

# **Critical Moments in Ukrainian History: Leaflets and Posters, 1905-1945**

**Delo 1-10**

***By Vladimir Danilenko,  
Director of the State Archive  
of the Kiev Oblast***

There are periods in the history of every state and nation that determine the path of their historical development. Significant in this regard is Ukraine's history during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which saw revolutions in 1905 and 1917, a civil war, two world wars and changes in the social and political system. The art, political papers and literature of such an age provide history's descendents with a bit of authentic thought from the era of their creation. Luckily for today's researchers, the library of the State Archives of the Kiev Oblast (GAKO) has carefully preserved a collection of leaflets and posters to this end. These documents convey the political ideologies and propaganda campaigns of their time while also managing to evoke a bit of the emotion and spirit that inspired their production.

This collection contains 1,340 pages in 10 *delo* [files], covering 1905 to 1944. Thematically, the collection is comprised of: (a) leaflets of the period of the First Russian Revolution; (b) leaflets of the WWI and February Revolution period; (c) leaflets of the Civil War period; (d) leaflets and posters of the WWII period. Below are some examples of content from each file.

**Delo 1** contains documents dating from the period of the First Russian Revolution of 1905. The manifesto issued by Nicholas II on 17 October 1905, proclaiming freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and associations, gave a powerful impetus to the creation of political parties and unions, who immediately joined the political struggle getting ready for the elections for the State Duma of the Russian empire.<sup>1</sup>

This file contains leaflets and posters of monarchist associations (Union of the Russian People, Patriotic Fellowship of Russian Workers of Kiev, Union of Russian Workers, Russian Fraternity); Constitutional Democrats (the Kadets); Union of October 17 (Octobrists) – a party of bourgeoisie and landowners; the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (SR); and the United Jewish Voters of Kiev.

The first part of the leaflets in this file are, in general, supportive of the autocracy and are mainly of declaratory and general nature.<sup>2</sup> They widely use quotations from the Bible and cite examples from Russian history and poetry:

We, the Orthodox Christian people, need no republics or constitutions. We need the Tsar. We need the father of the people. We need the Autocracy... Do you know why we love the Tsar, why we stand up and will stand up for the orthodox Tsar? Christ says to us: **“Fear God, revere the tsar,” “Render his due unto every ruler,” “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s.”** Why didn’t you shout about a republic and constitution before when Moscow was ruled by Grishka (Grigory) Otrepyev, Boris

Godunov, and the Poles? And now you fall silent. We will join the battle for the Anointed One – our Orthodox Christian Tsar, **and the memory of you will perish amid the noise of the battle ...**

“Christian compatriots, Russian plowmen! Our native land is being tormented by external foes – the Japanese – and by internal foes – various seditionists. And what a bitter feeling it is to know that some of the plowmen are giving them a hand ...

“The plunder of other people’s property and violence are not protecting the fatherland but ruining it instead; this is not for the joy of the Tsar, our father, but for his bitter sorrow. Let us repent, reform and purify ourselves for the comfort and consolation of the Tsar and the Homeland, not for misfortune but for their exaltation and glory and not for disgrace and abasement. So help us God.<sup>3</sup>

The leaflets of the other political forces tend towards more specific and pragmatic information.

**Delo No. 2** contains documents covering World War I and the February Revolution, including four October-November 1914 issues of the newspaper *Kievskaiia Zemskaiia Gazeta* which themselves contain war reports, reviews of military operations, information about the establishment of the Red Cross, lists of donors and donations, and other information.<sup>4</sup> Also included in this file are sermons by Archimandrite Grigorii to the sick and wounded Russian soldiers; resolutions signed by the Main Chief of the Kiev Military District, Adjutant General Trotskii; an appeal by the Most August Campaign Ataman, Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich, chief of the military Cossack organization; documents of the Provisional Government and its authorized bodies at the local level; the Petrograd and Kiev Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies; the Ukrainian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries; and the leaflet of the RSDRP [Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ Party] Central Committee addressed to the people of Petrograd about accusations of spying for Germany leveled against Lenin.

