

RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

To cite this article: Elif Hatun Kılıçbeyli, “Red Army Propaganda In The Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic: An Investigation On Posters”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 43 (2021): 109-140.

Received: 06.05.2021

Accepted: 21.07.2021

RED ARMY PROPAGANDA IN THE ARMENIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC: AN INVESTIGATION ON POSTERS

(ERMENİSTAN SOVYET SOSYALİST CUMHURİYETİ'NDE KIZIL ORDU PROPAGANDASI: AFİŞLER ÜZERİNDEN YAPILAN BİR İNCELEME)

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Abstract: *After the October Revolution in Russia, in early 1918, the Board of People's Commissars, headed by V.I. Lenin, decided to form an army of volunteer workers and peasants to ensure internal and external security. The red color symbolizing the Bolsheviks was added to the name of the army. Visual materials for the ideological purposes of the Soviet Union (SU) had been widely used since 1918 with slogans supporting political discourse. Much propaganda was made towards all components of the SU (the Republic, region, autonomous administration, and all Soviet citizens) for the acceptance and support of the Red Army. One of the republics that made up SU was the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR). The aim was the acceptance by the Armenian people of the Red Army, which had ended the Republic of Armenia at the end of 1920 that had been declared independent by the Armenian National Council under the control of the Dashnaksutyun. Another aim was to receive the support of the Armenian people for the Red Army as a security institute. This article discusses Red Army-themed posters, the main elements of the Red Army's image, and the causality of these elements within the propaganda activities in the ASSR. The mentioned visual works were created by Soviet artists in the years*

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between 1920 and 1960. This article analyzes the elements of visual materials, Roland Barthes's semiotic approach and the meanings of cultural symbols, the dynamics of transition from the Russian state to the Soviet context and its effects on Soviet political power. This qualitative analysis study reveals that, after the Red Army's entry into Armenia in 1920 and the establishment of the Armenian Red Army, the ideological purpose of the Red Army's incorporation of the far-flung Armenia into the SU was sought to be explained, the need for ensuring the internal and external security of the expanding SU geographical boundaries was strongly emphasized.

Keywords: *Armenia, Red Army, Soviet Union, Political Communication, Visual Materials*

Öz: *Rusya'daki Ekim Devrimi'nden sonra, 1918'in başlarında, V.I. Lenin başkanlığındaki Halk Komiserleri Kurulu, iç ve dış güvenliği sağlamak için gönüllü işçi ve köylülerden oluşan bir ordu kurmaya karar verdi. Bolşevikleri simgeleyen kırmızı renk ordunun isminin başına eklendi. Sovyetler Birliği'nin (SB) ideolojik amaçları için görsel çalışmalar, 1918'den beri siyasi söylemi destekleyen sloganlarla yaygın olarak kullanılmıştır. Kırmızı Ordu'nun kabulü ve desteği için SB'nin tüm bileşenlerine (Cumhuriyet, bölge, özerk yönetim ve tüm Sovyet vatandaşları) yönelik birçok propaganda faaliyeti yapılmıştır. SB'yi oluşturan cumhuriyetlerden biri de Ermenistan Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti (ESSC) idi. Amaç, Taşnaksutyun'un kontrolü altında Ermeni Ulusal Konseyi tarafından bağımsızlığı ilan edilen Ermenistan Cumhuriyeti'ni 1920'nin sonunda sona erdiren Kırmızı Ordu'nun Ermeni halkı tarafından kabul edilmesiydi. Bir diğer hedef ise Kırmızı Ordu'nun Ermeni halkı tarafından bir güvenlik kurumu olarak benimsenmesiydi. Bu makalede ESSC'deki propaganda faaliyetleri içinde Kırmızı Ordu temalı posterler, Kırmızı Ordu imajının ana öğeleri ve bu öğelerin nedenselliği tartışılmaktadır. Çalışmada belirtilen görsel çalışmalar, 1920-1960 yılları arasında Sovyet sanatçılar tarafından yapılmıştır. Bu makale; görsel çalışmaların ana öğelerini, Roland Barthes'in göstergebilimsel yaklaşımını ve sembollerin kültürel anlamlarını, Rus devletinden Sovyet bağlamına geçiş dinamiklerini ve Sovyet siyasi gücü üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektedir. Bu nitel analiz çalışması; Kırmızı Ordu'nun 1920 yılında Ermenistan'a girmesi ve Ermeni Kırmızı Ordu'sunun kurulması ardından, Kırmızı Ordu'nun merkezden uzak Ermenistan'ı SB'ye dahil etmesinin ideolojik olarak ispatlanmaya çalışıldığını ve genişleyen SB coğrafi sınırlarının iç ve dış güvenliğinin sağlanmasının önemine güçlü bir şekilde vurgu yapıldığını ortaya koymaktadır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ermenistan, Kırmızı Ordu, Sovyetler Birliği, Siyasal İletişim, Görsel Malzemeler*

Introduction

Essentially, “[i]deology calls individuals as subjects.” It is obvious that the phase of establishing a hegemony and a counterhegemony belonging to the opposing classes also plays an active role during the construction of power and the production/reproduction of consent. The class character of the ideology’s function of the subjectivation of individuals mostly follows a line determined by the hegemonic project of the ruling class¹. Propaganda, leading authorities agree, is a systematic attempt to persuade an audience to adopt a specific viewpoint or to undertake a given course of action. Propaganda is the tool of a special interest group, and it features a deliberate effort to manipulate the audience².

The Soviet Union (SU) was founded as a union of states in a political structure that realized an alternative state system challenging imperialists and capitalists. Propaganda activities, which played an important role in the 20th century, were very effectively used for the deployment of the new system that was established in Russia with the October Revolution of 1917³. The Red Army was founded immediately after the revolution when the Bolshevik Party came to power, but the official day of its creation is considered 23 February 1918. This was when the Soviet Republic announced the first victory of the Red Army over the Germans on the very last days of Russia’s World War I campaign. The “slogan” or “watchword” is the combative and constructive aspect of this propaganda. It is the verbal translation of one phase of the revolutionary tactic. It is a driving concept, expressing as clearly, briefly, and euphonicly as possible the most important objective of the moment⁴.

The Red Army (*Krasnaya Armiya*), the red color referring to the Bolsheviks, was a common name for the Russian National Military Forces from 1918 to 1946, which was also known by the abbreviation RKKK (Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army). Two weeks later, the Bolsheviks signed a peace agreement with Germany, as it was difficult to fund the army that was short of everything including guns, ammunition, and human resources. Some historians argue that no true victory was achieved here⁵.

