

A Call to Arms: Mobilizing Words and Pictures

British Propaganda Posters 1914-1918

Anna McNulty
Barnard College, Department of History
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"Men, materials & money are the immediate necessities. Does the call of duty find no response in you until reinforced - let us rather say superseded - by the call of compulsion? Enlist today."

- Lord Kitchener, 1914

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INTRODUCTION

Wartime propaganda posters in the twentieth century became an efficient way for governments to communicate with the public. Attention grabbing images paired with succinct taglines can quickly deliver a message and illicit a response. The more effective ones cling to the collective memory and become imperative to our understanding of the wars that produced them.

War propaganda as we think of it today was largely formed as a practice during the First World War. Though surely before the Twentieth century, governments had been using censorship and print media to sway public opinion and control public action, it had not previously been done such an intentional and organized way. The combination of new styles and formats of communicating derived from the advertising world¹ and other independent print media, and the extreme circumstances of the war led the British government to establish systems for producing propagandistic images of their own. The way the government went about creating propaganda has been described as “undeniably an impressive exercise in improvisation”² because they were using a very new tool to address very new problems as they arose.

¹ Clampin, David. "Commercial Advertising as Propaganda in World War One." The British Library. December 09, 2013.

² Sanders, Michael L., and Philip M. Taylor. *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18*. London: Macmillan, 1982.1

The successful execution of total war is predicated on the enthusiastic participation of the public. This was especially true in the case of Britain at the start of the First World War because neither their military nor their economy was set up to support such an endeavor as a world war. This shaped how and why propaganda posters were created and distributed.

The topic of war propaganda, even excluding film and radio content, is a complex one. Though literally an island, Britain does not function in isolation. In fact, much of the propaganda produced by the British government went to influencing the minds of foreign publics. Garnering support from neutral powers, especially the United States, as well as from its own colonial assets and dominions were essential to Britain's military success. Great Britain undertook massive recruitment initiatives tailored to colonial populations especially in India. The recruitment posters deployed in places like Ireland, Scotland, and Canada featured similar themes and styles as those made for England, often with slight regionally specific alterations³.

Here, however, the focus will remain on domestic endeavors and will track the main concerns at home as they changed throughout the war. Initially enlistment was at the forefront. After the introduction of conscription in January 1916, attention was turned to the workforce, war bonds, and civilian morale.

³ Wood, Lawson, Artist. Your king & country need you to maintain the honour and glory of the British Empire / Lawson Wood '14 ; Dobson, Molle & Co. Ltd., Color Printers, Edinr. & London. Belgium England Great Britain, 1914. [London: Parliament Recruiting Committee] Photograph.

I will be examining a range of posters across the years of the First World War and identifying their themes, styles and pictorial content. I will then be seeking to establish connections, and in some cases causality, between events and trends on the war front and in the public consciousness of the homefront and trends in the propaganda material being produced.

CHAPTER 1: “Your Country Needs You”

Informal Beginnings

In the summer of 1914, Britain’s military was very different from the other major powers entering into war. It was much much smaller. The Regular Army, Reservists, and Territorial Forces combined totaled only 733,514 men⁴ compared to France, Germany, and Russia who entered the war with well over a million men each⁵. It was also voluntary and professional. Men made careers out of military service, unlike the continental system of conscription and short term mandatory service. France, Prussia and other European states had long standing traditions of required military service, so when the nature of the war demanded it, there was a mechanism in place to rapidly replace the military as the need became apparent. Britain relied on voluntary enlistment. This meant that public perception of the war was paramount.

These circumstances lead us to one of the earliest and most iconic recruitment images of the war: Lord Kitchener with his pointed finger accompanied by a call to arms.

⁴ Connelly, Mark, Ian Beckett, and Timothy Bowman. *British Army and the First World War*. Cambridge University Press, 2017.

⁵ Royde-Smith, John Graham, and Dennis E. Showalter. "World War I: Forces and Resources of the Combatant Nations in 1914." Encyclopædia Britannica. January 09, 2019.



Left: Alfred Leete's portrait of Lord Kitchener on the *London Opinion* cover, September 5, 1914⁶.

Right: The same image in poster format printed late September 1914⁷.

This image did not originate as a poster, and its creation was not connected to official recruitment efforts. However, its popularity meant that it would go on to influence future recruitment and propaganda images produced during the course of the war. It first appeared on the cover of the magazine *London Opinion* on September 5th, 1914. The the portrait of Kitchener was done by artist Alfred Leete, and the accompanying text was added by an unnamed member

⁶ Leete, Alfred. "Your Country Needs You." *London Opinion*, September 5, 1914.