**Delo No. 3** though 8 pertain to the Civil War era. There were several periods to the course of this struggle - the war initially broke out when Soviet Ukraine made war against the Ukrainian People’s Republic (UPR) in 1917-1918. Then there was the uprising against the Hetman in 1918, led by the Directory of the UPR, against the regime of P. Skoropadskii. Following this came the military conflict between the Directory and the Bolshevik regime and the confrontation between the Whites and Reds (1919). In 1920 there was war between Poland and Russia and the struggle led by Baron Wrangel against the Bolsheviks. Also spread throughout this period were massive insurgent movements of peasants and pogroms against Jewish people.

The frequent changes of government and the noninvolvement of the greatest portion of the population in political activities and military operations compelled authorities to resort to military mobilization. Desertion and constant migration of the

command personnel from one military camp to another were common. The presence of troops from Germany, Austro-Hungary and France in Ukrainian territory further strained the situation.

The ethnic and ideological nature of the Civil War made it extremely bitter, with murderous intent aimed not only at destroying the political enemy but also the enemy's assumed supporters. With this purpose in mind, they used ideological and political weapons alongside military methods. All armies had centers of political propaganda. In 1918, the Denikin government set up a special body designated as the Information and Agitation Agency (Osvag), which was reorganized early in 1919 as the Propaganda Department.

The most powerful both quantitatively and in terms of technical equipment was the Propaganda Department of the Political Department of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs of the Red Army. The Army's political organs and party organizations produced and disseminated prodigious amounts of leaflets. Under combat conditions, leaflets were often fired from artillery guns (60 leaflets to one projectile). In 1920 alone there were some 5 million copies of leaflets, appeals and pamphlets produced and disseminated on the Ukrainian fronts.

Some of the specific contents of Delo 3 include leaflets characterizing the political and military situation in Ukraine and appeals to strengthen the Red Army, join its ranks, destroy the enemies and contribute to the war effort. A large portion of this file are leaflets devoted to the mobilization of the Red Army, universal military training of the working people, Red Army Commander Day and Front and Transport Week; some titles include, "Deserter, People are Asking You Questions," "Make the Deserter Answer!," "Deserter, Go Back to the Red Army!," "Deserter, Come to Your Senses, Atone for Your Guilt!"

**Delo No. 4** contains Civil War period leaflets on economic measures: The Law on Land, March 1919; decrees on the protection of forests; on the 1918 and previous years; surplus harvest appropriations; on harvesting in 1919 and mobilizing agriculture and land management experts; on food requisition dictatorship; on improving the position of Red Army men's families; on pedigree stock-breeding; resolutions of the Council of People's Commissars of Ukraine on measures to combat unlawful audits and confiscations in Soviet economic entities; on fish breeding and fishing; on universal compulsory labor service; on the allocation of timber; regulations for the local departments of labor; on the levying of taxes and duties; orders issued by the food department of the Demeevskii district of Kiev; orders to the Southwestern Railways; instructions to front-line procurement bodies; on the organization of land departments attached to executive committees; on the 1919 use of the land of nationalized sugar refineries; on allocation arrangements inside the *volost'* [subdivision of *uiezd*]; an agronomic instruction, etc.

**Delo No. 5** contains leaflets of the Civil War period on combating banditry and pogroms. Some titles include, “Down with organizers of pogroms!,” “Down with pogroms,” “Down with traitors!,” “Against anti-Semitism!,” “Pogroms mean returning to the past,” “Why do Petliura people stage pogroms?,” “Impostor Grigor’ev is on the wrong side of the law,” “An answer to bandits Petliura and Sokolovskii,” “About the atamans of big and small bandit gangs,” “Don’t be traitors!,” “A word to the fooled peasants and workers,” “A word to the peasants in the insurgent detachments,” “A letter to the bandits,” “Addressing the insurgents” and “An appeal to the followers of Makhno.”

