

H. C. KEMP*

Flags of Nations on Picture Postcards

On the 1st October 1869 the postcard was officially adopted for use in Austria. Economic motives were of decisive importance to make the proposal of Dr. E. Hermann for the introduction of the postcard a success. The manner of corresponding, especially when brief reports were concerned, was in the opinion of Dr. Hermann, useless expensive. Envelope, letter-paper and stamp should be compressed to one item: the postcard. It was however not a new idea. On the 5th Postal Conference held in 1865 in Karlsruhe, "Geheimer Postrat" Von Stephan had a similar idea already, but afraid that it would not be approved by the Conference he did not submit it for discussion.

Together with the introduction of the postcard, the basis was laid down for the "birth" of the picture-postcard. Also in this respect the honour is due to Austria, as it was the Burgomaster of Melk who had a picture of the cloister of that village printed on a series of official postcards.

It lasted until the end of the 19th century before the picture postcard attained great popularity.

The picture postcard offered the possibility to private persons to depict their feelings on it and to send these to their relations. In this respect private persons were less restrained than Governments as far as the conception of their stamps was concerned.

The use of flags as a motive on picture postcards was limited until the end of the 19th century. About the change of that cen-

*Lecture by Mr. Kl. Sierksma. Additional informations to the 100 slides projection were given by Mr. Sierksma.

tury several series of picture postcards were published on specific subjects, such for instance as uniforms, costumes etc. But also pictures of national flags. In the Netherlands the publisher N.J. Boon issued series of picture postcards showing flags of various nations. In the United Kingdom it were Messrs. R. Tuck and Sons who published a combined series of national colours and costumes. Publishers Tuck in Paris published a very attractive series in which national flags, together with arms and map were combined. Many other examples can be quoted.

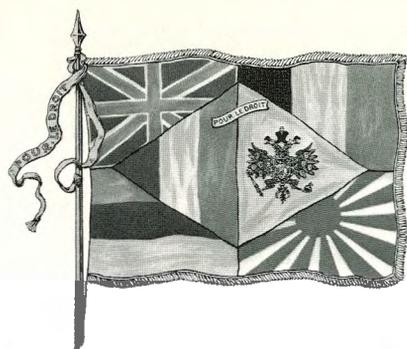
The French series "La Poste en ..." brought out by Kunzli Frères in Paris, showing the postman in his uniform, the flag and a stamp print of the country concerned, were very popular. It resulted in many reprints, either in large size for advertising purposes, or in small size as album prints, enclosed in packages of tea, for instance.

Remarkable picture postcards are those which relate to World War One, the period between 1914 and 1918. As a result of the forced separation of family and relations, caused by that War, the need of communication was stronger felt than ever before and it was the picture postcard, then still on the top of its popularity, which filled up that gap. More than in other periods the picture postcard was in those years the medium to express its joy or sorrow, to tighten the bonds of friendship or to show its feelings of enmity. The picture postcards were in that period an important means of propaganda.

On a number of about one hundred picture postcards, relating to that War period 1914-1918 and on which the flag is a motive, you will see that—as usual—both war parties believed in their victory and that God would give it to them. The pictures speak for themselves, but it may well be that they will give rise to some discussion. This could be the case already when we see how inconsequently in many cases flags have been pictured, for instance in the case of the Japanese flag, which, without clear reason, is pictured as merchant flag, respectively as imperial standard, or as war ensign.

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- 1 "L'Étendard des Alliés". (Edt. O.H., 's-Hage).
- 2 "The 'New' Watch on the Rhine!" (W. den Boer, Bussum).
- 3 "For Victory!" (The "Victorious Peace" Series: Newfoundland. Raphael Tuck & Sons, London).
- 4 "For Freedom." (Raphael Tuck & Sons, London).



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