⁷ Leete, Alfred. "Britons. Join Your Country's Army!", 1914

of the magazine staff. Leete was a self taught artist, who made a career in cartoons and illustrations for newspapers and magazines, often comical or politically satirical ones.⁸ His style relied on simplification, to the point of caricature, and here, that is especially evident.

Kitchener's likeness is achieved by little more than his signature mustache and eyebrows under a military hat. In order to understand the effectiveness of this image, we must consider its reliance on Lord Kitchener as a public figure.

In 1914, Kitchener was a 64 year old officer with a long, heroic military career behind him. He had made a name for himself in colonial conflicts including the Boer War, as well as in Egypt, India and the Sudan. He was known for excelling in the logistics of war waging. At the outbreak of war there was only an interim Secretary of War. Prime Minister Asquith had reservations, but public support, notably from the *Times* and other important publications, led to Kitchener's appointment on August 6, 1914⁹.

Despite early underestimations of the scope of the war, Kitchener foresaw a longer and more grueling conflict and immediately set out to raise a new and much larger volunteer army. It was in response to this initiative that the *London Opinion* published the September 5th cover. Due to his reputation as a steadfast military hero, Kitchener's image would have been legible to the magazine, and subsequently posters' audience, as a symbol of nationalism and patriotic

⁸ Aulich, Jim. 2008 "Leete, Alfred Ambrose Chew (1882–1933), graphic artist." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁹ Neilson, Keith. 2011 "Kitchener, Horatio Herbert, Earl Kitchener of Khartoum (1850–1916), army officer." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

honor. With this in mind, the message of the image becomes that to answer his call to action would be to uphold those values and take on that honor for oneself, and conversely to sit idle would be to let Kitchener and “your country” down. As it was reproduced in poster format, the text was often set in a more eye catching red and had several variations including “Kitchener's Army: Join at Once¹⁰” and “Britons. Join Your Country's Army!¹¹”.

Britain did manage to raise a huge voluntary army in the early months of the war. By the end of 1914, over one million men had enlisted. However, the initial wave of enlistment actually peaked before the poster reached wide circulation¹². It did continue circulating and surely aided recruitment efforts in the crucial months to come, but its association in the public consciousness with that first burst of patriotism is somewhat misguided.

The fact is, it *has* become emblematic of that early moment of enlistment, possibly due to the influence it had on much of the subsequent material produced in the interest of recruitment. Many of the images produced by the British government follow the formula of a striking image accompanied by a succinct, second person call to action. The Kitchener image would in 1917 inspire the iconic “Uncle Sam wants you!” poster from the American artist James Montgomery Flagg. From the accusatory pointed finger to the phrasing of the call to action, it

¹⁰ Great Britain. House of Commons. *Oral Answers to Questions: Recruiting*. Hansard. July 22, 1915

¹¹ Leete, Alfred. "Britons. Join Your Country's Army!", 1914

¹² Sanders, Michael L., and Philip M. Taylor. *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18*. London: Macmillan, 1982.

closely mirrors Leete's original image, albeit with an anthropomorphic stand in for America on whole rather than a living person as the carrier of its message. This Americanized version has become one of the most famous images of war propaganda as millions of copies were printed and disseminated, and it became ubiquitous in a slightly altered form again during the Second World War¹³.

A great deal of criticism for the Kitchener image actually came from the British government, and from Kitchener himself. They took issue with Kitchener being equated with the army and the nation, and felt that its stance was too abrupt and authoritative, even though they would later seek to replicate its efficacy. The posters were removed from locations too near to government buildings, lest people think they were state approved¹⁴. The government had to scramble a bit to take control of this newly popular way of eliciting public action. The newness and improvisational nature of this effort is highlighted in a House of Commons transcript from July 1915, Liberal MP Harold Tennant¹⁵ asked in response to an errant Kitchener poster being spotted on a war office building, "Is there anybody at the head of the Department whose duty it is to supervise all these posters and statements about recruiting?"¹⁶ The answer by then was yes.

¹³ Andrews, Travis M. "The Uncle Sam 'I Want YOU' Poster Is 100 Years Old. Almost Everything about It Was Borrowed." *The Washington Post*. April 03, 2017.

