

Propaganda & Patriotism in World War I

Brandon J. Sethi
Urbana Middle School
AHTC Unit Plan
Illinois State Archives: Springfield, IL

Lesson #3: When People Answer the Governments Call

Abstract:

In this lesson, we look at the third and final step of coerced patriotism and that is the people's response. The media goes through a great effort to align itself with the government during World War I and through studying the Boys Working Reserve, we get an idea of how and why that call is answered.

Essential Questions:

1. Should people have a say to serve in the military or not?
2. Does the government know what is best for it's people?
3. How can people best serve the country during a time of war?

Assessment:

1. Journal question response: How have you changed the way you live in response to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars?
2. Cartoon analysis sheet (Cartoon.Analysis.pdf) regarding Three Little Pigs political cartoon (Cartoon1.jpg)

Setting the purpose:

In following with the progression of the unit, today the students are asked to look at the effectiveness of the government and media working in concert to raise peoples patriotism. In this lesson, students will be asked to read through some items regarding conscription and also about the Boys Working Reserve which was composed of boys from the city enlisting to go work on understaffed farms for minimal pay but with the mindset of increasing food production to help with the war effort.

1. Journal question to begin class (see assessment #1).
2. Cartoon analysis with worksheet (see assessment #2).
3. Have students examine the conscription document and do a think-pair-share with the class on if they agree or not. Instruct students to take into consideration the fact that we do not currently have a draft but if we did, what would that be like.

4. Read through Boys Working Reserve pamphlet and have students answer the question filling out a t-chart: Would you join the Boys Working Reserve? Three reasons supporting and three reasons opposing.
5. Show class Sugar Poster and Illinois Boys Working Reserve Poster and discuss merits as a class.
6. At the end of the lesson, put students into groups of three and have them come up with a list of five ways they could make sacrifices for the troops overseas and share as a class for discussion purposes. Also, have them answer the question: How would you make people do your five things?

Analysis of local primary sources:

1. Illinois Boys Working Reserve Poster

Ties to national primary source or sources:

1. Sugar poster
2. Conscription
3. Boys Working Reserve Pamphlet

Annotated list of materials and resources for the lesson or series of lessons:

1. Cartoon analysis sheet (Cartoon.Analysis.pdf) – Worksheet to assist in breaking down a political cartoon.
2. Three Little Pigs political cartoon (Cartoon1.jpg) – Cartoon comparing the attitudes of unpatriotic people to the three little pigs.
3. Sugar.jpg – Poster asking people to turn others in if they are seen hoarding sugar.
4. Illinoisboys.jpg – Poster making people aware of the Boys Working Reserve and what their role is and how they can be used.
5. Conscription 1-2.jpg - Three pages from a pamphlet produced to get citizens to buy into universal military service. The propaganda uses anecdotal evidence about its benefits telling the transformation of young men after going through boot camp. From there is also espouses the idea that mandatory service will both reduce crime and support the economy at the same time among other benefits.
6. Boysreserve1a-i.jpg - A pamphlet about the Boy's Working Reserve (BWR), a government run agency that recruited boys from the cities and put them to work on undermanned farms so that more food could be produced and thus further the war effort. The pamphlet details the success of the BWR and why more boys ought to join.
7. Tchart.pdf – Blank t-chart organizer.