**Delo No. 6** includes leaflets of the Civil War period relating to questions of state and party organizational development. Among them are: an instruction describing election rules and the participation of workers and peasants in the Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspectorate of 11 May 1920 signed by the inspectorate’s head, People’s Commissar Joseph Stalin; “Who are the Communists (Bolsheviks);” provisional rules for organizing local bodies of Soviet government and administration procedures; rules governing local committees of office workers; an instruction addressed to propaganda education divisions and of the *volost*’ military commissariat; an instruction to house management committees on how to compile registration lists of the male population and check identity papers; an appeal of the Kiev Gubernia Revolutionary Tribunal; an instruction dealing with work among the female proletarians; a provisional regulation concerning *volost*’ and village committees of poor peasants; etc.

**Delo No. 7** includes leaflets of the Civil War period dealing with matters of public health, education and culture. Some titles include: “Why so many babies die in Ukraine and Russia?,” “Why is your baby crying?,” “Turn to your doctor immediately for advice,” “An appeal to breastfeeding mothers,” “How to be a pregnant woman,” “About the bloody diarrhea (dysentery),” “How to protect yourself from typhus,” “Advice to Wounded Red Army men,” “Alkaline solution instead of soap,” “How to protect yourself from contracting cholera,” “What we should know about scarlet fever,” etc. Of particular note is the leaflet issued by the department of health education of the People’s Public Health Commissariat, featuring workers’ poet Demian Bednyi’s satirical fable “The Flea.”

---

**Delo No. 8** contains posters of the Civil War period. Their subjects vary widely: war on Denikin, ‘White Poland’ forces, Petliura, Wrangel, bandits and mobilization. Some of the posters are simultaneously in Russian, Ukrainian and Yiddish. The *delo* contains 177 posters.

**Delo No. 9** and 10 contain items from WWII. Delo 9 includes orders, directives and notices issued by both the German occupation authorities and by local authorities and covers various activities.

**Delo No. 10** contains agitation and propaganda material. All the documents (excepting three leaflets) come from the German side. These include: “To the Troops of the Ukrainian Front” signed by Army Commander 1<sup>st</sup> Rank Timoshenko and members of Ukrainian Front Military Council Khrushchev, Borisov and Kozhevnikov in September 1939; leaflets signed by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Commander of the Ukrainian Insurgents Army (UPA) Klim Savur; official communications of the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht from theaters of military operations; pamphlets “Alfred Rosenberg Visits the Ukraine,” “Now all Germany will go to War,” “Why is Europe Winning?,” “The Struggle against Stalin is a Struggle for Motherland!,” “Toward New Life,” etc. These pamphlets include many photographs.

This collection is unique and contains a vast body of information that has not been used by researchers before, information that is of interest not only to professional researchers but also to those individuals generally interested in the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century at its complex and tragic junctions. All documents are originals.

Documents are in Russian, Ukrainian, German, Polish, and Yiddish.

---

<sup>1</sup> The State Duma – a representative legislative assembly in the Russian Empire. It met with interruptions from 10 May (Oct. 27) 1906 to 31 (13) December 1917. There were four elected and dissolved State Dumas.

<sup>2</sup> GAKO. Collection of Leaflets and Posters. Delo 1, pp. 1 – 26.

<sup>3</sup> GAKO. Collection of Leaflets and Posters. Delo 1, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> GAKO. Collection of Leaflets and Posters. Delo 2, pp. 1-64.

# Collection Contents

## Index

Item No.		Number of pages	Film number
1	Introduction in English		1
2	Introduction in Russian		1
3	Opis' 1		1
4	Contents of Reels in English		1
5	Contents of Reels in Ukrainian		1
6	Contents of Reels in Russian		1

## Collection of Leaflets and Posters, 1905-1944

File No.		Number of pages	Film number
	<b>Opis' 1</b>		
1	Russian Revolution era (1905-1906)	57	2
2	World War I and Revolution era leaflets (1914-1917)	104	2
3	Civil War leaflets. Political and military	135	2
4	Civil War leaflets. Economic situation	181	2
5	Civil War leaflets. On combatting pogroms; appeals to workers, peasants, and soldiers	141	2
6	Civil War leaflets. Governmental and Party issues	83	2
7	Civil War leaflets. Public health, education, culture	64	3
8	Civil War. Posters	177	3
9	World War II Papers (orders, instructions, notices)	135	3
10	World War II. Propaganda materials	263	3