¹⁴Great Britain. House of Commons. *Oral Answers to Questions: Recruiting*. Hansard. July 22, 1915

¹⁵ Tennant, coincidentally, was PM Asquith's brother in law. Curthoys, M. C. 2009 "Tennant, Harold John [Jack] (1865–1935), politician." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹⁶ Great Britain. House of Commons. *Oral Answers to Questions: Recruiting*. Hansard.

An Official Effort

The Kitchener poster was one of the first issues addressed by the Parliamentary Recruitment Committee, a group officially aimed at commissioning and disseminating content to inspire enlistment, formed in the last days of August 1914. They were led by Prime Minister Asquith, but were truly an all-party collaboration of 30 members. In addition to commissioning recruiting posters, they also set about censoring and approving images being produced by “numerous unofficial bodies”¹⁷.

Despite their effectiveness at delivering a simple rousing message, early British recruitment images were criticized at the time for seeming primitive in comparison with the images coming out of other countries, especially Germany. It is true that Germany’s early posters in 1914 already show the more dramatic compositions and colors that appear in Britain later on¹⁸, but in hindsight, to gauge their efficacy in comparison when they had very different aims and audiences seems unproductive. Germany’s propaganda was from the start very intently focused on controlling the narrative of why they were at war, since enlistment was not a concern¹⁹.

July 22, 1915

¹⁷ Sanders, Michael L., and Philip M. Taylor. *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18*. London: Macmillan, 1982. 17

¹⁸ Bernhard, Lucian, Artist, and Dlc Rehse Archiv Für Zeitgeschichte Und Publizistik. Das ist der Weg zum Frieden -- die Feinde wollen es so! Darum zeichne Kriegsanleihe! / Bernhard. Germany, None. [München: dr. c. wolf & sohn, between 1914 and 1918] Photograph.

¹⁹ Sanders, Michael L., and Philip M. Taylor. *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18*. London: Macmillan, 1982. 38

Britain had the converse issue thematically, but as the PRC gained traction in their production of posters, they started to hire esteemed graphic designers and artists who created more complex compositions.

A 1920 survey of war posters proposed that the early posters' success "was thanks to the good spirit of the British public and not to the artistic merit of the posters themselves"²⁰, but good spirit seems to be exactly what these images were intentionally relying on. They tended to call on a sense of civic duty, a comradeship among citizens of Britain, to motivate men to enlist. That is not to say that the images themselves did not evolve. We do see more complex uses of space and integration of text with visuals that go beyond mere captioning. Rather than simple caricatures we see more realism in the depiction of soldiers and other figures.

Several notable tropes begin to emerge including lines of men in uniform beckoning the viewer to join their ranks, often these figures will not be shown frontally like Kitchener, but rather facing askance, mid-action. Though realistically rendered, their faces often lack distinctive features so that they could be interpreted as any Englishman. This allows the viewer the potential to see themselves in that position, being thanked by an old man, or standing in solidarity with other new recruits.

²⁰ Hardie, Martin, and Arthur K. Sabin. *War Posters Issued by Belligerent and Neutral Nations, 1914-1919*. London: A. and C. Black, 1920.



Left: “There is still a place in the line for you. Will you fill it?” poster commissioned by the PRC in early 1915²¹.

Right: “Your King and Country Need You” poster commissioned by the PRC in late 1914, depicting an elderly war veteran sending off a younger soldier departing for the front²².

The accompanying texts still rely on the second person address. “Your country needs YOU”, remains a popular one, along with variations expressing the “needs” of the King, “your

²¹ There is still a place in the line for you. Will you fill it? / The Haycock-Cadle Co., London S.E. England Great Britain, 1915. [London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee] Photograph.

²² Wood, Lawson, Artist. Your king & country need you to maintain the honour and glory of the British Empire / Lawson Wood '14 ; Dobson, Molle & Co. Ltd., Color Printers, Edinr. & London. England Great Britain, 1914. [London: Parliament Recruiting Committee] Photograph.

friends”, even fellow sporting enthusiasts²³. The image above uses a veteran of an earlier war to reference the legacy of Britain’s military power, implying that signing up means inheriting and carrying on that legacy.

They also make use of questions. “Will you come?” “Won’t you do your bit?”²⁴. Phrasing these messages as questions gives a greater sense of agency to the viewer than just the authoritative “Join Now!” by itself. This strategy is in keeping with the government’s hope that they could avoid implementing conscription and that if given the choice, the able bodied men of Britain would make the right one. There is a sense of superiority wrapped up in this idea. It assumes that countries with conscription, specifically Germany, relied on that system because their people would not willingly join up.

