



# Accepting the “Outsider”: Pro-Ottoman Propaganda Postcards in Great War Germany<sup>1</sup>

by Nicholas Rummell

*“Even propaganda, an allegedly self-evident, transparent language, needs to be deciphered.”*

–Carlo Ginzburg

World War I was a major event in the history of the world. Unfortunately, it is often overshadowed by more recent events such as World War II. With the one-hundred year anniversary of the start of World War I having recently occurred, numerous new examinations of different aspects of the war have emerged. With these new works a deeper understanding of the war and its effects is starting to take shape. Even with the recent flourishing of scholarship, more opportunities to expand the scope of

knowledge remain. Traditional studies of the First World War have well considered the mobilization of nations, armies, and men. However, most of the common understandings of World War I are still as a European war fought largely by white Europeans. Looking at different groups allows us to expand the analysis and understanding of the war to incorporate its larger imperialistic reality. When considering the culture of the First World War by focusing on those groups or individuals traditionally under-represented as ‘outsiders,’ an

<sup>1</sup> Many thanks must be expressed to those who have helped me with this research to present. There are far too many to name, but a very special thanks to Dr. Elizabeth Frierson must be included for her dedication and leadership, which really made much of this research possible! Most of the research for this paper was done during a National Endowment for the Humanities 2014 Summer Institute for College and University Professors hosted by Dr. Frierson at The University of Cincinnati, titled *World War I and the Arts: Sound, Vision, and Psyche*. An adapted version of this paper was given at the CCHA Southern Regional Conference in Tampa on 1 November 2014.

opportunity arises to look more in-depth at the experiences and depictions of these groups. In this work, the idea of the 'outsider' is narrowed down to the Ottoman Empire, and the medium used to examine their role in the war is propaganda postcards.

By 1914, the Ottoman Empire was widely known as the "sick man of Europe," and was traditionally seen as not being a part of the organization of Europe. As a religious-based, Muslim, authoritarian empire located mostly in the area of the Middle East, the empire was a general outsider and often viewed as such. As a result, when the alliance system started to develop in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire was not seen as a major player. However, as the war was approaching, numerous European powers realized that the empire could play a helpful role in the war effort. The German Empire was the most willing to court the Ottomans. Because of the Ottoman's geographic position between the Russians and the British in the Mediterranean, the Germans hoped for an alliance with the Turks, and they ultimately were able to secure this arrangement for a few reasons.

Even though the British were traditionally the ones supporting the Ottoman Empire—or at least helping to preserve it from dissolution—their encroachment into the Middle East created an issue for the Ottoman government. Their presence in Egypt and their assumed desire for other parts of the Middle East (including Mesopotamia, the Levant, and even control of the straits at Istanbul) led the Ottoman government and population to question the seriousness and

realization of a possible alliance. Furthermore, the Germans had traditionally been more benevolent towards (and approved of by) the Ottomans. By 1914, German military advisers had been in Turkey for nearly thirty years, and Turkish soldiers in the empire were trained in the German manner by German military officials. Additionally, the Germans had taken a 'turcophile' approach to the Ottoman Empire, establishing organizations and associations to study Islam, encouraging cultural exchanges, and facilitating tourism and investment. With most of the rest of the globe already carved up by imperialism, this was done to provide Germany with a place to expand her own infrastructure and economy.

However, an alliance would really only be successful as long as the Ottoman Empire remained a free and independent partner in the expanding global world. "The German Empire's increasingly manifest destiny as bulwarks of Islam against the imperialist rapacity of the Entente, a favorite theme among public intellectuals, contributed to the sense of German proprietorship in an Anatolian place in the sun."<sup>2</sup> And although the Ottomans and Austrians had a history of strained relations, the situation between them in 1914 was not terrible. According to Tilman Lüdke: "Initially, Germany entered the alliance with the Ottoman Empire with no further interests than to gain an ally able to harass Russia in the Caucasus and Britain in Egypt . . . (and) the Kaiser's commitment to *Islampolitic* greatly assisted (Max Freiherr von Oppenheim, head of the German *Intelligence Bureau for the East*<sup>3</sup>) to overcome the initial skepticism of the

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, 107.

<sup>3</sup> Oppenheim's work "Memorandum on revolutionizing the Islamic territories of our enemies" is widely regarded as a starting point for the German desire for an Ottoman call for jihad against the Entente Powers—some among the Arabs reportedly referred to him as Abu Jihad ("Father of the Holy War") (see Bremm). Although faced with initial skepticism (and later failures), he was able to find some success due to the German commitment to the alliance. (For more on the call for jihad, see Mustafa Aksakal "Holy War Made in Germany? Ottoman Origins of the 1914 Jihad"; Tilman Lüdke *Jihad Made in Germany*; and Klaus Jürgen Bremm "Propaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg.")

German civilian and military leadership” in the Empire<sup>4</sup>. As a result: “In the case of Germany and Austria, the matter was a lot easier to solve. Germany had few colonies with hardly any Muslim population to speak of, and the only predominantly Muslim territory controlled by Austria was Bosnia-Herzegovina.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, in August 1914 the development and completion of the German-Ottoman alliance was able to be (somewhat easily) arranged.

