"Reinforcement" (August 1917)

Abstract

By 1917, paper was in extremely short supply and normally limited to official publications. But German military and governmental authorities provided raw paper to some popular magazines so that these periodicals could continue to publish – just so long as they continued to support the war effort whole-heartedly. The provision of paper offers evidence that the military authorities saw these magazines as crucial to keeping up the morale of the home front.

In this illustration from a 1917 issue of *Simplicissimus* titled "reinforcement," somber soldiers march to the front with grim determination. The men's eyes are hidden by the new steel helmets that were first issued in 1916. But the soldiers' upright posture and rigid jawlines clearly show their determination. This is a starkly different style of image from those showing lighthearted scenes of easy victory from 1914. The backdrop here is gloomy resolution: this humor magazine recasts the severe manpower shortage of 1917 as an image of unflinching resolve.

The illustration is accompanied by a war poem written by a soldier.

Source

Riddled with anxious questions
We march in heavy step
A distant roll strides along,
as if a cross were struck.

In the starlit night
The canopy of heaven burns and blazes.

We feel like seeds before death,
unripe for harvest.

There it shrills through night and sorrow
Like hot courage from man to man,
Then a new faith leaps at us:
We are the people of tomorrow!

In the storm and the roar of death
No dying wind blows us away,
Because we are not seed and blossom,
No, we are the soil and the field.

Hans Bauer (Champagne)

Source: *Simplicissimus,* Jg. 22 Heft 20, August 14, 1917, p. 252.
http://www.simplicissimus.info/uploads/tx_lombkswjournaldb/pdf/1/22/22_20.pdf