There was also an emphasis on maintaining a modicum of normalcy on the Home Front, and expressing that a reason for fighting would be that preservation of British life. This included the protection of women and the traditional family structure. For this reason, many recruitment

²³ Several posters addressed members of sporting clubs, and advertize the importance of athleticism in a soldier.

Rugby union footballers are doing their duty. Over 90% have enlisted. British athletes! Will you follow this glorious example? / printed by Johnson, Riddle & Co., Ltd., London, S.E. Great Britain, 1915. [London: Publicity Department, Central London Recruiting Depot] Photograph.

²⁴ Think! Are you content for him to fight for you? Won't you do your bit? We shall win but you must help. Join to-day / Chorley & Pickersgill Ltd., The Electric Press, Leeds and London. England Great Britain, 1915. [London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee] Photograph.

posters emphasized that *single* men should enlist first²⁵. Those men attached to a wife and children had to worry about supporting them financially and otherwise while on the frontline, therefore single men were encouraged to make that sacrifice instead. They also employed images of women, a famous example is the “Women of Britain say, Go!” image below. This invocation of women and children (as they are lumped together here and in many other examples) is meant to appeal to the viewers sense of masculinity, asking him to go protect his dependents. More directly there were posters bearing the tagline “Be a Man”²⁶, asserting that fighting for one’s country was a masculine thing to do.

²⁵ Single men are urged not to put off voluntary enlistment or attestation until the last moment / printed by Roberts & Leete, Ltd., London. Great Britain, 1916. [London: Parliamentary and Joint Labour Recruiting Committees] Photograph.

²⁶ Brangwyn, Frank, Artist. At Neuve Chapelle. Your friends need you. Be a man / designed and lithographed by Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A. ; printed by The Avenue Press, Ltd., Bouverie St., London, Eng. Chapelle France Great Britain Neuve, 1915. [S.l.: s.n] Photograph.



Left: “Women of Britain Say go?”²⁷ and right: “Daddy, what did you do in the Great War?”, both posters commissioned by the PRC in 1915²⁸

The poster with the tagline “Daddy, what did you do in the Great War?” has a message that is more multidimensional than most others of its kind. It features a seated man, dressed

²⁷ Women of Britain say - "Go!" / E.P.? Kealey ; printed by Hill, Siffken & Co. L.P.A. Ltd., Grafton Works, London, N. Great Britain, 1915. [London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee] Photograph.

²⁸ Daddy, what did you do in the great war? / designed and printed by Johnson, Riddle & Co., Ltd., London, S.E. Great Britain, 1915. [London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee] Photograph.

nicely in a suit, with his two children as they ask him about his role in the war. This image asks the viewer to assume a future where Britain has won the war and this anonymous soldier has returned home unscathed; a rather hopeful scene considering the state of the war in 1915. The children symbolize not only the actual family of a potential enlister which he would be interested in protecting, but also the future of Britain on whole. The boy especially symbolizes a continuance of the legacy of British military victory. He plays with toy soldiers to suggest one day he too could serve his country like his father. There is also an element of shaming which we see in this and other posters. The idea that had this man not participated in the war effort, he would be letting his children down, just as a man who ignored the earlier poster's pointed finger would be letting down Lord Kitchener.

CHAPTER 2: “Take up the Sword of Justice”

Adapting to New Dilemmas

The initial understanding of the war was that it would be a quick affair. The British public famously assumed that it would be “over by christmas²⁹”, but by the spring of 1915, it was rapidly becoming clear that this war was a different beast entirely. When death tolls and reports of battlefield horrors were coming back regularly, national pride alone would no longer suffice as a reason to join up. The British government started to consider the introduction of conscription, but aimed to hold off on that as long as possible. Instead, they increased their output of recruitment propaganda. The public needed new reasons to believe in the war, and so the messaging of recruitment efforts began to change.

The posters produced during this period were often more impassioned and more specific with the “why” of enlistment. Since they could not ignore the harsh realities of the war, the PRC chose to incorporate and play off the public understanding of major events and images from the frontlines. Some popular themes were avenging the civilian casualties of Germany’s aggression and not letting fallen soldiers’ sacrifice be in vain. These very righteous messages rely on a public understanding of the Germany army as a villainous monolith that needed to be vanquished. This image was based largely in the public understanding of Germany’s brutality as they invaded Belgium.