At this point, the German leadership set out to expand its propaganda to create new works supportive of their new alliance. This propaganda expansion, which was extremely evident in postcards, was organized not so much to woo the Ottoman Empire into an alliance, but rather to convince the people of Germany to receive with kindness the alliance with the Ottomans. While there was some German propaganda designed to cater to an Ottoman audience specifically, the propaganda examined here was, arguably, an attempt to convince the German people to accept the Ottomans as not only allies, but also as comrades and friends. The German propaganda machine designed these postcards to create a sense of trust and friendship between Germans, Austrians, and Ottomans, and to create popular acceptance of the German-Ottoman alliance.<sup>6</sup>

First, a word on propaganda. The First World War was the era in which propaganda originally acquired its evil connotations, and it left citizens of all nations questioning their government’s honesty and intent. In regards to propaganda during the war, it has been claimed that the “orgy of killing on the battlefield took

place against the backdrop of an orgy of loaded words, and the silences were equally deadly, for they often masked the truth.”<sup>7</sup> Although a “life long suspicion of the press was one lasting result of the ordinary man’s experience of the war,” while the war was occurring, and before the ‘suspicion’ was confirmed, propaganda did develop in a very important way.<sup>8</sup> In general, propaganda aims at portraying standard messages to their recipients in the “simplest possible way.”<sup>9</sup> The turn of the century marked the first time that ‘words’ and ‘pictures’ were so extremely important in the waging of war. German General Ludendorff was quoted as saying: “Words today are battles: the right words, battles won; the wrong words, battles lost.”<sup>10</sup> “In no previous conflict had ‘words’ been so important. . . . No longer did single battles decide wars; now whole nations were pitted against other nations requiring the cooperation of entire populations, both militarily and psychologically.”<sup>11</sup> Thus propaganda was a major aspect of the war effort for all countries involved.

The goal of propaganda is usually broad, including mobilizing the country, marshaling the animosity of the community against the enemy, keeping up morale, and maintaining friendly relations with allies. The use of images and simple slogans in propaganda (and specifically on the postcards) “were an ideal means to influence the masses, contributing to a positive image of the war and helping to keep up morale on both the home front and the battle front.”<sup>12</sup> The ideas of maintaining friendly relations with allies and keeping up home front morale are the

<sup>4</sup>Lüdke, 48.

<sup>5</sup>Lüdke, 52.

<sup>6</sup>Another aspect (which I have not had time to examine yet, but hope to do further research on) is to also look at the Austrian angle. Some aspects suggest that as much as they were aimed at the German population, there is also at least a facet that was aimed at the Austrians separately as well. This is important because the Austrians and Ottomans were more traditionally opponents of one another, and had a history of strained relations which would cause the Germans to desire to convince the Austrians that they should accept the Ottomans as well.

<sup>7</sup>Marquis, 468.

<sup>8</sup>Fussell, 316.

<sup>9</sup>Köröglu, xx.

<sup>10</sup>Bruntz, 3.

<sup>11</sup>Jowett and O’Donnell, 217.

<sup>12</sup>Bürgschwenter, 102.

main focus here. According to Harold Lasswell, “most of the friendly sentiments toward an ally are manufactured by one country *among its own population*. The stimulation of pro-ally emotions at home is more important than the stimulation of pro-ally sentiments abroad.”<sup>13</sup> Clearly, the production of propaganda postcards by Germany during the war aimed at promoting

*“Words today are battles: the right words, battles won; the wrong words, battles lost.”*

friendly sentiments towards the Ottoman Empire illustrates this point. Postcards allowed for the war to become something “familiar, easily recognized . . . (and) stripped of its horror and untidiness,” to help maintain or improve German morale on the home front, and to promote the Ottomans as an ally in the war effort.<sup>14</sup> The managing of the depiction of the war in the postcards was really a newly developed necessity, as it was “perhaps the first time in history that official policy produced events so shocking, bizarre, and stomach-turning that the events had to be tidied up for presentation to a highly literate mass population.”<sup>15</sup> They allowed and encouraged the Germans to identify with the war without being subjected to the horror, to accept their Turkish allies without questioning their differences, and to understand the need for Turkish power and assistance.

At a time when the only avenues of mass communication were printed newspapers,

journals, books, posters, and the mail, it was proper to consider ‘mail with a message,’ which was what postal cards were, as a medium of mass communication. Postal cards were immensely popular, and the economic mainstay of a vast and diverse printing industry throughout Western Europe. Postcards were inexpensive, cheap to send, ubiquitously available, and endlessly creative in the message their pictures conveyed. Based on the messages written on the cards (spelling errors, nature of the writing, etc.) it appears that the greatest users of such cards were lower middle-class and working-

class people, and it was also argued that because of the prominence of the cards in the private sphere, “postcards were an indication that the war was the ‘people’s business.’”<sup>16</sup> Privately produced picture postcards had become quite common in Germany by the 1880s, and the number of cards posted in Germany was steadily on the rise from 314 million in 1890 to almost 1.8 billion in 1913.<sup>17</sup> The tradition continued into the war period, which created a new, mass market for dissemination. During the war years of 1914-1918, it has been suggested that Germany and Austria produced “more than 50,000 different war related picture postcards.”<sup>18</sup>

German focus on propaganda at home and not in the Ottoman Empire itself, occurred for multiple reasons.<sup>19</sup> The first being that the Ottoman Empire did not have a long tradition of propaganda postcards. Postcards in the Ottoman Empire were only introduced in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1895), and were mostly used to support

<sup>13</sup> Lasswell, 124 (emphasis added).

<sup>16</sup> Smith, 78-79.

<sup>17</sup> Fraser, 39.

<sup>14</sup> Mosse, 133.

<sup>18</sup> Bürgschwenter, 102.

<sup>15</sup> Fussell, 178.

