

## THE 19TH CENTURY IN UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF INFORMATION WARFARE

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**Key words:** information war, history of Ukraine, hybrid opponent, hybrid war, modern history, modern era, nineteenth century.

The article describes the historical images and narratives within Moscow's information warfare efforts relation to Ukraine's 19<sup>th</sup> century history, particularly in connection to Moscow's ten years hybrid warfare actions and its 2022 invasion. The purpose of the article is to analyze the elements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century history of Ukraine that are relevant to Moscow's information warfare against Ukrainian interests in various information spaces and «battlefronts», along with determining why exactly does the 19<sup>th</sup> century history matter to the Kremlin. It is concerned with determining the meaning of this informational support for Moscow's soldiers themselves, for their sympathizers across the globe, and for the population of the territories occupied by Moscow's forces, and for other observers of this war from different countries. The methodology, in connection with the review of diametrically different narratives in Moscow's propaganda, and different approaches to information warfare depending on the specific infospace and intended audience, is based mostly on the historical-comparative method. The results of the study indicate that the symbolism of Moscow's aggression was and remains inextricably linked with their historical imperial/colonial contacts with the territory of Ukraine in the 19th century, and thus constitute a form of imperialistic «phantom pains», yearning for a time when Ukraine both «did not exist», but simultaneously was very important for the core «Russian» identity. With the spread of occupation in the territories of Ukraine that went through decommunization, the aggressors have established new priorities: the «protection» of Tsarist and the return of Soviet symbols, despite the latter being downplayed in the Russian Federation itself, and the former being unaffected by decommunization. The article helps to reveal the complex psychological and informational aspect of the Moscow war, which includes the foundations of historical images and narratives to shape support and supposed legitimacy for aggression across various audiences. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the information strategies used in the context of war and underscores the importance of countermeasures and a need for understanding why the 19<sup>th</sup> century history of Ukraine is a particularly interesting «object» to the Kremlin's information warfare and politics of history in general.

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## XIX СТОРІЧЧЯ В УКРАЇНІ В КОНТЕКСТІ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНОГО ПРОТИСТОЯННЯ

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**Ключові слова:** інформаційна війна, історія України, гібридний супротивник, гібридна війна, нова історія, нова доба, дев'ятнадцяте сторіччя

Стаття описує історичні образи та наративи в рамках московських зусиль в контексті інформаційного протистояння щодо історії України XIX ст., зокрема у зв'язку з десятирічними діями Москви в гібридній війні та її повномасштабним вторгненням у 2022 р. Мета статті – проаналізувати

елементи історії України XIX ст., які мають відношення до інформаційної війни Москви проти українських інтересів у різних інформаційних просторах і на різних «інформаційних фронтах», а також визначити, чому саме історія XIX ст. має значення для Кремля. Стаття зосереджена на визначенні значення цієї інформаційної підтримки для самих московських вояків, для їхніх симпатиків по всьому світу та для населення окупованих московськими військами територій, а також для інших спостерігачів цієї війни з різних країн. Методологія, у зв'язку з оглядом діаметрально різних наративів московської пропаганди та різних підходів до ведення активних дій у межах інформаційного протистояння залежно від конкретного інфопростору та цільової аудиторії, базується здебільшого на історико-порівняльному методі. Результати дослідження свідчать про те, що символізм московської агресії був і залишається нерозривно пов'язаним з історичним імперським та колоніальним досвідом стосовно територій України в XIX ст., а отже, є формою імперіалістичних «phantomних болів», які тужать за часом. коли України і «не існувало», але водночас була дуже важливою для формування «російської» ідентичності. З поширенням окупації на територіях України, які раніше пройшли через декомунізацію, агресори встановили нові пріоритети: водночас «захист» спадщину царату та повернення радянської символіки, незважаючи на те, що остання применшується в самій Російській Федерації, а перша й не постраждала від декомунізації. Стаття допомагає розкрити складний психологічний та інформаційний аспект московської війни, який включає «базові» історичні образи і наративи для формування підтримки та легітимізації агресії в різних аудиторіях. Наголошується на важливості розумінні інформаційних стратегій, які використовуються в контексті війни, і підкреслюється важливість контрзаходів і потребу в розумінні того, чому історія України XIX ст. є особливо цікавим «об'єктом» для зусиль Кремля в інформаційним протистоянням та його історичної політики взагалі.

