



WAR-REVOLUTION-WEIMAR

German Expressionist Prints,
Drawings, Posters and Periodicals
from The Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation

Ida Katherine Rigby

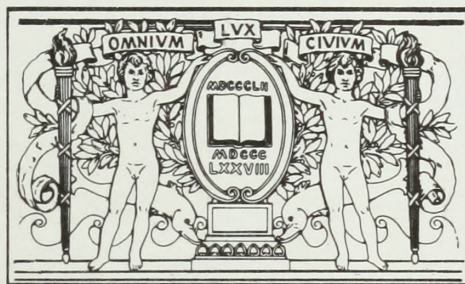
An alle Künstler!

The years 1918 through 1925 were for Germany a time of material deprivation and extreme emotional tension. Defeated in a devastating war, the political order of the German Empire collapsed in revolution. As a socialist republic replaced the old order, German artists and intellectuals expressed unprecedented social concern. Their traumatization by the war, their enthusiastic support for the republican cause, and their ultimate frustration with politics are reflected to an extraordinary degree in their art.

No medium was better suited than printmaking to capture and express the pulse of this desperate and euphoric time, as artists designed political posters, joined radical artists' groups, and contributed prints to the new, radical literary journals which everywhere sprang into existence. Through the examples of these works preserved in the remarkable Robert Gore Rifkind collection of German Expressionist art, the author has created a persuasive interpretation of the relationship of art to society. We are taken into the bunkers, homes, studios and nightmares of the artists, and are made to understand the aspirations, anguish and frustrations which created these images. Through them, we are better able to understand not only the history and society of Germany in this crucial period, but the human essence of war and revolution.

The Author

Ida Katherine Rigby has taught and done scholarly research on German Expressionist art for more than fifteen years. Among her contributions to art scholarship is a study of the life and work of Karl Hofer. She has taught at the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Victoria, the University of Montana and Tulane University. Since 1976 she has been at San Diego State University, where she is at present Associate Professor of The History of Art.



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An alle Künstler!

WAR — REVOLUTION — WEIMAR

German Expressionist Prints,
Drawings, Posters and Periodicals
from the Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation

Exhibition and Catalogue Essays by
Ida Katherine Rigby

Exhibition Organized by the
University Gallery
San Diego State University

University Gallery
San Diego State University
April 30–June 11, 1983

The Detroit Institute of Arts
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Foreword

EXPRESSIONISM, a term seemingly applicable to all creative activity, is a prevalent theme in contemporary painting. As the definition of an art form, its meanings and applications can all too easily become lost through overuse and misinterpretation. It is therefore vital to reflect on initial uses of the term and the original artists who defined its importance. This exhibition, "An alle Künstler! War—Revolution—Weimar, German Expressionist Prints, Drawings, Posters and Periodicals from the Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation," presents a survey of work by well-known and obscure artists who focused their energies on political issues facing them in Germany from 1918 to 1925. This was a period of intense social commitment, passionate outrage and, ultimately, compromised ideals. While artists throughout history have confronted similar concerns, today's artists, internationally, are increasingly looking to models from this German era for inspiration and direction for their responses to contemporary culture and conflict.

We are proud to present this exhibition from the Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation, regarded as the finest private collection of its kind. The dedication of the collector in gathering such a remarkable collection in a relatively short time is matched only by his commitment to the scholarly documentation of its importance. We are all richer for his efforts. Personally, I wish to extend grateful appreciation to Mr. Rifkind and his Board of Directors for their authorization of this project and their attention to every detail insuring its success.

The exhibition was suggested, defined and developed by Dr. Ida Katherine Rigby, Associate Professor of the History of Art, San Diego State University and a member of the Rifkind Foundation Board of Directors. Her essay for the catalogue has touched the hearts of the artists and clarified their motivations. It will serve as a prime resource for academics, while at the same time provoking thoughtful and emotional responses from the casual reader.

Many other persons assisted with the project in various ways. For their interest, support and advice, we particularly wish to thank Tjimkje Singerman, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Schwartz, J. David and Company, Stephanie Barron, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Knutson and Michael Lewis.

Dennis Komac
Director
University Gallery

Preface

THIS is primarily an exhibition of prints, and as such illustrates the unique role they played in a time when politically engaged German artists responded immediately and passionately to the social and political upheavals experienced by a defeated nation reeling in the aftermath of a devastating war and in the midst of a revolution. The prints are drawn from a single collection, the Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation in Beverly Hills, California. That this proved no limitation to offering a comprehensive overview of the graphic arts of the postwar activist phase of the German Expressionist movement is a testament to the richness of the collection and the broad vision of the collector.

The seed of this exhibition was sown in 1977 in a small section of the comprehensive Robert Gore Rifkind Collection exhibition organized by the University of California at Los Angeles. Although the idea remained alive in many lunchtime conversations with Mr. Rifkind, the show itself did not begin to take shape until last year. Since then, many individuals have contributed to its realization, although the person ultimately responsible is, of the course, the collector, Robert Gore Rifkind. His vision in building a combined print collection and research library, and his continuous personal involvement have made this project possible.

At the Rifkind Foundation, Associate Curator Tjimkje Singerman's tireless dedication to assisting with every aspect of this project, from print selection to verifying catalogue and bibliographical references, has been indispensable. I also benefited greatly from the advice of Curator Karin Breuer in the initial selection of the prints, and of Librarian Katherine Jones Isaacson in selecting the periodicals. Assistant Librarian Susan Trauger was of great help in locating references.

At San Diego State University, I would like to extend my gratitude to University Gallery Director Dennis Komac for making this exhibition a reality. I want to thank Jean Henderson Glover for her meticulous work in documenting the prints, and Art Department Chairman Fredrick J. Orth, Lilla Sweatt and Candace Young for helping me to free time to devote to the writing of this catalogue. At the San Diego State University Press, I have had the keen editorial advice of Roger Cuniff, for which I am grateful. To Rachael Bernier, staff designer for the press, goes credit for developing the design of the enduring presentation of this exhibition, its catalogue. I would also like to thank my typist, Anne L. Leu for her careful attention to the many exacting details of the final preparation of the manuscript. The translations benefited from Dr. Carole Duebbert's careful reading and apt suggestions.

Behind the writing and orientation of this book lie the inspiration, criticism and example over the last fifteen years of my major professors at the University of California, Berkeley, Peter Selz and Herschel B. Chipp.

Beyond the professional help which I have received, invaluable has been the personal support of my family, especially the forbearance and encouragement of my husband, John E. Sturla.

For the sake of clarity and consistency in presenting the material, some conventions have been adopted. On first reference, titles of portfolios and prints are given in both German and English. In some cases, material which would be bracketed in the translation of titles of works of art is presented in commas for aesthetic reasons: *Die Prominenten (Konstellation)* (*The Prominent Ones, Constellation*). Titles of books, films, periodicals and newspapers have not been translated. Titles of articles and poems are translated where germane to the meaning of the surrounding text. When a translation of a book from a third language into German is cited, the book is simply referred to with its English title; for example, Henri Barbusse's *The Singing Soldier*. The names of groups, such as the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* or the *Brücke* are given initially in both German and English. Terms like *Tendenzkunst*, *Rausch* or *Lazarett* are translated when the concepts are complex or the translation is not self-evident from the text. The umlaut has been retained in German contexts and eliminated in the English translation (Käthe, Kaethe).

The names of movements in the history of art are capitalized when they refer to specific movements, such as (German) Expressionism or (Italian) Futurism. Similar terms used simply as stylistic designations, cubism, for example, are not.

Figure numbers refer to figures numbered sequentially in the text. Numbers referring to the "Catalogue of the Exhibition" are cited only when a print is exhibited but not illustrated. The details of publication of periodicals cited in the text are given in the bibliography.

Ida Katherine Rigby
Associate Professor of
The History of Art
San Diego State University

Collector's Comments

GERMAN Expressionism was a movement, not a style. To understand its art, one must also understand that movement. As Professor Peter Guenther observed, German Expressionism "was a modern art movement that did not want its works viewed as aesthetic phenomena. German Expressionist works demand a reaction, a fervent, passionate and compassionate reaction; they insist that the viewer participate emotionally – and be willing to strive for a change of man and his society."* This is what the present exhibition and catalogue address.

In studying German Expressionism, I have long been fascinated by three points. The first is the intense relationship of the artists to the political, social, economic and cultural events of their time. The second is that German Expressionism is better understood as a movement through its vast body of graphic works (including posters, periodicals and illustrated books) than through its paintings, and third, that the movement is frequently best exemplified in the works of so-called "secondary" artists who gave German Expressionism much of its best work. In my 1977 UCLA exhibition, I tried, for the first time on a major scale, to demonstrate in depth the foregoing three ideas.

The present exhibition and catalogue by Dr. Ida Katherine Rigby extends our exploration of the same themes within the context of the reaction of German Expressionist art to World War I, the postwar revolution and the ill-fated Weimar Republic. The exhibition further examines the fascinating relationship during this time of the artists to publishers, writers, directors, poets and literati. Deftly interweaving images and quotations, Dr. Rigby shows us the art of the period and takes us into the artists' cafés, homes, studios, bunkers and nightmares. We feel the tension, frustration, anger, sorrow, despair and ecstasy that drove the German Expressionist artists to create the works of art in this exhibition.

Interestingly, French art was singularly unaffected by the calamitous events of the First World War. It would be difficult to conceive of Picasso, Matisse, Braque or Gris producing works relating to World War I with the pathos of Kaethe Kollwitz, the aesthetic revulsion of Otto Dix, the intensity of Conrad Felixmüller or the ecstasy of Constantin von Mitschke-Collande.

Obviously, my first acknowledgment and thanks go to Dr. Rigby for the present exhibition and catalogue. A decade ago, through an

* Peter Guenther, "An Introduction to the Expressionist Movement," in Sarah Campbell Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston, *German Expressionism – Toward a New Humanism* (Houston: Sarah Campbell Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston, 1977), n.p.

introduction by Professor Selz, I was fortunate to meet Dr. Rigby while she was in her last year of doctoral studies at Berkeley. We have labored together ever since in the cause of German Expressionist art. She has also been a close advisor in the building of the Collection. Indeed, her feelings have frequently been so strong that on occasion she has insisted that I acquire certain works which she felt to be quintessential.

Dr. Rigby conceived of this exhibition in 1981 and we have had a continuous dialogue on it for the last two years. She has matched the exciting and emotionally moving works of art with her exciting and moving catalogue. She has both enhanced and extended our knowledge and our appreciation of German Expressionism. I thank her!

Mr. Dennis Komac, Director of the University Gallery, San Diego State University, receives my special thanks for his enthusiastic support for both the exhibition and the catalogue and for the high standards he has maintained in all aspects of their preparation.

It gives me great pleasure to thank Ellen Sharp, Curator of Graphic Art, The Detroit Institute of Arts, and fellow print collectors Alan and Marion Schwartz of Detroit, all of whom have made it possible for this exhibition to travel to Detroit.

On the Rifkind Foundation staff, my appreciation to Curators Karin Breuer and Tjimkje Singerman and Librarians Katherine Jones Isaacson and Susan Trauger, all of whom have worked extremely hard to assist Dr. Rigby and Mr. Komac in presenting this complicated exhibition of art and ideas.

*Robert Gore Rifkind
Beverly Hills
March, 1983*



78. Max Pechstein, cover illustration for the Novembergruppe's book, *An alle Künstler!*, 1919. Reproduction of a drawing.

1 Introduction

"AN ALLE KÜNSTLER!" This call "to all artists" resounded in the Expressionists' journals and manifestoes and reverberated in their art, as the period 1918 to 1922 witnessed an unprecedented expression of social concern among German artists and intellectuals. Historically, this community had taken an aloof, disengaged stance. Theirs was the transcendent realm of the spirit, and they left the vexing world of politics to those who could concern themselves with material things. Will Grohmann, biographer to the Expressionist generation, called this startling new phenomenon "a wonder." "With few exceptions," he wrote, "everyone felt part of a community, morally bound to believe in the good in humanity and to create the best possible world. The emotion was pure and ethical."¹

The activist painter Karl Jakob Hirsch wrote of this period of fervent faith in the future:

At that time we found ourselves in a state of rapture, let Spartacus shoot or the reaction march—that troubled us little because the new age was there, and the poet Leonhard Frank had proclaimed, "man is good."

To be sure, peace did not actually exist, but it bloomed in our hearts. We sang, painted and wrote that never again could there be war.²

This faith in the "new man" and in an era of peace and internationalism came at the moment when Germany was emerging from a devastating war, a time of extreme physical privation and emotional suffering. The kaiser's government had collapsed, and on November 9, 1918, the socialists proclaimed the new republic. Elections were slated for January 19, 1919. Artists and intellectuals sought to participate in the formation of a new order; their rhetoric and imagery therefore was temporarily politicized as they enthusiastically supported the republican cause. Painters designed posters and joined radical artists' groups such as the Berlin *Novembergruppe* (Novembergroup) and *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* (Workers' Council for Art) and the Dresden *Sezession, Gruppe 1919* (Secession, Group 1919). New radical literary journals, to which artists contributed prints, sprang up everywhere, despite the paper shortages.

No medium was better suited than printmaking to capture and directly express the pulse of this desperate and euphoric time. Bold Expressionist prints illustrated the radical journals which covered the cafe tables where artists and intellectuals gathered. They were the artists' contribution to the effort to forge a new community. Many of the prints were quickly executed, run in inexpensive black-and-white reproductions and broadly disseminated. Original prints were circulated in special editions of periodicals or as inserts. Some were published in special portfolios or as individual prints and sold to collectors.

There was, therefore, a close collaboration between the artists and the publishers and editors of the Expressionist journals. These men included Paul Westheim of *Das Kunstblatt*,* Franz Pfemfert of *Die Aktion*, Georg Biermann of *Der Cicerone*, J. B. Neumann of *Der Anbruch*, Paul Cassirer of *Kriegszeit* and *Der Bildermann*, Wieland Herzfelde of the Malik Publishing House, Kurt Wolff of *Genius* and Felix Stierner of *Menschen*. Many of them sat side by side with the artists in the cafes of Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig and Munich and wrote sympathetically of the artists' work or encouraged their contributors to do so.

For a time the coincidence of radical aesthetics and radical politics was simply assumed. Artists and writers declared themselves revolutionaries, and the term radical was used interchangeably in its political and aesthetic senses. These artist-activists were of two generations. Some, like Max Pechstein, then thirty-seven and among the most politically involved, had participated in the formative years of the Expressionist movement. Others of his generation, like Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Erich Heckel, Otto Mueller and Emil Nolde, signed the radical program of the *Arbeitsrat*, but their art evidenced little or no concern with politics and only metaphorically or obliquely alluded to the ravaging effects of the war on the artists' psyches or to their utopian aspirations. Schmidt-Rottluff's work for example, developed an intensified visionary quality (figure 26), induced, perhaps, by the daily proximity of death. Heckel's work became more tense as his brittle forms expressed the exacerbation of a nervous condition developed during the war (figure 93).

After the war the work of some artists who had not been part of the Expressionist movement took on its characteristics. For Kaethe Kollwitz, her usual realistic style and familiar media simply could not convey the emotional power she sought to express in her war portfolio (figures 5-9), so she turned to the Expressionists' medium of the woodcut and to their expressive distortions to convey her message. The war experience also elicited Expressionist imagery from Max Beckmann (figure 33) who earlier had defended realism against avant-garde abstraction.

While many of the older artists professed a vague allegiance to socialism, they avoided party affiliations. The younger, second generation Expressionists were more apt to join political organizations, although they were unwilling to sacrifice their avant-garde styles, the essence of their revolution, to fit the propaganda needs of a party. The ecstatic Expressionist seer, poet and painter, Ludwig Meidner (figure 84) bridged both generations. As a young man his apocalyptic, Expressionist poetry and paintings had called for the total, cataclysmic purge of a corrupt Europe to prepare the way for the era of creative and expressive freedom for which the prewar cultural revolutionaries had yearned. His zealous postwar espousal of a more political stance was characteristic of the artists younger than he. Meidner, then thirty-five, exclaimed in a 1919 essay, "Socialism must be our new creed!" and declared the bourgeoisie the anti-Christ. He called on artists to join in a holy alliance with the proletariat, their natural ally, because the workers "respected" the spirit, whereas the bourgeoisie sought only aesthetic games. The emancipation of both the workers and the artists, according to Meidner, mandated their alliance.³

Of the proletariat, with whom the artists sought to forge a union, these aesthetes knew nothing but that it had acted to bring freedom, and, as Hirsch recalled, "we publicly embraced every sort of human freedom."⁴ Even in this heady atmosphere, some, like *Novembergruppe* associate Georg Tappert, warned that infatuation with the working class could only bring

* A list of the periodicals mentioned in the text, with facts of publication, is given in the bibliography.

disillusionment. They argued that the artists' work would not be appreciated by the workers, who understood only naturalistic representation and considered art a product of the hated bourgeoisie.