<sup>19</sup> In addition to the reasons

listed here, some argue that the Ottoman government tried to maintain its sovereignty and as a result was unwilling to have infidels in areas with heavy Muslim presences, and as a result, was “unwilling to let Germans carry out fact-finding missions or propaganda” (Lüdke, 83). However, with Germany’s strength and abilities, it is acceptable to believe that the Germans could have overcome this issue. It is safer to believe that although the Germans could find out information through both soldiers and fact-finding missions, they were not great at ‘listening to’ or

the Young Turk revolution.<sup>20</sup> They were mostly just photographs of leaders, such as Young Turk Leader Enver Paşa, and usually lacked any artistic depictions or phrases. This was because (as was stated earlier) a large portion of the Ottoman population was illiterate, and they could take meaning from the picture without needing any captions. Also, the Ottoman “literary output of 1914-1918 did not reflect a powerful propaganda like that present in the West, but was more of a difficult attempt to create a ‘national identity.’”<sup>21</sup> However, since the German postcards were often sent from friends and family, they could have made it to German officers, soldiers, or civilians in the Ottoman Empire, thus serving a dual purpose.<sup>22</sup> In addition, with the German tradition of postcard use well established, the picture postcard became one of the “most important instruments of trivialization” during the war.<sup>23</sup> As early as 1894, the German government “began systematically to employ a press policy for the purpose of building support for its foreign policy at home and abroad.”<sup>24</sup> By taking some of the violence and death out of the war, it was possible to promote the war, and allow agitators and supporters of the war to contravene what traditional post card collectors “presumed to be the unifying purpose of the picture postcard . . . which should establish a fraternal bond between all the peoples and nations.”<sup>25</sup> However, this was exactly the reason the producers of these postcards (both private and the state<sup>26</sup>) used this medium. The establishment

of a ‘fraternal bond’ between the Germans and Turks would go a long way to benefit the war effort, improve morale, [and enhance Muslim-Christian relations]. Also, this would help to build popular support in Germany for their Turkish friends and brothers. As a result, those producing the cards believed they were using the cards for their unifying purpose, to establish the bonds between peoples and nations; they were just choosing which peoples and nations to establish and strengthen the bonds between. In essence, they were promoting the unity of the German people and the German state as a parallel to the unity between the Germans and Turks, and between the German and Ottoman states.<sup>27</sup>

While the development of postcards was steadily on the rise in Germany—and throughout the world—the First World War gave a great stimulus to the propaganda postcard. Much of the propaganda from the First World

*By taking some of the violence and death out of the war, it was possible to promote the war. . . .*

War was meant to indoctrinate even the youngest citizens into the war effort, and this was most evident from the German propaganda postcards, which often depicted uniformed children in adult settings.<sup>28</sup> Ross Collins argues that “the war crystallized modern techniques of propaganda with every belligerent nation launching

‘understanding’ the information that they received, and their ignorance (or arrogance), as opposed to their ability to gain knowledge, was their downfall. For instance: “So complete was the domination of Turkey by Germany, not only through the providing of military instruction and equipment, but through commercial advances, that the Turks laid the blame of the Armenian massacres on the German teaching” (US War Dept. General Staff, 47). However, German intelligence gathering in the Ottoman Empire “mostly concerned itself with military matters; the idea of political espionage and determination of a population’s attitude had not yet found entrance into the institutional network” of Germany (Lüdke, 58).<sup>20</sup> Özen, 145. <sup>21</sup> Köröglü, xxi. <sup>22</sup> At the end of the war, there were as many as 20,000 Germans in the Ottoman Empire (Erickson, 233). <sup>23</sup> Mosse, 128.

<sup>24</sup> Mommsen, *Imperial Germany*, 190. <sup>25</sup> Bürgschwenter, 101-102. <sup>26</sup> Recent scholarship has argued that for propaganda in general, “the public sphere provided the real force behind the war effort in the first

enormous propaganda campaigns. It was aimed at everyone, including children.”<sup>29</sup> The idea of using images of children in propaganda follows the idea of creating positive content that can provoke patriotism, sympathy, and support. With children in the propaganda, the viewer is “hit on a sentimental and emotional level . . . to awaken his sympathy.”<sup>30</sup> The children motif conveys the message of war and the need for support, but it also puts the viewer in a state of mind where the war can be seen as patriotic and a service to the state, not as a violent death trap for the citizens. These concepts are portrayed in the postcards, which often show patriotism for each country by dressing smiling children in national uniforms, holding their national flags. The imagery of such postcards suggested the need for unity reinforced by the sayings on them (See Figure 1).

Arguably, the use of children in these postcards also serves some additional purposes, including the idea of the children as ‘outsiders’ in an ‘adult’ world of politics and war. To begin with, the postcards were aimed at the children themselves. The purpose of this was two-fold. First, it showed the children a vision of their own future, preparing them for eventual service to the country when the time came. At this point in German history, future wars appeared to be inevitable, and preparing the children for this would serve to benefit both the country and the children themselves. The second way the postcards were aimed at children was as agents of propaganda. Images of children were major

purchase motivators. Postcards portraying images of children ‘playing’ war would lead them to be more desirable for parents wishing to delight their children, and hopefully lead to more postcards being purchased by the general population.



