
# Seduction or instruction?

## First World War posters in Britain and Europe

Jim Aulich &
John Hewitt

'A fantastic resource on the cultural history of the First World War.'
*Professor Joanna Bourke,*
*Birkbeck College, London*

This book makes a critical and historical analysis of the public information poster and its graphic derivatives in Britain and Europe during the First World War. It was the first international conflict to see the launch of major publicity campaigns designed to maintain public support for national needs and government policies. Then, as now, the press, photography and film played an important role, but in the early twentieth century there was no radio, television or internet and the most publicly visible advertising medium was the poster.

*Seduction or instruction?* considers the museological and memorialising imperatives behind the formation of the war publicity collection at the Imperial War Museum and undertakes institutional and iconographical analyses of the British government's recruiting, war loan and charity campaigns. It examines the effect of the inroads of the poster into important public and symbolic spaces and provides a comparative analysis of European poster design and the visual contribution of the poster through style and iconography to languages of 'imagined communities'.

This volume will be of interest to design historians, historians and readers involved with the study of communication arts, publicity, advertising and visual culture at every level.

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*Jim Aulich and John Hewitt*

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Lynn, Alice and John
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To Aileen, Jo and Sam
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# Introduction

In the literature, posters are generally conceived as self-evident objects to be listed, described, geographically located, attributed and categorised. Often they are offered as unproblematic visual evidence of a society's history, customs and practices. For the authors of this book, the poster is an object produced within a historically specific system of visual communication. The look of the posters, where they are displayed and how they acquire meaning is understood as a direct consequence of particular modes of production, exhibition and reception shaped by historically defined practices, expectations and legal frameworks. The latter are what Michel Foucault calls a nexus of regularities that frame the conditions for the historical appearance of the poster.[1] Regularities in turn articulated through a range of discourses such as patriotism, citizenship, duty, aesthetics, trade, commerce, identity, and the spheres of the public and the private, all of which underpin the political and moral structure of society.

From the late nineteenth century the poster was increasingly visible in public spaces. This visibility and its reception were mediated and by virtue of its location the poster signified in a wider field of visual products. The poster's relationship to the wider field of visual objects with their own modes of production and consumption is akin to the Saussurian relationship of 'parole' to 'langue', of individual expression to the underlying language.[2] Our knowledge of the language affects our understanding and the poster acquires meaning by reference to other visual objects and practices. As semiotics reminds us, something is defined as much by what it is not, as by what it is. In 1914, for example,

one of the defining factors of the poster was that it was not a painting, a fact deplored by many middle-class critics of advertising, but celebrated by an increasingly confident advertising trade.

The last comment draws attention to the unstable and transient nature of the field. The field is not simply an aggregate of all possible visual practices at any one moment but is, in fact, structured according to certain competing values held by different interest groups. As a result, not all visual objects and practices are accorded the same degree of legitimacy at any one time. As Pierre Bourdieu comments, 'the field becomes the product and prize of permanent conflict'.[3] Indirectly affected by wider political, social and economic changes it has an even greater degree of instability as its distinctive structure and logic are subjected to further pressure.

An example from the liberal democratic British experience will help to clarify the issue and relate the general theoretical concept to the subject of the book. In 1914, the public notice and the poster shared many of the same general characteristics. Both are pieces of paper and are printed with text to be exhibited in public space. Yet, the public had no difficulty in telling them apart, even when they shared the same space. Railway travellers had no problem in distinguishing between a poster attempting to seduce them into a visit to Skegness because it was 'So Bracing', from a timetable instructing them how to get there.[4] This was because they dealt with different kinds of subject matter and because they looked distinct even when they were both produced as letterpress bills. They were doing different jobs. They addressed and constructed their putative audience in specific ways: where the public notice informs, instructs or even commands, the poster persuades, seduces and even wheedles. In this exchange, the public notice constructs the 'readers' as citizens subject to the power of various institutions, while the poster constructs them as consumers who have the freedom to choose from what is on offer. The power relationships between the author and the reader are distinct. In the public notice the power resides with the author. The reader can take note or not at his own risk. In the poster, power appears to rest with the reader who gets the message or not and acts accordingly, possibly at the advertiser's expense. The public notice operates according to bureaucratic

or legal principles, the poster according to the laws of the marketplace. Indeed, as the book establishes, the measure of the instability of the field can be seen in Germany and France where the distinction was less clear. In these countries, more than was ever the case in Britain, the state controlled the production of posters along propagandistic lines to construct a citizenry within particular national histories.

Public notices were more likely to occupy civic space such as town squares, or the outside of government buildings, schools, law courts and public parks, while posters were displayed in commercial spaces of the hoarding, the gable end and the shop window. This spatial separation was vigorously defended by middle-class pressure groups and was secured by legislation in the face of increased outdoor advertising in the period immediately prior to the outbreak of hostilities. This separation was emphasised by the impact of Sir Ian Malcolm's exhibition of German proclamations 'Scraps of Paper' at Selfridges. Not only did the exhibition illustrate the extreme measures undertaken by the German military in the occupied territories with the announcements of death sentences handed out to figures such as Captain Fryatt and Nurse Cavell, but it took place in a shop whose owner was renowned for his modern use of advertising to entice and beguile, rather than to inform and instruct by decree.[5]

No pressure group can permanently fix the shape of the field of visual production in popular commercial culture and what is particularly interesting in studying the First World War poster is how its role and its relationship to the public notice was impacted upon by the social, economic and political changes that took place on a scale, of a scope and at a speed that was quite unprecedented.

In 1914, the war was expected to be a traditional conflict of limited duration affecting a small section of society. Within two years it was clear the war had become a war of attrition without a foreseeable end affecting all sectors of society. Although it did not disappear, the public notice proved an inadequate instrument for the delivery of government information when the need for the authorities to educate and instruct increased as governments caught up in total war sought to regulate more and more of people's lives. The public notice alone was inadequate to the pressures to raise men, money, materials and morale. Populations

had to be persuaded they were fighting for a just cause in defence of a community in which all had a vested interest. This was far from self-evident in 1914 and work had to be done to persuade people that this was indeed the case, and propaganda departments from the various combatant nations turned to the well-established instrument of popular persuasion, the poster. As a product of the advertising business, it was an association with national cause that certainly enhanced the reputation of the trade, at least for the duration.

It did not, however, enhance the reputation of the advertising trade among the ruling classes. Throughout the book, the authors draw attention to the tensions between different sections of the middle classes, particularly in Britain as the various ruling elites made use of advertising. Broadly, the tension was between a professional middle class, many of whom shared the values of the aristocracy and the gentry, and the business section of the middle classes. The professional middles classes frequently felt a sense of superiority to the business class through their commitment to professional codes, ethical standards, aesthetic value and a notion of gentlemanly behaviour that they compared unfavourably with the businessman's pursuit of profit.[6] Middle-class men who dominated the world of advertising were not only associated with business but were more narrowly associated with commerce. They carried with them the taint of trade.[7] While these divisions within the middle classes in the different European countries took on local emphases, there were broad correspondences. Consequently, throughout the book we shall refer to the different segments of the middle classes as the professional and commercial middle classes.

This book draws almost exclusively on the comprehensive poster collection held by the Art Department in the Imperial War Museum and concentrates on the British, while making reference to the French, German, and to a lesser extent Austro-Hungarian holdings. America came late to the war, and for reasons of space their posters and those of Russia and Italy have not been included. However, taking the lead from the original intentions of the War Publicity collection when it was set up in 1917, the book embraces advertising in Britain, not just as a 'record of the war' as originally hoped, but as part of an attempt on behalf of

the authors to locate the 'poster' within a discursive formation shaped by government, commerce, special interest groups, and the advertising industry influencing the perception of the poster and the construction of the viewer.

Chapter 1 examines the central role of the Keeper of War Publicity, L.R. Bradley, in establishing the collection between 1917 and the early 1920s. Using his unpublished correspondence and the evidence of the collection itself, it explores the political, museological and memorialising imperatives behind the collection's inception. The selection, inclusion and exclusion of material classified as short-lived printed ephemera, poses a whole range of interesting theoretical, aesthetic and ideological questions. These are particularly significant as it evolved from a collection of War Publicity that made little distinction between proclamations, cartoon, press advertising, show cards, streamers and posters, to its current status as one of the nation's most important poster collections. Against this background, taking the cue from Bradley's original intention, the chapter examines the medium of the poster and its graphic derivatives in the context of the wider debates concerning propaganda, publicity and advertising in relation to the media, modernity and Americanisation.

Chapter 2 focuses on the use of posters in recruiting campaigns. In Britain the principal official poster campaign was facilitated by the War Office and the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (PRC). Drawing on the work of Nicholas Hiley, Philip Dutton and Barry Curtis, the chapter assesses the relative roles of central government, local civic and military bodies and the advertising trade in the production and display of these posters.[8] Looking across the whole campaign it is possible to map shifts in the formal appearance of the posters as they move from public notice to commercial poster and back again by 1916. These shifts signify an uneasy and unresolved tension between the professional and commercial middle classes as to the purpose, value and decency of publicity. The chapter also examines the recruiting campaigns in Ireland, the colonies and the dominions, an area in which little work has been done and concludes that for all their differences there are striking similarities across all the campaigns, not least because the political and military bodies responsible drew on motifs and themes in the British campaign.

These similarities are reinforced by the dominant figurative, anecdotal, sentimental and unremittingly commercial poster style.

The published work on the British First World War poster has concentrated almost exclusively on the recruiting poster yet the campaigns lasted for barely a year. Consequently, the bulk of posters produced in Britain during the war has been ignored by historians. Chapter 3 sets out to remedy this lack and examines posters used in government campaigns to raise money for the war through the sale of war loans, war bonds and savings certificates, to organise and direct labour, to raise and sustain morale and, as the U-boat blockade began to bite, to encourage a more economical use of resources. These campaigns made use of an infrastructure of local bodies and committees, many of which had been put in place during the PRC campaign to facilitate the distribution of publicity and posters. The campaigns, like those for recruiting, also drew on the expertise and facilities of the advertising world for the design, production and display of the posters.

The chapter also analyses the posters produced as part of the fund-raising activities by non-governmental bodies. These included relief committees set up to support the populations and refugees from allies such as Belgium and Serbia who were victims of the aggression of the Central Powers in the early part of the war. The work of other charities such as the YMCA, the YWCA and the Red Cross expanded enormously as the number of casualties increased and soldiers at the front began to suffer more and more from physical, psychological and moral dislocation in what seemed to be an interminable conflict.

While these charities and voluntary bodies were non-governmental they were not non-political. Their trustees and patrons were drawn from the social and political establishment and, as the chapter demonstrates, the publicity used to raise funds drew on and articulated a public discourse of patriotism, duty and sacrifice in defence of an imagined community of equals against an immoral and uncivilised enemy in a chorus that not only echoed political propaganda but also complemented and reinforced it.

The literature on posters tends to detach them from history and removes them from the public spaces where they achieved their meaning.

Chapter 4 places the British First World War posters back into the public space to examine the conditions under which they were displayed and consumed. By 1914, the very public nature of the poster had generated hostile criticism from middle-class groups leading to legislation to contain the spread of outdoor advertising. This was happening not only in Britain but also in France, Germany and Austria-Hungary. However, the very intensity of these debates in Britain and the frequency with which fresh legislation was being demanded suggested a failure on the part of its opponents to stop the spread of outdoor advertising. The critics sought to contain its impact, how it addressed or rather harangued the man in the street, by subjecting the poster to discourses on art and manners. For the professional middle classes, the problem with the poster was that it did not know its place.

In the main, during the First World War the poster ceased to be an object of criticism. It moved unopposed into civic spaces previously free from advertising, such as city squares. Why was this so? The chapter suggests that when the poster became an advocate for a public cause and was deployed, albeit indirectly, by the political and social establishment, it achieved a new respectability. What is more, the poster's tendency to importune passers-by, which critics had found so vulgar and intrusive, could now be seen as a virtue if people were seduced into supporting the war.

There is another possible explanation for the war poster's acceptance. The fact that the posters were seen in places other than the usual commercial spaces and were frequently implicated in the public spectacles of recruitment parades, war loan rallies and flag days diluted their commercial character and made them less open to criticism. What adds weight to this view is the one class of poster that did attract hostile criticism and a strident demand for legal controls was the film poster. Its presence outside cinemas showing commercial films caused a moral panic not seen in Britain since the 1880s, when the 'Horrors of the Walls' were believed to threaten the safety and the moral well-being of the public at large. These kinds of posters operated outside the framework of war publicity, which had rendered the posters produced in support of the war free from the usual mix of fear, hostility and disdain.

An important question for the role of the poster is the changing relationship between public information, propaganda and popular commercial culture, including advertising. Chapter 5 argues that the adoption of the techniques of advertising by government had profound ideological implications and contributed to the self-perception of the public on its road to full enfranchisement and the forms of democratic government and private enterprise we know today. In other words, poster production is addressed within the wider issues raised by the increasingly important phenomena of publicity and propaganda brought about by commercial imperatives, developing understandings of the psychology of perception and desire, and the events of the First World War. It demonstrates how the trade began to address its market in representations of the crowd that mirrored contemporary understandings of the urban mass as something simultaneously grandly patriotic and essentially subversive to the old order. The urban mass owed no allegiance to traditional bourgeois orders based on taste, and its members looked to the developing consumer market to exercise choice in the purchase of goods and simultaneously to find a form of representation. As such they were addressed in government publicity and commercial advertising as consumers with a stake in the nation through 'service'. Not only could there be seen to be a seamless transition from the civilian crowd to the military column, but also the assurance of a hygienic, well-fed, leisured existence for those who served at home and at the front. This was the war its curator L.R. Bradley records. The evidence of the collection illustrates the development of an advertising ploy in official campaigns that ceases to beguile and seeks instead, to harangue, emotionally blackmail and eventually instruct. At the same time, commercial advertisements for tobacco, gravy browning, soup, cosmetics, shaving cream, soap and raincoats produced by the same agencies were now legitimised by government and, in campaigns to provide comforts for the troops, carried the promise of a sanitised present insulated from the detritus and desolation of war in instantiations of well-rested and efficient labour in action and at home.

Chapter 6 undertakes a comparative analysis of European poster design and the visual contribution of the poster through style and

iconography to languages of 'imagined communities' mobilised on behalf of the mediation of meaning, authority and identity amongst the combatant nations. The discussion of German posters builds on the work of Jeremy Aynsley, Sherwin Simmons and Ida Katherine Rigby where, for example, British posters were regarded as poorly designed, but emotionally and psychologically affective. By the turn of the last century it was widely held that poster design should be striking, simple and efficient. To achieve this in their different ways British and French posters conformed to a publicly acceptable and popular, illustrative, realist and narrative aesthetic. Design in parts of central Europe, on the other hand, had begun to transform itself in the years leading up to the outbreak of hostilities. No longer so constrained by a notion of popular taste, designers were increasingly inspired by the design and decorative possibilities opened up by mechanical reproduction, standardisation and a resulting simplification of form. As a result, a design practice took root which moved away from the lithographic realism and the more aggressive and populist reality of the posters characteristic of most British graphic design, so that by the early twentieth century many no longer saw the poster as an illustration or a picture, but as an aesthetic category in its own right. At the heart of this controversy are the essentials of a debate in graphic and communication design that continues to this day.

The First World War was the first international conflict to see the launch of major publicity campaigns designed to maintain public support for national needs and government policies. Then, as now, the press, photography and film played an important role, but in the early twentieth century there was no radio, television or internet and the most publicly visible advertising medium was the poster. Much has changed since 1914. The poster is as prevalent in public space, but is less visible in this strikingly visual age. Posters intended to sway public opinion as part of a campaign, rather than to sell us commodities, have in large part moved from the hoarding to the demonstration or the contained space of the gallery and the virtual space of the web. What the public holds dear, and what the persuaders could appeal to a century ago, is not necessarily what can be appealed to today. In 1914, the business and psychology of persuasion were in their infancy and *Seduction or instruction?* will venture

to see how propaganda exploits, through the visual messages embodied in the posters, feelings of patriotism, guilt and loyalty to family, community and nation, for example. The vista produced by the posters from the combatant nations seems coloured with the pastel colours of dawn and dusk in tints of violet, pink, red, orange and yellow. Everything, it seems, occurs at those prescient moments of passing into the light of new life and resurrection, or into the darkness of death, despair and melancholy, and it is not always clear which is meant. The public display of imagery and information in the interests of the nation at war, for war loans, recruiting, charity and the home comforts of soap, tobacco and hot drinks, was never going to be a totally unambiguous affair.

This book can usefully be read in conjunction with the Posters of Conflict website which can be found at www.vads.ahds.ac.uk

## Notes

Bibliographical note: notes containing the entry IWM AD or IWM Library indicate that the document is found in the archive of the Imperial War Museum Department of Art or the Imperial War Museum Library.

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2. Jonathan Culler, *Saussure* (Glasgow, Fontana), 1976, pp. 29–35.
3. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge, Polity Press), 1993, p. 34.
4. This is a reference to a popular holiday poster designed by John Hassall for the Great Northern Railway in 1911 advertising the delights of Skegness.
5. Sir Ian Malcolm, *Scraps of Paper* (London, New York and Toronto, Hodder and Stoughton), 1917.
6. Harold Perkins, *The Rise of the Professional Society* (London, Routledge), 1989, pp. 83–4.
7. W.J. Reader, *Professional Men* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson), 1966, pp. 151–9.
8. Nicholas Hiley, 'Sir Hedley Lebas and the Origins of Domestic Propaganda in Britain 1914–1917', *The Journal of Advertising History*, 10:2 (1987); Nicholas Hiley, '"Kitchener Wants You" and "Daddy What Did YOU Do in the Great War?" the Myth of British Recruiting Posters', *Imperial War Museum Review*, 11 (1997); Phillip Dutton, 'Moving Images? The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee's poster campaign, 1914–16', *Imperial War Museum Review*, 4 (1989); Barry Curtis, 'Posters as Visual Propaganda in the Great War', *Block*, 2 (1980).

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# War publicity, posters and the Imperial War Museum

The collection of war publicity at the Imperial War Museum always had the future archaeologist in mind. In a mirror image of the museum itself, the collection was all-embracing and extended far beyond official material, to include cartoons, advertisements from the press, show cards and other printed promotional material. Culled from government bodies, advertising agencies, printers, the press, manufacturers and occasionally individual artists and designers, the material was intended to provide, on the one hand, an encyclopaedic record of the war's impact on popular visual commercial culture and, on the other, evidence of the impact of total war on everyday life. In this desire the Keeper of War Publicity, L.R. Bradley, unwittingly attempted to preserve for the future the wider visual discourses of the poster that give it meaning. The discovery on the part of the authors that before the war had ended, the museum had amassed over 20,000 items, of which posters were only a part, stimulated a methodological approach to the study of the medium that characterises this book. At its most obvious level the poster rarely stands on its own; it is usually part of a media campaign. If it is successful, as was Bert Thomas' 'Arf a "Mo" Kaiser' (plate 21), for example, it stimulates public discussion in the media, parliament, pulpit and public house to the extent that it feeds into wider representational and ideological systems in society, as this book tries to demonstrate.

In other words, what survives today as one of Britain's most important

poster collections was not what its originator had intended. L.R. Bradley was not interested in the already hackneyed history of poster design that plotted a line of inheritance from the masters of nineteenth-century French poster design, Jules Chéret, Toulouse Lautrec and Alfonse Mucha through to the Beggarstaffe Brothers, Frank Brangwyn and Ludwig Holhwein.[1] But just because Bradley did not subscribe to this aesthetic discourse for the understanding of the poster, its power should not be underestimated. The fact that for Bradley a typographical or poorly designed piece of printed ephemera was as important as a pictorial and aesthetically successful poster, was something that would sometimes get him into difficulty.[2] Paradoxically, it was as a touring exhibition of posters that the War Publicity Section gained its first independent exposure in 1917. This was followed in June 1919 when Bradley organised a large exhibition 'War Posters of Many Nations' at the Grafton Galleries in London. Conceived as a prestige event, membership of the exhibition committee included eminent figures such as Sir Martin Conway, and John Buchan and Lord Beaverbrook, formerly of the Ministry of Information. The emphasis was entirely on the poster. The exhibition set out to ensure every country and every well-known poster artist in the collection was represented by: 'specimens of what may be described as the true poster, or the purely artistic poster' as well as 'the poster that is merely historically interesting'.[3] Significantly, one reviewer, perhaps encouraged by the status bestowed on the medium by its participation in a national collection, wrote in the *Sunday Times*:

> Our opinions on many matters have been altered by the War. There was a time, not so very long ago, when the art authorities of this country resolutely declined to regard posters as serious works of art, when an official who suggested that a posters section might advantageously be added to a public art gallery exposed himself to the censure of his Trustees of Committee and to a severe snubbing of his advocacy of what was then looked upon as an inferior and trivial branch of art.
>
> But now all is changed, including the official attitude towards the poster, and the Imperial War Museums, under enlightened administration, has made a start by collecting twenty thousand

different war posters, emanating from nations directly or indirectly involved in the war.[4]

As we shall see, deeply entrenched attitudes such as these were to have a lasting and significant impact on the fate of the collection.

The Imperial War Museum was conceived to promote the appetite for the war at home. It was a product of Prime Minister David Lloyd George's total war policy after the crises of the Asquith Government following the Easter Uprising in Ireland, the success of the German U-boat campaign and the disaster of the Somme. The War Cabinet established the National War Museum Committee in early 1917 as part of the broader initiatives of the Department of Information and the National War Aims Committee. As an agent of government policy, the museum had value for the ruling elites in the exercise of influence when the population was coming to terms with the combined effects of the violent decimation of a generation and the influenza pandemic. Before an audience of 40,000 at its official opening in 1920 at Crystal Palace, King George V stated that the museum was to be a democratic record of the experience of the war and would recognise 'in concrete form that in modern warfare success in the field is no longer the achievement of a few leaders or of a professional class, but it is the result of the devoted and heroic work of millions of men and women'.[5] Spawned by government legislation, the museum was conceived to contribute to the smooth running of a potentially unstable society where many of the established orders were under threat. If nothing else, the museum effectively superseded and subjected to centralised control the many local memorialising initiatives that had grown up around the country.[6]

A number of independent proposals had coalesced to lead to the creation of the museum. The Tower Armouries, London then under the direction of the future Curator and Secretary of the Imperial War Museum, Charles Ffoulkes, had been collecting some small relics of the war since 1915 and in the press he championed the idea of a material record of the war for the nation. Simultaneously and independently, Sir Ian Malcolm MP proposed that literature, stamps, posters, leaflets and other printed material relating to the conflict should be preserved

for future generations.[7] Adding to the debate, Sir Martin Conway,[8] who was to become the first Director General of the Museum, campaigned for a national hall of memory. The National War Museum, as it was then called, was finally approved by the War Cabinet along the lines suggested by Sir Alfred Mond MP, First Commissioner of Works,[9] to collect 'War Trophies, Books, Maps, Posters, Pictures ,and other material connected with the War'.[10] At the opening Conway stressed that the museum was not intended to glorify war but to recognise the labour and sacrifice endured by the people of Britain and empire through the provision a material record of the war for the historian and the technologist.[11] Nevertheless as the offspring of a domestic political struggle, the museum was bound up with the creation of a particular triumphant national past and, should its political significance be doubted, its name was changed to the Imperial War Museum at the request of the Dominions.[12]

Before the museum found a temporary home at Crystal Place, it had organised over eighty touring exhibitions between mid-1917 and the end of the war. Objects were subjected to an empiricist rationale, and given meaning within narratives of the 'war to end wars' such as the technology of war, military history and education. Documented contexts were essential to the selection of objects, 'to which a definite honourable history can be attached, thus making them also serve as memorials of the heroic men who served them on the field of battle and too often laid down their lives beside them'.[13] This material approach memorialised the dead and the opening of the museum coincided with the burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey on 11 November 1920. The decision not to bring home the war dead had shifted the discursive framework of the war away from stories of loss and futility towards an interest in spiritualism and battlefield sites, on the one hand,[14] and to the ways people interacted with the material objects of the war, on the other. Acts of memory were embodied through identification with the objects on display, speaking to 'the heart and imagination' in 'visible shape a record of our deeds and endurance'.[15] Conveniently for the establishment responsible for the war, it avoided the effect of the war on bodies and minds.

It is worth giving consideration to the exhibited material, collected

'to record in some measure practically the whole life of the Nation as affected by the War'.[16] Categorised by sections, it embraced Munitions, Army, Navy, Air Force, Medical, Women's Work, Dominions, Art, Library and Publicity Records. It represented the military wings of the state and recognised the role of women and the media in contemporary war to emphasise the collective, technologically advanced and the industrially produced in a figure of modernity. Photographs[17] and film were considered as important as oil paintings and watercolours of battles and important protagonists. There was little evidence of private experience or memoir. Photographs and pictures of ruined churches, shell bursts, gun emplacements and bunkers are strangely disembodied and are comparable to the differentials, rear axles, exhaust valves, lorry and aircraft engines, models and parts of ships, munitions and guns which illustrated the technology of war. As a celebration of modernity, it contained progressive elements in the Medical and Women's Work sections. The latter, for example, ranged from the record of nursing to work in heavy machine shops and for charities.[18] Revealingly one caption commented, 'where no statement is made to the contrary, it may be assumed that the tools are ground and set by male labour, and that work is done under skilled male supervision'.[19] In a reflection of the social and political spheres, the commitment to progressive and emancipatory modernity was only partially embraced. Nevertheless, the collections were very different from those of other museums and implicitly recognised a dedication to modernity and its corollaries of publicity and propaganda.

The War Publicity gathered by L.R. Bradley represents one of the first systematic collections of advertising and graphic design anywhere in the world. Bradley collected the bulk of the First World War material in the years between 1917 and 1920. His aims were to illustrate the influence of the war on advertising and the role advertising played in the war. It was to be a record of the war for future historians, who might 'draw the correct colouring and atmosphere of the period', by means of posters and press advertisements.[20] His approach paralleled that of the collector and promoter of advertising Hans Sachs in Germany, who in 1914, as Jeremy Aynsley points out, had stated: 'cultural and art historians of the later

centuries in their investigations into culture and "uncultured", aesthetic sentiment and artistic taste ... will draw no less on ... the private printed matter of the twentieth century, than on great works of painting and sculpture, architecture and the arts and crafts'.[21] It is uncertain how far Bradley was aware of this and other initiatives in Germany and there is no mention of them in his correspondence, but the museum's Art Department does hold contemporary copies of the magazine *Das Plakat*, edited by Sachs, where such views were promoted and debated.[22]

Whatever may have been the case, within the museum the scope of the collection was Bradley's initiative and included virtually the whole field of graphic design from propaganda to advertising, as well as the publicity campaigns carried out by the huge number of charities and associations that had sprung to life during the war. He recounted in October 1917:

> On my discharge from the Army I was put on the staff of the National War Museum and the whole idea of this section was my suggestion. It started with the idea of collecting official proclamations and posters issued in connection with the War. These were so extremely uninteresting and bad that I determined in order to show that British advertisers can do splendid work, to collect examples of all forms of posters, press advertisements etc. from private sources which use the war as a subject for either copy or illustration. I think by this means it is possible to put on record a really 'live' history of the War as it affected 'The Man in the Street'. This will be a gigantic task but I feel sure it can be done and that it will be most unique and interesting.[23]

He aspired to create an inclusive collection capable of both illustrating how far the war had permeated every aspect of civil life and reaching the widest possible audience. He found value in what he called a 'live' history, as it applied to men, women and children and their social world revealed in unofficial commercial popular culture, as much as in official proclamations and propaganda campaigns. In a letter Bradley set out his agenda:

Roughly speaking our collections can be divided under three headings.

1. Official advertising
2. Commercial advertising
3. Miscellaneous publicity matter

The first heading will include all posters and press ads issued from Official Sources relating to recruiting, war savings, food economy etc. and all Official Notices in connection with the war.

Under the second heading we are collecting all Commercial advertising which bear a topical reference to war measures and conditions either in copy or in illustration. For instance there are advertisements which announce restrictions, shortages of raw material, change in price or the appeal to economy or that emphasise the utility of certain goods at the Front or in some other connection with the war.

Under the third heading we are putting any form of publicity matter that has been issued as a result of the War. This will include Charity announcements, Sporting events, lectures and other miscellaneous events connected with the war.

The object of our collection is to record the War as far as possible by means of publicity matter of all forms and to show the great part played by advertising in the War.[24]

By November 1917 through exposure in the trade press, the collection had already stimulated interest among the advertising community in London.[25] Thomas Russell, the prominent advertising consultant and member of the Voluntary Recruiting Publicity Committee, took the interest from a national and government body as a form of official recognition for the trade.[26] Later, he took Bradley to the Aldwych Club,[27] 'the gathering of men whose interest is so vital to my scheme'. There was a suggestion Bradley might deliver a talk, but he preferred to see people individually to explain his ambitions for the collection and suggested a member of the advertising community would have the appropriate expertise to lecture on War Advertising.[28] Again, following German precedent in the shape of Fritz Ehmcke's exhibition of printed ephemera

and posters 'Art at the Service of the Businessman', for example, Bradley saw the potential of the collection for the advertising industry, its international basis fuelling foreign trade and mutual understanding.[29] How much this was genuine ambition, wishful thinking, or a ploy to encourage overseas donors to contribute to the collection, is impossible to tell.

In the museum the seemingly neutral and objective world of manufactured objects mingled with advertising as illustrations of their impact on daily life. This use of advertising was not always felt to be entirely commensurate with the serious business of providing a suitably dignified and legitimate record of the war. Somehow, advertising had appeared uninvited on the national scene to emerge as a challenge to traditional Victorian and high bourgeois values based on taste rather than commerce. The necessary corollary was the uncertain status of the collection, and this was something Bradley attempted to remedy. Moving among influential circles in the advertising world, he set about establishing a War Publicity Section Committee under the chairmanship of Charles Higham, 'who is not only responsible for the bulk of the British government advertising but he is also a vice-president of the National Advertising Advisory Board which produces all the official American Advertising'.[30] He hoped the committee would provide the expertise he felt he lacked as an amateur enthusiast, and would have the strategic effect of bestowing on the collection a status equal to the other Sections in the museum.

In July 1918 following approval from the General Committee of the Imperial War Museum,[31] Charles Higham agreed to form a committee. He proposed his own membership, choosing figures from across the spectrum in what we would now call the culture industries, specifying figures from advertising, theatre, music publishers, cinema and government.[32] Although it was officially sanctioned and in place, there is no record of the committee ever having met. As a measure of the changing situation with regard to the collection in late 1919 when Bradley was assigned to the Cataloguing Section, he wrote to his ally and former member of the board of Trustees, Stephen Gaselee: 'It was therefore, very pleasant to learn you are keeping the collection in mind for so few persons take

an interest in it.'[33] In 1918, for example, the Imperial War Museum exhibition at Burlington House saw posters exhibited in the vestibule but they were absent from the published catalogue of shell-casings, medical dressings, photographs and paintings.[34] By 1921 the Publicity collection, along with much of the rest of the museum, was in disarray. Bradley was moved full-time to the Cataloguing Department, purchases ceased and the exhibition of posters at Crystal Palace was removed to await a new and smaller space. To add to its difficulties, there was the sheer volume of material and this, combined with the dubious status of publicity material, meant that it had slipped down the list of the museum's and Bradley's priorities. From that time on, with the increased difficulty experienced in acquiring material and a general lack of enthusiasm for the project, Bradley gradually distanced himself from the collection. Some years later when invited to give a talk on German war posters, he declined, saying he knew nothing about the subject.[35]

An important aim for Bradley had been the creation of a record of the war for future historians, to do 'full justice to the very considerable part that advertising has played in the revolution in social and economic conditions affected by the War'.[36] Although aesthetic judgement did play a part in the selection of some items, it was never the overriding factor as it was with the poster collection at the V&A, for example.[37] In response to a letter critical of the British contribution to the exhibition of posters from the collection at the Grafton Galleries in 1919, Bradley wrote: 'My collection here is being made primarily as a form of War record from which historians may find material for their work and in the nature of things, the artistic merit of a poster must be of secondary importance.'[38] Originally, the quantity of advertisements in the collection far exceeded the numbers of posters, yet from the evidence of the acquisitions correspondence a hierarchy was unconsciously at work. The initial imperative was to obtain the poster, then the show cards, shop displays, press advertisements and cartoons. Interestingly, postcards were not systematically collected, and popular prints, such as those produced by Louis Raemaekers as propaganda (famously, the Germans sentenced him to death *in absentia*), were considered the province of the Library. Bradley focused on publicly consumed commercial popular culture and

in advertising, the aesthetically inferior and the merely typographical, he preserved at least something of the poster's frame of reference in the larger context of publicity.

Bradley recognised the historical value of the poster, as others had done before,[39] but a collection of publicity put together without regard for aesthetic value cannot belong to the narrative of art as a signifier of progress and individual emancipation. As the cultural theorist Tony Bennett points out, the category of the aesthetic enabled elite cultural practices to be separated from 'dazzling spectacle' to become civilising instruments aimed at the wider public. Despite the best efforts of Higham and others, what they saw as the universalising and progressive imperatives of commercial culture did not find wide acceptance amongst the traditional establishment of the ruling elites and professional middle classes and therefore could not be instrumentalised by government with either a large or a small 'g'. Advertising, therefore, did not lend itself to the discursive and institutional contexts of the museum and in the aftermath of the official campaigns for men and money, government opinion turned against the commercial language of advertising, even if it still took full advantage of its technologies, systems of delivery and structures of administration.

In June 1919, Bradley organised the exhibition 'War Posters of Many Nations' at the Grafton Galleries in London.[40] The representation of the collection through the medium of posters to the exclusion of press advertising and cartoons is significant. It places the collection within a subcategory of art history and allies it with autonomous art practice. Up to this point, Bradley's attitudes to the poster and advertising were more or less synonymous. The poster was situated alongside advertising at the centre of the debates in the trade press concerning art and commerce, the efficient delivery of a message and an incipient market economy. Bradley was aware of the vigorous exchange in the daily press and the trade publications about the relative merits of outdoor and press advertising, taste and censorship. The debate ranged billposters, advertising agencies and printers with an interest in posters, against a vigorous campaign led by Lord Northcliffe's Amalgamated Press, whose newspapers had done extremely well out of government contracts for

press advertising.[41] Additionally, paper restrictions and the reduction in poster sizes through government legislation had resulted in a slippage of advertising away from the hoardings.[42] The fact that the weight of opinion came down in favour of the effectiveness of newspaper advertising rather than the poster may have further convinced Bradley of the need to embrace publicity in its wider sense and to incorporate a broad range of commercial popular media. Thomas Russell in his New York column for *Printers' Ink* reported on the basis of a written statement not intended for publication from Bradley that the British government had recognised that the social history of the war was reflected in advertising:

> The change in quality and quantity of the food we eat, and the clothes we wear; the many economies we are urged to effect, the endless shortages to which we have to submit, the vastly increased cost of living, the effect of air-raids on theatres, tubes and the hour for leaving business – all these things can be vividly realised in the advertising of the period.
>
> On the day after an air-raid the advertisement columns are full of apposite announcements. Similarly during an Allied offensive the advertisements become full of references to our progress and optimistic 'after-the-war' schemes. The psychology and the experience of the British nation during the war are thus faithfully recorded in advertisements.[43]

Before the war Bradley had nursed the intention of entering the advertising trade and if the constant reminders for lapsed payment for subscriptions from the London-based *Advertising World*, and *Advertising Weekly* as well as the Chicago-based *The Poster* are anything to go by, he maintained his interest. It is tempting to argue he was psychologically allied to the growing and aspirant community of advertisers in London at the very moment when Thomas Russell made the case for the strength, power and future of advertising on the evidence of the success claimed for the government Recruiting and War Loan campaigns in a prevalent culture which was 'a long way from being "sold" on the advertising proposition'.[44] The art correspondent for the *Observer* had made the same point at the time of the poster exhibition at the Grafton Galleries:

'In England the poster is still hardly considered an art, it is tainted with commerce, transient, declamatory, and we feel instinctively that art is something to be reserved for those solemn moments which are not occupied with religion. In fact, with regard to art, most of us are highbrows.'[45] This is a crucial point and it has a bearing on the fate of the War Publicity collection. Advertising allied itself to a progressive element in the business community but because of its lack of a disciplinary frame and closeness to the trades of billposting, printing and journalism, acceptance from the establishment was elusive. The trade press made much of the recent large scale forays of government into the sphere of commercial publicity with its recruiting, war savings and food and fuel economy drives, which seemed to give it a long-desired legitimacy. But part of the problem was that commercial culture developed outside the moral economies of nation, religion, civic respectability and labour. Caught between commodification and culture it could be seen to undermine the national cause in favour of the war profiteer, rather than duty and service. Charles Higham inadvertently put his finger on the problem in 1916 when in *Eclipse or Empire*, sporting an allegorical illustration *Progress Fast Bound By Prejudice* by Bernard Partridge as a frontispiece, he emphasised the essentially American nature of the industry three times in the space of the page and a half dedicated to 'Advertising'.[46]

Such sentiments expressed on behalf of the future of empire echo the contemporaneous statement by the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, who spoke of a business democracy where statesmanship and salesmanship elide with liberty, justice and markets. Advertising and Americanisation represented a challenge to European hegemony with its hierarchies of social distinction based on taste. Nicholas Hiley argues convincingly about the close relationships between the commercial visual rhetoric of selling and the government recruiting campaign and how this fell awkwardly with both the Liberal and Conservative establishments. For the former it was seen to be inappropriate to the *gravitas* of fighting a war and patriotism, duty, sacrifice and comradeship, while for the latter, its commercialism simply signalled the failure of the campaign as a whole.[47] Hiley also emphasises the increasingly critical role the trade itself took towards the campaign, lamenting its haphazardness and the

lack of a consistent or overreaching marketing policy. In other words, the campaigns attracted criticism from the trade, not for their failure as such, but for their lack of professionalism: for the very fact that the government had not been nearly commercial enough in its approach. Nevertheless, for a brief moment the government and the military accepted the encroaching language of a standardised mass market. And, as Hiley observes, the most popular designs amongst the wider public were the posters that correlated the least to the realities of military life with their images of happy soldiers in easy camaraderie. As early as 1920 William Macpherson, author of the widely read *The Psychology of Persuasion*, pointed out that the public saw what it wanted to see and commercial advertising and government publicity campaigns obliged.[48]

Whether at the Crystal Palace[49] or at its current site on Lambeth Road, the museum has been geographically positioned outside of what Brandon Taylor calls the 'symbolic circus of national culture in the British capital'.[50] That part of its mission was indeed national is clear from its conception as a memorial, and national pride certainly played a part. An appeal for exhibits published in *Cambridge Magazine*, for example, requested printed matter of a public and propagandist nature in the light of the precedent of the German War Library established in Berlin in 1915: 'If future historians are not to go to Germany through lack of material at home ... '[51] But national hubris and the desire to implicate the people in the national enterprise of the war are not straightforward. As an heir to industrialised carnage and the social and economic change of which Bradley was very much aware, the museum and its collections have an ambiguous role in the life of the nation. Unlike the institutions within Taylor's symbolic circus, the museum could not play successfully to the 'stabilities' of the western classical tradition found in the National Gallery or the civilising benefits of empire, exploration, science, trade and industry exemplified by the V&A Museum or the Science Museum. The victory for which the museum stood witness could never be addressed directly and publicly in terms of its meaning for the individuals who had fought or suffered bereavement, and for whom there was no official discourse beyond the War Memorial or the aesthetically legitimised category of war art. The discourses of empire, nation, sacrifice, patriotism, duty and

service in which it did participate were the source of suffering and guilt, more worthy of forgetfulness than official commemoration.

Between 1920 and 1924, the period of its tenancy at the Crystal Palace, the museum received two and a half million visitors, a large proportion of whom the museum claimed had had some direct involvement with the war. Visitors found themselves caught between gratification and dismay at the inclusion of so much material from their everyday lives. That ordinary objects were worth preserving was only appreciated as the war receded in importance and the new challenges of the flu pandemic and economic recession made them appear dated.[52] By the time the museum opened, its focus had shifted from conceiving of itself as a memorial to those who had died or had been maimed to a material record of the impact of the war on daily life. For the Director General, Martin Conway, it was a 'unique attempt to preserve for those who fought, those who worked at home, and for future generations as yet unborn, this record and visible memorial of the immeasurable sacrifices and supreme national effort which not only saved the country from a dire catastrophe, but, as we all hope, laid firm and deep the foundations of a new and better world'.[53] The collections commemorated 'the devoted and heroic work of millions of men and women cooperating as parts of one vast living machine'.[54] In other words, visitors from all sections of society recognised partially forgotten or repressed aspects of their lives in the services or on the home front in this official record of the national experience of the war. To identify with the institution and the governmental programme it represented in making the nation heroic in the name of the king, and despite the overwhelming human cost, necessarily implicated the population in the government's wider imperial role and ambition as a world power.[55]

The Crystal Palace, while not at all congenial for many of the exhibits, served one purpose with great efficiency and that was the display of the visitors. As their experiences became the subject of knowledge they identified with the exhibits, and in so doing, according to Bennett's reading of Foucault, were self-regulated in seeing themselves being seen as subjects and objects of knowledge. The museum's regime combines spectacle and surveillance. The visitor and participant in the record

engages with the cultural technologies deployed to ensure a reading rooted in rational organisation and organised narratives defined by a set of codes of service for the nation. What was there to be seen as evidence were the technologies of war, medicine and surveillance: individual suffering was given limited and controlled exposure in the aesthetic category of art and the documentary photographic and film record. But commerce, the technique of advertising and the role of publicity remained obscure. Within this regime, the collection of War Publicity could only survive as an autonomous history of the poster as a subcategory of the aesthetic and art history.