1 Emek Yıldırım, “Sovyetler Birliği’nde Propaganda ve Proleter Hegemonik İdeolojinin Kurulumu Üzerine”, *Doğu-Batı Düşünce Dergisi*, Sayı 69 (2014): 5.

2 Neil M. Heyman, “Leon Trotsky: Propagandist to the Red Army”, *Studies in Comparative Communism* 10, no. 1/2 (1977): 35, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45367161>

3 Mertcan Akan, “Sovyet Propaganda Afişlerinde ‘Doğu’ İmgesi”, *Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi*, Sayı 17 (2017): 77.

4 Jean-Marie Domenach, “Leninist Propaganda”. *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 15, No. 2 (Summer, 1951): 267.

5 Russia Today (RT) is a news network financed by the Russian Federation. RT began its 24/7 English broadcast from Moscow in December 2005. RT carries out many online historical projects such as “Russiapedia”.

SU was established after the Eighth Congress of Soviets on 30 December 1922⁶. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, as a leader of the Council of the people's commissars, believed that the development of political ideologies through propaganda activities would be strengthened by educated culture. Lenin gave priority to the strengthening of the state through communist ideology⁷.

Propaganda is a series of methods that "guide" the development of the individual and society for political purposes. In the case of the SU, it was constantly and effectively applied to create a 'Soviet man', which would in turn create a useful being for the homeland and Soviet peoples. With full control over mass communication, the Soviet administration used cinema, radio, theatre, music, visual materials, posters, and much more for purposeful propaganda⁸. Therefore, much importance was given to literacy education and publishing after the October Revolution⁹. Although the resources and tools of the period were narrow, limited, and difficult to access, the existence and security of the state was also of great importance. Despite material constraints, there was an all-out movement for both education and motivation and job production. Here, propaganda posters played an important role. Literacy rates of peoples in the Soviet and surrounding administrations was low. For adults, young people, and children who did not speak Russian, or did not know the grammar of their own national language, the visual elements of posters would be impressive and easy to understand. And these visual products could be circulated at an affordable price in society as part of the propaganda management.

Lenin's plan had many targets, but main aim was on economic progress for SU in all its components. His plan for production propaganda was through the study of political and cultural enlightenment. It emphasized the need for political experience related to economic structuring to form the basis of all ideologically structured propaganda and agitation of the Soviet Union¹⁰. The *sine qua non* of political enlightenment was education with understandable, sympathetic means, the habit of reading, and common social areas that society would share. In a revolutionary period, this objective may be to overthrow the

6 Lenin was the first Soviet administrator to serve as head of the Council of People's Commissars elected by the Congress of Soviets of the Soviet Union on 30 December 1922. On 21 March 1922, a new state was established with the establishment of the Soviet Union. Leonid Vasylevich Milov, Alexander Sergeyich Barsenkov, Alexander Ivanovich Vdovin, Svetlana Vladimirovna Voronkova, "Istoriya Rassii XX-nachala XXI veka", Moskovskiy Gosudarstvenniy Universitet imeni M.V. Lomonosova (Moskva: Eskimo, 2006), 324.

7 Y.A. Ahapkini, "Lenin", Institute of Marxism-Leninism under CCCP of the SU (Moscow: Panorama, 1990), 311.

8 Akan, "Sovyet Propaganda Afişlerinde Doğu İmgesi", 81.

9 P.N. Pospelov, *V. İlyiç Lenin - Biyografi*, çev. Gönül Özen Sezer (Sorun Yayınları, 2000), 427.

10 Marcel Cahin and Clara Zetkin, *They Knew Lenin: Reminiscences of Foreign Contemporaries* (University Press of the Pacific, 2005), 26.

class enemy and rally the masses (“All power to the Soviets,” “Land and Peace,” “Bread, Peace and Liberty,” “For a Liberal, Democratic Government,” etc.). Or, in a period of “socialist edification,” this objective may be essentially one of planning (“To reach and exceed the plan in four years,” etc.)¹¹.

Many people of different nationalities took part in the Red Army, the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union. Soldiers within the Soviet Union administration and the Red Army were trained for Leninist propaganda purposes. Through the glorification of the ideology of communism and maintaining the legitimacy of the Communist regime, it was thought that the Soviets would be more entrenched, highly confident, and long-lived. It was planned that it was possible for the life of the Soviets to expand first to its immediate surroundings and then to states interested in communism.

These propaganda activities related to the Red Army were carried out in the Socialist Republics that formed the Soviet Union. It was aimed to create an image of a strong, protective, and dynamic Red Army in the minds of people. It was also aimed to increase the loyalty of the soldiers to the Red Army and, at the same time, to ensure that the people of the Soviet Union supported the Red Army. In Armenia, like the rest of the SU, it was not only the soldiers who were the target audience for propaganda activities concerning the Red Army. In other words, propaganda tools were also developed for parties who had nothing to do with military service. The decision-making mechanism of the Soviets, headquartered in Moscow, planned all propaganda activities for all administrative units of the union, while implementing the visual materials and content to be used. Throughout this process, the propaganda apparatus of the SU effectively used posters, one of the advanced forms of mass media of the era. These posters were visual materials usually designed in Moscow or St. Petersburg, printed in capital cities of the SU, and hung in places where the public could easily see them.

Various academic articles have been published on the Red Army and propaganda. Some of them are:

- Bonnell¹²: Iconography of power - Soviet political posters under Lenin and Stalin
- Domenach¹³: Leninist propaganda

11 Domenach, “Leninist Propaganda”, 267.

12 Victoria E. Bonnell. *Iconography Of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin And Stalin* (Berkeley, CA/USA: University of California Press, 1999).

13 Domenach, “Leninist Propaganda”.

- Kutskaya and Dorozhkin¹⁴: the Soviet technical propaganda tools of the Red Army in Europe during the Second World War
- Posvyatenko¹⁵ and Levshin¹⁶: propaganda in the Red Army during the Russian Civil War
- Wark¹⁷: British propaganda and the Red Army between 1945-1952
- Jarkov¹⁸: propaganda in the Red Army in 1921-1941
- Shin¹⁹: Red Army propaganda for Uzbek soldiers
- Cheravitch²⁰: Wrote an article titled “Open Your Gates to Us, Wide and Trustingly: The Foundation of Special Propaganda in the Red Army”. Between 1938 and 1940, the Soviet army conducted an intense propaganda campaign with the idea that ‘special propaganda’ (*spetsprop*) represented one of the oldest forms of Soviet asymmetric warfare that would decimate even the Soviet state.