**Figure 1:** *Bitten fest zusammen halten!*  
 (“Please hold firmly together!”)<sup>31</sup>

While children were partially a target of the propaganda, the real motivation was to have the message of the propaganda reach the adults who would purchase the cards and read them to the children. With this being the major aim, the use of children in the images also served to affect the parents (adults). “The postcard sentimentalizes, if possible, the notion of parting for adults, the breaking up of the family in service to the state.”<sup>32</sup> Explaining to (or better yet, reminding) parents that eventually their own sons and daughters will have to serve in battle for the betterment of the state goes a step further than just appealing to the children directly.<sup>33</sup> The call to nationalism and service serves to overshadow the fear and anxiety

two years of the conflict,” and that in Germany, for the most part, “the state seems to have left the postcard market completely to commercial producers” (Bürgschwenter, 101-103). However, regardless the producers, the intent appears to be similar if not exactly the same, and knowing the level of censorship, the private producers, even if they were not specifically working for the government, would have had a lot of governmental ‘influence’ in the content and message of their cards. <sup>27</sup> Jelavich, 34-35. <sup>28</sup> Kingsbury 209. <sup>29</sup> Collins, 13.

<sup>30</sup> Lukasch, 1. <sup>31</sup> Image retrieved from Hauptschule Innenstadt. “1915 Gallipoli/Gelibolu 2015: Kinderpostkarten.” <http://www.xn--oznabrck-c6a.de/fur-kinder/kinderpostkarten.html> Copyright HSI Osnabrück 2015. Used with permission. <sup>32</sup> Kingsbury, 209. <sup>33</sup> While the majority of the cards feature boys, there are some that show girls, although they are usually shown carrying out activities on the home front or partaking in activities such as nursing or helping wounded soldiers.

of having the children taken away by war. Finally, the use of children helps to build the bonds of friendship and comradery between the members of the alliance. The connections between members of the alliance (especially the German-Ottoman alliance) are often portrayed as young friendships, and the parallel with childhood is obvious. Such connections were especially seen in the postcard above (Figure 1) which calls for the allies to ‘hold firm’ in their friendship and alliance. It is quickly recognizable that taking a photo as such would take time, and those being photographed would need to hold still long enough for the picture to be taken. Using this to imply that the alliance was not just a ‘pose’ that could be held quickly, but one that would take some time and patience reiterated the strength and longevity of the alliance, and even became a plea to the members of each country (including the civilians) to hold firm in their connection, even though the war was taking longer than planned. The image of a long friendship, started in youth and continued through the war gave the illusion of strength and longevity, and by using smiling, happy children, holding hands and playing together, helped to keep the war light and palatable to the viewers.

Showing the children in adult roles also added another level to the ‘outsider’ theme. Once the idea of accepting all allies as participants emerged, it paralleled the idea of the Ottoman Empire being accepted into the alliance and war. Because of the German view of the ‘childish’ nature of the Ottomans—uneducated, illiterate, naïve, immature, and not as developed as the Germans, or the rest of Europe in general—the use of children can be read as another facet of including a group that was not typically going to



**Figure 2:** *Ich sei, gewährt mir die Bitte, In eurem Bunde der Dritte* (“’Tis mine your suppliant not to be, Ah let the band of love be three!”)<sup>36</sup>

be part of the war effort, much like the Ottomans were not expected (at first, before the alliance) to be part of the fighting. With children portrayed on the postcards as looking up to the soldiers and emulating them, it helps to remove the focus from the violence, terror and death of the war. It also alludes to the Ottomans being the ‘children’ in this situation, looking up to the Germans and emulating them the way a child does an adult. Since many postcards avoided realistic war images, it “made it easier to stage and manipulate representations of war . . . (and thus) The Myth of War Experience” as Mosse argues, “was advanced by postcards which sanitized the war and depicted its manageability.”<sup>34</sup> This ‘kinder, gentler’ portrayal of the war through innocent children becomes a major component of German propaganda postcards during the Great War.<sup>35</sup>

The most telling postcard that really aimed at ‘accepting the outsider,’ is shown above (Figure 2). As seen on this card, there is the image of three children—one Austrian, one Ottoman, and one German—holding hands, dressed in military uniforms, and smiling. When

<sup>34</sup> Mosse, 128-129.

<sup>35</sup> Books for children that glorified war were part of youth literature even before the war. After the wars of German unification, many patriotic children’s books emerged, especially concerning the war for 1870-1871 (for more see Lukasch). With this idea already prominent, the shift in medium from books to postcards was a simple change that allowed for a wider audience nation-wide and internationally.

<sup>36</sup> Image retrieved from Hauptschule Innenstadt. “1915 Gallipoli/Gelibolu 2015: Kinderpostkarten.”

looking at this postcard, many of the themes and concepts discussed above are present. There is an obvious expression of the alliance between Germany, the Ottoman Empire, and Austria, and an appearance of friendship (or at least friendly relations) between the members. Again present are symbols of nationalism and patriotism evidenced by the distinct military uniforms. However, only the Ottoman 'soldier' is presented with a flag, suggesting that the intended audience should recognize the German and the Austrian based on their uniforms and equipment. The Ottoman, readily identified by his distinctive fez, is also shown with the Ottoman flag, to further illustrate where he is from and who he represents. The image helps support the argument that it was designed for a domestic German audience, as they might not be as familiar with the image of the Turk. Also, as mentioned above, the children are happy and holding hands, looking like friends more than mere allies.

They are portraying this image of 'friendship' without a direct reference to the war or fighting. As shown earlier (in Figure 1) this attempt to hit the viewer on a sentimental level is coupled with the 'kinder, gentler' image of the war by avoiding realistic images of fighting or death.

