

¹ On the strategy and war goals of the belligerent powers in Ukraine, see von Hagen.

² In 1917, Kyiv’s population of approximately 470 thousand comprised 49.9% Russians. Only 12% of the city dwellers were Ukrainians and 4.4% identified themselves as Little Russians (“*malorosy*”); other nationalities held around 34% of the population. The Russians retained key positions in the economy, the culture, and the administration, while the Ukrainians occupied the lowest social ranks due to their peasant origin (Lazans’ka 110-12).

³ In 1917 Ukrainians constituted about 75.5% of the region’s total population, while Russians comprised around 3.4% (Lazans’ka 78).

background and empirical data, the present article views the Russian language press of Kyiv as politically Russian. Yet, there was a discussion about the limits of Russianness. Until the war of 1914, the Kyiv liberal press had acknowledged the cultural distinction of Ukrainians providing that the latter professed all-Russian patriotism. This was an element of a situational alliance between the two groups directed against the tsarist regime (Miller, “The Role,” 76). In turn, Russian ultra- and great-power nationalists sought to substitute the potentially separatist Ukrainian identity with the allegedly state-loyal Little Russian one.⁴ World War I compelled Russian media agents to alter their beliefs and to search for an ultimate national solution. Patriotic fervour increased intolerance among the liberals while Central Powers’ propaganda encouraged Russian nationalists to take a more liberal approach toward “the Ukrainians.” The outbreak of the 1917 Revolution led the media to call for Ukrainian political inclusion into a projected all-Russian civic nation—as a necessary step to secure the unity of the state. Finally, the issue of Ukrainian independence had triggered the rally for the preservation of a single Russia, resulting in an anti-Ukrainian stance in the Kyiv Russian press by the end of 1918.

The present paper reviews the concept of imagology, which explores national stereotypes and images of “otherness” in conjunction with an actor’s own identity. In accordance with a constructivist approach, it analyzes original patterns of thought rather than arguing for their correctness or fallacy (Beller 11-12; Hall 25). Michael Kunczik defines a national image as a “cognitive representation that a person holds of a given country, what a person believes to be true about the nation and its people” (46). Imagology explores the given national representation via the analysis of tropes, i.e., words and expressions covering the theme of inquiry. These tropes are contextualized within the text, its author, the audience, and the historical conditions (Leerssen 27-29). Specifically, print media present a valuable source of tropes concerning a national image (Cinnirella 39-42).

KYIV PRESS AND ITS IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS

The study is based on material in Kyiv’s Russian language daily newspapers: the ultra-nationalist *Kiev*, the rightist *Kievlianin* (*Kyiv Citizen*) (and its 1918 successor *Golos Kieva* [*Voice of Kyiv*]), and the “progressive” (liberal / socialist) *Kievskaja mysl'* (*Kyivan Thought*), *Poslednie novosti*

⁴ On the Little Russian involvement in the formation of Russian imperial nationalism see Hillis. However, Ilnytzkyj’s review of Hillis’s report is strongly recommended to gain a better understanding of the struggle between Ukrainian and Russian national projects over Rus’ and Little Russian heritage.

(*Latest News*), and *Iuzhnaia kopeika* (*Southern Kopeck*). These publications represent both the spectrum and the constellation of forces in Kyiv's Russian political thought. The "nationally-Russian" *Kiev* embodied the local Black Hundred ultra-nationalist group, while *Kievlianin* was the region's largest great-power nationalist quality newspaper. Both of these pro-regime and partially state-subsidized newspapers, however, enjoyed relatively small circulations (6 thousand and 16 thousand, respectively, in 1914). In fact, it was a lack of commercial success that predetermined *Kiev's* closure in December 1916. The so-called "progressive" (i.e., reformist, critical of the Russian imperial government) independent media were more influential. With a circulation of 80 thousand, the liberal *Kievskaja mysl'* was regarded as *Kievlianin's* prime competitor and was prosperous enough to endure regular censorial fines. *Poslednie novosti*, *Iuzhnaia kopeika* (circulations 55 thousand and 60 thousand, respectively) and *Vecherniaia gazeta* (*Evening Gazette*, circulation 9 thousand) occupied the niche of affordable media (Basenko, "Kharakterystyka shchodennoi," 15-20). Due to their tabloid origin they emulated the popular "progressive" style only outwardly, refraining from heated political debates (Brooks 130). Nevertheless, tsarist censors considered them to be dubious, as they were perceived to broadcast "pseudoliberal" ideas to "those classes of the society, unable to perceive the information critically" (Basenko, "Kharakterystyka shchodennoi," 18). On the whole, the Russian language dailies occupied around two thirds of the Kyiv media market. The other daily press in Kyiv included the Polish *Dziennik Kijowski* (*The Kyiv Daily*, circulation 9-14 thousand) and the Ukrainian *Rada* (*Council*, circulation 4 thousand), the latter being suppressed in 1914 (Basenko, "Kharakterystyka shchodennoi," 15-20). From 1914 to 1917 the Kyiv press was a part of the all-Russian informational space with its topics of patriotism and war propaganda and its search for internal enemies (Stockdale 38-52, 166-213; McReynolds 253-81). However, throughout the revolutionary 1917 this media bond gradually decayed as the re-established Ukrainian language press raised the question of national self-determination. Following the foundation of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic in November 1917, Kyiv's Ukrainian *Nova rada* (*New Council*, circulation 15 thousand) quality newspaper, the Social Democratic *Robitnycha hazeta* (*Workers' Gazette*, circulation 9.4 thousand), and the Social Revolutionary *Borot'ba* (*Struggle*) and *Narodnia volia* (*People's Will*, circulation 12.5 thousand)⁵ party newspapers became the new mouthpiece of the state. At the same time, local Russian language press critical of the idea of Ukrainian autonomy /

⁵ According to The List of prints in Ukrainian, issued in Kyiv and registered at Kyiv's commissariat until 4 December 1917. F. 292, Op. 1, Sprava 62, no. 34. The State archives in the City of Kyiv (DAK), Kyiv. 8 February 2013.

independence found themselves to be numerous yet politically marginal (Mukomela 48-64).

