

ON THE BRINK

The Politics of Conflict 1914-1916 Project

WORKSHEET 2

RECRUITMENT: NEWSPAPER SOURCE EXERCISE

Using a number of articles on the subject of recruitment taken from local newspapers published in 1914, this exercise encourages you to study the primary sources below and answer the following questions associated with each source.

Recruiting in Ireland.

The Carsonites are boasting of the number of their "Volunteers" who are enlisting for the war, although it is probable that for one Carsonite there are five or ten Nationalists enlisting, despite the soreness which has existed amongst Nationalists over the delay in enacting the Home Rule Bill. Until now, the Carsonites have contributed two or three thousand recruits. They boast they have 120,000 Volunteers. Instead of their "Voluntary Aid Detachments," which figured so prominently in the photographs, being sent to the front, Lady Londonderry proposes to keep them in Ulster hospitals for treatment of wounded sent home from the front. Northamptonshire has a population of 348,000, and it has provided 13,000 recruits. If the Carsonites represent a million of the population in Ulster, as they say they do, their contribution in recruits ought to be 40,000 on the Northamptonshire basis. Irishmen know Carson and "Ulster" if Englishmen do not. The Irish recruiting question may be left to take care of itself. The sneers of the Yellow Press affect Irishmen not at all.

1) According to the article, how many nationalists were enlisting for the war effort compared to unionists?

2) What was Lady Londonderry's proposal for the Voluntary Aid Detachments?

3) A statement is made regarding the number of recruits from Ulster. How many men does the author believe should enlist from Ulster?

Derry Journal, 18 September 1914

4) Now that you have read the newspaper article and answered a series of questions. Is this article written from a unionist or nationalist opinion? Circle below.

UNIONIST OPINION OR NATIONALIST OPINION

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**ULSTER AND THE ARMY.
MAGNIFICENT RESPONSE.
20,000 RECRUITS FROM THE PROVINCE.
NORTHERN LINE REGIMENTS.
A CALLOUS SNEER.**

It is regrettable to find that the Ulster division of Kitchener's Army is the subject of persistent misrepresentation in Radical and Nationalist papers. Every effort is being made to minimise its strength and to distort the position as regards recruiting in Ireland. Ulster is content to wait till the War Office issues the figures when the divisions are completed. The Director-General of Recruiting has not published figures since the 15th inst., on which date the number of men who had enlisted in Ireland was 20,419, or 0.93 of the male population, compared with 2.79 for Scotland, 2.41 for England, and 1.94 for Wales. Two-thirds of this total was contributed by Ulster, which up-to-date has the credit of having raised eighteen infantry battalions, a record which is not approached by any province in Ireland.

Larne Times and Weekly Telegraph, 3 October 1914

5) What does the author of the article suggest nationalist newspapers were publishing regarding the Ulster division?

6) How many men from Ireland had enlisted by October 1914?

7) When compared to the levels recruitment in Scotland, England and Wales, how would you describe the level of recruitment in Ireland?

8) How many infantry battalions had been raised by recruits from Ulster?

9) Now that you have read the newspaper article and answered a series of questions. Is this article written from a unionist or nationalist opinion? Circle below.

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Larne Times and Weekly Telegraph, 15 August 1914

10) The previous two newspaper articles are clearly swayed by political opinions. The photograph on the left, was published in the Larne Times and Weekly Telegraph in mid-August 1914. The photograph shows reservists leaving Ballycastle. What is interesting about these reservists and what does this show? Why does the photograph highlight that this group of men are from different backgrounds?

GROUP DISCUSSION!

Now that you have studied the primary sources, in groups discuss your answers with your classmates but also consider why recruitment was such a controversial issue in Ireland during the 1914-1916 period.