A further detail on this card (as well as Figure 1) is the artistic depiction of the Ottoman child. To begin with, the Ottoman boy is shorter in stature than both the German and the Austrian. This shortness in height again supports the domestic nature of the card. By placing the German boy as the tallest, the sense of pride and importance in the German role in the war and alliance are stated; a fact that the German citizens

would certainly notice and appreciate due to the historical strength of their army. As seen in these two cards—and through the extreme majority of others—the size of the boy soldiers was often used to represent the relative importance of each country in the war effort (at least according to the culture producing the cards, in this case, the Germans). In addition to the stature of the Ottoman, his facial features are also often different in appearance than the German and Austrian. The Ottoman soldier is usually shown with a 'younger' less threatening face, relating back to the 'childishness' of the empire. The image almost reads as if the Ottoman is the younger brother of the two European powers, and they are not only asking the viewer to accept them as allies,

*Showing the children in adult roles also added another level to the 'outsider' theme.*

but also suggesting that it is their 'responsibility' to look after and help support their 'younger sibling.' Finally, when looking directly at the image of the Ottoman boy, he is often drawn with a slightly darker, more olive complexion, with dark hair, dark, smaller eyes (when visible), and with smaller and slightly wider noses.<sup>37</sup> All of these themes and ideas continue to reiterate the thought of the Ottomans as outsiders, not being the same in size, importance, intelligence, maturity, or quality as the Germans, yet they still aim at convincing the German population that they have a responsibility to help the Ottomans while also maintaining that they are important for the war effort and the alliance.<sup>38</sup>

<http://www.xn--oznabrck-c6a.de/fur-kinder/kinderpostkarten.html> Copyright HSI Osnabrück 2015. Used with permission.

<sup>37</sup> The darker complexion is more evident in earlier postcards, which will be explained later. The olive completion is hard to distinguish in some images, but for the most part, there are slight but distinct differences between the Ottoman soldier and the European ones.

<sup>38</sup> Although the Germans undoubtedly believed in their superiority over the Ottomans, they still recognized the importance of the alliance, and the assistance that



The postcard (Figure 2) becomes more interesting when looking at the writing on the card. The plea written on this card comes from the writings of the German poet and playwright Friedrich von Schiller. The use of Schiller's words on the card is important, and again points directly to a German audience. Schiller was a very well-known writer in Germany, who was often referred to as the 'German Shakespeare,' and was

*“Ich sei, gewährt mir die Bitte,  
In eurem bunde der Dritte!”*

considered to be one of the most commanding writers in German history, “because like no other poet of his day, he has become a part of the living memory of his people and, almost against his will, has shaped the categories of their thinking.”<sup>39</sup> Most Germans (and German speakers in general) would be familiar with this poem, and with Schiller's work in general; his words were constantly, according to Mathäs, “on the lips and in the hearts of all true Germans.”<sup>40</sup> His work was often filled with ideas of unity, duty, and nationalism, which would all be welcomed in the propaganda, trying to bring peoples and nations together for the war effort. In addition, Schiller was not only a poet, but also a historian, and he tended to blend his artistic and historical abilities to become an ‘artistic historian,’ and “as such he is dangerous in yet another way. The artistic historian glorifies the past . . . (and) his art has the ability to enslave others to its power, seducing them to repeat the past . . . (not) merely to survive the past but, indeed, imaginatively to

relive it, and feel it on the most visceral possible level . . . to make its viewers believe that they were participants in the historical venues whose images they perceived.”<sup>41</sup> With all of this in mind, choosing such a cultural icon, whose work resonated with German nationalism, and was basically—unintentionally—designed for propaganda, makes sense on the most basic and general levels.

However, the specific phrase used on this card adds even more depth to its importance. The passage “*Ich sei, gewährt mir die Bitte,/ In eurem bunde der Dritte!*” comes from one of Schiller's ballads, *Die BÜRGHSCHAFT* (The Hostage).<sup>42</sup> The phrase is loosely translated as “I would be—please grant me this request,/ The third in your group,” (alternate translation: “Tis mine your suppliant now to be,/ Ah, let the band of love, be three”). These lines are the closing lines of the ballad, and most Germans would be familiar with this poem and the story it implies. In *Die BÜRGHSCHAFT*, the main character Moerus fails in an attempt to kill the despotic king Dionysius, and is captured and sentenced to death.<sup>43</sup> Moerus asks for a delay in his punishment, so that he can go marry his sister to her designated husband, and Dionysius grants this request, however he requires that a ‘hostage’ be held in Moerus' place to guarantee his return. Moerus' friend volunteers to be the hostage, and Dionysius gives him three days to carry out his task. If Moerus did not return in the allotted time, his friend, the hostage, would be executed in his place. To Dionysius' astonishment Moerus, despite facing numerous obstacles such as floods, assaults, and lack of water on the way back to his own

the Ottomans could provide. As will be shown later (Figure 3) the success of the Ottomans in certain theaters of the war may have been surprising to the Germans (see Gallipoli) but it also allowed for justification after the fact for their original desire to bring the Ottomans on board. <sup>39</sup> Rehder, 11. <sup>40</sup> Breul, 217.

<sup>41</sup> Hammer, 160-162.

<sup>42</sup> Schiller, *Die BÜRGHSCHAFT* 192.