Commerce in the machinery of state remained invisible, concealed in among the plotted plants and in the atmosphere of the department store generated by the Crystal Palace. According to Tony Bennett, the exhibits and their organisation are lessons in civics, they incorporate the people within a national cause as 'its subject and its beneficiary' ordered by the ruling elite in the name of the people: 'this was the rhetoric of power embodied in the exhibitionary complex – a power made manifest not in its ability to inflict pain but by its ability to organise and co-ordinate an order of things and to produce a place for the people in relation to that order'.[56] Despite the futility of war, people took pride in the objects on display and were seduced and implicated in a 'metonymic expression' of the war. In this way it appeared that the museum was subject to their controlling vision. It was as if the workings of the war were made transparent through the display of the material record, but in fact, such expression and display from a distance and from a position of peace, rather than war, ensured the exhibits and what they represented belonged both to the visitor and to another distant and barbarous age. In this way, 'the war to end wars' is successfully transformed into something other than itself. The exhibits hint at what the state might be capable, without representing systems of coercion and discipline. Installations representing propagandised atrocities were avoided, for example. We need to be aware, however, that this was by no means a straightforward or simple process where high and petit bourgeois cultural and ideological values could completely re-organise thought and feeling in wider society through rational recreation and the forces explicit in classification and

the ordering of the record of the war preserved in the museum, as Bennett suggests.

Bennett argues that the museum plays an important role in the representation and reproduction of dominant social values.[57] The Imperial War Museum, established by directive from central government, was unambiguously conceived as an instrumental tool of social management. Its emphasis shifted with the coming of the peace when taste for war was replaced with need for social cohesion in the face of industrial strife and economic instability. Or, as Sir Ian Malcolm expressed it, writing from Paris:

> I do not see a chance of getting home, as my colleague ... is down with influenza ... it is, however, possible to derive some consolation from the fact you all seem to be very uncomfortable at home with these horrible strikes. If these agitators are not throttled in one way or another we shall go from bad to worse; frankly, I do not think it requires a great deal of courage to tackle them.[58]

Originally posters and publicity were considered as symptoms of aspects of the prosecution of the war: as an adjunct to the work of Wellington House and John Buchan's Department of Information; or, famously, the Parliamentary Recruiting and War Savings Committees; or in relation to Women's Work or the Red Cross. Except in its aesthetic role, publicity alone was not deemed capable of carrying the moral and educative weight of the museum. Popular commercial culture possessed a subversive quality that excluded it from the already marginal position taken up by the museum itself. Publicity could not possibly materialise the power of the traditional establishment, since as a product associated with the mass or the crowd and the world of business, it represented a modern urban culture of which the establishment was only dimly aware and which it regarded as a threat.

The fate of the War Publicity Section was sealed by its multiple allegiances. It might be said that state propaganda constructs the citizen or subject, while commercial advertising constructs the consumer. Bradley's heterogeneous approach failed to distinguish between the two. This situation was compounded by the government's use of the advertising

industry to promote recruiting, financial and resource economy needs. In the promotion of the collection as a reference and inspiration for the advertising industry and as a record of the war for future generations, Bradley exposed the close relationships between war and commerce. Those links contained the potential to disrupt the conservative hegemony in Britain after the First World War, where patrician ambition found offence in the occlusion of markets and patriotism, preferring instead the haughty *faux* classicist allegories of civic, financial and national pride to the no less convincing smile of 'Tommy Atkins' and the commercial discourse of advertising. The inroads of the market had made their mark, and the professional middle classes retaliated with an appropriation of aristocratic cultural pretensions expressed visually in classical allegory and symbol. As one contemporary American commentator expressed it: 'In conservative England a score of venerable precedents were smashed, the hoary dignity of long-established government departments was swept aside and trained advertising men, with irresistible power, carried campaigns for army and navy volunteers, for money, munitions, ships and guns direct to the people'.[59] The end result was a series of contrasting representations of 'imagined communities', extending from the 'cheeky chappy' familiarity of the ordinary man in the street to the ideal and aloof pretensions of the political and financial classes who wielded power.

To stimulate the economy, the government had introduced small denomination paper notes to encourage spending amongst the working classes. Increased incomes meant that for the first time they were able to purchase shoes, clothes, blankets, soap and better food. There was an equality of consumption where goods could become a sign of social cohesion rather than the division of the older order where the craft-based, high-skilled production of consumer goods signified hierarchy. The rise in income of the working classes and the increasingly developed market where the standardised held sway, challenged the traditional middle and upper classes in what Victoria de Grazia describes as 'mass consumer society ... the jauntily progressive alternative to dourly exclusive, provincial, or, worse, reactionary solidarities'.[60] The latter could easily be found in Kitchener's promotion of the Temperance League and the growth of associations such as the British Empire Union, both of

which launched significant publicity campaigns. De Grazia makes the comparison between Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* and Sinclair Lewis' George Babbitt:

> Their self-esteem swelled not from contemplating their heritage of art or music, but from surveying the number of cheap appliances in the kitchen and calculating the upward spiral of land values. On the European side of the Atlantic, drawing-room conversation touched on love, courage, and politics, whereas on the American, homey evening chats on front porches turned to the workmanship of safety razors, the artfulness of coloured advertisements for Crisc and Maxwell House coffee.[61]

This new culture suited neither the older monied classes who relied for their status on cultural distinction, nor organised labour which could see it losing its political radicalism through increasing prosperity and access to mass-produced goods. Easy-going advertisements for the nation and manpower represented a threat because they had the capacity to change national taste and style. This picture is further complicated by the advertisers' Whiggish appeals for cultural improvement through the aesthetic values found in posters and the 'gallery of the streets'. This is a view that was propagandised by the advertising and billposting trades in pursuit of legitimacy and by a creeping Americanisation that conflated the freedom to consume with democracy. The collection embodied the conflict between the high cultures of nation and the demotic cultures of everyday life: new dreamworlds of wish fulfilment were instantiated in press advertisements, show cards and posters representing commodities such as Oxo, Bovril, Nestlé, Sunlight Soap and Tobacco products, and even the good life in the army. Dreamworlds that contributed to the widely recorded refusal of the troops at the front to reveal the reality of life as a soldier, for fear of demoralising those at home and, simultaneously, despoiling an imaginary refuge from the relentless misery of the trenches. In some cases it was clear that some advertisers deliberately avoided all reference to the war, even to the exclusion of 'athletic young men engaged in sport or social intercourse'.[62]

Together, these allegiances ultimately condemned the War Publicity

collection to obscurity as a record of the war, preferring instead to concentrate on the poster with its potential for aesthetic autonomy. The point being made has to do with the status of commercial popular culture in the early part of the century. The War Publicity collection was sited uncomfortably where the discursive fields of advertising and the museum overlap, a place where certain ideas of progress in society were at odds with the universal norms the museum represents, and to which advertising could not possibly aspire, because of its utilitarian rhetoric and its active, results-orientated, rather than contemplative role. Advertising is manufactured within the marketplace to generate demand. As such, despite its popularity it could not make a claim for cultural legitimacy, nor can it be said to be an authentic product of the 'people'. It is, therefore, 'homeless' to both the establishment and the people, to both upper- and middle-class high bourgeois culture and working-class religious and political culture with its austerity and suspicions of material wealth: within European and specifically British social contexts, advertising and its techniques represented a threat to both.

## Notes

1. See early poster histories such as M. Hardie & A.K. Sabin, *War Posters Issued by Belligerent and Neutral Countries, 1914–19* (London, A. and C. Black), 1920; Cyril Sheldon, *A History of Poster Advertising* (London, Chapman and Hall Ltd), 1937 and Walter Shaw Sparrow, *Advertising and British Art* (London, John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd), 1925.
2. Letter to L.R. Bradley from F. Daemon, former private secretary to the Belgian Ambassador in Washington, poster collector and editor of *Review Shawinigan Falls*, 20 February 1922,

   > [I] am very sorry to say that I am not at all satisfied with the selection of posters which I received from you in exchange for the material which I forwarded.
   >
   > May I be allowed to point out to you, sir, that I am not so much interested in the historical value of War posters as in their artistic [in red] value, because I have made arrangements to exhibit only [in red] the illustrated artistic posters of my collection.

3. Exhibition of War Posters, exhibition catalogue (London, Grafton Galleries), June 1919.
4. Frank Rutter, 'War Posters. Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries', *Sunday Times*, 18 June 1919.

5. His Majesty's Reply to the Address of the Chairman of the Imperial War Museum, 9 June 1920, *Third Annual Report of the Imperial War Museum, 1 April, 1919, to 2 July, 1920* (London, HMSO), 1920, p. 4.
6. Gaynor Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War: A Social History* (London & New York, Leicester University Press), 1994, pp. 103–51. Bradley makes it his business to communicate with local organisations by writing to virtually every Lord Mayor in the country as well as the custodians of the local war museums (Local Museums Association). Ffoulkes circulates local district and borough councils: 'A National War Museum having been determined upon by the War Cabinet, and the undertaking having been approved of by HM the King, a Committee has been formed consisting of the First Commissioner of Works as chairman, and Representatives of the Admiralty, War Office, Ministry of Munitions, Women's Work etc. A large proportion of the exhibits will be drawn from official sources, but the committee are most anxious that the local and personal aspects of the War should be strongly emphasised.' Circular to local authorities, July 1917, IWM AD.
7. See Charles Ffoulkes, *Arms and the Tower* (John Murray, London), 1939, pp. 46–156.
8. Slade Professor of Art at Cambridge, mountaineer, explorer and art critic.
9. Part of the 'Liberal War Group' that helped Lloyd George to power in 1916. First Commissioner of Works in Lloyd George's coalition government from 1916 to 1921, in which capacity he approached Lutyens and asked him to construct a temporary memorial for Whitehall to complement the Peace Parade held on 19 July 1919. He became Chairman of the Imperial War Museum in 1920. He was Liberal Member of Parliament for Swansea in the period 1910–23. From his interests came ICI (1926), of which he was the first chairman. See Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, pp. 121ff for a detailed account. Mond's influence in government circles was crucial and he was to become the Chairman of the museum General Committee.
10. *First Annual Report of the Committee of the Imperial War Museum* (London, HMSO), 1917–18, p. 2.
11. 'The museum was not conceived as a monument of military glory, but rather a record of the toil and the sacrifice; as a place of study to the technician in studying the course of development of armaments; to the historian as an assembly of material and archives to instruct his work; and to the people of Empire, as a record of their toil and sacrifice through these fateful years.' *Third Annual Report*, p. 3.
12. *First Annual Report*, p. 2.
13. Martin Conway, *Third Annual Report*, p. 3.
14. Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 1995, pp. 54–77.
15. His Majesty's Reply to the Address of the Chairman of the Imperial War Museum, 9 June, 1920, *Third Annual Report*, p. 3.
16. Conway, *First Annual Report*, p. 2.
17. Photographic Section established on the demise of the Ministry of Information from 1 January 1919, Charles Ffoulkes, *Second Annual Report of the Committee*

*of the Imperial War Museum, 1918–19* (London, HMSO), 1919, p. 12.

18. Ibid., p. 6.
19. *Catalogue of the Imperial War Exhibition* (London, Burlington House, Royal Academy of the Arts), 1918, p. 20.
20. Bradley to Frederick E. Potter Ltd, Agents for Advertisers, London, WC1, 12 October 1917, IWM AD.
21. Quoted in Jeremy Aynsley, *Graphic Design in Germany, 1890–1945* (Thames and Hudson), 2000, p. 37.
22. See Aynsley, *Graphic Design in Germany* and Frederic J. Schwarz, *The Werkbund, Design Theory & Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press), 1996.
23. Bradley to J.C. Sparkhill, editor of *The Guardian: The Authoritative Newspaper of the Church of England*, 9 October 1917. See also Bradley to Thomas Russell, 27 October 1917: 'Before the war I had intended to take up advertising. I have for a considerable time subscribed to most of the technical papers on the subject it is therefore needless for me to say that I am interested in advertising. I may say the whole idea of this section was mine and I therefore fear that the "Official Recognition of Advertising" if this collection can be called that is not really due to the Government.' See also the letter from Bradley to the Advertising Manager of Messrs Carreras Ltd, London, 10 October 1917, IWM AD.
24. Bradley to A.E. Boyle, The Winnipeg Board of Trade, Canada, 23 October 1917, IWM AD.
25. Bradley to Frederick E. Potter Ltd, Agents for Advertisers, London, WC1, 12 October 1917 and letter to Roy O. Randall, editor of *The Poster*, Chicago, 8 November 1917 and letter to Swinburne Sheldrake, The Editor, *Selling & Advertising* (Printers' Ink Ltd), Norfolk Street, The Strand, London, 15 September 1917, IWM AD.
26. Bradley to Thomas Russell, Advertisement Specialist and Consultant, Author and Designer of Advertisements, President of the Incorporated Society of Advertisement Consultants, 22 October 1917, IWM AD.
27. Wareham Smith, *Spilt Ink* (London, Ernest Benn Ltd, Bouverie House, Fleet Street), 1932, p. 101. 'About this time [1911] there was founded in London the now well-known Aldwych Club. It was started by myself with the aid of Sir Hedley Le Bas and a committee of advertising men. The first, and only, trustees were Lord Burnham, Lord Riddell and the late Lord Northcliffe. Premises were taken behind Inveresk House in the Strand – where the club-house still remains to this day.'
28. Bradley to Russell, 8 November 1917. He contacts the Aldwych Club for material relating to 'Business Men's Week', Bradley, letter to the Secretary of Aldwych Club, 14 February 1918. See also Bradley to Howitt Advertising Service letter 3 July 1918, IWM AD.
29. Bradley to T.M. Ainscough OBE, Director General of Commercial Intelligence, Calcutta, 23 April 1918. A Circular was also sent out to His Majesty's Trade Commissioners between April 1918 and March 1919. 'Many of the leading advertising men in this country are extremely enthusiastic over the scheme.

Incidentally it is hoped that this collection of international War Publicity ... will help advertisers in this country to get a better knowledge of the kind of appeal that is most effective in each country. It is therefore possible that this collection will be of great use in the extension of trade between foreign countries, colonies and this country.' IWM AD.

30. Bradley suggested Ivor Nicholson, editor of *Pall Mall Magazine*, Mr John Hart of *London Opinion*, Mr A.J. Wilson, a representative of Associated Press, and Mr Sydney Walton from the Ministry of Food as members of the committee. Bradley to Ffoulkes, 16 July 1918, IWM AD.
31. Bradley to Charles F. Higham 23 July 1918. He had first contacted Higham in September 1917, IWM AD.
32. Higham to Bradley, 30 July 1918. Higham suggests Charles Vernon, WSZ Crawford, Edward Osborne and Mr Howitt as representatives of the advertising industry, Sir Alfred Butt to represent the theatrical industry, Herman Darewski the music publishers, Sir William Jury in regard to the cinema, Sydney Walton for Government Publicity to serve with him on the committee 'Publicity and the Great War' with Bradley as Secretary. The Report of the Publicity Section 19–30 September 1918, lists: 'A committee on "Publicity and the great War" has been formed to assist the work of this section under the chairmanship of Mr CF Higham. It is consisting of the following members, WS Crawford, CH Vernon, R Howat – advisory committee Sir William Jury, S Walton, Sir Alfred Butt, and Herman Darewski. Mr Bradley will act as secretary. No meetings have yet been held.' IWM Library.
33. Bradley to Stephen Gaselee, 27 November 1919, IWM AD.
34. Plan of the Exhibition, *Catalogue of the Imperial War Exhibition* (London, Burlington House), 1918, pp. 6–7.
35. Bradley to Ffoulkes, 13 October 1921, IWM AD. See also Report on the Publicity Records Section 1 April 1921–30 September 1921, IWM Library.
36. Bradley, letter to H.S. Ashburners' Textile Advertising Specialists, 6 September 1918, IWM AD.
37. H. Devitt Welsh, Committee on Public Information, Division of Pictorial Publicity, NY, to Bradley 19 March 1918, IWM AD.
38. Bradley to Praill of the Avenue Press Ltd, 19 June 1919. The Avenue Press represented Frank Brangwyn and Praill felt Brangwyn was under-represented, see letter to Bradley, 18 June 1919.
39. See Joseph Thacher Clarke, 'Introduction', Edward Bella (ed.), *A Collection of Posters: The illustrated Catalogue of the First Exhibition* (London, Royal Aquarium), 1894, pp. 7–12, quoted by Margaret Timmers, 'Introduction', *The Power of the Poster* (London, V&A Publications), 1998, p. 16.
40. 11 June–28 June 1919.
41. Lord Northcliffe, proprietor of the *The Times*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Mirror* and the *London Evening News* was hugely critical of Asquith's policies and was instrumental in his downfall.
42. Cyril Sheldon, The Placard and Service Bill-Poster, Sheldon's Publishers, Leeds, to Bradley, 5 October 1917, IWM AD.
43. 'British Government collects Advertisements Relating to the War: Striking

Recognition of Advertising as a Mirror of Public Events', 11 May 1918, p. 122.

44. Thomas Russell, 'Advertising Stimulated by the War,' *Printers' Ink: A Journal for Advertisers*, New York, 98:4 (25 January 1917), pp. 25–32.
45. Jan Gordon, 'Art & Artists: The Grafton Galleries'. *Observer*, 15 June, 1919.
46. Charles Higham, 'Advertising', Herbert Branston Gray & Samuel Turner, *Eclipse or Empire?* (London, Nisbet and Co. Ltd), 1916, pp. 163–5.
47. Nicholas Hiley, '"KITCHENER WANTS YOU" and "Daddy, What Did YOU Do in the Great War?" The Myth of British Recruiting Posters', *IWM Review*, 11 (1997), pp. 40–57.
48. William Macpherson (London, Methuen & Co.), 1920, p. 27.
49. Bradley to W.H. Hill, HMSO, 27 January 1920, IWM AD.
50. Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nation: Exhibitions and the London Public 1747–2001* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1999), p. xv.
51. 'Notes and Comments', 20 October 1917.
52. *Annual Report of the Imperial War Museum Second Report of the Board of Trustees 1921–2*, IWM Library.
53. Report of the Imperial War Museum 1919–20 (HMSO, 1920), p. 3.
54. Ibid., p. 4, 'His Majesty's Reply'.
55. Report on the Publicity Records Section April 1919–31 March 1920, IWM Library.
56. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London & New York, Routledge), 1995, p. 339.
57. See Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* and Pierre Bourdieu & Alain Darbel, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public* (Cambridge, Polity Press), 1991.
58. Ian Malcolm letter to Ffoulkes from Paris, 7 February 1919, IWM AD.
59. 'Poster Advertising and the Five Liberty Loan Campaigns', *The Poster War Souvenir Edition* (Chicago, Poster Advertising Association Inc.), 1919, p. 9, See also Frederic J. Haskins, 'War Posters and Poster Artists', *The Poster* (November 1918), p. 39. 'The idea of government advertising was more of a shock to England than to this country. A month after England entered the war, recruiting was being promoted by posters which reached and influenced communities inaccessible to the recruiting officers. Progressive England applauded; conservative England gasped. *The London Morning Post*, a highly conventional organ of British society, broadly denounced this commercial boosting of patriotism as vulgar and unworthy of England's traditions. London editorials notwithstanding, the poster continued to blaze away, carrying its message to every corner of the empire.'
60. Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., London: The Bellknap Press of Harvard University Press), 2005, p. 8.
61. Ibid., p. 20.
62. H.S. Ashburners', Textile Advertising Specialists, to Bradley, 11 October 1917, IWM AD.

# Meaning and the poster 1: the recruiting campaigns in Britain and the empire

The editor of *Printers' Ink*, an American advertising journal, commented in December 1913 that the War Office had decided to advertise the Army and had placed a contract with Hedley Le Bas of the Caxton Agency.[1] If the editor thought the Army had become the latest convert to the persuasive powers of advertising then he was to be sadly disappointed. It was only when the decision was made at the outbreak of war to raise a large army by national appeal and not through conscription that the potential value of advertising was acknowledged. At first the popular enthusiasm for the war made systematic publicity unnecessary but when there was a sudden drop in the number of recruits in October 1914 pressure mounted for a more aggressive recruitment campaign. Until then Le Bas and his Advisory Committee drawn from men in newspaper advertising[2] had bowed to the Minister of War's preference for restrained announcements making dignified appeals for recruits.[3]

While some of the press adverts were enlarged for use as posters in the early months of the war, the remit of the Advisory Committee did not extend to the design and production of outdoor advertising. This was the responsibility of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (PRC) and more particularly of its publication sub-department. Set up in August 1914, it met in September for the first and only time. At this meeting a

group of three men were given the job of arranging for the production and distribution of leaflets, posters, streamers and show cards.[4] Although they dealt directly with the printers, they had neither the experience nor the inclination to act as advertisers or advertising agents. They gave the printers no brief to work from and while they gave final approval to the printers' ideas and designs they were happy to 'agree to whatever suggestions the trade put forward'.[5]

If a pattern can be discerned in the posters and streamers emanating from the PRC, it has more to do with the printers' sensitivity to current needs and preoccupations and their capacity to translate those concerns into the language of advertising. Certain printers dominated the production of the recruitment publicity and this may have given the campaign a pattern. Although thirty-six printing companies were involved, nearly half the work was done by just five, and of these David Allen and Sons were responsible for the largest share, amounting to some 1,500,000 copies of forty different poster designs.[6]

Nor was there any systematic national policy for distribution and display. The PRC supplied the material only at the request of local recruiting committees and other civic and military bodies. In the absence of a government billposting contractor, the poster campaign was dependent on the initiative and enthusiasm of local recruiters. Consequently, according to the printer John Allen, writing in 1915, posting was both haphazard and spasmodic.[7]

Most of the posters produced by the PRC's recruitment campaign were single sheet, i.e. 20 inches by 30 inches. These were considerably smaller than the normal 16-sheet and 32-sheet commercial bills, and critics from the trade were quick to point out the limits size put on the impact of the design. On the hoardings they could only compete with the larger bills by being massed together and even then a single, large design would dominate.[8] The critics argued that the 16- and 32-sheet posters could be seen and taken in quickly from some distance. While this is true, the single-sheet poster proved very flexible. It could be displayed in shop windows, in schools, libraries and clubs and attached to the sides of buses and trams and posted outside recruitment centres. These sites were more accessible to local recruitment committees than the hoardings, for

which committees would have to pay or rely on the generosity of local billposting contractors.

Nor were all of the posters single sheet. The printers produced a variety of sizes from single-sheet bills to streamers, show cards and stamps, sometimes of the same design. The *Penrose Annual*, for example, describing the output of David Allen and Sons, pointed out that the design 'Take Up the Sword of Justice' (plate 1) was reproduced in three sizes of poster, and in two sizes of show card for hanging in public institutions, offices, shops and houses.[9]

For all the criticism levelled at the government's recruitment campaign, the cumulative effect must have been striking. By the time conscription ended voluntary enlistment in 1916, the PRC had produced 12.5 million copies of 164 different poster designs and 450,000 copies of 10 different show cards,[10] and when the sub-department ceased production over a million posters and show cards remained undistributed.[11] The last recruiting poster was issued in September 1915: thereafter, the various bills were concerned with informing the population of the scope and operation of the Derby Scheme. The recruiting campaign therefore lasted a year from October 1914 to September 1915. From the outset it was in the hands of the commercial printers and in all but a few cases the material was designed anonymously[12] and was aimed largely at the working class, the only social group that could meet the incessant demand for recruits from the War Office.

When the first group of posters and streamers were published, recruitment numbers were falling and the priority of the campaign was to rekindle the enthusiasm of the early months of the war.[13] The themes that shaped the campaign were laid out early on. The potential recruit was called upon to serve his King in defence of country and empire against a brutal and contemptuous aggressor who paid no heed to international treaties or civilised behaviour. These themes were returned to again and again in the campaign and struck a chord in a country where the values of imperialism, militarism, monarchism and patriotism, widespread among sections of the middle and upper classes, had influenced many working-class men and boys through the commercial popular culture of mass-produced comics, magazines and popular newspapers.[14] The

illustrated story and the illustrated advertisement jostled side by side, and often emanating from the same hand, they showed little difference in style and shared with the pictorial posters of the campaign a visual vocabulary familiar to their intended audience.

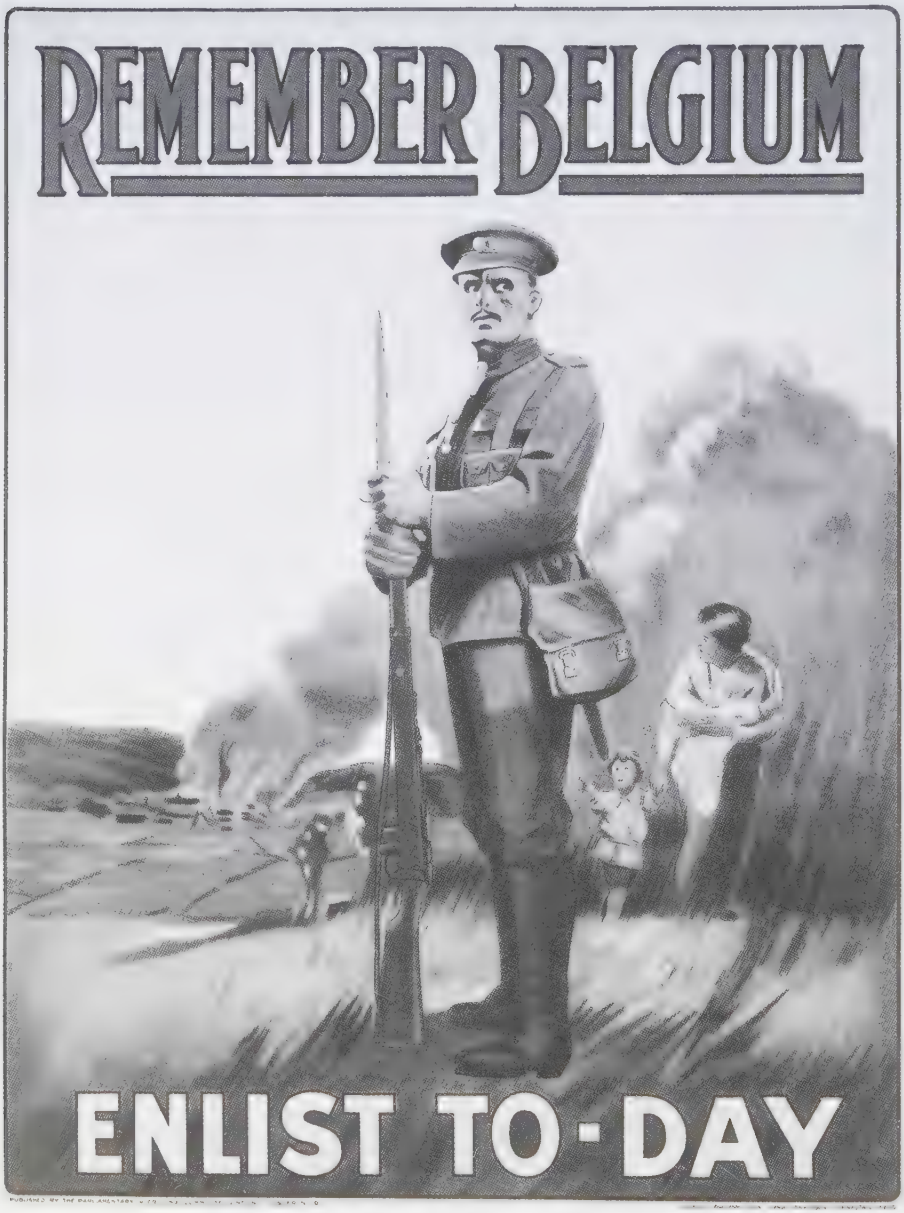
Early PRC posters had been a mixture of official document and proclamation. But in the hands of the experienced advertising printer, letterpress material was more direct and urgent in its appeal and addressed the viewer directly in a manner familiar from the rest of the campaign. The size and colour of the type is varied, usually red and blue in order to underscore the message and reinforce the patriotism of the appeal. Against a white background these concise commands would have stood out clearly.

One of the most powerful inducements for men to enlist was a feeling that they were fighting a just war against an enemy who, by the unprovoked attack on Belgium, had shown himself to an arrogant bully contemptuous of the weak. The moral courage of the freeborn Englishman was required to stand up to the enemy. This chimed with a widespread sense of justice and fair play, values inculcated through countless stories in popular literature[15] and strongly held by many of the working class.[16]

After the shelling of Scarborough and Hartlepool in late 1914 and the sinking of the passenger liner the *Lusitania* in May 1915, Germany was presented in propaganda and war publicity as a threat to defenceless women and children, a claim reinforced by press stories of German atrocities in Belgium. In these circumstances British men were exhorted to fight in defence of their families as well as for justice.

The PRC campaign used these events in a series of letterpress and picture posters in 1914 and 1915 as men were admonished to remember Belgium or Scarborough or the *Lusitania* and to 'Enlist To-day' to exact revenge these for crimes as a matter of duty. This was strong language and the letterpress posters were often explicit and intemperate in their description of German 'barbarity' often quoting from newspaper reports, but what is surprising is the anodyne nature of the picture posters dealing with the same subject matter. There are none of the graphic representations of violence found in posters on similar themes

produced in Ireland, the colonies or dominions. A poster published in December 1914 shows a mild and somewhat hackneyed representation of violence that hardly warrants the stricken look in the soldier's eyes (figure 1). This generalised image has much in common with the stock



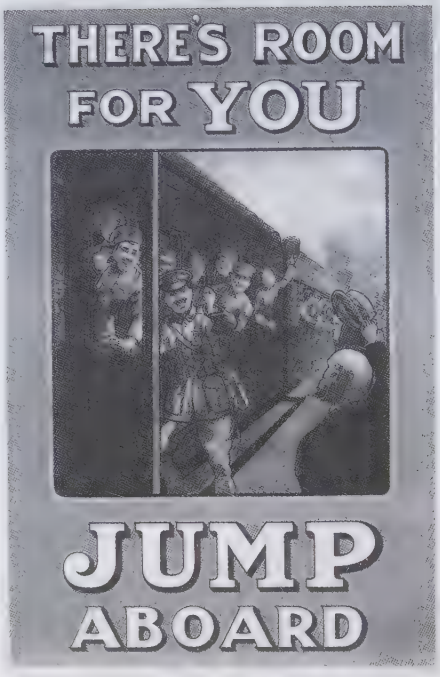

1 Anon., December 1914, Remember Belgium

posters used extensively in the printing trade and it could refer to any event or theatre of war. Only the copy drawn from press reports makes it specific. The posters dealing with Scarborough and the *Lusitania* also eschew any representation of violence (plate 1). Through the medium of fine art and by the use of the allegorical figures of Britannia and Justice, the appeal to putative recruits is given a high moral tone. Since the furore surrounding the 'Horrors of the Walls' in the 1880s and 1890s, the outdoor advertising trade had been sensitive to the criticism that their posters provoked violence and immorality through their crude imagery. The billposters had set up their own censorship committee and in the succeeding decades had removed the worst excesses from the hoardings.[17] The result was a genre of visually bland posters. References to violence were shifted to the copy where they were less offensive to the eye.

In the PRC campaign the viewer is addressed as a dutiful citizen loyal to King and Country through the use of simple devices such as the Union flag, the portrait of the King or the map of the British Isles. In this way the inequalities of a profoundly hierarchical country were glossed over. Thus the ground was cleared for the projection of an 'imagined community' worth fighting for.[18] It was a community with a particular history constructed in schoolbooks, newspapers and popular literature that celebrated the military achievements of British leaders in foreign and colonial wars.[19] Its heroes were Lords Kitchener and Roberts, heroes of the recent colonial conflicts in Africa, as much as Lord Nelson, and all three were used throughout the campaign as examples to follow. Yet it was not sufficient to rely on 'celebrity endorsement', however popular and heroic, to encourage enlistment. The appeal had to be more focused and potential recruits were addressed directly from the hoardings. At first the tone was one of cheerful invocation but as the need for troops increased it gave way to exhortation and finally to an urgent entreaty to 'Halt', 'Think' and 'Enlist'.

The posters regularly use similar visual structures. Against a blank space (figure 2) or in scenes of comradely enthusiasm (figure 3), healthy happy and well-fed soldiers beckon recruits into a mythic world very different from the unhealthy and economically insecure existence many


2 Anon., March 1915, Line Up, Boys!




3 After W. A. Fry, There's Room for You

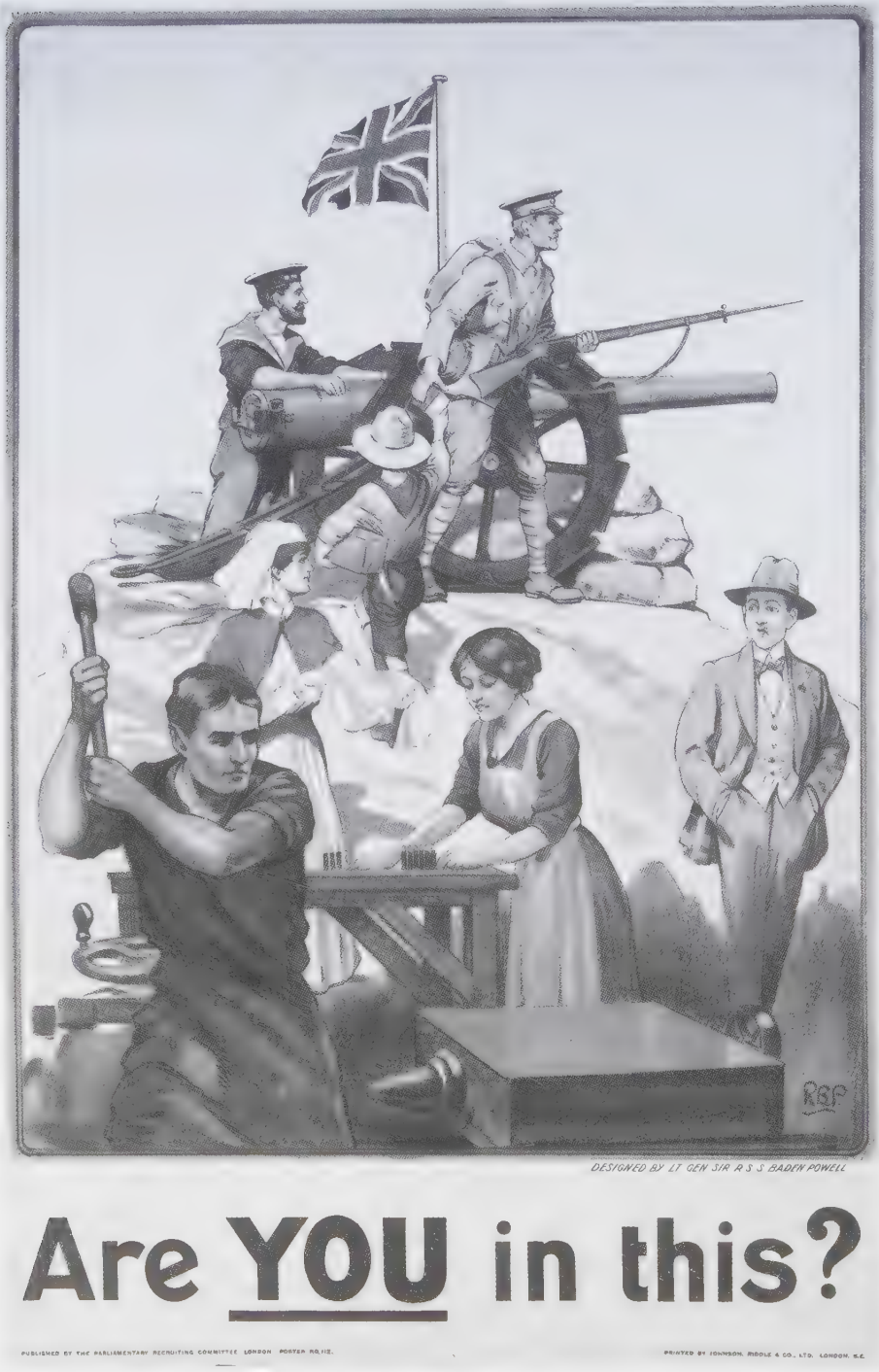

4 Harry Lawrence Oakley, January 1915, Think!

were experiencing in civilian life. There is no reference to the often brutal and harsh regime of army life. What is on offer is a painless and instant transformation into the military.[20] Few of the posters drew attention to actual fighting and where they did so it was in a far from emphatic way. The scene of action was often distanced by the use of silhouettes as in the 'Think' poster (figure 4). This poster was widely displayed because with its simple form and strong contrasts it stood out on most outdoor sites and its message would be easily grasped. It also offered the excitement of military action without reference to the concomitant risks and horrors of actual conflict.

The poster's appeal could be personalised even more by displaying within the composition an actual space for the individual to fill. This was felt to be so effective a device that it was used in recruiting posters at local level and in the colonies. In the poster 'Step Into Your Place' (plate 2) the invocation is particularly powerful: the recruit joins the end of a queue of volunteers representing all classes in society whose social differences are gradually erased as they become part of a national army. What is conveyed is a sense of communal effort, of a shared sacrifice in defence of a whole community. It was an appeal difficult to reject without looking like the shamed outsider in Baden Powell's design, particularly when, as here, there is conveyed a sense of a whole community at war (figure 5).

During 1915 it became increasingly necessary to mobilise on the home front as well as on the battlefront. These early shifts towards total war can be discerned in the designs of some of the PRC posters. The anonymous design for 'Fill Up the Ranks' (plate 3) projects interdependence of worker and soldier at a time when men were being recruited, not always willingly, into munitions work. Barry Curtis observes it was 'indebted to traditional heraldic images of socialist unity [which] reinforce the equivalence but not the similarity of war and work'.[21] This sense of mutual dependence conveyed by the poster would increase pressure on the worker to play his part.

If an appeal to adventure, patriotism or justice was not enough, the poster could always flatter or shame. While in one letterpress poster of 1915 the viewer becomes 'THE ONE' who could make all the difference, in another his continued absence is a betrayal of his friends.[22] It declares,




5 Robert S. Baden Powell, 1915, Are You in This?

'You are proud of your Pals in the army of course. But what will your Pals think of You?' With the catchy rhythm of the popular song or music hall monologue the question sticks in the mind and, hopefully, in the conscience. The word 'pals' would have had a particular resonance. At the beginning of the war, 'Pals' Battalions had been formed particularly in the towns and cities of the Midlands and the North from friends and colleagues from the same community, workplace or even sports club.[23]

A series of letterpress posters in 1915 drew heavily on established advertising practice by targeting particular groups in order to pressure men to enlist. It is not accidental that they first appeared as press advertisements devised by the experienced advertising men of the Advisory Committee.[24] In one poster, 'Five Questions to Men who have Not Enlisted',[25] physically able men were asked to consider the consequences of their poor example for the security of the country and the empire while in other posters their wives and their employers were encouraged to put pressure on them to join the army.[26] A further twist was added when the posters asked of the men how they would answer when their children asked what they had done in the war. This last question was picked up and developed as a silhouette poster that was felt to be so effective it was used by the PRC, Essex Recruiting Committee, and recruiting committees in Ireland, Australia and South Africa (figure 6).[27] More infamously, the artist Savile Lumley designed for the printers Johnson, Riddle and Co. a poster on a similar theme in March 1915 (plate 4).[28] As an example of manipulative sentimentality it achieved a certain notoriety after the war during a period that was less jingoistic and more critical of the conflict. As Nicholas Hiley demonstrates, however, the poster was not seen at the time as being particularly significant, nor is it an example of advertising under the pressing need for effective war propaganda becoming more psychologically persuasive. If anything, as its origins in Le Bas's press campaign indicates, it was the product of agencies already adept at the persuasive rhetoric of commercial advertising. In fact, there is no evidence that the PRC had any part to play in the poster's genesis.[29]

Finally, women were encouraged to pressure their men in two more picture posters in which first a wife and then a mother command their


6 Anon., 1915, What Will Your Answer Be

men folk to 'Go', the one with stoicism (plate 5), the other with pride.[30] It is easy now to feel uncomfortable with this kind of moral arm-twisting but we should not underestimate the commitment to the war. The moral and patriotic obligation to defeat a brutal and immoral foe was widely felt and is testament to the effectiveness of British propaganda in 1915. Widespread atrocity propaganda had shown females as victims and fear of German brutality was real among middle-class women.[31]

Looking at the campaign as a whole, while it is possible to discern certain shifts in emphasis, there is no sense of a developing strategy. The last PRC picture poster of a charging cavalryman is laughably out of date, given the mechanised slaughter that was going on along a static war front.[32] There was no guiding hand, no central body shaping and controlling the campaign. A variety of printers in different parts of the country responded to events in the press, no doubt shaped by British propaganda, or to public concerns and official requirements – in the midst of an intense recruitment drive in 1915 the PRC still found space to issue a poster detailing the new scales for separation allowances. Using their own design tradition and stable of designers, the printers


**Plate 1** Bernard Partridge, June 1915, Take Up the Sword of Justice


Plate 6 Septimus E. Scott, 1917, Defend Your Island from the Grimmest Menace that Ever Threatened it


Plate 7 Anon., May 1915, Can You Any Longer Resist the Call?


