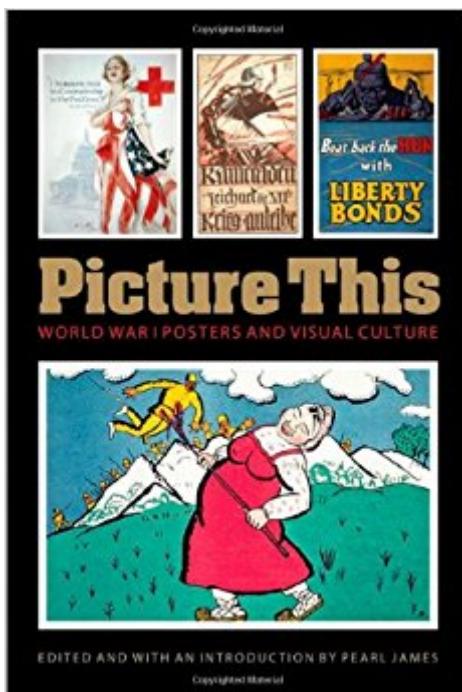


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# Picture This: World War I Posters And Visual Culture (Studies In War, Society, And The Military)



## Synopsis

The First World War was waged through the participation not just of soldiers but of men, women, and children on the home front. Mass-produced, full-color, large-format war posters were both a sign and an instrument of this historic shift in warfare. War posters celebrated, in both their form and content, the modernity of the conflict. They also reached an enormous international audience through their prominent display and continual reproduction in pamphlets and magazines in every combatant nation, uniting diverse populations as viewers of the same image and bringing them closer, in an imaginary and powerful way, to the war. Most war posters were aimed particularly at civilian populations. Posters nationalized, mobilized, and modernized those populations, thereby influencing how they viewed themselves and their activities. The home-front life—factory work, agricultural work, domestic work, the consumption and conservation of goods, as well as various forms of leisure—became, through the viewing of posters, emblematic of national identity and of each citizen's place within the collective effort to win the war. Essays by Jay Winter, Jeffrey T. Schnapp, Jennifer D. Keene, and others reveal the centrality of visual media, particularly the poster, within the specific national contexts of Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States during World War I. Ultimately, posters were not merely representations of popular understanding of the war, but instruments influencing the reach, meaning, and memory of the war in subtle and pervasive ways.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is a fine addition to the growing body of literature on this somewhat ephemeral form of graphic

communication."â "S. Skaggs, CHOICE (S. Skaggs CHOICE 2010-06-01)"Readers' comprehension of World War I posters will be enriched well beyond their most thorough visual observations."â "Barbara Steinson, Annals of Iowa (Barbara Steinson Annals of Iowa)"Historians of war, politics, gender, culture, art, and literature will all benefit from the insights presented here."â "David Welky, Journal of American History (David Welky Journal of American History)"Picture This is a powerful edited collection in which the whole adds up to a great deal more than the sum of its parts."â "Karen Petrone, Journal of Military History (Karen Petrone Journal of Military History)

Pearl James is an assistant professor of English at the University of Kentucky.Â Â Contributors: Meg Albrinck, Richard S. Fogarty, Stefan Goebel, Nicoletta F. Gullace, Pearl James, Jakub Kazecki, Jennifer D. Keene, John M. Kinder, Mark Levitch, Jason Lieblang, Andrew Nedd, Jeffrey T. Schnapp, and Jay Winter.

Fascinating! Academic, chewy analysis of where the WWI poster fits into the social history of the early 20th century.

Honestly, I have not yet read this book, which seems promising in terms of academic usefulness. However, my initial reaction is deep disappointment over the paucity of images. What images accompany the text are small, b/w, and of not high quality. I understand the costs of publishing and the tenuous position of university presses, but for a book that purports to examine the visual qualities of war propaganda (as promised by the title), why bother, if more and better quality images cannot be made available? If it was a matter of the prohibitive cost of permissions, I could understand, but I am guessing this is not the case, since many of these posters should be in the public domain. In fact, it was the implied promise of compelling images that induced me to purchase the book, and I feel a little like I've been had.

The First World War was longer and bloodier than any nation imaged in 1914. "Home before the leaves fall" gave way to a nightmare of death and suffering for every nation involved. For authoritarian governments popular support could not depend on habits of obedience and fear only went so far. For the democracies, government had to rally the citizens to maintain popular support. Europe had not seen anything like WWI since Napoleon. While America fought for less time, it had to address resistance to a foreign war. All nations turned to full-color posters to address this

situation. These images, many of which entered our national memory, what governments wanted them to do and their use are the subject of this book. Part 1 is three essays looking at the representation of the enemy and the national army in Great Britain, the United States and Germany. This can be strong stuff. These nations were fighting for their lives and "shades of gray" were not popular. Language is no problem as the images drive the point home. Part 2 is four essays on national identity and the war. Two essays look at how France rallies Africa to the cause and enlisting schoolgirls in the cause. An essay on posters aimed at America's Black population gives us a look at a little seen side of early 20th Century life. Part 3 is three essays viewing women, the heroic male and injury in American posters. As with any book of essays, some are better than others and some will capture your attention while others will not. The overall writing is very good and readable. One of the best things is 53 illustrations of posters or pictures of using poster to promote the war. This book works as a history of a little known side of WWI, of war in general and how government uses the popular media for its' purposes.

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