

Framing the Foe: Propaganda and Enemy Imagery in the Austro-Hungarian War Effort

Gabriella Jeki

Károli Gaspar University of the Reformed Church in Hungary

ABSTRACT

During World War I, the Austro-Hungarian Empire meticulously crafted the image of the enemy as a pivotal tool of propaganda. This endeavour was not a spontaneous or organic development but a consciously designed process integral to the war effort. My presentation based on original research conducted in Vienna's Staadtarchiv and Kriegsarchiv, supported by two fellowships, to explore the multifaceted role of enemy image-building in sustaining morale and patriotism, legitimizing sacrifices made for the war, and unifying soldiers and civilians. Through an analysis of various media and censorship practices, as well as the exploitation of cultural and social influences, my presentation try to reveals how propaganda and the construction of the enemy image were deeply embedded in the social and political dynamics of the era. I illustrate with specific examples the strategic portrayal of adversaries in derogatory and dehumanizing manners, highlighting the manipulative power of visual and textual content. The research methodology includes archival investigation and qualitative analysis, aiming to understand the impact of these propaganda techniques on human and international relations during and after the war. The expected outcomes of this research include a deeper insight into the psychological and societal mechanisms of propaganda, contributing to the broader historical narrative of World War I. This presentation underscores the lasting implications of wartime propaganda, offering a critical perspective on the enduring effects of crafted enemy images on collective memory and international perceptions.

Keywords: World War I, Austro-Hungarian Empire, propaganda, enemy image, media