Plate 8 Norman Alfred William Lindsay, 1918, The Last Call

would also pick up on themes already being circulated through posters produced by other printing companies.

By concentrating on the rather wooden, sentimental and aesthetically unsophisticated designs used in the PRC posters, one can underestimate the relatively sophisticated advertising techniques that were being deployed. Hiley demonstrates effectively how many of the posters in their visual form derive from commercial models. How else could it be when in the early years of the war printers were producing work for their commercial clients and the PRC at the same time?

As a strategy for encouraging sufficient men to enlist voluntarily, the PRC campaign must be judged a failure. One measure of this failure was the derision, even disgust, expressed by many, including the targeted working-class audience, at the attempt to sell war like any other commodity. The strong visual links between commercial advertising and the appeals to patriotism must have been evident in every hoarding, bus, train and tram and in the press. Hiley addresses evidence to suggest that during 1915 large sectors of the population were gradually alienated by the growing commercialism of the campaign.[33]

More speculatively, it could be argued that the campaign represented a failure to understand the motivations of its target group. The PRC recruitment drive was sanctioned by the professional middle class and carried out by the commercial middle class. It was aimed at a working-class audience who shared little of the middle classes' uncritical enthusiasm for the values of monarchism, patriotism, imperialism and militarism that underpinned the campaign. Motivated by, at best, a sober sense of duty, the prospect of economic security or the comradeship of friends, many of the working class tired of the relentless appeals to patriotism and empire or the crude use of shame and guilt.

In October 1915 the PRC met as a separate committee for the last time and joined with the Labour Recruiting Committee to form the Joint Recruiting Committee (JRC) under the chairmanship of Lord Derby. In the same month the 'Derby Scheme' was introduced whereby every man in the United Kingdom between 18 and 41 was to be asked to pledge himself to being called up. These men were divided by age and marital status and a promise was made that no married man would be called up until

all single men had been summoned. It is not clear whether the scheme represented a last attempt to save the principle of voluntary enlistment or was a prelude to conscription.[34] Whatever the reason, the nature and purpose of the posters emanating from the JRC changed. They became information bills informing the public of the implications of the scheme. One senses that it was with some relief that the War Office resumed the more palatable process of producing official proclamations and distanced itself from the strident tones of the recruitment campaign.

Recruiting campaigns did not start or end with the PRC. Nor did they cease with conscription. Even before 1914 the Territorial Army and Her Majesty's Special Reserve Force were advertising for volunteers. During 1914 15 other branches of the services including the Royal Navy, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and even individual regiments and battalions advertised directly or through local recruiting committees. The posters produced in these campaigns were undistinguished letterpress bills giving information about pay and conditions or were banal picture posters in which healthy men in uniform or cheerful female recruits encourage viewers to enlist. In 1916 the Ministry of National Service was set up by the incoming Lloyd George Government and set about recruiting men and women through posters such as 'Defend Your Island from the Grimmest Menace that Ever Threatened it', by the well-known commercial artist Septimus Scott (plate 6), showing a flamboyant Britannia with the nation behind her coming up over the brow of a hill. Only when the Ministry was reorganised in late 1917 and began to direct people into the services did this kind of advertising cease.[35]

At local level individual agencies played an active role in encouraging recruitment, usually through uninspiring letterpress bills guiding men to the nearest recruitment offices. In form these early placards echoed the government's official notices. However, some local recruitment committees were more proactive in using the skills of local printers. The Central London Recruiting Committee used a variety of appeals targeted at various groups to recruit to different services (figure 9). The Essex County Recruiting Committee adopted an interesting strategy. They complemented, in fact fed off, the PRC Campaign, either directly


7 Anon., 1915, Murdered By the Huns

by producing copies, sometimes modified, of a PRC poster or picked up on national propaganda themes about German atrocities (figure 7).

The posters for the PRC Campaign were available to recruiting bodies in Scotland and Wales as well as England. A number of them were published in Welsh. Three bills calling on the men of Wales to live up to their heritage and defend their country were produced exclusively for the principality while the remainder were translations of the PRC's English posters. The PRC's responsibility for recruiting did not extend to Ireland, then part of the United Kingdom. The nationalist leader John Redmond, who supported Ireland's involvement in the war, advised, in March 1915, that 'it would not be advantageous to recruiting in Ireland for the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee to take up definite work

there'.[36] His views were heeded. In the previous month the War Office had sent Hedley Le Bas to Dublin to overhaul recruitment, and, working with a small group of Dublin newspaper editors, he devised a poster and leaflet campaign. He was also responsible for expanding the Volunteer War Service League into the more grandiose Central Recruiting Council for Ireland.[37] The War Office was happy for this body to assume the same kind of responsibilities as the PRC in Britain. During 1915 the Central Recruiting Council became the more professional Department of Recruiting in Ireland before finally emerging as the Irish Recruiting Council in 1918.[38]

The Irish Recruitment Campaign took place in a country very different from the rest of the British Isles and certainly from England. Irish politics and society had been shaped by the long-standing issue of Home Rule. The division of nationalist and loyalist was reinforced by the split between Catholics and Protestants, and geographically by the concentration of Protestants in the North and particularly in Ulster, and to some extent economically by the predominance of farming in the Catholic South and West. These political religious, economic and geographical divisions did not line up neatly to produce an unbridgeable chasm between two Irelands but they were the context for the poster campaign. Yet it is surprising how these divisions rarely surface in the campaign. This may have been because the campaign was run by central, non-partisan recruiting committees employing printers in Belfast and Dublin from both sides of the divide to recruit from the whole community. It certainly helped that before the 1916 Uprising both nationalists and loyalists supported the war though for different reasons.[39]

Recent work by historians has drawn attention to the power 'of group affiliations and collective pressure' in encouraging enlistment in Ireland. David Fitzpatrick comments that 'The readiness of individuals to join the colours was largely determined by the attitudes and behaviour of comrades kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow members of organisations and fraternities.'[40] After 1916, however, Irish nationalist organisations did develop which opposed recruitment to what was increasingly seen by nationalists as an imperial conflict.


8 Anon., Come and Join This Happy Throng

The recruitment posters produced in Ireland, almost without exception, were the anonymously designed output of printers based in Dublin and Belfast. Only one designer is named. Two printers had bases in London and one of them, David Allen and Sons, produced posters for both the Irish and the PRC Campaign. The posters used a rather sentimental, naïve and figurative style reminiscent of the PRC. Throughout 1915 cheerful soldiers beckon recruits to join them in some conflict-free zone. Sometimes they do this singly and sometimes, as in this very unusual photographic poster (figure 8), as a 'Happy Throng' of Irish recruits leaving for the Front. The appeal is often to chums or friends and where there is emphasis on Ireland it is as part of a British or Allied Force. When the Front appears, it is a non-threatening place of card games and camaraderie where the viewer is hailed from within the poster to fill the space created for him as it is in 'Will You Make a Fourth?'[41] Other posters called on the viewer to act and not to stand on the sidelines, ignoring the boys at the front.[42] References to conflict, such

as in the appeal to the Irish fighting spirit as exemplified by the bravery of Irish heroes awarded the V.C., were in the copy, not in the imagery.[43]

Like the PRC Campaign the Irish posters demonised Germany, presenting them as a threat to family and religion. Atrocity stories and reported war crimes were played on as early as March 1915 to show Irish women to be at risk from a brutal and victorious foe. In July 1915 one poster not only had the Hun at the door, but had him bursting through it to threaten the Irish family within, including a man young enough to have enlisted (figure 9). There was little reality to this threat but the message


9 Anon., July 1915, Is Your Home Worth Fighting for?

was clear. The male recruit is being constructed as the protector of his defenceless family and women folk and he has a moral duty to combat the ruthless and immoral foe before hearth and home are defiled. Two posters in May 1915 show Rheims Cathedral destroyed by a heartless and implacable Germany to underscore German indifference to beauty and as a threat to Christendom. One shows a man at the plough addressed by the spirit of St Patrick dominating the ruins of Rheims Cathedral in an image that would resonate with the Catholic farming communities of Ireland and has no equivalent in the PRC campaign (plate 7).[44]

In the same month the Central Recruiting Council published a poster with the slogan 'Irishmen, Avenge the Lusitania!', accompanied by a schematic representation of survivors swimming away from the sinking passenger liner.[45] In style, the image is strongly reminiscent of popular illustration and very different from the fine art influenced representation of the event by Sir Bernard Partridge for the PRC though it may be that this poster (plate 1), along with a PRC letterpress poster on the same theme, were circulated in Ireland.[46] Both were produced by David Allen and Sons, who worked for the PRC and the Irish Recruiting Committees. This incident may have been given prominence in Ireland because the *Lusitania* was sunk off the Irish coast as a consequence of the U-boat blockade that was damaging the fishing industry of County Cork, and would therefore have had a particular pertinence for the Irish.[47]

In the Irish campaign the few letterpress posters that there were appealed for recruits on behalf of specific regiments. What is interesting about the recruiting posters, with the exception of the references to Rheims Cathedral, is the absence of any direct appeal to religion or references to the case for or against Home Rule. This was very much a case of the British Isles presenting a common face to an external enemy.

Missing from this review of the British recruitment campaigns is reference to the poster that has come to typify First World War propaganda: the face and pointing finger of Lord Kitchener commanding 'Britons' to 'Join Your Country's Army' (figure 10). Its significance has grown since the First World War and particularly since the 1960s when, as a kitsch image, the General stared out from bed-sit walls, T-shirts and

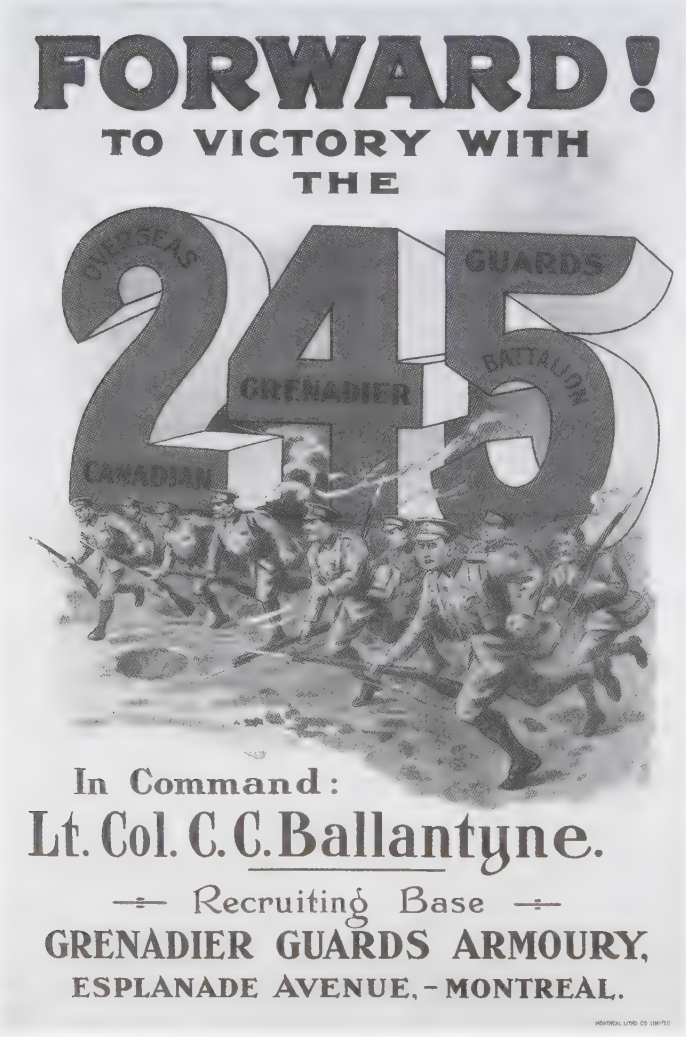

10 Alfred Leete, Britons

shopping bags. However, as Nicholas Hiley has demonstrated, it had no such eminence with the public at the time, although the pointing finger as a graphic device is recurrent in later PRC posters and posters from other countries, as has been pointed out by Maurice Rickards among others. The popular and trade press made no mention of it and it had no official status. It was not produced for the PRC either in its original form or when it was re-printed by David Allen and Sons with the new caption 'Your Country Needs You'. Designed by the cartoonist Alfred Leete for the magazine *London Opinion*, it appeared on the cover on 5 September 1914. Later in the year the journal developed it as a poster. The journal was following the example of other companies who generated their own recruiting appeals.[48] Not only was the poster the product of a private initiative but it was contrary, in its assertive and abrasive style, to that approved by Lord Kitchener and the War Office in August and September of 1914, and its associations with commercial advertising echo the later direction taken by the PRC campaign. Interestingly, versions of this particular image of Kitchener reappear in colonial recruiting posters in Canada, India, Australia and South Africa.[49]

In the different colonial campaigns, perhaps the one recurrent image that bound them together was the Union flag whether deployed centre stage or as a backcloth to other imagery. This was not lip service paid to an imperial ideal. There was strong support for Britain in the various colonial territories among the political and intellectual elites and in the popular press, and although support waned as the war continued, it never disappeared.[50] The recruiting campaigns drew on it as a powerful sentiment but not at the expense of local patriotism. Canadians were exhorted in a variety of designs to live up to the achievements of the battles of Langmarke, Festubert and St Julien, to which the Canadian Expeditionary Forces had made a vital contribution.[51] While after 1915 Australians were encouraged to continue the fight rather than discredit the nation by pulling out. The appeals to nationalism and imperialism continued side by side.

In all the campaigns, particularly in the early years of the war, recruits were encouraged to find comradeship, status and adventure by joining up. In Australia the PRC poster figure 3 of cheerful soldiers encouraging

recruits to join the great adventure was adopted by the government but with the more 'matey' copy line 'Jump Aboard'.[52] The army was the place for MEN. In posters such as the Canadian battalion poster (figure 11) they are represented in action, though rarely in conflict. In the dominions where sport was an important part of the culture the war was presented as a sporting contest on the field of honour much as it had been by the Central London Recruiting Committee in the poster, which eshorted the 'Young Men of Britain ... [to] Play the Greater Game' and thereby give the lie to the Germans who said they were not in earnest.[53] In South




11 Anon., Forward! To Victory with the 245 Battalion Canadian Grenadier Guards

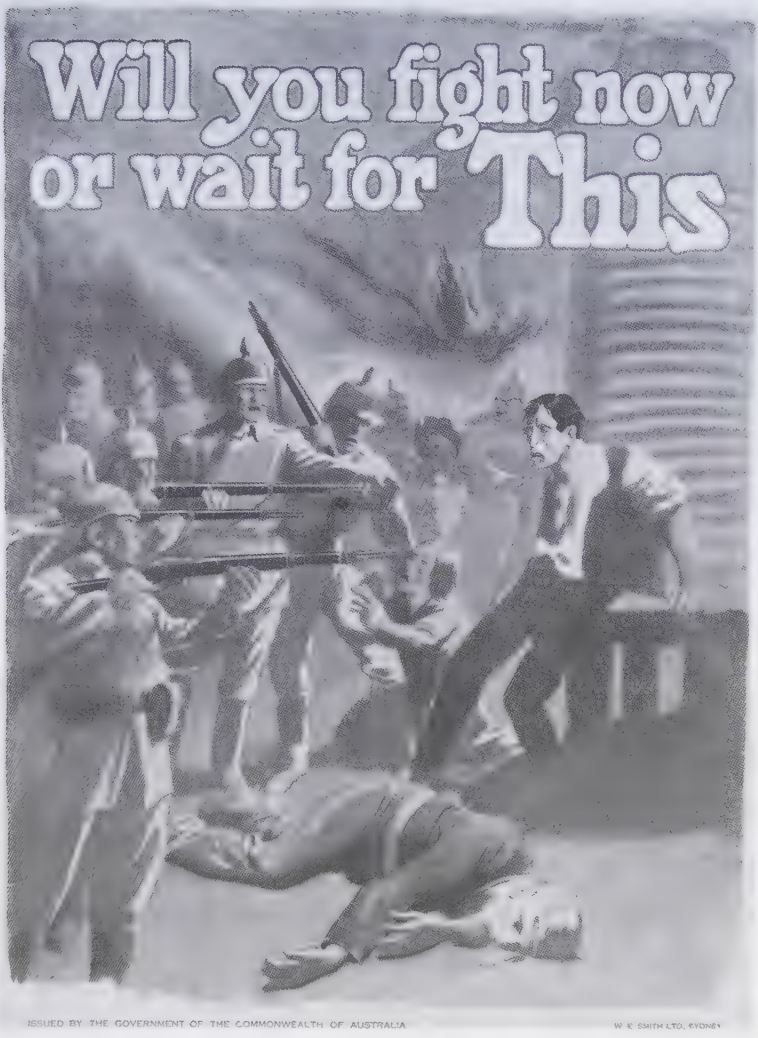

12 Anon., Sportsman's Company of the Irish Canadian Rangers

Africa three early letterpress posters make a more than tongue-in-cheek appeal for recruits to join the springbok tour of the Western Front and men are encouraged to 'Roll Up' and fight the Hun in a poster that has the structure as well as the language of a boxing bill.[54] In Australia new recruits are exhorted to enlist in the 'Sportsmen's 1000' and 'Play Up, Play Up and Play THE Game'.[55] In this poster, sport and comradeship make a powerful double appeal. Even more vivid and direct in its appeal is the poster for the Irish Canadian Rangers where a new recruit in athletic garb hurdles into a place reserved for him in the 'Sportsman's Company' (figure 12).

As the war moved to a bloody stalemate and the initial enthusiasm declined, so stronger justifications for enlisting were deployed. Most common was the appeal to men to protect their family and not to let others do it for them. But what were these enlisting men protecting their families from? The posters answered that question by the traditional propaganda technique of demonising the enemy, and this meant Germany, in the form of a pitiless soldiery (figure 13), the menacing Imperial Eagle (figure 14) or the aggrandising Kaiser all of which threaten one's family, country and way of life.[56] A moment's thought would have exposed the absurdity of this notion for countries as far away from Europe as Canada and Australia and yet, paradoxically, the further away a country was from the front the more vividly German barbarity was represented. This tendency is epitomised by a Norman Lindsay poster of 1918 for the Australian


13 C. David, Canadians – It's Time to Take Action


14 E. Currie, The Prussians Want to Make This the Dark Continent: Will You Let Them Do it?




15 Norman Alfred William Lindsay, 1918, Will You Fight Now or Wait for This?

government (figure 15). In its gruesome exaggerations it echoes the more sensational contemporary cinema and theatre posters and like them produces a distorted imagery that bears little resemblance to the reality it purports to represent and which no Australian would have experienced.

The more the patriotic and moral justification for fighting was emphasised the less reason could there be for staying behind. Now the imperative was a duty to country, family and friends, not the pull of a life of adventure and camaraderie: you should enlist not to join your pals but not to desert them. In Australia banal stickers were telling you

'Your Mate Wants You' and in Canada a poster asked 'Your Chums are Fighting. Why aren't You?'[57] The soldiers at the front no longer lured you in with their uniform and their confident swagger but, bandaged and bloody, pleaded with you to come urgently to their aid as in the poster from 1918, 'The Last Call', by Norman Lindsay (plate 8).

While the propaganda of the colonial countries shared common themes and strategies in their posters, these countries had also to acknowledge what was distinctive about their own communities. This was particularly true in Canada and South Africa where two groups with a different language and culture co-existed as unequal partners. In both cases the French and the Boers were reluctant supporters of the war. In Canada, a number of posters had French copy and appealed in ways that would find a specific response from 'Canadiens'. In one poster the new recruit joins with his '*poilu*', his French brother in arms, in support of Britain but in defence of French culture and values against Prussian Militarism.[58] Another poster in French shows scenes of German barbarism as a warning that Canada might suffer the same fate and would clearly resonate differently in Quebec or Montreal (figure 13). In South Africa, the tension between the Boers and the British colonists continued throughout the war and made the presence of political and military figures like Botha and Smuts crucial in securing Boer compliance. Consequently, when a poster in Afrikaans with a photograph of Smuts calls for South African recruits to live up to the achievements of South Africans at Messine Ridge in 1914, it is more than a reworking of the Kitchener appeal.[59] Smut's political significance in a divided South Africa was far greater than the Field Marshall's back in Britain.

After 1916 with the introduction of conscription the need for recruiting posters disappeared in Britain, New Zealand and Canada although they continued in Ireland, Australia and South Africa. Looking back at the campaigns in the different countries one is struck more by the similarities than the differences. There was not a single coordinated campaign in any of the countries and no printer or publishing house was solely responsible for the production of posters. A variety of bodies at national and local level produced their own placards on their own initiative. It is

perhaps surprising then to find strong similarities not only within each country but more widely within the empire. This is evident in the themes of the campaigns but particularly in the style of the posters which was strongly figurative, anecdotal or sentimental and derived from popular illustration and commercial advertising.

The recruiting campaigns in Britain and the colonies were, in effect, advertising campaigns and used advertising's visual rhetoric of persuasion with all its exaggerations, simplifications and evasions. We should not be surprised by this alliance of commercial and national interests. Ever the opportunist advertisers had, since the late nineteenth century, used national events like Queen Victoria's Jubilees and the Boer War to sell their products. It was only a short step to selling war itself.

Yet increasingly, and in Britain particularly, the war did not 'sell'. As it dragged on and more and more people became aware of the conditions at the front the gap between the war as it was represented on the hoarding and the reality on the ground widened. Without an experienced publicist to direct the various poster campaigns and to respond to changes in the public's attitude to the war the campaigns became less persuasive and more out of touch. Given a client, the state, which was always uneasy about using advertising and a target audience, working-class men, who were increasingly resistant to the attempts to exhort, command or shame them into what seemed more and more like an act of self-sacrifice, the campaigns became less and less effective. Conscription did not end poster campaigning in Britain but as we will see in the next chapter these new campaigns produced posters of a different kind.

Of the almost 150 designs produced by the PRC in the United Kingdom half are typographical. The majority of the latter function more as public notices and propaganda sheets than carefully constructed advertisements directed at the addressee's sense of patriotism, civic duty, guilt or self-interest. They helped to create a cultural environment where the injustices suffered by less fortunate nations and the fate of the individual, family and local community became entwined. Despite their use of the national symbols of flag, lion, war heroes, Britannia and John Bull, and significantly, the common soldier who is authoritative, happy and part of the greater enterprise of the national cause, the campaigns failed in their

primary aim. Their rallying calls in the battle for the defence of freedom, liberty and their corollaries of rights and duty pictured an ideological position that made equivalences of national interest, communal solidarity and personal happiness. The slogans elicited a conditioned response where the posters addressed real anxieties and appear to propose resolutions and where dominant values were automatically affirmed and misgivings repressed. As such they were the product of a cognitive dissonance. They are pictures of deceits to conceal what Slavoj Žižek calls the rupture at the heart of the real. They are part of the facade that constitutes the coherent reality demanded by a belief in service, but even when it has been demystified, people still act as if they believe. There is a kind of complicity or mutual dependence where the commitment to the war that had already been made in terms of the sacrifices made by many, had not only to be endured but justified in the promise of an unalienated social cohesion appropriated from commercial popular culture.

## Notes

1. T. Swinborne Sheldrake, Editorial, *Printers' Ink*, 130 (December 1913), p. 33.
2. Wareham Smith, *Spilt Ink* (London, Ernest Benn), 1932, p. 116. The committee consisted of LeBas, Wareham Smith (Advertising Director of Associated Newspapers), Thomas Russell (Advertising Consultant), Charles Higham (Advertising Agent), Henry Simonis (Advertising Manager *of the Evening News*), and J.D. Ackerman (Managing Director of *Advertiser's Weekly* and later Advertising Manager of *The Times*).
3. Nicholas Hiley, 'Sir Hedley Le Bas and the Origins of Domestic Propaganda in Britain 1914–1917', *Journal of Advertising History*, 10:2 (1987).
4. Roy Douglas, 'Voluntary Enlistment in the First World War and the Work of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee', *The Journal of Modern History*, 29:4 (December 1970), p. 568.
5. Nicholas Hiley, '"Kitchener Wants You" and "Daddy What Did YOU Do in the Great War?" The Myth of British Recruiting Posters', *Imperial War Review*, 11 (1997), p. 46.
6. Ibid., p. 47.
7. *The Placard* (January 1915), pp. 24–30.
8. Ibid., p. 26.
9. W.J. Avery, 'National Advertising in Poster', *Penrose Annual*, 1916, p. 111.
10. Confidential Report of the PRC Meeting's sub-department, 25 May 1916. No.106/367 quoted in M. Sanders and P.M. Taylor, *British Propaganda During the First World War, 1914–18* (London, Macmillan, 1982), p. 104.
11. Hiley, 'Kitchener Wants You', p. 52.

12. Only twenty designers are named and only three are not commercial artists.
13. Phillip Dutton, 'Moving Images? The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee's Poster Campaign, 1914–16', *Imperial War Museum Review*, 4 (1989), p. 46.
14. See W.J. Reader, *'At Duty's Call', a Study in Obsolete Patriotism* (Manchester, Manchester University Press), 1988.
15. Ibid., pp. 83 100.
16. J. Hartigan, 'Volunteering in the First World War. The Birmingham Experience, August 1914 May 1915', *Midland History* (1999), p. 181.
17. John Hewitt, 'Poster Nasties', S. Popple and V. Toulmin (eds), *Visual Delights* (Trowbridge, Flick Books), 2000, pp. 154–69.
18. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, Verso), 1983, pp. 14–16.
19. W.J. Reader, *At Duty's Call*, pp. 35 -59.
20. Barry Curtis, 'Posters As Visual Propaganda in the Great War', *Block*, 2 (1980), pp. 51–2.
21. Ibid., p. 52.
22. See IWM PST 5143 and 12211
23. J.M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (London, Macmillan), 1985, pp. 30–3.
24. Hiley, 'Kitchener Wants You', p. 46.
25. See IWM PST 5129, this was one among a series of posters disliked by Kitchener for its similarity to advertising.
26. See IWM PST 11678.
27. See IWM PST 12321, 12322, 12244, 12476.
28. *Imperial War Museum*, P.A. Gann to B. Kitts, 3 December 1971, 1–2 with enclosure 'Extract from Memoir of Arthur L. Gunn'.
29. Hiley, 'Kitchener Wants You', pp. 46 8.
30. See IWM PST 5162.
31. P. Ward, 'Women of Britain Say GO': Women's Patriotism in the First World War', *Twentieth Century British History*, 12:1 (2001), pp. 23–45.
32. See IWM PST 5031, 11970.
33. Hiley, 'Kitchener Wants You', p. 50.
34. Douglas, 'Voluntary Enlistment', pp. 578–9.
35. Winter, *The Great War*, pp. 41–2.
36. Douglas,'Voluntary Enlistment', p. 574.
37. Hiley, 'Sir Hedley Le Bas', pp. 37–8.
38. It is not clear when the Central Recruiting Council became the Department for Recruiting. Keith Jeffery says it was October 1915 (see K. Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 2000, p. 17). However, in the Imperial War Museum's collection of posters some of the placards have the Department of Recruiting as publisher as early as May 1915.
39. Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, pp. 5–36.
40. David Fitzpatrick, 'The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914–18', *The Historical Journal*, 38:4 (1995), pp. 104–30.
41. See IWM PST 13635.

42. See IWM PST 13607.
43. See IWM PST 13647.
44. See IWM PST 13606.
45. Jeffery, *Ireland and The Great War*, p. 17.
46. See IWM PST 11782.
47. Jeffrey, *Ireland and The Great War*, p. 32.
48. Hiley, 'Kitchener Wants You', pp. 41–5.
49. See IWM PST 12441, 2734, 12207 and 12331.
50. D. Stevens, *1914 18: The History of the First World War* (London, Allen Lane), 2004.
51. See IWM PST 0887, 12430, 12460, 12473.
52. See IWM PST 12246.
53. See IWM PST 12126.
54. See IWM PST 12328, 12334, 12335.
55. See IWM PST 12226.
56. See IWM PST 12208.
57. See IWM PST 12247, 12428.
58. See IWM PST 0887.
59. See IWM PST 12331.

3

# Meaning and the poster 2: war loans and charity campaigns in Britain

It was clear from 1914 that the British government was not going to finance the war from normal revenue and as the demands grew so did the need to encourage the home population to lend money to the government. In addition to the sale of Treasury Bills, the government launched loans in November 1914, June 1915 and January 1917.[1] After September 1917 they marketed a series of national war bonds under different guises.[2] These loans and bonds had a minimum deposit, a rate of return and a repayment timescale that deterred the small investor until, at the launch of the second loan, the government made it possible to buy War Savings Certificates that cost 15 shillings and sixpence (77.5p) and could be cashed in for £1 after a year. These were far more attractive to the small investor and War Savings Certificates continued to be available until 1919.[3]

The amount raised by loans, bonds and certificates increased in the second half of the war because the rise in personal disposable income among the workforce coincided with decreased opportunities to spend it in a period of shortages. By the use of aggressive marketing a lot of this spare cash found its way into the government's coffers after 1915. Hedley Le Bas and the Caxton Advertising Company were given the job of selling the second and third loans, while bonds and certificates were pushed from 'the platform and the pulpit, but more particularly through

the press'.[4] Increasingly, from 1917 posters became an important medium, not least because the sale of loans, bonds and certificates were often made at public events such as 'Feed the Gun', 'Tank Week' and 'Business Man's Week' which were held around the country and were vigorously and extensively advertised in public spaces. These were one-off events but there was the constant low-level exhortation to invest from hoardings, railway stations, post offices and other public buildings.

The various outdoor advertising campaigns were initiated nationally under the umbrella of the National War Savings Committee and the Scottish War Savings Committee and implemented locally through a network of over 1,500 local Associations for War Savings. The associations drew on many of the same people involved with the local


16 Bert Thomas, 1918, You Get More Than He Does

recruiting committees in 1914–15 and who now became representatives for the National War Aims Committee (NWAC).[5] The National Savings Committees used mainly printing companies based in London and Edinburgh who would, like the PRC before them, have distributed the posters to local bodies. Often these posters had a blank space left on them so that details of the local fund-raising events could be overprinted. This must have lent a certain visual coherence to the various local activities but such a design was almost certainly on the initiative of the printer and not the government committee. There is no evidence that the national committees issued a brief for the printers to follow and the only constraints on the printers would have been those imposed by the need for the copy to convey accurately the details of the financial conditions of the various loans, bonds and certificates. What the various campaigns do have in common is 'the usual combination of commercial inducements and patriotic appeal'.[6] Le Bas commented in 1915, 'We must give the investor something for nothing to make him lend his money. In other words why not make patriotism profitable.'[7] There is no common visual style in the posters, although they do rely on traditional patriotic imagery to a far greater extent than the recruiting posters, images of St George, Galahad, Britannia and even Joan of Arc were used alongside the British Lion.[8] Many are letterpress and differ widely in type form, type size, in paper size and in colour and copy. They range from the detailed description listing the financial terms and rates of interest to short simple commands to 'Buy War Bonds'.

The double appeal made by some of these posters to financial prudence and patriotism is communicated by the juxtaposition of citizen and serviceman indicating clearly the link between the civilian and military effort. The motives for buying bonds or certificates, patriotism or self-interest, do not always sit easily together, as can be seen in Bert Thomas's design (figure 16) where the civilian needs a strong prompt from the soldier to do his duty. These posters for bonds and certificates often addressed different audiences. Some posters for the National Bond were made to look like boardroom portraits and were almost certainly for display in banks and clubs.[9] Other posters for War Certificates addressed a working-class audience where working men were shown discussing the

merits of the certificates.[10] The successful illustrator and cartoonist, Bert Thomas, was used extensively by the National War Savings Committee, not least because his popular and accessible style could be turned to a variety of ends. Large and small investors could be encouraged, exhorted or challenged to invest by his deployment of the stereotypical capitalist, worker or serviceman.[11]

The problem of contradictory motives was resolved in a number of letterpress and picture posters that stressed the purely financial benefits of investing. Frequently, the small investor, usually civilian and male but occasionally a serviceman, is prompted to invest for his children or his old age in certificates or bonds backed 'by the power of the British Nations' or because they are as 'Safe as the British Empire'. In these


17 Gregory F Brown, June 1918, To Prevent This – Buy War Savings Certificates Now

examples national and financial security are tied together and any conflict of interests is diffused.

However, the loans and savings certificates were to enable the country to continue fighting and references to war were rarely absent. The posters re-worked themes from the earlier PRC Campaign. Appeals were made through real or mythic figures like Nelson, Wellington, Britannia and, in a poster from the Scottish War Savings Committee, William Wallace.[12] In 1918 a poster by Gregory Brown, one of two on the same theme of Britain's fate at the hands of a victorious Germany, shows an enslaved British Nation as a warning and an inducement to invest for victory (figure 17).

Many of the posters in this campaign eschew the detailed representations of British heroes and industrial activity or the compressed narratives of Bert Thomas. These stripped-down posters composed of a few colours and assertive in image and copy, command viewers to 'Bomb Them with War Bonds', 'Bring Him Home with War Bonds' or 'Buy War Bonds Now!'[13] Their impact is strong, direct and instant as in the example shown in plate 9 which is done in the style of the Vorticist C.W.R. Nevinson. They conjoin money and war in a clear and unproblematic way to give a strong prompt to action.

Posters were centrally printed and then distributed around the country to advertise local versions of national campaigns such as 'Tank Weeks', 'Aeroplane Weeks' or 'Feed the Guns' weeks which were held to sell loans, bonds and certificates. The posters showed images of guns, tanks or planes in action at the front but in a simplified, stylised and often silhouetted form. These technologically optimistic expressions of modernity and industrial competence communicated a sense of power and forward momentum without the detailed representation of any battle (plate 10). With generalised, almost stock, images and the empty spaces reserved for local bodies to overprint specific dates and places, these posters were extremely flexible. Used widely across the country, they gave a visual unity to the campaigns and cumulatively they contributed to a sense of common purpose, of the effective translation of personal investment into military power on a national scale. Sometimes, the contribution of civilians to the war effort is literally conveyed as a family

'feeds the gun' but often a sense of power and success is communicated through simple images of thrusting phallic guns and rearing tanks crushing all before them in an effortless way that was never repeated on the battlefield (plate 11).

While war figured in many of the loan posters it did so in a rather stylised way. Pictures of the weapons of war or men in action did nothing to convey the brutality and harshness of the conflict. So, it is all the more surprising that the National War Savings Committee accepted a poster by Frank Brangwyn, an Associate of the Royal Academy and a well-respected artist and lithographer (plate 12). Here war is not subject to comic book exaggeration, nor reduced to patriotic emblems and idealised scenes of past victories. In this poster a British Tommy ruthlessly dispatches the enemy soldier with a violence effectively conveyed through the dynamic of the picture's composition. The enemy soldier is no caricatured representation of Germany's pitiless aggression but another human being. The copy, designed and integrated into the poster's overall composition by the artist, effectively links our financial investments to the action of the British soldier bayonetting the German. Our money gives him the strength to strike the lethal blow. We are accessories to this single act of violence which lays bare the real relationship between money and war. As Maurice Rickards suggests, 'it was certainly one of the most vicious posters of the war' and a positive incitement to violence.[14]

In its artistic force and the unromantic presentation of war, Brangwyn's poster was conspicuously different from all the other posters in the war loans campaigns. However, there is no suggestion that the Committee had any reservations about it. Equally, it is unlikely that they actually commissioned it, as one recent writer has suggested.[15] It is likely the responsibility lay with the Avenue Press which printed all Brangwyn's war posters. Certainly the chairman of the printing company agreed with Brangwyn that 'nothing could be too drastic to fight the German's with.'[16] Nor did the poster represent a change in policy on the part of the National War Savings Committee. It came too late for that. It was produced as part of the Autumn War Bonds Campaign that started in September 1918 six weeks before the cessation of hostilities. Brangwyn also designed a larger less violent version of the poster with a more anodyne copy, 'Back

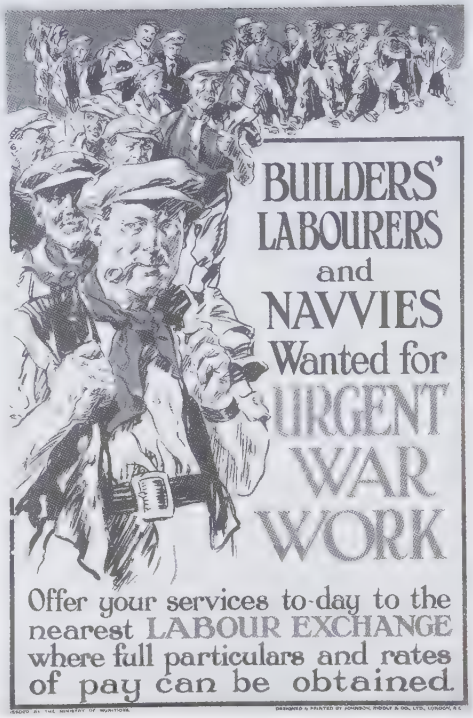
Him Up. Buy War Bonds' that was printed later. After the war the loans campaigns of 1919 had no role for such unvarnished representations of conflict.

In the last two years of the war the conflict made a greater impact on domestic life. The U-boat blockade resulted in shortages of food and there was a continuing demand for more men to fight and to carry out war work. In order to harness the human and material resources of the country and to deal with shortages in a way that contained any anger and unrest, the government had to become increasingly involved in the life of its citizens. This was done mainly through the new ministries dealing with Labour, National Service, Munitions and Food established at the end of 1916 by the new administration under Lloyd George.[17]

While the government directed the movement of labour and controlled the price and distribution of food, rationing was not introduced until 1918. Education, not legislation was its preferred method. Consequently, all the ministries to varying degrees used pamphlets, posters and official proclamations to disseminate information.

The posters produced by the Ministry of Munitions, for instance, both inform and persuade, often at the same time. In this publicity those recruited to munitions work are presented as a crucial part of Britain's fighting force, either directly, by identifying them with the recruits to the fighting services; or indirectly, as in Will Dyson's image where the unremitting output of British munitions workers is the despair of 'Fritz' the enemy (figure 18). The phrase 'No Holidays' becomes a matter of celebration, not a reference to exploitation, and disguises the dangerous and laborious nature of munitions work. Tradesmen who were encouraged to transfer to munitions work are constructed as solid, reliable workers and significantly beyond conscription age (figure 19). In this poster there is a neat reversal of the line of men used in a number of army recruiting bills. The cheerful and determined labourers march towards the viewer and the words 'Labour Exchange' marked out in red from other parts of the copy direct them to their destination. They are not marching away from the viewer to some distant battlefield (plate 2), and by presenting these recruits in an eager rush the poster negates associations with the dole queue. As the war continued and more able-bodied men in all


18 Will Dyson, No Holidays




19 Anon., Builders' Labourers and Navvies Wanted for Urgent War Work

trades were conscripted to fight so the labour problems, particularly in munitions work, were solved by dilution: the use of semi-skilled or hastily trained replacements. The replacements included women who, though represented in labour recruitment posters published by bodies like the Ministry of Munitions and the London County Council, were shown silhouetted and from a distance in a way that obscured the arduous nature of the work.

The Ministry of Food was set up by Lloyd George and under the energetic leadership of Lord Rhondda, appointed Food Controller in April 1917, a network of local food councils and Divisional Food Commissions were established to implement controls over the price and distribution of basic foodstuffs. Much of the work of local food councils was to inform people about the controls, check they were being carried out and, in

1918, to implement rationing. Only in the important but limited area of waste was an active publicity campaign of persuasion pursued. Here the voluntary work of the League of War Safety was taken over by the Ministry of Food and posters early in the campaign were produced on behalf of both bodies. Posters and pamphlets were also deployed locally by the food councils.[18] The posters address the woman of the household, wife or mother, who contributes directly to the war effort by her frugality. The home literally becomes an extension of the battlefront. Kitchen and ocean are juxtaposed to underscore the point that food is only available thanks to the sacrifices of our sailors who run the German blockade (plate 13). To waste food is to throw that sacrifice back in their faces.

The object used most often to represent food is the loaf. This is not accidental. Bread was a staple diet in Britain and its availability became the measure of the severity of the food shortages. Lord Rhondda was determined to secure the supply of bread and peg its price to what was generally affordable to help keep a check on potential discontent. In a large number of posters and streamers, often containing a simple representation of a loaf, housewives are urged 'Don't Waste Bread' or 'Eat Less Bread' as here in this banal equivalent of the German 'object poster' (plate 14). Interestingly, bread in Britain was never in short supply. By using more of the wheat to make bread flour and by mixing it with maize and barley flour, bakers produced a more nutritional loaf than before the war.[19] However, it was seen as inferior and more importantly its availability seemed constantly threatened. Such was the power of publicity.

The posters so far discussed were produced for government bodies in an effort to raise men and money and to secure popular support for the war. They were, in the main, anonymously designed and printed by commercial companies, drawing on the strategies and visual rhetoric of popular advertising. After the war these posters were often dismissed by art critics, curators and even established figures in the billposting trade as being 'cheap and vulgar' in sentiment, as well as 'poor things in point of design', although Cyril Sheldon, the Leeds billposter, admits, 'it may be that they served their purpose'.[20] If, according to Sabin and Hardie, curators who published the first book in English on the posters of the First World War, a poster should 'grip by instantaneous appeal;

hit out as it were, with a straight left' then something as simple and direct as Maurice Randall's 'Save Food' (plate 15) makes the point and prompts action more forcibly than Spencer Pryse's 'The Only road For an Englishman' which could be subject to the criticism that it is excellent as a lithograph 'but ineffective when valued in relation to the essential services that a poster is required to render'.[21] Yet it is the Pryse that Sabin and Hardie praise and the Randall they dismiss.

