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Guide to the Charles B. Burdick War Poster Collection

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Guide to the Charles B. Burdick War Poster Collection

SJSU Library Special Collections & Archives

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library

San José State University

One Washington Square

San José, CA 95192-0028

Phone: (408) 808-2062

Fax: (408) 808-2063

Email: special.collections@sjsu.edu

URL: http://www.sjlibrary.org/research/special/special_coll/

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Processed by:

Robert Donahue

Date Completed:

2010

Encoded by:

Rosalinda Gonzales

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Charles B. Burdick War Poster Collection

Dates: 1914-1979

Bulk Dates: 1914-1945

Collection number: MSS-2010-02-02

Collector: Burdick, Charles Burton, 1927-1998

Collection Size: 122 Folders, 1,452 Posters

Repository: San José State University. Library.

San José, California 95192-0028

Abstract: The Charles B. Burdick War Poster Collection 1914-1979 (bulk 1914-1945) is a graphic art collection of posters documenting World War I and World War II. The collection consists of over 1,400 posters created by both the United States and foreign nations. War posters were used as propaganda to sell the war to the American public. The posters generally defined war as a struggle between good and evil, and featured the sale of liberty bonds to protect American democracy. A broad range of topics are represented in the collection, including war bonds, civilian employment, women's service in the military, food rationing, and fire prevention. The collection also includes posters documenting political subject matter from the 1930s-1970s. This collection is arranged into three series: Series I. World War I Posters, 1914-1918; Series II. World War II Posters, 1939-1945; and Series III. Political Posters, 1930s-1970s.

Physical location: Posters are located in flat file drawers 1-01 through 2-10 in Vault 1.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English, Filipino, French, German, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish.

Access

The collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

Charles B. Burdick War Poster Collection, MSS-2010-02-02, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Robert Donahue. Finding aid EAD encoded by Rosalinda Gonzales. Reviewed by Danelle Moon and Erin Louthen.

Project Information

This finding aid was created as part of the Survey and Cataloging Project, a two-year San José State University Library grant project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The project began in 2008. The Project Director is Danelle Moon. The Project Archivist is Erin Louthen.

Collection Description

Between World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945), the U.S. government used propaganda through the mass production of war posters, pamphlets, billboards, advertisements, and film to foster broad-based support of the two wars. In World War I, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) was organized to shape public opinion in favor of U.S. war aims. Civilian chairman, journalist George Creel, enlisted the creative talent of over 150,000 people to produce over 100 million pieces of literature and visual materials in order to explain the meaning and cause of the war to the American public. During World II, the War Advertising Council (WAC) produced a similar volume of war propaganda materials.

The U.S. government used propaganda posters as a powerful mass communication tool to build support for the war effort. Throughout both wars, posters were created to boost morale, increase patriotic sentiment, promote the purchase of war bonds, offer guidelines for food rationing, and promote civilian and military war work, while demonizing countries such as Germany, Japan, Spain, and Italy. Various government agencies worked closely with private organizations such as the YWCA and the Red Cross to produce a variety of posters that supported the war, and specifically targeted women to conserve, to work in war industries, and to consider military service.

Included in this collection are posters that depict the aggression of the Germans against the vulnerability of neighboring countries, such as the experience of Belgium. One such example graphically projects the imagery of the Belgium people victimized by the Germans as invading Huns. In WWII, both the United States and England also utilized the "First to Fight" poster campaign to portray the Germans and the Japanese in an unfavorable light. Many of these posters used less offensive techniques to engender support from American women by targeting their responsibilities as patriots through military service as WAVES, WACS, and as Red Cross nurses, while the iconic image of "Rosie the Riveter" and slogans like "Yes We Can!" encouraged both married and single women to enter the workforce in unprecedented numbers.

Bibliography

Bird, William L. *Design for Victory: World War II Posters on the American Home Front*. 1st ed. Rubenstein, Harry R. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998.

Paret, Peter. *Persuasive Images: Posters of War and Revolution from the Hoover Institution Archives*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Price, Sean. *The Art of War: the Posters of World War II*. Chicago: Raintree, 2009.