Situated in the World War I frontline zone, Kyiv press functioned under the supervision of civil and military censorships. Both were designed to prevent antigovernment moods (Kyriienko, "Viis'kova tsenzura," 191). In particular, the 1914 martial law allowed military authorities to suppress Ukrainian language publishers under the pretext that they were disloyal. In March 1915 this was followed by a general prohibition of the Ukrainian language in print (Kyriienko, "Ukrains'ke pytannia," 167-68). However, with the 1917 fall of the monarchy, the Russian Provisional Government abolished the civil censorship (Kyriienko, "Rosii's'ka viis'kova tsenzura," 34). The freedom of print enabled a highly pluralist information space, inducing non-Russian national and various leftist newspapers to emerge (Mukomela 48). Following the Bolshevik October Uprising this policy of non-interference was maintained by the Provisional Government's regional legal successor, the Ukrainian Central Rada. With the exception of *Kievlianin's* short-term suspension, the Ukrainian authorities had generally tolerated their political opponents until the outbreak of Soviet Russia's military intervention in December 1917 ("Zakryttia 'Khulihanina,'" 2; Rudyi 69). In contrast, the Bolsheviks were notorious for the suppression of critical media during their brief occupation of Kyiv in February 1918. In particular, having crushed *Kievaskaia Mysl'* and *Kievlianin*, they turned the remainders into impartial bulletins (Mukomela 97-105). The freedom of speech was restored with the city's liberation in March 1918, but the publication of certain Russian newspapers was then occasionally disrupted by the Ukrainian Council of Ministers. Driven by the necessity of a government print establishment, the Council requisitioned the printing equipment of *Kievlianin*, *Iuzhnaia kopeika*, and partially of *Kievaskaia mysl'* ("Rekvizytsiia drukaren'," 1). However, this decision affected only *Iuzhnaia kopeika*, for *Kievlianin* had already announced its voluntary dissolution and *Kievaskaia mysl'* was allowed to retain the facilities (Shul'gin, "Kiev, 24 fevralia," 1). The censorship was revived in April 1918 under the reign of Hetman Pavlo Skoropads'kyi, yet it proved to be haphazard and ineffective. Primarily, the Hetman authorities persecuted the pro-socialist press of the Ukrainian opposition, while overtly tolerating anti-Ukrainian state utterances of the pro-regime Russian media (Pyrih, *Het'manat Pavla Skoropads'koho* 164-65). To conclude with the factor of censorship, for the researched period the Russian press of Kyiv enjoyed a sufficient freedom in discussions of the Ukrainian theme.

There is considerable literature on the Ukrainian question of national self-determination during World War I. Some studies focus on the Ukrainian policy of Imperial Germany (Golczewski; Fedyshyn; Remer; Borowsky; Kamenetsky) while others compare it with the Austro-

Hungarian Ukrainian policy (Kuraiev; Lieb and Dornik) or examine the perspectives of tsarist Russia (Mikhutina) and the Ukrainian movement itself (von Hagen; Holovchenko and Soldatenko; Pyrih, *Het'manat Pavla Skoropads'koho*; Reient et al.; Hausmann). These academic works reveal not only the Ukrainian dimension of the Great Powers' struggle but also a profound record of interactions between national activists and global actors. However, media coverage of the Ukrainian question of national self-determination is an undertone in most of the surveys. Several articles are of particular interest for the research presented here: Riccardo Bavaj's on the notion of Ukraine in German political journalism, Marian Luschnat's on the 1918 Ukrainian media perception of the Germans,⁶ Aleksandr Tsvirkun's and Iuliia Polovynchak's works on the anti-Ukrainian attitude of metropolitan Petrograd and Moscow magazines and the newspaper *Kievlianin*. The present study enhances both Tsvirkun's and Polovynchak's investigations in that it focuses on the provincial press and presents a detailed picture of the Russian language Kyiv media. As Alexei Miller argues, the role of regional Russian nationalism is still understudied, yet it throws light on the Ukrainian question of national self-determination in Southwestern Krai ("The Role," 73). Miller's analysis is, however, centred on the local rightist movement and only briefly mentions the liberal alternative.⁷ By introducing the original sources of the Kyiv Russian language press, the present study expands the inquiry onto the whole spectrum of Krai's Russian political thought. It maintains that despite ideological differences, both Russian nationalists and liberals shared a sense of patriotism. Although they debated ethnic and political options, they perceived Ukrainians to be members of the projected all-Russian nation. Therefore, the anti-Ukrainian campaign should be seen as the Russian patriotic denial of Ukrainian political substantiality. During World War I, the Russian press of Kyiv extensively utilized the image of a German enemy in an effort to discredit a separate Ukrainian identity. This sentiment outlived the monarchy and was aggravated by the foundation of an independent Ukrainian state.

ORIGINS OF THE ANTI-UKRAINIAN PRESS CAMPAIGN

The anti-Ukrainian press campaign of the alleged "Austrian-German intrigue" was launched by a group of Russian rightist newspapers in the early 1910s. It is considered to be a consequence of the general

⁶ See also Basenko, "The Perception of Germany in the Kyivan Press."