These authors were using aesthetic criteria and by such measure the designs of established artists like Pryse, Brangwyn and Clausen were prized above the mass of commercial bills that dominated First World War publicity in Britain. The London Underground, in particular its publicity manager Frank Pick who 'commissioned' artists to produce posters for the company, was singled out for special praise, not least because he refused to display the PRC posters on the Underground because they were 'too bad to be hung'.[22] In fact, Pick 'commissioned' very few war posters.[23] Apart from Pryse's lithograph and Brangwyn's 'War – to Arms Citizens of the Empire' of 1915, only four more posters were produced by George Clausen, Charles Sims, F. Ernest Jackson and J. Walter West in 1916.[24] All four presented an idealised image of Britain in posters with high pictorial rather than design quality and were sent directly to the Front to be displayed in dugouts and huts.[25] Though this output was small it enhanced the company's reputation as a patron of the arts and serves to remind us that many posters were the product of private initiative, not government policy. In fact the private sector represents a major source of poster production in Britain. Publishers, manufacturers, transport companies and even printers published war posters and as the war continued the growing poster presence was added to by the voluntary sector, those charities and associations whose principal purpose was to raise money and materials for a wide range of causes.

These bodies operated largely outside direct government control, and the growth in their numbers after 1915 was so rapid that the government became alarmed.[26] Perhaps it was no accident that many of the charities had members of the royal family, the government, the aristocracy or civic leaders as patrons. It was an effective way of tying them into the social order or using them as a channel for government policy by giving them

an official though not political status. The expansion of voluntary work paralleled the extension of government control into many areas of people's lives for the first time after 1915. It was as if the one was a compensation for the other, a way of preserving a degree of involvement and control by social groups used to playing an influential role, particularly at local level. At first, these charities focused their attention on the relief of refugees and defeated populations who had suffered at the hands of the Germans in the early years of the war. The National Committee for the Relief of Belgium formed in 1915 by the Lord Mayor of London was a substantial organisation producing one million flags and 185,000 posters in its first year, and raising £165,000.[27] Similar campaigns were launched in support of Armenia, Serbia and Poland.

While not organised by the government, these campaigns were certainly welcomed by it. They supplemented the government's efforts to secure the support of the population for war by finding a righteous cause for which to fight.[28] As we have seen, it became easier after Germany's invasion of Belgium to present her as a country with no respect for international treaties. In the wake of this invasion came exaggerated stories of the wilful destruction of cities and the execution of citizens. Whatever the strategic justification for these alleged actions, they were a propaganda disaster for Germany and allowed Britain to present Germany as a pitiless tyrant and a threat to British liberty in officially sponsored campaigns. The anger of the British people and their determination to defeat Germany and hold her accountable for her actions was a genuine and motivating force. The work of the various relief committees kept this indignation on the boil and provided an opportunity for those citizens who could not enlist to feel they had a role to play in this resistance to naked aggression and to ameliorate the suffering of its victims.

For all the anti-German rhetoric, the poster designed by David Wilson and produced independently by the printer David Allan and Sons is unusual in presenting such a blatant image of a brutal and murderous German soldier (figure 20). It draws on anti-German propaganda generated in the popular press largely under the inspiration of the newspaper owner and patriotic enthusiast Lord Northcliffe and promoted by right-wing organisations such as the British Empire Union, the National Party and

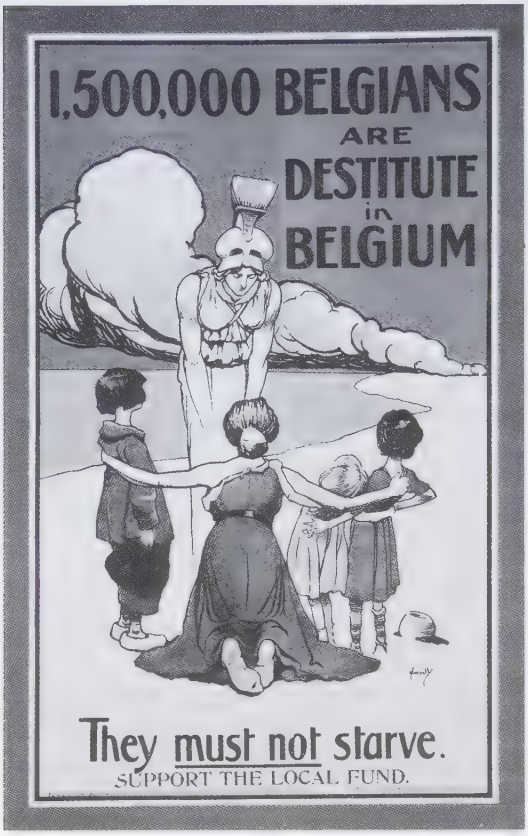

20 Anon., Remember Belgium

the Navy League. Generally, outdoor advertising operated more indirectly as in a poster for Serbian Relief (figure 21) showing the effects of atrocities in order to construct Germany as brutal and the defeated population as an object of pity. Posters of this kind empower viewers by giving a moral

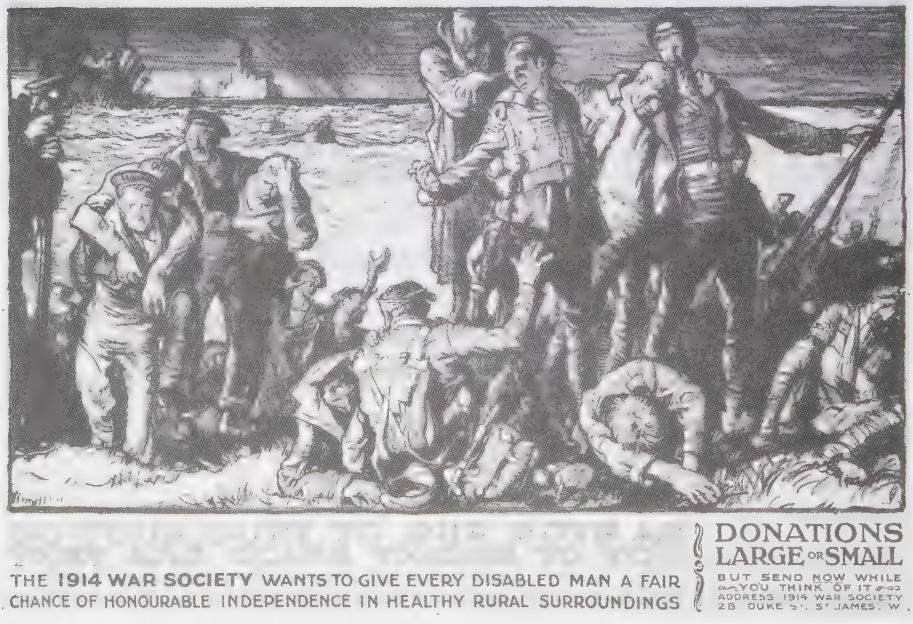

21 Anon., Countryless

justification to their anger and a focus to their charity. A number of well-established artists who often gave of their services free of charge were used by these organisations, though not always appropriately. The copy in a poster illustrated by John Hassall seems powerful enough, but the sentimental style of the image, redolent of his theatre posters, is out of keeping with the seriousness of the subject (figure 22). By contrast the Dutch artist Louis Raemaekers in his image of Belgian victims conveys the right degree of pathos and helplessness in order to elicit the required public response (plate 16).

As the war continued, the focus of charitable activity widened to include the provision of material support to those fighting and those caring and for the wounded men and animals.[29] From tobacco to fresh vegetables, posters exhorted citizens to send aid for the heroic and deserving British serviceman. However, as the troops returned from the front badly wounded or permanently disabled, a new image of the




22 John Hassall, 1916, 1,500,000 Belgians are Destitute in Belgium




23 Frank Brangwyn, 1914, Do Your Duty to Our Boys as They are Doing Theirs to You


**Plate 9** After C.R.W. Nevinson, Now – Back the Bayonets


**Plate 10** Anon., 1918, London's Week


**Plate 11** Bert Thomas, 1918, Feed the Guns with War Bonds and Help to End the War


**Plate 12** Frank Brangwyn, Put Strength in the Final Blow Buy War Bonds


Plate 13 Anon., Don't Waste Bread!


Plate 14 Anon., Eat Less Bread


Plate 15 Maurice Randall, Do Your Bit – Save Food


Plate 16 Louis Raemaekers, 1916, In Belgium


Plate 17 Bert Thomas, 1917, Fag Day


Plate 18 David Wilson and WFB, Red Cross or Iron Cross?


Plate 19 Tom Purvis, 1917, Our Day Most Urgent of All Funds


Plate 20 Anon., Time for One More


**Plate 21** Bert Thomas, 'Arf a "Mo" Kaiser!' ... Gladden the Heart of a Hero


Plate 22 Anon., Dunlop Cycle Tyres, Only Me and DUNLOPS Left

fighting man emerged in charity publicity. It was an image that had to be constructed with some care by the artist, one that could elicit sympathy without despair, anger without defeatism. Whether severely wounded, blinded or otherwise disabled, the British soldier is never the object of pity in these posters.[30] Helped by his fellows in arms, cared for by a dedicated but pretty nurse, or having his suffering transformed by a loving family, he is the object of our admiration and the subject of our generosity. Many of these posters have an elegiac quality, acknowledging and trading upon the grief of the nation while concealing the industrial scale of the casualties in sentimentalised late-romantic visions of loss and redemption. Blasted landscapes and groups of huddled men rest under the pink, purple and yellow skies of dusk and dawn to depict human disaster indirectly through the filter of poetic convention rather than its visceral reality.[31] Similarly, Brangwyn's fighting men are heroic and noble in their suffering in a design elevated by its association with an aesthetic discourse through its formal association with Michelangelo's *Flood* from the Sistine Chapel ceiling (figure 23). Others, however, followed the example of Bert Thomas's chirpy and cheerful servicemen with their bandages and crutch (plate 17) more familiar from popular commercial culture.

Finally, let us look specifically at posters calling on support for well-established organisations whose activities expanded substantially during the war, and whose commitment to voluntary service within a Christian context gave them an important function in moral and practical terms. They were the Red Cross, the YMCA and the YWCA. The Red Cross was formed in the nineteenth century and, at the outset of the war, joined with the Order of St John of Jerusalem to supply a range of crucial support services. For example, the British Red Cross Society (BRCS) was the means by which local communities were able to send parcels to prisoners of war in Germany. Its principal role, however, was to provide medical care, ambulance drivers, stretcher bearers, and nurses through women recruited as Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD) attached to military and camp hospitals abroad and at home.

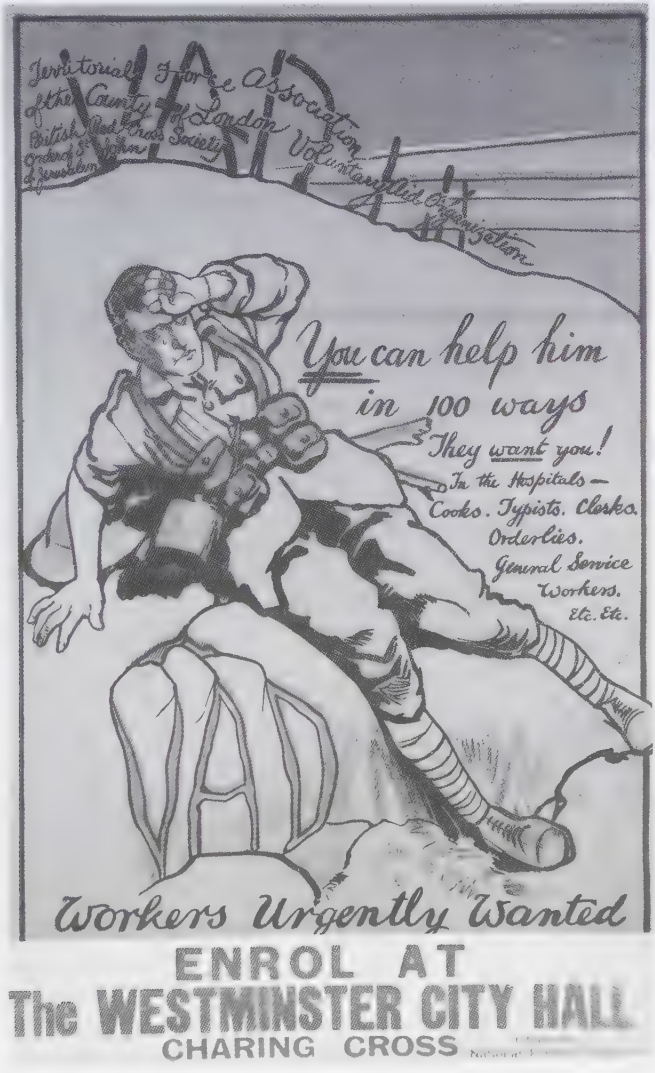
The Red Cross was an international organisation and its symbol defined its non-combatant status. Its purpose was to relieve suffering, not to secure victory and the voluntary status of the BRCS was crucial

in separating it from the government war machine. Ostensibly, posters displayed in Britain appealing on behalf of the French, Italian, Belgian and Serbian Red Cross testify to the organisation's international reach. Special events such as 'France's Day' were complemented by 'Our Day', for example. But the fact that these were allied countries or victims of German aggression, suggests that they also served a propaganda purpose, not least when the image of the self-sacrificing and caring nurse that the posters systematically constructed is so shockingly denied in David Wilson's image of the German sister in the poster 'Red Cross or Iron Cross?' published by the Dangerfield Printing Company (plate 18). There was always a tension for the BRCS in showing its volunteers helping the British combatants. Inexorably, its attempts to position itself as a body responding to a universal, traditional and Christian moral code appropriated by the Allied Powers drew it into the British propaganda machine. One wonders how far the support it received from the national press like *The Times*, the *Daily Mail* or the *Evening News* effectively compromised its neutrality. The tension is evident in two sets of stamps the BRCS produced in order to raise funds. In a series designed by Brangwyn, the activities of the Society's volunteers at the Front are delineated graphically, while a second set, classical in style and content, elevates the Red Cross's work to the plane of universal morality.[32] Voluntarism was a defining feature of the Society's activities and its funding. Exhibitions, fêtes, fairs and collection days were its principal means of raising revenue and recruiting volunteers. Publicity was a crucial element in these events not least because it helped to define the Society, its activities and its volunteers.

If the male figures in these posters represent a masculine ideal, then the representations of Red Cross nurses conform to a powerful patriarchal ideal of femininity.[33] They are presented symbolically as mother, literally as a ministering angel or as some pure ethereal spirit and always in virginal white. Yet, for many middle-class women the VAD was a liberating experience. Freed from a domestic universe that defined them and given a new experience and the independence to demonstrate their competence, albeit within a matriarchal hierarchy, such women could feel empowered for the first time.[34] Not that the nurses

in the posters demonstrate this degree of competence and control. Most commonly, they are seen ministering to the needs of sick, though rarely dying men. They exist only in as far as men need them as shown in this VAD recruitment poster (figure 24).

Men's need was double edged. It suggested a dependency on women that volunteer nurses found attractive and empowering.[35] The posters communicate some of this without emasculating the wounded recipients. In fact, so healthy do some of the patients seem their bandages look like fashion accessories. In the end, and not always easily, these posters like




24 Vnon., You Can Help Him in 100 Ways

so many others reinforce established gendered roles. They were after all, designed and printed by men for male institutions. We can see both gendered roles outlined clearly though indirectly in Tom Purvis's 'Our Day' (plate 19). In this poster the male viewer can see himself reflected back heroically as bloodied but unbowed, but for the mother, the wife or the putative VAD, he is a focus for their love and care.[36]

The YMCA and the YWCA provided opportunities for rest, recreation and Christian education through the provision of huts, mobile kitchens and canteens. The hut, as much as the YMCA's red triangle and YWCA's blue triangle, came to symbolise the work of the organisations in their publicity. The publicity was necessary to advertise for special collections during 'Hut Weeks', 'Blue Triangle Weeks', 'Red Triangle Days' and 'Emblem Days'. The posters defined the organisations and their activities for a wide public.

As can be seen in 'The Link with Home  Hut Week' (figure 25) the main purpose of the YMCA was to create a 'home from home' for soldiers at the front, an alternative space for wholesome activities and a place where men could replicate their domestic roles in an environment often decorated like middle-class homes. In a real sense, the YMCA set out to domesticate the theatre of war. In the poster the home is linked to and contrasted with the war zone. It presents to the soldier a scene both familiar and familial, whether imaginary or real. It is one of peace, order and love in contrast with the chaos of the trenches where the domestic values of social order are profoundly undermined. In the poster the triangle guides the eye down to the hut where these domestic values are inculcated.

In other posters, including a series of dull detailed images of the exteriors and interiors of huts and dugouts by Edward Wright, these places become the focus of men's search for peace and order. What they also provided was a reinforcement of patriarchal values. Where women were employed in these places, they took on the roles of mother or sister, offering a contrast to the sexual allure of the barmaid or the promiscuous availability of the prostitute, who represented those temptations, those sources of social and moral disorder, against which the ethos of the huts was defined.[37]


25 Anon., The Link with Home Hut Week

In the posters for the YWCA there are both similarities and differences in approach. The YWCA also provided huts which were shown as warm and welcoming refuges after hard war work where the YWCA is personified as Mother providing succour and shelter to servicemen, workers of both genders and to the poor. It feminised the activities of the organisation in patriarchal terms. Yet in other ways, the posters of the YWCA project a very different image of women. Often they are strikingly modern in design indicating, by their form, a level of female emancipation.[38] The organisation provided canteens for war workers and the posters that publicise this activity differ markedly from other YWCA posters and from those of the YMCA. They do not present the canteens as homes from homes. Rather they are seen as crucial supports for women's labour. Women are shown either at their work bench or serving in the canteen. According to recent work by J.S. Reznick, if the rest huts of the YMCA publicity 'underscored the codes of masculine conduct' then the YWCA placard 'denied women association with the domestic environment and arguably with traditional roles of feminine conduct'.[39] If the experience of war made it necessary for men to be domesticated then the exigencies of war production made it crucial for women to be refigured as efficient industrial workers.[40]

These campaigns demonstrate an unprecedented involvement by the government in people's lives. In line with Britain's war aims, there was no question of the government imposing its demands on the population. Britain was not an authoritarian state with a command economy. There was no labour conscription and while taxes were increased, the conflict was substantially financed through voluntary contributions, and rationing came in only towards the end of the war. Most people willingly contributed their labour, their loans and in some cases their lives. This level of support was remarkable in a country where more than half the population were not yet enfranchised and where neither the mechanisms nor the institutions were in place to achieve a widespread consensus for the war.

To exploit this level of support the government had to address the public directly for the first time. Recognising the need to go beyond simple instruction and in the absence of any established political channels of

communication, it made use of the agencies and rhetoric of advertising. In addressing the public in this way throughout the war, a public discourse was constituted in which support for the conflict was adduced less by reasoned argument and more by emotional appeal. It was a discourse in which the population was seduced rather than persuaded into continuing support for the war. In this discourse individuals were addressed and thereby constructed as the kind of dutiful, patriotic and self-sacrificing citizen for whom supporting the war was a natural response. Differences in class and gender were alluded to in the campaigns, but they were made to seem differences without significance at a time when all citizens were equal in the contribution they could make to the war.

## Notes

1. D. Stevens, *1914–1918 The History of the First World War* (London, Allen Lane), 1977, pp. 224–8.
2. G. Hardach, *The First World War 1914–18* (Harmondsworth, Allen Lane), 1977, pp. 165–6.
3. Hugh Strachan, *The First World War, Vol I: To Arms* (Oxford, Oxford University Press), 2001, p. 933
4. Ibid., p. 932, and *The World's Largest Loan* (London, T. Fisher Unwin Ltd), 1917, p. 8.
5. Cate Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning* (London, Allen Lane), 1977, p. 43 and H. Keatley Moore and W.C. Berwick Sayers, *Croydon and the Great War. The Official History of the War Work of the Borough and its Citizens from 1914 to 1919* (Croydon), 1920, p. 204.
6. Hardach, *The First World War*, p. 165.
7. Strachan, *The First World War*, p. 932.
8. See IWM PST 10774, 10137, 10999, 10067, 10296.
9. See IWM PST 10305, 10306, 10307, 7894 and 10310.
10. See IWM PST 3594.
11. See IWM PST 10223, 10290, 10418, 10422, 10288 and 10375.
12. See IWM PST 10363, 7900, 10475 and 10079.
13. See IWM PST 10450, 10163, 10385, 10304, 10440 and 10443.
14. Maurice Rickards, *Posters of the First World War* (London, Adams and MacKay), 1968.
15. Ruth Walton, 'Four in Focus', in M. Timmers (ed.), *The Power of the Poster* (London, V&A Publications), 1998, p. 148.
16. Ibid., p. 149.
17. Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad of Faces of War* (Cambridge, Polity Press), 1986, p. 533.
18. Ibid., pp. 538–40.

19. J.M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (London, Macmillan), 1985, p. 216.
20. Cyril Sheldon, *A History of Poster Advertising* (London, Chapman and Hall), 1937, p. 84.
21. M. Hardie & A.K. Sabin, *War Posters* (London, A. and C. Black), 1920, pp. 8–9. See IWM PST 0349.
22. Comment by F. Haskins in *The Poster*, 1918. Quoted in S. Baker, 'Describing Images of the National Self', *The Oxford Art Journal*, 13:2 (1990), p. 28.
23. C. Barham, *The Man Who Built London Transport* (Newton Abbot, David and Charles), 1979, pp. 35–40.
24. See IWM PST 13655, 13664, 13661, 13662.
25. Hardie and Sabin, *War Posters*, p. 11.
26. Haste, *Keep The Home Fires Burning*, p. 28.
27. Ibid., p. 29.
28. Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War*, p. 156.
29. 'Our Dumb Friends' League', The Blue Cross provided aid for animals. See IWM PST 10968, 6186, 6184, 6190, 6188, 6187, 6185, 6189.
30. See posters for St Dunstan's Hostel for Soldiers and Sailors Blinded in the War, IWM PST 10832, 10809, 10810, 10995.
31. This was particularly, but not exclusively, true of posters for the British Committee of the French Red Cross, see IWM PST 11274, 10901, 10895, 13549.
32. Both sets of stamps are in the archives of the British Red Cross, 1447/88 (1) and (2).
33. See IWM PST 7946, 10901, 10898, 10851, 10859.
34. H. Donner, 'Under The Cross-Why VADs Performed The Filthiest Of Tasks In The Dirtiest Of Wars: Red Cross Women Volunteers, 1914–18', *Journal of Social History* (Spring 1997).
35. Ibid., p. 688.
36. Tom Purvis like a number of artists including Frank Brangwyn and John Hassall provided their services free to these charities.
37. J.S. Reznick, *Healing The Nation*, Manchester (Manchester University Press), 2004, pp. 17–41. See IWM PST 13213, 13227, 13222, 1329.
38. See IWM PST 13242.
39. Ibid., p. 23.
40. Ibid., pp. 35–6.

4

# Outdoor advertising and the symbolic ownership of space

When the government through the PRC decided to advertise for recruits in 1914 it became involved with a world of advertising of which it was largely ignorant, and which it viewed with a mixture of suspicion and distaste. However, the need to raise a bigger and bigger army when public and politicians were hostile to the idea of conscription meant that a substantial publicity drive to encourage men to enlist was the only option. This included a major outdoor advertising campaign. Under pressure and without really knowing what was involved, the PRC left most of the decisions to the commercial printers who designed and printed most of the publicity. At best, it could be said that the Committee's Publications Sub-Department took on a supervisory role.

The government's call to arms drew on a mature and sophisticated advertising apparatus. Since the 1880s and the massive increase in cheap, branded goods, advertising had expanded and developed in its techniques.[1] Advertising agencies, but more particularly, printers and billposting companies were well established in most large towns and cities. The billposters had at their disposal a range of hoardings and gable ends chosen for maximum effect, disposed as they were through town centres and suburbs in such a way as to target customers.[2] The days of fly posting were long gone and outdoor advertising was now as carefully planned and strategically sited as it was extensive.

In the Introduction we looked at changes in the form of government publicity as it moved from public notice to commercial poster. This

formal change was accompanied by a spatial shift. If, before the war, official publicity and commercial advertising occupied different spaces, then during the war government publicity, influenced by the strategies and rhetoric of advertising, seemed ubiquitous. This chapter will look at the extent to which this separation of spaces broke down under the pressure of war and the need to raise men, money and morale through systematic publicity campaigns. It will question the extent to which the expansion of this new form of government publicity into public spaces previously free from such publicity represented the colonisation of the civic space by the commercial world. Finally, it will examine how far war publicity operated in the public arena like traditional commercial advertising.

In the early years of the war government publicity was predominantly concerned with recruiting, and by the end of 1915 the PRC had produced 12.5 million copies of its posters and 450,000 display cards.[3] Not all were distributed and at the end of the war the government had on its hands a large stock of unused posters. However, more than enough were sent out for display to leave an impression on contemporaries. Their accounts attest to the extensive use of hoardings and walls. Writing in early 1915, Michael McDonagh describes London 'vibrant with the call to arms' where there were recruiting posters on every hoarding.[4] By the middle of 1915 a writer in the *Windsor Magazine* refers to 'an infinite variety of pictorial and letterpress appeals to the manhood of the nation' to be found on hoardings across the country.[5] In 1916 Charles Higham, an advertising expert employed by the government, writes of the moment when 'Posters appeared on every hoarding [and] were emblazoned on the walls of conspicuous buildings.'[6]

While these accounts may have been partial and while the authors may have had their own reasons for asserting the role of the hoarding, it is difficult to dismiss the constant reference to the use of these commercial sites for the recruitment campaign. More pertinent was the fact that the billposting trade was undergoing something of an economic crisis at the beginning of the war as contracts with advertisers for the Autumn and Winter campaigns were cancelled at short notice in the face of uncertainty on the outbreak of war.[7] While the billposting

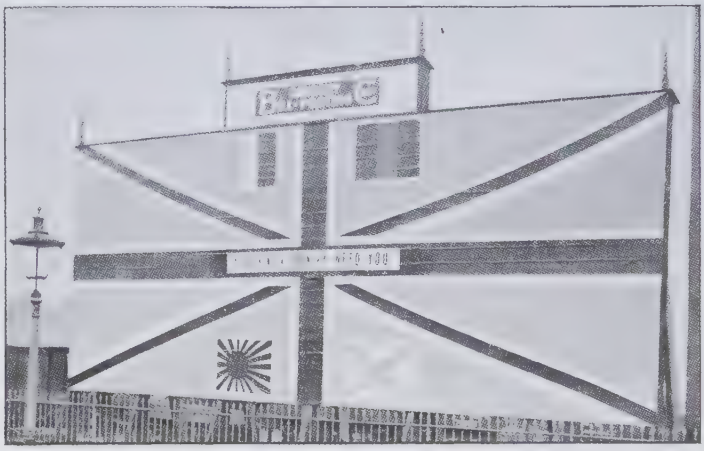
trade did pick up slowly, it never reached pre-war levels until after 1918. Consequently, there were a lot of underused hoardings and the attraction of free recruiting posters for hard-pressed billposting firms must have been irresistible for economic as well as patriotic reasons. The editorial in *The Billposter* of January 1915 observed, 'Our hoardings have been half empty for months and are now covered by army appeals and posters taken at reduced rates.'[8]

Given the availability of free posters and the large amount of space to be filled, one is surprised by the lack of visual evidence of PRC posters on hoarding and walls in the photographic archives. It is far more usual to find photographs of posters on recruitment buses and trams and in the windows of shops and recruitment centres.[9] In this regard, it is useful to note the comments of John Allen writing at the beginning of 1915 in the *Placard*, a journal edited and published by the Leeds billposter Cyril Sheldon. In Allen's view, the hoardings were underused and the appearance of posters was spasmodic and haphazard, not least because so much was left to the initiative and enthusiasm of local recruiting committees and individuals. The PRC only supplied publicity on request and what was lacking was a general billposting campaign directed from the centre and applied nationally. In his view, the war office needed the services of a good billposting company.[10] No doubt he had his own company in mind.[11]

Allen's recommendation was never likely to be met when the use of most outdoor advertising was the result of local decisions and initiatives. As a result, appeals for recruits and signs announcing public meetings or giving directions to recruiting offices came from local printers. A major recruitment campaign in Manchester financed by local businessmen, for example, used locally published posters, tram and window stickers and placards attached to lampposts.[12] From the illuminated recruiting tram used in Leeds in September 1914[13] to the hand-chalked boards outside a Salford shop,[14] it is evident that local groups and individuals added their own distinctive brand of publicity to the general appeal for recruits. Local billposters would design, print and post patriotic placards on their own hoarding at their own expense (figure 26).[15]

In emphasising the local nature of much of this outdoor advertising

THE POSTER THAT SERVED TWO PURPOSES



" THESE COLORS WILL NOT RUN."

The above is taken from a photo and produced in actual colors on one of the Banbury Billposting Co's (Ltd.), Hoardings. Naturally it would strike the observer's eye as a large lithographed production; such is not the case. All the flags are composed of blanking paper cut out to form the Allied colors.

The Banbury Billposting Company believe it to be the best way of making use of any additional space that can be spared in the various towns during the depression in the trade.

While the motto on the Union Jack

" YOUR KING AND COUNTRY NEED YOU."

is imperative, it is also applicable to business firms by adding " Your King and Country desire that you should 'Business as Usual.'" By adhering to both calls the Country will have no fear of alarm.

OXFORD BILLPOSTING CO., LTD., or the

BANBURY BILLPOSTING CO., LTD., 43 and 45, George Street, Oxford.

26 The Poster that Served Two Purposes, 'These Colours Will Not Run'

we must not play down the national dimension. The posters, streamers, placards and bills that appeared on the hoardings and walls and in buses, trams, shops, recruiting stations and houses across the land were frequently supplied by the PRC and so recurred in a multitude of urban

and rural settings. Sometimes the same design was adapted for different uses.[16]

The national dimension was reinforced when a local recruiting committee like that for Essex adapts a PRC poster or uses a locally produced poster to echo a national theme (figure 7).[17] On one rare occasion the PRC used one of its posters for a national campaign when it requested 'heads of industrial municipalities' to erect special hoardings in city centres to take the poster 'Fill Up the Ranks. Pile Up the Munitions' (plate 3). This was in May 1915 when the new Minister of Munitions, Lloyd George, was addressing a crisis in the supply of munitions. According to the *Manchester Courier*, not only municipalities but also the railway companies responded positively to the request.[18]

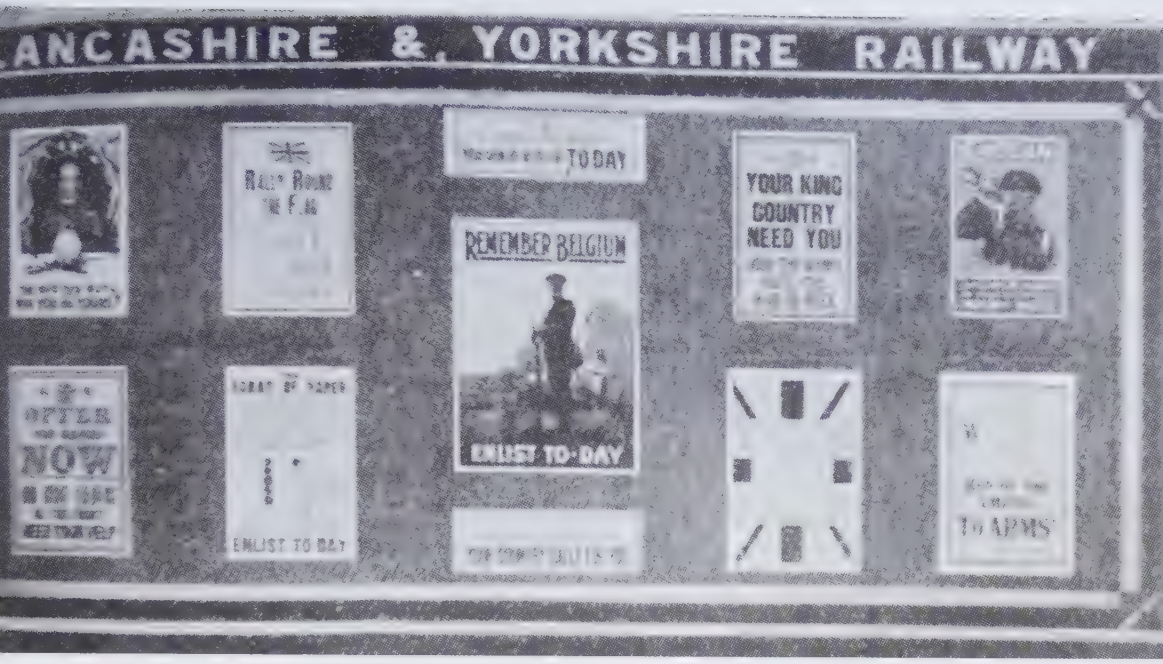
How were these posters displayed? Grouped together as they are in Cardiff (figure 27) or outside Curzon Hall in Birmingham (figure 28) they achieve their effect cumulatively. But it has to be acknowledged that they


27 Recruiting Headquarters, Queen Street, Cardiff

present a jumbled, untidy impression as picture and letterpress posters jostle for space with no obvious logic or order. Any unity comes from their shared purpose and common theme. This kind of visual disorder could easily confirm the view of the many critics of outdoor advertising that the poster remained an eyesore in the public space. It was only the national purpose of the campaign that kept the criticism at bay.

The confused effect produced at these poster sites may have been due to the inexperience of outdoor advertising on the part of the local recruiting committees. When the PRC supplied advertising material to more experienced advertisers the effect was very different. The hoarding

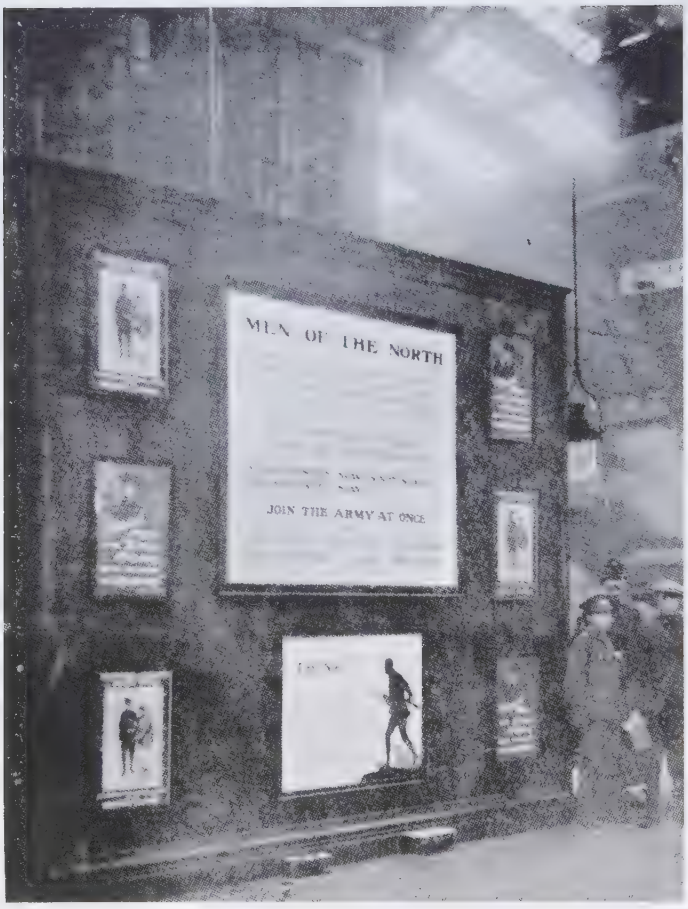

28 Curzon Hall, Suffolk Street, Birmingham, August/September 1914




29 Recruiting Posters Exhibited by the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway

on Manchester Victoria Station (figure 29) shows what can be achieved by the orderly presentation of bills of different sizes.[19] The central poster, the eye-catching 'Remember Belgium', is larger than the single-sheet posters that surround it and visually holds them together by giving a clear focus for the viewer. There is also a logic to their placement. The appeal to moral outrage at the invasion of Belgium is reinforced by the reference to Germany's disregard for the international guarantees of Belgium's independence, publicised in the 'Scrap of Paper'[20] placard, while the other bills offer you the opportunity to channel your anger by responding to the figurative call to arms and enlisting. Of course, other forms of propaganda would have predisposed you to get the message from the hoardings but clearly this was no unconsidered display.

Posters took some time to appear on the railway hoardings and it may have been, as the *Railway Gazette* suggests, that the earlier recruitment bills 'were not issued in the usual standard sizes' and were therefore difficult to accommodate.[21] With the issuing of the 'Think' poster the problem seems to have been resolved. Produced at the beginning of




30 Near View of Special Recruiting display, Main Square, York Station, NER

1915, it was the centrepiece of displays in York and Newcastle that year (figure 30). It appeared with other single-sheet bills in the main booking halls at York and Newcastle and on specifically constructed hoarding outside the North Eastern Railway's (NER) headquarters in York (figure 31). In Newcastle the poster is considerably enlarged and in York it is attached to a special hoarding where a large letterpress poster addresses the 'Men of the North'. Men are adjured to enlist and make the enemy pay for the cowardly attack on the undefended north-east coastal towns of Hartlepool and Scarborough in December 1914. This is a clever, topical advertising campaign and one that was certainly put in place by the company's own publicity department.

Here the NER was using advertising material mostly generated elsewhere

31 Recruiting Posters exhibited near the Headquarters Offices, York, NER

but railway companies did publish publicity material throughout the war and holiday posters were still appearing in 1915.[22] The only railway company to produce its own war publicity was the London Electric Company, later known as the London Underground, which contributed to war propaganda on its own terms. While using only artists whose work would maintain the company's artistic reputation, beyond its 'galleries' of the Underground stations the company was not averse to the use of popular propaganda. Its buses carried on their rear, in 1915, a bill exhorting men to 'Follow the Buses to the Front. THE BEST COUNTRY ROUTE OF THE YEAR FOR MEN. By Bus to the Trenches Start NOW'.[23]

The impact of the PRC posters was not always confined to local sites or railway stations. At the bottom of Aldwych in London in March 1915 a huge hoarding was set up on which was displayed 'A Poster Gallery' of what were judged to be the best recruiting posters. These consisted of images of smiling soldiers marching off to war. Both *The Guardian* and *The Billposter* suggested that the posters were less effective cumulatively than singly[24] but this was no jumbled mass of placards outside a recruiting station. If the reports are correct then the impact of the hoarding must have been powerful, not just because of the size of the

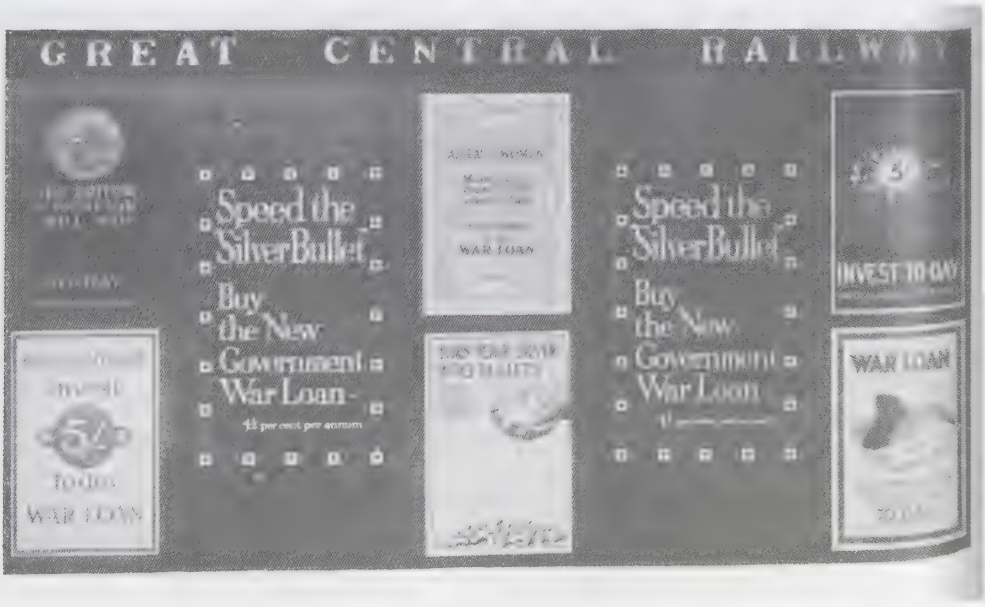
32 Woman giving a recruiting speech in Trafalgar Square, London, August, 1915

hoarding, but also because of the way the single theme of the modest but cheerful Tommy, supporting his comrades and going off willingly to do his duty was reiterated. Although the articles in the press do not specify, the posters referred to are almost certainly 'Line Up Boys' and 'Come Along Boys', published in the month the hoarding went up (figure 2).[25] Here the advertising strategies of concentration and repetition were being used to great effect.