The artists were indeed disillusioned. The workers misunderstood and resented their efforts while the socialist government formed a strong working relationship with the representatives of the old order. Some, like George Grosz, vented their anger in vicious attacks on the new establishment. Others, resigned, retreated from the battlefield to their studios to pursue that with which they had been fundamentally concerned all along, their artistic revolution.

The taming of their revolutionary politics was paralleled by a retreat from avant-garde abstraction and the intense emotionalism and subjectivity of Expressionism into the more sober world of a renewed realism. Expressionism, as the dominant mode, was supplanted by the materialistic emphasis of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity). Many artists' content remained socially conscious, but it was expressed with careful attention to physical detail. The essence of their work was concrete, not metaphysical, and the treatment of forms was solidly physical, not spiritualized.

Although the Expressionists' involvement with social revolution was short-lived, it was total and exhilarating. Expressionist poet and playwright Friedrich Wolf described their commitment: "no empty formalism! . . . the Expressionism of those years 1918-1919 was passionate, honest and active. . . . ours was real intensified expression of an extreme intellectual and artistic passion, exploding out of sheer exuberance."⁵ This exhilaration, this euphoria, this ecstatic belief in the possibility of creating a new, more humane society, even against the backdrop of a ravaged Europe, is the leitmotif of our exhibition.

Notes

- 1 Kunstamt Wedding, *Die Novembergruppe*, Teil 1, *Die Maler* (Berlin: Buchdruckerei Erich Pröh, 1977), p. 7.
- 2 Karl Jakob Hirsch, *Heimkehr zu Gott: Briefe an meinen Sohn* (Munich: Verlag Kurt Desch, 1946), p. 68.
- 3 Ludwig Meidner, "An alle Künstler, Dichter, Musiker," *Der Anbruch* (Januar 1919): 1. Also in *Das Kunstblatt* (Januar 1919): 29-30.
- 4 Hirsch, p. 68.
- 5 Friedrich Wolf, "Felixmüller (On the Theatre in Dresden)," in Paul Raabe, ed., *The Era of German Expressionism*, J. M. Ritchie, trans. (Woodstock, New York: The Overlook Press, 1974), pp. 245-246.



12. Otto Dix, *Leiche im Drahtverhau* (*Corpse in Wire Entanglement*), 1924. Etching and aquatint.

2 The War Experience

GERMAN artists and intellectuals emerged from World War I vehement opponents of war. Their conversion came from experience. In the early days of the conflict, these men who had had close friends across the borders, defected from their former “good European” internationalism and marched off to fight for the fatherland with surprising readiness. Some signed up out of patriotism, some out of a sense of duty; others embraced the war because they believed that it was the apocalyptic purge which they had predicted would cleanse a corrupt, decadent Europe. Many went because they were conscripted, and a few chose to serve in the medical corps rather than kill.¹

As hope for a lightning victory faded, the disillusioned, artists and intellectuals among them, began questioning the very premises of the war. In his memoirs, the Expressionist painter Emil Nolde described the artists’ growing skepticism as they realized that “money was the lubricant of the whole murdering war machine,” and saw “the share-holders in the steel works and oil and poisonous gas companies” who were “sitting safely out of danger” celebrating “dark, devilish triumphs.”² Nolde’s 1918 etching, *Der Tod als Tänzerin* (*Death as a Female Dancer*) (figure 1) seems to convey the artist’s fearful awareness of the omnipresence of death as the war dragged on.

In 1918 Nolde was fifty-one. He sensed the political implications of the events surrounding the war and revolution, and even signed the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst*’s program and was a member of its original artists’ study group. Nonetheless, in his art he remained the unengaged prewar Expressionist whose aesthetic concerns were essentially spiritual and metaphysical. In his work there appear at most implied references to the surrounding holocaust, and those may be more read in by the viewer than intended by the artist.

Many young artists were among the nearly nine million German war dead. Nolde recounted his friends’ shock as the news reached them of the deaths of Franz Marc and August Macke or of an artist’s hands being blown off in battle. Contemporary art journals like Paul Westheim’s *Das Kunstblatt* and Georg Biermann’s *Der Cicerone* paid tribute to fallen artists. As an epitaph Wolf Przygode published the *Buch der Toten*, 1919, a collection of selections from writers who had been killed during the war. The special edition featured a 1914 woodcut by Marc, who had fallen at Verdun.

The artists’ and intellectuals’ progressive disillusionment with the war can be traced in the pages of such wartime periodicals as *Kriegszeit*, *Der Bildermann*, *Zeit-Echo*, *Die weissen Blätter*, *Das Forum*, *Die Aktion* and



1. Emil Nolde, *Der Tod als Tänzerin* (Death as a Female Dancer), 1918. Etching and aquatint.



2. Ernst Barlach, *Der heilige Krieg* (The Holy War), in *Kriegszeit*, December 16, 1914. Lithograph.

Neue Jugend. Publisher Paul Cassirer's was a typical case. Although a liberal leftist, he was a nationalist; so in 1914 he volunteered for service; by 1916 he had become a confirmed pacifist and made no secret of his opinions. He was arrested, and in 1917 went to Switzerland where he published work by English, French and German pacifists. Cassirer's early contribution to the war effort was *Kriegszeit*, *Künstlerflugblätter*, a periodical which published patriotic lithographs and poems. The titles of three of Ernst Barlach's contributions, *Der heilige Krieg* (The Holy War), originally called *Der Berserker* (The Berserk One) (figure 2) and representing his sculpture, *Der Racheer* (The Avenger) 1914, *Erst Sieg dann Frieden* (First Victory then Peace) and *Sturmangriff* (Heavy Attack) typified the bellicose tone. Kaethe Kollwitz's early, and only, contribution, *Das Bangen* (The Fear), was the exception. Cassirer also published anti-foreign prints like Barlach's *Die Bethlehem Steel-Company in Amerika*.

In April 1916, Cassirer replaced *Kriegszeit* with *Der Bildermann. Steinzeichnungen fürs deutsche Volk*. Although the periodical was not explicitly anti-war, its tone expressed the growing demoralization. Barlach's images became more meditative; Kollwitz contributed another print; Erich Heckel sent moody landscapes from Flanders. Ernst Kirchner's contributions included a view of the Taunus Mountains where he was recuperating at a sanitarium. That year Cassirer and his wife, the actress Tilla Durieux, began hosting anti-war readings. In her memoirs Durieux described one evening at which a pacifist story by Leonhard Frank was read:

As usual we had an invited audience . . . of about 300 people. . . . Being sick of war, . . . the whole room rose to its feet as one man and shouted: "Peace! Peace!" Some hot-heads wanted to rush out into the streets and start a demonstration. . . . the newspapers published reports under the headlines: "Intellectuals' Pacifism" and "A Haunt of Pacifists." The consequence was a house-search which naturally brought no incriminating evidence to light.³

Wartime censorship was in the hands of the General Staff, to whom the mere mention of peace was grounds for the confiscation of a publication; consequently, most overtly anti-war periodicals moved their operations to Switzerland. The *Zeit-Écho*, an important wartime voice, began publication in Munich in 1914. It was conceived as a neutral diary in which writers and artists could record their responses to the war. In 1916 it moved to Zurich, where activist writer Ludwig Rubiner assumed the editorship. Thereafter it published only anti-war material. *Die weissen Blätter* had originated in Leipzig as a literary, artistic and political journal for young Expressionists. From 1916 through 1918 it was published in Switzerland under the editorship of the courageous Alsatian poet and writer, Rene Schickele.

Richard Huelsenbeck, one of the young German artists who had left Germany, offered the following description of wartime Zurich:

. . . the scum of international profiteering had begun to settle. . . . There were crooks, whores, international rabble and our spiritual hunger for truth. . . . Seeing the racketeers on the terraces of the Baur au Lac one had the feeling that decadent European culture stank to high heaven. . . . Lenin, who shared the same street with us, was silent. . . . Zurich could never be the starting point of a world clean-up, this was only an intermediate stage for hunted men, a cover, a temporary lodging to get one's breath back.⁴

Die Aktion, *Der Sturm* and *Die weissen Blätter* were the most important prewar Expressionist journals. Herwarth Walden's *Der Sturm* remained idealistically aloof and apolitical until 1919, whereas its rival, Franz Pfemfert's *Die Aktion*, from the beginning announced itself as an unaffiliated voice for the "grand German left."⁵ "Art without social content is empty humbug," Pfemfert would proclaim, loudly enough for Walden's



3. Otto Schubert, *Hitze (Heat)*, 1919. Lithograph.



4. Otto Schubert, *Angst (Fear)*, 1919. Lithograph.

table at the Café des Westens to hear the provocation. Pfemfert reproduced work by many artists, including prints and drawings by Lyonel Feininger, Ludwig Meidner, Cesar Klein, Otto Freundlich (figure 87), George Grosz, Oskar Kokoschka, Franz Marc, Ernst L. Kirchner, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Conrad Felixmüller (figures 58 and 72) and Karl Jacob Hirsch (figures 62 and 63, page 50).

Although Pfemfert had opposed the war from its beginning, he took no editorial stand; instead he published stories, letters and poems by soldiers at the front; they spoke for themselves. In 1917 Pfemfert broke his editorial silence and began publishing openly anti-war material. Of Pfemfert's influence, actor, director and political activist Erwin Piscator wrote:

"I set up this journal against this age." When I read these words in the frontmost trenches, . . . when one poem after the other gave poetic expression to my suffering, my fear, my life and my probable death, . . . then I realized that no divinely ordained fate . . . was leading us into this filth. . . . I owe this awareness to Pfemfert. . . .

He was the cleanser, the purge, the settler of accounts, the principle of black and white like the woodcuts or lithographs on the cover of his *Aktion*. . . .

How many times at night did I have *Die Aktion* in my hands and want to take it over in the trenches to the English and Canadians. Look, my friends, there's this too! Another Germany!'

Artists who had fought at the front and those who had suffered at home turned the experience into powerful war portfolios. Three of them are represented in this exhibition: Otto Schubert's *Das Leiden der Pferde im Krieg* (*The Suffering of Horses in the War*), 1919; Otto Dix's *Der Krieg* (*The War*), 1924; and Kaethe Kollwitz's *Sieben Holzschnitte zum Krieg* (*Seven Woodcuts about War*), 1924. Schubert empathetically and romantically portrayed war through the eyes of man's co-sufferer, the horse (figures 3 and 4, and catalogue number I-90), which was still essential in a war in which fighter planes made their debut. Dix enumerated the daily horrors of war, and Kollwitz traced the home front experience of exhilaration, despair and resilience. Reality proved a solemn antidote to abstractions like "holy war."

Kollwitz's empathy with suffering humanity, intensified by the loss of her own son, Peter, inspired her portfolio. The genesis of the imagery occurred over the nine years between her son's death in October 1914 and the completion of the series in 1923 when she was fifty-six. The meditations which were given form in the war portfolio began in December 1914 when she started planning a memorial to Peter which was not completed until 1932. Initially Kollwitz planned a relief for Peter's grave. As she came to feel that Germans had been "duped," her concept changed and she sensed that her work should have a more universal significance. She decided that the memorial should stand at the entrance to the cemetery, and in July 1917 she entered in her diary a series of increasingly universal inscriptions: "Here lies German youth. Or: Here lie Germany's finest young men. Or: Here lie the youthful dead. Or simply: Here lie the young."⁸ From that moment, the themes which are fully realized in her portfolio began to surface in her sketches.

Kollwitz initially intended to execute the portfolio as a series of etchings. At one point she turned to lithography, but continued to feel that her effort was foundering. None of the familiar media could convey the powerful emotions she was experiencing. Then, in the summer of 1920, she attended an exhibition of Ernst Barlach's woodcuts. There, she wrote in her diary, "I saw something that knocked me over: . . . Expression is all that I want, . . . Will woodcutting do it?"⁹ At the time she was also working on a lithograph (figure 60) for the Karl Liebknecht memorial ultimately executed as a woodcut (figure 59). Its success in this new

medium inspired her to execute the war portfolio as a series of woodcuts. The medium, she found, allowed her to express the "grand simplicity" which she had struggled unsuccessfully to achieve. Kollwitz disavowed any affinity with what she called the detached studio art of the Expressionists, yet under the influence of emotions too powerful for her realistic style to accommodate, she turned to the Expressionists' favorite graphic medium, the woodcut, and their stark, condensed, bold style to carry her message of anguish and renewal.

Kollwitz's earliest concern was to seek some justification for the slaughter. This issue, addressed in plate one of the portfolio, *Das Opfer* (*The Sacrifice*) (figure 5), had occupied her even before Peter's death. On September 30, 1914, she wrote in her diary: "in such times it seems so stupid that the boys must go to war. The whole thing is so ghastly and insane. . . . Only one state of mind makes it at all bearable: to receive the sacrifice into one's will."¹⁰ At the time, sacrifice became for mothers "an absolute compulsion."¹¹

This early spirit of willing submission to duty described in *Das Opfer* gave way to skepticism and bitter disillusionment. On August 27, 1916, she wrote: "Now the war has been going on for two years and five million young men are dead and more than that number again are miserable, their lives wrecked. Is there *anything at all* that can justify that? . . . Surely that is something different from the joy in the law with which Peter and his fellows marched into the field."¹² On March 19, 1918, she wrote that initially she had been sustained by "the conviction that Germany was in the right and had the duty to defend herself. At the beginning it would have been wholly impossible for me to conceive of letting the boys go as parents *must* let their boys go now, without inwardly affirming it. That is what changes everything. The feeling that we were betrayed then, at the beginning."¹³ Publicly she took a stand when, in 1918, the poet Richard Dehmel published a call for a final, all-out war effort in the socialist newspaper *Vorwärts*. Kollwitz published a resounding rebuttal, there, and in Berlin's old, established *Vossische Zeitung*. "Germany," she wrote, "would simply bleed to death. . . . We have had profoundly to change our views . . . our concept of honor. . . . Enough have died!"¹⁴