²⁹ "Voices of the First World War: Over By Christmas." Imperial War Museums. May 31, 2018

Belgium was especially important to Britain as the defense of Belgium's neutrality was their official impetus for entering the conflict. Reports of destruction in Belgium were making their way into the public awareness, and when the initial waves of recruitments started to slow, avenging innocent Belgium became an important theme in recruitment posters. These images were made more powerful with the public attention paid to the Bryce Report.

The Committee on Alleged German Outrages Report, known informally as the Bryce Report, was an evaluation commissioned by the War Office to assess the damage inflicted by the invading German army on the Belgian army and especially the civilian population. The document itself has been condemned as propagandistic. It has been suggested that though the events described within the report, including graphic descriptions of the torture and mutilation of children³⁰, were not outright false, they were exaggerated³¹. Whether that was an intentional move to shape public opinion, or merely the result of bias going into the evaluation is unclear. What is clear is the powerful hold that the atrocities, whatever their actual scale, had on the public imagination.

³⁰ Bryce, James, and Committee on Alleged German Outrages. "Report of the Committee On Alleged German Outrages: Appointed by His Britannic Majesty's Government And Presided Over by the Right Hon. Viscount Bryce...", Government Printing Bureau, 1916. 46-48

³¹ "Bryce Report: Committee on Alleged German Outrages." The British Library. November 13, 2013.



Above: "The only road for an Englishman", 1915³²

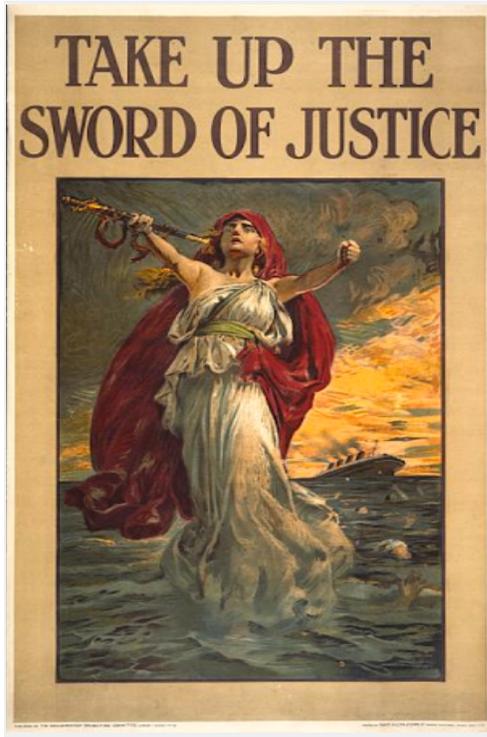
The above image depicts a destroyed Belgian city street dramatized by the unsettling diagonals of the ground and ruined buildings, as well as the deep shadows. The British army marches through a beam of light, their orderly formation in contrast to the chaos of their surroundings. This caption asserts once again that it is the moral imperative of the British to serve as rescuers for this war torn nation.

³² The only road for an Englishman Through darkness to light. Through fighting to triumph. England Great Britain, 1915. [London: Johnson, Riddle & Co., Ltd] Photograph.

By this point many of the artists producing posters for the PRC were formally trained, and renowned in “higher” forms of art than cartoons and graphic design. Several of them were members of the Royal Academy and thus familiar with the grand style of history painting³³, the influence of which we can see in their war posters. In the “Take up the Sword of Justice” poster, artist Bernard Partridge³⁴ depicts the personification of Justice, her stance, flowing hair and maritime setting recall Botticelli's “The Birth of Venus”, elevating the poster by association with the Renaissance masterpiece. She also wears the flowing, classicized drapery typical of history painting.

³³ History painting in the modern European tradition is considered the highest genre of painting. It focuses on scenes of biblical, mythical, and historical narrative, and often features allegorical figures.

³⁴ Partridge was from a family of artists and went to art school, but made his career mainly in comedic political cartoons. Knox, E. V. 2004 "Partridge, Sir (John) Bernard (1861–1945), cartoonist and illustrator." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.