We have examined in some detail the campaigns by government agencies and charities that gathered pace after 1915. The ways in which they engaged with the public represented both a continuation and a break with the recruitment campaign. The National War Aims Committee (NWAC), concerned with the mobilisation of morale and the combating of war weariness and pacifism[26] operated in a way very similar

to the PRC whose apparatus it took over in 1916. It used many of the same modes of communication as the PRC, the local meetings with well-known speakers and music hall artists as well as the use of leaflets and posters.[27] A similar relationship between centre and periphery operated with the Ministry of Food that displayed its leaflets and posters through local Food Councils.[28] Labour was a crucial resource during the war and various government ministries were responsible for raising and deploying a large number of men and women. There was no labour conscription and the workforce had to be persuaded and posters were used on sites in key industrial and agricultural areas to that effect.

Some of the most spectacular campaigns concerned the raising of money for the war effort from a wide sector of the public through War Bonds and War Savings. Administered by the National War Savings Committee and Scottish War Savings Committee, publicity for special events was provided by the national committees and handled by local associations.[29] The posters were displayed on all the usual sites across the country, and advertising for events were shown on special hoardings such as on the stations of the Great Central Railway (figure 33).




33 One of the numerous small Great Central bill blocks scattered over the London district

Fund-raising by charities often produced publicity of a different order. Money was mostly raised through one-off events around the country, from street collections and flag days to small garden parties, fêtes, concerts, exhibitions and sporting events. Posters from the most professional to the most mundane appeared in the windows of houses and shops, outside theatres and galleries and village halls and in the streets as a backcloth to street collections. The posters were produced in small runs and artists such as Brangwyn, Purvis and Hassall donated their services.[30] As a visible presence in the public space, they did more than merely advertise an event. They helped to amplify the wider national appeals and to reinforce the sense that the whole society and not just the government was at war.

The various government and charity campaigns made use of the agencies, methods and sites of the new advertising profession and this allowed it to move into spaces and take on areas of concern not previously part of its sphere of activity. The publicity appeared on sites not associated with commerce or even political advertising. Posters, show cards and notices were displayed in banks, offices, schools, public libraries, labour exchanges, Co-operative Societies and outside village halls and garden fêtes. Other sites, the barracks and the recruitment centres, had a more direct association with war, though not traditionally with commercial advertising.

Recruitment centres and temporary recruiting booths were most frequently found in town halls and city squares. After churches, churchyards and cathedral closes, civic spaces were the least likely places to contain hoardings and placards, though not public notices. The architecture and urban space of these civic sites embodied a set of aspirations that set them apart from the sites of commercial advertising. The civic space is the place where citizens can be greater than themselves, where they can feel enlarged by being part of a common purpose and not be addressed as a putative customer. These public squares are often named after figures and events of national significance like St George's Square in Liverpool, Albert Square in Manchester or Trafalgar Square in London. Here, our military heroes, civic dignitaries and inspirational figures are memorialised in stone and look down on

celebrations, demonstrations, protests or riots. Writing recently about Trafalgar Square, Paul Vallely commented that there 'we stand in that place whose stones give palpable expression to our own social, historical and political aspirations'.[31]

The deployment of war publicity in these places contributed to a bridging of the gap between commercial and civic space, as placards fixed to monuments, buildings or temporary hoardings exhorted the people to fight or part with its money. From September 1914 the most iconic civic space in England, Trafalgar Square, bristled with recruitment posters.[32] The gap between Nelson on his column and Nelson on a PRC poster had shrunk.

Before the war, the spread of advertising was viewed with alarm and distaste by much of the middle class, but under the guise of war publicity it moved into city spaces previously out of bounds. The same posters that challenged or importuned the individual from the hoardings along the public highways and on railway stations now did so from public squares. But this colonisation of new space was only possible because advertising itself appeared transformed by its patriotic mandate. *The Billposter* commented that 'the whole craft of billposting [was] dignified and ennobled by this use'.[33] It is interesting to note that *Scapa*, the pressure group most hostile to the spread of advertising suspended its activities until after the war was over.[34]

Outdoor advertising did not stay 'ennobled' for long. In the second half of the war the poster trade had to combat growing criticism of outdoor advertising at national and local level due to the excesses of cinema advertising. The attack on the film posters for their crude and vulgar exploitation of sex and violence awoke memories of similar 'Horrors of the Walls' from the 1880s when crude and explicit posters advertising melodramas, vaudeville acts and 'penny dreadful' publications were seen to threaten the moral integrity of the nation. The billposting trade in particular had overcome this opposition by setting up its own censorship committee. Unfortunately, film posters were outside its control. Often produced abroad and distributed with the films, they were displayed outside the cinema on boards that were not under the control of the censorship committee of the United Billposters Association (UBA).

Though the majority of the trade tried to distance itself from the actions of the cinema owners, the furore caused by the protest groups who tried to limit their display by legislation simply reminded many of the middle classes what it was about commercial advertising they found so distasteful. Film publicity had been around since before the war but such had been the widespread use of commercial advertising in recruiting campaigns that the criticism had remained muted. After 1916, the involvement of outdoor publicity, while it continued, was more problematic.[35]

If, where advertising is displayed affects our attitude towards it, then so does how it is displayed. The posters, slips and show cards produced for the war effort were frequently used in ways very different from commercial advertising. Unlike commercial bills which occupied a static place on the hoardings and walls or in shop windows for months on end, many recruiting posters were drawn into a kind of street theatre and became part of small, intense dramas usually lasting a fortnight and played out in the squares and thoroughfares of towns and cities across the land in 1914 and 1915.[36] The posters became supplements to more spectacular events and were given a vivid significance as part of a wider programme of public speeches, marching bands and army parades. In Bristol in August 1914 a mix of posters, press and public meetings 'brought forth recruits in growing numbers'.[37] In Croydon, in November 1914 Admiral Lord Charles Beresford addressed a mass meeting at the Central Baths Hall and the audience were transported there in tramcars' placarded with large and effective appeals'.[38] A woman speaker in Trafalgar Square in August 1915 is surrounded by army officers and backed by recruiting posters on a temporary hoarding (figure 32). In 1915, a Leeds tram (figure 34) was decorated with recruiting posters and with the Leeds City Tramway Band on board toured the city suburbs looking for men to bring the Leeds Battalion up to full strength.[39]

Frequently, these events were attended by army bands playing martial music and were accompanied by officers looking resplendent in their uniforms. '[This] powerful combination of rousing music and speeches allied to the spectacle of an organized pageant with striking visual images produced an ideal atmosphere for recruiting purposes ... '[40] In


34 The Leeds Pals' recruiting tram

this environment the poster offers the prospect of transformation from civilian to soldier in defence of one's country. The attendant soldiers in their splendid uniforms present the 'reality' and the recruiting sergeants who mingle with the crowds close the deal. In April 1915, *Advertiser's Weekly* made reference to the War Office's fifteen-day recruitment drive in London and commented on how the city was deluged in pictorial posters on fixed sites and attached to cars as part of the patriotic demonstrations.[41]

None of this should surprise us. The PRC's role was always more than supplying posters and leaflets. Through local representatives it organised public events and supplied speakers, complemented by marching bands and army parades provided by local regiments. Publicity was always seen as part of these events and not as a separate activity. Of course, when the speeches stopped, the bands fell silent and the troops returned to their barracks, the recruiting posters remained on the hoardings outside the recruiting offices and at the railway stations. But these jamborees had had their effect. They had helped to give a significance and purpose to the placards that elevated their appeal above the mere huckstering of the commercial bill.

With the introduction of conscription, government publicity shifted to sustaining support and raising finance for the war. The decision to finance the war through savings certificates and bonds meant that after 1916 the greatest publicity efforts went into encouraging businesses, institutions and members of the public to invest. The campaigns, well publicised by posters, generated the kind of public events reminiscent of the recruitment drives of 1914 and 1915. The appeals to investors and savers were given a focus and relevance by attaching them to special events like 'Business Men's Week', 'War Weapons Week', 'Feed the Guns' and 'Tank Week'. These names made clear the target or the purpose of the loans. The tanks and artillery present at many of the events from where you could buy certificates and bonds, were a reminder without being a threat of the war effort in which, through your investment you were now complicit, a reminder softened somewhat by the making of these spectacles into a fun day out for the family: more fairground and carnival, than a serious attempt to adjure and persuade.[42] If money was to be extracted at gunpoint, then this was as pleasant a way of doing it as any. It was as if the state wanted the people's support without inducing their consent. One of the most spectacular of these events occurred in February 1917, when the War Savings Committee took over Trafalgar Square and posted the square and its surrounding buildings with giant letterpress posters exhorting people to buy war loans. Large notices were attached to the plinth of Nelson's Column indicating the number of days to go before the loan closed to pressure people into investing.[43]

35 S. Begg, 'Germany is Watching': the Lord Mayor in Trafalgar Square on the Day Before the War Loans Lists Closed

The Savings Committee had in effect turned the pre-eminent civic square in the land into a giant advertising station. Without doing more than conjoining outdoor publicity and an iconic national square the Committee had elevated investing into a patriotic duty. What sealed the

transformation was the rally staged in the Square on the penultimate day of the campaign. It is represented in the *Illustrated London News* (figure 35)[44] where the chaos and mess associated with rallies have been transformed into a powerful visual order by the illustrator. All ranks are there; the state, the church, the army and the people. All are in their place. The only hint of disorder is the presence of a handful of policemen who are clearly there to help, not to control. The eye is drawn up and to the right, where outlined against the bright sky is Nelson's Column, a monument to Britain's prowess in war. At the base of the Column, at the focal point of the illustration, is a large Union flag poster as an emblem of national unity. It has been made to stand out by the way the illustrator has faded the buildings behind it. No doubt it is easier to achieve a sense of unity and order in an image like this than in the event itself, but what the picture conveys so vividly is what the rally sought to achieve. The 'advertising station' that Trafalgar Square had become was returned to its pre-eminent role as focal point for national unity.

The rally was a staged event and the posters were literally backcloths to the action. Like so many official and semi-official events during the war, there is a theatrical quality to it. To support the loan of 1918 Trafalgar Square was turned into a bombed out French village using theatrical flats.[45] Two years earlier in Knightsbridge an Active Service Exhibition was held complete with a set of trenches, a mock-up of a headquarters and stretcher bearers.[46] As Paul Fussell points out, 'The devices of the theatre were frequently invoked at home to stimulate civilian morale and to publicise the War Loan.'[47]

Nor did the theatrical associations with war-time publicity stop there. The theatres were full of plays on the theme of war or staged concerts in support of war charities. These plays and events were publicized outside theatres on posters produced by artists such as John Hassall. At times the difference between the real war and the staged war, both represented on posters, must have been difficult for a home audience who had not been to the front to tell apart. We should not be surprised then that, according to John Hassall, Mme de Wilde of the Alhambra Theatre, Leicester Square wanted to see some posters 'with a view to impersonating one or two of them at the Alhambra' in April 1918.[48]

These staged social and cultural events and the use of non-commercial and civic sites publicised the government's needs without seeming to advertise them. The national and local government agencies through which publicity flowed were made up from the professional middle class who had never really been easy with commercial advertising and had countenanced its use reluctantly and from a distance. However extensive its use there was never any lasting commitment to government advertising and the state quickly reverted to public notices after 1919.

## Notes

1. T.R. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain* (London, Heinemann), 1982. But also contemporary handbooks on advertising such as Clarence Moran, *The Business of Advertising* (London, Methuen, 1905) and G.W. Goodall, *Advertising, A Study of Modern Business Power* (London, Constable), 1914.
2. *Billposting and Outdoor Publicity* had regular articles on the way companies disposed their hoardings and walls, Billposting companies published small handbooks for clients listing the locations of their advertising stations. Also see Moran, *The Business of Advertising*, pp. 54–63.
3. M. Sanders and P.M. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914–18* (London, Macmillan), 1982, p. 104. The authors are quoting from the Confidential Report of the PRC Meetings Sub-Department published in May 1916.
4. Michael McDonagh, *In London During the Great War* (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode), 1935, p. 51.
5. 'Recruiting by Poster', *The Windsor Magazine* (June 1915), p. 3.
6. Charles Higham, *Scientific Distribution* (London, Nisbet), 1916, p. 132.
7. *The Billposter*, 29:341 (1 November 1914). The journal is quoting from *Advertising World* (October 1914).
8. *The Billposter* (January 1915), p. 67.
9. This tentative assertion is based on a trawl of a limited array of images but certainly none of the easily accessible sites show a large array of hoardings with war posters on them. It may be that because of the low status of advertising and often untidy appearance of small walls and hoardings people did not choose to make a visual record of them.
10. *The Placard* (January 1915), pp. 24–30.
11. John Allen was a family member of the printing and billposting firm of David Allen and Sons Ltd.
12. *Advertiser's Weekly*, 16 January 1915, pp. 44–6.
13. L. Milner, *Leeds Pals* (London, Leo Cooper), 1991, p. 19.
14. M. Stedman, *Salford Pals* (London, Leo Cooper), 1993. Also P. Dutton, 'Moving images? The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee's Poster Campaign, 1914–16', *Imperial War Museum Review*, 4 (1989).

15. *The Billposter* (1 January 1915), pp.71–2.
16. W.J. Avery, 'National Advertising In Posters', *Penrose Annual*, 1916, p.111.
17. See IWM PST 12476, 12456, 12217.
18. *Manchester Courier*, 12 May 1915, p.4.
19. The picture is taken from *The Railway Gazette*, 11 November 1914, p.621.
20. See IWM PST 11402.
21. *The Railway Gazette*, 11 November 1914, p.112.
22. The last 'The Railways Picture Gallery' of holiday posters was produced in *The Railway and Travel Monthly*, 9 (June December 1915).
23. *The Railway and Travel Monthly*, 10 (January–June 1915), p.399.
24. *The Guardian*, 29 March 1915, p.6 and *The Billposter* (1 April 1915).
25. See IWM PST 11555, 11446.
26. M. Sanders and P.M. Taylor, *Propaganda during the First World War 1914 18* (London, Macmillan), 1982, p.11.
27. Cate Haste, *Keep The Home Fires Burning* (London, Allen Lane), 1977.
28. See letter from Jennifer Wood of the Imperial War Museum Art Department to Margaret Timmers at the V&A Museum, 20th June 1985.
29. Haste, *The Home Fires Burning*. Also H. Keatley Moore and W.C. Berwick Sayers, *Croydon and the Great War* (Croydon), 1920.
30. Tom Purvis donated designs for two Red Cross. According to the charity, 'We had no department exclusively devoted to advertising, and of the few posters we issued we were indebted in some instances to the generosity of the artists'. *Joint War Committee Reports, 1914–19*: Access No. 1080, Class D52, Part III, Section 8, Sources of Income, Advertising, p.16.
31. P. Vallely, 'Heart of the Nation', *Independent*, 15 September 2005, p.11.
32. *The Billposter*, 29:341 (1 November 1914), p.53 shows a reproduction of a photograph of Trafalgar Square with posters in temporary hoardings taken from the *Daily Mirror* from the previous month.
33. *The Billposter*, 29:345 (1 March, 1915), p.89.
34. Richardson Evans, *An Account of the Scapa Society* (London, Constable), 1926.
35. In the monthly *The Billposter* throughout 1916 there are extracts from local and national press expressing concern about films and film posters. Before 1916 there are no references to this though before 1914 there was some anxiety about the effect of film posters on the public as witnessed by a cartoon in *Punch*, *23* October 1916. Also see M. Hammond, *The Big Show, British Cinema Culture in the Great War 1914–1918* (Exeter, University of Exeter Press), 2006, pp.60–9.
36. M. Sander and P.M. Taylor, *British Propaganda*.
37. C. Wells and G.S. Stone, *Bristol and the Great War* (Bristol, J.W. Arrowsmith), 1920, p.110.
38. Moore and Berwick Sayers, *Croydon and the Great War*, p.121.
39. L. Milner, *Leeds Pals*, pp.71 2.
40. Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, pp.103–4.
41. *Advertiser's Weekly*, 17 April, 1915.
42. T. Tate, 'From Little Willie to Mother: The Tank and the First World War',

*Women: A Cultural Review*, 8:1 (1997), pp. 52–6.

43. *The Times*, 7 February 1917. Also reported in *The Billposter*, 31:369 (1 March 1917).
44. *The Illustrated London News*, 24 February 1917, p. 221.
45. Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War* (Cambridge, Polity Press), 1986, p. 647.
46. Wareham Smith, *Spilt Ink* (London, Ernest Benn), 1932.
47. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London & Oxford, Oxford University Press), 1975, p. 194 and Barry Curtis, 'Posters as Visual Propaganda in the Great War', *BLOCK*, 2 (1980), p. 51.
48. Correspondence between Bradley and Mme de Wilder, IWM AD, *March April 1918*.

5

# Advertising, publicity and propaganda in Britain during the First World War

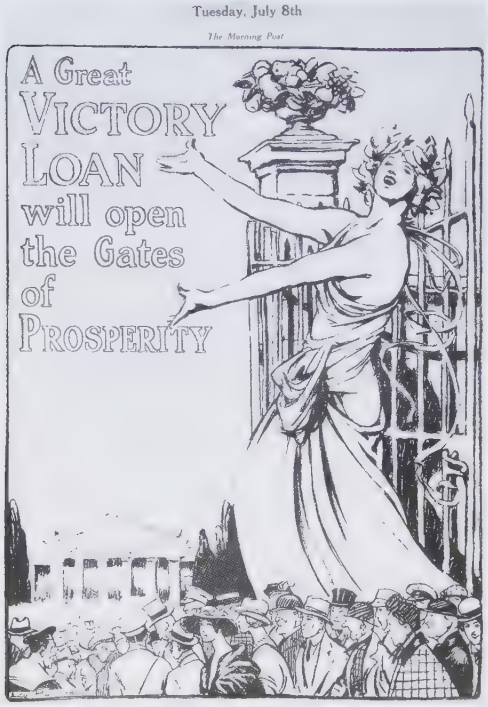
Because the First World War stimulated the British government's interest in disseminating information in an organised way for the first time, there is a large literature on official propaganda. However, the wider cultural and ideological effects of the official use of the techniques of advertising have not received a great deal of attention. The official acceptance of a popular rhetoric of advertising by various government departments effectively supported the visual culture of a burgeoning consumer market oriented towards novelty, choice and desire shaped by war.[1] In March 1915, *The Billposter* remarked that government was the trade's 'biggest business concern' and if the poster itself was not capable of governing, it could teach patriotism and sacrifice, literally to market 'service'.[2] Service is a term that may be difficult to grasp today, but a contemporary used the words and phrases 'duty', 'Britannia', 'brave', 'gay band of brothers', driven by the 'promise of ultimate victory', and 'doing one's best', while willing to pay 'the price of citizenship, right and justice and liberty' in a struggle against a 'degraded and detestable foe'.[3] As Roland Barthes observes, advertising speaks the product but sells something else,[4] in this case, 'service', and less obviously, 'bereavement, suffering, mutilation and death' in the cause of the nation.

An unforeseen consequence of the state use of the techniques of advertising and publicity was the implicit, if however brief, legitimisation

of the discourse of press and outdoor advertising to encapsulate the values of the system exhibited in the close ties between corporate and government interest, and all that that implies for the construction of the individual subject in the liberal democratic state. This became increasingly clear as the demands of the war for materials and the control of information manifested themselves through government measures such as the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA), with its impact on personal liberties and *laissez faire* economics. Increased personal taxation, censorship and the control of labour contributed to a new social contract between the government and the people. The wider population was politically disenfranchised, but was addressed by, and found representation in, popular commercial culture to achieve a form of social and cultural emancipation at a time of high patriotic fervour.

Unlike contemporary cartoon and popular print, this popular commercial culture rarely adopted the conventions of high art found in the work of Frank Brangwyn, Gerald Spencer Pryse, E. Kemp-Welch, Louis Raemaekers and Bernard Partridge, for example, all of whom designed posters and advertisements. Allegorical figures, personifications and allusions to the high bourgeois legacy of the classical tradition were part of their armoury to greater or lesser degrees. Similarly, nods to aesthetic modernism and expressionism were predominantly relinquished in favour of the measured directness of a mass representational language: 'Healthy naturalism counts its friends in millions', as *The Billposter* observed.[5]

Once hostilities were declared the fires of patriotism had to be simultaneously fuelled and controlled. The government sought to achieve this through pageant, concerts, public meetings, the press, pamphlets and advertising. By appropriating the language and techniques of advertising to the affairs of state, so the state was implicated, however reluctantly, in the cultural meanings of the wider commercial visual sphere and its appeal to people who had no investment in the traditional orders. In the Victory Loan press campaign of 1919, for example, Raemakers undermines traditional academic language: the allegorical figure of Peace loses her traditional remoteness to address the viewer and the depicted crowd as consumers in the marketplace (figure 36). The simple and direct drawing




36 Louis Raemakers, 1919, A Great Victory Loan Will Open the Gates of Prosperity


37 Anon., Come into the Ranks and Fight for Your King and Country – Don't Stay in the Crowd and Stare, You Are Wanted at the Front

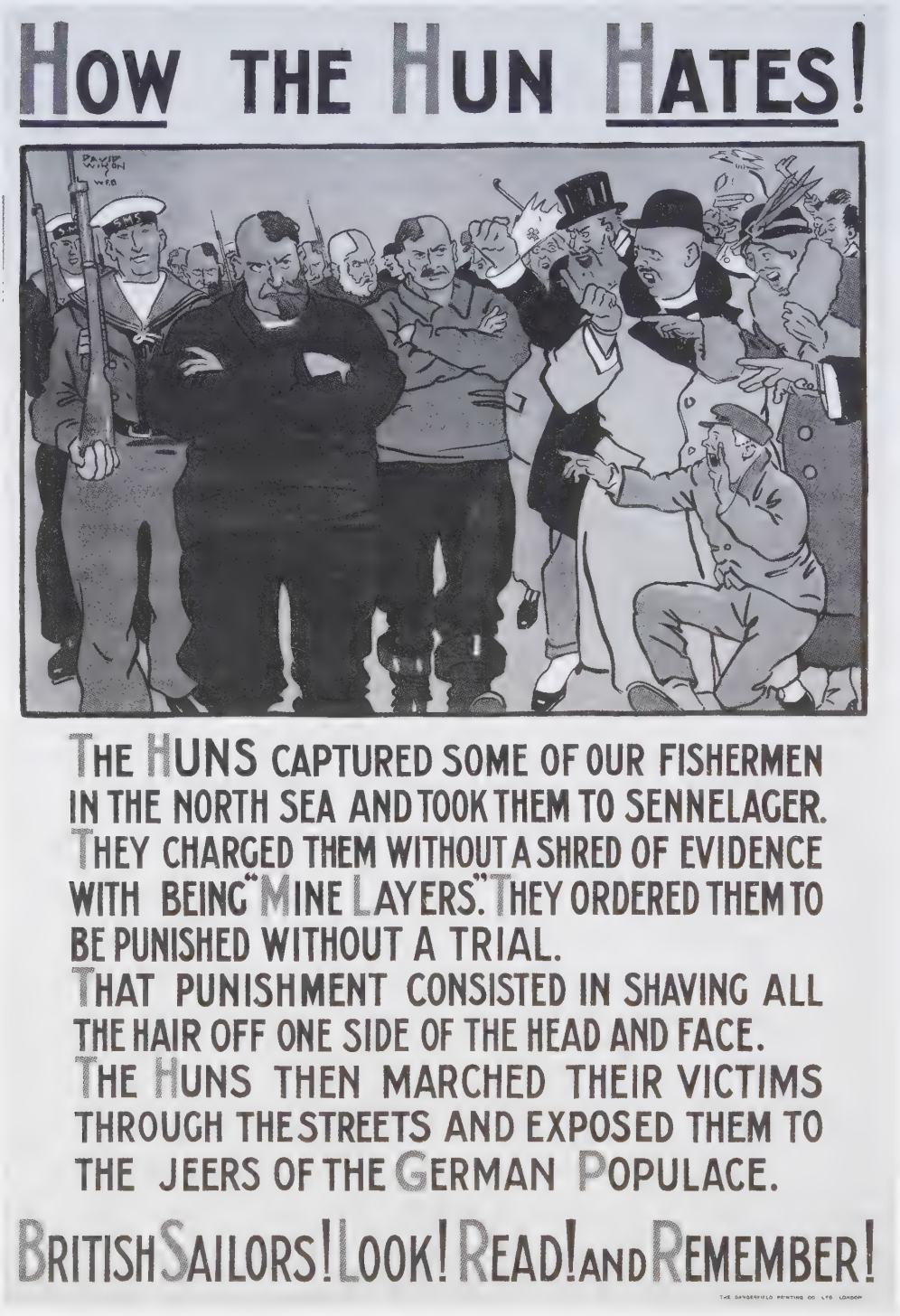
style avoids the academic conventions of modelling and deep perspective. More often there are no allusions to high bourgeois culture (figure 37): allegory, personification and classical composition are all absent; instead, a stark presentation of abstract space contrasts the homogeneity of the crowd with the disciplined ranks of the army.

Pictorially, these images of the crowd are the equivalent of dominant understandings of the urban mass. At once homogenous, differentiated and individualised – by dress codes, most obviously the 'hat'[6] – and in pursuit of a common goal, the posters address the phenomenon they depict (plate 2, figures 36, 37). For William Trotter writing in 1917, who was influenced by the French thinker Gustav Le Bon, the crowd was far more likely to be susceptible to the emotions than to reason and, as Thomas Russell put it, thinking of advertisements, 'Pictures have a more direct appeal to the human intelligence than words.'[7] For Le Bon,

the popular classes were a subversive force and the observation was accurate insofar as it identified the 'dangerous' and 'new' phenomenon of the easily manipulated urban mass, more susceptible to appearances than reality. Le Bon remarked in an implicit justification of the visual devices of the advertiser: 'It is only images that terrify or attract them and become motives of action' and whoever 'can supply them with illusions is easily their master; whoever attempts to destroy their illusions is always their victim'.[8] Vulnerable to those who controlled the advertising techniques of repetition, imitation, affirmation and the promise of social prestige, the crowd, it was believed, could be marshalled to the national cause in a train of thought that was to have a lasting influence on the debates concerning democracy and publicity. Another recruiting poster shows an equally heterogeneous crowd of civilians marching into the distance, and as they do so, they metamorphose into a column of troops (plate 2). The image is in line with contemporary understandings, which suggested that if the crowd could be controlled correctly, its solidarity would contain the ethical and moral core of the nation itself.[9] The image is the visual equivalent to Trotter's contrast of German 'aggression' with British social tolerance and the moral strength, which overcomes class barriers, prejudice and scepticism to generate 'enthusiasm, courage, endurance, enterprise, and all the virtues of a warrior'.[10] Just how prevalent these ideas were, can be seen in the poster by David Wilson 'How the Hun Hates' (figure 38). Here the German crowd, differentiated in the personifications of the variety of social strata, become a mob that terrorises captured British merchant seamen.

For Le Bon, the popular classes had entered into political life by means of universal suffrage, labour unions, and he might have added the marketplace because that was where, as he describes it in relation to the crowd: 'The ideas of the past, although half destroyed ... [are] still very powerful, and the ideas which are to replace them ... [are] still in the process of formation, the modern age represents a period of transition and anarchy.'[11] Tradition and innovation sat alongside each other in an uneasy relationship.

Overall, Trotter's argument although tempered by a social conscience was little more than a justification for the *status quo* and as a psychological




38 David Wilson and WFB., How the Hun Hates!

explanation it took no account of opinion forming institutions in society or how they worked. However, by the end of the war the terms of the debate concerning the state, commerce and the people in relation to publicity and propaganda that occupied the 1920s and 1930s were set. The discussion focused partly on the role of the press and the impact of government orchestrated propaganda campaigns carried out under the cover of secrecy. The structural implications of the appropriation of modern communications to the needs of the state were largely ignored, although the debate did extend to the relationships between official propaganda and advertising. Harold D. Lasswell's *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, published in 1927 exemplifies the approach.[12] Essentially, the arguments concentrated on the efforts of those such as Charles Masterman and the British propaganda campaign aimed at getting the United States to enter the war, or the kind of anti-German sentiment generated by the Bryce Report's erroneous confirmation of German atrocities, later thoroughly discredited by Arthur Ponsonby.[13] This kind of overt propaganda was usually confined to the pages of the newspapers and illustrated magazines, and was found in atrocity photographs, stories, prints and cartoons[14] alongside published books and pamphlets produced under the auspices of the likes of John Buchan at the Department of Information.[15] Little explicit atrocity material reached the posters. The trade was self-regulated and concerned with the pursuit of respectability, as the debates surrounding poster-making as an art, as opposed to a mere artisanal and slightly disreputable commercial activity, testify.[16] Visual material that might give offence in public spaces was avoided.

After the war, the debate surrounding propaganda and the state began to address the mechanisms by which information reached the people and the ideological implications of the medium itself. In 1929 Harold Chapman Brown wrote: 'Propaganda for this purpose can be classified with advertising, for while the latter is concerned with prompting the sales of specific articles for the sake of somebody's profit, the former is concerned with what is, in popular parlance, the sale of ideas, possibly for the good of society, but often for somebody's profit as well.'[17] Brown failed to pursue the connection he had made between

the production of information and business, preferring instead to stress the affective power of advertising and its appeal to unreason.[18] The aim was to incite people to immediate action according to the propagandist's wishes, making the point that it is not the ideas presented so much as the emotive form they are given that encourages action. A decade later, Richard S. Lambert made the association between propaganda and advertising explicit: 'most of the methods employed by the propagandist in other fields to-day, especially in politics, are but devices borrowed from commercial advertising'. The techniques and practices are comparable, and he concurs with the American champion of the 'science of publicity', Edward L. Bernays, who maintained that the manipulation of public opinion was an important component of modern democracy. In his view, the elite who 'manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.' For Bernays and others such as the American liberal social and political commentator Walter Lippmann, this was the only way to wrestle power away from the demotic and volatile mass. In other words, it was thought that power in societies based on individual liberty and enterprise should be exercised by a small group of propagandists who by virtue of their control of the public mind are its leaders.[19] As early as 1922, the well-known liberal and pacifist philosopher, Bertrand Russell, was already deeply suspicious of the ways propaganda and advertising operated in the public discourse of liberal democratic societies. Russell identified what Noam Chomsky later called 'the manufacture of consent',[20] when he wrote:

> Our system of education turns young people out of the schools able to read, but for the most part unable to weigh evidence or to form an independent opinion. They are then assailed, throughout the rest of their lives, by statements designed to make them believe all sorts of absurd propositions, such as that Blank's pills cure all ills, that Spitzbergen is warm and fertile, and that Germans eat corpses. The art of propaganda, as practised by modern politicians and governments, is derived from the art of advertisement ... propaganda, conducted by the means which advertisers have found successful, is now one of the recognised methods of government in all advanced

countries, and is especially the method by which democratic opinion is created.[21]

Russell does not explore the interests represented by advertising itself, although he does warn of the power of the American monopolies whose influence he compares with that of the power of the Soviet state in Russia.

In Britain during the war in the spheres of propaganda and publicity, Charles Frederick Higham was making the running. Widely respected within the advertising community, Higham's polemics identified advertising as 'scientific distribution', by which he meant that it should function as an agency of refinement and enlightenment through communication: 'wise advertisement', he argued, 'can rouse a community from a comatose, lethargic state, and instil, in place of this, a spirit of high enterprise and self-respect'.[22] Advertising promoted the desire for better things and by implication self-improvement: 'Its civilising influence is far too little understood. How many of our habits of cleanliness, how much of the nourishment of our food, are due to the teaching of advertisements!'[23] Or, as Thomas Russell put it, 'This was the time to tell the people the facts, and advertising was the method of doing it.'[24] Like Bernays and Lippmann in America in the 1920s, Higham proposed a coalition of the good, effectively an intellectual elite of the advertising man, the statesman and the artist who would replace coercive with enlightened government. Simply, advertising would become a great educative force as it had in the government recruiting and war savings campaigns: 'A means had to be used whereby the nation's need of men and money was silently but vividly proclaimed ... and it was advertisement.'[25] He makes the case for advertising as essential for democratic life. As an unbiased and unrivalled educative medium it was not something that seduces and cynically promotes desire where there was none before. But even he had to admit that statesmen would have to 'condescend' to collaborate with advertising men.

The pact between the interests of government and the business of advertising fudged the answer to the question as to how the fourth estate contributed, as a limit to state power, to a functioning, if not yet

fully fledged democracy. The question of information and its control, or propaganda, was not subjected to intense debate in parliament until 1918, by which time the Ministry of Information had been served notice by the political establishment.[26] For the duration, however, the needs of the nation at war were seen to merit the closeness of the relationship, regardless of the implications for a developing liberal democratic order. For Higham, as it was for Bernays and Lippmann,[27] advertising in the guise of publicity was a powerful force capable of inoculating the mass against its own baser instincts. Symptomatically, a commentator in *The Billposter* in the aftermath of the recruiting campaign lamented the loss of what he called the national patriotic poster, necessary, in his view, for the maintenance of civilian morale.[28]

Nevertheless, for most of those in the position to comment, such as the Liberal columnist A.G. Gardiner, publicity's medium was the easily manipulated and gullible crowd. The growing consumption of film, comic strips, illustrated magazines and pictorial display advertising in the press and on the hoardings, contributed to increased communication through images rather than words, emotion rather than reason. As such, it was a threat to the integrity traditional culture on this and other levels. The profit motive sidelined the aesthetic and moral in favour of the interests of consumers and producers to undermine high bourgeois orders based on taste. Playing to the crowd, it was perceived to be essentially egalitarian in a manner many, such as the members of the National Society for Controlling the Abuses of Public Advertising [*Scapa*], found unacceptable.[29] Amongst this elitist upper and professional middle class and aristocratic elite was Lord Kitchener, and Hedley Le Bas remarked of Kitchener's reaction to his own early recruiting campaign: 'At first, I do not think he quite saw modern advertising as the business man sees it, and was a little suspicious about the popular appeals that departed so drastically from traditions he had respected all his life ... I think sometimes startled the great soldier.'[30]

Advertising represented values beyond the 'gentlemanly'[31] pursuits of the traditional ruling classes. Questions of manners and Christian moral rectitude had little influence in business, which was perceived to be 'diametrically opposed, and consequently repugnant to the instincts

of a gentleman',[32] and epitomised by Bert Thomas' drawing of a Tommy 'Arf a "Mo" Kaiser' (plate 21). Nicholas Hiley, in particular, draws attention to the adverse criticism the recruiting posters attracted when their visual rhetoric emulated advertising.[33] Indeed, it was the language of the advertiser corralled to national need that was new. As a language it depended upon psychological persuasion to create demand and it was not afraid of the widening societal emancipation represented by market consumerism. It belonged to what H.G. Wells called the real nation of 'outsiders':

> Britain was not a State. It was an unincorporated people. The British Army, the British War Office, and the British administration had assimilated nothing; they were little old partial things; the British nation lay outside them, beyond their understanding and tradition; a formless new thing, but a great thing; and now this British nation, this real nation, the 'outsiders' had to take up arms.[34]

Wells was referring to a nation framed by abstract and liberal values of democracy and liberty, rather than their unspoken, because unspeakable concomitants of the march of the popular mass media and the high street, and what he described as the pernicious influence of the 'business man'.[35] Under these circumstances, war – with its nationalism and its supreme value of service – was partially reconceived as a brand to be sold to the public, and not exclusively by the state. J.M. Winter points out in relation to the popular arts that:

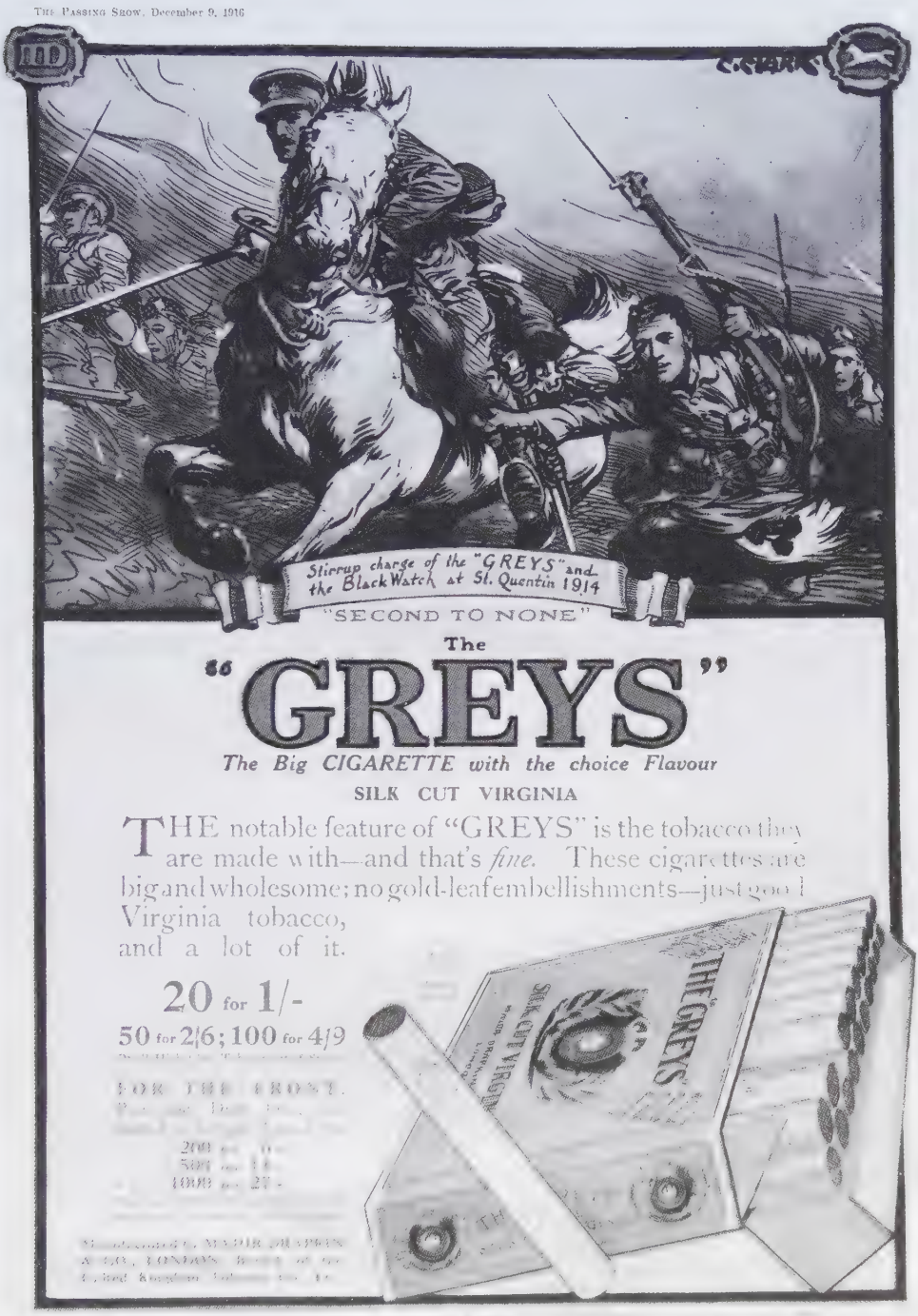
> historians have failed to do full justice to the visual propaganda of private enterprise. The private sector had an autonomy of its own. Postcards, caricatures, posters, bric-à-brac, statues, monuments, cartoons, paintings and films cannot be reduced to products of the hegemony of a ruling class or its economic agents ... the war was recreated in a romantic or romanticised form primarily because it sold. The myth of war enthusiasm was good business. Profit-making and proselytising were far from incompatible activities.[36]

The success of cartoonists and printmakers such as Brangwyn, Raemakers, Pryse, Partridge and Dyson, for example, and the prevalence

of photographic postcards such as those issued by the *Daily Mail* bear out Winter's observation. One might also add that romanticised visions of war serve not only to be sold but also to sell. But this is not the whole story, and there is the equally important area of commodity advertising that engaged a large and literate mass audience. It shared space with government campaigns on the hoardings and in publications as diverse as the *Daily Mail*, *Tit-Bits*, *The Times* and *Punch*, for example. Its audience reached across social divides, more and more of whom could afford an array of branded products such as ready-made clothes, soap, tobacco, hand cream, razors, soups and gravy browning.

Popular support for the war in 1914 relied upon deeply held ideological systems originating in popular Darwinism and puritan Christianity. Victory and morality walked hand in hand, and defeat was the fate of the technically ill equipped and the morally disadvantaged. For the upper and middle classes, war was a purely masculine affair of adventure, gallantry, honour and glorious imperial cause. A sport, in all but name, illuminated with the romanticism of 'the dignity of resistance and the sacred quality of patriotism'.[37] Frequently, brands were marketed by capitalising on these widely held emotions of heroic patriotism: reproducing and reinforcing them in equally conventional style. An advertisement for The Greys Silk Cut Virginia cigarettes from 1916 (figure 39), featured an illustration of the packet surmounted by a coloured line drawing of a cavalry and infantry charge titled 'Stirrup charge of the 'GREYS' and Black Watch at St Quentin, 1914'; another, less blindly heroic, for Mitchell's Golden Dawn Cigarettes, 'Time for One More' (plate 20), shows plucky and cheerful lads passing cigarettes before going over the top. Both, although different in tone, show the same oblivious lack of care for personal safety characteristic of boys' adventure stories by authors such as G.A. Henty, and only unusually found in recruiting posters such as 'At the Front!' and 'Forward!'[38] Patriotic heroism is used to sell a commodity in the shape of tobacco and, in turn, to commodify heroic patriotism itself.