**Problem statement.** Conflicts surrounding «historical memory» and «information manipulation» during the last decades have become not only objects of research by Ukrainian researchers, but also part of the life of Ukrainians in general, in the course of Moscow's hybrid warfare efforts, alongside the current information warfare surrounding the conflict. The 21<sup>st</sup> century's technologies, globalization and informatization have qualitatively changed the way historical and political discourse takes place: now the discussion of the history of Ukraine can take place not only in the scope of a scholarly discussion of professional historians in the course of correspondence, forums, or reviews of publications, but also on Internet sites open to everyone. This opens up opportunities to influence such an exchange of opinions for interested parties, whose goal is to promote the formation of certain narratives. Although most of modern information warfare concerns either propaganda on the current (geo)political situation, or the ability to influence one of the key infrastructure elements (transport, banking, communications, and the electrical grid), information warfare on Ukraine's history remains just as important, if not the most important, for Moscow's

strategic goals. The Kremlin's interest in controlling the narratives on various topics from the history of Ukraine permeates its propaganda efforts on various levels: in official state policy; «on the ground» in schools, social events, and cityscape redecoration in Kremlin-controlled territories; on television; on the Internet; in the official statements from their supreme commander himself.

The history of Ukraine has been a «target» for propaganda in the course of Moscow's information warfare with Ukraine, because it contains cross-cutting narratives that are key to the existence (or «non-existence») of the Muscovite state in the imperial format: the genesis of Russia, «Ruthenianess», even «Russianness»; a living example of getting out of addiction; preserved historical memory of the crimes of imperial regimes. For the imperial legend of Moscow as «Russia», it is problematic for it to exist far from Kyiv, or to tolerate the existence of Ukraine as «not Russia», i.e. as an independent power that does not repeat the same sacred historical narratives and ideological memes (symbols and shibboleths) as Moscow. The way in which history and historical images are used to give a sacred meaning to modern military and political actions (which are inherently

aggressive, such as invading the territory of another country) is of interest.

This particular paper will be focused on how Ukraine exists (or «does not exist») in Moscow-affiliated actors' narratives on 19<sup>th</sup> century history, as seen on various platforms. Since there already are dedicated works on the study of history textbooks and propaganda in schools, these vectors of research will mostly be omitted to focus on Internet and other forms of mass media instead, concerning social networks, news media, and official rhetoric.

#### **Analysis of basic research and publications.**

Overall research on information warfare (under various names, such as information war, information confrontation, hybrid warfare, information expansion) intensified in Ukraine with the increase of aggressive rhetoric during the 2000–2010s and, ultimately, the illegal invasion by Moscow in 2014. In 2015 H. Sasyn reviewed the chronology of research (and the search for a specific definition) of the phenomenon in the local information and scholarly space for Ukrainian researchers as follows: the first open public research of the Canadian culturologist Herbert Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s, and reached the post-Soviet scholars by the 1990s, a 2003 monograph by the Moscow scholar S. Rastorguyev, then numerous works by Ukrainian authors, which became especially active with the beginning of Moscow's armed invasion of Ukraine in 2014. The study of this aspect of the warfare is logical for Ukrainian humanitarians, contrasting with Western studies of the 1990s–2000s, in which, while specifying the humanitarian factor, cyber security researchers dominated, which were given appropriate descriptions of the concept<sup>1</sup>. From this chronology, it becomes clear that the peculiarities of the definition of the concept as seen by Ukrainian authors, mostly historians and political scientists: R. Chyrva, Ye. Mahda, I. Kostyuk, D. Bogush, and O. Yudin, were extrapolated from the propagandistic aspect of «what is information» (and not the «mathematical» aspect of information-as-data). This clearly characterizes the Ukrainian interest in the topic as a certain form of «problem-solving», its acquisition of relevance together with the destruction of the peaceful status quo pre-2014, when the phenomenon of information influences with the aim of achieving a military goal began to be «noticed» more often<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Sasyn, H. V. Informatsiina viina: sutnist, zasoby realizatsii, rezul'taty ta mozhlyvosti protydii (na prykladi rosiiskoi ekspansii v ukrainskyi prostir). *HRANI*. 2015. № 3 (119). PP. 18–23. [in Ukrainian]

<sup>2</sup> Mieliekistsev, K. I. Definitsii informatsiinoho protystoiannia

The connection between the «technical» and «psychological» classifications of information warfare in recent years has become clearer, since an increasingly large part of that confrontation, even around issues of history, flows on the Internet, which Ukrainian researchers also note, taking into account the «mathematical dimension of information»<sup>3</sup>.