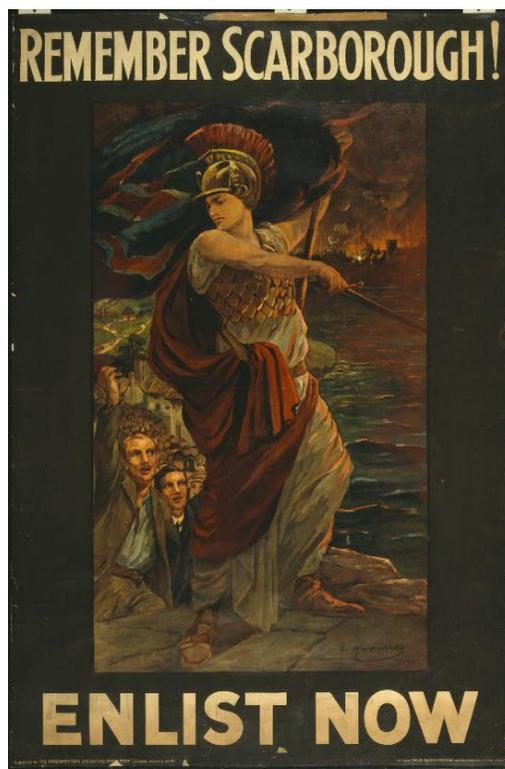
Above: "Take up the Sword of Justice" commissioned by the PRC in 1915.³⁵

The figure of Justice floats above the sea where there is a sinking ship and drowning victims visible. This is in reference to the sinking of the Lusitania which occurred on May 7, 1915. 1,198 civilian passengers died³⁶.

³⁵ Partridge, Bernard, Artist. Take up the sword of justice / B.P. ; printed by David Allen & Sons Ld., Harrow, Middlesex. Great Britain, 1915. [London: published by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee] Photograph.

³⁶ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Lusitania." Encyclopædia Britannica. February 07, 2019.

What would have been a tragedy and a potential rallying symbol for vengeance anyway, becomes particularly important because 128 of those passengers were American. Because of the US's potential power to turn the tides of the war, emphasizing a cause with their interests in common would be strategic.



Above: "Remember Scarborough!" poster 1915³⁷

³⁷ Kemp-Welch, Edith, Artist. Remember Scarborough! Enlist now / E. Kemp-Welch; printed by David Allen & Sons Ltd., Harrow, Middlesex. Great Britain, 1915. [London: published by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee] Photograph.

A final example of this trend of basing enlistment material on memorable losses is the case of Scarborough. The coastal town was the site of a December 1914 bombardment that killed 122 civilians and injured hundreds more. What makes matters worse is that the town was entirely defenseless and was only mistaken for a military target³⁸. This caused public outrage, and the PRC capitalized on that fervor. This poster appears very similar in style to the “Sword of Justice” example. A female anthropomorphization, this time of Britannia, leading civilians away from their city which burns in the distance.

This poster makes use of the added imagery of the Union Jack. This iconic flag was used fairly often, especially in earlier posters. It is instantly recognizable as a symbol of patriotism and therefore can convey that message without a need for much creative context. Here, though the flag is dramatically waving in the air over the shoulder of the regal warrior. This image is very emotive and perfect for drumming up a desire to sacrifice for one’s country.

During this period on the precipice of conscriptions there was a public awareness that it was not far off. One recruitment message said it quite explicitly with the slogan: “Push and Go: It is better to Go than to be Pushed”³⁹. The slogan implies that all available men would be going to war anyway, the only question was whether it would remain voluntary or not.

³⁸ Kemp-Welch, and David Allen. "Remember Scarborough! Enlist Now." WDL RSS. January 01, 1970.

³⁹ Great Britain. House of Commons. *Oral Answers to Questions: Recruiting*. Hansard. July 8, 1915

CHAPTER 3: “Are you in this?”

In January of 1916, the decision to impose conscription was finally made and went into effect in the spring. With the need for recruiting material gone, the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee became obsolete. In its place, a new committee was formed to coordinate propaganda, now with a focus on the home front operations and morale, called the National War Aims Committee (NWAC). At this point, Britain had also undergone political changes; Lloyd George was now the Prime Minister and thus lead this new committee. The NWAC functioned essentially the same as its predecessor in that it created centralized images and delegated regional alterations and distribution to local organizations⁴⁰.

Despite different goals, the posters produced in the later years of the war stuck to mainly the same themes and tactics as had been established in the push for enlistment. Messages of national pride, solidarity, honour were all present. That being said, the content of the images shifted to include more domestic and home front work scenes, in place of uniformed soldiers.

