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Women in World War I

POSTERS - POSTCARDS AND CARTOONS



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Introduction

Commonly cartoons, posters and postcards illustrate history. In this series about cartoons, posters and postcards in World War I the past can be derived from these sources.

On internet everybody can find many sites with hundreds and sometimes thousands of cartoons, posters and postcards from the First World War. The editors of this book selected these visual sources on various aspects of the First World War; they decided to use questions about causes, consequences, changes and interpretations.

This volume focuses on many aspects of the changing role of women. Leading questions in the search for and selection of pictures were:

- What appeal did the posters and postcards make to the women?

- In what ways did the cartoonists react to the posters and postcards?
- The publishers of the postcards wanted to sell many postcards; their buyers were both men and women. The artists of the posters tried to persuade women. And the cartoonists, mostly men, tried to exaggerate reality in a humorous way; their audience were readers of newspapers and magazines. Nobody tried to portray reality. What can you nevertheless derive from these sources?

These sources give a lot of information, but they also raise many questions that deserve further study.

2 Women as pillars of marriage in wartime



5
Title: 'Farewell'
Caption: 'Yes, the farewell hurts, she is proud, because I'm going.'
Artist: Unknown
Source: Simplificissimus, München, 1914

6
Title: 'Women of Britain say - Go!'
Artist: E.V. Kealey
Source: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, London, 1915



4 Women as pillars of navy and army

18

Title: 'Gee, I wish I were a man'

On the poster: 'I'd join the navy, naval reserve or coast guard'

Artist: Howard Chandler Christy

Source: Back cover of *The Poster*, USA, July 1917

19 (next page)

Title: 'The motor-corps of America'

Artist: Howard Chandler Christy

Source: Poster USA, 1918

20 (next page)

Title: 'Back our second line of defense'

Artist: Ernest Hamlin Baker

Source: United War Work Campaign, YWCA, USA, 1918

Explanation: Some women in the parade are wearing military uniforms appropriate for military jobs behind the frontline or on the Homefront.



5 Edith Cavell and Mata Hari: were they spies?

NURSE EDITH CAVELL

The execution of 49-year-old nurse Edith Cavell on October 12, 1915 was a cause célèbre. Before the war the British Edith Cavell was matron of a training school for nurses in Brussels. She stayed after the war broke out. She cared for wounded soldiers of every nationality. She was arrested after helping Allied soldiers escape to Holland. Cavell was sentenced to death by the Germans. Diplomatic efforts of belligerent and neutral states to commute the sentence were rejected and she was executed by firing squad.

In many ways the Allied hailed her as a heroine and martyr. On internet you can find a lot of information about this remarkable woman. She helped wounded Allied soldiers to escape, but was she also a spy?

18

23

*Title: 'The assassination of miss Edith Cavell', a French view
Caption: 'A German crime that shocked the human conscience'*

Artist: Unknown

Source: Le Petit Journal, Paris, November 7, 1915



7 Women activists

BEA SUTTNER IN AUSTRIA

The pacifist novel 'Die Waffen nieder' of the Austrian Bertha von Suttner (1843-1914) was first published in 1889. Her book was translated into 12 languages and reprinted numerous times (this cover is from 1916).

She was the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Till her death two weeks before the war, she attended and addressed many Peace Conferences, travelling through the world and meeting political leaders. In 1899 she took part in the organisation of the First Hague Conference.

Bertha von Suttner was often victim of ridicule. The cartoon left was published in response to the Hague Peace Conference in 1907. Bertha speaks to Hermann (a German hero warrior against the Romans).



34
Title: 'Come down from your pedestal'
Cartoonist: Unknown
Source: Unknown



35
Title: 'Lay down your arms!' (in Dutch: De wapens neer)
Caption: 'By Bertha von Suttner, translated by Anna van Gogh-Kaulbach'
Artist: Jan Sluijters
Source: Book cover, Dutch translation 1916