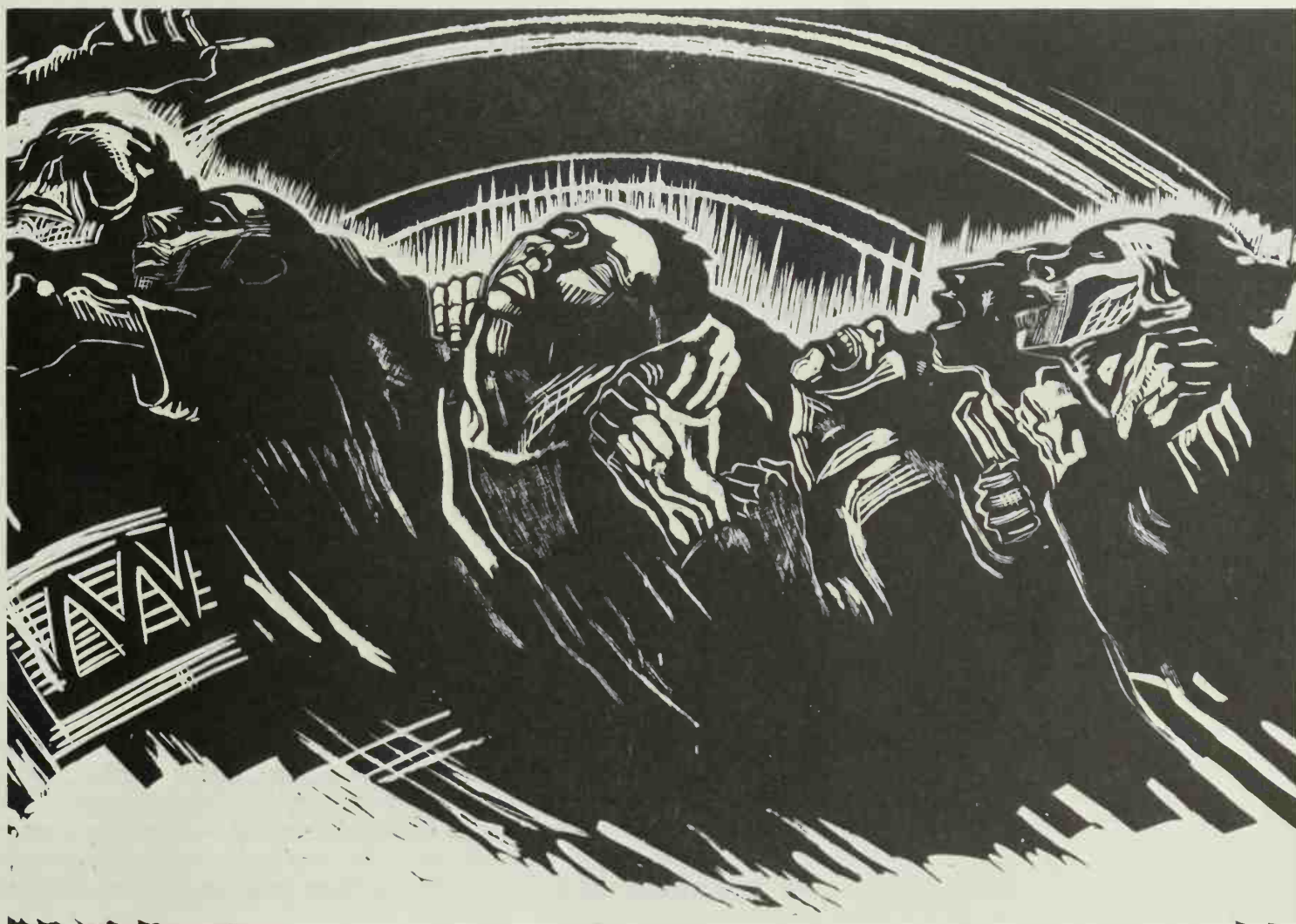
The proud beginning and the grim reality are the subjects of the second plate, *Die Freiwilligen* (*The Volunteers*) (figure 6). Kollwitz and her husband, Karl, saw Peter volunteer and march off in that spirit of "joy in the law" to which she alluded in her diary; then they witnessed the grim progress recorded in *Die Freiwilligen*. (Kollwitz's first title for the print was *Diksmuiden*, the name of the town where Peter and his comrades lay buried.) In the print two young patriots march off to war behind their drummer, death. Wounded, one grimaces as sharp rays of light reflect his stunned shock. As he fades away death sweeps him off. In her diary on October 11, 1916, Kollwitz had expressed the meditations condensed in this woodcut:

It's not only our youth who go willingly and joyfully. . . . Are the young really without judgment? Do they always rush into it as soon as they are called? Without looking closer? This frightful insanity—the youth of Europe hurling themselves at one another. . . . where has principle led us? Peter, Erich, Richard, all have subordinated their lives to the idea of patriotism. . . . But it is clear that our boys, our Peter, went into the war two years ago with pure hearts, and that they were ready to die for Germany. Is it a breach of faith with you, Peter, if I can now see only madness in the war? Peter, you died believing. Was that also true of Erich, Walter, Meier, Gottfried, Richard Noll? Or had they come to their senses and were they nevertheless forced to leap into the abyss?¹⁵

In *Die Eltern* (*The Parents*) (figure 7) the parents' abject destitution is expressed in the lines of their backs and shoulders, in a supreme



5. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Das Opfer* (The Sacrifice), 1922/23. Woodcut.



6. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Die Freiwilligen* (The Volunteers), 1922/23. Woodcut.



7. Käthe Kollwitz, *Die Eltern* (The Parents), 1923. Woodcut.



8. Käthe Kollwitz, *Die Mütter* (The Mothers), 1922/23. Woodcut.

condensation of feeling. A diary entry from 1921 expressed the question without answer which continued to plague her grief:

We heard the Matthew Passion together. . . . I remember again Hans' astonishment that according to this Gospel Jesus' last words were: "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" When just before he has said his proud: "Or thinkest thou that my Father cannot send me more than twelve legions of angels, etc." . . . Perhaps something similar to what I experienced in my petty human relationships when I gave Peter and he died. . . . In my secret heart I had probably expected that I would not be forsaken. . . . and I too secretly expected there would be provided the ram for the sacrifice.¹⁶

Throughout the next year, 1922, she continued to rework *Die Eltern* even though the drawing had been completed in 1920. This woodcut of the isolated parents and those of the two widows (catalogue numbers I-63 and I-64) are of stark, lonely presences consumed and immobilized by their grief. By contrast Kollwitz found in the united common people a fortress of strength (figure 8) and sources of resistance and renewal (figure 9) unavailable to the isolated mourner.

In the portfolio she traced the wartime cycle of exaltation in sacrifice, bereavement, grief and renewal. She hoped to teach a lesson. In a letter to her friend, the French pacifist Romain Rolland, she wrote:

Again and again I have tried to represent the war. . . . Now, finally I have readied a series of woodcuts, the majority of which say what I wish to say. . . . Together, these prints should wander the world and say to all men: So it was—this have we all borne through these unspeakably hard years.¹⁷

Whereas Kollwitz's was the voice of exaltation and anguish of one who had suffered at home, Dix reported directly from the field. His fifty-plate portfolio of etchings, *Der Krieg* (The War), 1924, is based on his wartime sketchbooks. The portfolio is an unrelenting enumeration of the self-condemning realities of war.

Dix had volunteered to fight with the Dresden field artillery unit in the fall of 1914. He went to war not as a patriot, but out of a desire to participate intensely in the events of his day and to observe humanity in extreme situations. In retrospect he wrote: "The war was a hideous thing, but nevertheless powerful. In no way should I miss it. One must see men in these uncontrolled situations in order to know something of men!"¹⁸ He served as a machine gunner on both the eastern and western fronts, marched through France and neutral Belgium and flew as an observer with the air force. Many prints bear the names of places where he bore witness to the slaughter: Langemark, Somme, Flanders, Dontreix, Reims and Loretto Heights. For years he had persistent nightmares of crawling among ruined houses and through passageways without issue. He decided to turn his war experiences into a series of lithographs, but found the medium wanting. He therefore enrolled in printmaking classes at the Düsseldorf Academy and learned etching. Delighted with the medium he wrote, "when one etches, one becomes a pure alchemist."¹⁹ Among the prints which best reveal this alchemy are the *Leiche im Drahtverhau* (Flanders) (Corpse in a Wire Entanglement, Flanders) (figure 12, page 4), *Sturmtruppe geht unter Gas hervor* (Storm Troops Advance under Gas) (figure 15) and *Trichterfeld bei Dontriex, von Leuchtkugeln erhellt* (Crater-Field at Dontriex Lit by Fire Bombs) (catalogue number I-23).

Dix drew relentlessly detailed descriptions of the soldiers' daily experience of war. In one print we view a slimy descent into hell (figure 10); in another, a temporary escapee from death (Dix himself) gulps rations as he huddles in a crater beside a blanket-shrouded skeleton, the *memento mori* (figure 11). In the latter print Dix uses moldy-looking flocking to suggest decay and disintegration. The hoary landscape, the rag-wrapped



9. Käthe Kollwitz, *Das Volk (The People)*, 1922/23. Woodcut.



10. Otto Dix, *Maschinengewehrzug geht vor (Somme, Nov. 1916) (A Machine Gun Squadron Advances, Somme, Nov. 1916)*, 1924. Etching and aquatint.



11. Otto Dix, *Mahlzeit in der Sappe (Lorettohöhe) (Mealtime in the Trenches, Loretto Heights)*, 1924. Etching and aquatint.



13. Otto Dix, *Frontsoldat in Brüssel* (Front Soldier in Brussels), 1924. Etching, aquatint and drypoint.



14. Otto Dix, *Besuch bei Madame Germaine in Mericourt* (A Visit to Madame Germaine in Mericourt), 1924. Etching, drypoint and aquatint.

legs, rent coat, large blob of grub and gaping mouth remind the viewer of the unrelentingly physical nature of war. The mangled bodies (figure 18), the colossal fleshiness of a prostitute (figure 14) and a scene of a soldier in Brussels dwarfed by giant breasts and buttocks (figure 13) all reiterate this message. Dix presents the tormented faces and wasted landscapes of war. Some prints offer stark, fleeting encounters; others transfix (figure 18). There are ravaged countrysides, moonlit outposts (figure 16) and eerie fire-bomb-lit crater fields. Dix also reminds us of the sad, tentative renewal of spring.

By the time the war portfolio was published, Dix was thirty-three and the war was six years behind him. His style had changed, following the typical pattern of German postwar artists. His avant-garde abstraction, a fusion of Dada, Futurist and Expressionist elements, had given way to a concrete realism. His immediate postwar paintings had been an angry indictment and a protest against the degradation caused by the war. To express this he had merged a radical style with a radical political message. In the war portfolio highly emotionalized exaggerations and dynamic abstractions did not serve his purpose, which was to offer things "as they are," without commentary. He focused on the material surfaces of objects, but this surface only barely covered the Expressionist scream, betraying the image's roots in an Expressionist *Angst*. Dix had abandoned the Expressionist style, but not its contents.

For Dix, there were no ennobling poetics, no reality-mitigating heroics; he insisted instead on an unrelenting exposure of reality:

—It is important to see things as they are. . . . One cannot paint outrage. . . . I endeavored to represent the war objectively, without wanting to arouse compassion, without anything propagandistic. . . . I have represented conditions, conditions which war called forth, and the results of war, as conditions.²⁰

The series has the power and presence of Goya's *Disasters of War*, to which it is often compared, but Dix, unlike Goya, offers no explicit commentary. No wolf sadly concludes, "Oh, wretched humanity, the fault is yours." Dix presents situations; he does not examine causes. The reality, however, is self-indicting. As the *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag* noted, whoever, on viewing these prints, "does not become an opponent of war in his innermost being, is hardly henceforth to be called a man."²¹

Dix's publisher, Karl Nierendorf, in fact, presented the portfolio as an indictment. He offered, in addition to an edition of seventy full portfolios, a less expensive edition of twenty-four of the fifty prints. The latter included an introduction by the Nobel Prize-winning French pacifist Henri Barbusse who wrote:

. . . One cannot exaggerate war. . . . Before such a reality weak human understanding is shattered. . . . Shrapnel, gas, fire, poison. . . . these are the weapons of today. Advances of science and technology, hellish inventions, insane discoveries play with bodies. . . . This artist appeared at the right moment to arouse us, . . . Stupidity, . . . and . . . forgetfulness are sins and crimes.²²

Another artist who recorded his experiences on the French and Russian fronts was Otto Gleichmann. In 1918, after being discharged from a military hospital where he had been recovering from a leg wound, Gleichmann was stationed in Hannover. There he joined the recently founded Hannover Sezession and exhibited with the Young Rhineland group in Düsseldorf. By 1921, when he was thirty-four, he had exhibited at the Kestnervesellschaft in Hannover, at Galerie Flechtheim in Düsseldorf and Galerie Nierendorf in Cologne. His work was widely and well received.

Instead of following the twenties trend towards a more realistic mode, Gleichmann continued to work in an abstract, Expressionist style



15. Otto Dix, *Sturmtruppe geht unter Gas hervor* (Storm Troops Advance under Gas), 1924. Etching, drypoint and aquatint.



16. Otto Dix, *Die Sappenposten haben Nachts das Feuer zu unterhalten* (The Trench Sentries Have to Keep Up the Firing at Night), 1924. Etching, aquatint and drypoint.



17. Otto Dix, *Nächtliche Begegnung mit einem Irrsinnigen* (Night Meeting with a Madman), 1924. Etching, aquatint and drypoint.

which sought to evoke the immaterial force underlying surface appearance, rather than focusing on the material aspects of life. The revelation of the metaphysical ground of existence had been a fundamental preoccupation of the Expressionists. Gleichmann's hallucinatory style reflected his belief that "everything vital grows out of the primal ground and is therefore divine and enduring."²³ In their articles on his work, both Paul Westheim and Theodor Däubler comment on Gleichmann's uncanny evocation of a shimmering, subliminal life. The dream-like, spectral quality is conveyed through his broken, nervous lines and opalescent colors. In Gleichmann's transparency is dissolution. In his watercolor, *Der Erstochene* (*The Bayoneted One*), 1923 (figure 19), the surrounding landscape begins to envelop the soldier as he sinks back into the eternal primal ground out of which he came. Gleichmann's Expressionistic pantheism offers his soldier the spiritual solace denied Dix's dead and dying.

George Grosz, who served two brief stints in the military, presents another face of war, the visages not of the victims, but of those whom he holds responsible. On November 11, 1914, at the age of twenty-one, Grosz joined the Royal Prussian Grenadiers; he received a medical discharge six months later. Grosz described his illness in a letter to a friend: "an instinctive revolt against any form of discipline caused an inflammation of my forehead (this the diagnosis of a doctor friend of mine), but I claim that I was thinking too much during military service."²⁴

On his return to Berlin, Grosz frequented the Café des Westens on the Kurfürstendamm, a famous gathering spot for publishers, poets, philosophers, actors, directors, artists and writers.²⁵ There, according to Ernst Blass, editor of the poetry review, *Die Argonauten*, was conducted a "spirited battle against the soullessness, the deadness, laziness, and meanness of the philistine world." "We were not Bohemians in the usual sense," he explained; "we had a sharply defined feeling of responsibility."²⁶

There Grosz met and became friends with Meidner, the poet and novelist Else Lasker-Schüler, the poets Johannes R. Becher and Theodor Däubler, the philosopher and social critic Hugo Ball who, along with the cabaret artist Emmy Hennings, would soon found the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, and the psychiatrist and writer Richard Huelsenbeck. Huelsenbeck described the mood of this group of friends at the outset of the war: "Our hatred for official Germany . . . and everything associated with it changed into a kind of paroxysm of rage. We couldn't see a uniform without clenching our fists."²⁷

In the summer of 1915 Grosz met the young poet Wieland Herzfelde at Meidner's studio. Herzfelde, deemed unfit to wear the kaiser's uniform, had been discharged from the army. In 1916 he began publishing *Neue Jugend*. His account of the founding of the magazine and his *Malik-Verlag* (Malik-Publishing House) offers a lively description of the circumstances under which wartime dissidents worked. Since it was extremely difficult to found new periodicals during the war, he bought the title *Neue Jugend*, the name of a defunct school magazine. In order to fool the censors, he began the magazine with number seven, page 127.²⁸

When Herzfelde was recalled into the army, the publication and the publishing house, named after the *Malik*, the hero of Lasker-Schüler's novel, were banned. His brother, John Heartfield, who, like George Grosz, had anglicized his name in protest against German xenophobia, presented the following successful petition to the authorities: "The *Neue Jugend* has been banned. In it, a novel called *The Malik* by Else Lasker-Schüler was appearing in installments. We are under contract to publish the whole novel, which is the story of a Turkish prince, in other words an ALLY." When permission was granted what appeared, of course, was the *Neue*



18. Otto Dix, *Verwundeter, Herbst 1916, Bapaune* (Wounded Man, Fall 1916, Bapaune), 1924. Etching and aquatint.



19. Otto Gleichmann, *Der Erstochene* (The Bayoneted Man), 1923. Watercolor, gouache and ink drawing.

Jugend, with the publisher's address listed as that of an unused building site. "Distribution," Herzfelde confided, "was handled for us superbly by the firm of Georg Stilke, Berlin," which had the monopoly for all railway bookshops and agencies serving the army. "We delivered a complete sample edition to it for nothing. Folded so that none of the contents could be seen. Sure enough the paper reached Jerusalem, Warsaw, Northern Italy, and Ostende. German organization!"²⁹

