



A British WWI propaganda poster for Italian readers

Anonymous.
 Il Calamaro o' 'Pesce Diavolo' Prussiano.

London: printed by H. & C. Graham for the War Office, 1916. Lithograph, sheet 385 x 560mm.

£2,200

A very scarce propaganda map, with the twin octopi of Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire spreading their tentacles across central Europe. It was printed in London for dissemination in Italy: although Italy had joined the Entente powers against Germany and Austria in May 1915, public opinion was still divided. Not only did the Socialist parties oppose the war, but also the Italian government had existing diplomatic grievances with both Britain and France. This map updates Frederick Rose's famous 'Octopus Map' of 1877, with the Russia being replaced as the cephalopod. The text box top right quotes German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, 'We do not threaten small nations', while the map demarks the areas annexed by Prussia and Austria from the Partitions of Poland (1772-1795) & Schleswig-Holstein (1864) to Belgium (1914) and Serbia & Montenegro (1915). According to the Imperial War Museum the map was also published in Swedish (with no effect on Sweden's policy of neutrality) and English. Hopefully the proof-readers of the other versions were more careful: 'Calamaro' is Italian for squid, not octopus. As we sourced this map from Italy it seems that this example was actually circulated at the time.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM: IWM PST 13542.



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