By way of contrast, in both government and commercial advertising the most commented upon representation of the common soldier was characterised by Bert Thomas' tobacco fund advertisement 'Arf a "Mo" Kaiser' (plate 21). According to a contemporary:




39 C. Clark, 1916, Second to None, Stirrup Charge of the 'GREYS' and Black Watch at St Quentin, 1914

> The humorist is as essential as the moralist, and if one or the other had to be suppressed it is possible that the moralist might not be over pleased with the popular verdict.
>
> ... no one will deny that Mr Bert Thomas ... is deserving of particular mention. His inimitable little sketch 'Arf a mo Kaiser!' has done much to establish him in the hearts of the British public ... and it has been described by the *Daily Mail* as the 'funniest picture of the war'.[39]

Tommy Atkins was brave, cheerful, formidable, chivalrous, kind, cheeky and, according to W.J. Reader: 'altogether, a bit of a rascal, and all the more lovable for that "a kind of domestic pet"'.[40] Bert Thomas' drawing epitomised these characteristics in a Chaplinesque antidote to the blindly heroic in a display of anti-authoritarian resilience. This relentlessly cheerful picture of life at the front, of good humour in the face of adversity, was pursued in many other advertising campaigns. 'I'll swap him for a CRAYOL',[41] sported a humorous cartoon of a Tommy trying to exchange a German prisoner for a cigarette. A show card for Dunlop Cycle Tyres pictured a jolly Tommy in a landscape devastated by battle astride the mangled remains of his bicycle holding two immaculately preserved tyres over the slogan 'Only Me and DUNLOPS Left' (plate 22).[42]

Similarly, Gerald Wood's recruitment poster of a row of smiling faces, 'Join the brave throng that goes marching along',[43] was echoed in the show card for Hignett's Fours, where men from the three services are joined by an equally cheerful munitions worker.[44] It was a symptom of the wider recognition of the role of the civilian war effort and it is also found in 'Fill Up the Ranks, Pile Up the Munitions' (plate 3). McLinton's Shaving Cream ran a campaign in *John Bull* and *The Passing Show* in the spring of 1917 featuring a series of cartoons by David Wilson the author of a number of posters for patriotic organisations. 'Close Shave No. 3, 'Biffed!! But Still Cool and Comfortable' is typical. Like most of these campaigns they were careful to address all of the services. In this advertisement a Jack has a shave in a lifeboat on rough seas while under fire from a U-boat. The copy reads:

> You may safely undertake any water risks so long as McLinton's

> Shaving Cream is your chief standby. The persuasive qualities of this preparation immediately overcome the resistance of the hardest water, and the resultant, rich creamy lather softens the beard no matter how stubborn – in a trice. Furthermore ... [it] does not contain anything which can sting or burn the skin. Thus, by its use you are assured of a delightful, cool shave, and a skin left refreshed and comfortable.

These images and their attendant rhetoric illustrate a feminisation of the representation of the war. They are an education in needs, teaching consumer desires beyond the product to a system of values dependent upon duty, moral obligation and sacrifice. Values now contaminated with the promotion of brands, products and an anti-heroic concern for self-preservation and self-presentation familiar to consumers of popular culture, and in a mould not really suitable for respectable people. Tobacco merchandising appropriates the higher aims to 'gladden the heart of a HERO', as the *Weekly Despatch* Tobacco Fund slogan would have it (plate 21). Calls to Duty and Service, admonitions to action to Go, Do, Buy suggest a patriotic need is being sold to employers and employees, women and even children. Women are given the dual role of protectors of the home and active contributors to the war effort through war work. Children like women see themselves represented back to themselves, as eager to contribute, or as inquisitors (figure 6, plates 4, 5). Wedded to the needs of the state, popular commercial culture gained respectability because it served the higher cause of nation, but simultaneously created the offence of combining the finer attributes with soap, cocoa, tobacco and gravy. In the advertising the state is identified with corporate interest, and corporate interest identifies itself with the state and the still not fully politically enfranchised people. The working people, who might not have the vote, were addressed through the commercial media to find representation in an image of itself.

Fry's pursued a good-humoured but gritty approach to the marketing of cocoa as the 'Strongest and Best', 'The Right Bracer for Men Who DO Things', or 'Cheery Oh! It's Fry's Pure Breakfast Cocoa', featuring a rugged portrait of Jack Tar. Significantly, 'Fry's A Fatigue Duty' (figure 40) took the campaign beyond the celebration of commonplace good-humoured duty:


40 Anon., Fry's A Fatigue Duty

> The nurse who is 'just ready to drop' will find a wonderful stimulant in FRY'S delicious Cocoa. Of course it feeds every tired muscle – it nourishes bone and nerve – but really does more. FRY's possesses in full measure that subtle 'spirit of cocoa' – theobromine – which is one of the most beneficial stimulants known.

Medical research is harnessed to the product in a declaration of modernity and asserts its place in a world increasingly distanced from traditional values. The promise of the luxury of a well-earned rest is tempered with references to hard work and endurance necessary for the task ahead. These representations of work and leisure are infused with the modern values of Taylorist scientific management, of efficiency and the issues of fatigue and safety, breaks and productivity in the work place and at the

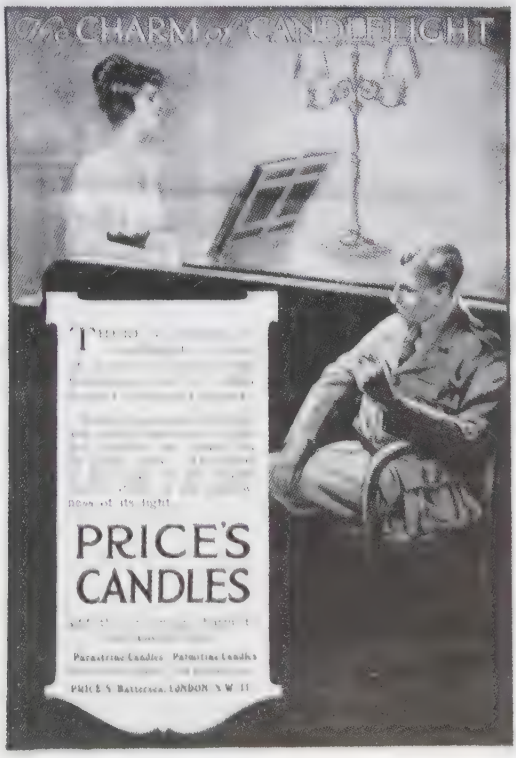
front. OXO Cubes[45] and Gong Soups, for example, took broadly similar approaches, mixing naturalistic drawings of men at rest in comfortable and homely bivouacs, as if also to stress to those at home, at whom the advertisements were aimed, that things were not so bad at the front. A world remote from what C.E. Montague later described as: 'the quelling coldness of frosty nights spent in soaked clothes – for no blankets were brought up to the trenches; the ubiquitous dust and stench of corpses and buzzing of millions of corpse-fed flies on summer battlefields and so on, and so on'.[46]

Vinolia, a manufacturer of cosmetic products ran a varied campaign aimed at working women by appealing to their femininity, 'The call of patriotism has set many a delicate pair of hands to hard and unaccustomed tasks', ran the copy for one advertisement. Royal Vinolia, as their products were christened, drew on obvious imperial and monarchical associations, aided and abetted by 'Handsome Tins of Wedgwood design', for those who would aspire to middle class status. Illustrated with realist line drawings of women at ease with their work and each other, they are seen collectively in service to the greater cause. Unusually, one series used photographs to emphasise the machinery (figure 41). The women are alone and in dialogue with their machines. The advertisement represents a new role for women in society, at ease with modernity, if subject to its phallic authority. The product through its associations and its function as a protective agent preserves femininity and allows space for men to return to the factory floor. This observation is supported by the copy for Royal Vinolia Talcum Powder: 'A little of this delightful powder dusted on the face protects the pores from dust and dirt. It absorbs all excess perspiration, keeps the skin fresh and cool, and preserves the peach-like bloom of the cheek.' Although the product itself might offer respite from the shop floor, the advertisement, through photography, represents women in an uncompromisingly modern way. Other advertisements captured the modern spirit of the war-working woman of a different class. A female office worker strides out into the rain 'For War Workers on a Wet Day There is Nothing Like a Zambrene [Raincoat]'.[47] Similarly, the poster campaign run by the YWCA, in contrast to the YMCA, which was set resolutely within nineteenth-century realist conventions,


41 Anon., A Case for Vinolia Cream

puts forward a progressive image of women through a dalliance with modernist typography and abstraction in a design by Edgar Wright.[48]

The copy for Vinolia products may have dubbed the woman war worker, 'The Lady of the Lathe', but these representations are a far cry from advertisements aimed at a different class, hidebound by convention and manners. The copy for a soap advertisement aimed at the middle class reads, 'Au Revoir! Let him carry away with him the cheering remembrance of a charmingly radiant personality – an impression of a clear and dainty skin, pearly white teeth, and bright glossy hair ... use McLinton's Colleen Soap and toilet Preparations, so that whenever he returns he may be confirmed in his happy impression of you.' The copy stands alongside the illustration of a fashionable young woman straightening her husband's tie in a fashionable 'Deco' interior. Or, the melancholic advertisement for Price's candles where under 'The Charm of Candlelight' a young officer, lost in thought, smokes while his wife plays the piano (figure 42). Or, 'When the Warrior's Home Again' around




42 Anon., The Charm of Candlelight

the crowded candle-lit dining table: 'With nerves a-jangle and craving for rest the home-coming warrior seeks quiet and repose. Nothing can so soothe the war-worn nerves as the meal that is served by the genial light of candles ... the real touch of home, makes for cosiness, content and restfulness.' There is a sense of foreboding and even psychological threat in these advertisements, the soft light issuing from the ornate candlesticks fails to blot out the real meanings of the war for the individual and for a class, which could no longer rely on taste and means to maintain their position in society in the face of a burgeoning economy driven by commodity consumption.

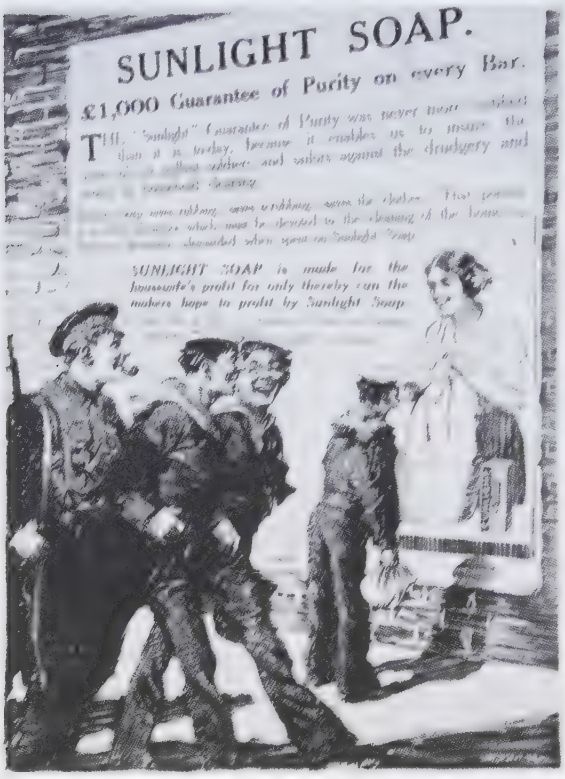
Industry had long since woken up to the fact that women were important purchasers of consumer items, and a lot of advertising was directed at them. Sunlight Soap, for example, ran a long and varied campaign using the concepts of 'purity' and 'efficiency' with the slogan 'The Cleanest Fighter in the World  the British Tommy'.[49] The clean and chivalrous Tommy is propagandised as an aspect of British business identified as the nation, and the war becomes as much a business opportunity as a military crusade against tyranny. In the copy the efficiency of business matches the moral rectitude of the military operation. As the campaign evolves, so the tone changes. Clean fighting becomes analogous to gallantry, bravery and efficiency and, increasingly, signals nostalgia for home and home comforts offered by mothers and wives who perform their domestic duties, now associated with forced economies and the need to make things last. In an advertisement for Sunlight Soap, a woman hangs out the washing, and in the background officers and men do their laundry:

> Wistful yet Cheerful! Although we lay stress upon the Purity and efficiency of sunlight soap, we always make our claims of secondary importance to the needs of those we serve. The best of Soaps can never be too good for the best of Mothers and Wives whose gallant sons and husbands are to-day preserving the traditions of our Motherland. It has been said that a woman's work was never done. It should be said that a woman's work was never done better than it is being done to-day with Sunlight Soap.

Similarly, advertisements for Hudson's Soap traded on notions of cleanliness, virtue[50] and homeliness.[51] The advertising was following Lloyd George when in September 1914 he had drawn the analogy between patriotism and the protection of the home to define the conflict in personal and domestic terms.

By 1916, the hope for an early end to the war had evaporated and something of the untiringly optimistic tone dissipates to be replaced by a more sombre symbolism. Sunlight, for example, featured an allegorical female figure of Hope cast in shadow, who is reluctantly turned towards the sunrise by a figure of the New Year of 1916: 'Sunlight Soap is made for the housewife's profit, for only thereby can the makers continue to profit by Sunlight Soap.' Crucially, soap is promoted as next to godliness and as an important component in the consumer market democracy into which the housewife is enfranchised through the act of purchase.

Lever's Lifebuoy took a slightly different tack and engaged in a battle against dirt and disease. Poor hygiene was a significant problem in the trenches, while to be well scrubbed was to walk next to God and to march forward with progress. One advertisement showed Tommies going over the top in an onslaught against 'Germs, Microbes and Disease'. The campaign extended into hospitals where under the regimen of the 'Royal Disinfectant' it took its place alongside the wounded and medical staff, in a manner indistinguishable from illustrations advertising 'Frazerton Irish Aprons. For Nurses and Household Use', for example.[52] Rinso 'the dirt dispeller' also sought military endorsement through a campaign of press advertisements and show cards to picture service men and war workers under slogans such as 'Rinso Washes While the Wide Awake House-Wife is Fast Asleep.'[53] Marketed as an advanced scientific preparation, it saved energy because it used cold water, helped to reduce wear and tear because the clothes were soaked rather than physically washed, and saved time: 'easy for the housewife – easy for the clothes', it 'enables war workers to give time and service to the country without neglect of home duties'.[54] Just as with the War Savings and Loans campaigns, consumers are encouraged to buy into the system as they had never done before. Service is combined with the promise of guaranteed temporal, material and financial profit, and the fundamental




43 Anon., Sunlight Soap poster

product for consumption, a new burgeoning form of state sanctified capitalism is realised.

Advertisements and poster campaigns to 'smoke cigarettes', 'Buy war bonds', and so on, promoted commodities and brands, and projected an imaginary reality dependent upon the already seen in the field of the poster and the advertisement and commercial artists often responded to this self-enclosed world. An advertisement for Rinso shows two soldiers in front of a poster animatedly discussing the merits of the product. Another presents a group of soldiers and sailors laughing at a Jack in conversation with a comely young housewife in a Sunlight Soap poster figure 43). An undercurrent of unspoken sexuality is used to create desire and to sell the product, but what is more significant is its intertextuality. The characters are already familiar to us from the wider discourse of advertising, posters and public space to undermine and absorb the real in the manner of Jean Baudrillard's simulacrum.

In this proto-consumerist paradise, advertising focuses on everyday things and concerns, such as doing service in the factories and at the front, making savings and economies, consuming tobacco, candles, tea, soap, washing powder, hand cream, soup, and gravy browning. Their promotion domesticates and feminises to create a war zone free of mutilation, desecration and brutality. Advertising used the war as a marketing strategy, playing on the feelings of those not at the front to conceal what Slavoj Žižek calls the collective dirty secret of the politically necessary. The culture of advertising in its advocacy of consumer products promoted a dream world in denial of the realities of the war. The fraternal camaraderie enjoined by recruiting campaigns concealed the carnage of the battlefield. The contributions from the population to the war effort through financial and material economies existed in paradoxical relation to the profligate waste of the war. The concern for the condition of the war worker's complexion obscured the often poor and dangerous working conditions. The promotion of convenience foods denied the failure of the authorities to prosecute the war efficiently or to provide an adequate diet for the troops. The emphasis on hygiene and personal cleanliness flew in the face of insanitary conditions at the front. The pursuit of leisure in the acquisition of tobacco enacted Taylorist demands for a sufficiently rested work force in the greater cause of the war. Commercial culture presented the acceptable face of capitalism and obscured its divided core suffering, exploitation, obsolescence and profligacy are denied in favour of happiness, prosperity, progress and efficiency. To show the world as capitalism and the state desired required acts of self-censorship connected with appearance to ensure that what Žižek identifies as the constitutive crime of authority remains invisible. This becomes a situation where everything untoward is denied and where everyone is supposed to act as if the real world is false because it is not what the market in league with service demands. Unachievable universals of fearless comradeship in adversity encapsulated by the figure of Bert Thomas's Tommy who can engage the Kaiser in conversation and simultaneously defy his authority, attracted those indifferent to the allied crusade for freedom, democracy and the market. It was an attraction built not from rational argument but from a conglomeration


44 TF, Scrap as Much as You Can

of fantasies, images and archetypes that was both remarkably affective and effective.

What was beginning to be established was the actualisation of the individual in terms of service, enabled through certain kinds of consumption and in conditions where the individual is not at all free. Here desires were manipulated by a hegemonic discourse of service, rather than the later paradigm of freedom through the satisfaction of irrational desire. According to the philosopher Jean Baudrillard, a system of needs is produced and alongside it a consumer corresponding to certain kinds of state market capitalism. The act of buying implicated the purchaser in its professed meaning and transported them to a guilt-free realm: labour-saving products make time to serve; and war, obsolescence in its purest form, can be redeemed in salvage to create an anxiety-free boys' own epic, illustrated by the posters produced by the salvage company George Cohen, where the trade of the scrap metal merchant is transformed into a glorious battle in the foundry and at the front (figures 44, 45).


45 Welsh, Put the Hun on Iron Rations

In government and commercial advertising contradictions between the nation and class, the state and the people found temporary resolution. A cycle of service and class interest set itself up in continual paradox, providing relief to wider conflicts through the acquisition of products as diverse as raw recruits for the front, labour for the war industry, or 'home comforts'. Advertising was marginal, but in service for the national cause it had gained a degree of respectability. What is important is the authority placed on a language and way of life based in consumer values rather than those offered by tradition and taste. While 'what was good for the country to know' was controlled by the press lords in connivance with the government. Its symbiotic partner in the distribution of information, the advertising industry, accrued institutional acceptance. Its ideological power extended far beyond the immediate needs of the control of information and the open demonisation of the enemy, to succeed in establishing new ways of operating in the world.

Higham argued for just such an arrangement and dedicated his book *Looking Forward* to the great ennobler of the press lords, Lloyd George.

It was exactly this configuration of individuals which constituted a ruling elite and to whose table the advertising men could begin to dine, if as slightly unwelcome latecomers.

## Notes

1. The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, National War Savings Committee, War Loans, Domestic Savings Committee, Ministry of Food, Board of Trade and League of National Safety, for example.
2. 'Government Patronage of the Poster', *The Billposter* (March 1915), pp. 88–9.
3. *The Billposter*, 375 (September 1917), p. 18.
4. Roland Barthes, *The Semiotic Challenge* (Berkeley, University of California Press), 1994, p. 178.
5. 'The Poster of the Future', *The Billposter*, 29:347 (May 1915), p. 106. See the CRW Nevinson inspired War Savings poster, IWM PST 8167, or the abstracted War Bonds poster, IWM PST 10443, which were always destined to be the exceptions.
6. This was a theme famously exploited by the German artist Max Ernst in the picture *The Hat Makes the Man*, 1923.
7. Thomas Russell (ed.), *Advertising and Publicity* (London, Educational Book Company), 1911, p. 98, quoted in D.L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy. Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford, Clarendon Press), 1988, p. 68, fn36.
8. Ibid. p. 61 and p. 110.
9. W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (London, T. Fisher Unwin Ltd.), 1919, p. 249.
10. Ibid. Trotter quotes John Buchan quoting Professor Werner Sombart of Berlin, Buchan also describes the Germans as a 'wolf-pack'; p. 115 and p. 129.
11. Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd* (London, Ernest Benn Ltd.), 1952, first published in English 1896, p. 14.
12. Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf), 1927.
13. Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood In War Time. Containing An Assortment Of Lies Circulated Throughout The Nations During the Great War* (New York, EP Dutton & Co.), 1928. See Michael Sanders & Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda During the First World War 1914–1918* (London, Macmillan Press), 1982.
14. See Ferdinand Avenarius, *Das Bild als Verleumder Bemerkungen zur Technik der Völkerverhetzung*, Munchen, Georg D.W. Callwey, not dated and *Die Mache im Weltwahn Schriften fur echten Frieden, Doppelheft 1/2, Propaganda und Wahrheit. 1. Die Photographen Dokumente* (Berlin), 1917, an exposure of the Northcliffe press manipulation of photographic evidence.
15. For a full discussion of these operations see Sanders & Taylor, *British Propaganda* and Gary S. Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester, Manchester University Press), 1992.

16. The trade press, such as *The Placard* and *The Billposter*, carried the debate throughout the war, and the category of art often fell into a contested area where it is not at all clear whether those involved in the debate mean art in the high bourgeois sense or as a separate category of commercial art.
17. 'Advertising and Propaganda. A Study in the Ethics of Social Control', *International Journal of Ethics*, 40 (1929), pp. 39–40.
18. Ibid., p. 40.
19. Richard S. Lambert, *Propaganda* (London, Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.), 1938, pp. 32–3. Lambert was a founding editor of *The Listener* in 1929.
20. See Noam Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions. Thought Control in Democratic Societies* (London, Pluto Press), 1989 and Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent. The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York, Pantheon), 1988.
21. Bertrand Russell, *Free Thought and Official Propaganda*, *Conway Memorial Lecture* (London, Watts & Co.), 1922, pp. 31–3.
22. Charles Frederick Higham, *Scientific Distribution* (London, Nisbet & Co. Ltd.), 1916, pp. 4–5. Sidney Webb in his introduction to G.W. Goodall's *Advertising. A Study of a Modern Business Power* (London, Constable & Co., 1914), p. xvi, had said much the same sort of thing in his advocacy of advertising in a socialist state.
23. Ibid., p. 61.
24. *Printers' Ink* (December 1914), p. 484.
25. Ibid., pp. 131–3.
26. See Cate Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning. Propaganda and the First World War* (London, Allen Lane, Penguin Books), 1977.
27. See Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York, Free Press Paperbacks), 1997, first published 1922; Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York, Horace Liverlight), 1928.
28. 'Government Patronage of the Poster', *The Billposter* (March 1915), p. 18.
29. Established in 1893 in reaction to what it saw as the despoilation of the countryside by inappropriate advertising its members in the first years of its existence included three members of the Fry family, Holman Hunt, Millais, Quiller-Couch, William Morris, Sir Walter Besant, Walter Crane and Rudyard Kipling. The poster industry had introduced self-regulation as early as 1890 with the Joint Censorship Committee sponsored by the United Bill-Posters Association and the London Bill-Posters Association. Although it suspended operations for the duration, it represented a bastion of upper middle class and aristocratic taste. SCAPA had its imitators in Germany, Austria and France, all of which introduced legislation comparable to The Advertisements Regulation Act, 1907. See Cyril Sheldon, *A History of Poster Advertising. Together with a Record of Legislation and Attempted Legislation Affecting Outdoor Advertising* (London, Chapman & Hall, Ltd.), 1937.
30. Hedley F. Le Bas, 'Advertising for an Army', Sir Hedley Le Bas (ed.), *The Lord Kitchener Memorial Book* (London, New York, Toronto, Hodder & Stoughton), undated, unpag.
31. W.J. Reader, *At Duty's Call. A Study in Obsolete Patriotism* (Manchester,

Manchester University Press), 1988, p. 96.

32. Howard Bridgewater, *Advertising or the Art of Making Known*, London, Sir Isaac Pitman, undated, p. 1.
33. See Nicholas Hiley, '"KITCHENER WANTS YOU" and "Daddy, what did YOU do the the Great War?" The myth of British recruiting posters', *Imperial War Museum Review*, 11, date?, pp. 40–58.
34. H.G. Wells, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, Cassell and Company, Ltd.,'1916, p. 238.
35. Ibid., p. 282.
36. J.M. Winter, 'Nationalism, The Visual Arts, and the Myth of War Enthusiasm in 1914', *History of European Ideas*, 15:1–3, pp. 359–60.
37. W.E. Henley, *Lyrica Heroica*, 1891, quoted in W.J. Reader, 1988, p. 54.
38. See IWM PST 5111, 11970.
39. Reginald Arkell, 'Humour as Usual. The Man Who Drew "the Funniest Picture of the War"', *The Billposter*, February 1915.
40. Reader, *At Duty's Call*, p. 58.
41. The advertisement sported the verse: 'When the battle had been won, / Tommy Atkins bagged a Hun; / Tried to swop his ugly catch / For a CRAYOL and a match. / But, alas, his fellow fighter / Said he didn't want the blighter!'
42. The iconography stretched to product endorsement in a show card for Smith's Glasgow Mixture which carried a cut-out of Piper Laidlaw of the 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers'. While on behalf of Player's Weights cigarettes a sailor rides a donkey on a beach identified by the black manservant as somewhere in Africa. Nestle's ran a similar campaign for tinned milk, see IWM PST 13670, 10791.
43. See IWM PST 11940
44. A show card for Hignett's S.D.V. cigarettes carried the slogan 'A Transport of Joy' and an illustration of soldiers in the back of a truck with the number plate U BI SDV. Similar iconographies were employed by Bigg's Shag; WD & HW Wills Golden Bar Tobacco and Studio cigarettes which showed a Tommy and a *Poilu* under the caption 'A Lesson in English. If you can say please give me Studio cigarettes that's all you need to know!'
45. See IWM PST 10805
46. C.E. Montague, *Disenchantment* (London, Evergreen Books), 1940, p. 81.
47. *Punch or the London Chaviari*, 18 July, 1917, p. 7.
48. See IWM PST 13244
49. 'The clean, chivalrous fighting instincts of our gallant soldiers reflect the ideals of our business life. The same characteristics which stamp the British Tommy as the CLEANEST FIGHTER IN THE WORLD have won equal repute for British Goods.'
50. Yet home tasks have still to be performed in spite of war. An invasion by dirt is the last thing the British Housewife would submit to. So she diligently keeps the home clean and cheerful-looking with HUDSON'S SOAP. Our gallant Soldiers sing as they pass by. Sadness is left behind them; but even sadness has nothing in common with sloth; so Hudson's Soap is busy keeping the cottage clean throughout – the Clothes Fresh and Fragrant – The Tables and

Floors Spotless – the China and Glassware Sparkling.'

51. To sleep between sheets washed with Hudson's Soap is indeed a great joy. They are so wondrously clean and refreshing. Their snowy whiteness, like a slumber song, induces peaceful repose. When our brave lads return home there is nothing they will enjoy more than the simple joy of getting between clean sheets once again. Those who use Hudson's Soap are great believers in 'HOME, SWEET HOME."
52. See IWM PST 13680
53. See IWM PST 13679
54. Drawings for the campaign were signed by S.G.

6

# Poster design in France, Germany and Austria-Hungary

In France under the Third Republic, state controls on billposting were slackened in favour of giving greater control to the owners of properties, walls and fences where posters were likely to be displayed. Only public buildings, Morris columns[1] and hoardings remained under the control of the government and local authorities. Before the outbreak of hostilities, outdoor advertising had become so prevalent in the cities along communication routes and out into the countryside that it attracted criticism from conservative groupings in French society and new controls were introduced, resulting in higher taxes being levied according to the size of the posters. Paradoxically, for those opposed to outdoor advertising, the state was keen to promote it because of the tax revenues. Taxation aside, legislation was comparable to that in Britain and many of the German principalities, and was designed to prevent the violation of the countryside. The poster designs had to be registered with the office of the commune where they were to be displayed, along with details of the advertiser and billposter, size, the number to be printed and locations.[2] In Paris, posters proliferated to make a sensual contribution to the cityscape and conservative Catholics such as Maurice Talmeyr, quoted in Kirk Varnedoe's *High & Low*, bemoaned the poster's lack of moral purpose or higher aim: '[It] does not say to us: "Pray, obey, sacrifice yourself, adore God, fear the master, respect the king ...". It whispers to us: "Amuse yourself, preen yourself, feed yourself, go to the theatre, to the ball, to the concert, read novels, drink good

beer".'[3] And so on. However, with the German invasion some twenty years later, posters found a serious purpose in national, charitable and humanitarian cause. Like the war poster in Britain, they were relatively modest in size and designers overwhelmingly abandoned the light-hearted and decorative precedent of Jules Chéret, for the serious-minded dual heritage of the social concerns of Honore Daumier and the authority of classical and realist tradition. Apart from the intensity of the hyperbolic visual rhetoric, very few French war loan and charity posters, for example, were indebted to contemporary styles or the scale of the commercial advertising poster.

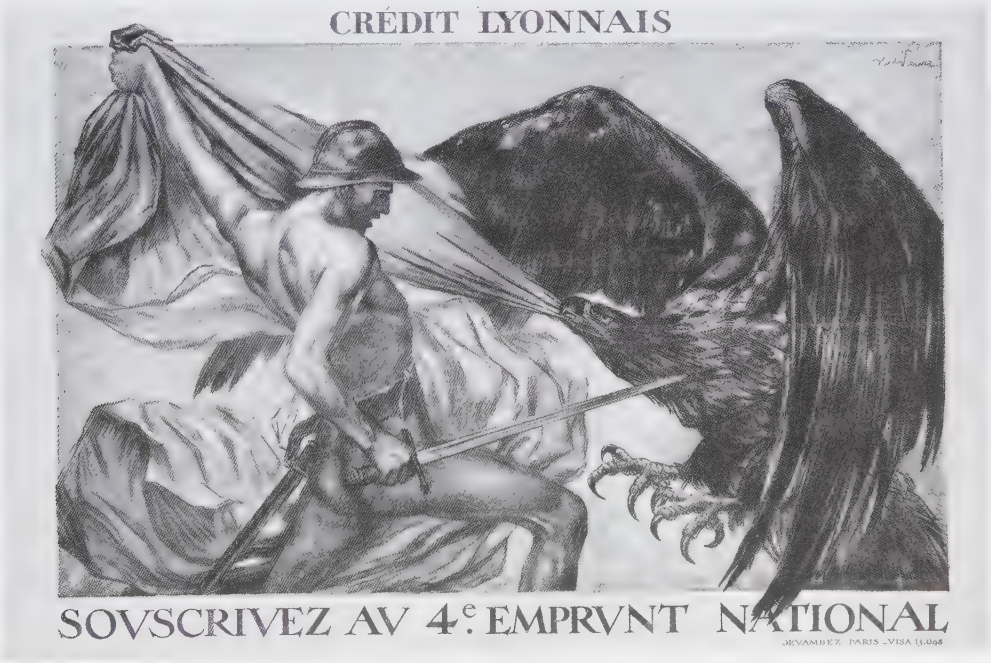
To generalise, the design of war posters owed little to the professions of the commercial artist or advertising. Advertising agents tended to be space brokers, and had no part to play in writing advertising copy, carrying out market research, or organising campaigns.[4] Instead, professional artists were employed directly or through established lithographic studios and printing houses such as Maurice Neumont Studios and Devambez Printers, which carried out a huge number of poster commissions for the government, war loans and charities. To be an *affichiste* was just one aspect of what it meant to be a professional and academically trained artist. If the Salon provided an avenue for genre painting, history painting, mythological and biblical themes, commissions for decorative schemes for interiors, illustrations for literary editions, and cartoon and caricature for humorist publications were just as likely. Georges Scott worked for the French Army for the duration. Maurice Neumont gained a reputation for political propaganda posters. The 'friend of the disinherited', Théophile Steinlen, engaged social themes. Many, such as Jules Abel Faivre, were 'generalists'. They pursued authorial, rather than design aims and used high art conventions and illustrational styles derived from eighteenth-century classicism and nineteenth-century realism. In relation to this it is worth noting that the majority of artists employed in the production of war posters were in mid-career and had been academically trained in the last twenty years or so of the nineteenth century. As a result, the aesthetic advances made by commercial artists and the avant-garde at home and abroad had no place in their visual rhetoric, still less the techniques of the advertising man.


46 Jacques Carlu 1917, Passer-by! Do Your Full Duty ... If I Avoided Mine, What Would You Call Me?

Jacques Carlu's poster 'Passerby! ...' illustrates the Parisian poster scene: on the wall are Third National Loan posters by SEM, Georges Redon, Faivre, Auguste Leroux and Chavannaz (figure 46). Typically, they are lithographs rendered with a realist, if sometimes sentimentalised naturalism, their subjects reaching from the domestic and the agricultural to the allegorical. Stereotypically, they embody transcendent national purpose through the family, the land and abstract ideals of liberty. Occasionally, posters knowing of the discourse of popular commercial culture are self-reflexive. The soldier addresses the viewer and the War Loan posters behind him. A poster by Lucien Jonas depicts a bourgeois couple studying a War Loan poster in the street to draw the spectator into the scene,[5] while the anonymous 'Hey there! Good people ...' (plate 24), owes something to British design in its direct address, and the use of flat colour planes in a modern and legible composition.

Usually they are steeped in allegory and support a battle of symbols similar to the illustrations of Louis Raemaekers and Will Dyson in

Britain. To the contemporary eye, many of the designs range from the sublime to the ridiculous: the German imperial eagle is slaughtered by a French warrior wearing only the French flag, and a '*Poilu*' throttles it like a farmyard chicken. Some, no less politically charged, or apparently absurd – a dignified and classical Marianne squashes the German imperial eagle with a cannon – were aimed at the financial and mercantile classes, and drew on a classical style imbued with the seriousness and the high bourgeois cultural capital appropriate to the war and their station (figures 47–48, plate 25). Both classicism and realism had the gravitas to carry the weight of the seriousness of the war for the propagandists and their public. Posters for products, which used the war as an advertising strategy, also conformed to this symbolic rhetoric. In the poster for the cleaning product Le Coq, Gaulois, aided by the republican cock General Clemenceau, prepares to douse a captured German officer with a bottle of disinfectant.[6] The patriotic public were addressed consistently as citizens with national, republican, democratic and socialist credentials, not as potential consumers, efficient workers or imperial subjects. Even




47 Jules Faivre, 1918, Subscribe to the Fourth National Loan

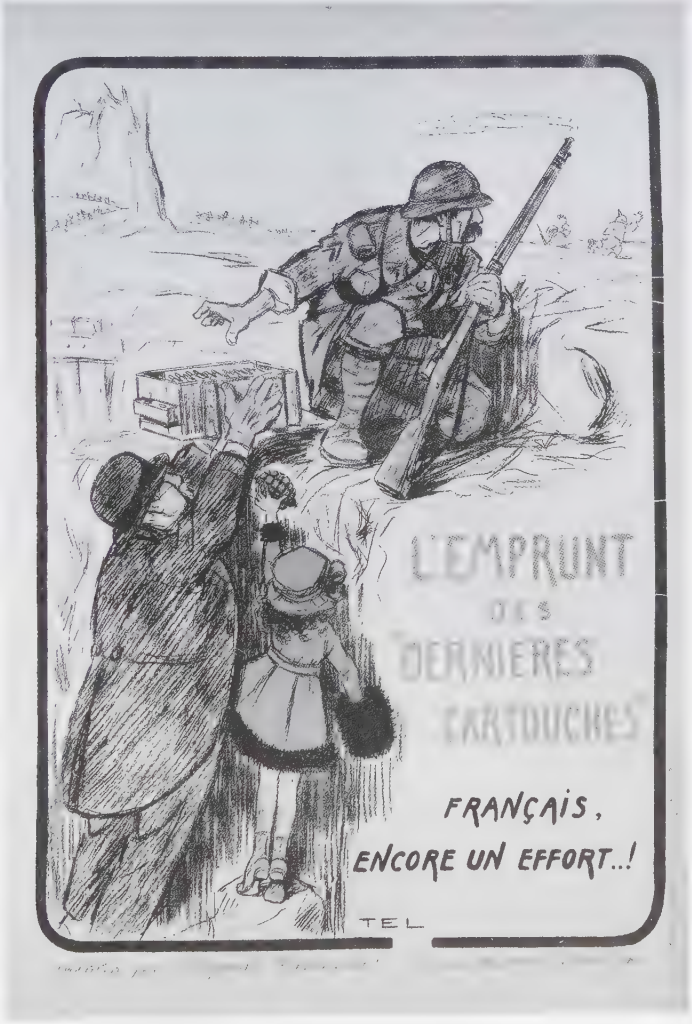

48 Maurice Neumont, 1916, Five Percent French Loan 1916. Subscribe for Victory on its Way and the Final Defeat

typographical posters commonly boasted the red, white and blue of the revolutionary tricolour.

The invasion of French territory provoked *L'Union Sacrée*. Class conflict was put in abeyance, elections were suspended, and the trades unions renounced strikes. Conscription had been in place since the Franco-Prussian war and was not an issue. Traditionally at odds with the secular Republican order, the church proselytised for a just and sacred war and the intellectuals saw it as a crusade for classical civilisation against Teutonic barbarism. France was politically divided, but the

coalition style of the centre-left Third Republic guaranteed a unified front as the demands of the war increased the role of the state in the economy, industry, labour, education and the media. All printed material, including posters, came under the jurisdiction of the French Press Commission and the uniformity of the symbolic language reflects the consistency of the *L'Union Sacrée*. Something of the memory of its impact is portrayed in a poster by Tel as it urged the people not simply to donate money but to put their efforts into one last effort (figure 49).

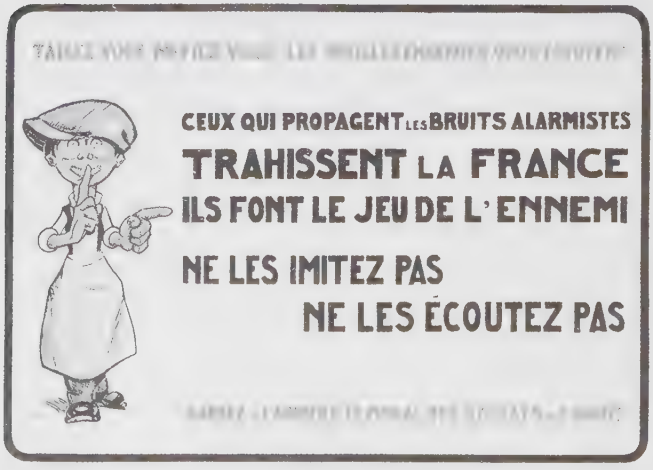
Anti-German feeling had been growing in the months leading up to the invasion and Christian Delporte recounts how in the winter of 1914




49 Tel, 1918. The Loan for the 'Last Cartridges'. People of France, Make One More Effort!

nationalist opinion focused on the dangers of espionage when posters, illustrated with a caricature of a German soldier wearing a spiked helmet, warned French soldiers to be careful because German spies were listening. On the home front Alexandre Millerand, the Minister for War, published an order on 29 October 1915 to post bills in all public transport with the words, 'Watch Out. Enemy Ears are Listening to You'. These public information efforts ridiculed the enemy and harangued the people to be on their guard and they took an approach derived from commercial popular culture and the tradition of the caricature. One example by Has deployed a straightforward marketing strategy reminiscent of Bert Thomas' humorous representation of a Tommy in the cartoon drawing of a French worker with his finger to his lips (figure 50). With an efficiency the British could only envy with their haphazard distribution system, one hundred thousand *affiches* were posted in the Metro, on the trains, trams, and in station waiting rooms and other public spaces: 'Eventually no-one setting foot in town could be unaware of their existence. They haunted daily life, and became so famous that they were sometimes used as slogans for commercial advertising.'[7] As in Britain, but to a lesser extent, propaganda and advertising coalesced to galvanise the public and prepare the ground for the first war loan of November 1915.

The French were aware of the early successes of German foreign propaganda, especially in the occupied territories, and quickly established




50 Has, 1915, Watch Out. Enemy Ears are Listening


Plate 23 Maurice Neumont, 1918, They Shall Not Pass!


**Plate 24** Anon., 1916, Hey There! Good People ... Pour Forth Your Gold. We are Spilling Our Blood


Plate 25 H. Falter, For the Supreme Effort. National Loan


**Plate 28** Alfonse Lelong, Private Bank. Subscribe to the Reconstruction Loan


**Plate 29** Béatrix Grognuz, Keep Silver and Copper Coins Circulating. Useful for Our Trade


**Plate 30** F.L. Barbier, For Your Country Pay Out Your Gold


**Plate 31** Jean Droit, 1917, Standing in the Trench Lit Up by Dawn, the Soldier Dreams of Victory and his Home … Subscribe to the Third National Defence


**Plate 32** G. Clairin, For Our Country. Subscribe to the Loan


Plate 33 Charles D. Fouqueray, 1917, African Army and Colonial Troops Day


51 Georges Capon and Georges Dorival, 1917, Tuberculosis Must be Vanquished like the Most Malignant of Reptiles

the Union of Major French Associations Countering Enemy Propaganda. The Maurice Neumont Studios provided material for the campaign and published posters such as 'They Shall Not Pass!' warning of a false peace proposal from the treacherous Germans (plate 23), as well as anti-pan-German posters used to illustrate lectures given throughout the country. Georges Capon and Georges Dorival executed a number of designs through poster agents for the American Committee for Tuberculosis Prevention in France that adopted the highly effective strategy of demonising the Germans by identifying them with disease. What was particularly interesting about some of these posters was the way they aped the German design strategy of the object poster in the depiction, for example, of a clenched fist in the act of throttling a German snake representing illness (figure 51).