In addition, in Turkey in recent years, academic works in the field of political communication have conducted propaganda analyses focusing on the Nazi period of Germany and the Soviet Union period. These include:

- Çağmar²¹ : Propaganda techniques in Nazi Germany
- İnceoğlu²²: The West and its image in Soviet propaganda animations
- Karakuş²³: Transformation of propaganda tools from the traditional to the digital format

14 Olesia Nikolayevna Kutskaya and Sergey Ivanovich Dorozhkin, “Sovyetskie tehicheskie sredstva propagandy b period bayevih diestviye Krasnoy Armii na territori Yevropi v godi ftoroy mirovoy vayni”, *Revista Militară* 11, no.1 (2014): 145-157.

15 Aksana Nikolayevna Posvyatenko, “Propaganda v voskah Krasnoy Armii v gody Grajdanskoy vayni (1918-1920 gg.)”, *Klio*, no.2 (2012): 120-122.

16 Konstantin Viktorovich Levshin, “Agitatsia i propaganda s massovim dezertirstvom krasnoarmetsev v gody grajdanskoy vayni”, *Trudy istoricheskovo fakulteta SPBGU*, no. 14 (2013): 158-176

17 Wesley K. Wark, “Coming in from the Cold: British Propaganda and Red Army Defectors, 1945–1952,” *The International History Review* 9, no.1 (1987): 48-72.

18 Vitaly Viktorovich Jarkov, “Propaganda i agitatsia v Krasnoy Armii v 1921-1944 gg.”, *Yaroslavsky Pedagogichesky vestnik*, no.1 (2009): 197-204.

19 Boram Shin, “Red Army Propaganda for Uzbek Soldiers and Localised Soviet Internationalism during World War II”, *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 42, no.1 (2015): 39-63.

20 Joe Cheravitch, “‘Open Your Gates to Us, Wide and Trustingly’: The Foundation of Special Propaganda in the Red Army”, *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 33, no.4 (2020): 556-579.

21 Mehmet Çağmar, “Nazi Almanya’sında Propaganda Teknikleri”, *Akademik Tarih ve Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Sayı 2 (2020): 191-205.

22 Çağrı İnceoğlu, “Sovyet Propaganda Animasyonlarında Batı ve Batılı İmgesi”, *Galatasaray Üniversitesi İletişim Dergisi*, Sayı 19 (2013): 23-40.

23 Melis Karakuş, “Gelenekselden Dijitale Propaganda Araçlarının Dönüşümü”, *Selçuk İletişim* 14, Sayı 1 (2021): 462-491.

- Işık et al.²⁴: Propaganda posters for the United States Army in 1914-1917
- Çetin et al.²⁵: The anti-USA Propaganda Posters in the Iranian Revolution
- Baytimur et. al.²⁶: The Soviet Union’s major economic development goals for its five-year development plan
- Çakı and Gazi²⁷: Soviet people against German armies in the context of Soviet propaganda posters

This article focuses on the use of Red Army propaganda posters in the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) between 1920 and 1960 using the semiotics analysis technique developed by Roland Barthes. The article aims to reveal how the administration of the Soviet Union reflected the Red Army to the people in Armenia to ensure that the people’s support for the Red Army remained strong and active, and to reveal what discourses were used for the Red Army through propaganda posters. In this way, it seeks to answer the following question: “what kind of perception was formed in the ASSR through Red Army propaganda posters?”. The methodology of the article and its findings are important as an original resource for researchers in history, politics and communication sciences working on Armenia and the Red Army. In this context, it is thought that this article will contribute to multidisciplinary studies in the field in terms of the subject being studied with a new perspective.

1. The Establishment of the Red Army and Its Duties

The Red Army was formed on 15 January 1918, shortly after the October Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party in Russia²⁸, although the official date of establishment of the Red Army’s is considered 23 February 1918. From its

24 Metin Işık, Mehmet Ali Gazi, Caner Çakı ve Gül Çakı, “Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Amerikan Kütüphane Derneği’nin ABD Ordusuna Yönelik Hazırladığı Propaganda Posterleri Üzerine İnceleme”, *Türk Kütüphaneciliği* 35, Sayı 2 (2021): 131-158.

25 Muammer Çetin, Caner Çakı and Mehmet Ali Gazi, “The Examination of The Anti-USA Propaganda Posters in The Iran Revolution According to Claude Lévi-Strauss Binary Opposition”, *International Journal of Social Sciences (INJOSS)* 1, Issue 3 (2018).

26 Tuğba Baytimur, Caner Çakı, and Ferit Arda Arıca, “The Propaganda In Armenia Of The Five-Year Development Plans Implemented In The Soviet Union”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 42 (2020): 81-102.

27 Caner Çakı and Mehmet Ali Gazi, “The Use of Nationalism Discourses in the Soviet Propaganda in the Second World War”, *International Journal of Social Science Research* 7, Issue 2 (2018): 291-306.

28 “Декрет об организации Рабоче-Крестьянской Красной Армии”, January 15 (28), 1918, official document, *Moskovskiy Gosudarstvennyy Universitet imeni M.V. Lomonosova*, <http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/DEKRET/rkka.htm>

conception, the Bolsheviks introduced a new system of leadership in the Red Army military units. Each unit, in addition to commanders, also had a *politruk* (political leader). These officers were appointed by the Bolsheviks to monitor the troops' morale as well as every move of the leading officers. If the order of the commander contradicted the line of the Bolshevik Party, the *politruk* could cancel it²⁹. A few weeks after its establishment, the Bolsheviks were unable to fund the army (which lacked everything from weapons, ammunition, to human resources) and were thus forced make a treaty with Germany.

In Russia, which experienced internal strife, a civil war between the Bolsheviks (also called the Red Guard) and the remaining factions of the former Russian army (also called the White Guard) caused decimation. Those opposing the Bolsheviks were heavily supported by the British and Americans, and by regiments from other countries which wanted to intervene against the Bolsheviks in 1918. As a result, the Soviet republic found itself in a ring of opposing forces with Cossacks in the South, Kolchak and Czech battalions in Siberia, and British and American troops in the north of Russia. For the fledgling Red Army, a rather difficult new process had begun. Leon Trotsky (1879-1940) was the leader of the Red Army and played an important role in the struggle of the Bolsheviks against the White Army. In addition, the Red Army fought against the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine (*Революційна Повстанська Армія України*) and against Poland in the Soviet-Polish War (1919-1921). During the Russian Civil War between the years 1917-1923, the Bolsheviks struggled to remain in power. During this period, the White Army received support from various countries such as the United States, Britain, and Japan and thus became a significant threat to the Red Army. The support of the peasants was important for the military expedition in Russia. As a matter of fact, the army had to be composed largely of peasants and fed by them.