⁷ See his *The Romanov Empire* and "The Role."

deterioration in relations between Russian and Central European empires after the Bosnian crisis of 1908-09 (Kuraiev 20). Confronting the Balkan expansion of its rival Austria-Hungary, the Russian Empire returned to the support of anti-Habsburg Pan-Slavism. Among other issues, Russia was concerned about the Ukrainian question of national self-determination in the Austria-Hungarian borderland province of Galicia. Russian nationalists perceived the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) population of Galicia as an integral part of the all-Russian nation, and therefore implicitly demanded its reunification. To achieve this goal, St. Petersburg launched a secret funding of the regional Russophile movement⁸ through a network of charitable Galicia-Russian society (Kuraiev 21-23). In response, Vienna promoted a state-loyal Ukrainian movement. In contrast to the tsarist Russification policy in Southwestern Krai, Austria-Hungary offered its Ukrainian subjects in Galicia the means of national and cultural development. Moreover, it tolerated immigration of national activists who were persecuted and who fled the Russian Empire. This policy spurred further anxiousness: the Russian authorities realized that Ukrainian self-determination in foreign Galicia would eventually spread to the Empire’s own “Little Russian” provinces. Avoiding any formal charges toward the neighbouring state, Russian officials tacitly sanctioned anti-Ukrainian press campaign (Kuraiev 21-29).

In the beginning of 1914,⁹ the anti-Ukrainian sentiment continued to be an urgent issue for the Russian rightist media. Newspapers designated the Ukrainian activists as “*mazepintsy*,”¹⁰ implying that the movement was separatist and treacherous (“*Mazepinskaia opasnost*,” 1). *Kievlianin* emphasized that the entire Ukrainian nationality was artificial, designed by Austria-Hungary to shift its “Russian” subjects’ identity (“*Kiev, 19 fevralia*,” 2). Moreover, *Kiev* condemned the Habsburg monarchy for spreading malicious Ukrainian ideas into Russian territories (Ratmir 3). *Kiev* asserted that the Austrians sought to “dismember Russia, to drive a wedge between, let us say, the core—the Russian people” (A. B. C. 1-2). Apart from the main version of the Austrian intrigue, the Ukrainian movement was presented as an independent internal phenomenon (“*Kiev, 12 fevralia 1914 g.*,” 2), a

⁸ On Galician Russophile and Ukrainophile identities, see Himka and Wendland.

⁹ The paper employs the modern Gregorian calendar. However, dating of the articles that had been published prior to the calendrical reform of March 1918 is presented in accordance with the original Julian calendar.

¹⁰ “*Mazepynstvo*” is a disparaging cliché, historically used by the Russian nationalists to define the Ukrainian national movement. The term is derived from the surname of the Cossack Hetman Ivan Mazepa (1639-1709) who had opposed his Russian patron tsar Peter the Great and took the Swedish side in the Great Northern War, 1700-21 (“*Mazepynstvo*”).

Polish (“Ukrainstvo pod pol'skoi,” 1), or a German intrigue (“Ukrainskii ‘iaz’yk,” 2). Unlike Russian rightists, progressive newspapers substantially ignored the anti-Ukrainian campaign. Furthermore, *Kievskaiia mysl'* sided with the Ukrainians by printing an article by Serhii Iefremov—an important figure of the national movement, a co-founder and one of the leaders of the “Society of Ukrainian progressionists.” Iefremov maintained that the “Russian chauvinists” were making scornful, idle attempts to stall the development of Ukrainian identity (Nemo 2).

Russian nationalists' *Kiev* was the most ardent denouncer of the Ukrainian “German intrigue.” Due to its neoslavistic affiliations, the paper searched for possible Ukrainian-German connections and presented them as signs of Slavic betrayal (“Za granitsej,” 4). Along with Austria-Hungary, the newspaper portrayed Germany as “our potential enemy in the forthcoming fatal fight” (Maloross, “Rastushchaia naglost',” 2). According to *Kiev*, the Germans were secretly subsidizing Ukrainian “*mazepynstvo*” in order to create an internal revolt¹¹ and enfeeble Russia (Maloross, “Rastushchaia naglost',” 2). The newspaper deduced the threat of “Independent Ukraine” out of a hypothetical Russian revolution. It maintained that in the event of political instability, Ukrainians and Jews would try to separate from Russia “all the lands of the Little Russian population” (Poltavets 1-2). If created, this nonviable “Independent Ukraine” would be quickly invaded by “German regiments.” Describing the unattractive scenario of brutal German rule, *Kiev* summoned “the Little Russians” to remain loyal to the Empire.¹² As yet limited to the Russian nationalists, this type of Ukrainian defamation would become widespread in the subsequent war-time press campaign.

IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I ON THE UKRAINIAN QUESTION

With the outbreak of World War I, the media diverted its attention to the grand European military clash. Similar to other belligerent countries, the Russian Empire explained the war in the terms of a civilizational conflict. Russian propaganda depicted a struggle of Slavic nations against German

¹¹ The German government had envisioned such an opportunity but refrained from such implementation. Yet, it maintained secret contacts with the Ukrainian National Democratic Party of Austria-Hungary through the informal organization of *Deutscher Ostmarkenverein* (Kuraiev 16-32).

¹² Poltavets concluded: “Together with the Great Russians, they [the Little Russians] have been building the Great Russian Home, with its fantastic, immense treasures . . . and they will not leave their magnificent, as wide as half of the world home to end up in the ‘Ukrainian’ hut being the German and the Jewish slaves” (1-2).

oppression and claimed that Russia's historical mission was to liberate all of the Slavic nations from the German yoke and unite them under the protection of the Tsar. In particular, the Ukrainian population of Austria-Hungary was to be reunited with "Mother Russia" (Astashov, Ch. 1). This neoslavic rhetoric was adopted by *Kiev* (Volynets 1) and *Kievlianin* (G. S. 1), and partially by *Poslednie novosti* ("Nemtsy i slaviane," 2). At the same time *Kievskaiia mysl'* and *Iuzhnaia kopeika* supported the war on the grounds of "defensive" civic patriotism ("Germaniia ob"iavila," 1; "Nakanune otechestvennoi," 1).