<sup>43</sup> The ballad itself is set in

the ancient Greek polis of Syracuse, again showing Schiller's desire to draw the past into the present. Of note, Schiller reworked the ballad in 1804 and changed the main character's name to Damon. It was translated to English

execution, at the last minute returns to save his friend. Dionysius, ashamed by his own actions, and thoroughly impressed by Moerus' loyalty not only to his friend, but also to the 'rule of law,' decides that both Moerus and his hostage can go free and escape any punishment. Finally, he then asks to be considered as a friend in their midst ("I would be—please grant me this request,/ The third in your group").<sup>44</sup> These qualities, namely that "he was loyal to his own word and secondly, he honoured the loyalty of his friend—and he did not want his friend to be victimized for *his* dishonesty," were so overwhelming to the despotic king, that not only did he let them go free, but he asked to join them in their friendship.<sup>45</sup>

Placing the ballad's last line on the propaganda postcard goes a long way towards trying to get the German people to accept the Ottoman Empire as an ally and friend in a way that would be noticed by most citizens. In reality, it can be read in two ways (and probably was designed to be read in both): first it attempted to show the German population that the Ottomans had a desire to join them, and second that the Germans were, like Moerus, loyal to their word

### *What more vivid wording could the Germans ask for, than the 'German Shakespeare,'?*

and their friends and allies. This message could also be directed, secondarily, at the Austrians, with the Germans implying that they are the friends that will always 'come back for' their allies. Finally, it could be argued that this message of loyalty and faithfulness to allies was directed at

the Ottoman population as well.<sup>46</sup> Germans of all walks of life would be expected to understand and accept this message on its multiple levels, because of their familiarity with Schiller, and the historical ideas of unity and duty for which he was known.

Further support for Schiller's importance can be found directly from a conference held in 1917 by the *Kriegspresseamt* (War Press Office) on the propaganda effort. Major Stotten of the *Kriegspresseamt* was looking for help on what would be effective, and it was suggested that he use "short but strong words which go straight to the heart of the people and steel their desire for victory. . . . Everything depends on the vividness of the wording."<sup>47</sup> What more vivid wording could the Germans ask for, than the 'German Shakespeare,' who throughout his numerous popular works had already coveted the unity and loyalty of the German people, and who told them both that *Der Soldat allein, ist der freie Mann* ("The soldier alone, is the free man"),<sup>48</sup> and that they should *Drum haltet fest zusammen—fest und ewig. . . . Seid einig—einig—einig—* ("Hold fast together, then,—forever fast. . . . Be one—be one—be one—")<sup>49</sup> It was as if Schiller's work was specifically made for this purpose, and the German *Kriegspresseamt* used this to their greatest advantage.

A final note on the text used on the postcards, again points to Schiller. In the two other cards examined (Figure 1 and Figure 3), the message discussed 'holding firmly together.' While not specifically verbatim from Schiller's teas mentioned above, both are extremely similar to the passage from *Wilhelm Tell*.<sup>50</sup> Although they

(anonymously) in 1902. <sup>44</sup> See Schiller, *Die Bürgerschaft*, 1799; and Scott Horton, "Schiller's 'The Hostage.'" *Harper's Magazine: Browsings, The Harper's Blog*. <sup>45</sup> Padture, 187.

<sup>46</sup> However, because of the high rate of illiteracy and the lack of knowledge of German literature, this seems to be a stretch, and the Ottoman citizens probably would not have truly gotten, or understood, this message. <sup>47</sup> Marquis, 491.

<sup>48</sup> Schiller, "Reiterlied," 137. <sup>49</sup> Schiller, *Wilhelm Tell*, 121. <sup>50</sup> The original text from Wilhelm is *Drum haltet fest zusammen* ("Hold fast together, then"), and the text on the other postcards are *Bitten*

are not exactly the same, they are close enough that most German readers would immediately pick up on the connection, and the link to nationalism and unity that was forever present in Schiller's work would be invoked in the minds of the readers.

Finally, looking at the images together, it is possible to revisit one of the points raised above.<sup>52</sup> When looking at the card *Wir halten fest und treu zusammen* (Figure 3), there is a noticeable difference when compared to the previous two. In this card, as mentioned above, the text is very similar, and shows the connection to the earlier themes and to the writings of Schiller. However, when looking at the image and placement of the Ottoman soldier, there is an apparent difference. To begin with, the Ottoman child, while still being smaller than the others, is hoisted on the shoulders of the German boy, effectively raising him to the top, and most important part, of the image. In addition, the skin tone and features of the Ottoman boy are lighter and much more European. In this image, it appears (through the image at least) that the Ottoman boy, and by extension, the Ottoman Empire, have been accepted by the Germans.<sup>53</sup> This position of prominence and height, usually reserved for the German representative, shows the viewer that although he started out small, childish, and an outsider, the Ottoman has now been accepted because of the role he played in the war effort.<sup>54</sup> This 'Europeanization' of the Ottoman outsider makes him more 'palatable' to the German populations, and allows him to become an



**Figure 3:** *Wir halten fest und treu zusammen* (“We firmly and faithfully hold/stick together”)<sup>51</sup>

‘insider’ now, on more equal footing with his European allies.

The importance of the analysis of these postcards is to understand the knowledge available from these images without having any proper context or printing information. These postcards provide a wealth of data on how the Germans saw themselves and their allies. By understanding and remembering that “we see the world through the stories we tell,”<sup>55</sup> and that “wartime propaganda derives from national culture,”<sup>56</sup> these propaganda postcards provide

*fest zusammen halten!* (“Please hold firmly together” {Figure 2}), and *Wir halten fest und treu zusammen* (“We firmly and faithfully hold together” {Figure 3}).

<sup>51</sup> Image of postcard retrieved from *Central Powers WWI Propaganda* at <http://imgkid.com/>. Image in the “public domain” and used under the understanding of “fair use” as stated in U.S. Copyright Law.

<sup>52</sup> In actuality, there are hundreds of German produced propaganda postcards that fit with the ones examined here. I have chosen the three included because they provide a good overview of the ideas, themes, images, and phrases that are common among the majority of them.