Scope and Content

The Charles B. Burdick War Poster Collection 1914-1979 (bulk 1914-1945) is a graphic art collection of posters documenting World War I and World War II. The collection consists of over 1,400 posters created by both the United States and foreign nations. War posters were used as propaganda to sell the war to the American public. The posters generally defined war as a struggle between good and evil, and featured the sale of liberty bonds to protect American democracy. A broad range of topics are represented in the collection, including war bonds, civilian employment, women's service in the military, food rationing, and fire prevention. The collection also includes posters documenting political subject matter from the 1930s-1970s.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into three series: Series I. World War I Posters, 1914-1918; Series II. World War II Posters, 1939-1945; and Series III. Political Posters, 1930s-1970s.

Subject Headings

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

World War, 1914-1918 -- History

World War, 1939-1945 -- History

World War, 1914-1918 -- Posters
World War, 1939-1945 -- Posters
World War, 1914-1918 -- United States
World War, 1914-1918 -- United States -- Posters
World War, 1939-1945 -- United States
World War, 1939-1945 -- Finance -- United States
World War, 1939-1945 -- United States -- Posters
World War, 1939-1945 -- United States -- Propaganda
World War, 1939-1945 -- Women -- United States
World War, 1939-1945 -- War Work -- United States
World War, 1939-1945 -- Food Supply -- United States
United States -- Naval Reserve -- Women's Reserve
United States -- Office of Civilian Defense
United States -- Office of War Information
United States -- War Food Administration
United States -- War Manpower Commission
Creel, George, 1876-1953
Committee on Public Information -- United States

Series I: **World War I Posters 1914-1918**

Physical Description: 86 Folders, 991 Posters

Series Scope and Content Summary

The material in this series consists of poster campaigns for the U.S. and foreign nations involved in World War I. The bulk of the series documents propaganda in the U.S., France, and Great Britain, but include smaller representations from Canada, Germany, Poland, and Russia. A broad range of topics are represented in this series, including war bonds, civilian employment, food rationing, military enlistment, and conservation of specific resources, such as oil and rubber.

Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically by country. Posters are located in flat file drawers 1-01 through 1-12 in Vault 1.

Folder 1-2 **Canada**

Physical Description: 2 Posters

Folder 3-24 **France**

Physical Description: 313 Posters

Folder 25-29 **Germany**

Physical Description: 50 Posters

Folder 30-37 **Great Britain**

Physical Description: 63 Posters

Folder 38 Poland

Physical Description: 12 Posters

Folder 39 Russia

Physical Description: 5 Posters

Folder 40-85 United States of America

Physical Description: 531 Posters

Folder 86 U.S.: Women's Posters

Physical Description: 15 Posters

Series II: World War II Posters 1939-1945

Physical Description: 41 Folders, 361 Posters

Series Scope and Content Summary

The material in this series documents poster campaigns for several countries involved in World War II. The bulk of the series documents U.S. propaganda campaigns, but includes examples from Belgium, Great Britain, Canada, Hungary, the Philippines, and the USSR (Russia). A broad range of topics are represented in this series, including war bonds, civilian employment, women's service in the military, food rationing, conservation of natural resources, and fire prevention.

Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically by country. Posters are located in flat files drawers 1-13 and 2-05 through 2-08 in Vault 1.

Folder 87 Belgium

Physical Description: 1 Poster

Folder 88 Canada

Physical Description: 6 Posters

Folder 89-92 Great Britain

Physical Description: 21 Posters

Folder 93 Great Britain: Women's Posters

Physical Description: 6 Posters

Folder 94 Hungary

Physical Description: 1 Poster

Folder 95 Philippines

Physical Description: 2 Posters

Folder 96 **Spain**

Physical Description: 1 Poster

Folder 97 **USSR (Russia)**

Physical Description: 3 Posters

Folder 98-126 **United States of America**

Physical Description: 297 Posters

Folder 127 **U.S.: Women's Posters**

Physical Description: 23 Posters

Series III: **Political Posters 1930-1979**

Physical Description: 10 Folders, 100 Posters

Series Scope and Content Summary

The material in this series consists of various poster campaigns from Great Britain, Cuba, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, and the USSR (Russia) promoting specific political parties, figures and national ideologies.

Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically by country. Posters are located in flat file drawers 2-09 through 2-10 in Vault 1.

Folder 128 **Cuba**

Physical Description: 2 Posters

Folder 129 **Germany**

Physical Description: 13 Posters

Folder 130-131 **Great Britain**

Physical Description: 32 Posters

Folder 132 **Hungary**

Physical Description: 1 Poster

Folder 133 **Sweden**

Physical Description: 1 Poster

Folder 134-137 **USSR (Russia)**

Physical Description: 51 Posters