During the first months of World War I, the Russian Empire experienced a patriotic enthusiasm similar to the German *Burgfrieden* or French *L'union sacrée*. Extolling a supranational unity against a common enemy, the press was highly reluctant to uncover any of the internal national conflicts (Porshneva 186-88). As a result, in August 1914 *Kiev* only nominally mentioned the Ukrainian enemy within while *Kievlianin* ridiculed the Ukrainian declaration of loyalty (Skrynchenko, "Galitsiia ne zabudet," 1; *Kievskii* 5).¹³ Nevertheless, the media reverted to the Ukrainian question of national self-determination in early 1915, following a gradual decline in citizens' war enthusiasm. In the absence of positive military reports, the press abandoned Russia's swift victory rhetoric and resorted to the "internal enemy" topic. It appeared convenient for both authorities and press to place the blame for military and socio-economic misfortunes on the enemy within. Speculating on Russian nationalism, the right-wing newspapers attacked the Russian Empire's alien ethnic groups, mostly the Russian Germans and the Jews (Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire* 21-30; Fuller 172-83). In this context, Ukrainian separatism embodied a regional dimension of the internal threat. Yet, it differed from the enemy-alien discourse in that the "Little Russian" population was regarded as indigenous and loyal. In fact, the anti-Ukrainian press campaign was primarily directed against a minor group of nationally conscious activists and did not target the vast majority of the apolitical Ukrainian peasantry (Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire* 154; Miller, "The Role of the First World War," 74, 79-84).

The "Great Retreat" in the summer of 1915 boosted interest toward the Ukrainian issue even further. By the end of the year, the Russian Empire had lost all of the previously conquered Austria-Hungarian lands and a large portion of its own western territories: Polish lands and part of Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian ethnic lands. By promoting local

¹³ Although welcoming the declaration, *Kievlianin* remarked: "But we sincerely regret that some of the 'Ukrainian people' . . . decided to remain a part of a separate nation . . . and not the kindred part of the Great Russian kin" ("Zaiavlenie 'ukraintsev,'" 1).

national movements, Austrian-German occupational authorities sought to detach the non-Russian borderlands from Petrograd's sphere of influence and to integrate them into Berlin's projected *Mitteleuropa*. This caused grave anxiety in Russian political circles (Miller, "The Role of the First World War," 79-84). In particular, Russian prejudice against the Ukrainian pro-German orientation was based on collaboration with the Central Powers. Above all the press emphasized the hostility of the Galician Ukrainians, who had been actively engaged in the war on the side of the Habsburg dynasty.¹⁴ No less disturbing was the treason of the Russian Empire's own political fugitives, who had formed abroad the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine and who pursued the goal of overthrowing Russian rule.¹⁵ These damning facts led to a strong anti-Ukrainian sentiment not only in *Kiev* and *Kievlianin*, but also in the previously tolerant *Kievskaia mysl'*. At the same time, *Poslednie novosti* and *Iuzhnaia kopeika* tabloids refrained from the discussion, arguably due to their traditional anti-rightist sentiment. A single article "Chernomorskaia Germaniia" ("Black Sea Germany") published in early 1916, supports this assumption (K.). Portraying the "indigenous Ukrainian population of the Southern Russia" as consistently anti-German and loyal to Russia, *Iuzhnaia kopeika* concluded that the only real turncoats were the former Germanophiles among the Russian rightists. Another wartime alteration concerned a general shift of the Ukrainian "Austrian intrigue" to the idea of its German origin. The shift could be explained by the objective process of Austria-Hungarian submission to German military decision making and the subjective Russian perception of Germany as the new principal enemy (Seniavskaia). The shift was also encouraged by the fact that by 1915 Germany had assumed a leading role in the support of Ukrainian émigré organizations (von Hagen 56-60).

As usual, *Kiev* and *Kievlianin* generated the most accusations of Ukrainian treachery. *Kiev* referred to the unpatriotic mood of the Empire's Ukrainian newspapers by noting that none of them was rejoicing about Russian army victories, yet all were sympathetic to the "Austrian Ukrainian" external enemy (Skrynchenko, "Zametanie sledov," 2). *Kiev* and *Kievlianin* disapproved of the "criminal idea" of Ukrainian independence. They reiterated the cliché of Ukraine as an "enemy intrigue" (N. A. 3; D. B. 1). Correspondingly, "the Ukrainians" was often put in quotes to indicate its

¹⁴ On August 1, 1914, the Ukrainian political parties in Galicia jointly declared their loyalty to the Habsburg Empire and established an objective of Russian Ukraine liberation. They organized a Ukrainian volunteer unit—the Legion of Sich Riflemen—who fought as part of the Austria-Hungarian army (Holovchenko and Soldatenko 53-54).

¹⁵ For further reading, see Pater.

figurative meaning: an artificial, marginal group of "enemies of the Russian state" which appeared to be unrepresentative of the predominantly loyal "Little Russians" (Figaro 1). With Austrian Galicia still under Russian control in February 1915, *Kievlianin* propagated the common "all-Russian identity" among "the Little Russians" in Galicia just as it did in Southwestern Krai (Savenko 2).