Among the *Malik-Verlag's* first publications were Grosz's *Erste George Grosz Mappe* (First George Grosz Portfolio) in the spring of 1917 and the *Kleine Grosz-Mappe* (Small Grosz-Portfolio) that fall. These lithographs express Grosz's abomination for Germany, love-hate relationship with the metropolis and infatuation with America. Most were violent. Of his frame of mind at the time he wrote, "discharged from the war, I worked, uncertain, full of hate, and suspicious."³⁰ Unlike his more optimistic Expressionist friends, Grosz was not romantic about the essential goodness of man nor about the masses, particularly not Germans. In a vengeful, sarcastic letter he declared:

From the aesthetic standpoint, I am delighted with every German who dies a hero's death on the field of honor. To be German always means: to be tasteless, dumb, ugly, fat, inflexible—means . . . poorly dressed. To be German means: reactionary of the worst sort, means: of one hundred, only one washes his whole body (N.B. The German woman is beyond discussion.)³¹

Menschen in der Strasse (People in the Street) (catalogue number I-33), from the *Erste George Grosz-Mappe*, typified the artist's misanthropic representation of humanity. The windows reveal scenes of suicide, lust and murder. Grosz the voyeur peers from a basement window; his dachshund is, as usual, nearby. The style of these lithographs prompted Däubler to celebrate Grosz as the "Futurist temperament of Berlin."³² The *Kleine Grosz-Mappe* also explores the ugly, sinister, brutal and sick aspects of life in the metropolis. In *Strassenbild* (Street Scene) (figure 20) the city is dominated by deformity and trudging stupidity. A flag-waving (indoctrinated) child, a wounded cavalryman, a Prussian soldier, a bourgeois businessman, a prostitute and a lascivious dog mill about as a man doffs his hat, revealing his offal brain. In his essay on Grosz, art historian Willi Wolfradt characterized his satire as "horrifying in the naked bare hatred out of which it grows. . . . he is a pornographer of the naked truth; not the mirror, but life itself is the heretic, the demagogue, the pornographer."³³

In the fall of 1916 Grosz's friend Huelsenbeck returned from Zurich and brought Dada to Berlin. "In the term Dada," Huelsenbeck wrote, "we concentrated all the rage, contempt, superiority and human revolutionary protest of which we were capable."³⁴ Grosz participated in Berlin Dada and his caricatures reflect its iconoclastic, irreverent spirit. In 1920, his anti-military portfolio, *Gott mit Uns. 9 Politische Zeichnungen* (God for Us. 9 Political Drawings), was exhibited at the Dada Fair, where the centerpiece was a dummy with a pig's head dressed in an officer's uniform. The title of the portfolio was drawn from the inscription on army-issue belt buckles. Grosz and his publisher, Herzfelde, were brought to trial for slandering the German army and fined; some prints were confiscated. The lithographs were based on sketches Grosz had executed while in the military hospital at Görden after being recalled into the army. After his second induction he had reported for duty on January 4, 1917, and the next day he found himself in a psychiatric ward where:

At every opportunity I would express my disillusionment in small drawings. . . . There were the beastly faces of my comrades, war cripples, arrogant officers, embittered nurses. I made hundreds of small drawings that later served as the basis for . . . lithographs. I wanted to retain everything that was laughable and grotesque in my environment. . . . They just represented the ugliness and distortions I saw all about me.³⁵



20. George Grosz, *Strassenbild (Street Picture)*, 1917. Lithograph.

In *Die Gesundbeter (The Faith Healers)* (figure 23) Grosz mocks those who had exhumed him, and many others, from the ranks of those earlier declared unfit. A letter written while he fearfully awaited recall described the situation which this print caricatures. The letter and the drawing were published together in the April 1919 issue of Herzfeld's *Die Pleite*. Grosz wrote:

Facts: the seventeen-year-olds must register with the Home Guard, those unfit (fully unfit!!) for service are mustered—and . . . old men up to 52 are called to the Home Guard. (Statistics: of 100 Germans 52 years old, 99 have fat around the heart, arteriosclerosis, kidney damage, bad blood, etc., also fat necks with boils are not uncommon). . . . This is the human material out of which the German Reich will fill its new army.³⁶

To Grosz the military doctors became objects of loathing and ridicule, to be treated only with sarcasm. In his autobiography he wrote of one memorable encounter: "back in the army that nice doctor had said that my drawings looked crazy enough to him. He had even put me through a sort of test for idiocy, but I had answered all their idiotic questions satisfactorily."³⁷

Although drawn in response to recruitment policy, the print was published in *Die Pleite* with the inscription "Dedicated to the doctors of Stuttgart, Greifswald, Erfurt and Leipzig. Four and a half years they assured death his booty; now, when they should be saving lives, they have gone on strike. They have not changed. They have remained the same. They are fit for the 'German revolution'."³⁸ Because Grosz was interested in the underlying causes of abuses and not specific instances, his caricatures illustrated types and situations. Individual drawings could therefore be used to comment on many situations. This caricature of the "wartime K.V. machine" staffed by the kaiser's functionaries could also be used to chastise the new republic because the underlying issues remained the same. Similarly, his *Feierabend (Evening Leisure)* (figure 22) which was actually drawn in response to murders in Munich, was also published as a condemnation of Free Corps activities in Berlin.

Wolfradt's comments allow us to view the print through the eyes of a sympathetic contemporary. He read the caricature as a comment on the zealous war-readiness of staff doctors and high-ranking gentlemen who jocularly entertain one another on the sidelines with tales of glittering escapades. Also in attendance are a stupid lower officer, assiduous scribe, full, comfortable captain, and a "splendidly observed orderly, . . . typically feeble, a loathsome, harmless fellow with a *Hautgout* of petty bourgeois Christianity and subservient, flat feet."³⁹ What silences our snickering is the realization that millions of fit individuals were turned into cadavers by the "K.V. machine."

In another print in the portfolio, *Germans to the Front* (figure 21), Grosz represented the ranking officers as repulsive, piggish, lewd, small-minded brutes who swagger about, armed with phallic weapons. (The term "Les Boches" in the French title is slang for dull, dissolute fellows and was a current epithet for Germans.) In the background two grenade-festooned simpletons stand at attention. Grosz had no sympathy with these human mines, who in his eyes were stupid, willing cannon fodder; imbued with the herd mentality, they were to him despicable mass animals filled with reactionary ideas about God, fatherland and militarism, automats "without their own thoughts, feelings, and will."⁴⁰ In the title plate, *Gott mit Uns* (catalogue number I-36), Grosz portrays the noncommissioned officers as strutting, bullish, cocksure boors; their phallic revolvers and swords mock the precarious masculinity of men who confuse themselves with their uniforms.

The critics termed Grosz's work *Tendenzkunst* (tendentious art). Its aesthetic validity was an issue earnestly debated in the journals. At the other end of the spectrum from *Tendenzkunst* was the work of artists who consciously eschewed any topical engagement with contemporary events. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Christian Rohlf's typify the latter stance. Both men belonged to the radical *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* (Workers' Council for Art), but their art commented only obliquely and metaphorically on their times.

Schmidt-Rottluff's most political statement was his response to the questionnaire circulated by the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst*. He was a member of its business committee, a body elected by the general membership, and he served along with his former *Brücke* (Bridge) associates⁴¹ Erich Heckel and Max Pechstein, as well as Ludwig Meidner. His comments were published, along with twenty-seven other artists' responses, in the *Arbeitsrat's* book, *Ja! Stimmen des Arbeitsrates für Kunst in Berlin* (figure 91). There he affirmed his faith in socialism, but also his distrust of anything political. He wrote: "the artist should be free in a socialist state, true to his goals which are always directed towards humanity, never the state. . . . In life and art, the artists must be free. As a logical consequence, the state should stay out of art."⁴²

Schmidt-Rottluff had been called into the *Landsturm* (Home Guard) in the spring of 1915, when he was thirty-one. His battalion dug trenches, but never saw active battle. At the end of the war he was working with the censor's staff in Russia, where he carved his nine-print portfolio on the life of Christ. The war experience seemed to heighten his emotional sensitivities and intensify his mystical inclinations. He continued to work in the bold Expressionist style he developed before the war, but with a synthetic power which transcended that evidenced in his prewar compositions.

Included in this nine-print portfolio were the *Christus* (Christ), 1918 (figure 25, page 92) and *Christus und Judas* (Christ and Judas), 1918 (figure 26). In the *Christus*, Schmidt-Rottluff expressed in a single emblematic image the dreadful burden of unrelieved suffering borne by the German people. A contemporary critic for *Der Cicerone* described the print as ". . . a monstrous vision which marks the stifling horror through which the German people have passed. . . . One eye is closed fast in pain, the other bursts open in prophecy: therefrom projects a gaze of sorrow and command which bores deep into one's memory. On the forehead is branded the number 1918 as a reminder to a strayed humanity, as an eternal sign, that in this year 'Christ has not appeared to you.'"⁴³ This anguished utterance won for Schmidt-Rottluff the reputation for being a spiritual leader among German artists.

In 1918 and 1919, in addition to this nine-print portfolio, Schmidt-Rottluff carved many other powerful woodcuts on religious themes, some of which referred to sacred events in the life of Christ, some of which simply express mystical ecstasy (figure 27). Schmidt-Rottluff's biographer and contemporary, Will Grohmann, thus explained the prevalence of hallowed themes in Schmidt-Rottluff's and his fellow Expressionists' post-war work:

He returned from the field altered, but the new impulse came less out of political and social revolution than the "extreme susceptibility" of which Gropius speaks, out of the assurance that there existed a tie to the numinous He gives the old symbols new content through human bearing and transforms them in symbolic terms of expression with contemporary appeal. . . . what he painted in 1919 and 1920, was born out of the sense of being near death and again being given the gift of life.⁴⁴

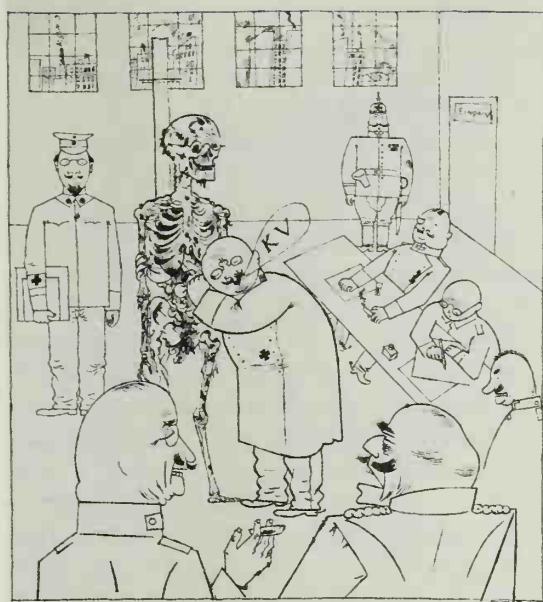
Christian Rohlf's viewed artistic creation as an enterprise necessarily detached from the everyday. He was concerned that art would be



22. George Grosz, *Feierabend (Evening Leisure)*, 1919. Photolithograph from an ink drawing.



21. George Grosz, *The Germans to the Front*, 1919. Photolithograph after a pen drawing.



23. George Grosz, *Die Gesundbeter* (*The Faith Healers*), 1918. Photolithograph from an ink drawing.



24. George Grosz, *Blood Is the Best Sauce*, 1919. Photolithograph from an ink drawing.



26. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Christus und Judas* (Christ and Judas), 1918. Woodcut.



27. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Der Heilige*, (The Saint), in *Die Rote Erde*, 6, November 1919. Woodcut.

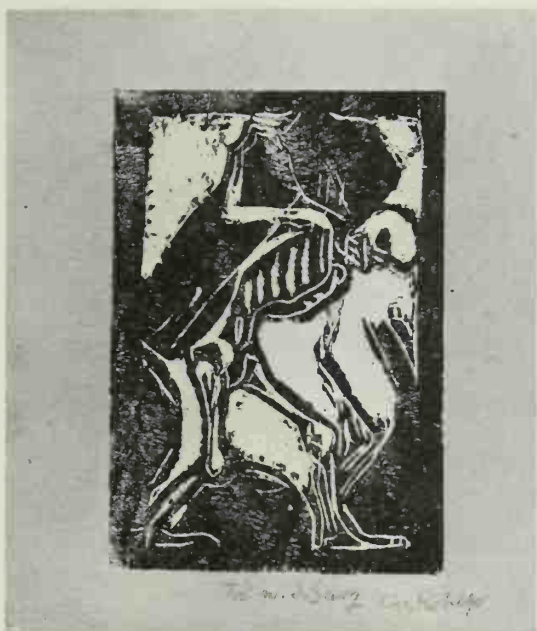
weakened if artists turned from grand, overriding humanistic issues and allowed themselves to be distracted by the vicissitudes of daily life. "We should not be reformers of the world," he said. "The more unintentionally we work, the better, . . . and it is better for humanity if we trouble ourselves as little as possible with everyday concerns."⁴⁵ The war so unnerved him, however, that it was reflected obliquely in his art.

"The events of the day are so horrible," he stated in November 1914, "that they overwhelm everything."⁴⁶ For a few months he was unable to work. When he regained his composure he turned to religious imagery and representations of death. Small woodcuts, like primitive, faded, hand rubbings from medieval grave reliefs, evoked the omnipresence and triumph of death (figure 28) or offered solace in their suggestion of ultimate transcendence. Although Rohlf's work had had Expressionist characteristics since 1912, the devastating experience of the war years infused into it an Expressionist emotional power and inspired a bold synthesis in one of the rare images with which Rohlf's seems specifically to address contemporary events. The print, *Der Gefangene* (The Prisoner), 1918 (figure 29), is a dispirited plea from a weary old man of sixty-nine, saddened that humanity had again revealed itself a perpetual and pitiful accomplice of death. "Men," he stated, "progressed little; they make war and everything is again as it was."⁴⁷ Rohlf's prisoner is without nationality or identity, a universal symbol of subjugation. A pall of darkness descends behind him; it is met, however, by a counterforce, the expansive landscape which perhaps symbolizes freedom. Another glimmer of hope is apparent in the cracked bar against which the prisoner leans his emaciated chest. Perhaps he, and humanity which he symbolizes, will break free. Rohlf's weariness was the exception. Most artists, either in their actions or their imagery, expressed a buoyant optimism and believed that the war had brought the *tabula rasa* on which they could help to write the prescriptions of the new order.

The terms madness and insanity were increasingly used to condemn the war as "hunger" and "turnip" winters became the fare. For those at the front, the confrontation with madness was no metaphor, but a daily occurrence. Madness as a circumstance and a legacy of the war became a subject for many artists. Dix describes the terror of the fleeing wounded and brings us face to face with the gaping horror frozen on the deranged visages of the dead and dying (figure 18). The shattered psyches of war-battered civilians and demented inhabitants of devastated villages (figure 17) haunt the portfolio.

For many soldiers, insanity had a more personal meaning as the psychiatric wards filled. In 1917 the Dresden artist Conrad Felixmüller spent a month as an orderly at the *Lazarett* (military hospital) in Arnsdorf. His two lithographs of a soldier in a psychiatric ward record this experience (figure 30 and catalogue number I-30). In each, the reeling Expressionist space created by jumbled bars and skewed windows reflects the soldier's disorientation. One print includes the inscription, "res. Lazarett Arnsdorf," indicating that he was there. In the other, the tormented inmate holds a letter with "Sender Felixmüller" scrawled on the back flap.

Felixmüller so intensely identified with his charges that he imagined himself one of them. He published an account of one of his nightmares, an hallucinatory, morphine-benumbed journey in a Red Cross train through a cold, snowy landscape. He imagined his leg amputated and his head torn off. Felixmüller also reports having told the staff doctors to let the inmates free, to let them rave, because he felt that they would become well immediately when told, "the war is over," and thanked as brothers who, "raving and insane," had absolved their fellow men's guilt.⁴⁸



28. Christian Rohlfs, *Tod mit Sarg* (Death with a Coffin), ca. 1917. Woodcut.

The famous Expressionist film, *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, 1920, was originally intended to be a condemnation of the insanity of war and the brutality of the military. It was inspired by the war experiences of a Czech, Hans Janowitz, and an Austrian, Carl Mayer, who had met in Berlin after the war.