The civil war in Russia ended with the victory of the Red Army. After the fall of the Russian Empire, the territorial integrity of the destroyed state was restored. The civil war had made the country's difficult conditions worse. Damage to the country's economy amounted to about 50 billion gold rubles, industrial production had fallen to 4-20% of the 1913 level, agricultural production had almost halved.

The Red Army's lost 940,000 troops (mostly from typhoid outbreaks), while 6.8 million people died because of poor sanitary conditions. Meanwhile, the White Guard troops, according to incomplete data, lost only 125,000 people in their battles. Russia's total losses in the civil war were about 13 million

29 *Russiapedia*, <https://russiapedia.rt.com/>

people. Amidst all this loss, the Red Army managed to mobilize more peasants than the Whites³⁰ and succeeded in overcoming its enemy, resulting in the victory of the Bolsheviks.

The Red Army was subsequently developed in terms of military equipment and a large number of tanks, aircraft and combat vehicles were added to its arsenal after the establishment of the Soviet Union on 30 December 1922. During the reign of Joseph Stalin, the Red Army became one of the leading military powers in the world. On the other hand, the Great Purge initiated during the reign of Stalin in 1936 led to significant purges of the upper echelon of the Red Army. It is claimed that this purge movement negatively affected the Red Army in the ongoing process. The Winter War between the Soviet Union and Finland³¹ is presented as one of the most important consequences of this purge. As a matter of fact, the Soviet Union suffered heavy losses against Finland in the war that took place between 1939-1940. Even though the Soviet Union managed to prevail over Finland in the end, the losses it suffered during the war caused the image of the Red Army to be negatively affected.

After Nazi-ruled Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, the Red Army also started to invade Poland on 17 September of the same year. After the defeat of Poland, the lands of the country were divided between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. In the following process, the Red Army occupied the Baltic States, Bessarabia, and Northern Bukovina. A non-aggression agreement called the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany on 23 August 1939³². However, in violation of the Pact, German armies invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. On the other hand, Italy, Romania, Hungary, and Croatia became involved in the war between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany and these countries fought against the Red Army. In addition, Finland started a war against the Red Army to seize the lands it lost during the Winter War.

The Red Army suffered heavy losses at the beginning of the war against the German army and many important cities of the Soviet Union were occupied. The German army managed to reach the suburbs of Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union. However, Soviet regime survived. The occupation generated patriotic feelings and increased sympathy for the government that had defended the homeland. As a result, the communist rule gained strength. Despite great losses, the Red Army managed to stop the Germans and continued to fight until

30 Orlando Figes, "The Red Army and Mass Mobilization during the Russian Civil War 1918-1920", *Past & Present*, no. 129 (1990): 209.

31 Bernard Kelly, "Drifting Towards War: The British Chiefs of Staff, the USSR and the Winter War, November 1939–March 1940," *Contemporary British History* 23, no.3 (2009): 267.

32 Alfred Erich Senn, "Perestroika in Lithuanian Historiography: The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact". *The Russian Review* 49, no.1 (1990): 43.

victory³³. In 1943, the Red Army succeeded in defeating the German army at the Battle of Stalingrad, resulting in the German army losing its initiative against the Red Army. In the same year, the German army failed to gain the upper hand against the Red Army in the Battle of Kursk, forcing the German army to move from an offensive position against the Red Army to a defensive one. Then, the Red Army managed to enter the territory of Nazi Germany and capture Berlin, the capital of Nazi Germany, on 2 May 1945. Shortly after the fall of Berlin, Nazi Germany surrendered unconditionally.

As a result of the achievements of the Red Army during the Second World War, socialist administrations were established in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Together with the United States, the Soviet Union became one of the two superpowers of the world. From 25 February 1946 onwards, the Red Army was named the Armed Forces of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

2. The Armenians in the Red Army and the Great Patriotic War

After the Turkish-Russian war of 1877-1878, Kars, Ardahan, and Batumi provinces were abandoned to the Russians as war compensation. This region rejoined with Turkey following the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of 3 March 1918 signed with the Bolsheviks. But this situation was short-lived, the region was evacuated after the signing of the Armistice of Mondros. Therefore, it was again left to Armenian and Georgian control³⁴.

Since September of that year, Turkish and Armenian forces were engaged in conflict along the border. Turkish nationalist forces under the command of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) began to recapture territory taken from the Ottoman Empire in the 1870s by the Tsarist regime of Russia. On 30 October, under the strong offensive of Mustafa Kemal's Turkish army, the Armenians abandoned the strategic city of Kars. Georgian troops occupied a neutral zone between the two sides with the permission of Armenia, preventing the Armenian army from being decimated by the Turkish army. On 15 November 1920, the population was evacuated from Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, due to the approach of Turkish national troops from the South. According to media reports, the Armenian army left the city, running out of ammunition, and the roads leading out of the city were filled with refugees, more than 100,000 of them fled Armenia to neighboring Georgia.

The Republic of Armenia, ruled by the Dashnaksutyun bourgeois government as Democratic Republic of Armenia (DRA), invited the French and British

33 V. Nicholas Riasanovsky ve D. Mark Steinberg, *Rusya Tarihi*, çev. Figen Dereli (İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları, 2011), 568.

34 Sadi Koçuş, *Tarih Boyunca Ermeniler ve Türk Ermeni İlişkileri* (Ankara, 1967).

military forces to the country, but in the end, it was only a small number of Greek soldiers who helped Armenia. Armenia was forced to demand peace, and on 18 November, the ceasefire came into force. On 1 December, a peace treaty was signed between the two sides. A few days after the armistice agreement with the Turkish government of Ankara, an uprising led by the Bolsheviks occurred in northern Armenia. Armenia was administered under the control of the Bolshevik revolutionary committee until 30 November 1920. After the uprising, the Armenian government, which had no political will left, agreed to the entry of the Red Army into the country. By then, the DRA, founded in 1918, had ceased to exist. The Red Army, coming from the Soviet Azerbaijan region, invaded Armenia. The Red Army entered Yerevan on 1 December, resulting in a change in Armenia's state-system and the country being named the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) as a part of Soviet Union³⁵. The ASSR provided soldiers to the Red Army, as was the case in the other socialist republics that formed the Soviet Union, and was directly involved in the military activities of the Red Army. Especially in the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945),³⁶ the ASSR made significant contributions to the war efforts of the Red Army. In addition, the ASSR played an important role in providing support to the SU in both industry and agriculture. During the war, many Armenians joined the Red Army, and some Armenians took important military positions in it. Although the battles of the war did not take place in the territory of Armenia, Armenia nevertheless lost many of its soldiers.