Russian denigration of the Ukrainian movement was often based on its alleged corruptibility: Ukrainian activists were portrayed as "German gold-seekers" (Pochaev 2). *Kiev* perceived Ukrainians as "lost sheep" of the Slavic community, who had fallen under the evil German influence and raised their hand against the "brothers" (Chestmir, "Vospitanie," 2). The newspaper had construed a conspiracy theory, claiming that Ukrainian organizations in Russia were "either deliberately or unconsciously" implementing Kaiser Wilhelm II's plan. According to *Kiev*, the German emperor had planned to build a "German throne" in "Independent Ukraine" for one of his sons in several decades' time (Chestmir, "Ukraina," 1-2). Less elaborate in agitation, *Kievlianin* warned the Ukrainian partisans that "the ideas of Mr. Hrushevs'kyi¹⁶ would not lead them to a freedom but would turn them into the manure of the German culture" (Kulakovskii 1). On rare occasions, the Russian press was quite ingenious in its anti-Ukrainian rhetoric. For example, *Kiev* counteracted the Ukrainian "German orientation" with the help of Ukrainian national symbols. Namely, *Kiev* selected authentic anti-German and Slavophile quotations of the nationwide respected Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, thus arguing to preserve the Little Russian identity (Enni 2). Besides the conventional idea of the "German intrigue," the press considered Ukrainian separatism to be a solely internal phenomenon ("Rabota 'ukraintsev,'" 2; Skrynchenko, "'Ukrainskii' muzei," 3). *Kiev* was the only newspaper to proceed with the Ukrainian separatist issue in 1916, when most of the media attention shifted to the country's socio-economic breakdown (Skrynchenko, "Episkop Nikon," 2; Maloross, "Temnaia sila," 1-2; Poltavets-selianin 1-2).

Contrary to *Kiev*, *Kievlianin* and *Kievskaiia mysl'* refused to exaggerate the Ukrainian menace. *Kievlianin* ridiculed the foreign Ukrainian propaganda as ineffective and completely alien to the political creed of "the Little Russians" (Efem, "Boltovnia," 2). Similarly, *Kievskaiia mysl'* presented the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine as a group of "swindlers" who received solid German subsidies for a deceitful promise of a national

¹⁶ Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi (1866-1934) was a Ukrainian historian, politician, statesman, a leader of the Ukrainian movement, and the author of the 10-volume *History of Ukraine-Rus'*. In his scientific work, Hrushevs'kyi contradicted the official Russian version of history and asserted the distinct national and cultural identity of the Ukrainian people. See Plokhyy.

uprising in “the Russian Ukraine” (Enzis, “Nemetskie ‘ukrainofily,’” 2). However, despite this unanimity, *Kievlianin* and *Kievskaiia mysl'* newspapers foresaw the future of the Ukrainian movement differently. *Kievlianin* predicted its forthcoming failure, as the paucity of Ukrainian intelligentsia in the Ukrainian culture would make it unable to compete with the dominant state-supported Russian culture (Shul'gin, “Neblagodarnoe delo,” 1-2). In contrast, *Kievskaiia mysl'* asserted that “Ukrainophilia” would continue to exist as a “weapon in the hands of the German foreign policy.” In order to annihilate this “weapon,” the newspaper urged the Russian “reactionary” regime to implement fundamental liberal reforms and, in the long run, to construct a stable civil society (Enzis, “Avstro-germanskie ukrainofily,” 1).

In summary, such war-triggered patriotism led the politically divergent Russian press to the common conclusion that the Ukrainian national movement was dangerous to the integrity of the state. Deducing that the Ukrainian national movement arose from foreign Ukrainians' co-operation with the Central Powers, the press combined the notion of Ukrainian identity with the image of the Germans as the principal enemy. As a result, the initial Russian nationalist campaign against the alleged “German intrigue” gained universal popularity in the media.

THE UKRAINIAN QUESTION DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY YEAR OF 1917

Political instability in the 1917 revolutionary period compelled the majority of Kyiv's Russian press to rally for the preservation of “A One and Indivisible Russia.” Apart from the ongoing war, the Russian patriots experienced numerous identity challenges on the country's polyethnic frontiers, including Russian Poland, the Grand Duchy of Finland, and the Ukrainian Southwestern Krai. Specifically for Ukraine, the February Revolution in 1917 enabled the foundation of a legal political movement. First, on March 17, 1917, the all-Ukrainian Council or the Central Rada was established in Kyiv. With the decision of the all-Ukrainian National Congress on April 21, 1917, it acquired the status of revolutionary parliament. Finally, on June 23, 1917, the Central Rada proclaimed the creation of a Ukrainian national-personal autonomy, thus confronting the authority of the Russian Provisional Government in Petrograd and spurring Russian public opinion all over the country (Verstiuk 87-160).

By the start of the February Revolution in 1917, both *Kievlianin* and *Kievskaiia mysl'* already shared a negative attitude toward the Ukrainian movement. However, the sudden popularity of the idea of Ukrainian autonomy compelled them to acknowledge the new political reality and remove the usual contemptuous quotation marks around the nation's

name. Supporting the Provisional Government, the majority of Kyiv's Russian press advocated a postponement of the Ukrainian question of national self-determination until an authorized decision from the projected All-Russian Constituent Assembly. Before that, *Kievskaiia mysl'* cautioned the Ukrainians "not to play into the hands of the Germans" and to preserve the society's internal unity (Brynskii 2). A similar standpoint was repeated by *Iuzhnaia kopeika*, although it recognized the "just demands of the Ukrainians" (Ulianitskii 2). The only newspaper to welcome the revival of "the fragrant Ukraine" was *Poslednie novosti*. Yet, this Ukraine was perceived to be a part of a new democratic Russia—an element in the all-Russian liberation from the monarchical "old world" (Breitman 1). On the contrary, *Kievlianin* remained the most negative, accusing Ukrainian politicians of treason: "Those who want to embroil Great Russia with Little Russia are with the Germans" (Shul'gin, "Kiev, 8 i iunia," 1). In an attempt to discredit the Ukrainian movement, the newspaper resorted to a conventional notion of the "German intrigue," which reminded the audience of identical political goals, pursued by the Ukrainian Central Rada in Kyiv and the enemy-funded Union for the Liberation of Ukraine in Berlin (K. B. 2). Comparing the enemy propaganda of Ukraine in the German controlled POW camps with the Ukrainian agitation "here, in our Little Russia," *Kievlianin* commented resentfully: "You never know where the German ends and the Ukrainian begins" (S-ko 1). The paper suggested a latent but stable anti-Russian sentiment in an average Ukrainian in Southwestern Krai (K., "Vstrechi i razgovory," 2). The overt Ukrainian-Russian confrontation on the issue of Ukrainian autonomy ended on July 16, 1917. Unable to suppress the Ukrainian movement, the Russian Provisional Government was forced to officially recognize Ukrainian self-administration in return for the Central Rada's subordination to Petrograd. *Kievlianin* disapproved of this Provisional Government's "walk to Canossa," claiming that it was a victory of the "German fabricated" Ukrainian project ("Kiev, 1 i iulia," 1).