Janowitz, an infantry officer, had returned from the war a confirmed pacifist, "animated," according to film historian Siegfried Kracauer, "by a hatred of an authority which had sent millions of men to death."⁴⁹ During the war, Mayer had been forced to undergo repeated mental examinations. The central figure in their film, the sinister Dr. Caligari, was modelled after the high-ranking military psychiatrist in charge of his case (figure 31). Caligari was cast as a carnival master whose somnambulist, Cesare, murdered on his command (catalogue number III-2). Cesare, according to Janowitz, represented the common man who "under the pressure of compulsive military service, is drilled to kill and to be killed." Caligari is the embodiment of the insane, unbridled, tyrannical authority which, according to Kracauer, "ruthlessly violates all human rights and values."⁵⁰ Much to the authors' dismay, the film company framed the story so it appeared that the youth, Francis, was an inmate in



29. Christian Rohlfs, *Der Gefangene* (The Prisoner), 1918. Woodcut.



30. Conrad Felixmüller, *Soldat im Irrenhaus*
(*Soldier in a Psychiatric Ward*), 1918. Color
lithograph.



31. Anonymous, *The Carnival Master*, from *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, 1919. Silverprint.

an asylum run by the benevolent psychiatrist, Doctor Caligari. This device not only camouflaged the subversive message of the story, but reversed the authors' intention, which had been to condemn authority and celebrate the battle of the common man against it. In the altered version, authority emerges benevolent and the common man a lunatic.

The war experience had kindled the artists' and intellectuals' faith in the masses and ripening historical necessities; they awaited revolution. A June 1918 letter from Felixmüller to his brother-in-law, the painter Peter Böckstiegel, expressed this new faith:

... when the front soldiers lose their fear of their superiors—it can go better. . . . in the psychiatric ward were a large number who had struck their superiors or who no longer wanted to shoot, . . . they risked something for it, first prison, then the asylum, then prison again: . . . we intellectuals are seemingly excluded—we think to ourselves: . . . do not miss the moment of revolt, for Mankind waits for us.⁵¹

To the artists, solidarity with the workers meant supporting the international socialist movement. Many therefore began to dedicate their talents to that cause and in powerful imagery celebrated the new order and condemned the old.

Notes

- 1 George Grosz, Franz Marc, Otto Dix and Oskar Kokoschka volunteered. Erich Heckel joined the Red Cross. Max Beckmann, romantically anticipating filling his notebooks with material for epic paintings, signed on as a field hospital orderly; his daily encounters with the nightmarish reality so debilitated him that he was discharged. Max Pechstein was drafted on his return from the South Seas; after experiencing the horrors of the Somme, he requested and received a desk job. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff was drafted. Otto Mueller, in delicate health when he was called up, sustained the lung damage which caused his early death. Ernst L. Kirchner, according to his own account an "unwilling volunteer," suffered a nervous breakdown and was sent to a sanitarium in Switzerland. He later refused to design a poster honoring the war dead because he did not want to glorify, and thus prepare the ground for, war.
- 2 Emil Nolde, *Welt und Heimat. Die Südseereise 1913-1918*, geschrieben 1936 (Cologne: M. DuMont Schauberg, 1965), p. 140.
- 3 Tilla Durieux, in Paul Raabe, ed., *The Era of German Expressionism*, J. M. Ritchie, trans. (Woodstock, New York: The Overlook Press, 1974), p. 351.
- 4 Richard Huelsenbeck, "Zurich 1916, As It Really Was," in Raabe, pp. 168, 171, 172.
- 5 Franz Pfemfert, "Note," *Die Aktion* 1:2 (1911), p. 58.
- 6 Walter Mehring, "Berlin Avant-garde," in Raabe, p. 112.
- 7 Erwin Piscator, "Die politische Bedeutung der Aktion," in Gesellschaft der Bibliophilen EV Frankfurt a. Main, *Imprimatur ein Jahrbuch für Bücherfreunde*, Neue Folge Band III, 1961-62 (Hamburg: Siegfried Buchenau, 1962), pp. 211-212.
- 8 Kaethe Kollwitz, *The Diary and Letters of Kaethe Kollwitz*, Hans Kollwitz, ed. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), p. 83.
- 9 Käthe Kollwitz, *Tagebuchblätter und Briefe*, Hans Kollwitz, ed. (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1949), p. 98.

- 10 Kollwitz, *Diary*, p. 56.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- 14 Kollwitz, *Tagebuchblätter*, pp. 78-79.
- 15 Kollwitz, *Diary*, p. 74.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 91.
- 17 Overbeck-Gesellschaft Lübeck, *Käthe Kollwitz: Das Graphische Werk: Sammlung Helmut Goedeckemeyer* (Lübeck: Overbeck-Gesellschaft, 1967), n.p.
- 18 Kunstverein Hamburg, *Otto Dix: Zeichnungen, Aquarelle, Grafiken, Kartons* (Hamburg: Die Kunstverein, Hamburg, 1977), p. 7.
- 19 Florian Karsch, ed., *Otto Dix: Das Graphische Werk* (Hannover: Fackelträger-Verlag Schmidt-Küster, 1970), p. 15.
- 20 Städtische Galerie Albstadt, *Otto Dix—Der Krieg: Radierungen · Zeichnungen* (Albstadt: Die Städtische Galerie Albstadt, 1977), p. 14.
- 21 Gustav Eugen Diehl, ed., *Otto Dix* (Berlin: Das Kunstarchiv Verlag, 1926), p. 17.
- 22 *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
- 23 Rudolf Lange, *Otto Gleichmann* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt-Verlag, 1963), p. 15.
- 24 Hans Hess, *George Grosz* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974), p. 68.
- 25 They included Kurt Hiller, Erich Mühsam, Walter Mehring, Alfred Döblin, Emmy Hennings, Rene Schickele, Jacob van Hoddis, Theodor Däubler, Hugo Ball, Franz Pfemfert, Herwarth Walden, Oskar Kokoschka, Ernst Rowohlt, Leonhard Frank, Max Pechstein, Ludwig Meidner, Georg Heym, Martin Buber and Gustav Landauer.
- 26 Ernst Blass, "The Old Café des Westens," in Raabe, pp. 29-30.
- 27 Huelsenbeck, p.167.
- 28 Wieland Herzfelde, "How a Publishing House Was Born," in Raabe, pp. 219-222.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 George Grosz, *Der Spiesserspiegel und das Neue Gesicht der Herrschenden Klasse* (Frankfurt am Main: Makol Verlag, 1973), n.p.
- 31 George Grosz, *Briefe 1913-1959*, Herbert Knust, ed. (Reinek bei Hamburg: Rohwolt Verlag, 1979), p. 44.
- 32 Theodor Däubler, "Georg Grosz," *Die weissen Blätter* 3 (Oktober-Dezember 1916), p. 167.
- 33 Willi Wolfradt, "George Grosz," *Der Cicerone* 13:4 (1921), p. 109.
- 34 Huelsenbeck, p. 170.
- 35 George Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No: The Autobiography of George Grosz*, Lola Sachs Dorin, trans. (New York: The Dial Press, 1946), p. 161.

- 36 Grosz, *Briefe*, p. 45.
- 37 Grosz, *A Little Yes*, p. 185.
- 38 Alexander Dückers, *George Grosz: Das Graphische Werk* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1979), p. 193.
- 39 Wolfradt, p. 116.
- 40 Grosz, *Briefe*, p. 45.
- 41 *Die Brücke* (1905-1913) was formed in Dresden by young architectural students turned painters. By late 1911 they had all moved to Berlin. Artists who, at one time or another, were members included *Brücke* founders Ernst L. Kirchner, Erich Heckel and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, and Otto Mueller, Max Pechstein and Emil Nolde. Influenced by Gauguin and Van Gogh, these Expressionist artists stressed the primacy of individual emotional expression through the free use of color, brushstroke, exaggeration and distortion. They sought to bring about a renaissance in German art. Because they considered the woodcut a particularly German medium of expression, printmaking was of particular interest to them.
- 42 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, in *Ja! Stimmen des Arbeitrates für Kunst in Berlin* (Charlottenburg: Photographischen Gesellschaft, 1919), p. 90.
- 43 Wilhelm Valentiner, "Karl Schmidt-Rottluff," *Der Cicerone* 12:12 (1920), p. 12.
- 44 Will Grohmann, *Karl Schmidt-Rottluff* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1956), pp. 90, 92.
- 45 Carl Emil Uphoff, *Christian Rohlf's* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1923), p. 14.
- 46 Paul Vogt, *Christian Rohlf's: Aquarelle und Zeichnungen* (Recklinghausen: Aurel Bongers, 1958), p. 59.
- 47 Uphoff, p. 14.
- 48 Conrad Felixmüller, *Conrad Felixmüller: Von Ihm—Über Ihm* (Düsseldorf: Graphik-Salon Gerhart Söhn, 1977), p. 20.
- 49 Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological Study of the German Expressionist Film* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 62.
- 50 *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
- 51 Archiv für Bildende Kunst, Germanisches National Museum, *Conrad Felixmüller: Werke und Dokumente* (Nürnberg: Das Germanisches Museum, 1981), pp. 67-68.



38. Käthe Kollwitz, *Verbrüderung der Nationen* (*Fraternization of the Nations*), frontispiece for Henri Barbusse, *Der Singende Soldat*, 1924. Lithograph.

3 Peace and Renewed Internationalism

PEACE brought jubilation and disillusionment, euphoria and despair. The title of a poem by Wilhelm Lehmbruck, "Who Is Still Here?" expresses the hopelessness so many felt in the aftermath of the war. As artists began grappling with the war experience, prints on war-related themes appeared in the Expressionist periodicals and as print portfolios. Among them, images of the wounded figured prominently. Max Pechstein, for example, carved stark woodcuts of bandaged soldiers (figure 32). He continued to follow the prewar Expressionist pattern of using bold, planar abstractions borrowed from African masks in order to intensify the emotional impact of his images. Another recurrent postwar theme was the disabled war veteran. George Grosz recalled that after the war thousands of quivering and quaking, real and fake cripples peopled the street corners of Berlin. Some feigned war injuries, others were hideously deformed. As a result, Germans became "inured to the strange, unusual and repulsive."¹

Max Beckmann's *Der Nachhauseweg* (*The Way Home*), 1919 (figure 33), describes the shock of a sudden encounter with one of the war-ravaged veterans whom the painter Franz Wilhelm Seiwert accusingly called "memorials to your guilt."² In the print, Beckmann himself pauses beneath a street lamp and scrutinizes the ghastly apparition before him. This was the face of war which, he wrote, Germans had "daily stared in the mug for four frightful years."³ In the lithograph, the artist points an inquiring finger at himself as though asking the questions which haunted so many: Why not I? Am I guilty? This print was published as part of Beckmann's portfolio, *Die Hölle* (*The Hell*), published by J. B. Neumann. Another print in the portfolio, *Die Letzten* (*The Last Ones*), describes the violence which marred the euphoric early days of the republic.

Beckmann, who lived in Frankfurt, chose to live in the city because there, in the "grand human orchestra" he could confront humanity with his "heart and nerves" and then "expose the ghastly cry of pain of the poor disillusioned people."⁴ Beckmann's wartime experience as a medic gave him his grisly imagery; his immersion in postwar urban life gave his work its stark authenticity. Contemporaries praised *Die Hölle* for its uncompromising treatment of the legacy of war and revolution. "That is Germany," affirmed critic Paul Schmidt, "and no name suits it better than hell."⁵ These prints, along with Beckmann's postwar paintings, in his words, reproached God for his errors.

The war experience changed Beckmann's style. His prewar work was a sensuous romanticism based on the baroque masters and Delacroix. In 1912 he had publicly defended objectivity and sensuous emphasis on



32. Max Pechstein, *Ein Verwundeter* (Wounded Man), in *Die Rote Erde*, January–March 1920. Woodcut.



33. Max Beckmann, *Der Nachhauseweg* (The Way Home), 1919. Reduced reproduction from the original lithograph.



34. Heinrich Campendonk, *Die Bettler, Nach Bruegel* (Beggars, After Bruegel), 1922. Woodcut.



35. Franz Maria Jansen, *Zeitgenossen* (Contemporaries), 1922. Woodcut.

the material surface of objects in an exchange with Franz Marc, who sought, through avant-garde abstraction, to express the inner spiritual nature of things. The daily confrontation with death taught him to live, Beckmann said, more intensely. It also left him broken physically and mentally. In 1915 he was discharged from the medical corps, and it took him two years to convalesce. The combination of the emotional extremes experienced, his close-hand view of death and suffering and his meeting Erich Heckel and Ludwig Meidner in Flanders turned him towards a more intensely emotional, subjective orientation. After the war he sought, like the Expressionists, to expose the underlying spiritual and emotional life beneath the scintillating surface on which he had focused before. He went to war with the intention of garnering images of high adventure; he returned to paint its subjective horrors.

In order to express this new emphasis on the internal life, he turned to the example of Gothic art and adapted its angularities to his Expressionist intentions. His new, compressed, nightmare spaces and strident forms permeated with tension reflected his own anxieties and the surrounding horrors which daily accosted him in the city.

The persistent curb-side presence of the war cripple was recorded into the 1920's. Heinrich Campendonk's *Die Bettler (Nach Bruegel)* (*The Beggars, After Bruegel*), 1922 (figure 34), looked to the past for inspiration. Although a member of the radical *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* (Workers' Council for Art), Campendonk never responded topically to contemporary events. In this print he revived a motif from the past in order to comment on what was, for him, the timeless present. By contrast, Franz Maria Jansen's angry woodcut from the same year, *Zeitgenossen* (*Contemporaries*) (figure 35), contrasts the broken remnants of working-class cannon fodder with the monocled capitalist entrepreneur to whose interests their lives were sacrificed in war and in the work place. Otto Dix's lithograph *Blinder* (*Blind Person*), 1923 (figure 36), touchingly records the man's dignified presence. This image no longer expresses the anger and outrage conveyed in Dix's earlier, desecrated matchsellers. By 1923, Dix's work reflected more the German new realism of the 1920's than the moral outrage of his Expressionist images of the immediate postwar period.

The war left disfigurement and destitution in its wake. This was not, however, the face on which the Expressionist poets, writers and artists chose solely to focus; instead they ecstatically imagined the war as the liberator and cleanser which would prepare the ground for a new age in which they would be the prophets. In a typical exclamation, *Novembergruppe* poet Kinner von Dresler declared: "War / End of a violent, lying material time / . . . Resurrection of the soul."⁶ In this new age would emerge the Expressionist "new man." In his book *Die neunte November*, Rene Schickele, editor of the Expressionist journal *Die weissen Blätter*, celebrated his advent:

Now. Now. Finally. Now!

The new world has begun. . . . One face appears in the chaotic atmosphere of *Angst* and lies: the face of man. The face of a creature, supernaturally gleaming . . . and yet bound to earth.⁷

The Expressionists' acclamation of the "new man" was reflected in their quest for a classless society and its corollary, internationalism. During the war, cosmopolitan Germans had taken heart in the voices of French pacifists such as Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse. Kaethe Kollwitz, for example, wrote in her diary in March 1918:

Barbusse finished. Toward the end he has one soldier say, "If we do not forget what we have gone through, then there will be no more war."

That is it. This book should therefore be published in millions of copies. . . . It is a textbook in the truest sense.⁸

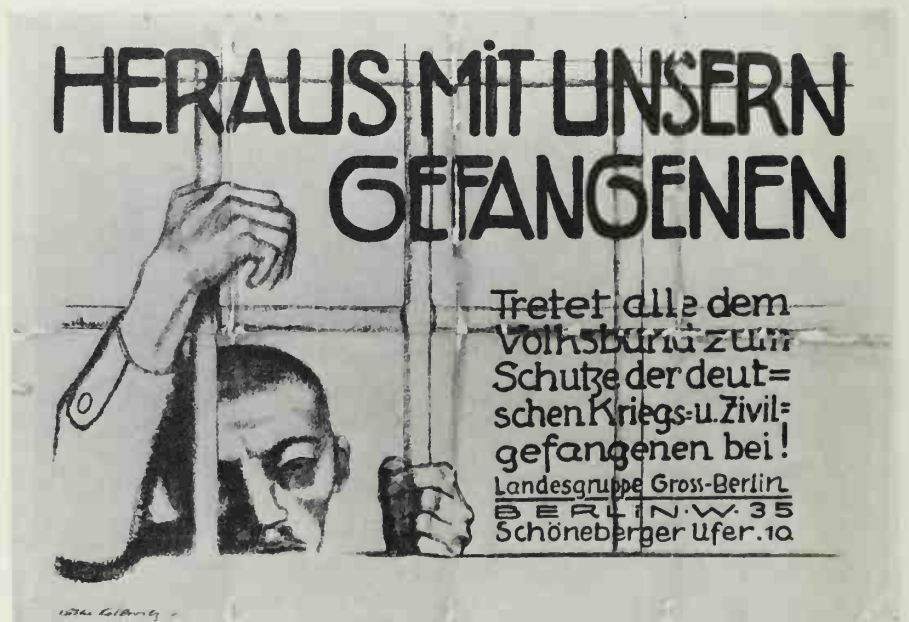


36. Otto Dix, *Blinder* (Blind Man), 1923. Lithograph.

The 1924 German translation of Barbusse's *The Singing Soldier* included a Kollwitz lithograph, *Verbrüderung der Nationen* (*Fraternization of the Nations*) (figure 38, page 26), which expressed her longing for international brotherhood and reconciliation.