<sup>53</sup> Even if this was not truly the case ‘on the ground’ in Germany, the creators of this card (and numerous

insight into how the war was viewed by the Germans, and the imagery they believed would allow them to cultivate a relationship between their subjects and their allies, the Ottomans. The use of aspects of that national culture, including the perception of the outsider, the wealth of recognizable literature, and the expressions of unity underscored with nationalism allowed for postcard propaganda well designed for its specific purposes.

Unfortunately for the German war effort, this level of depth and understanding was not always used in the propaganda. The postcards discussed here were successful, for the most part, in getting the German population to see the importance of the Ottoman alliance, and for them to be accepted. However, the Germans had little success with propaganda (postcards or otherwise) aimed directly at the Ottoman subjects, and they also had little success with propaganda concerning other aspects of the war. “Defensiveness verging on self-pity was to be the dominant tone in Germany’s propaganda effort,” and the major problem became that German leadership lost contact with the public because “all honest expressions of opinion having been stifled by censorship, any ‘feel’ for public opinion had been lost.”<sup>57</sup> There was evidence to suggest that “by emphasizing common interest and the certainty of a German victory, Germany was able to control opinions and encourage her allies,” but she could not do enough to maintain the support of her own people.<sup>58</sup>

Perhaps if the time, effort, and dedication used to secure the acceptance of the Ottomans

as allies were put into all aspects of German propaganda it would have been more successful, and the leaders of the NAZI party later in Germany could not contend that they “were not beaten on the battlefield, but were defeated in the war of words.”<sup>59</sup> This argument, made by many NAZI leaders, most specifically Hitler, was instrumental in their rise to power. According to Hitler:

*[T]he work done on our side being worse than insignificant It was the total failure of the whole German system of information—a failure which was perfectly obvious to every soldier. . . . All that was undertaken in this direction was so utterly inadequate and misconceived from the very beginning that not only did it prove useless but at times harmful.*<sup>60</sup>

As a result, it is possible that with a more successful propaganda program in World War I—one that echoed the more successful pro-Ottoman propaganda of the early war—the Germans may have had more success in the war, or, at least, the NAZI party may not have gained as much support and assistance in their rise to power. In short, the German population was willing to accept the ‘outsider,’ but they were unable to accept their own cause, or the inadequate propaganda concerning their opponents and enemies.

other similar cards) wanted to further express this acceptance through the image. <sup>54</sup> I contend that this postcard probably was created and issued after the Ottoman victory at Gallipoli, showing everyone, but specifically the German population, that by sticking together and accepting the Ottomans, they have produced a successful alliance that was able to defeat the British contingent at the straits, and thus serves to follow up on the earlier requests for acceptance.

<sup>55</sup> Danner, 88.

<sup>56</sup> Köröglü, xv

<sup>57</sup> Marquis, 489-491.

<sup>58</sup> Welch, 23.

<sup>59</sup> Eugen Hadamovsky, deputy to Joseph Goebbels, quoted in Marquis, 493.

<sup>60</sup> Hitler, 145.

## Bibliography

- Aksakal, Mustafa. "Holy War Made in Germany? Ottoman Origins of the 1914 Jihad." *War in History* 18.2 (2011): 184-199.
- Anderson, Margaret Lavinia. "'Down in Turkey, far away': Human Rights, the Armenian Massacres, and Orientalism in Wilhelmine Germany." *The Journal of Modern History* 79.1 (March 2007): 80-111.
- Bernhard, Irma and Willi. *Bildpostkartenkatalog. Deutschland 1870-1945: 1784 Abbildungen Preise und Beschreibung in deutsch, english und französisch*. Hamburg: Willi Bernhard, 1972.
- Bremm, Klaus Jürgen. "Propaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg." Thesis, Darmstadt, 2013.
- Breul, Karl. "Schiller's Lyrics—The Period of Maturity." *The Modern Quarterly of Language and Literature* 1.3 (November 1898): 216-222.
- Bruntz, George G. *Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1938.
- Bürgschwenter, Joachim. "War Relief, Patriotism and Art: The State-Run Production of Picture Postcards in Austria 1914-1918." *Austrian Studies* 21 (2013): 99-120.
- Collins, Ross F. "This is your Propaganda, Kids: Building a War Myth for World War I Children." *Journalism History* 38.1 (Spring 2012): 13-22.
- Danton, George H. "Schiller and Confucius." *The German Quarterly* 16.4 (November 1943): 173-182.
- Danner, Mark. "Iraq: The New War." *New York Review of Books* (September 25, 2003): 88.
- Erickson, Edward J. *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001.
- Fraser, John. "Propaganda on the Picture Postcard." *Oxford Art Journal* 3.2 (October, 1980): 39-47.
- Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Ginzburg, Carlo. "'Your Country Needs You': A Case Study in Political Iconography." *History Workshop Journal* 52 (Autumn, 2001): 1-22.
- Hauptschule Innenstadt. "1915 Gallipoli/Gelibolu 2015: Kinderpostkarten." <http://www.xn--oznabrck-c6a.de/fur-kinder/kinderpostkarten.html> Copyright HSI Osnabrück 2015.