Political perturbations in the autumn of 1917 only deepened the initial Russian hostility. On November 7, 1917, the Russian Provisional Government was overthrown in the course of the October Uprising. The new Bolshevik order was deemed illegitimate by the majority of Russian leftist, liberal, and right-wing parties. The Ukrainian Central Rada also refused to recognize the Bolsheviks' authority. On November 20, 1917, it declared the foundation of the Ukrainian People's Republic (*Ukrains'ka Narodna Respublika*, UNR) as a self-governed entity, adherent to a bond with the future all-Russian democratic state. Despite such a reassuring provision, the majority of Russian press became alarmed at Central Rada's ongoing state activity, interpreting it as a commencement of Russia's disintegration. On the one hand, the media were unanimous in negation of

the Bolsheviks; on the other hand, no Russian newspaper could accept the idea of an independent Ukraine. After December 3, 1917 the frustration of the Kyiv Russian language press only worsened as the Bolsheviks launched separate peace negotiations with the Central Powers. In order to ensure Ukraine's national interests, an independent Ukrainian delegation was sent to the German-controlled Brest-Litovsk (now Brest, Belarus) on January 1, 1918. The press denounced both acts as treachery toward Russia and its Entente allies. The situation was further aggravated by the Russian Bolsheviks' decision to launch a war against the UNR on December 18, 1917 (Verstiuk 198-238).

Throughout the fall of 1917, the prominent Russian newspapers *Kievlianin* and *Kievskaja mysl'* demonstrated increasing hostility toward the allegedly "German" Ukrainian political aspirations (L-skii 1; "Preslovutyi 'Soiuz,'" 1). *Kievlianin's* chief editor Vasilii Shul'gin was indignant about the proclamation of the UNR and stigmatized the Rada's deputies, calling them "diligent German clerks." They, it was stated, had annexed the nine Russian provinces in favour of "Ukraine" in accordance with the German-forged principle of self-determination (Shul'gin, "Oselok," 1). Shul'gin dreaded this "devilish" German dismemberment of Russia and predicted German domination of the Slavs ("Oselok II," 1). *Kievskaja mysl'* expressed identical considerations, interpreting the German seizure of the Russian Empire's borderland provinces as an intention to "push Russia into Asia" (Rozanov 1). Vladimir Rozanov believed that the loss of the Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish, Ukrainian, and Finnish lands would deprive Russia of its European culture and political influence in the region (1). Specifically, *Kievskaja mysl'* presented the Ukrainian republic as one of the disgraceful pro-German "buffer states" organized to weaken the Russian state ("Gore pobezhdenym!" 1).

In December 1917, the Russian press attempted to persuade the Ukrainian authorities and the public to not sign a separate peace with the enemy. As the majority of the Ukrainian politicians had professed socialist ideology, *Kievskaja mysl'* employed leftist patterns of agitation. Namely, it urged to fight for "world democracy" and against the "German imperialists" (Narodin 1). In contrast, *Kievlianin* appealed to the all-Russian patriotism, denouncing the Ukrainians for their desire "to build a free Ukraine . . . only on the ruins of Russia" (Shul'gin, "Tak bylo," 1-2). Shul'gin argued that if signed, the treaty with the Central Powers would lead Ukraine to political subordination and economic exploitation ("Rech', skazannaia," 1). Additionally, *Kievlianin's* editor-in-chief threatened the Ukrainians with the irrevocable vengeance of the victorious Entente (Shul'gin, "Lebedinaia pesn'," 1). Finally, he encouraged Ukraine to become "the Second Righteous" of Russia in order to save its "Sodom and Gomorrah" together

with the "Lot"—the leader of the Russian White movement, General Kaledin ("Rech', skazannaia," 1).

In the light of the 1917 Revolution, the Russian media image of the Ukrainian "German intrigue" had only strengthened. Whether a firm conviction or a political manipulation, it became the Russian press's basic argument against Ukrainian national autonomy / independence and for the preservation of a single Russian state.

THE 1918 PEACE TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK AND ITS IMPACT ON THE UKRAINIAN QUESTION

With the beginning of the Soviet-Ukrainian war, the Russian press in Kyiv stigmatized the Bolsheviks' aggression. *Kievskaiia mysl'* exposed the cynicism of the Bolsheviks, who signed a truce with the "German enemy" at the front only to begin the "fratricidal war" at home ("Peremirie zakliucheno," 1). *Kievlianin* developed a conspiracy theory, claiming that the Germans had intentionally pushed their "Bolshevik puppets" against Ukraine. Allegedly, their goal was to provoke a "clash between the Great and Little Russia" in order to strengthen the anti-Russian sentiment of the Ukrainians and divide the all-Russian unity (Shul'gin, "Tak bylo," 1-2). The aversion toward the Bolsheviks had even spurred *Poslednie novosti* to tactically recognize the independence of the UNR in January 1918. Nevertheless, this was conditioned by the liberal version of the same all-Russian idea. *Poslednie novosti* perceived Ukraine as the last healthy part of democratic Russia by claiming: "through the [Ukrainian] independence—towards the federation of the free nations of Russia" ("Kiev, 12 ianvaria," 1).

