

The first victim in war times is the truth. This is still true nowadays, despite modern high-speed communication means. I am not talking about possible reasons why conflicts break out. Meant is how official sources inform their people at home, what they say and show, and what they *forget* to tell. *Propaganda* is a term that covers a wide field. Propaganda directed against the enemy, the evil, to make clear why action was necessary. Propaganda can also be used against the own public. Disinformation, stressing own successful operations and losses on the enemies side. In general no officials want the public fully informed, especially not from independent side. Propaganda includes manipulation and censorship. Pictures can be very meaningful. Together with the right, matching slogan the perfect tool for propaganda and working better than long explanations.

World War One produced plenty of "propaganda cards" on all sides. The direct, aggressive type but also more subtle ones. The cards published did change while the war and killing went on. Keep in mind that all picture/war postcards (in Germany) had to pass the official censors. It appears to me however, that there was room for publishers to show the war as it was. And, these cards were bought and sent home. I came across a huge series of which I would like to show you few samples. Form your own opinion please.

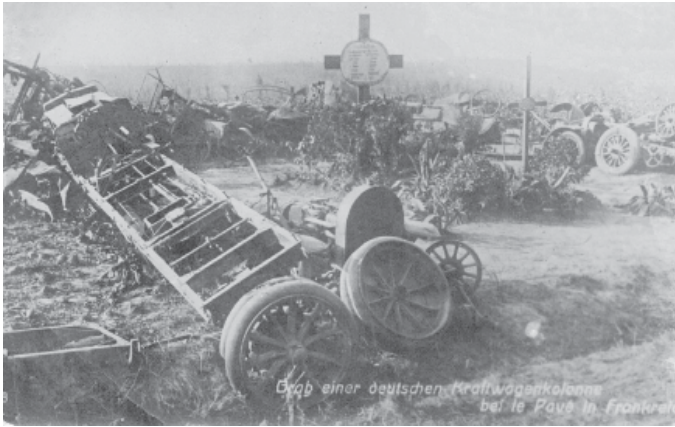


← From early days of the Great War dates this German propaganda card, published as no. 54 by *Wilhelm S. Schröder Nachf., Berlin* (publisher/wholesaler better known under *W. S.+ S. B.*). The mighty *Michel* (plain honest German) holds a note that further declarations of war are accepted. Around his feet, figures representing France, England, Belgium, Russia and Japan are in trouble with German soldiers. Signed "Ad. Hoffmann". Monochrome colotype. P/u Sept. 1914.

(Below) All cards distributed by a *Heinr. Knobloch, Blasewitz (Dresden)*. Halftone printed, some b/w, others in dark green, violet, dark brown). Card no. always found on picture side. *Untypical "Forest path"* card no. 72 not p/u, all other cards in 200 no. range p/u Jan/Feb. 1917, sent home by a member of the 2nd Inf. Div., at that time at the western front I believe. Views look like press photos. However, the absence of any captions and other information make these cards different in my opinion. Plenty destroyed buildings, landscape, trenches, usually one or two German soldiers in the picture. But no *This town was destroyed by French artillery - Village xyz after being occupied by German troops* or similar messages. Views show nothing but war pictures, without comment, something the soldiers in the field were used to. Perhaps the same views appeared in a war publication together with full description?

— WORLD WAR ONE —
**Propaganda
 Cards (?)**
 —————





The remains and graves of a German convoy near Le Pavé, France. Photo card without publ. imprint, not p/u. A small "8" is found at the lower left corner. When the war went on, cards like this turned up more often. Usually without any publisher imprint, some issued only in small number. I am not sure if this view would have received official authorization. Caption tells it as it was without any emotionalism. The way the caption was written as well as the small number makes me believe that a photographer behind the front produced a small run of cards on photo paper with pre-printed address side.



Veteran from East-Prussia with family in a refugee camp. A number of the people in East-Prussia left their homes when Russian troops attacked. The decorated old man on the right a veteran? The child at lower right corner was added to the picture. Good colotype printed (brown doubletone) by Gebr. Deyhle & Wagner; Berlin, a huge postcard printer dealt with in next TPA. This is a "Wohlfahrts-Postkarte" (welfare postcard) of the "Ostpreußenhilfe", to raise money for the East Prussian refugees. General distributor was J. Wielandt & Co. also from Berlin. Civilians are always the losers/victims of conflicts.

↓ (former Kaiser) Wilhelm II on his way to Holland – forced to say farewell to his native country. The end of WW1 was also the end of monarchy in Germany. Wilhelm II had to resign on Nov. 9, 1918 and went to Holland. Together with his family and a small staff Wilhelm II stayed as guest for some time with Count Godard Bentinck at castle Amerongen. On May 15, 1920 the former Kaiser moved into "Haus Doorn", a country seat situated near the city of Utrecht. Here he continued the luxury life he was used to until his death on June 4, 1941. "Haus Doorn" is now a museum holding a collection of about 15,000 different items from the Kaiser era.

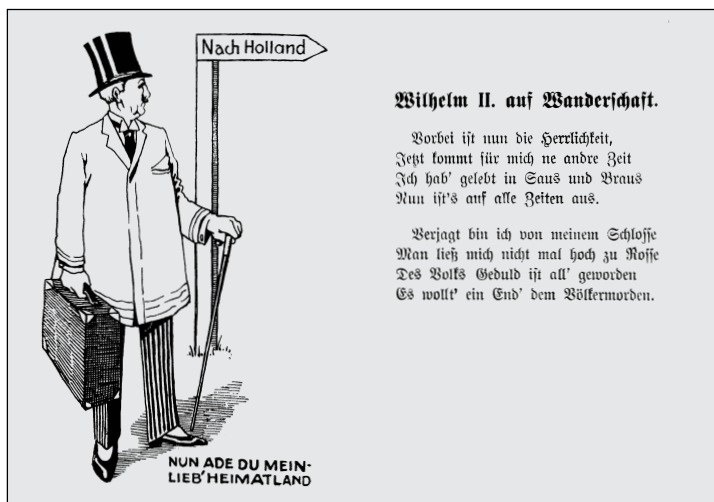
The card below bears a defamatory message in rhyme form. The meaning is that Wilhelm's pomp and circumstance is now over for all times, that he was chased away from his palace. The German people lost their patience, wanted an end of the war/genocide.

B/w autotypy, distributed by a F. Dommes from Leipzig-Plagwitz. Not often seen card.

→ Nordische Kunstanstalt Ernst Schmidt & Co. from Lübeck (formed 1908 and still around today) published and printed (colotype) this view of a memorial for the dead of the German 9. Res. Army Corps near Avricourt. This place believed to be found somewhere in the Somme region. The 9. Res. Army Corps lost more than half of their men (dead, missing, wounded) during the Somme Battle in mid 1916. The inscription of the unusual monument is hard to read. The plate below bears an inscription in French – added later for the dead French soldiers? Two cities are mentioned: Noyon and Roye. Both places turn up frequently in WW1 literature, even as late as April 1918.

The monument has an interesting shape. On top of a stone plinth, a pyramid was erected. It looks that gun cases were used, something they had surely available in great quantity. Unusual, but matching somehow.

This card is not p/u. At least post-1916 origin I believe, or perhaps even post-war date.



Sommer flowers near the Radio Tower – Berlin 1944. Photo card, not p/u, no publ. This peaceful scenery makes you believe everything is normal – but Berlin was at that time a permanent target of allied air-raids. This card was also a propaganda tool.