While some of the Armenians supported the Red Army in the Great Patriotic War, some of them sided with Nazi Germany instead. Nazi Germany launched the invasion of the SU, called Operation Barbarossa, on 22 June 1941. Despite poor strategic deployment and operational and tactical deficiencies during Operation Barbarossa, the Red Army survived the summer and autumn of 1941³⁷. During the war, the Nazis formed various armies to use the manpower in the SU against the Red Army and the Communist regime. At this stage, the *Russian Liberation Army* (*Русская освободительная армия*) was formed under the leadership of Andrey Vlasov against the Red Army. In addition, the Nazis formed divisions called *Georgian Legion* (*Georgische Legion*), *Azerbaijani Legion* (*Aserbajdschanische Legion*), and *Armenian Legion* (*Armenische Legion*).

35 *Vayannaya Ensiklopedia*, 8 toms, Vaenizdat (Moskva, 2004).

36 Anvar Ismailovich Ismailov, "On the Issue of Human Losses during the Great Patriotic War, 1941–1945", *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 24, no.2 (2011): 232.

37 Alexander Hill, "Offense, Defence or the Worst of Both Worlds? Soviet Strategy in May-June 1941", *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 13, no.1 (2010): 61.

3. Methodology

A total of 616 propaganda posters were found in the Armenian Soviet Posters Collection³⁸ from the website of the Library of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)³⁹. After the scanning all the Armenian Soviet Posters Collection, seven posters containing propaganda for the Red Army and the Armenian SSR were determined for sampling from the said 616 posters. In the selected posters, attention was paid to the graphic transmission of images or symbols containing references in whole or in part to the Red Army and the ASSR. The propaganda posters identified in the study were analyzed using the semiotic model (a qualitative research method) of the French linguist Roland Barthes (1915-1980).

Semiotics involves a greater and deeper awareness of the roles acquired by people in the construction of reality in all areas of interest to society, and the roles and meanings of the indicators used as tools is an important part of the semiotics theory⁴⁰. Today, semiotic practices that combine different disciplines in academic and social studies can achieve innovate results. Analyses can be reproduced and compared to form different points of view. As a result, semiotics is a fairly broad analysis theory with a wide range of applications. It is a theory that includes applications that can meet the needs of the technological progress of our age and offers propositions from different angles to problems, and is among the methods of searching for qualities that are open to analytical interpretations.

38 "Armenian Ephemera", *University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Library*, <http://idep.library.ucla.edu/armenian-ephemera> ; "Soviet Armenian Posters", *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed May 4, 2021. <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/collection=Soviet+Armenian+Posters>

39 Benjamin Alkaly, "Beyond the Library Walls", *University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Library*, September 16, 2019, <https://www.library.ucla.edu/news/beyond-library-walls>

40 Murat Kalelioğlu, "Göstergebilim Kuramının Genel Bir Değerlendirmesi, Türkiye'deki Yeri ve Önemi", *Söylem Filoloji Dergisi* 6, Sayı 1 (2021): 198.

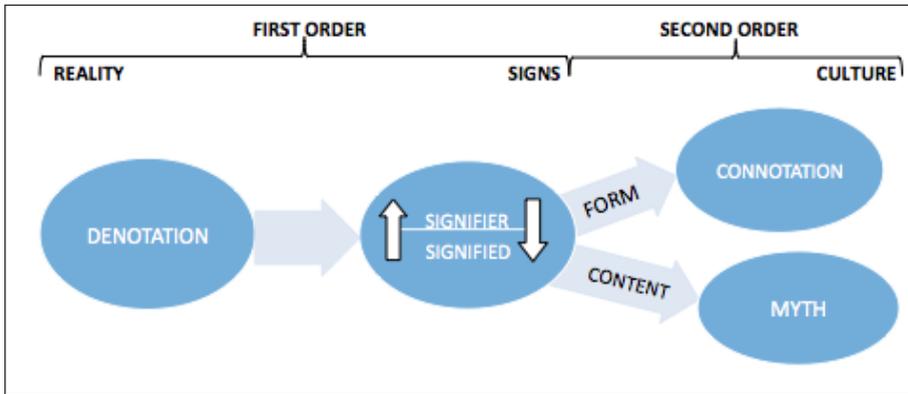


Figure 1. Roland Barthes' Semiotics Model⁴¹

According to Barthes, the image is characterized by a structural independence associated to what is aesthetic and ideological to address the recipient who is able to read it on the connotative level through his/her cultural and symbolic background. In addition, Barthes was able to study the graphic signs through the interpretation of the social worlds whether they are things, text, or adverts. He established a new method to analyze the image on the denotative and connotative level. The graphic image as a myth is a semiological system, a sign combined of the signifier and the signified, therefore, the image is a nonverbal language which is open to many interpretations, readings and significance. In photography, the scene is captured mechanically and man's interventions in the photograph (framing, distance, lighting, focus, speed) all effectively belong to the plane of connotation⁴².

4. Results and Discussion

Roland Barthes's *S/Z*, which purports to be an exhaustive structuralist reading of Honoré de Balzac's short story "Sarrasine", which is a classic of what we today understand by post-structuralism in its relentless exposure of the structuration of the structures of the realist narrative. The following is an outline of the so called "five codes" he uses to analyze the different dimensions of realism. The combination of codes and their functions provides a positive attempt to establish discursive constraints that make communication both possible and meaningful. The following are the codes identified by Barthes in his breakthrough post-structuralist text, *S/Z*:

41 John Fiske, *İletişim Çalışmalarına Giriş*, 5. Basım, çev. Süleyman İrvan (Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, 2017), 186.

42 Feyrouz Bouzida, "The Semiology Analysis in Media Studies-Roland Barthes Approach", Proceedings of SocioInt14-International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities, September 8-10, 2014, Istanbul/Turkey, p. 1004.