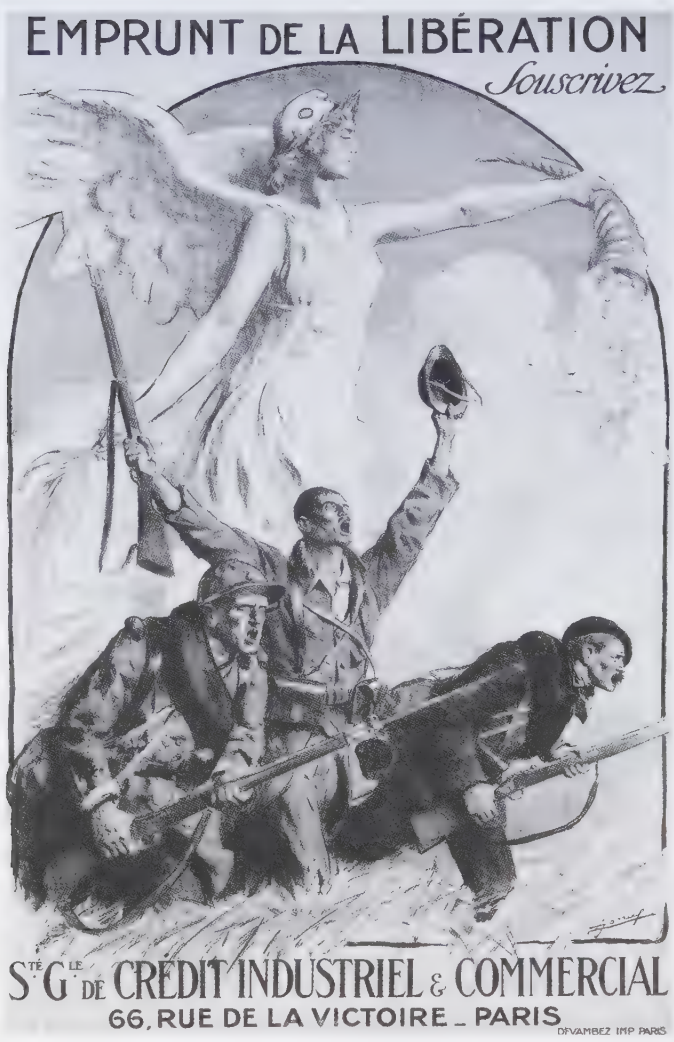
Almost exactly contemporaneously to the Bolsheviks in Russia,[8] the French rallied the rhetoric of the French Revolution not to the communist

revolution, but the national cause, patriotism and republicanism. The French Revolution was fixed as the event around which the past, present and future was made intelligible. It stood for motherland and liberty and its opponents were tyranny and despotism. As Michael Moody forcefully argues, the figures of Liberty, the Republic, Marianne, Victory and the French peasant woman were readily conflated in allegories of the Motherland and national re-birth in the poster campaigns for the War Loans (figures 52, 53, 54, plates 26, 27, 28).[9] The wall posters were


52 SEM, 1916, For Victory Subscribe to the National Loan. Subscriptions are Accepted in Paris and the Provinces at the National Credit Bank

just a part of a campaign incorporating proclamations, *l'image d'Epinal* aimed at children, certificates, and small posters for interior display. Larger illustrated posters were put up in the streets on the Morris columns, in banks and post offices. They were also used as active agents of propaganda, providing visual aids in schools and at public meetings where the state sanctified version of history promoted republican values, *L'Union Sacrée* and the return of territories of Alsace Lorraine lost in the Franco-Prussian war of 1871. The French authorities, like the German,


53 Auguste Leroux, 1918, To Hasten Victory and to be Reunited with Us Soon Subscribe!




54 Lucien Jonas, Liberation Loan - Subscribe. General Company of Industrial and Commercial Credit

took the response to the war loans as a measure of public opinion. Jean-Jacques Becker establishes convincingly that morale was firm, if unenthusiastic until 1917, when *L'Union Sacrée* collapsed under the weight of labour disputes over wages and widespread resentment born of a sense of inequality of sacrifice, which had led to mutinies at the front. Simultaneously, the government promoted its largest poster campaign in November 1917.

The rhetoric of revived republicanism and moral right was part of a deliberate propaganda effort, orchestrated in large part through the

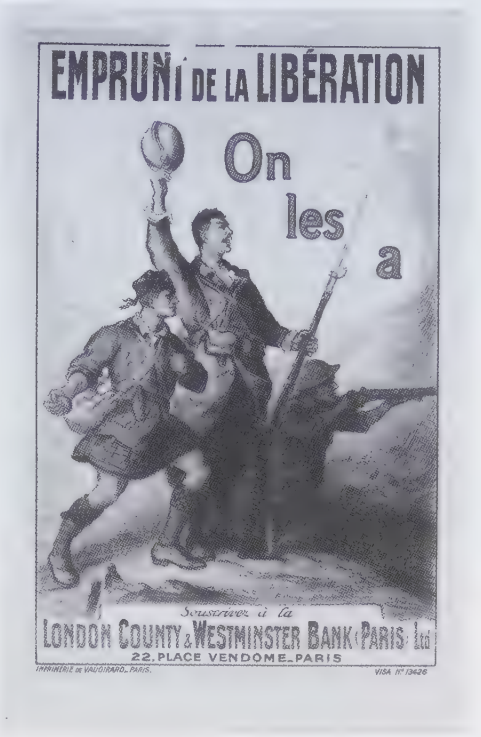
state-controlled education system. Becker describes how the education minister, Albert Serrault, instructed teachers: 'To recall the "noble memory" of the dead; to explain to pupils the "causes of the war", "the unprovoked aggression", "France the eternal champion of progress and justice ..." ... And this from the first lesson of the day, so that a "manly attitude" be imprinted on the mind of pupils, on "citizens of tomorrow".'[10] Schools were centres for the organisation and collection of the loans[11] and they were the subject of scholarly exercises, French composition and drawing lessons in the hope that the message would reach the families.[12] The political was conflated with the financial in what was thought to be high patriotic acts in the schools and the universities. On the launch of the first loan, teachers were given a six-point plan and had to read out a speech by Alexandre Ribot: 'The public will have read it as it has been posted everywhere, but reading the poster by oneself in the street is necessarily superficial and provokes few emotions. It must be read with feeling, in an atmosphere of patriotic communion and with a fervour that will stress its principal points.'[13] Teachers then reported back to the ministry on their activities. The curriculum was overhauled to make sure the right message was put across, and a series of posters by Prouvé, for example, were published for display and instruction. They told of the heroic lives and deaths of French servicemen, often themselves former teachers and the values of honour and sacrifice they had learned in school (figure 55). The centrality of the schools to the French propaganda effort is further illustrated by the series of posters designed by children for the French Union National Wartime Providence and Savings Committee, many of which have a direct and designed quality absent from the posters executed by professional artists (figure 56, plate 29).

Among adults, censorship by the government was deemed the most effective strategy for shaping opinion. If bad news and casualty reports were suppressed, the press on its own initiative praised French courage and condemned German ignominy. Badly equipped, cruel, demoralised and decimated Germans were regularly pitted against the superior material and moral qualities of the French soldier (plate 30). Becker observes the rhetoric was regarded by many as 'eyewash', defined by Michael Baumont as: 'optimistic lies about military operations; childish

denigration of the enemy; an idyllic presentation of life in the trenches' with the 'exaltation of an army permanently frozen in a fixed heroic gesture'. Baumont quotes Charles Delvert, a history teacher who had seen active service who lambasts a journalist from the *Echo de Paris*: 'How


55 V. Prouvé, 1918, How They are Writing History. My Dear Children, This is How it Was ...


56 G. Douanne, Let's Look After the Farmyard. I'm a Fine War Hen. I Don't Eat Much and I Produce a Lot




57 Firmin Bouisset, 1918, Liberation Loan. We've Got Them. Subscribe at the London County and Westminster Bank

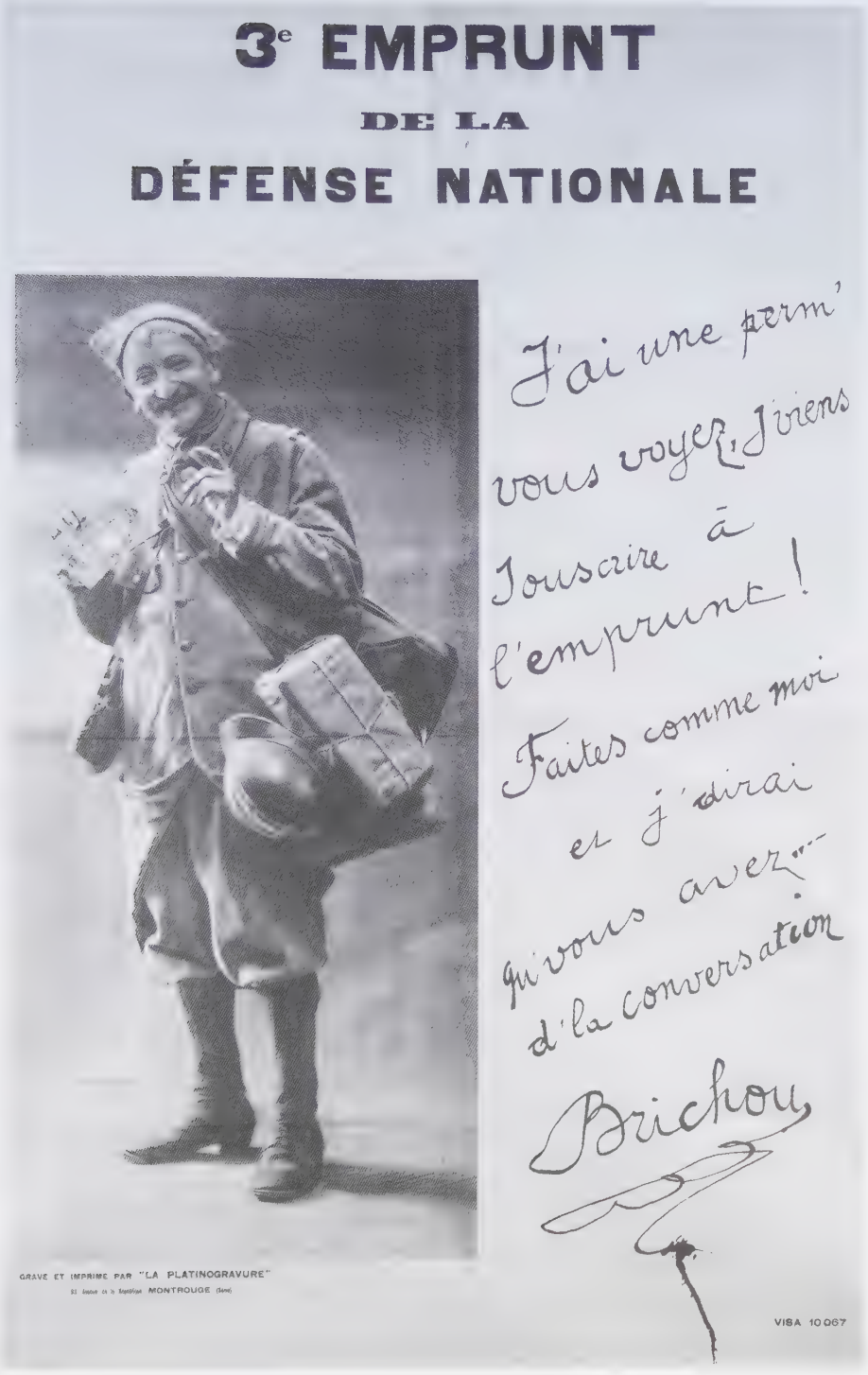
does she picture us combatants? Does she really believe we spend our time brandishing great swords with heroic gestures and yelling "*Vive la France*!" at the tops of our voices? When will these ladies and gentlemen in civilian life spare us their fantasies?'[14] For the purpose of the loan posters, the French were often seen alone or in heroic concert with their allies (plate 31, figure 57). The etymology of the term 'eyewash' might suggest it found its origins in the spectacle of the War Loan posters.

The most romantic expressions of battle were reserved for posters produced in aid of the contributions to the war from the colonies of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Typically, these non-white French troops were depicted as primitive, savage and horde-like (plates 32, 33). Engaged in actions not entirely appropriate to trench warfare, they are ferocious enough to have them on your side, but in their indiscipline and exotic difference they are set apart from the French nation. Interestingly, many


58 A. Grebel, Hey, Lads! Sparkling Wines from Augendre, Atelier Grebel, Paris

of these spectacular designs were produced with the express purpose of being sold to collectors and the public to help raise funds.

The nature of the poster meant that artists were not likely to confront the realities of the front, although clarion calls and flashing sabres were more conducive to the image of the war on the streets, as the war progressed just cause was preserved in realist depictions of soldiers. The popular print was far more graphic and posters advertising *Salut! C'est Verdun*, a selection of illustrations reprinted from *L'Almanac Vermot*, 1917, for example, shows the carnage. In the interests of propriety and




59 M. Kivatizky, 'I'm on Leave ...'

public morale, the censor did not allow these advertisements to be posted outdoors.[15]

The widespread depiction of the blind heroism of France's crusade is matched by an emphasis on the common soldier, and demotic images of the '*Poilu*' express solidarity with the ordinary citizen who was bearing the brunt of the war. To a certain extent British government recruiting and war loans posters appropriated the language of commercial popular culture and shared in the wider discourse of advertising. Bert Thomas' 'Tommy' and his progeny's light-hearted anti-heroism successfully accommodated both cynicism and anxiety in ways that posters of the French '*Poilu*' only sometimes emulated in drinks advertising (figure 58)


60 Auguste Leroux, 1917, Third National Defence Loan. Subscribe. For France Which is Fighting! For the Girl Growing Up Every Day

and the highly unusual photogravure poster for the Third Loan, 'I'm on leave, you see, I'm coming to subscribe to the loan!' (figure 59).

France was predominantly an agricultural society and the image of the peasant predominates. Common Soldiers' Day is a case in point. Aimed at raising funds for the troops at the front, the posters are not always sentimental and hyperbolic and demonstrate a preference for heroic but nevertheless down to earth, democratised and humanised visions of the soldier's lot (figures 59, 62). We see the father hugging his daughter (figure 60) or a loving couple caught in tight embrace (figure 61). Invasion threatened not simply the national family but the joy of life itself. In these images the fate of the nation was made less generic and


61 Adolfe Leon Willette, The Common Soldier's Day. Alone at Last ...!


62 Théophile Steinlen, 1915, The Common Soldier's Day

grandiose and is tied to the fate of the individual in ways unique to the French poster.

At war's end strident images of French building workers can be found promoting charities engaged in rebuilding the devastated regions and helping the civilian population,[16] but in general posters were far more likely to feature sentimentalised representations of displaced families, orphaned children and widows (figures 63, 64). As victims of the war,


63 Riom, 1917, Army Orphanage, Their Fathers have Died so that France may be Free

their visual rhetoric was broadly comparable to that reserved for the wounded and prisoners of war and was designed to elicit the maximum amount of sympathy from the wider public.[17] These posters, conservative in style and reactionary in their representational capacity, reflected the degree to which left-leaning reformism had penetrated French civil society. This stood in vivid contrast to the widespread revolutionary tendencies that manifested themselves at the end of the war in Germany, Austria and Hungary.

The political, social and cultural climate in the Central Powers was very different from Britain or France. Politically, the German parliament or Reichstag was subservient to the Kaiser and his Chancellor and by 1916 they had effectively relinquished power to the military high command of Hindenburg and Ludendorff. Like Kitchener in Britain and Pétain in France, they were popular military heroes and often featured on posters. Socially, a system of state capitalism advantaged the financial and industrial professional middle class while the working class was largely


64 Val Reyre, 1916, Oise Day. 6 February 1916. September 1914 at Senlis. For the War-Stricken

integrated into a benevolent, militarised state with the most advanced social welfare system in Europe. The vote was determined by tax contributions and ensured the predominance of the landed aristocracy or Junkers, who together with wealthy merchants, industrialists and other socially conservative groups resisted any attempt to reform either parliament or the military and bureaucratic elites. Tellingly, David Welch describes Germany as: 'A mass society before it had overcome its feudal past and before the early liberal-individualistic period of early capitalism had created those institutions of self-government and ideas of liberty which makes possible the existence of a mass society capable of organising for the collective defence of their interests as free men.'[18]

The belief that European war was inevitable was widespread and the elite saw it as a potential solution to the problem they diagnosed when in 1912 one third of the electorate voted socialist. According to David Welch, the military wanted a quick victory in a war of defence to ensure

political acquiescence. A carefully orchestrated anti-Russian campaign conjured the *Burgfrieden*, literally Fortress Peace, contained a fragile consensus between the left and liberal-leaning urban classes and the nationalist and militarist elites. The euphoric sense of national unity was challenged to a certain extent by anti-war demonstrations in the cities. But overall, a social romanticism defined the people as a superior ethnic entity undivided by class interest in a fictitious *Volksgemeinschaft* or National Community. In its reference to historical and national myth, it paralleled *L'Union Sacrée* in France, but there the comparison ends, as it constructed individuals as ethnically superior pan-Germanic imperial subjects rather than republican citizens.

A state of siege was declared at the end of July 1914 and the Reich was divided into Bavaria and 24 military districts. These broadly corresponded to the old pre-unification principalities and traditional rivalries thrived, especially in the field of print culture. Artists frequently moved between Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Munich, Frankfurt am Main, Cologne, and Dusseldorf, and crossed national boundaries to Prague, Vienna and Budapest. In Vienna, the Weiner printing house monopolised the market for outdoor advertising and published the work of Theodor Zasche, Alfred Offner and Heinrich Lefler, among others. Berlin boasted the printing house Hollerbaum and Schmidt with its stable of artists including Lucien Bernhard, Hans Erdt, and Julius Gipkens, all of whom were normally expected to take responsibility for the total design of the posters. As printers willing take on the graphic identity and entire campaigns for companies, they were extremely influential in an environment where advertising agencies were not strongly in evidence and where the handling of posters and press advertisements was mostly carried out by space brokers. There was Dr Hans Sachs who had founded the Association of the Friends of the Poster that, in 1914, had a membership of over 1,200 and was paralleled in England by the London Society of Poster Art, which sponsored an exhibition of German commercial art in England in the summer of 1914. Sachs was a leading figure in the journal *Das Plakat*, an important focus for the debates concerning the poster in Germany. Equally significant were the *Werkbund*'s philosophies of design and production. The *Werkbund* aimed to rescue manufactured objects

from an alienated present for a vision of a utopian future derived from an ideal pre-capitalist era. The debate revolved around the authenticity of craft-based as opposed to standardised mass commercial culture. Interest was high amongst the artistic community and many of the regional capitals possessed Arts and Crafts museums with extensive poster collections. Leipzig, for example, was a centre for publishing and Munich had its own Secession and was associated with Ludwig Hohlwein and the design group *Die Sechs*.[19]

Censorship was strict and poster display concentrated on the Litfass columns,[20] stations, the interiors of railway carriages and trams, and was controlled by the police and the local and military authorities in each of the districts. Generally, sites were owned and chosen by the municipalities. Legislation was aimed at the regulation and proper appearance of public space, social control and the suppression of undesirable political movements, especially the extreme left. The Prussian Police Regulation of 1 August 1899, for example, made explicit and scant reference to the debates about commercial art: 'these police regulations, are limited to the fulfilment of their duties as guardians of public order and supervisors of traffic in public places ... not the welfare of the state and society, much less the aesthetic feelings and interests of certain classes or divisions of the population.'[21]

The columns were reserved for exhibition, tourism and theatre posters, while commercial advertising tended towards singular outdoor signs on commercial enterprises and posters in interiors and window displays. A correspondent for the *The Times* reported in May 1915:

> Notices and posters ... are to be seen all over the country, not only in railway carriages, but on and in public buildings and on the advertisement pillars in the streets. Only in exceptional cases are they displayed on private buildings or private property. As a rule they are part of the state machinery. The language employed is plain and to the point, without verbiage. There is little or no attempt to make these appeals attractive as advertisements. The only exceptions from this bureaucratic rule are the posters of some voluntary associations which make their appeal by methods resembling those of the picturesque advertiser eager to catch the public eye.

> ... every placard has some compelling authority behind it, even though it concern voluntary acts. No flaunting display is needed. The great majority of posters do not shriek at you from the hoardings wherever you turn your gaze, they do not appear in the streets except on special pillars, they are insignificant in appearance and are usually a mere strip of printed paper. You must look for them, they do not look for you; but they are evidently exercising great influence.
>
> This is the tale of the posters in Germany. On coming back to England, I saw how great is the contrast in the art, the display, and the contents of the posters here. They seem to concern a totally different world.[22]

The correspondent shares the stereotype of the urban environment in Britain as brash, vulgar and commercial in contrast to a dignified, responsible and civic Germany. Posters did have an impact on public city space, but it was certainly more regulated than in Britain where the free play of the market and a self-regulated poster trade had a greater influence.[23] Despite the fact that of all the belligerent nations, Germany was industrially the most advanced in 1914 and despite the best efforts of the *Werkbund* to develop the debate, commercial art remained subject to the individuality of the artist and to the wider demands of high bourgeois culture, rather than advertising agencies, and the needs of commodity capitalism and popular culture.[24] This liaison between art and commerce was characterised by the 'art' poster, of which Lucien Bernhard's development of the typographical poster and the *Sachsplakat*, or object-poster, for maximum aesthetic affect, are prime examples.

Taking the lead from the United States, in the years immediately leading up to the outbreak of war, there were limited discussions in the trade press about the relationships between advertising and psychology, and the advent of war propaganda stimulated the debate.[25] Through the activities of the Independent Association for Advertising Art and Science, the trade struggled for respectability and promoted the benefits of publicity. As Sherwin Simmons points out, Paul Rubens envisaged a new role for advertising in tune with the anti-commercial, embryonically anti-Semitic, nationalist and imperial tenor of the time: 'to promote the

greatness and continued existence of the Empire, the honour of dead heroes, the glory of the living – Germany and Austria lead the world'.[26] During the first year of war, only civic authorities and aid societies made use of advertising and for the same reasons as in England, advertising groups lobbied government to professionalise the promotion of the war at home and abroad.

On the outbreak of war, the advertising industry was threatened by a loss of business. Uncertain how to proceed, leading graphic artists such as Ludwig Hohlwein and Lucien Bernhard developed 'war graphics', producing posters and advertisements which positively associated certain products such as Manoli cigarettes and Leibniz biscuits with the war.[27] In so doing, the practice of advertising made plain the relationship between commercial advertising and propaganda. Generally, however, the German establishment was suspicious of advertising and held deeply entrenched prejudices against commercial popular culture. In contrast to Britain, the self-made men of the media allied themselves to the high European anti-modernising and late romantic tastes of the established imperial elites.

In the German districts and in large parts of Austria the military commanders had absolute authority and censorship was strict. Their capricious behaviour gave rise to the resentment that made the military suspicious of the civil authorities and urban populations. The German government had established a network of observation stations under regional Enlightenment Directors, to monitor public opinion, but military attitudes and a warrior ethos prevailed. In July 1914, *Printer's Ink* reported:

> Many examples ... of the autocracy of censorship might be given. The tango, which raged unchecked in London, was in many German cities '*Strengstens polizeilich verboten*', and posters dealing with the subject were banned.
>
> They have borrowed from England and America the idea that advertising should be serious. There are, of course, many press advertisements and posters which aim to catch the eye by sheer freakishness, but the tendency is to make an appeal through beauty of design and sobriety of presentation.[28]

Inevitably the campaigns failed to hit the correct note with the people.[29] The imagery, however striking, may have caught the ambitions of the military, land-owning and industrial classes, but it failed to touch the people and especially the masses in Berlin, Vienna and Budapest, who along with the troops were increasingly paying the physical and psychological price of the war.

Hungary had managed to avoid military rule and in that respect was the closest to the Western Allies. The regulatory framework for billposting was less strict than in Germany or Austria, but civil liberties were suspended, the press was censored and war industries placed under military supervision. In Austria, beyond the emperor Franz Joseph, people were unclear why they were fighting. Most of the country was declared a 'war zone' under martial law and a 'war surveillance office' was responsible for censorship and counter-subversion. The publication of anything unpatriotic or pacifist was banned, including anything of a strong religious, nationalist or socialist nature. The food shortages of 1915 led to the division of Austria into self-sufficient units, leaving Vienna and the cities isolated. With the death of Franz Joseph in 1916 and the difficult winter of 1916–17, his successor Karl began to work for greater civil liberties and independence from Germany.[30] The government produced spectacular propaganda events such as the exhibition in Vienna's Royal Prater amusement park. It featured a reconstructed trench and enemy positions, a Naval play with a representation of a real sea battle with movable, armed warships in water, a giant diorama of Gorizia and the surrounding area after heavy bombardment, all to the accompaniment of military music.[31]

Exhibitions of dioramas, war weapons, relics, graves and art featured strongly in the Central Powers' façade to its people and the posters for these spectacles went through the catalogue of stock patriotic imagery: aeroplanes become imperial eagles in darkly romantic skies, soldiers are heroic in individual combat and the war is symbolised and memorialised with monumental gravity (plates 34, 35, figures 65, 66).[32] Film and newsreel also played an important part in the propaganda machine. In Germany the government secretly commissioned newsreel and propaganda films from private companies. The pattern was repeated


65 Albert Janesch, 1917, Isonzo Exhibition in the Royal Academy of Arts


66 Kruis, 1916, Art exhibition by the Imperial and Royal War Press Headquarters at the War Exhibition in the Kaisergarten

in Austria under the auspices of Sascha Film, where the seriousness of the newsreel was echoed by the pessimism of the posters by Karl Rob (plate 36). By 1918 the German government had expanded into the official sponsorship of feature films with the Picture and Film Office (BUFA) to ensure the production of entertainment for education and Hans Rudi Erdt produced a series of highly effective designs for the film posters (plate 37).[33]

The vocabularies of caricature and cartoon, normally confined to


67 Linge, European Brawling 1914. 'The Guard on the Rhine'

the media of the print and the journal, found a wider circulation in posters in Germany than elsewhere (figure 67). The prospect of American involvement, for example, motivated propagandists to direct their demonising energies against the president Woodrow Wilson in contrast to the sense of historic national purpose emanating from posters published in response to the collapse of the Russian front in 1917 (figures 68, 69). The use of caricature was as much a measure of the determination of the military to get its message across as the symptom of a military psychology that, equally revealingly, relied on posters of campaign maps to articulate the case for war.[34]

In July 1915 bread rationing was introduced in Germany and the first food riots were experienced in the autumn. The War Press Office[35] began a campaign to divert attention from domestic hardship by encouraging


68 Fritz Baldauf (Bd III), 1917, Seventh War Loan


69 Otto Ubbelohde, 1918, The Circle of Enemies is Broken. The Eighth German War Loan is Open!

hatred of the enemy and the British blockade. Stimulated by the success of the Bryce Report in Britain, German counter propaganda listed British Imperial transgressions in Ireland, India, Egypt and South Africa. A favourite symbol of British callousness was the murder of a German U-boat crew by HMS *Baralong* under the cover of the American flag a few months after the sinking of the *Lusitania*.[36] Posters pictured weakness in the face of the English threat in the image of actual deprivation as a future consequence (figure 70), while others imagined entirely fictitious burning cities in visions unrealised until the Second World War.[37]

In 1916 the food situation was exacerbated by the failure of the potato


70 G. Haale, If the Enemy's Hate and Army Win, the Workplaces will Stand Empty

harvest, leading to the so-called 'turnip winter'. Animal feed was diverted for human consumption leading to catastrophic shortages of fodder and the widespread slaughter of animals. A nationwide campaign was launched to gather substitutes such as acorns, beechnuts, potato peelings and vegetable leftovers. Other campaigns encouraged the collection of women's hair, nettles for textiles and metals for war production. A journalist reported in *The Times*:

> For civilians to waste bread is as bad for the soldier to throw away cartridges. This campaign by posters, circulars, and by exhortation in the Press has been accompanied by lectures and educational courses on the means of economising in matters of food even more than in the past ... The advertisement pillars in the streets are usually covered with announcements of this kind. Alongside detailed regulations for a census of copper, issued by a commander of an army corps, stand an announcement from the War Cereals Society enjoining economy in the use of flour and other innumerable appeals ... The public reads these announcements and acknowledges the necessity of complying with them. It feels that it, too, has been mobilised, and the sense of discipline makes the hard times easier to bear. When a man goes to the railway booking office he sees a placard at the level of his eye telling him that it is his patriotic duty to exchange for notes every gold coin he may possess or that may come into his possession. It is the same at the post office.[38]

The aim was to rally the people to the national cause: 'Housewives Help to Win Germany's Struggle for Existence', and 'to defeat the English plan of starving the country into submission', ran two of the slogans. The population was empowered in the belief that it could do something to ameliorate its increasingly dire situation. From the evidence of the posters, they made use of the gamut of techniques available to the advertiser. Psychological appeal was achieved through the depiction of children, the landscape invoked patriotism through nostalgic views of the homeland familiar from travel posters, realism addressed the working classes where the support for socialism was strong, and the advanced technique of the 'object-poster' derived from contemporary advertising

made a direct aesthetic impact (plates 38, 39, 41).[39] In Austria-Hungary, posters relied to a greater extent on the advertising techniques of novelty and surprise to attract attention (figure 71).

In other words, civil campaigns succeeded insofar as they were not subject to the same codes as the highly patriotic propaganda and war loans campaigns with their rhetoric of heroism, history, empire and expansionism. Other domestic campaigns helped establish the capitalist command economy and contributed to the rationalisation of war production in the industrial and agricultural heartlands. Posters instructed farmers to grow crops such as potatoes for food, and sunflowers


71 F. Gareis. Exhibition of Substitute Materials Business Association of Leather Processing Trades


72 Joe Loe, The Only Salvation. Shortage of Housing, Shortages of Food and Coal Threaten Every Unemployed Person with Mouldering in the Mass Grave of the City! So Get Out into the Country and the Small Towns

and poppies for oil (plate 40), to catch oil-rich fish and urged people to move into the countryside to alleviate food and fuel shortages in the cities (figure 72).

These policies failed to prevent civil unrest despite Hindenburg's best efforts, who as a popular hero and the victor of Tannenberg had attempted to mask the introduction of forced civilian labour under a fog of patriotic fervour. The labour market was effectively militarised and all Germans 'including profiteers, agitators and pessimists should be subject to the "time-honoured principle that he who does not work, does not eat"'.[40] Surprisingly, the unions supported these moves: the Patriotic Auxiliary Service Law gave them official recognition, even though it limited freedom of movement and bound them to the war effort. The need to sustain production soon took the form of anti-leftist propaganda. Strikers with legitimate grievances were identified as potential enemies of the state in a strategy that continued under the provisional government and Weimar after the war.[41] All of these policies placed more political power in the hands of the industrialists while the

working population was disadvantaged through inflation and shortages of food and fuel.

Hermann Rickendorf, the advertising director of the *ersatz* coffee manufacturer H. Franck Sohne, together with Lucien Bernhard, and Pischewer an advertising filmmaker, took charge of the fifth Reichsbank War Loan campaign in autumn 1916. Bernhard oversaw the design of all the posters and press advertisements for the campaign in what was seen by leading members of the advertising trade as recognition from a hostile establishment. Unlike the first War Loan, for example, the posters were not restricted to bank interiors. Bernhard's designs aped the form of his object-posters for commerce, although Hans Sachs thought they lacked the 'gripping emotionalism of Allied posters'.[42] Sachs had organised the exhibition of Parliamentary Recruiting Committee posters in Berlin in autumn 1915, where the critics had dismissed them aesthetically, but admitted their emotional impact:

> It is well known that the most extreme kitsch and false sentimentality are most effective when joined with realistic representation not only in England, not only in the Latin countries, but also even with our masses. The English recruitment posters very consciously turn to these popular sentiments, they represent mawkish scenes, they gossip with the viewer in a homey popular tone or with earthy humour, in short they contain plenty of emotionalism which the expert poster artist, of whom Germans are so proud (not always wisely), completely repudiates.[43]

The strength of the propaganda poster therefore lies in its popular appeal: its effect on the collective psychology as pure pulp fiction. The military, however, never understood the relationships between propaganda, publicity and public opinion and once the certainties of swift victory, unity and the historic mission German *Kultur* dissipated, they were incapable of responding to the real needs of the German people.

In Germany something like 60 per cent of the cost of the war was borne by public subscription to nine war loans. Propaganda campaigns urged participation as a patriotic act and returns were regarded by the

military as a plebiscite for continuing the policy of total war. By 1916, just as the economy went onto a full war footing, support started to decline, small subscribers fell from half to only a quarter of the total. Many hoped a failure of the loan would shorten the war as the campaigns unfolded against a background of crackdowns on the pacifist and revolutionary socialist movements, encouraging the population to 'Hold Out' and to 'Help Us Win'. For the sixth war loan in 1917, regarded by Ludendorff as a success, the military put structures into place for 'patriotic instruction'. Lectures, public meetings and posters put the blame for the war on the enemy and warned the consequences of defeat would be particularly dire for the working classes. The propaganda promoted the belief in final victory, fortitude, duty, national pride and the need for authority, obedience and confidence in the leadership.

Artists were commissioned directly or through the printers by the banks. The derided salesman or advertising agent, identified in the dominant ideology as materialist and probably Jewish, was excluded from the process. Responsibility for the design fell on the artists' cultured and romantically anti-capitalist vision. As established national figures, they held prestigious positions in the academies and schools of art. War loan posters often drew on the 'object-poster', to produce a powerful aesthetic effect, independent of what was perhaps recognised as the declining appeal of figuratively expressed national myth and imperial emblems (plate 41).[44] The posters were extremely popular and received wide distribution beyond the Litfass columns of which there were over one hundred on the Vienna ring alone, for example, and they could be seen on hoardings, fences and other available urban spaces.

The Central Powers' visual rhetoric of 'service' imagined a militaristic and transcendent ancient Germany in mythic iconographies of empire, history and landscape. The posters address the public as imperial and heroic subjects. They are not constructed as prototypical consumers or as efficient well-rested contributors to the war effort as in Britain, or as Republican citizens as in France. The posters defied the lived reality and essential modernity of an industrially advanced society with a relatively well-developed urban working and mercantile and financial middle class. The discourse pitted the authentic and pre-capitalist values of

*Kultur* against modern instrumental *Zivilisation*. *Gemeinschaft* or natural community is set against *Gesellschaft* or alienated society. In posters this was achieved through imperial emblems, chivalric imagery, Gothic script and allusions to the medieval woodcut to conjure memories of Saxon and Teutonic paganism. Albrecht Altdorfer's *Battle of Issus* of 1529 never seems far away in this pre-modern imaginary that made contemporaries in England think of the 'House of Hohenzollern as "warrior-priests" of the ancestral religion of blood and iron',[45] in Prussian fantasies of the 'cult of the Superman, the worship of the human animal, ... conceived in the disordered brain of the anti-Christian German philosopher, Nietzsche'.[46] At the same time, allusions to German romanticism and classicism called to mind a culturally and ethnically identified pre-imperial Germany and 'the lofty-spirited Goethe, the noble-minded Schiller and silvery tongued Heine', all of whom were promoted in the name of Prusso-German militarism and economic dominance.[47] At its heart was an atavistic impulse and in it idealism and materialism found expression in the fact of the war. Allied propagandists diagnosed this *Kultur* in the destruction of the cathedral at Rheims and poster designers, especially in France and Ireland, made consistent reference to it as a measure of its anti-Catholicism, paganism and brutality.[48]

In Austria, the imperial authorities had adopted the visual idiom of the Sezession to give a powerful, dramatic effect far from the naturalism, realism and allegorical flair of the French or the commercial look of British posters. Typically, soldiers are protected by the nation in the figure of Germania (plate 42), or alternatively in medieval costume they stand guard over their families who stand in for the nation (plate 43). Austrian posters especially, make reference to the Alpine landscape where their borders were fought over with the Italians. In Hungarian posters soldiers stand guard in forests in an iconography of vigilance, protection and defence (figure 73). They are the visual equivalent of the dialogue Karl Kraus satirises *In These Great Times* when the war correspondent Alice Schalek reports:

> There he sits as though carved from wood. I think there's even a hint of a twinkle in his eye. The common man, in person ... What emotions are sweeping your soul? Why did I never before the war


73 Oswald Hengst, 1917, Subscribe to the Seventh Austrian War Loan at the Bank for Tirol and Vorarlberg in Innsbruck

> see these splendid figures I now meet every day? ... gripped by the fever of the adventure. Call it patriotism, you idealists; hatred of the enemy, you nationalists; call it sport, you modern men; adventure you romantics; call it blissful strength, you students of mankind – *I* call it liberated humanity![49]

It has to be said these images do not echo the popular iconographies of conflict depicted in British posters and advertisements. They do not belong to the world of *Boys' Own* heroics, they are grimmer, more determined and even pessimistic. In this universe, the sociolologist Werner Sombart contrasted a nation of heroes with a society of


74 Willy Stieborsky, Subscribe to the Sixth War Loan


**Plate 34** Arnold Frutz, Battle Panorama Isel Mountain. For the Benefit of the Widows and Orphans of Tirolese Heroes (Tirolese Emperor's Riflemen). War exhibition


**Plate 35** Moldován Béla 1917, Exhibition of War Planes

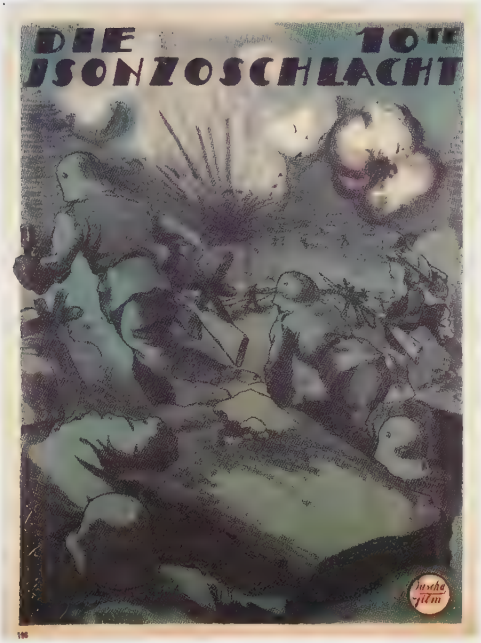



**Plate 36** Karl Rob (Robicek). The 10th Battle on the Isonzo

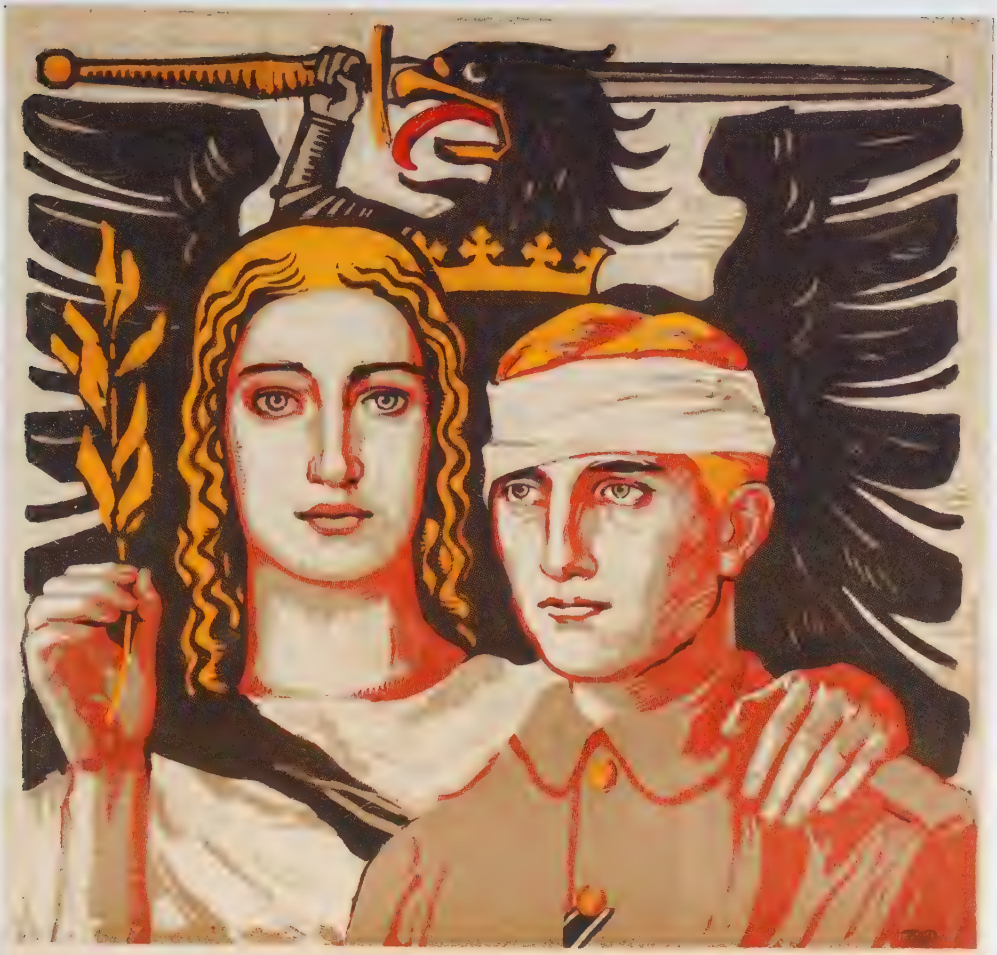

**Plate 37** Hans Rudi Erdt, 1918, Filmposter. With Our Heroes on the Somme


**Plate 38** Jocheim, The German Housewife's Contribution. Give Copper for the Iron in the World War. 1916. The German War Pan. The War Memorial of the German Housewife

**Plate 39** Lina von Schauroth 1915. War Welfare Service. Cigarettes


**Plate 40** Julius Gipkens, Plant Oil!


**Plate 41** Julius Klinger, 1918, 8th War Loan



# Der Versorgungs-Ausschuß für Kriegsinvaliden in der Provinz Westpreußen

hat die Fürsorge für alle westpreußischen Kriegsinvaliden übernommen. Er will ihnen nach der Entlassung aus dem Heeresverbande im wirtschaftlichen Leben weiterhelfen. Jedermann weiß, daß selbstverdientes Brot am besten schmeckt. Wer diese Hilfe annehmen will, möge sich an den leitenden Arzt seines Lazarettes oder an den örtlichen Unterausschuß für Kriegsinvalidenfürsorge wenden, der ihm mit Rat und Tat zur Seite stehen wird.