Another important aspect of researching information warfare relates to the specifics of sources used. Back in the 19th century A. Lappo-Danilevsky introduced the classification of sources according to the essence of the information that a historian can get from the source, dividing them into «narrative» (or «myth») sources, in which a fact is mentioned in the source (a description of a fact or event in such a way that the authors of the original source wanted to convey to us), and on the «remnant» of the fact, the evidence that the source contains regardless, or even in spite of the wishes of its original authors. «Mythical» information is what its authors deliberately wanted to tell us. In contrast, «residual» information is something that was created without the specific intent of conveying a message to an audience. At a basic level, this refers to the separation of the sources themselves (for example, a genera's published memoirs of the war are the «narrative» and archival accounts of his army's supply are the «remnant»), but this methodology is also relevant to source criticism: the «how» and «why» certain narratives can be a «remnant» of certain processes in themselves. Such a characterization of sources is extremely useful for working with manifestations of information warfare on history, where it is more important to investigate not only the «myth» (what message is spread by the propagandists), but also, more importantly, the «remnant» (why exactly do they spread it and what does this indicate about their side<sup>4</sup>.

Previously the 19th century history of Ukraine, as portrayed in information warfare efforts online, was partially touched in a work by K. Mieliekistsev, which detailed messaging on Georgian and Ukrainian history in relation to Russia on Twitter, with related

v ukrainskii istoriohrafii [Definitions of information warfare in Ukrainian historiography]. *Pivdennyi arkhiv (istorychni nauky)*. Vypusk 40. 2022. S. 14–19. DOI: 10.32999/ksu2786-5118/2022-40-2 [in Ukrainian]

<sup>3</sup> Shemchuk, V. V. Kontseptualni pidkhody do rozuminnia informatsiinoi viiny v suchasnomu sviti [Conceptual approaches to understanding information war in the current world]. *Vcheni zapysky Tavriiskoho natsionalnoho universytetu imeni V. I. Vernadskoho*. Seria : Yurydychni nauky. 2019. T. 30(69), № 3. S. 29–35. [in Ukrainian]

<sup>4</sup> Lappo-Danilevskij A. S. Metodologiya istorii [Methodology of History]: in 2 volumes. Moscow, 2010. Vol. 2. p. 64. [in Russian]

sources from LiveJournal and various news media<sup>5</sup>. Part of the importance of this period is that many of the ideas, narratives and ideals key to modern Moscow's information warfare and, indeed, policies on «Russianization» were products of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian Empire's political thought, and have been researched as such by Ukrainian authors<sup>6</sup>.

**The purpose of the article is** to analyze the elements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century history of Ukraine that are relevant to Moscow's information warfare against Ukrainian interests in various information spaces and «battlefronts», along with determining why exactly does the 19<sup>th</sup> century history matter to the Kremlin.

**Presentation of main material.** As mentioned in the problem statement, information warfare can concern both the physical word, with people experiencing live contact with propaganda efforts, and also the non-physical «infosphere», the consumption and spreading of information via mass media, most importantly the Internet. In this discussion of how 19<sup>th</sup> century history figures into information warfare against Ukraine, we will start with the «physical» part, particularly the fresh experience of the 2022 invasion, before moving over to various infospace efforts seen on the Internet in 2014–2020.

Why is «the Long Century» so important to information warfare on Ukraine? The 19<sup>th</sup> century in Ukraine was a time of its division between the Habsburg and Romanov empires, the latter of which was quite occupied with proving its mantle of the «Russian Empire», as an heir to a certain historical tradition, from Kyiv to Saint Petersburg, and the unifier of «all Slavs». For modern Kremlin-approved propaganda, this is «the golden era»: a time when Ukraine was not independent («did not exist»), but Ukrainians participated actively in the building up of cultural traditions of the Empire, and in military campaigns («brotherly people»). That was connected to the Empire's theory-based policies, such as the «theory of official nationality», the ideology of the «Triune Russian people», which could not become viable precisely because even the main