Initially, the Russian Bolshevik military invasion was extremely successful: by February 8, 1918 their troops had captured a significant portion of the UNR and seized the capital. Despite this, on February 9, 1918, the Ukrainian peace delegation at Brest-Litovsk managed to conclude an advantageous peace treaty with the Quadruple Alliance. The Central Powers recognized the sovereignty of the Ukrainian state and provided crucial military assistance in the war against Soviet Russia. On March 1, 1918, the allied Ukrainian-German troops recaptured Kyiv, accomplishing the expulsion of the Bolsheviks from the territory of the UNR by the end of April 1918. Although Germany pursued its political and economic goals in Ukraine, at the beginning of 1918 it acted as an allied force.¹⁷

¹⁷ By signing a peace treaty with Ukraine, the Central Powers intended to acquire a significant Ukrainian provision surplus and thus overcome their own raw material shortages. However, Germany also pursued the political objective of the friendly

Following the period of Bolshevik oppression, the majority of Kyiv's Russian language newspapers were reopened with the restoration of Ukrainian authority in March 1918. Yet, the new political reality compelled the newspapers to adopt a neutral stance. Ironically, they avoided any mention of the Ukrainian "German intrigue" for the duration of the German stay in Ukraine. Shortly after its reopening, *Kievlianin* announced its voluntary dissolution. Loyal to the Entente, Shul'gin refused to recognize the German occupation authority ("Kiev, 24 fevralia," 1). However, in April 1918 members of *Kievlianin's* editorial staff organized another rightist newspaper, *Golos Kieva* (*Voice of Kyiv*). While preserving the former *Kievlianin's* great-power nationalistic stand, they acknowledged the new "German rule." *Golos Kieva* presented *Deutsches Heer* as "the only real force" in the region and was concerned about the triumph of the "German oriented Ukrainian leaders" (Alekseev 1; Zaluzhnyi 2). Nevertheless, the German military command's interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine¹⁸ brought the press to a conclusion that the Ukrainian Central Rada was on the brink of collapse ("Operatsii germantsev," 1; "Iz gazet. 'Nova rada,'" 1).

Incompetent in solving the country's pressing socio-economic issues, the Ukrainian socialist government lost its original support among the public and was overthrown by the conservatives (Verstiuk 244-50). On April 29, 1918, a congress of the Ukrainian Democratic Grain-Growers' Party proclaimed the Ukrainian aristocrat, Skoropads'kyi, descendant of a famous Cossack kin as a Hetman of Ukraine. The German Army Group participated in the coup by disarming the Ukrainian military units that remained loyal to the Rada. Although Germany had officially recognized the Hetmanate, its extensive military control led to the de facto occupation. Internally Hetman Skoropads'kyi relied on the predominantly Russian financial and industrial circles, the former imperial aristocracy, and the tsarist era bureaucracy. These minor but influential groups were hostile to Ukrainian statehood and supported the Hetman's regime only to ensure the projected restoration of Great Russia. Nonetheless, the Hetman's authority retained the formal Ukrainian character, thus creating political tension between the pro-Russian elements in the administration and the Ukrainian opposition.¹⁹

Ukrainian "buffer state" creation. It was projected as a part of the German Mitteleuropa strategy (Fedyshyn 60-86).

¹⁸ The Ukrainian socialist government failed to implement the treaty arrangements concerning food supplies. Its ineffectiveness induced the Germans to interfere: on March 18, 1918, the German command of Army Group Kyiv by-passed the Ukrainian Government's authority and announced a compulsory sowing campaign (Pyrih, "Nimets'ko-avstriis'ka okupatsiia Ukrainy," 14-30).

¹⁹ See Pyrih, *Ukrains'ka het'mans'ka derzhava 1918 roku*.

Throughout the period of the Hetman’s reign, the Russian liberal *Kievskaiia mysl’* and *Poslednie novosti* transmitted the information rather impartially. For example, *Kievskaiia mysl’* published an ostensibly German-friendly speech made by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Ukrainian State, Fedir Lyzohub. The latter proclaimed: “with the support of Germany we hope to create a national state of the Western European type, in a close co-operation with the Germans—our nearest neighbours, with the German culture, to which we owe so much . . .” (“Rech’ Lizoguba”). At the same time the press disseminated communiqués of the German Army Group’s command that officially denied its involvement in the coup d’état (“Iz germanskikh offitsial’nykh,” 2; “Reikhstag,” 1). Last, the Russian press covered the standpoint of the Ukrainian socialist opposition. Disappointed with the former allies, the members of the dissolved Ukrainian Central Rada accused “the German imperialists” of interference in the internal affairs of the country and of support for the Hetman’s “reactionary” regime (“Ukrainskie sotsialisty,” 2; “Rezoliutsiia ob otnoshenii,” 2). It is noteworthy that in the course of this discussion the Russian press of Kyiv unintentionally familiarized the audience with the new political notions of the “Ukrainian State” and “the Ukrainian authority.” Nevertheless, the press remained committed to the concept of “Great Russia.” Occasionally, *Kievskaiia mysl’* summoned “the Russian people” to endure the German occupation and thoroughly learn from the defeat. It envisioned the restoration of an even Greater Russia—the same way the Germans had once surpassed their oppressors from Napoleonic France (“Vystuplenie,” 3).