- “1. Proairetic code (the voice of empirics): The code of actions. Any action initiated must be completed. The cumulative actions constitute the plot events of the text.
2. Hermeneutic code (the voice of truth): The code of enigmas or puzzles.
3. Connotative [or Semic] code (the voice of the person): The accumulation of connotations. Semes, sequential thoughts, traits and actions constitute character. “The proper noun surrounded by connotations.”
4. Cultural or referential code (the voice of science [or knowledge]): Though all codes are cultural we reserve this designation for the storehouse of knowledge we use in interpreting everyday experience.
5. Symbolic code (voice of the symbol): Binary oppositions or themes. The inscription into the text of the antithesis central to the organization of the cultural code.”⁴³

For this article, the third item, the connotative code was selected and applied on the visual materials for analyzing the posters on Red Army and Armenia. In this way, we have had the chance to resolve details and define materialistic codes on these visual works. Seven propaganda posters on military equipment, war training, socialist homeland, air force, the enemy, the front, and celebration are analyzed employing the semiotics method.

4.1. Propaganda Poster on Military Equipment

The propaganda poster on military equipment was prepared by Ashot Mamadzhanian in 1933. When considered in the denotation dimension, it is seen that three soldiers are depicted next to the gatling gun in the poster. One of the soldiers looks in one direction with his binoculars. It is seen that there are *budenovkas* belonging to the Red Army on the head of the soldiers. It is understood that a big production plant (or a big dam) is depicted in the background of the poster. Armored vehicles, tanks, and aircraft are next to the production plant (or dam) in the poster. The picture below shows soldiers training with weapons. In the bottom picture, there is a train and a truck carrying a tank. There is an inscription stating “Let us master [improve ourselves in the use of] the military tactics the Bolshevik way (*Բայլ շեղիկորեն տիրապետենք նազմական տեխնիկային*)” on the poster.

43 John Phillips, “Roland Barthes and the Coding of Discourse”, *National University of Singapore*, accessed July 20, 2021, <https://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/elljwp/5codes.htm>



Poster 1. Propaganda Poster on Military Equipment⁴⁴

Security and power issues come to the fore as signified in the poster. When analyzed in terms of connotation, the message that the Red Army protects Armenia is given in the poster. The soldiers in the poster are used as the metonym of the Armenian people joining the Red Army. The production plant (or dam) symbolizes the production in Armenia. The armored vehicles, tanks, and planes featured in the poster constitute the perception that the Red Army is equipped in terms of military hardware and that the Red Army is ready for any attack against Armenia. The Red Army is used as a metaphor for both power and security in the poster. The poster gives the message that the strength of the Red Army is important for the security of Armenia. In this respect, the poster constructs the propaganda myth that “The strength of the Red Army is the strength of Armenia”. Through this myth, Armenians are called upon to improve themselves within the Red Army so that Armenia can be a strong country.

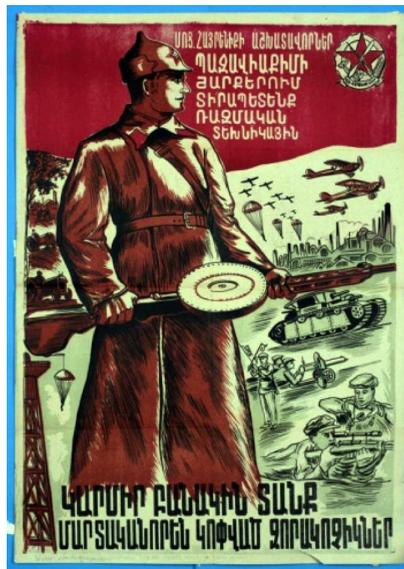
44 “Բայլ շեվիկորեն տիրապետեն ռազմական տեխնիկային,” *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:407>

Signifier	Soldier, production plant, weapons
Denotation	Providing military training
Signified	Security, strength
Connotation	The Red Army protects Armenia
Myth	The strength of the Red Army is the strength of Armenia

Table 1: Propaganda Poster on Military Equipment

4.2. Propaganda Poster on War Training

The propaganda poster on war training was prepared by Ashot Petros Mamajanyan. The poster is dated between 1927-1951 years. When examined in terms of denotation meaning, a man wearing a Red Army uniform holding a machine gun is depicted on the poster. Tractors plowing a field are behind the man and planes, parachutes, a tank, and civilians standing at the head of weapons are in front of him. The color red is used in the background of the poster. There is an inscription stating “We give to the Red Army strong conscripts for combat” (Կարմիր բանակին տանք մարտականորեն կռիված զորակոչիկներ) on the poster.



Poster 2. Propaganda Poster on War Training⁴⁵

⁴⁵ “Կարմիր բանակին տանք մարտականորեն կռիված զորակոչիկներ”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemeria Project*, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:80>

Security and power issues come to the fore as signified in the poster. When considered in terms of connotation, the poster gives the message that the Red Army protects the Armenian people. The soldier in the poster is used as the metonym of the Armenian people joining the Red Army. The tractors plowing the field behind the man in the poster symbolize the production in Armenia, the planes, parachutes, and the tank symbolize the power of the Red Army. The perception is formed that the Red Army ensures the security of Armenia and that it is ready for a possible attack against Armenia, as is the case in the first poster that was examined. In this respect, the Red Army is used as a metaphor for both power and security in the poster. The propaganda myth “Armenians should join the Red Army” is constructed in the poster and thus Armenians are encouraged to join the Red Army this myth.

Signifier	Soldier, field, weapons
Denotation	Providing military training
Signified	Security, strength
Connotation	Red Army’s protection of the Armenian people
Myth	Armenians should join the Red Army

Table 2: Propaganda Poster on War Training

4.3. Propaganda Poster on Socialist Homeland

The propaganda poster on the socialist homeland was prepared by Aleksandr Grigoryan. The poster is dated between 1939-1950 years. Considered in denotation terms, the poster depicts a soldier holding a rifle and bayonet. It is understood from the uniform of the soldier that he is a soldier of the Red Army. A big production plant is depicted in the background of the poster. There is an inscription “Let the Red Army of the workers and peasants, who are the watchful guardians of the socialist country, grow and become stronger (*Пусть растёт и крепнет Рабоче-Крестьянская Красная Армия зоркий часовой социалистической родины*)” on the poster. Unlike the other posters examined within the scope of the study, the propaganda message is given in Russian.



Poster 3. Propaganda Poster on Socialist Homeland⁴⁶

The content of this poster bears resemblances to the previous two posters. Security comes to the fore as the signified in the poster. When examined in terms of connotation meaning, the poster gives the message that the Red Army is the guarantee of the safety of production. The soldier in the poster is used as the metonym of the Armenian people joining the Red Army. The production plant in the poster also symbolizes the production in Armenia. The poster creates the perception that the Red Army is the guarantee of Armenia’s security. Red Army is used as a security metaphor in the poster. The propaganda myth “The Red Army protects the gains of the Armenian people” is constructed in the poster, and the Armenians are thus encouraged to support the Red Army through the myth.