<sup>5</sup> Mieliekistsev K. The «Post-truth era» and its effects on public perception of Georgian and Ukrainian history. *15th International Silk Road virtual conference. Conference Proceedings (Silk Road 2020)* = აბრეშუმის გზის მე-15 დისტანციური საერთაშორისო კონფერენცია. *Silk Road Conferences. October 09-10. Tbilisi, Georgia*. Tbilisi: IBSU, 2020. PP. 24–32. [in English]

<sup>6</sup> Mieliekistsev K., Temirova N. The Policy of Russianization of Ukraine and Other European Territories of Russian Empire: Comparative Analysis. *Eminak: Scientific Quarterly Journal*, (2(38). PP. 43–57. [https://doi.org/10.33782/eminak2022.2\(38\).580](https://doi.org/10.33782/eminak2022.2(38).580) P. 44. [in Ukrainian]

apologists understood its propagandistic nature, and, accordingly, treated Ukrainians not as «their own», but as «foreigners» (a term originally used only for non-Christian peoples, by late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century it also targeted «political» Jewish and Ukrainian organizations). And if in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian elites shunned such a specific wording themselves, then at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the imperial authorities identified the further political separation of Ukrainians from the Empire, along with other peoples' similar situations.

The policy of Imperial «unification» of Ukrainians and Poles, Moldovans, and Baltic nations during the «long 19<sup>th</sup> century» exemplified uniformity on the European territory of the empire, with two exceptions regarding Ukraine. Firstly, there was no need to translate the grammar into Cyrillic instead of Latin, like with the Poles and the Romanians. Secondly, there was a convenient ideological unifier in the form of the «Triune Russian people». However, although the «Little Russians» were declared a part of the «official nationality», almost identical methods of assimilation were applied to them as in the «non-Russian» regions. Resorting to slogans about the «unified Russian nation» or attacking the very idea of the loyalty of «foreigners» to the empire without loyalty to the Russian language and culture demonstrate the true goal of «unification»: strengthening the emperor's autocratic power, eliminating the remnants of autonomy and particularism, uniting the vast expanses of the empire around the «Tsar of Russia».

However, in the end, the tsar's policy was able to influence only the transformation of a part of the elite of the conquered peoples' socium into a «Russian element». Having seen the liberalization of neighbouring Austria-Hungary and the rise of national states in Europe, the tsar decided that only the strict unification of all «foreigners» into a single Russian nation could stop such processes. But «the genie was already out of the bottle»: the oppressed peoples have already managed to form their own intellectual elites (in the Polish case, it became a continuation of the old noble elite, and in the Ukrainian case, it was mostly a new intelligentsia-centered group). Any oppression of their sphere of interests (the development of the cultural heritage of the peoples) could not lead to any other result than the ultimate rejection of assimilation policy<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Mieliekistsev K., Temirova N. The Policy of Russianization ... *Eminak: Scientific Quarterly Journal*, (2(38). PP. 43–57. [https://doi.org/10.33782/eminak2022.2\(38\).580](https://doi.org/10.33782/eminak2022.2(38).580) P. 55–57. [in Ukrainian]

During the last decades, the ideological meme that Moscow managed to spread among its population and tried to spread beyond its borders was the «St. George ribbon», which combined both imperial and Soviet symbolism, as well as a persistent symbol of «victory over fascism». Originating in the Russian Empire, St. George's ribbon was historically used as an analogue of the corresponding award – the Order of St. George, the Military Order and the St. George's Cross. In the cases when the knights of the Military Order could not receive the award itself (for example, during the defence of Sevastopol in 1854–1855). Since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, St. George's ribbon was also used as an accessory for the banners and standards of units of the Russian Imperial army. In 1806, St. George's flags were introduced into the Russian army. After 1878, the tape became known as «narrow St. George's tape» or simply «St. George's tape». «Wide St. George's ribbons» appeared as an accessory of battle flags in 1878. From the beginning of the invasion, the Ukrainian population reported that the occupiers not only distributed St. George's ribbons and depicted them on buildings, but also had the corresponding symbols on their helmets and uniforms. However, with the continuation of hostilities, helmets and uniforms with «sewn» St. George's ribbons disappear. Related symbolism was then used mostly to raise the morale of the Moscow military itself. The explanation for such changes should be sought in the fact that at the beginning of the invasion, the invaders carried with them not only a combat uniform with the «St. George» symbols, but also parade uniforms, expecting a quick victory. St. George's helmets, like the uniform, were to become symbols of the «small victorious war» for the soldiers and their observers, another artefact of Russian Imperial myth-making, originating from the propaganda surrounding the Russo-Japanese war<sup>8</sup>.