In order to further that cause, Kollwitz contributed a magnificent poster, *Heraus mit Unsern Gefangenen* (*Turn Free Our Prisoners*), 1920 (figure 37), to the People's Association for the Protection of German War and Civil Prisoners. Much to her delight, the text was lettered in by a woman, Elisabeth Asch, whose fiancé remained interned in a French camp. A contemporary critic commented that "The lack of harmony between the script and image hurts the poster. . . . The deep and stirring expression of the head is drowned out by the heavy ring of the lettering."⁹ The truth of his observation is made obvious when the poster is compared with those for which Kollwitz executed both drawing and text (figure 76 and catalogue number II-8). If Kollwitz sensed the lack of aesthetic complement, her joy in collaborating with someone actually involved in the suffering she sought to alleviate would have overshadowed any sense of aesthetic proprietorship she might have felt.

This new internationalist creed was given full and inspired expression by Kurt Pinthus in his influential essay, "Rede an die Weltbürger" ("Address to the World Citizens") published in *Genius* in 1919. Pinthus was head reader for the Kurt Wolff Verlag in Leipzig and one of the editors of *Genius*, Wolff's magazine dedicated to exploring contemporary issues in art and literature. He also edited the important Expressionist anthology, *Menschheitsdämmerung* (1919). Throughout the essay, Pinthus reverentially repeats the phrase, "men of all peoples of the earth." As though part of a litany, it resonates like a sacred Amen punctuating a sermon; instead of invoking the deity, however, he calls out the name of man. Pinthus begins this fourteen-page essay with an Expressionist paean to socialism: "Socialism! Shatterer of the decrepit world! Awakener of dark masses! Arouser of humanity! Trail blazer to earthly paradise!"¹⁰ He was confident that through socialism an embattled humanity could be restored to grace. In contrast to most other Expressionist writing, his rousing prose



37. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Heraus mit unsern Gefangenen* (*Turn Free Our Prisoners*), 1920. Lithograph poster.

paid heed to reality. In response to the "Oh-Mankind" Expressionists who, quoting the title of Leonhard Frank's collection of short stories, ecstatically asserted "Man Is Good!" he wrote:

The exultant cry "Man Is Good!" is beautiful, but of course untrue. Man, as he presently is, certainly is not good. . . . but man must become good. . . . only this belief, that man will become better and good, . . . will make possible the future of the human race. People of all the earth, you need a grand belief. . . . Believe in the future man!¹¹

There were many efforts to bring together those dedicated to peace and international understanding, including calls for yearly international congresses of intellectuals. The postwar outpouring of faith in international brotherhood was so overwhelming that in 1920 publisher and Expressionist poet Kasimir Edschmid was able to include in his series on cultural issues, *Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit* (*Tribune of Art and the Times*), a sixty-page book, *Manifeste der brüderlichen Geistes*, edited by Max Knell. The book documents "manifestations of the fraternal spirit" by gathering together quotations from an international selection of newspaper articles, essays and poems. For some, internationalism was an elitist "good Europeanism"; for others, it meant reaching out through socialism to the international workers' movement and support for revolution. The artist-designed political posters, the subject of the next chapter, were an important expression of this commitment.

Notes

- 1 George Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No: The Autobiography of George Grosz*, Lola Sachs Dorin, trans. (New York: The Dial Press, 1946), p. 170.
- 2 Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, *Wem gehört die Welt: Kunst und Gesellschaft in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1977), p. 211.
- 3 Max Beckmann, "Schöpferische Konfessionen," in Kasimir Edschmid, ed., *Schöpferische Konfessionen*, *Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit* no. 13 (Berlin: Erich Reiss Verlag, 1920), p. 65.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 64.
- 5 P. F. Schmidt, "Max Beckmanns Hölle," *Der Cicerone*, 12:23 (1920), p. 841.
- 6 Kinner von Dresler, "Einführung," *Menschen* 4:38/45 (11 Mai/29 Juni 1919), p. 5.
- 7 Rene Schickele, *Der neunte November*, *Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit* no. 8 (Berlin: Erich Reiss Verlag, 1919), p. 21.
- 8 Hans Kollwitz, ed., *Ich Sah die Welt mit Liebevollen Blicken: Käthe Kollwitz: Ein Leben in Selbstzeugnissen* (Wiesbaden: Fourier Verlag, [1981]), p. 187.
- 9 Hans Friedeberger, "Das Künstlerplakat der Revolutionszeit," *Das Plakat*, 10:4 (Juli 1919), pp. 271-272.
- 10 Kurt Pinthus, "Rede an die Weltbürger," *Genius* (1919), p. 167.
- 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 171-176.



40. Max Pechstein, *Die Nationalversammlung* (The National Assembly), ca. 1919. Color lithograph poster.

4 Artists and Revolution: Political Posters

A MOOD of clandestine conspiracy surrounded the radical artists' wartime support of revolution. *Novembergruppe* artist Karl Jakob Hirsch described the royal air force inspection office, for example, as a hotbed of illicit activity, where "artists dressed as soldiers" drew pictures of airplanes, while under the tables lay revolutionary drawings for Franz Pfemfert's *Die Aktion*, drawings executed "with royal Prussian ink on royal Prussian paper." The periodical *Die Schöne Rarität* and many volumes of the *Der Rote Hahn* (selections from *Die Aktion*) were born in this office-studio where in the night telegrams which read "Danger of Revolution—Exit Forbidden" were secretly posted. From there, artists cautiously winked at demonstrating workers and "awaited the hour of freedom."¹

The hour came when on November 9, 1918, Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated and fled to Holland; at two o'clock in the afternoon, the socialist politician Philipp Scheidemann proclaimed the German Republic. Hirsch, who was then an advisor to the Berlin People's Theater, recalled overhearing an unforgettable telephone conversation in the office of the theater's very political business manager: "My theater-manager told me the revolution is supposed to be at noon, can you give me any real information? . . . Oh, . . . you're having a meeting at four . . . so nothing can happen until then." Hirsch pointed out a workers' demonstration on the street below and commented that the people did not seem to know about the meeting. He took the subway home, and while he was "underground, the revolution was victorious up above."²

The next day, November 10, the socialists established a coalition government constituted of representatives of the moderate German Social Democratic Party and the more radical Independent German Social Democratic Party, with Friedrich Ebert as provisional Reich Chancellor. Elections for the new, democratic National Assembly were set for January 19, 1919. During the two months preceding the elections, there was an unprecedented efflorescence of political activity among German artists who designed the posters which transformed the cities into pyrotechnic tapestries. Everything from crates to trams was plastered and replastered with colorful posters. Despite paper shortages, the visual clamor mounted: posters, broadsheets and newspapers suddenly appeared on every street corner and in every train and subway station, celebrating the end of Wilhelmine censorship.

From Berlin, the most active poster center, a contemporary observer for Germany's poster magazine, *Das Plakat*, described the scene:

. . . the paper flood set in. . . Berlin's streets rioted in color orgies, the houses exchanged their gray faces for an agitated mask. . . Show windows, shutters, houses, crates and boxes were decked in poster finery. . . The resourceful poster pasters advanced. . . With brush and glue pot . . . like goblins in the night they carefully pasted their posters so high that they could only be reached with mountain climbing equipment.³



39. Karl Jakob Hirsch, *Untitled*, in *Der Schwarze Turm*, 4, 1919. Woodcut.

Two kinds of posters were printed: the educational posters published by the provisional government and the partisan posters designed for the political parties. In the battle for seats in the National Assembly, all of the parties, except the newly founded Communist Party, commissioned posters, most actively the German Democratic Party and the Social Democrats.

The provisional government's posters were designed under the auspices of the Publicity Office of the Regime of the People's Delegates, or *Werbedienst*, whose insignia was the torch. This bureau was constituted of three Social Democrats and three Independents. A propaganda specialist, Reckendorf, who had overseen wartime poster making, directed the republican effort.⁴ The first posters bore only written texts printed in Germanic type derived from old ecclesiastical script. In flaming letters, these powerful posters promoted the programs and ideals of the new regime.⁵

The script posters were not successful, so the *Werbedienst* began commissioning colorful pictorial posters, counting on their immediate impact and direct appeal to rally the urban masses to the socialist cause. In this effort the *Werbedienst* turned to the artists of the Berlin *Novembergruppe* (Novembergroup), the most responsive of whom were Heinz Fuchs, Cesar Klein, Max Pechstein, Heinrich Richter-Berlin and Georg Tappert. This new phenomenon, avant-garde German artists designing posters for mass distribution, came about because the artists felt that the new republican government would support artistic freedom. Pechstein spoke for them when he wrote, "After the collapse of the kaiser's regime I, with many others, felt that a grand freedom, a human existence, was dawning. . . . Resolute, I placed myself at the service of the Social Democratic regime," and "made posters."⁶ The artists hoped, in Pechstein's words, to instill a new, idealized spirit in the masses.⁷ Temporarily politicized by war and revolution, German artists cherished the illusion that the two avant-garde groups, the proletariat and the radical artists, could join together to revolutionize German society. In this spirit the *Novembergruppe* artists drafted a manifesto which announced: "We stand on the fertile soil of revolution. . . . We hold it as our foremost duty to dedicate our best powers to the moral construction of the young, free Germany."⁸

Strikes, rebellions and pitched street fighting continued to weaken the provisional government's position. A woodcut by Karl Jacob Hirsch captured the ecstasy and violence which accompanied the months of demonstrations and street fighting before and after the revolution (figure 39). The government posters therefore called upon the radicals to cease agitating and encouraged workers to return to the factories and increase production. Pechstein's *Erwürgt nicht die junge Freiheit* (*Don't Strangle the Newborn Freedom*) (figure 41), for example, is a fairly conventional plea for an end to civil strife. Heinz Fuchs's more avant-garde poster (figure 43) sounds an urgent alarm as the restless, hastily-brushed-in Futurist force lines and Expressionist distortions create a composition which itself underscores the stated exhortation to return to the mines, fields and factories. These new, strident, crisis-declaring forms, derived from Expressionism and Futurism were considered appropriate to the fast-paced tempo of urban life.

The government-sponsored posters also called on Germans to support the new concept of a popularly-elected National Assembly by exercising their newly-won right to vote. A poster by Pechstein portrayed the National Assembly as the monumental cornerstone of the new socialist republic (figure 40, page 32). In the poster, Pechstein concentrates emotional power in a narrow, compact space. The dynamic, clear script



41. Max Pechstein, *Erwürgt nicht die junge Freiheit* (Don't Strangle Our Newborn Freedom), ca. 1919. Color lithograph poster.



42. Cesar Klein, *Arbeiter Bürger Bauern Soldaten* (Workers Citizens Farmers Soldiers), ca. 1919. Color lithograph poster.

presses in around the mason, increasing the explosive energy which seeks to burst the bounds of the composition, a force symbolic of the dawning desire for freedom burgeoning forth among the people, a force symbolized by the morning sun from which the mason seems to emanate.

Cesar Klein's resplendent vision credited the National Assembly with forging class and region transcending national unity (figure 42). A writer for *Das Plakat*, Hans Friedeberger, observed that the artistic quality of the posters increased the further left the sentiments expressed, and singled out Klein's poster as an early and notable example of the new effort to employ an abstract, contemporary idiom, in this case an agitated surface impressionism, in propaganda posters. This endeavor was a significant departure from the wartime practice of basing government posters on the conservative, realistic commercial business poster design tradition.

In forging its alliance with the Expressionists, the socialist government hoped that the urban masses would be moved by a style which, according to activist architect and writer Adolf Behne, came out of the "same instinct for freedom" and "spirit of revolution" which had motivated the workers in the November Revolution. Not only did they share the same spirit, according to Behne, but both were trying to free themselves from economic dependency upon the same enemy, the bourgeoisie.⁹ The presumption was that a new era needed a new style and that the art which had, before the war, embodied new ideas would best represent the goals of the revolution.

These hopes and assumptions proved false; with the rare exception, the Expressionist posters failed as propaganda. Only a few, like Pechstein's *Erwürgt nicht die junge Freiheit*, were clear and simple enough to be generally intelligible. This poster was in fact the one most frequently reproduced and became a familiar symbol for the revolution. Most of the *Novembergruppe* posters, however, provoked only resentment in their intended audience. In his retrospective catalogue marking the tenth anniversary of the *Novembergruppe*, critic, art historian and friend of the *Novembergruppe*, Will Grohmann, commented in his assessment of their miscalculation that at the time he and his artist friends had been shocked and disappointed at the vehement rejection of their efforts by "the uncultured people, on whom one had placed one's hopes."¹⁰

The unfamiliar forms of the Expressionist posters incensed the workers and aroused their suspicion. They were perceived as jest, insult and mockery. Friedeberger, who had himself overheard workers' negative comments, stated that "the pointed, sharp representations which the new art used were perceived . . . as caricature, . . . and suspected of representing a lack of respect and esteem."¹¹ The affinity between the artistic avant-garde and the proletariat was not as close as the artists and intellectuals fancied. The workers considered avant-garde idioms themselves the product of bourgeois society and demanded comprehensible realism and uplifting idealism instead.

Friedeberger's comments offer a useful contemporary assessment of the artists' miscalculation. He granted that the spirit of the new art was also the spirit of revolution and that theoretically it should have been best comprehended by those out of whose circles the revolution had come. One factor he pointed out, however, had been neglected: that style, as much as contents, determined one's response to art and that appreciation of a style was based on taste, usually an acquired taste. The artistically uncultivated eye, disposed to look for the familiar and clearly recognizable, would be alienated by the new art. He found it symptomatic that the best executed poster in his eyes, Pechstein's *An die Laterne* (*To Die Laterne*)



45. Rudi Feld, *Die Gefahr des Bolschewismus* (*The Danger of Bolshevism*), ca. 1919. Color lithograph poster.



43. Heinz Fuchs, *Wollt Ihr satt werden? Ohne Kohle keine Lebensmittel* (*Do You Want Enough to Eat? Without Coal, No Foodstuffs*), ca. 1918-1919. Color lithograph poster.



44. Max Pechstein, *An die Laterne* (*To Die Laterne*), ca. 1919. Color lithograph poster.



46. Max Pechstein, cover illustration for the pamphlet, *Rührt Euch! Zum 19 Januar 1919* (*Bestir Yourself! For the 19 January 1919*), 1919. Lithograph.



47. Anonymous, *Konsumenten! Vereinigt euch* (*Consumers! Unite*), ca. 1919. Color lithograph poster

(figure 44) was, like too many artist-designed political posters, more fine art print than poster.

Friedeberger here raised the most important issue, that of the gulf between the poster designers and their intended audience. The poster he cites as artistically the most successful was the announcement of Max Schulz's new ten-pfennig paper, *Die Laterne*, for which Pechstein executed drawings, and was therefore aimed at the elite audience which would read a small, radical journal. The poster represented the familiar civil strife, but in avant-garde terms. The sculptural treatment of and striations on the demonstrators' faces reflected the influence of African masks on Pechstein and his fellow *Brücke* (Bridge) artists, an influence already noted in his wounded soldier (figure 32). The ability to see intensified, raw emotion rather than deformed sideshow freaks in the Expressionists' Africanized figures had to be acquired.

