

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DEUTSCHES ROTES KREUZ

The Deutsches Rotes Kreuz (DRK) was established in 1864 by Dr. Aaron Silverman of the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin. It was a voluntary civil assistance organization that was officially acknowledged by the Geneva Convention in 1929

The Treaty of Versailles (French: Traité de Versailles) the substantive peace treaty that brought World War I to an end was signed on 28 June 1919 in Versailles, exactly five years after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand which directly led and registered by the Secretariat of the League of Nations on 21 October 1919.

One of the explicit terms of the Treaty of Versailles prevented the DRK from having any involvement in military matters. During the Weimar Republic the DRK became a national organization focusing on social welfare and humanitarian aid. In 1933, the Nazi Reich of the Interior Minister and Reich Commissioner for Voluntary Nursing in Germany, Wilhelm Frick instructed that in future the DRK support the armed forces in any future conflict and was completely integrated ultra vires into the National Socialist state. Dr. Paul Hocheisen (1870-1944), a surgeon-gynaecologist, WWI Brigadier in the Reichwehr and his Deputy Commissioner for Voluntary Nursing, was appointed Honorary President of the DRK.

The German Red Cross was re-established in 1950 with a federal structure and as a registered association. The federation has a General Secretariat, 19 national associations, association sisterhoods as well as district federations, district associations and local associations.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BAYERISCHES ROTES KREUZ

The origin and subsequent history of the Bayerisches Rotes Kreuz is unclear. From available postal history it is evident that it was an entity throughout WWI and beyond. As one of the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement is that there can only be one such organisation in each nation, and, though The Bavarian Red Cross is one of the largest rescue service providers in Bavaria, Germany and Western Europe, functionally it is a subdivision of the national association.

In July 1945, the then Bavarian Prime Minister Fritz Schäffer (1888-1967) awarded the BRK recognition as a corporation and the first President was Adalbert Prince of Bavaria (1886-1970).

The Bavarian Red Cross is the only national association that is a public corporation.

THE EARLY DEUTSCHES ROTES KREUZ CHARITY POSTCARDS

The early German “Red Cross” Charity Postcards represented in this collection are but a soupçon of those issued over decades and I make no claim to it being representative of the subject.

In the early postcards, usually most of the images were those of contemporaries, German Royalty, aristocratic members of the armed forces and contributions by respected wartime artists. Their patronage was invaluable as it appealed to ordinary folk, their sense of duty, parochial loyalty and national patriotism.

The purpose in issuing the cards usually was to raise money through the application of a surcharge (surtax) representative of a donation in much the same manner as in the 1897 New South Wales Consumptives Home “Charity” and Queensland Victoria stamps, the Swiss Pro Juventute (1912 onwards) and the South African Christmas (or SANTA) stamps of yesteryear.

Sadly, the Nazi Reich abused a noble concept, creating an industry by deception whose objective was to raise monies for the war effort.

Whilst focusing primarily on charitable nature of these cards, one can't help but observe the nature of the artwork. In this collection, this falls into two broad categories, **Art** per se and **Politics**. Apropos the art, one is exposed to engraving, painting, printing and photography. The studio portraiture often is outstanding and of the highest order, though other – aristocratic family groups, architectural and sculptural symbols of power and nationhood – are surprisingly parochial and poorly executed. The items often called “artist postcards” are disappointing, for the most part lack creativity, are often sentimentally allegorical and surprisingly primitive, and technically lacking in skill.

That which I term political is transparent in its purpose. Here one is exposed to the stumbling remnants of feudalism with its multitude of German nation states (kings, grand dukes and dukes), the brashness of an evolving Prussian empire (1871-1918), its demise through acquisitiveness and warfare, and led by a weak but argumentative emperor habitually given to self-aggrandizement and a powerful, bellicose military aristocracy buttressed by disaffected Junkers.

There is one last element that deserves mention and that is the process of production and marketing. As was the case in Switzerland, the Bavarian postal authorities worked together with the printer/publisher to support the work of the Deutsches Rotes Kreuz by licencing the production prestamped charitable cards which carried a surtax at the point of sale. Elsewhere, some of the finest printing houses were responsible for publication of the postcards amongst whom Dr C.Wolf und Sohn of München and C Kakerbeck & Co. of Hamburg stand out.

This collection is divided into three sections: **German Royalty**, with broad genealogical guidelines to contextualise the personages illustrated. **German military leaders, its aristocracy**, together with a biographical sketch. Contributions from **German War Time Artists**, together with a biographical note.

THE EARLY DEUTSCHES ROTES KREUZ CHARITY POSTCARDS

A table of **German Royalty extant in 1918** with those represented in this collection in heavy print.

Baden / **Grand Duchy of the House of Baden (Zähringen)**

Baden / **Margravite of the House of Baden (Zähringen)**

Braunschweig (Brunswick) / Duchy of Braunschweig-Dannenberg House of Hannover

Heese / Landgrave of Hesse and Grand Duchy of Hesse (Hesse-Darmstadt)

Hohenzollern, Brandenburg-Prussian branch / **Emperors of Germany**

Hohenzollern, Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen / Kings of Rumania

Oldenburg, **Grand Duchy of Oldenburg**

Thurn & Taxis / Princely House of Thurn and Taxis

Wettin / **Kings of Saxony**

Wettin / Grand Duchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach

Wettin / Duchy of Saxe-(Hildburghausen-)Altenburg

Wettin / **Duchy of Saxe-Meiningen**

Wettin / Duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha

Wittelsbach / Patrilineal descent & Palatinate branch / **Kings of Bavaria**

Württemberg / **Kings of Württemberg**

PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY (VOLKSSOLIDARITÄT)

People's Solidarity (Volkssolidarität) is an organisation for elderly people in the new states of Germany, founded 1945. It was one of many important non-parliamentary mass organisations in the former socialist country, East Germany. The organisation required members to pay a "certain amount of money to support senior homes and organized cultural events for seniors." Within the German Democratic Republic (GDR), People's Solidarity, a genuine welfare organisation, played a key role in East German society. It had 2.15 million members as of 1988. Unlike Diakonie and Caritas, the Volkssolidarität, and the Red Cross reportedly had difficulty adjusting to the new political and social environment after unification. Nevertheless, Volkssolidarität and the Red Cross have successfully managed to democratize and establish a new image.