Notably, the character of V. Lenin received criticism and accusations of «creating Ukraine» from the Kremlin strongman himself<sup>9</sup>. The Bolshevik leader's

<sup>8</sup> Mieliekistsev, K. Istорични обrazy v konteksti moskovskoho vtorhnennia u 2022 r. [Historical images in the context of the Moscow invasion in 2022]. Rozumovski zustrichi: zbirnyk naukovykh prats / Siverskyi tsentr pisliadyplochnoi osvity; Siverskyi instytut rehionalnykh doslidzhen [Razumovsky meetings: a collection of scientific works / Siversky center of postgraduate education; Seversk Institute of Regional Studies]. Chernihiv: Siversky Center of Postgraduate Education, 2023. Issue 10. 200 p. PP. 153–163. p. 156.

<sup>9</sup> Stattia Volodymyra Putina «Pro istorychnu yednist rosian ta ukrainitsiv». Prezydent Rossyy. 12 chervnia 2021 roku. [Vladimir Putin's article «On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians.» President of Russia. June 12, 2021.] URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20240213134728/http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66182> [in Russian]

figure it does not fit well into Moscow's current narrative of history, as someone who «weakened» the Empire. However, since the monuments in honour of Lenin still remain typical for many settlements in the Russian Federation, due to the desire to remove any signs of the differentiation between occupied Ukraine and Moscow's territories (such as the dismantling of monuments to Bolshevik leaders in Ukraine), the monuments of the leader personally hated by Putin got restored.

On the other hand, the occupation administration became interested in promoting the other side of historical politics: the cultural monuments of the Romanov empire on the territory of Ukraine. The Russian Empire has become an important part of the symbolism for the current Kremlin regime in foreign policy, which makes it possible to make territorial claims and declare all 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture and other monumental art in then-controlled countries to be part of «Russian heritage». In anticipation of Ukraine's dismantling of monuments to military leaders, state and cultural figures of the Romanov empire, Moscow's military machine began to remove such monuments from occupied cities. Before evacuating their occupation contingent, the Russian Army went to rob Kherson museums, churches and libraries and take the most valuable exhibits from there. Among them: monuments, church values, valuable exhibits of the Kherson local history and art museums, valuables from the Kherson Regional Academic Music and Drama Theater, the Kherson Puppet Theater, and the Kherson Philharmonic, the most valuable books of local libraries, even the remains of the bodies of nobles from the times of the Russian Empire<sup>10</sup>.

Information warfare efforts of Moscow-affiliated actors on the Internet may be confronted with an audience that will have at least a superficial understanding of the political and historical ties of Georgia or Ukraine to Moscow and will be able to personally identify an overly involved or completely false narrative. Therefore, Russian-language sources of information warfare on history (particularly of the Russian Empire era) concentrate on a specific narrative from history in order to depict specific mythos for the Russian-speaking audience about «treachery and slavery of elites», «rescue by the Rus-

<sup>10</sup> Prikhvatiat ostanki kniazia Potemkyna: propagandisty sovetuiut, chto nuzhno vyvezty iz Khersona. 24 kanal. 23 zhovtnia 2022 roku. [Grab the remains of Prince Potemkin: propagandists advise what needs to be taken from Kherson. 24 Kanal. October 23, 2022.] URL: [https://24tv.ua/ru/kontrnastuplenie-vs-u-hersonshhine-propagandisty-sovetujut-cto\\_n2183274](https://24tv.ua/ru/kontrnastuplenie-vs-u-hersonshhine-propagandisty-sovetujut-cto_n2183274) [in Russian]

sian Empire», and finally «500 years of parasitism». Thus, on top of the Russians' superficial knowledge of the «near abroad», allows a negative impression to be imposed on the audience, with resentment for «historical wrongs», which are immediately identified with the current political situation<sup>11</sup>.