The Russian rightist *Golos Kieva* greeted the dissolution of the Central Rada with optimism, as a sign of termination of the “nonviable” Ukrainian statehood (Shlykov 1; Pavlov 1). The newspaper was of the opinion that the substitution of the Ukrainian socialist government with the German military command resulted in a more effective Russian “ancient regime” elite. Both *Golos Kieva* and *Kievskaiia Mysl’* anticipated a grand reorientation in the foreign policy of “monarchic Germany” toward the restoration of a “traditional friendship” with Russia (“Iz Moskvyy v Kiev,” 2; “Germanskaia orientatsiia,” 4). Partially, this proved to be true as the Hetman authorities tolerated chauvinistic, anti-Ukrainian publications of the Russian press. In particular, *Golos Kieva* criticized the reform that introduced the Ukrainian language in school education. The newspaper maintained that Ukraine was “the former Little Russia” and, therefore, an integral part of the Russian cultural space requiring the Russian language of instruction (Staryi Pedagog 3-4; Afanas’ev 3). Hostile to the Ukrainian identity, *Golos Kieva* denigrated its very essence as a foreign “Austrian German” product (Efem, “Disput,” 4).

The defeat of the Central Powers in November 1918 facilitated the Russian great-power claims in Ukraine. Deprived of German military protection, the Hetman's regime attempted to collaborate with the Entente and the Russian White Movement. On November 14, 1918, Hetman Skoropads'kyi proclaimed the entry of the Ukrainian State into a federation with non-Bolshevik Russia. The Ukrainian opposition interpreted this as an act of national treason and launched a successful uprising. As a result, on December 14, 1918, Skoropads'kyi abdicated in favour of a provisional revolutionary state committee—the Directorate of Ukraine (Pyrih, *Ukrains'ka het'mans'ka derzhava* 222-30, 253-58).

The news of the Entente's triumph marked a drastic turn in the German-friendly rhetoric of Kyiv's Russian press. Reverting to their former stance, the press spoke in the name of the Entente-loyal Russia. They extolled the Russian Empire's immense war effort and thus expected the Allied Powers to aid the country's restoration. Both *Kievskaiia mysl'* and *Golos Kieva* were indignant about the Ukrainian state and reviled at the departure of the German occupational regime. For *Kievskaiia mysl'* it was the end of the infamous "Brest period in the Russian history" ("Kiev, 23 noiabria," 1). With the fall of the "German imperialism" the paper predicted a quick decay of "German sponsored" Ukrainian independence ("Kiev, 23 noiabria," 1). It reiterated that "Independent Ukraine" had been part of the German project of Russia's "artificial" disintegration ("Po Germanii. Doktor," 1). Similarly, *Golos Kieva* returned to a denial of the Ukrainian nation's existence, claiming that "the Little Russians" were indisputably Russians, just as "the Württemberg Swabians" were Germans (S. L. 1). The newspaper derided the loss of the Ukrainian "German patronage" ("Ukrainskoe dvizhenie," 4; Efimovskii 1; Pilenko 2). Together with the rest of the German-created "ephemeral states"—Lithuania, Baltic, and Finland—it expected Ukraine to return "to the bosom of single Russia" (Pogodin 1; Levitskii 1). Taking advantage of the regime's collapse in December 1918, *Kievskaiia mysl'* branded Hetman Skoropads'kyi to be a "shiny toy" in the hands of the German generals ("Getmanshchina," 1). Retrospectively, it marked the Ukrainian State as an "operetta of German-Viennese authorship" and once again foreboded the revival of a "unified Russia" ("Getmanshchina," 1).

The Russian state for which these newspapers longed so much was never restored as imagined. In fact, none of the above-mentioned Kyiv Russian language press endured the politically turbulent 1919. As well as their Ukrainian counterparts, they had fallen victim to abrupt changes of power, confronting regimes and ideologies, common intolerance, and material hardships. In less than a year since the December 1918 withdrawal of the German military, the Kyiv city was recaptured five times by three opposing forces: the Ukrainian People's Republic, the Russian

White Movement, and the Bolsheviks. Although the Ukrainian question remained a burning issue, it was no longer associated with the “German intrigue.”

CONCLUSION

Covering a period of 1914-18, this article investigated the evolution of the Russian press’s attitude toward the Ukrainian national movement through a prism of its alleged “German intrigue.” Along with the latest works of Miller and Polovynchak, this is an attempt to amplify the scholarly literature concerning the Ukrainian question by establishing a local Russian perspective of the problem. Particularly, the research introduces original sources of Kyiv’s Russian language press and focuses on the administrative centre of the ethnically Ukrainian region—the Russian Empire’s borderland province of Southwestern Krai. The anti-Ukrainian press campaign of the “Austrian-German intrigue” began in the early 1910s because of the Russian Empire’s controversy with its Central European neighbours. It examined a long-standing Ukrainian question from a new perspective of international confrontation, thus presenting the Ukrainian movement as a malevolent, foreign-instigated instrument of Russian state disintegration. Initially, the press defined Austria-Hungary as a primary rival due to its internal pro-Ukrainian policy in the contested province of Galicia. However, with the start of World War I the main focus of the campaign had shifted to Austria-Hungary’s leading ally—the German Empire.

In the final analysis, the anti-Ukrainian campaign of the alleged “German intrigue” displayed the worldview of the Russian press. Denying the nation’s political substantiality and even the mere existence of a distinct Ukrainian identity, the Russian press sought to explain Ukrainian national aspirations via a conspiracy of external forces. It considered the ethnically Ukrainian territories of Southwestern Krai to be an integral part of the Russian Empire and promoted the concept of an all-Russian nation. Specifically, the Russian nationalists envisioned Ukraine as a Russified ethnic monolith while the great-power nationalists and liberals tended to integrate Ukrainian ethnicity into a projected all-Russian civic society. However, in the course of the 1914-18 perturbations, Kyiv’s Russian press experienced the emergence of a mass Ukrainian national movement and, eventually, the creation of a Ukrainian state. Correspondingly, the hostility toward Ukrainian self-determination evolved from the Russian nationalists’ marginal speculations in pre-war 1914 to a unanimous Russian negation of actual Ukrainian statehood by the end of 1918. In general, the then Russian attitude should be evaluated as a historic example of a controversy between Russian and Ukrainian national projects.

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