- Hammer, Stephanie Barbé. "Schiller, Time and Again." *The German Quarterly* 67.2 (Spring 1994): 153-172.
- Hearne, Betsy Gould, Janice M. Del Negro, Christine Jenkins, and Deborah Stevenson (Eds.). *Story: From Fireplace to Cyberspace: Connecting Children and Narrative*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1998.
- Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. Translated by James Murphy. London: Hurst and Blackett, 1939.
- Holt, Tonie, and Valmai Holt. *Till the Boys come Home: The Picture Postcards of the First World War*. Newtown Square, PA: Deltiologists of America, 1977.
- Horton, Scott. "Schiller's 'The Hostage.'" *Harper's Magazine: Browsings, The Harper's Blog*. 16 September 2007. <http://harpers.org/blog/2007/09/schillers-the-hostage/> 30 April 2015.
- Jelavich, Peter. "German Culture in the Great War," in Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.) *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914-1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell. *Propaganda and Persuasion* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2012.
- Kingsbury, Celia Malone. *For Home and Country: World War I Propaganda on the Home Front*. Lincoln; University of Nebraska Press, 2010.
- Köröglü, Erol. *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity: Literature in Turkey During World War I*. London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007.
- Kosanovich, Jerry and Paul Hageman. "Propaganda Postcards of the Great War." <http://www.ww1-propaganda-cards.com/> Copyright © Paul Hageman (NL) / Jerry Kosanovich (USA), 1999-2010.
- Lasswell, Harold D. *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927.
- Lüdke, Tilman. *Jihad made in Germany: Ottoman and German Propaganda and Intelligence Operations in the First World War*. Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005.
- Lukasch, Peter. *Der muss haben ein Gewehr: Krieg, Militarismus und Patriotische Erziehung in Kindermedien vom 18 Jhdt. bis in die Gegenwart*. Books-on-demand, 10 April 2012.
- Mackaman, Douglas and Michael Mays (Eds.). *World War I and the cultures of Modernity*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000.

- Marquis, Alice Goldfarb. "Words as Weapons: Propaganda in Britain and Germany during the First World War." *Journal of Contemporary History* 13.3 (July 1978): 467-498.
- Mathäs, Alexander. "Schiller's 'Die Sendung Moses.'" *The German Quarterly* 81.3 (Summer 2008): 283-301.
- Mommsen, Wolfgang J. *Imperial Germany 1867-1918: Politics, Culture, and Society in an Authoritarian State*. London: Arnold Press, 1997.
- Mommsen, Wolfgang J. "German Artists, Writers, and Intellectuals and the Meaning of War, 1914-1918," in John Horne (ed.) *State, Society, and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997: 21-38.
- Mosse, George L. *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Moyer, Laurence. *Victory must be ours: Germany in the Great War, 1914-1918*. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1995.
- Özen, Mustafa. "Visual representation and Propaganda: Early Films and Postcards in the Ottoman Empire, 1895-1914." *Early Popular Visual Culture* 6.2 (July 2008): 145-157.
- Padtare, Rajendra. "Concept of 'Friendship' as depicted in Schiller's *Ballad Die Bürgschaft*." *Shodh, Samiksha aur Mulyankan (International Research Journal)* 2.7 (Aug. 2009): 187-190.
- Ponsonby, Arthur. *Falsehood in War-Time: Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated throughout the Nations during the Great War*. New York: Dutton, 1928.
- Rehder, Helmut. "The Four Seals of Schiller," in A. Leslie Wilson (ed.) *A Schiller Symposium in Observance of the Bicentenary of Schiller's Birth*. Austin: University of Texas, 1960: 11-30.
- Roshwald, Aviel and Richard Stites (eds.) *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914-1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Schiller, Friedrich von. "Die Bürgschaft" ("The Hostage") in Friedrich Schiller (ed.) *Musen Almanach für das Jahr 1799*. Tübingen: J.G. Cottaischen Buchhandlung, 1799: 176-192.
- Schiller, Friedrich von. "Reiterlied: Aus dem Wallenstein," in Friedrich Schiller (ed.) *Musen Almanach für das Jahr 1798*. Tübingen: J.G. Cottaischen Buchhandlung, 1798: 137-140.
- Schiller, Friedrich von. *Wilhelm Tell, Schauspiel*, edited and introduction by Arthur Hubbell Palmer. New York: H. Holt and Company, 1898.

- Seidlin, Oskar. "Schiller: Poet of Politics," in A. Leslie Wilson (ed.) *A Schiller Symposium in Observance of the Bicentenary of Schiller's Birth*. Austin: University of Texas, 1960: 31-50.
- Smith, Jeffrey R. "The First World War and the Public Sphere in Germany," in Douglas Mackaman and Michael Mays (Eds.) *World War I and the Cultures of Modernity*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000: 68-80.
- Staff, Frank. *The Picture Postcard and its Origins*. New York: Frederick A Praeger Publishers, 1966.
- Stevenson, Randall. *Literature and The Great War: 1914-1918*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- United States War Department General Staff. *Propaganda in its Military and Legal Aspects*. Washington: Military Intelligence Branch, Executive Division, General Staff, 1918.
- Wall, Richard and Jay Winter (Eds.). *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914-1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Wasserman, Janet I. "A Schubert Iconography: Painters, Sculptors, Lithographers, Illustrators, Silhouettists, Engravers, and Others Known or Said to Have Produced a Likeness of Franz Schubert." *Music in Art* 28.1/2 (Spring-Fall 2003): 199-241.
- Weigand, Hermann J. "Schiller: Transfiguration of a Titan," in A. Leslie Wilson (ed.) *A Schiller Symposium in Observance of the Bicentenary of Schiller's Birth*. Austin: University of Texas, 1960: 85-132.
- Welch, David. *Germany, Propaganda and Total War, 1914-1918: The Sins of Omission*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000.
- Wilson, A. Leslie (ed.) *A Schiller Symposium in Observance of the Bicentenary of Schiller's Birth*. Austin: University of Texas, 1960.