The situation with «screening out information» for information warfare actors (which narrative can be presented to which audience about the history of a foreign country, and which narrative it will not understand) is significantly different outside the Russophone Internet segment, and the further the territory is from the borders of Eastern European countries, the less people know about these countries about the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian Empire times. Usually, they are not even interested in the topic. In the English-language segments of social networks, it is the Kremlin supporters (both real people and automated «bots») who will try to mention the history of 19<sup>th</sup> century Ukraine to convince the audience about it «belonging to Russia». These are mostly micro-influencers who are interested in «hot» news and topics related to Moscow's interests, preparing «refutations» in replies to other users. They appeal to the idea that Moscow's aggressive policy applies only to those territories that it «should own» as «historical parts» of its territory. Using both open mockery and condescending advice to «check your knowledge of history», they assert the legitimacy of the Kremlin's claims to its neighbors as «historically the babies of Russia», declaring that «Russia has never invaded anyone (anyone important)», or implying it owns the whole Eastern Europe because it is «not the territory of Europe, but the Slavic culture.» To confirm such wild claims the influencers will appeal to 19<sup>th</sup> century Imperial Era as the supposed authoritative source of the «real» history, and will try to pretend to argue from a highly educated position associated with those times, suggesting Imperial Russian historiographic literature on the topic, like the «History of the Russian State» by N. Karamzin to «uninitiated» onlookers<sup>12</sup>.

Promoting cohesion around the Russian Empire as an idea of a peaceful, cooperative time for Eastern Europe is a prominent feature of Moscow-affiliated influencers. While official representatives of state diplomacy would deny any claims of «unprovoked» aggression or subversion, online influencers can afford to acknowledge some claims made by oppo-

nents (such as conquest and occupation), but only in order to convey to their own readers that there is nothing wrong with the history of imperial conquerors. As an example, Oleksandr Subbotin of Moscow, mainly a political influencer in the Yandex Zen and Telegram networks, who also had a modest number (about 4 thousand) of followers on Twitter, painted a truly terrible picture of the «near abroad» without Imperial guidance: «Troublesome Belarus and Kyrgyzstan; warring Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia without territories and the dying Baltic States... Well, as you wished, the «Russian occupier» left. Probably, everyone is satisfied.» In this message, largely supported by the author's nostalgic readers, he condemns the wars and the loss of territories in Ukraine and Georgia as problems, while «forgetting» Moscow's direct actions that caused these problems. The audience sees no contradiction in this, since the main idea is that the «Russian occupation», that is, Moscow's hegemony over its colonized neighbours, was a positive factor and the only guarantee of peace and prosperity. As a result, countries are accused of the «crime» of gaining independence and then being attacked by a former colonial power<sup>13</sup>.

**Conclusions.** The variety of Moscow's information warfare narratives on Ukraine's 19<sup>th</sup> century history, accompanied by conventional military actions during both the 2022 invasion and previous hybrid warfare efforts, confirms the fact that the information policy of the state never «stops», and the protection of its interests is always in the first place for the state leadership, staying way ahead of maintaining the truthfulness of messages or preventing open hypocrisy. Because of this, Moscow's information policy combines Soviet and imperial historical mimicry at the same time; glorifying one's own historical «imperial greatness» and accusing of «revisionism of history»; the Ukrainian population sees the imposing of narratives a relic of the Soviet times in the Russian Federation itself, but achieve current goals in bringing Ukraine closer to Moscow through the symbolism of the «all-Soviet» Lenin monuments (despite Lenin's portrayal in Moscow's internal historical propaganda as a despoiler of the empire); caring about the «cultural heritage of the Russian Empire» in Ukraine; support for both the «anti-imperialist» and «pro-imperialist» viewpoints across the world in regards to Moscow's portrayal of its actions (even such relatively inconsequential actions like the propagation of St. George ribbons).

<sup>11</sup> Mieliekistsev K. The «Post-truth era» and its effects... Tbilisi: IBSU, 2020. P. 24–25 [in English]

<sup>12</sup> Mieliekistsev K. The «Post-truth era» and its effects... Tbilisi: IBSU, 2020. p. 25 [in English]

<sup>13</sup> Aleksandr Subbotin. *Twitter*. 5/10/2020. URL: [https://twitter.com/subbotin\\_ru/status/1313221081562517506](https://twitter.com/subbotin_ru/status/1313221081562517506)

It is quite reasonable to assume that Moscow's information warfare efforts operate with the idea that the recipients of the propaganda will not have the ability, time, or desire to check whether the messages they want to convey through the means of

propaganda are actually followed in the Russian Federation itself. Because of that, Moscow shields itself in anti-imperialism, while glorifying the Romanov Empire and trying to revive its «Triune Russian Nation» mythos.

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