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PERSONAL REPORTS
PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY
DURING WW1

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USE OF PROPAGANDA IN TURKEY DURING WW1

WW1 is the first biggest war of 20th century. Nearly all European countries used every means available for this war. This type of wars is called TOTAL WAR. There are no civilian people; everybody is a soldier. All the economical and manpower resources are allocated in order to overcome the enemy.

One of the most important features of total war is PROPAGANDA. The rulers should convince their people about the rightfulness of their war. People should believe the cause that they will fight for. Because of the technological development in Europe, majority of the people could read or write. The daily circulation of newspapers and magazine were high. This reality gave the rulers the idea of using them as means of propaganda.

WHAT ARE THE MEANS OF PROPAGANDA?

Because of the technological developments in today's world,

- Television and radio
- Cinema
- Internet
- Social media
- Newspapers and magazines
- Posters and bulletins
- Demonstrations and meetings

are being used as the means of propaganda. In 1914, the development rates of the countries were different and the techniques used for propagandizing were different as well.

For example, England was a well developed country and most of its people could read or write. They could use written media as an effective way of propaganda. On the other hand, Turkey was less developed and less than 10% could read or write. It was a large empire and there were different communities in it. Each community



A Propaganda Poster in England during WW1

had its own language. For these reasons, propagandizing with written media was not very effective.

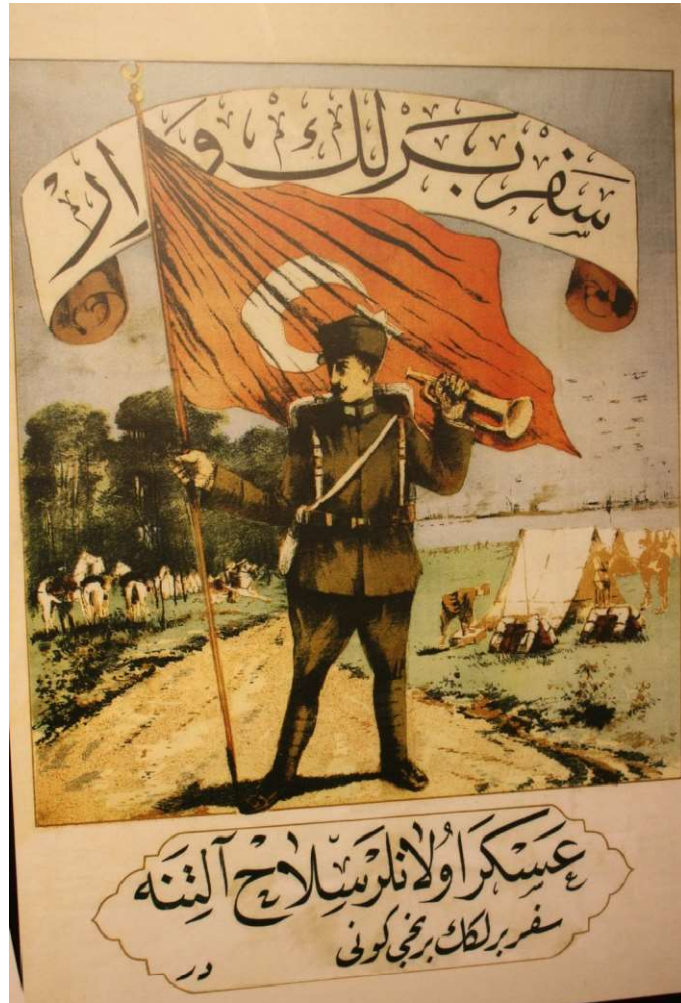
PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES AT PRE-WAR STAGE IN TURKEY

As we mentioned before, Turkey of 1914 consisted of different communities which were talking different languages. Less than 10% could read or write. There were few newspapers only in Istanbul and some other big cities. So, newspapers and magazines were not effective means of propaganda.

1. RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA AND THE CALL FOR JIHAD (HOLY WAR)

Majority of Anatolian people were religious and loyal to their Sultan. Religious propaganda might be successful. The people were ready to die for their sultans, but they still needed propagandizing. This is because Ottomans made alliance with two old enemies. First one was Austria-Hungarians. Ottomans besieged their capital city twice. The second was the German Empire which pioneered the idea of Crusades and Christianity for years. Propaganda was a must in order to convince people that the war was holy. At first, Sultan declared Jihad (Holy War). Caliph-Sultan, Mehmed Reşat called every Muslim to fight against Allied Powers (England, France, Russia).

German Kaiser Wilhelm II. visited Istanbul, Jerusalem and Damascus respectively. In Damascus, near the graveyard of Saladin, The German Kaiser said that “German Emperor is the protector of all Muslim world. After that, a big propaganda activity was done by Turkish and German propaganda makers. They even said that Kaiser converted into Islam after this trip. People in Turkey started to call him as “Hajji Wilhelm”.



A Poster for Jihad Call in Turkey

2. HARP MECMUASI – WAR MAGAZINE



1st Issue of War Magazine

This magazine was published by Turkish military during WW1 in Istanbul. The main purpose was to make counter-propaganda against the British. Ottomans didn't have a professional propaganda team. After the British started to make propaganda activities in the trenches and newspapers, Turkish war ministry decided to publish a magazine. British said that

- Ottomans and Germans were weak and they were soon beaten.

- That was not a holy war. Muslims died for German ambitions.

The goal was to deny this news. The magazine showed very nice pictures from Gallipoli and other fronts. They wrote heroic stories about war.

However, Ottomans were financially weak, and after two years the magazine stopped.

3. PROPAGANDA IN THE TRENCHES

During Gallipoli Campaign, The British and the French threw notices and piece of papers from planes and balloons onto the Turkish troops.

- If you surrender right now, you can go to your hometown.
- If you surrender, you will be welcomed in POW camps in Egypt in a five star comfort.
- The Sultan is captured, and the war is already over.
- Germans use Turks for their own benefit.

These were some examples. In return, Turks threw pictures of captive British soldiers in good condition. They wrote that Turks are not wild people; they behave well to the captives. Moreover, Turkish officers noticed that there are Muslim colony soldiers in French army. They chose sweet-voiced soldiers to recite the azan (call for prayer). In this way, they tried to make them understand that both sides are Muslim.



A notice Thrown onto ANZAC trenches during Gallipoli Campaign by the German planes.

4. GERMAN ORGINATED PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES

As mentioned before, there wasn't a professional team for propaganda affairs in Turkey. Many goods for propagandizing came from Austria and Germany. There were postcards, stamps, medals, badges, posters, china, dining plates and etc. There were pictures of leaders and flags of the Central countries on them.



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