Signifier	Soldier, production plant
Denotation	The Red Army soldier protects the production plant
Signified	Security
Connotation	The Red Army is the guarantee of the safety of production
Myth	The Red Army protects the gains of the Armenian people

Table 3: Propaganda Poster on Socialist Homeland

⁴⁶ “Пусть растёт и крепнет Рабоче-Крестьянская Красная Армия зоркий часовой социалистической родины”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:325>

4.4. Propaganda Poster on the Air Force

The propaganda poster on the air force was prepared by Andrey Borisovich Yumashev, Viktor Nikolaevich Deni, and Nikolai Andreevich Dolgorukov in 1940. When examined in terms of denotation meaning, black and red airplanes are depicted in the air on the poster. In the foreground of the poster, one of the red airplanes goes over a black plane. The black plane crashes and smoke rises from it. There are star symbols on the red plane. In the poster, there is an inscription stating “‘Who is strong in the air is strong in our time.’ K. Voroshilov” (“Ով ուժեղ է ոդում, նա մեր ժամանակ ընդհանրապես ուժեղ է” Կ. Վորոշիլով) on the poster.



Poster 4. Propaganda Poster on the Air Force⁴⁷

47 “Ով ուժեղ է ոդում, նա մեր ժամանակ ընդհանրապես ուժեղ է” Կ. Վորոշիլով”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:199>

Power and success come to the fore as the signified in the poster. When considered in terms of connotation, the poster gives the message that the Red Army defeats its enemies. The red plane in the poster is used as the metonym of the Red Army’s air force. The perception is formed that the Red Army is strong in the air as it is on the ground and that it is ready for a possible air attack against Armenia. Red Army is used as a power metaphor in the poster. Thus, the propaganda myth “The Red Army is strong against its enemies” is constructed in the poster. In this way, the perception is formed that the Red Army is strong enough to defeat its enemies.

Signifier	Black, red planes
Denotation	The red airplane prevails over the black airplane
Signified	Strength, success
Connotation	The Red Army defeats its enemies
Myth	The Red Army is strong against its enemies

Table 4: Propaganda Poster on Air Force

4.5. Propaganda Poster on the Enemy

The propaganda poster on the enemy was prepared in 1941 but it is unknown who prepared it. Considered in a denotation sense, the poster depicts soldiers on horseback carrying two flags advancing in one direction. On the front of the poster, there is an inscription stating “For the homeland, for Stalin (*за родину за сталина*)” on the red flag. A star is depicted on the helmets worn by the soldiers. Airplanes are depicted on the upper left of the poster. There is an inscription stating “Attack the enemy, brave soldiers of the Soviet country (*Հարձակույթ թշնամու վրա դրուցազներ սովետական երկրի*)” on the poster.



Poster 5. Propaganda Poster on the Enemy⁴⁸

This is a poster steeped in communist elements. When analyzed in terms of connotation, the poster gives the message of the Red Army as the protector power of communism. The soldiers on the poster are used as the metonym of the Armenian people who have joined the Red Army. The red flags on the poster symbolize the ideology of communism. The development of the defense industry is demonstrated by the aircraft. It refers to air military support for the Red Army. The poster shows the inscription on the flag they carry while the Red Army is fighting for the homeland. It is also significant that the strong message is now written in Russian because Armenia remained a member of the SU at the end of 1920. The planners of the propaganda must have calculated that the Armenian people could speak, read, and write Russian. On the other hand, through the visual signs, a perception is inadvertently formed that the Red Army is struggling to maintain the ideology of communism. Overall, the propaganda myth that “communism could be threatened without the Red Army” is built on the poster. In this way, the perception is formed that the Red Army’s defense of communism is the defense of Armenia. Information from the poster shows that the Red Army is a force ready to fight. On the other hand, the poster also highlights Stalin’s personality cult.

48 “Հառա՛ջ թշնամու վրա դուրսագնէր սովետական երկրի”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:158>

Signifier	Red flags, soldiers
Denotation	Red Army attack
Signified	Communism
Connotation	The Red Army is the protector of Communism
Myth	Communism can be under threat without the Red Army

Table 5: Propaganda Poster on Enemy

4. 6. Propaganda Poster on the Front

The propaganda poster on the front was prepared in 1944, but like the previous poster, it is unknown who prepared this poster. When examined in terms of denotation meaning, tobacco and cotton images are highlighted in the poster. In the background of the poster, two soldiers smoke on the left side and one soldier gives clothes to another soldier on the right. There is an inscription stating “We will give more tobacco and cotton to the front” (*Տանք ֆրոնտին սվելի շատ ծխախոտ ու բամբակ*)” on the poster.



Poster 6. Propaganda Poster on the Front⁴⁹

49 “Տանք ֆրոնտին սվելի շատ ծխախոտ ու բամբակ”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:432>

Aid and support stand out as the signified in the poster. When considered in terms of connotation, the poster gives the message that the Armenian people support the Red Army. The soldiers in the poster are directly used as the metonym of the Red Army. The Soviet Union is among the countries that experienced the Second World War with great intensity and suffered the greatest decimation. Tobacco and cotton were grown in Armenia, and during this difficult war, Armenia provided full military support to the Red Army. This poster clearly shows the support of Armenia, which gave the Soviets all the crops it grew. In the poster, the Armenian people’s support for the Red Army is perceived as a responsibility. At this stage, the propaganda myth that “The Armenian people should support the Red Army” is constructed and the perception that the Red Army needs cigarettes and clothing is formed. Based on this perception, it can be claimed that the poster gives the message that the Armenians should support the Red Army in its need for tobacco and cotton.