A poster with the caption “Are you in this?” presents a variety of citizens diligently aiding the war effort, from soldiers to a nurse, to a civilian man and woman working at what appears to be munitions production. A well dressed man looks idly on, and the assumption of the image is that the viewer would not want to appear like this man and thus should step up their

⁴⁰ Paddock, Troy R. E. 2014. *World War I and Propaganda*. History of Warfare. Leiden: Brill. 21-28

involvement. While the government no longer needed enlistment, they still needed action. The vague question “Are you in this?” combined with the examples of good wartime citizenship makes the viewer question his or her answer. *Am I one of the productive characters? Or am I the idle one?*

The other image below also deals with labour and war effort, in a very different way. It advertises war savings certificates and presents a dystopian image of enslaved workers being directed by German officers as the potential outcome of losing the war.



Right: War Savings Poster, 1918⁴¹

Left: "Are You in this?" 1917⁴²

Also apparent in these post conscription posters is an increased attention to what would happen after the war, presenting a light at the end of the tunnel, so to speak. We see this particularly with war bond advertisements. They were pitched as both an important aid to winning the war and also as an investment to be carried into a peaceful (hopefully near) future. These posters rely heavily on the imagery of children and family, which as we have seen with recruitment posters alludes to a continuing legacy of Britishness and prosperity.

⁴¹ Brown, F. Gregory, Artist. To prevent this - buy war savings certificates now / F. Gregory Brown ; J.W. Ltd. Great Britain, 1918. [S.l.: s.n] Photograph.

⁴² Baden-Powell Of Gilwell, Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, Baron, Artist. Are you in this? / RBP ; Printed by Johnson, Riddle & Co., Ltd., London, S.E. Great Britain, 1917. [London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/200365281/>.

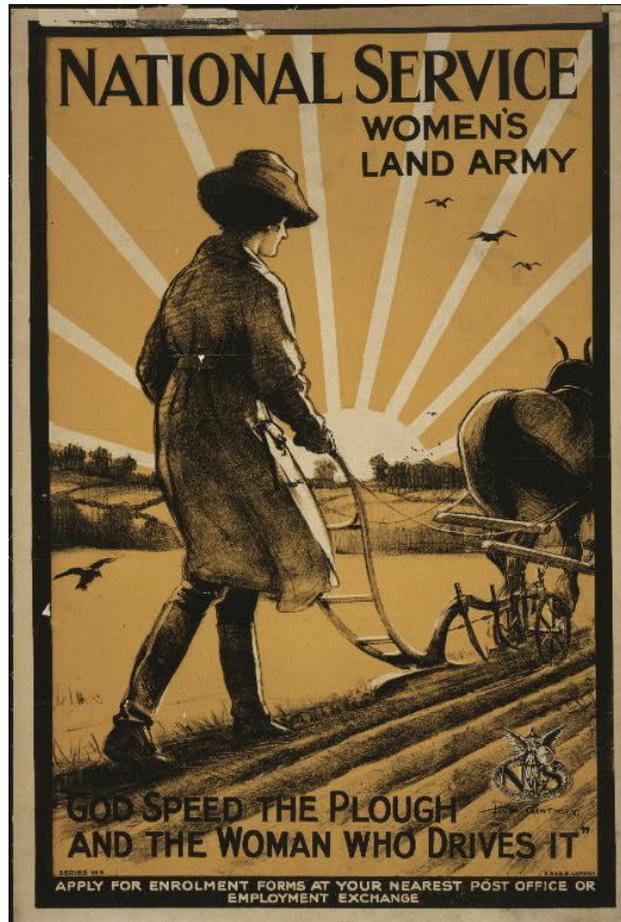


Right: "For your children..." poster from 1917⁴³

Left: "Are you Saving for the Children?"

Something else that sets many of these later posters apart is their target audience. No longer is the able bodied man the intended recipient of these messages. Instead they appeal to those too old, too young, or too female to be sent to the Front. The women on the Home Front had posters aimed at bringing them into the workforce, and at celebrating their contribution to the war effort.

⁴³ Gutti, Rosina Mantovani, Artist. For your children. Buy war savings certificates and they will live to thank you / Rosina Mantovani Gutti Roma ; Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd. England Great Britain, 1917. [London: National War Savings Committee] Photograph.