Bodenstein & Miehlke - Danzig.

Plate 42 T.A.P., 1918, The Support Committee for Disabled Ex-Servicemen


Plate 43 Walter Ditz, 1918, Fatherland, Family, Future


**Plate 44** Béla Moldován, 1918, Subscribe to the War Loan, Help Us in the Fight for Peace!


Plate 45 DDP, July 1915, Lend Your Five Shillings to Your Country and Crush the Germans


**Plate 46** Abel Faivre, 1915, For France Pour Forth Your Gold. Gold Fights for Victory


Plate 47 Anon., Tradespeople! Craftspeople! Subscribe to the War Loan!


Plate 48 Alfred Offner, 1917, Viennese Commercial Bank. Subscribe to the Seventh War Loan


**Plate 49** ID, 1917, National Collection for the Bereaved Families of those who have Died in Action in the War. Exhibition of Art Objects and Valuables on Königsplatz


**Plate 50** Richard Klein, Flag Day, German Red Cross


**Plate 51** Arno Drescher, Blood Sacrifice. Thanks from the Country. Welfare Service for Disabled Ex-servicemen and the Bereaved


**Plate 52** K. Sigrist, 1918, Subscribe to the War Loan


**Plate 53** Paul Neumann, 1918, The Eighth War Loan is the Final Blow


Plate 54 Louis Oppenheim, The German Blacksmith, a Patriotic Play for the Benefit of War Aid Arranged by the Berlin Military Command


**Plate 55** Willy Szesztokat, 1917, Forge the German Sword. Subscribe to the War Loan


Plate 56 Euringer, 1917, Citizens of Cologne! Fulfil Your Most Sacred Duty with the Sixth War Loan


**Plate 57** Freidrich Heubner, The Six, Brothers, Enlist in the 'Reichswehr'


Plate 58 Albert Birkle, Halt – Volunteers Forward!


**Plate 59** Heinz Fuchs, Workers. Hunger, Death Approaches. Strikes Destroy, Work Feeds. Do your Duty, Work


**Plate 60** Paul Helwig-Strehl. 1919, Is This What You Want? Alliance to Combat Communism


**Plate 61** OK. Down with Bolshevism. Alliance to Combat Communism


**Plate 62** Attributed to Manno Militades, They Wash Themselves!

**Plate 63** L. Mitschek, 1920, Vote Christian Socialist!


**Plate 66** J. Sentrein, Liberated Belgium. Belgian State Railways. Yser Louvain Liège Dinant. Visit its Battlefields


**Plate 67** Alfred Leete, June 1919, See the World and Get Paid for Doing It


Plate 68 Mihály Biró, 1920, Vote Social Democratic


75 Alfred Wesemann, Help Us Procure Ploughs and Arms. Subscribe to the Eighth War Loan


76 Josef von Divéky, Sixth War Loan

merchants. The British Empire was controlled by the petty mindedness of the small businessman, while an expansionist Germany of soldiers, peasants and townspeople were bound by spiritual, ethical and historical ideals to defend itself from the Entente's crass materialism (figures 74–76).[50] Sombart's conceit is illustrated in the iconography of coins of the realm in War Loan posters. British and French posters show the enemy crushed by the weight of the Entente's wealth; those from the Central Powers use the coin as a moral shield against aggression (plates 44–48).


77 Edmund May, 1916, Exhibition for Heroes' Graves in East Prussia

As part of a strategy for fund raising, the imperative to memorialise is one largely absent from British and French posters. Exhibitions of 'Heroes' Graves' and art objects, advertised with posters, accompany war loan posters sporting eternal flames in the effort to raise funds for the bereaved in what looks like the beginnings of a death cult in the context of the wider iconography, a kind of visual equivalent to Ernst Jünger's *Storm of Steel* (figure 77, plate 49).[51] Unlike, for example, posters specifically aimed at gaining sympathy for prisoners of war or the wounded and disabled (plate 50), the bereaved are not portrayed


78 Ludwig Hohlwein, Exhibition of Work by German Prisoners of War Interned in Switzerland

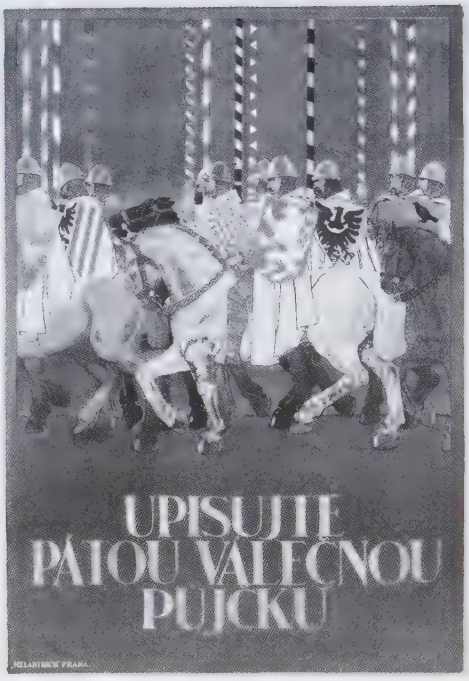
in abjection, they are not even present. Instead, the posters suggest the blood sacrifice associated with peace and the promise of ultimate, if metaphysical victory. Either way, the connection between heroism, sacrifice, blood, iron and soil is forcefully made in an imaginative world where the eagle would always fly over the dove (plates 51 52).

One of the devices for attracting support for the war loans schemes was the creation of 'iron nail' memorials where the Iron Cross was outlined in nails purchased by the public to symbolise the strength of the national will.[52] According to Allen J. Frantzen the symbolism of iron is Janus-faced. Simultaneously iconic of German *Kultur* and industrialism it was both archaic and modern and captured the idealism and materialism of the German ideology. It looked backwards to the origins of Christendom in the nails of the cross and to medieval chivalry and crusading knighthood in the breastplate and the sword and looked forward to German industrial progress based on iron and steel production (figure 78, plates 53–55).[53]

Messianic philosophers such as Fichte through their interpretations of Schopenhauer, Schelling and Kant provided the ground for a conception of the Hero and the worship of the state. In realms of moral freedom and purity of the soul they promoted German genius, and redemption in sacrifice in the name of the German nation. Championed by the military authorities, this kind of Wagnerian mythic imagery made for impressive-looking posters, but there is little evidence they had much influence on the wider public. The war workers on the home front were far more concerned about shortages of food and fuel than they were about high cultural literary allusions, or the grandiose rhetoric of the crusade of ethnically and spiritually superior German *Kultur* against a racially inferior and materialistic Latin civilisation.

This current of Teutonic medievalism was also adopted in Austria, Hungary and the Czech lands, although it is tempting to read in the iconography and heraldry an implicit Slav nationalism independent of the dominant pan-Germanism (figures 79, 80). The Allies were even less convinced. Howard van Dusen's 'Knights of the Air' shows Kaiser Wilhelm boasting to Hindenburg about 'My German heroes' as German planes bomb Red Cross hospitals.[54]


79 V. Karpellus, 1917, Seventh War Loan. J. Weiner, Vienna IWM PST 0505




80 Hanuš Svoboda, 1916, Subscribe to the Fifth War Loan

In Germany, Hindenburg's labour policies guaranteed women entered the workplace on a large scale, but paradoxically, her image was largely confined to the allegorical figure of Germania. In the body of a medieval woman, she embodies a historical myth of the nation and the nation as mother. Like Marianne she often carries the attributes of abundance, but unlike her she is never in battle or caught in mortal struggle. Often she is a figure of stability and wealth, advocating the collection of precious metals and jewellery to fund the war effort. Her image addresses on the one hand, the responsibility of women on the home front as providers of emotional sustenance, and on the other, an ideal of beauty to represent the essential character of the nation. After the war she retains her status but the emphasis moves from an abstract ideal to the power found in universal suffrage and the drive to get people to vote (figures 81, 82).

The U-boat campaign was widely publicised in newsreel, film and posters in Germany and, especially, Austria-Hungary (plate 56, figure 84). The advanced technology of the submarine, like that of the aeroplane, conveyed the spirit of man and machine locked in mortal combat with the enemy and the elements. It was a glamorous and chivalric antidote to the dreary and all too frequently fatal routine of trench warfare. It was virtually the only parallel to the British and Empire use of war technology as an invocation of modernity,[55] although the imperative was different and ideologically appealed to a warrior myth. The U-boat propaganda was aimed at raising morale as much as funds and the authorities made the claim that unrestricted submarine warfare would bring England to her knees, ignoring the danger of precipitating America's entry into the war. 'Freedom of the Seas' was the one slogan the German propagandists had come up with that had some success in promoting anti-British feeling


81 Ivi Diez, Pax. Gold Beats Iron


82 Paul Elsas, Germany's Future Lies in Your Hands! Propaganda Stuttgart. German Women, Join the German Democratic Party!

in neutral countries and it was discussed in August 1917 at the War Press Office conference on propaganda: 'We have not succeeded at all. The only successful slogan we have is "Freedom of the Seas!"'[56] Ironically, in Britain, David Wilson, never one to miss a chance of promoting anti-German sentiment, successfully appropriated the slogan and the dominant romanticised style in an anti-German poster showing the cost in human life (figure 83).


83 David Wilson and WFB, Freedom of the Seas, Der Seas Vos All Free Now! You Can Go Vere You Tam Please!


84 Anon., The U-Boat Hero

The early victories in 1914–15 had stimulated plans from right-wing quarters for territorial domination and annexation in Belgium, Northern France and Russia and in the summer of 1917 disastrous conditions at home precipitated by food shortages and labour strikes inspired the government to intensify its propaganda to promote its policy of victory, annexation and German supremacy. It was an attempt to unify the population when resentment at the privileged and powerful for the inequality of sacrifice was at its height. Following these policies Wolfgang Kapp and Admiral von Tirpitz, with the support of industrialists and the traditional conservative land-owning Junkers classes in East Prussia

founded the *Vaterlandspartei* in September 1917. On the recommendation of the Bavarian War Ministry, which had looked to the example of England where 'Entire houses had been covered with War Loan Posters',[57] Kapp decided to employ commercial advertising techniques and the art poster in particular in the promotion of *Gemeinschaft* to attack the Allies and the pacifist groupings within the Social Democratic Party.

The *Vaterlandspartei*'s policies led to a delay in agreeing peace terms on the Russian front and a wave of strikes swept the country. To help restore workers' confidence in the government, posters were specifically

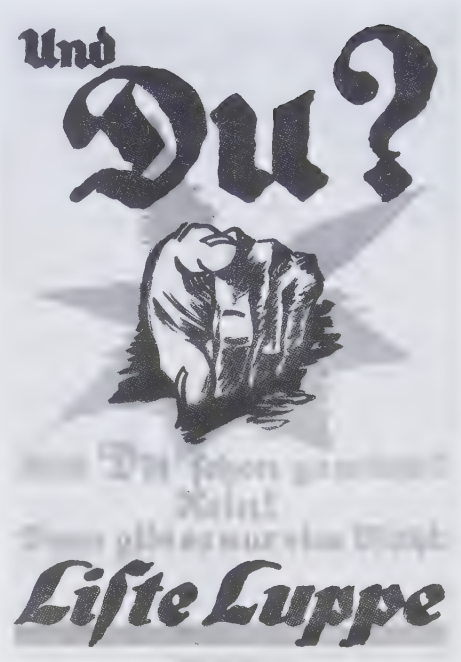

85 Walther Gasch, Our Border Riflemen to the Defence of the Country

aimed at their leaders. Alexander Cay, for example, produced a poster showing a German soldier, representing patriotism and government, shaking hands with a munitions' worker representing organised labour, with the caption 'Through Work to Victory! Through Victory to Peace!' The German Communist Party published a visual riposte to the design in realist style under the slogan 'This is how the worker defends his borders! Proletarians of all countries unite!' It was one of the first shots of what was to become a spectacular war of posters as the country descended into revolutionary chaos.[58]

At the cessation of hostilities the Imperial German Army returned to a defeated and chaotic Germany. The new Weimar Republic was faced with the unfamiliar need to recruit volunteer regiments to the *Reichswehr*.[59] Often formed from the *ad hoc* anti-communist *Freikorps* or Volunteer Corps, they saw service in the Baltic and defended the republic against Polish territorial incursions in the East. The recruiting drive was regional and adopted the imagery of the War Loan campaigns, showing rugged and dynamic soldiers in postures of defiant defence (figure 85, plate 57). Some of the more advanced designs, however, seized upon the example of the British and American recruiting poster, producing versions of Alfred Leete's 'Your Country Needs You' to address the viewer directly in simple and dramatic designs (plate 58, figures 86, 87). The iconography was also picked up by the new authorities in their determination to encourage the people to vote and lend legitimacy to Weimar.

According to Ida Katherine Rigby,[60] with the end of Wilhelmine censorship in the two months leading up to the German elections in January 1919 and despite the paper shortages, a politically unstable situation brought about a deluge of political posters onto the streets. Rigby quotes from an article in *Das Plakat* by Ernst Carl Blauer, 'The paper flood rose ever higher, Berlin's streets rioted in colour orgies, the houses exchanged their gray face for an agitated mask. Every free space was relentlessly covered. Where had the days of "Posting Forbidden" gone? Show windows, roller-shutters, crates and boxes were decked in poster finery.'[61] The expressionist writer and publicity director of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Paul Zech, argued propaganda was essential to political power and he wanted a new kind of poster, 'a work


86 Julius Ussy Engelhard, 1919, You Should Join the Reichswehr too, so Report to the Nearest Recruiting Office.




87 F.T.L., 1919, What About You? Have You Voted Yet? No! Then there is Only One Choice: the Luppe List

of art spurred on by the hot wind of revolution'.[62] On the one hand it was a logical extension of the *Werkbund*'s desire to preserve authenticity in design, and on the other it preserved aestheticism in a new form. Zech created the new *Werbedienst der sozialistischen Republik* (Publicity Office of the Regime of the People's Delegates), a coalition of Independent and Social Democrats. Initially, in November 1918 posters were aimed at returning troops, and by December the *Werbedienst* was distributing one hundred thousand posters and flyers daily (figures 88, 89).

Under criticism from the left and the right, Zech's publicity office was eventually absorbed into the conservative National Office for Domestic Propaganda, which also produced recruiting posters for the *Freikorps* and was connected with organisations concerned with the defence of Germany's Eastern borders. Typically, with slogans in traditional Gothic script and in images of utopian and pure communal German life on the

88 Lucien Bernhard, Defend Your Country! Enlist in the Volunteer Corps


89 O.H.W. Hadank, German Farmer Protect the Crops You have Grown, Form German People's Councils

land and in the village, the posters warned against anarchy and socialism in evocations of *Gemeinschaft* nostalgic for the national consciousness the German authorites had attempted to exploit in the early days of the war. Aimed at social radicals to warn of the threat of social unrest and revolution to the future of Germany, they also accommodated more popular commercial styles familiar from popular horror genres and the tradition of anti-socialist propaganda in Europe (figure 88).

Many radical artists, such as Max Pechstein and Heinz Fuchs (plate 59) who were members of the Berlin *November gruppe*, were committed to the establishment of a socialist state. At the same time, the socialist provisional government thought the urban masses would be more influenced by avant-garde expressionist posters, than those based on established Wilhelmine taste (figures 90–91). Zech, especially, thought that their visual rhetoric, uncorrupted by the state and commerce would sap support for the extreme Left: specifically, Karl Liebknecht and the Spartakus group. This desire to appropriate the avant-garde to the medium of the poster was linked to the lack of an acceptable popular commercial visual culture. Effectively, the design of war posters in Germany had been based on a vocabulary comfortable to the military, commercial and land-owning elites and was in denial of more popular imagery dependent upon consumer tastes. The return to Latin typography and the incorporation of 'popular horror-show imagery into an Expressionist and Futurist space'[63] in the poster by Fuchs, for example, represented a comparable attempt to that undertaken by Bernhard in 'Defend Your Country!' (figure 88) aimed at harnessing the anti-establishment feelings of the working class by absorbing the censored and counter-cultural imagery of popular literature and cinema. The latter had not only attracted a great deal of criticism from the authorities during the war, but was held responsible for rapidly increasing delinquency. Additionally, the connotations of fine art embodied in expressionist style gave the poster an authority amongst the intellectual classes who were competing for ascendancy after the collapse of the imperial order. In the context of the long-standing prejudice in German society against the popular commercial arts, the expressionist tendency possessed the potential to emasculate any perceived threat from popular cultural forms.


90 H. Richter, 1920, Three Ideas: Undisrupted Demobilisation, Development of the Republic, Peace

In the contemporary theory the poster affected the public aesthetically. According to Rigby, it also evoked revolution and betrayed the artist's belief in the ability of Expressionism to stir the people to action. Steeped in national and aesthetic idealism, it promised millennarian and communal redemption from the trauma of defeat, the excesses of commerce and the brutality of the age. Avant-garde posters promoted the ideas and goals of a new socialist order, but workers identified the style with the middle classes and former ruling elite. They found it condescending, and after years of privation the fact that it denied their material aspirations in some abstract spiritual utopia did not appeal. Rigby quotes from an article by Hans Friedeberger recording workers' responses, 'the pointed, sharp representations ... were perceived ... as caricature ... and suspected of representing a lack of respect and esteem'.[64]

The idealism of these posters could not be sustained amongst the

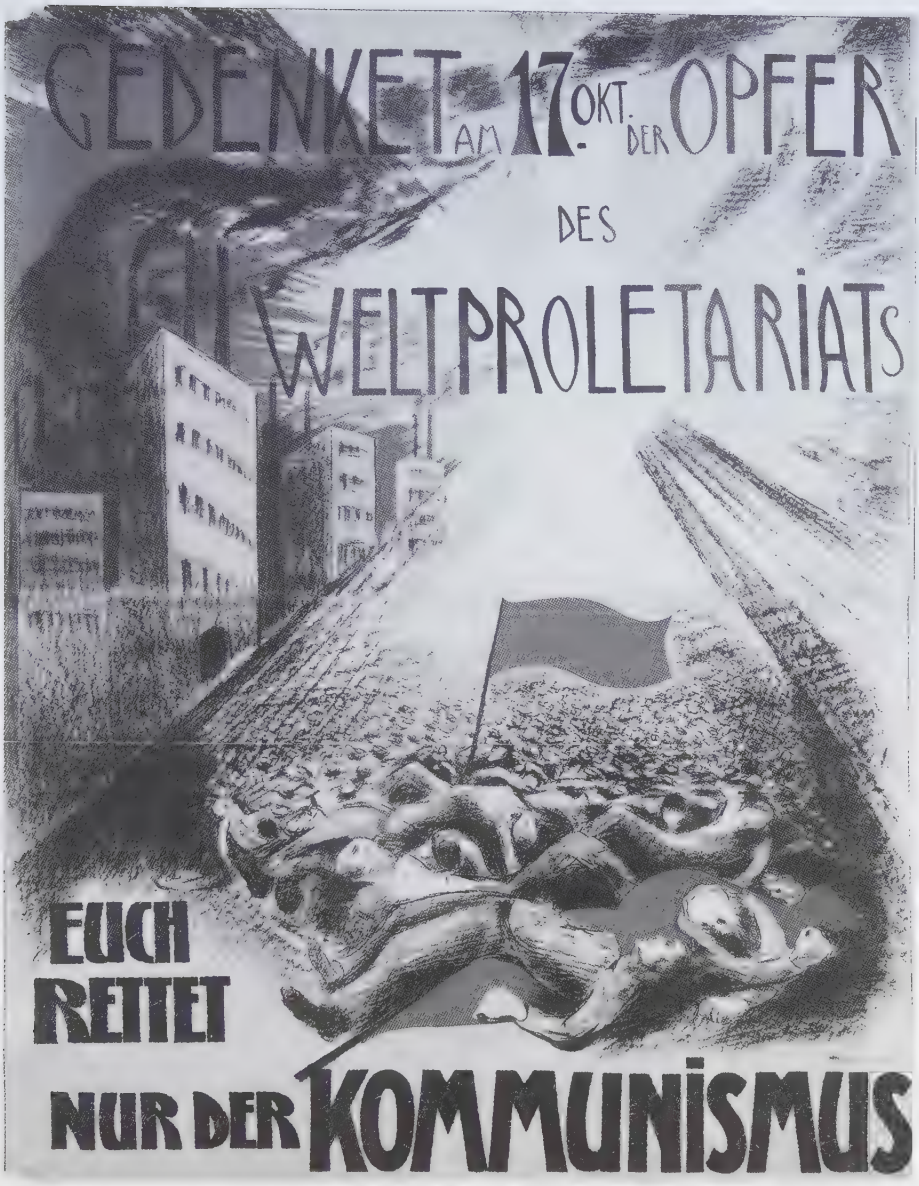

91 Fritz Kirkbach, Help Expelled Germans who have been Living Abroad, Returning Emigrant Aid

public. The middle classes saw them as vulgar and humorous or as expressions of angst ridden alienation. Organised labour and the communists felt they promoted a negative picture of the working class. In any case, the communists were uncomfortable with commercial advertising techniques and tended to rely more on street agitation and


92 Anon., Join the German Communist Party

pamphleteering, which was less subject to legislation.[65] Some posters do survive and are prototypically socialist realist in the styles they adopt, showing Karl Liebknecht in the pose of Lenin (figure 92); or caricatured images of heroic resistance to capitalist and militarist exploitation


93 Anon., What Does Spartakus Want?




94 Anon., On 17 October Remember the Victims from the World Proletariat. Only Communism will Save You

(figure 93). Images of working-class solidarity in golden visions of the communist future were not uncommon, although one poster graphically depicted the cost to the proletariat in ways later orthodox Socialist Realism would never allow (figure 94). They share the iconography of

international socialism about to be formalised in Russia by figures such as Dmitri Moor, Boris Efimov and Viktor Deni.[66]

Many of these posters condemn the revolutionary mass as dangerous and anti-German. Anti-Russian messages familiar from the years of war transform themselves into anti-Bolshevik propaganda as 'they', in the figures of the Jew, the profiteer and the shirker, all of whom were perceived to have stabbed the nation in the back, carry the blame for the war. Stock images drawn from German romanticism and the vocabulary


95 OK, A Bloody Sea. A Host of Graves. That is Bolshevism. Alliance to Combat Communism


96 Anon., Bavarian People's Party, Berlin. Munich. Bavaria, the Bolshevik is on the Prowl! Get Him Out on Election Day! Bavarian People's Party

of popular art found in film posters, cartoon and caricature were more acceptable than avant-garde and expressionist images promoted by the provisional government. The vocabulary was adeptly exploited by the Alliance to Combat Bolshevism in Germany and other comparable right-wing organisations in Austria and Hungary, many of which by this time were beginning to use advertising companies to produce posters (figures 95, 96, plates 61–63).

With covert financial support from bankers and industrialists, Eduard

Stadler was able to establish the Alliance to Combat Bolshevism (figures 95, 96, plates 60, 61). It campaigned to demonise Bolshevism, to defend the Eastern borders, and to recruit for the *Freikorps* or Volunteer Corps. At first, the Alliance approached artists directly, but later they held poster competitions and offered substantial prizes adjudicated by prestigious figures such as Peter Behrens, Bruno Paul and Hans Sachs. Submissions were exhibited to promote their aims, and to raise the status of the designs that had been, at first, almost universally condemned as Kitsch.[67] This commitment to produce political posters for mass consumption was a new phenomenon and although heavily stimulated by newly won universal suffrage and the need to get the people to vote, it represents an aspect of the struggle for aestheticism in the development of popular commercial culture in Germany.

## Notes

1. The poster columns in France are called Morris columns, and were introduced to Paris by Gabriel Morris in 1850 one year before the Litfass column was introduced in Berlin.
2. See Thomas Cochrane, *Advertisements (Foreign Countries)* (London, HMSO), 1903, pp. 4–5.
3. 'L'Age d l'affiche', *Revue des deux mondes*, 137 (September 1896), pp. 201–6, quoted in Kirk Varnedoe & Adam Gopnik, *High & Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture* (New York, The Museum of Modern Art), 1990, p. 236.
4. 'The Lay of the Market in France', *Printers' Ink* (20 September 1917), p. 86.
5. See IWM PST 10729.
6. See IWM PST 12903.
7. Christian Delporte, 'The Image and Myth of the "Fifth Column", Valerie Hoffman and Debra Kelly (eds), *France at War in the Twentieth Century. Propaganda Myth and Metaphor* (New York & Oxford, Berghahn Books), 2000, p. 51.
8. See Orlando Figes & Boris Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the French Revolution. The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press), 1999.
9. See '"*Vive La Nation*!" French Revolutionary Themes in the Posters and Prints of the First World War', *Imperial War Museum Review*, 3 (1988), pp. 34–43.
10. Quoted in Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People* (Leamington Spa/Heidelberg/Dover, NH, Berg Publishers Ltd.), 1985, p. 48.
11. Ibid, p. 118, pp. 150–60.
12. See Philippe Vatin, 'Publicité et Politique: La Propagande pour l'Emprunt en France de 1915 à 1920', *Revue de Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 27 (April 1980), pp. 206–36.

13. Quoted in Becker, *The Great War*, pp. 158–9.
14. Ibid., quoted, pp. 166 7.
15. See IWM PST 12889.
16. See IWM PST 6289, 6287.
17. See IWM PST 11079, 6801, 11152, 11154.
18. David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War, 1914–18, The Sins of Omission* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press), 2000, p. 10.
19. For a full discussion of the graphic arts in Germany see Jeremy Aynsley, *Graphic Design in Germany 1890 1945* (Thames and Hudson), 2000, pp. 6–85 and Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund. Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press), 1996.
20. The column was introduced by Ernst Litfass as a means of controlling the distribution of posters and was introduced to Berlin in 1851, Dresden 1856, Stuttgart in 1872, Bremen in 1873, Vienna in 1877 and Leipzig in 1878. see Aynsley, *Graphic Design*, pp. 54–7.
21. Thomas Cochrane, *Advertisements (Foreign Countries), Return of the Laws, if any, in force in France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and the United States: (1) for regulating or restricting the exhibition of Posters, Bills, and other Public Advertisements; and (2) for the taxation of such Advertisements* (London, HMSO), 1903.
22. A Neutral Correspondent, 'In Germany To-Day, VIII, Appeal of the War Poster. A Disciplined Nation', *The Times*, 29 May 1915, p. 5. See also an American journalist in the *Continental Times*, 16 April 1917: 'Some of the latest subscriptions to the 6th War loan are truly remarkable. They tell eloquently of the spirit of patriotism and confidence which exists throughout the country. It must be remembered that none of the frantic style of advertising which recently took place in England where the entire country was placarded with screaming posters, papers crowded with over-wrought and hyper-sensational advertisements, imploring, admonishing or cajoling the people, and statesmen like Bonar Law even using threats of coercion if people did not subscribe. Here all has been done quietly. In simple words and modest form the people have been asked to subscribe from motives of patriotism. Posters have been used but in no sense have they been loud or sensational' quoted in Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War*, pp. 205–6.
23. See Herman Muthesius, 'Die Englische Bewegung gegen die Ausschreitungen des Ankundigungswesens,' *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung*, 26 July 1899, pp. 349–50, quoted in Schwartz, *The Werkbund*, pp. 90–1. In 1902, the Law against the disfigurement of the Landscape was passed in Prussia, see Cochrane, *Advertisements (Foreign Countries)*.
24. See Schwartz, *The Werkbund*.
25. Sherwin Simmons, 'Grimaces on the Walls. Anti-Bolshevist Posters and the Debate about Kitsch', *Design Issues*, 14:2 (Summer 1998), p. 26.
26. Quoted by Simmons in 'Advertising Seizes Control of Life. Berlin Dada and the Power of Advertising', *Oxford Art Journal*, 22:1 (1999), p. 130.
27. Ibid., p. 129.
28. Max Rittenberg, 'The New Commercial Art in Germany', *Printers' Ink* (July

1914), p. xiii.

29. Alice Goldfarb Marquis, 'Words as Weapons. Propaganda in Britain and Germany During the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History* (SAGE), 13 (1978), pp. 490 1.
30. See David Stevenson, *1914–1918. The History of the First World War* (London, Allen Lane), 2004, pp. 282–5.
31. See IWM PST 6871.
32. See IWM PST, 6871, 6723, 6855.
33. See IWM PST, 8407, 8316 – there is a large collection of posters by Erdt held by the IWM.
34. See IWM PST 12959, 1204, 12956, 7193, 12946.
35. The War Press Office (Kriegspresseamt) formed in September 1915 under the general Staff to centralise censorship and information output. It functioned efficiently until it began to dissolve in acrimony between the military, government, political parties, civil authorities and the press. See Alice Goldfarb Marquis, 1978, 'Words as Weapons', pp. 467–98.
36. Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War*, p. 63. See IWM PST 12274. The poster 'He is to blame' paradoxically targets the English through the figure of a Scottish soldier, see IWM PST 6912.
37. See IWM PST 7194.
38. *The Times*, 29 May 1915, p. 5.
39. See IWM PST 74362, 3920, 7691, 7477, 7527.
40. Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War*, p. 89.
41. See IWM PST 7571, 7713, 7788.
42. Simmons, 'Grimaces on the Walls', p. 20.
43. Hans Sachs, '*Soldatenwerbung durch Bildplakate', Mitteilungen des Verbands deutscher Kriegsammlungen* 1:4 (1919), p. 119 quoted by Simmons, ibid.
44. See IWM PST 10605, 6578, 3224, 10610.
45. Anon., 'The German Spirit', *The Quarterly Review*, 223, 1914, pp. 43–55 quoted in Gregory Moore, 'The Super-Hun and the Super-State. Allied Propaganda and German Philosophy During the First World War', *German Life and Letters*, 54:4 (October 2001), p. 313.
46. J. Keating, '"Militarismus"', *The Month*, 124 (1914), p. 394, quoted in ibid.
47. John Butler, 'Russian vs German Culture', *New Age*, 16 (14 January 1915), p. 269, quoted in ibid. p. 312.
48. See IWM PST 7032, 13637, 2775, 1588, 13606.
49. Karl Krauss, *In These Great Times: A Karl Krauss Reader edited by Harry Zohn* (Manchester, Carcanet Press Ltd), 1984, p. 191.
50. See Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf), 1927, pp. 68–9.
51. See IWM PST 11299, 7233, 7801. *Storm of Steel* was first published in German in 1920.
52. Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good. Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago, University of Chicago), 2004, pp. 167–9. See IWM PST 7607, 7605, 7617, 7615, 7616, 7304, 8000.
53. See IWM PST 7324, 7432.

54. See IWM PST 13561.
55. See the 'Feed the Guns' and 'Tank Week' campaigns, for example.
56. Marquis, 'Words as Weapons', p. 491.
57. Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War*, p. 210.
58. See IWM PST 12313, 7846.
59. At first called the Provisional German Defence Force, then to become the Transitional Army, before eventually being known as the *Reichswehr* after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.
60. 'German Expressionist Political Posters 1918–1919. Art and Politics, A Failed Alliance', *Art Journal* (Spring 1984), pp. 33–9.
61. Quoted in Rigby, 'German Expressionist Political Posters', p. 33 from 'Das politische Gesicht der Strasse', *Das Plakat*, 1919, p. 164.
62. Paul Zech quoted by Simmons, 'Advertising Seizes Control of Life: Berlin Dada and the Power of Advertising', *Oxford Art Journal*, 22:1 (1999), p. 135.
63. Simmons, 'Grimaces on the Walls, p. 35.
64. Ibid., p. 38, from 'Das Kunstlerplakat der Revolutionszeit', *Das Plakat*, 1919, p. 275.
65. This was despite the best efforts of Wieland Herzfeld, John Heartfield and George Grosz who through *der Malik Verlag* campaigned against the reactionary use of advertising and publicity. Simmons, in 'Advertising Seizes Control', makes the point that political advertising, and especially the work of artists like Alexander W. Cay who had demonstrated a lack of integrity in designing posters for five political parties, was a prime target for the activities of Berlin Dada.
66. James Aulich, 'Boris Yefimov and the Soviet Political Cartoon', *Boris Efimov: Forced Laughter*, exhibition catalogue (Prague, Galerie Nova sin), 2005, pp. 12–14.
67. Sherwin, 'Grimaces on the Walls', p. 22.

# Conclusion

For many historians, the twentieth century began in 1914. In this way they acknowledge the massive political, social, cultural, economic and technological changes wrought by the First World War. Less attention, however, has been paid to changes in the nature and use of publicity occasioned by the conflict. It has been the purpose of this book to describe, account for and assess the extent of these changes with specific reference to the widespread use of posters in Europe. Before 1916 and 'total war', the combatant nations felt the need to manufacture popular consent, to gain the material and moral support of their populations to an unprecedented extent. This required governments to make extensive use of the techniques of advertising and in particular of the poster. In a sense, the First World War acted as the midwife at the birth of modern publicity.

As the book demonstrates, this simplifies a varied and complex picture. In 1914 an already sophisticated visual language of persuasion was in place and it was utilised by governments on a scale and in areas of public life that were very new. But even this statement needs qualification. The governments of the combatant nations appealed to their people for different things and in different ways and in doing so made use of existing publicity apparatuses that differed from country to country. After all, as the book has demonstrated, publicity is shaped by political, economic and cultural forces, which were certainly not the same across Europe in 1914.

The conditions and relations of poster production were different in France, Germany and Britain. France was the least industrialised of the

three and, despite the fact it was the acknowledged birthplace of the modern poster, it had the least developed commercial advertising trade. Artists retained considerable autonomy and traditionally saw themselves lending their talents to the world of publicity without compromising their individuality and independence. Germany was the most industrially developed and had a community of designers who were close to industry and, as is evident in the debates generated in the *Deutsche Werkbund*, were eager to seek an industrial aesthetic, to develop a new visual language for the changed times. This search embraced the graphic arts including poster design. Britain was the most commercial of the European powers and its advertising sector was more developed and sophisticated than any outside of the United States. Artists who lent their talents to the printer or the advertising agency learned to compromise. Seeking a middle way, they scoffed at those fine artists who felt designing a poster was just like painting a picture while simultaneously dismissing lithographers and workshop apprentices who turned out undistinguished stock designs at the behest of the advertiser. In these circumstances it is not surprising, as the book shows, that war posters from different countries were quite distinct for all their similarities in why and how they were deployed.

The European ruling elites shared a deep suspicion bordering on disdain for commercial advertising. With a Canute-like obstinacy, these groups tried, by legislation, to check the rising tide of commercial publicity in the period up to 1914. So, it was with some reluctance that governments embraced publicity during the war. It was a marriage of convenience and as soon as the war was over a separation was arranged as government and advertising returned to their own spheres. The position was more complicated in the chaotic conditions in the immediate post-war period in Germany. Even here, however, the war had exerted its impact and as in so many other areas it was impossible to return to the *status quo ante bellum*, as examples from Britain, France and Germany show.

At the end of the war, the French poster scene was dominated by government campaigns for reconstruction loans and various charitable aid schemes for refugees and returning soldiers. Many of these designs show the direct influence of American design. From 1917 American Liberty Loan posters had been distributed in unoccupied France to


97 Anon., America's Answer to the Germans

entice American service men and women to invest.[1] In these posters lithographic drawing is abandoned in favour of more integrated pictorial designs. The colour is dramatic and simpler, and figures are contained within planar renditions of landscape. The designs become less reliant on the shallow stage-like space typical of most French posters. The Americans saw themselves as part of a crusade for freedom and democracy, and some designers took this on uncritically, providing some of the only French designs that made use of medieval imagery, for example (figure 97). Georges Dorival's (plate 64) work shares a similar pictorial coherence with posters advertising battlefield tourism published by the French and Belgian railway companies (plates 65, 66). These posters are characterised by the colours of wistful dusks over desolate battlefields and shell damaged towns, where the visitor finds solace in the new dawn. In one poster for Belgian railways the spectre of a soldier invites a young woman, a daughter, wife or sister into a battlefield that exists in another pictorial plane (plate 66). For all the visual impact of the poster, the pictorial device emphasises the impossibility of understanding. Those who did not experience the trenches are forever condemned to the superficialities and vicariousness of the tourist.

In Britain, recruiting campaigns continued, advertising the life in the services as an opportunity to see the world and play sport, in 'an unbroken whirl of pleasure and of travel — unmarred by anything so fatiguing as work' (figure 98, plate 67). They were not well received in some quarters and *The Billposter* reported,

> In some parts of the country there has been defacement by ex-Servicemen of the posters now being used to assist recruitment for the army ... Until the war came and brought some six millions of men under arms recruiting posters passed without objection. Now their incredulity makes itself apparent in disfigurements.

The writer thought this kind of reaction could not be ignored because not only did it 'diminish faith in official honesty' in 'overstatement' and a lack of 'propriety', but it served to dissipate the 'public confidence in advertising', that the trade felt that it had won through its contribution to the war effort.[2] These battlefield tourism and recruiting posters share a


98 Albert Bailey, June 1919, Not a Care in the World

pictorial coherence and confidence that speaks for a return to 'Business as Usual' and a simultaneous cautionary realisation that publicity and information thought appropriate for liberal democracy could so easily slip over into the propaganda that was thought more appropriate for tyranny.

The immediate aftermath of war and economic collapse in Germany, Austria and Hungary saw the poster turn increasingly to political purposes, idealisms of the left and the right exploiting the medium to the full. Expressionist and realist styles drawn from the artistic and political avant-gardes combined with popular commercial styles to express socialist and nationalist agendas to spectacular visual effect, but with questionable powers of persuasion as they played on the fear of external invasion and internal instability (plate 68).

During the war in Germany and France where government control had ensured the impact of commercial culture was at a minimum, the posters tended to instruct the populace and to provide a guide for correct forms of behaviour through officially defined models of national history and identity found, respectively, in narratives of Teutonic supremacy and Republican zeal. As we have demonstrated, these narratives were so far removed from everyday reality in Germany, for example, that they rarely found their mark with the people. In Britain the government's *laissez-faire* attitude to propaganda and publicity in the area of poster production and the popular commercial culture of which it was a part, led to a process of seduction where people recognised themselves in a visual rhetoric of service that made use of the tricks of the trade to cajole and lever on an emotional level. The pictures of the crowd, the admonitions to enlist and even the Tommy in 'Arf a "Mo" Kaiser', in what was effectively a promotion for the tobacco industry, appeared within a discourse of commercial popular culture legitimised by government. This had the effect of making government capable of being able to simultaneously address and implicate whole sections of the population who did not have the vote and who had no investment in the political establishment and, for the first time, could literally see themselves represented and given a kind of official enfranchisement in and beyond the marketplace. The publicity succeeded to the degree that it did because its audience was

seduced on social and cultural levels. This did not yet occur on a political level but the promise of power was implicit in the act of recognition carried out in the discourse of an officially recognised publicly consumed commercial culture. Effectively, it carried the seeds of a vision of a liberal individual, produced by an alliance of commerce and government. An individual, who, as a not yet fully enfranchised citizen and incipient consumer, was made 'free' by the 'home comforts' and leisure necessary for efficient labour to provide service to the state. This may, or may not have been, a picture of the first Director of the Imperial War Museum, Martin Conway's, 'foundations of a new and better world',[3] but it is certainly the record of 'the devoted and heroic work of millions of men and women cooperating as parts of one vast living machine',[4] that comes down to us in the legacy that this analysis of the Imperial War Museum's poster collection represents.

## Notes

1. Labert St. Clair, *The Story of the Liberty Loans* (Washington DC, James William Bryan Press), 1919, p. 101.
2. 'The Army and Its Posters', *The Billposter*, 37 (September 1919), pp. 13–15.
3. *Third Annual Report of the Imperial War Museum 1919–20* (London, HMSO), 1920, p. 3.
4. Ibid., p. 4 'His Majesty's Reply'.

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