Signifier	Tobacco, cotton
Denotation	Cigarettes and clothing for Red Army soldiers
Signified	Aid, support
Connotation	Armenian people’s support for the Red Army
Myth	The Armenian people should support the Red Army

Table 6: Propaganda Poster on the Front

4.7. Propaganda Poster on Celebration

This poster was designed and drawn in 1960 by Armenian artist Khachatur Hovhannes Gyulamiyan. The words of the prominent inscription, “There is no end to our march, there is no defeat to our bright endeavor...” (*Մեր երթիկն վախճան չկա, մեր պայծառ գործին՝ պարտություն...*), belongs to the Armenian writer Yeghishe Charents. Born in Kars in 1897, Charents died in a Yerevan prison hospital in 1937. We can see that excerpts from Charents’ poems, who was arrested by the authorities of the communist system for engaging in “nationalism” and involved in other common crimes, were nevertheless used by the same system after his death. The fact that the Armenian writer was more sympathetic to the Armenian people (over any system or state) makes it a poster that would attract attention, which was probably deliberated on by the final decision maker who approved the publication of this poster. On the poster, the army troops that went to fight at the front are used prominently with strong lines. Again, history was preferred to be written in Red Army color and the blue color of freedom. Against the morning or bright cloudy skies in the background, the poster reflects both comfort and energy. In terms of the meaning of the expression, on the left side

of the poster is a dynamic army unit armed with a rifle with a bayonet attachment, on the right side is a student girl, a woman with her hair carefully collected, and a man with a strong expression just to her right. Behind the girl, woman, and the man is the flag of the Red Army with the coat of arms of Lenin. The flag being waved shows the year 1960, signifying the 40th anniversary of the Armenian SSR.



Poster 7. Propaganda Poster on Celebration⁵⁰

From the point of view of connotation, the poster gives the message that the Armenian people are watching the Red Army with sympathy and adoration. The soldiers on the poster are used directly as the metonym of the Red Army. In the poster, the Armenian people -the figures of the girl, woman, and man in the poster- are perceived to have positive feelings for the Red Army. At this stage, the poster gives the message that “the Armenian people have adopted the Red Army and believe in it”. The Red Army is strong here and refers to the crowd, the multiplicity, but is passive. We can understand from this that the army does not have any demands. For this purpose, this poster creates the perception that forty years of unity and harmony has been achieved. Based on this perception, the poster claims that the Armenians, as one entity, adopted a system, believed in it, and became a whole with themselves.

50 “Մեր երթին վախճան չկա, մեր պայծառ գործին՝ պարտություն... Չարենց”, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:393>

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Signifier	Army, people, flag
Denotation	Red Army soldiers, people
Signified	Loyalty, Fidelity
Connotation	Armenian people have adopted and trust to the Red Army
Myth	The Armenian people are grateful to the Red Army.

Table 7: Propaganda Poster on Celebration

Conclusion

It is an indisputable fact that modern political propaganda was initiated with the Bolsheviks. After the October Revolution, Soviet propaganda, especially developed by Lenin and Trotsky, began to be aired on the radio for the first time with the positivity of Lenin and the innovation of Trotsky. It is often impossible to definitively limit the propaganda space. Propaganda is only one aspect of the political purpose of the state; it covers a general program of action ranging from school to industrial and agricultural production to the formation of armies. Citizens whole life become an object of propaganda.

The basic triangle of Soviet propaganda was indoctrination, agitation, and practice. The Leninist political propaganda technique was perceived to be directly proportional to Lenin's moderate and calm structure. The messages were quickly adopted by proletarians, peasants, intellectuals, soldiers. All propaganda efforts were aimed at the "unification of forces". Through speeches, films, songs, publications, posters, and decorations, the workers and the soldiers were committed to a successful and prosperous future.

After the Bolshevik-led uprising in northern Armenia, the 11th Red Army invaded Armenia from Soviet Azerbaijan. By 30 November, power had passed into the hands of the Bolshevik Revolutionary Committee. On 1 December, the Red Army entered Yerevan, and the Soviet Republic of Armenia was proclaimed. The entry of the Red Army into Armenia and the immediate establishment of the Armenian Red Army without reaction by the Armenians was an unusual development. The quick acceptance of the Red Army in Armenia may have been due to the failure of the independent Armenia to offer adequate protection. Another factor may be the inability of the Dashnak government to succeed against the Turkish army. But more serious for the Dashnak government and its supporters was the demand for troops from Britain and France for border protection. The fact that this was ignored by the countries concerned also destroyed trust in imperialist states.

On the other hand, there was excitement for the strengthening and development of the Red Army's capacity. The revolution that began in Russia was also reflected in the Caucasus region. The most important factor can be considered as the lack of political power of Armenia. In all these possibilities, the presence of the Red Army in Armenia and the establishment of the National Red Army attached to the central army did not cause a local reaction. The Soviet Union also found an area of expansion in the Caucasus, located in the south-west region –of more strategic importance, in accordance with its own policies. This is a situation that shows that the security of SU was ensured both in the geographical area and in the ideological periphery.

In the propaganda posters examined in this article, it appears that the propaganda of the Soviet Union emphasized the importance of the Red Army in the defense of the motherland in general. The posters form the perception that there was a strong industry in the ASSR based on the guidance of the communist regime in the SU. At this stage, the idea rises that the industry continued in the ASSR and it was possible to remain a strong country with the communist regime. The posters put forth the Red Army as a guarantee of the communist regime in the ASSR, and the Red Army is presented to the public as the protector of prosperity in the ASSR. In this way, it turns out that propaganda posters in the ASSR sought to both legitimize the communist regime and create a positive perception of the Red Army. Soviet propaganda was successful at the point where the activities of the state appeared to all political, economic, and intellectual groups in Armenia.

The propaganda posters made it clear that the presence of the Red Army ensured peace and security of the ASSR. At this stage, the Armenian people were asked to join and support the Red so that they could remain strong. It was perceived that the expertise in the military equipment of people who joined the Red Army in the ASSR contributed to the strength of the Red Army. The posters were intended to depict the Armenian people willingly supporting the Red Army and were given the message that the Red Army was the army of the Armenian people. On the other hand, propaganda posters tried to create the perception that the Red Army was strong, determined, and dynamic in the minds of the Armenian people. This stressed that the Red Army was ready for any possible attack against the ASSR.

In the findings obtained from posters used in Red Army propaganda in the ASSR, it becomes clear that there was an effort to establish a relationship with the Red Army in the ASSR, and in this way the Armenian people would accept the Red Army as their own army. In propaganda posters, Stalin's cult of personality was surprisingly in limited use (considering the power of his cult of personality in the SU), while what came to the fore was the Red Army, which was depicted as engaged in the defense of the country. In this way, it can be

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argued that the purpose of the Red Army's existence in the ASSR was to ensure the security of the Armenian people and that a positive image of the Red Army was sought to be cultivated in the eyes of the Armenian people. After the Red Army, which entered Armenia in 1920 and changed its name in 1946, it is possible to say that these propaganda works had a positive effect on justifying its existence in Armenia until the end of the Soviets in August 1991.

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