Above: National Service Women's Land Army poster from 1917

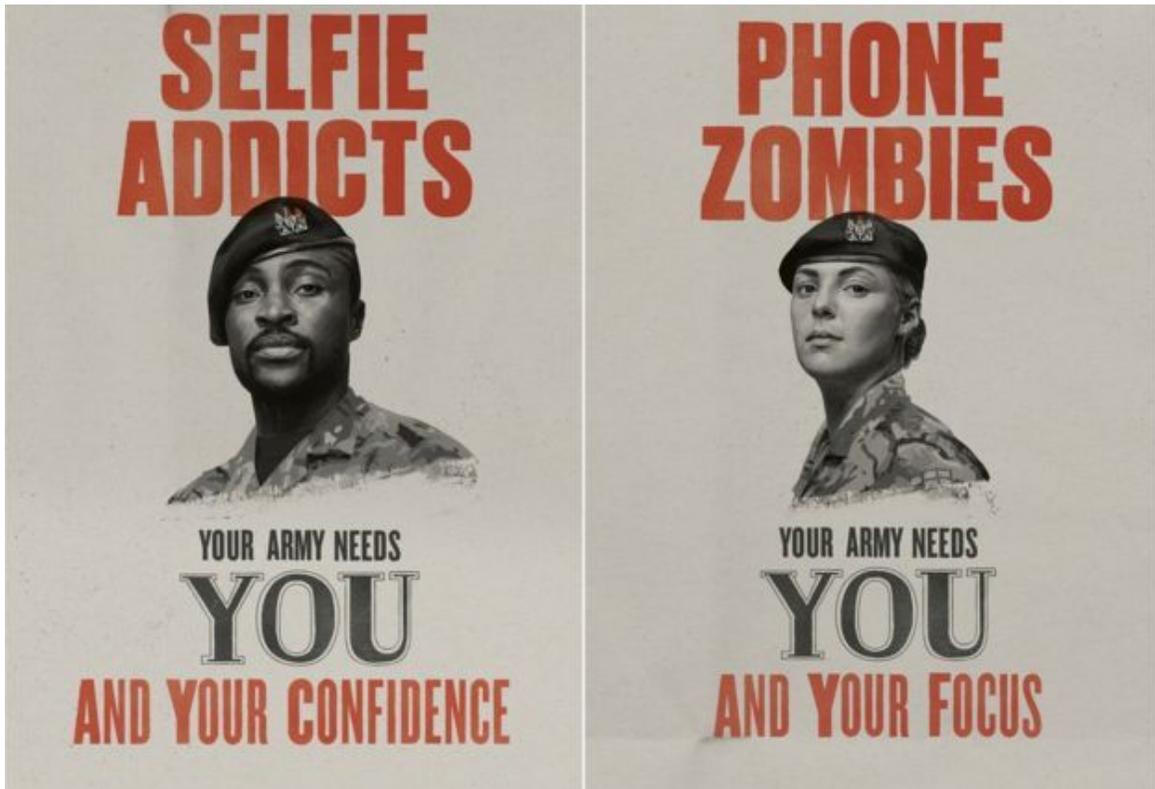
This poster paints an idyllic picture of the strenuous manual labour of agriculture that women were taking on during this time. It uses an interesting combination of realism, in the depiction of the woman and much of the landscape, and stylization, in the geometric sunbeams.

This ensures that the sun will grab focus and gives the image an overall feeling of hope; exactly what the working women of the Home Front needed in 1917.

CONCLUSION

At the outbreak of war in August 1914, Britain was faced with a crisis of army recruitment. They overcame that crisis due in large part to their quickly honed skills at using a new mechanism for influencing the public: propaganda posters. By reacting to unofficially produced images, widely familiar events, and employing powerful themes and images they were able to successfully inspire surges of enlistment. The tactics explored during that initial period were then applied to the concerns of the home front including war financing, labour, and overall civilian morale.

Throughout the rest of the twentieth century the legacy of this formative period is evident. The Allied war propaganda of World War II relies entirely on the foundations laid out here. World War One poster propaganda is still very much with us even today, as evidenced by a recent recruitment initiative in the UK. The Army released a series of images referencing the iconic Kitchener image. They feature young military personnel, each labeled with an attribute that they find valuable for military service. From the figure's direct gazes to the layout and font of the text they parallel the Kitchener poster exactly. One hundred years later, a World War I poster is helping to recruit a new generation of the British military.



Contemporary interpretation of the 1914 image⁴⁴

⁴⁴ "Army Campaign Targets 'snowflake' Millennials." BBC News. January 03, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-46747862>.

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<https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/voices-of-the-first-world-war-over-by-christmas>.

There is still a place in the line for you. Will you fill it? / The Haycock-Cadle Co., London S.E. England Great Britain, 1915. [London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee]

Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003662901/>.

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