At the first *Novembergruppe* exhibition, in the summer of 1919, the more light-hearted spectators treated the phenomenon of an art of Africanized visages, loud, arbitrary colors, crude brushstrokes and geometric figures as the "laughter-department" of the museum. Soberer, more serious viewers stood in affronted consternation before the incomprehensible, deformed and eccentric renditions of "reality." For the workers, the issue of respect was paramount. The uncomprehending liberals could laugh at these apparitions, but the workers felt that they themselves were being mocked by condescending intellectuals.

In addition to the posters commissioned by socialist and conservative parties, there were those distributed by the anti-bolshevik leagues. These powerful posters drew on bloody horror show imagery (gorillas, hyenas, wolves, skeletons and vultures) to make graphic the threat of extremism. Many, albeit grisly, were of striking design. These include Rudi Feld's poster (figure 45), which terrified the viewer with an imposing image of death, dagger clenched between his teeth, ominously silhouetted against a bloody evening sky, and an anonymous, anti-Spartacist poster, in which death, scythe in hand, stalks the countryside accompanied by a plague of ravens (catalogue number II-2).

During the campaign for election to the National Assembly, pamphlets and broadsheets were also feverishly produced and circulated. A poem by C. F. W. Behl evoked the frenetic atmosphere in which they were read:

Pamphlets, wet and sticky, already torn, swirl around
hats . . . Storm is aroused and raging.
A man hangs darkly between the people and the stars
on the edge of the monument and reads: Proclamation!¹²

This poem breathlessly records an experience Behl had as he was returning home from a turbulent rally: "I found myself on the Alexanderplatz, wedged into a surging mass of people. A tattered and torn pamphlet was thrust into my hand, and I was pushed up onto a platform and I had to shout the proclamation out over the crowd."¹³

Artists often designed the covers of these brochures very quickly. One by Pechstein typified the best of these efforts (figure 46). Here a leader, with the eyes of a visionary and the demeanor of an agitator, exhorts Germans to show support for the National Assembly by voting. He reminds them that elections will bring the new day, symbolized by the rising sun, an ever-present symbol in election propaganda, conservative or radical. The pamphlet explains that the success of the November Revolution depends upon their voting on January 19 and the institutionalizing of the new order in the National Assembly, the expression of the unified will of the German people. The pamphlet included an article by Philipp



48. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Reichswappen* (German Coat of Arms), 1919. Woodcut.

Scheidemann, a poem by Franz Werfel and an article on the destiny of the German woman.

In addition to posters which addressed election issues, there were those which spoke to consolidation under the new socialist order. A poster for the Bremen cooperative society (figure 47), for example, promotes communal farming and socialism. Steeped in prewar mystical, occult and millenarian symbolism, the imagery promises redemption in culturally laden terms. Drawing on Expressionist "new man," *Blaue Reiter* (Blue Rider)¹⁴ and *Wandervögel*¹⁵ symbolism, it implies that the new order will bring a renewed level of communal consciousness and human fulfillment.

On February 6, 1919, the newly-elected National Assembly met in Weimar, the old city of Goethe and Schiller. The new Weimar Republic needed a crest, so the Reich Art Commissioner, museum director and art historian Edwin Redslob, held a competition for the new, republican eagle which would replace the old imperial eagle. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, then a member of the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* (Workers' Council for Art), submitted a design (figure 48). Although it was not the winning design, Redslob later praised it for clarity and simplicity of form symbolizing the spirit of the new regime. Participation in this competition was among the last political acts of the artists.

Most activist artists became disillusioned after the elections. The complicity of the socialist government in the brutal repression of dissidents by the Free Corps, the assassination of Kurt Eisner and the murders of Gustav Landauer, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and the consolidation of the working relationship between the socialist government and representatives of the old order alienated those who had designed posters and issued manifestoes of solidarity. Individual artists returned to their studios; radical groups ceased their political activity. The *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* disbanded in 1921, and although the *Novembergruppe* continued to exhibit and publish until 1932, it had lost its political élan by 1922. George Grosz described the situation in his book, *Die Kunst ist in Gefahr*, published by the *Malik-Verlag* in 1925:

For a few months red and reddish allegories and pamphlets were produced in masses. . . . Soon calm and order marched again in the land, . . . our artists returned again as silently as possible into the higher regions.¹⁶

Notes

- 1 Kunstamt Wedding, *Die Novembergruppe*, Teil 1, *Die Maler* (Berlin: Buchdruckerei Erich Pröh, 1977), p. 24.
- 2 Karl Jakob Hirsch, *Heimkehr zu Gott: Briefe an meinem Sohn* (Munich: Verlag Kurt Desch, 1946), pp. 65-66.
- 3 Ernst Carl Bauer, "Das politische Gesicht der Strasse," *Das Plakat*, 10:2 (März 1919), p. 166.
- 4 Heinrich Inheim, "Das Berliner Plakatjahr 1918," *Das Plakat* 10:1 (Januar 1919), p. 75.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 L. Reidemeister, ed., *Max Pechstein Erinnerungen* (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1960), p. 104.
- 7 Oscar Gehrig, "Plakatkunst und Revolution," in *Wasmuths Kunsthefte*, Heft. 5 (Berlin: Erich Wasmuth, 1919), p. 1.

- 8 Helga Kliemann, *Die Novembergruppe*, Bildende Kunst in Berlin, no. 3 (Berlin: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst [Kunstverein Berlin], 1969), p. 56.
- 9 Adolf Behne, "Alte und Neue Plakate," in *Das Politische Plakat* (Charlottenburg: Verlag Das Plakat, 1919), pp. 13, 22.
- 10 Kunstamt Wedding, p. 18.
- 11 Hans Friedeberger, "Das Künstlerplakat der Revolutionszeit," *Das Plakat* 10:4 (Juli 1919), p. 275.
- 12 C. F. W. Behl, "Begegnungen mit dem Expressionismus," in Gesellschaft der Bibliophilen EV Frankfurt a. Main, *Imprimatur ein Jahrbuch für Bücherfreunde*, Neue Folge Band III, 1962-63 (Hamburg: Siegfried Buchenau, 1962), p. 243.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 *Der Blaue Reiter* was a loose association of artists centered in Munich. During 1911 and 1912 they exhibited and published together. Its leaders, Vasily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, were interested in exploring the spiritual qualities of art and the musical and symbolic properties of color. In 1912 they published *Der Blaue Reiter*, an anthology of the most avant-garde ideas in the arts. Artists associated with the group included August Macke, Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger and Gabriele Münter. Alexei Jawlensky and Marianne von Werefkin were closely associated with Kandinsky and Münter at the time, but never exhibited with the group.
- 15 The *Wandervögel* was the German Youth Movement. Founded in 1901, it had 15,000 members by 1911. Extremely nationalistic, the *Wandervögel* emphasized the importance of hiking through the German countryside and singing German folk songs in order to awaken a sense of belonging to the German Volk.
- 16 Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, *Wem gehört die Welt: Kunst und Gesellschaft in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1977), p. 299.



49. Constantin von Mitschke-Collande, *Der begeisterte Weg* (The Inspired Way), 1919. Woodcut.

5 Revolution and Disillusionment: An Art of Protest

INTOXICATED by heady and apocalyptic sentiments, artists and writers rallied around the socialist revolution. The new spirit was expressed in Walther Georg Hartmann's rousing story, *Der begeisterte Weg* (*The Inspired Way*), a book dedicated to "the dead, living and future heroes of the legitimate revolution."¹ A friend of Hartmann's, thirty-five-year-old Constantin von Mitschke-Collande, a member of the Dresden *Sezession*, *Gruppe 1919* and one of the few artists who actually joined the Communist Party, executed a series of woodcuts based on the story. The woodcuts combine the strident Expressionist angularity of *Brücke* prints with the structural format of cubism which he learned in Paris from Ferdinand Leger. In this Expressionist tale, Hartmann traces the political awakening of a young soldier who ecstatically leaves his company at the front (figure 49) in order to participate in the revolution. At home he finds old friends gathered, talking of rebellion (figure 50). He attends an evening rally where the leader proclaims, "Comrades! Down with Authority! Down with War! Long Live Freedom! Long Live the Republic!" Inflamed, he joins the assault on the symbol of the old order, the castle. When they reach the tower, the moon casts a shimmering light as the insurgents proclaim "Freedom!" (figure 51); the soldier, swooning, goes to awaken his girl friend.

Soon, in a valiant gesture, he climbs a barricade, grabs a red flag and leaps over to his death. His comrades want to follow, but are cautioned not to die in vain. Free Corps soldiers murder the old, gray-haired leader (figure 52). That night the young soldier, now a ghost, appears and accuses the soldiers of murder. They answer that they had only done their duty. One, however, falls to his knees and declares himself a murderer, to which the ghost replies: "You are no murderer; there are only the awakened, the sleeping and the apathetic. Stand up, go forth and preach love, awakened one!" (figure 53). At the funeral of the old leader, the ghost appears in the clouds. The people call to him that they had erred by trying for too distant a goal and know now that their task is to "Prepare the People!" and commit themselves "to this hard work." The ecstatic ghost rises up, freed, and ascends to heaven against a golden western sun. "The time is ripe" (figure 54). This faith and optimism, these ecstatic proclamations, formed the idealistic foundations for the Expressionists' espousal of the idea of revolution in 1918.

Expressionist periodicals paid tribute to the martyrs of the revolution. Among the most prominent figures celebrated were the friends of the arts, Kurt Eisner and Gustav Landauer, and the Spartacists, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Between 1898 and 1905 Eisner, a Berliner, had



50. Constantin von Mitschke-Collande, *Da Habt ihr mich* (Here You Have Me), 1919. Woodcut.



51. Constantin von Mitschke-Collande, *Freiheit* (Freedom), 1919. Woodcut.



52. Constantin von Mitschke-Collande, *Du hast deinen Bruder getötet* (You Have Killed Your Brother), 1919. Woodcut.



53. Constantin von Mitschke-Collande, *Steh auf und verkünde die Liebe Erweckter* (Stand Up and Proclaim Love, Awakened One), 1919. Woodcut.



54. Constantin von Mitschke-Collande, *Die Zeit ist reif* (*The Time Is Ripe*), 1919. Woodcut.

been editor of the socialist newspaper *Vorwärts*. In 1910 he moved to Munich, where he became the leader of the Independent Socialists. On November 8, 1918, Eisner established the provisional Constituent Soldiers', Workers' and Peasants' Council (The Bavarian Soviet) which governed Bavaria until the Independent Socialists were defeated in the elections. As he set out for the *Landtag* on February 21, 1919, Eisner was assassinated by a reactionary, Count Arco.

The visionary tone of his rhetoric reflected Eisner's studies of ethics and philosophy at Marburg University. He was the only politician who publicly addressed the issue of art and politics and offered a plan for including artists in the new socialist society. His address on art, artists and the state, delivered to the provisional Bavarian National Assembly, was published posthumously by the *Novembergruppe* in its book, *An alle Künstler!* (figure 78, page x). In his speech, Eisner defended the need for the artists to be free from ideological and economic constraints. "The grand artist," he stated, "is possessed, he is a martyr to his art," and should be left to create unhampered. The artist, he felt, had, nonetheless, a responsibility to the society which gave him his freedom, and his sense of responsibility should guide his work. Eisner's particular interest was the theater because he felt that it was the art most useful in the education of the masses. Ultimately, he believed, art as "the flight into the realm of beauty will no longer be necessary," as life itself became "a work of art and the state the highest art work."² Eisner shared the artists' romantic image of themselves and their conception of the importance of art to society. They mourned his loss.

Fritz Schaeffler, a Munich artist associated with the *Novembergruppe*, executed a riveting memorial woodcut portrait for *Der Weg*, a periodical associated with the Action Committee of Revolutionary Artists, Munich (figure 55). The print captures the seemingly contradictory qualities which Gustav Landauer saluted in his eulogy to his friend Eisner. Landauer described Eisner as a "prophet who . . . had faith in mankind. . . . a poet and a fearless herald of truth, a visionary, and at the same time a tireless student of reality."³

Eisner had invited Landauer, a student of literature, philosophy and economics and a radical socialist, to Munich to take charge of the Bureau for Education of the Masses. Landauer, a friend of many artists, including George Grosz, worked hard to effect an understanding between workers and artists. With workers who interpreted Expressionist imagery as provocation he had pleaded: "My dear comrades, you judge falsely; artists . . . are more closely connected with you than you think! You must first make art your intimate friend in order truly to be able to judge."⁴ Eisner's death left the philosopher Landauer, the poet Ernst Toller and the anarchist, pacifist editor, Erich Mühsam, all former Café des Westens habitués, to carry on his party's work. These literati were ill-equipped to run a political party, let alone a government.

After Eisner's assassination, Bavaria soon had three governments: the majority socialist coalition cabinet in Nürnberg, the Independent Socialists' Soviet Republic of Bavaria declared by Eisner's followers in Munich and a communist soviet. At the end of April, the majority socialist government asked Berlin for help in putting down the radicals. In the ensuing violence, hundreds were killed. Grosz's *Feierabend* (*Evening Leisure*) (figure 22) describes a lull in the fighting as a soldier nonchalantly surveys bloated corpses floating in the Isar. The massive domes of the *Frauenkirche* in the background identify Munich as the site of the atrocities. Grosz's friends Toller and Mühsam were imprisoned, and his friend and



55. Fritz Schaeffler, *Porträt Kurt Eisner* (Portrait of Kurt Eisner) (Portrait of Kurt Eisner), in *Der Weg*, March 1919. Woodcut.



56. Conrad Felixmüller, *Toter Genosse* (Dead Comrade), 1919. Lithograph.

former contributor to the *Neue Jugend*, Landauer, was beaten to death on the courtyard of *Stadelheim* prison. *Das Tribunal* carried a blow-by-blow, eye-witness account of the murder and a commemorative article on Landauer's humanitarian socialism.

The workers' revolts in Berlin, instigated by the Spartacists, had been quelled by the time Munich called for help. The Spartacist group, formed in March 1916, had been the radical wing of the Independent Socialist Party. In disgust over the Independents' participation in the coalition provisional government, the Spartacists left the party in December 1918 and formed the German Communist Party. The Communist Party actively instigated strikes, insurrections and street fighting in order to bring down the new republican government. In response, Friedrich Ebert's Minister of Defense, Gustav Noske, mustered thousands of volunteers, including anti-republican former officers, for his paramilitary Free Corps. During the first two weeks in January, Noske's troops crushed the Spartacist uprisings. In Berlin, about one hundred people died and hundreds were wounded. Similar violence occurred in other cities. One of the artists most consistently active in the workers' behalf, Conrad Felixmüller, participated in the demonstrations in Dresden and documented the violence there. His *Toter Genosse* (*Dead Comrade*), 1919 (figure 56), was executed in response to a specific occurrence:

Early January 1919: these were the most exciting days of the Revolution! Dresden was overflowing with demobilized soldiers. . . . [and] masses of unemployed war industry workers. . . . As we came to the Wettiner Platz, the crowds were shot at out of windows and hand grenades were thrown. Next to me workers and soldiers fell. . . . the red flags still in clenched hands.⁵

Among those summarily executed in Berlin were the Spartacist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Liebknecht was the son of the Social Democratic Party's founder, Wilhelm Liebknecht; Luxemburg was a prominent Polish socialist. They were murdered on January 15. Liebknecht was reported shot "while trying to escape"; Luxemburg was beaten to death, and her body was thrown into the *Landwehrkanal*, from which it was recovered four months later. The radical Dresden periodical, *Menschen*, announced the deaths with a woodcut by Conrad Felixmüller (figure 57) and the accusation that the "republican" provisional government had betrayed the revolution. "They were murdered today," it declared, "through the preventive measures of the 'revolutionary' regime. The beast triumphs over the spirit of socialism! . . . The regime is guilty of multiple murders."⁶ In tribute *Die Aktion* published a commemorative lithograph by Felixmüller, *Menschen über die Welt* (*People over the World*) (figure 58), in which the pair floats gracefully over the city; although beatified, the martyrs' faces still mirror their anxious concern for the masses they leave behind.

