

Propaganda in World War 1

Background

- World War I was the first war to feature large-scale propaganda efforts
- British propaganda was the most robust: *Wellington House*
- American propaganda: *Committee on Public Information*
- Took many forms: posters, journalism, film
 - “Color Books”: documents promoting government position
 - At the beginning of WW1: to shift blame of war

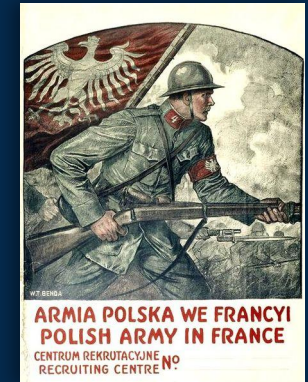




Purposes

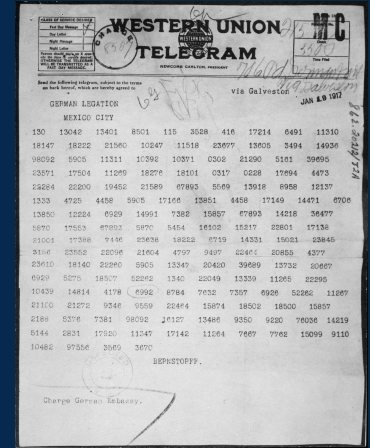
Promoting Recruitment

- Most prominent in Britain, only nation with no draft
- Empires needed to convince the people in the colonies to fight
- However, even countries with a draft needed passionate men to enlist



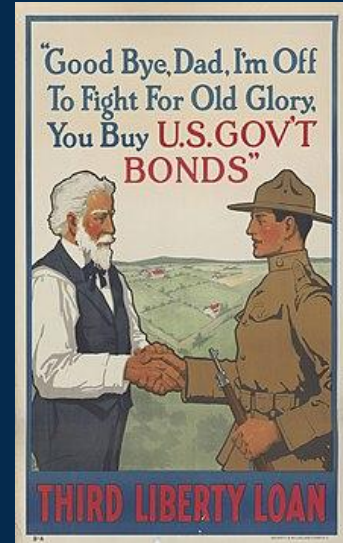
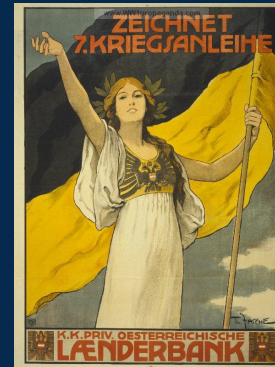
International Opinion

- Focused on neutral states
 - Enter the war on their side (e.g. USA & Zimmerman telegram)
 - Foster anti-war & pacifist movements to keep them out
- Also focused on enemy states
 - Allies fueled minority nationalist movements within Central Powers
- Both public opinion and elite opinion
- Airplanes were used to release pamphlets



War Bonds

- Debt sold by the government to fund military operations
- Way for non-soldiers to help the 'brave patriots' off fighting; a patriotic act rather than an economic one
- United States:
 - \$17 billion raised through "Liberty Bonds"
 - \$8.8 billion raised through taxation

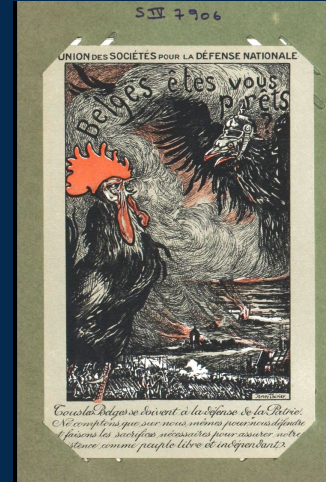




Values & Techniques

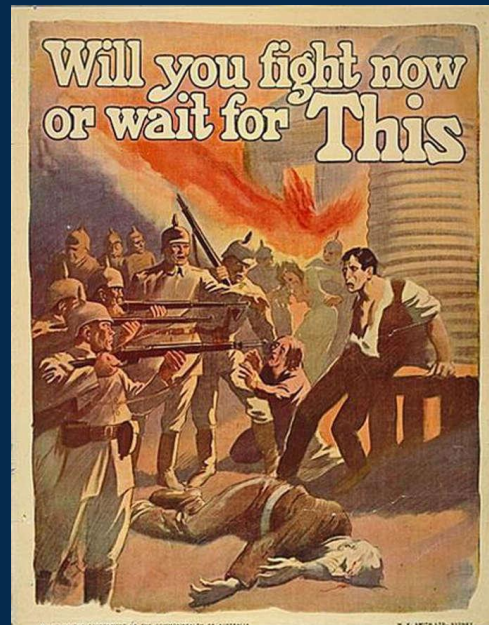
Patriotism & Nationalism

- Most prevalent tool in propaganda
- Nations often personified or turned into animals
 - Bulldog for UK, Rooster for France, Eagle/Dragon for Germany
- Instrumental in forming nationalism in colonies
- Ideas of God, monarch, country



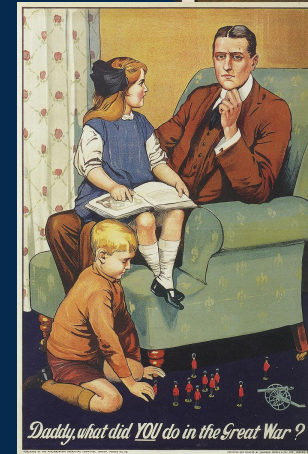
Atrocity Propaganda

- Utilizes transgressions by the opposition
 - Factual or otherwise
- Communicates a *clear enemy*, black and white
- Largely against Germany
 - Supposed German barbarism (“huns”) on Western front
 - German citizens couldn’t agree on a primary enemy
 - Workers: Russia; bourgeoisie: Britain, USA
- Took up stereotypes and fears of “the other”
- Create the narrative of a “defensive war”



Honor

- Heavily tied with gender roles
 - Men - brave and fight
 - Women - support their husbands in the war effort
- Soldiers were coming into adulthood/maturity
 - Shameful, cowardly if not involved in the war
- Sacrifice for a greater cause



Sources

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