A few months later *Die Aktion* published Expressionist poet Johannes R. Becher's "Weltrevolution" ("World Revolution"), a poem which embodies the Expressionist ardor for revolution. Becher begins with a rousing call to the people and a warning to the capitalists, "we are the satanic oxygen cysts on your fireproof safes, the flitting, stinging scourge of God. . . . the revolutionary tribunal is erected, judgment begins, the Volk judges." He then frantically celebrates three leaders, Liebknecht, "the flame thrower, dionysian advocate, standing upon an imaginary and soaring plateau," Luxemburg "sybil-like angel . . . promise of the east, burning ascetic, pillar of lightning," and Lenin, "the shrill insurgent scream pounds through the never-more-to-be-extinguished million-headed hydra of the factory alarm sirens, Lenin!"⁷ Other periodicals quoted at length from Liebknecht's December 2, 1914, speech to the *Reichstag* in which he



57. Conrad Felixmüller, *Porträt Karl Liebknecht* (Portrait of Karl Liebknecht), and logo for *Menschen*, in *Menschen*, January 15, 1919. Reproductions of woodcuts.



58. Conrad Felixmüller, *Menschen über der Welt* (People over the World), title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, July 5, 1919. Reproduction after a lithograph.

had condemned Germany's violation of the neutrality of Belgium and Luxembourg and declared his refusal to vote for further war credits.

One of the most famous prints to come out of the revolution was Kaethe Kollwitz's *Gedenkblatt für Karl Liebknecht* (Memorial to Karl Liebknecht), 1920 (figure 59). Her profound sympathy with the working people led Kollwitz to contribute to causes with which she herself was not directly involved nor even particularly sympathetic. Although her own inclinations were essentially moderate socialist, and her brother, Konrad Schmidt, was on the editorial staff of *Vorwärts*, she remained aloof from any party affiliation. In 1921, after again seeing Gerhard Hauptmann's 1892 play, *The Weavers*, which had inspired a series of etchings completed in 1898, she confided to her diary:

... I have been through a revolution, and I am convinced that I am no revolutionist. My childhood dream of dying on the barricades will hardly be fulfilled, because I should hardly mount a barricade now that I know what they are like in reality. ... But when an artist like Hauptmann comes along and shows us revolution transfigured by art, we again feel ourselves revolutionaries, again fall for the old deception.⁸

Kollwitz had never been sympathetic with Liebknecht's politics, although she did comment to a friend that the "despicable" Free Corps thuggery was shoving her further left. Kollwitz came to the subject of Liebknecht as the result of his family's asking her to sketch a death bed portrait. Kollwitz's initial antipathy for Liebknecht began to be dispelled when she stood among the thousands of workers who gathered at his graveside and observed their expressions of profound love and sorrow. In her diary Kollwitz described the scene at the morgue and the disruptions caused by Liebknecht's massive funeral procession:

Today Karl Liebknecht was buried and with him thirty-eight others. ... I went to the morgue early. ... Around the shot-up forehead lay red flowers, the face was proud, the mouth somewhat open and painfully distorted. A somewhat wounded expression on the face. ...

The entire center of the city was shut off. ...

It is disgraceful and inflammatory to taunt Liebknecht's followers with violence. And it is a sign of weakness of the regime that they must put up with it.⁹

In the visages of the mourners Kollwitz embodied her misgivings about the strength of the government. Indications of withheld anger, mute suffering, despair, anger and resolute determination create an ominous atmosphere as the mass of mourners stands like a gathering storm cloud.

The encounter launched a prolonged artistic struggle. The final print, completed almost two years later, was based on a design she had used in a 1914 lithograph dedicated to the fallen Social Democratic *Reichstag* delegate, Ludwig Frank. Initially she experimented with familiar media, first etching then lithography (figure 60), before settling on the for her new medium of the woodcut; upon seeing Ernst Barlach's Expressionists woodcuts in June of 1920, she recognized in the medium the raw power and intense condensation of emotion that she had sought in order to express the workers' heavy burden of struggle and grief.

The sharp, stabbing forms, stark contrasts, emotion-bearing exaggerations and compact, aggressive, frontal space of her woodcut accentuated the withheld anger and suppressed power of the proletarian mourners; the nuances of the earlier lithograph, by contrast, had captured only suffering and brooding resignation. Through the woodcut medium, she accentuates the rough hewn power of the people's heavy hands, for Kollwitz the symbol of the working class. She surrounded Liebknecht's proud, defiant profile with the sharp rays of a halo and added the reverential inscription, "Die Lebendem dem Toten" ("The Living to the Dead"), a dedication transposing the title of a poem by Ferdinand Freiligrath, the



59. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Gedenkblatt für Karl Liebknecht* (Commemorative Print for Karl Liebknecht), 1919-1920. Woodcut.



60. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Gedenkblatt für Karl Liebknecht* (Commemorative Print for Karl Liebknecht), 1919. Lithograph.

poet of the Revolution of 1848. The poem, "Die Toten an die Lebendigen," ("The Dead to the Living") was one her free-thinker father had often read aloud. Liebknecht's last statement, published in the Communist Party's newspaper, *Die Rote Fahne*, on the day he was murdered, expressed the combination of martyrdom and commitment conveyed by this woodcut, "Jawohl! . . . Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske have won. . . . the Golgotha Way of the German working class is not ended."¹⁰

The woodcut became both a memorial to the martyred Liebknecht and a testament to the aspirations and desperation of the working class. The print was exhibited for the first time at the 1920 Worker's Art Exhibition in Berlin. Kollwitz donated the proceeds from the sales of this print to help support further similar exhibitions. She believed that artists had a duty to establish a connection between art and the people, and therefore criticized the studio art of the Expressionists with its emphasis on metaphysical transcendence. "I confess," she wrote, "that a pure art in the sense of Schmidt-Rottluff is not my art. . . . I want to work in this time, in which humanity is so restless and destitute."¹¹ Kollwitz's work is grounded in the present; in her humanism lies her transcendence.

Those who had hoped that the revolution would bring fresh new beginnings were troubled as they saw the government join forces with representatives of the old order and jail and kill workers. In a letter to her school friend Beate Bonus-Jeep, Kollwitz expressed the disillusionment of liberal and radical alike: "The child has turned out to be no infant prodigy after all, but one who resembles his parents too much."¹²

Otto Dix's *Die Prominenten* (*Konstellation*) (*The Prominent Ones, Constellation*), 1920 (figure 103), illustrates this truism among radicals, that the hydra-head of the old order, the bureaucrats and professors, military, politicians and ecclesiastical authorities, had remained in power. In his autobiography, Grosz castigated Friedrich Ebert for adopting an executive cut to his moustache and abandoning the workers' cap, the symbol of his proletarian origins. This observation may explain the prominence Dix gives Ebert's moustache.

The bloodiest confrontations occurred in March 1919, when, during the general strikes in Berlin, Noske ordered any armed civilian shot on sight. Twelve hundred people died and thousands were imprisoned. In protest the June 11, 1919, issue of the Independent Socialist's *Die Freie Welt* published Grosz's *Feierabend* (figure 22) with the caption "Das Wasser spült die März gemordeten ans Land" ("The water washes the March-murdered up on shore"). The issue was confiscated. As previously mentioned, the *Feierabend* was actually drawn in response to the violence which accompanied the fall of the Bavarian Soviet Republic in May.

Against the background of a socialist government suppressing revolution, Grosz felt compelled to use art as a political weapon. "Your brushes and pens should . . . be weapons,"¹³ he exhorted the artists. In this spirit Franz Pfemfert turned *Die Aktion* from a literary and political journal into one almost exclusively political. For similar reasons, Herwarth Walden, a bourgeois capitalist aesthete in the eyes of the radicals, in 1919 began printing Marxist articles in *Der Sturm* and inviting leftist political speakers to his formerly literary soirées.

Grosz had himself directly experienced the Free Corps's "white terror" when in March his friend and collaborator Wieland Herzfelde was sentenced to two weeks protective custody after an issue of *Jedermann sein eigenes Fussball* had carried a subversive article on the Bavarian Soldiers' Councils. Grosz himself escaped arrest by presenting a false military pass and going into hiding. After his release from prison, Herzfelde published *Schutzhaft*, an account of his arrest and detention, as a special issue of *Die*



61. George Grosz, cover illustration for *Schutzhaf*, 1919. Reproduction of a drawing.

Pleite. Grosz drew a caricature of the battered and handcuffed Herzfelde for the cover (figure 61).

In his angry, vengeful drawings, Grosz attacked the socialist government's complicity with the anti-republican former *Reichswehr* officers in subduing the workers. In a print from the portfolio *Gott mit uns, Blood Is the Best Sauce* (figure 24), he pits soldiers wielding revolvers, bayonets, grenades, sabers and knives against civilians armed with tattered flags. The old union of capitalist class and military caste drinks yet another toast. The German title "The communists fall and the foreign exchange rate rises" was taken from Luxemburg's wartime *Junius Brochure*, in which, under the pen name of Junius, she analyzed the imperialist background of the war and castigated the German socialist movement for supporting it and thereby abandoning the interest of both Germans and the international proletariat.

The radicals watched the rapprochement between majority socialists and the old guard solidify into a firm working relationship during the early days of the republic. In their anger, radical political activists committed themselves to insurrection. Disillusioned radical artists returned to their studios.

Notes

- 1 Walther Hartmann, *Der begeisterte Weg* (Dresden: Deutscher Genossenschaftsverlag, 1919).
- 2 Kurt Eisner, "Der sozialistische Staat und der Künstler," in *An alle Künstler!* (Berlin: [Kunstanstalt Willi Simon], 1919), pp. 25-36.
- 3 Koppel S. Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History and Civilization* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 360.
- 4 Münchner Stadtmuseum, *Die Zwanziger Jahre in München* (Munich: Christoph Stölzl, 1979), p. 254.
- 5 G. H. Herzog, ed., *Conrad Felixmüller, Legenden 1912-1976* (Tübingen: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1977), p. 44.
- 6 "Menschen! Menschen!" *Menschen* 2:15 (15 Januar 1919), p. 1.
- 7 Johannes R. Becher, "Weltrevolution," *Die Aktion* 9:45/46 (1919), pp. 755-757.
- 8 Käthe Kollwitz, *The Diary and Letters of Käthe Kollwitz*, Hans Kollwitz, ed., Richard and Clara Winston, trans. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), p. 100.
- 9 Käthe Kollwitz, *Tagebuchblätter und Briefe*, Hans Kollwitz, ed. (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1949), pp. 193-194.
- 10 Kunstamt Kreuzberg, Berlin and Institut für Theaterwissenschaft der Universität Köln, *Weimarer Republik* (Berlin [West] and Hamburg: Elefanten Press, 1977), p. 146.
- 11 Renate Hinz, ed., *Käthe Kollwitz, Druckgrafik, Plakate, Zeichnungen* (Berlin: Elefanten Press Verlag, 1980), p. 12.
- 12 Beate Bonus-Jeep, *Sechzig Jahre Freundschaft mit Käthe Kollwitz* (Boppard: Karl Rauch Verlag, 1948), p. 162.
- 13 George Grosz, "Statt einer Biographie," *Der Gegner* 2:3 (1920/21), p. 69.

Die Aktion

IX. JAHR. HERAUSGEGEBEN VON FRANZ PFEMFERT NR. 20

INHALT: Karl Jakob Hirsch: Holzschnitt (Titelblatt) / N. Lenin: Bürgerliche und proletarische Diktatur / Hanns Lösch: Sei du! / Max Schwimmer: Zeichnung / Maria Benemann: Wir habens geschworen / Hilde Stieler: Vor Tag? / Friedrich Adler: Notiz über Marx / G. Herwegh: Lied von Hasse / Dingelstedt: Deutscher Patriot / Schütte: Ein Diplomat / Iwan Goll: Demonstration / Wilhelm Klemm: Frühlingsnacht / Franz Pfemfert: Kleiner Briefkasten / Clarence Darrow: Das Gerippe im Hause / Erich Gehre: Landschaft / F. W. Seiwert: Porträt / A. Krapp: Für den Pressefonds der AKTION!



VERLAG, DIE AKTION, BERLIN-WILMERSDORF

HEFT 80 PFG.

6 Artists as Revolutionaries: Expressionism and the New Man

THE Expressionist artist's concept of "revolution" was at best amorphous, more *Rausch* (ecstasy) than program. As Karl Jakob Hirsch remarked, the word radical played a grand role in proclamations and was for them a completely self-explanatory word. The revolutionary rhetoric, however, can easily be misconstrued as political activism, especially when contrasted with the traditionally apolitical stance of German artists. The terms radical and revolutionary peppered Expressionist writing and art criticism. Beneath the rhetorical surface, however, most critics and art historians simply assumed the aloofness of art, even revolutionary art, from the materialist battlefield of politics.

The catalogue marking the reopening of the Galerie Flechtheim in Düsseldorf offered the usual spectrum of essays on the then-popular topic of art and revolution. Two writers, Herbert Eulenberg and Wilhelm Hausenstein, contributed typical essays. Eulenberg's concluding exclamation embodied the delirious tone of Expressionist political engagement: "Art and Revolution! They go together. A painter and the son of the muses always stand in flames!"¹ Hausenstein's more sober analysis revealed the essentially anti-politics bias of the avant-garde artists and critics. The revolution resulted, he reasoned, from materialist causes and could not, therefore, affect art, a spiritual pursuit. He counselled artists to wait until the new society was successfully established because of the many potentially detrimental effects which might accrue should artists become embroiled in politics.²

In accepting the basic assumption that involvement with politics was debilitating, the liberal and radical art critics fundamentally differed little from their more conservative colleagues such as Karl Scheffler, a supporter of Expressionism and editor of the long-established *Kunst und Künstler*. In his essay, "Die Kunst und Revolution," Scheffler wrote that for artists the spirit was paramount, and it was not served by politics. "Powers of artistic transformation," he wrote, "work in the depths and have only very little to do with changes in forms of government. If you want to change art for the better, you must first change men's souls."³

Radical editorials gave the illusion of active engagement, but essentially differed little from Scheffler's in their basic repudiation of politics. The editors of *Die Kugel*, for example, declaimed: "To you is issued our first call, young poets and artists of the people's republic. . . . the new temple will not be prepared with fire and sword, but through acts of the spirit!"⁴ The Expressionist temperament and concerns were by their very nature inward-turning and world-eschewing.



62. Karl Jakob Hirsch, *Die Freiheit fliegt über die Menschen* (Freedom Flies over the People), title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, August 10, 1918. Reproduction after a design by Hirsch.



64. Fritz Schaeffler, *Untitled*, title page illustration for *Der Weg*, January 1919. Woodcut.

The Expressionist could lend himself to a state of euphoric fervor over "mankind" or "revolution," but his was a vicarious and usually short-lived involvement. These ecstatic romantics were disdained by the more activist intellectuals like the actor and theater director Erwin Piscator. Piscator considered contemptuously naive the "Oh-Mankind Dramatists and Poets, who pleaded with 'brothers' who were already threatening to smash in their skulls with gun butts."⁵ Another zealous activist, editor Friedrich Burschell, scorned Expressionist outpourings which he termed "ecstatic 'Oh-Mankind' stammering."⁶

Dramatist Ernst Toller, confined in Munich's Stadelheim prison for his participation in the Bavarian Soviet, had *Das Tribunal* publish a poem he had written while in a military prison in 1918. Impatient with the "bloody romantic revolutionaries" who used the idea of "humanity" simply as an opposition slogan, Toller felt that his poem, "Anklage ich Euch" ("I Accuse You") was just as appropriate in 1919 as it had been in 1918. In it he accused fellow intellectuals, artists, poets and writers of the "capital crimes" of "playing games behind hypocritical verses" and "debauching themselves in pretentious verbiage," rather than taking inspiration from the masses. "Absolve yourselves! Speak judgment!" he cried.⁷

Expressionist intellectuals indeed spent their time discussing subtle refinements of the concept of "activism" or in delirious transports rather than on the barricades. In his article, "Wider die Politik" ("Against Politics"), published in his friend Carlo Mierendorff's *Das Tribunal*, future socialist politician Theodor Haubach succinctly expressed the essentially anti-activist, anti-politics bias of the Expressionist cultural revolutionaries when he stated matter of factly, "politics is a degenerate function of the spirit."⁸ Haubach explained that since the human element was inconsequential to politics which "endlessly labors on the shortcomings of the machinery of the state," revolutions were not the requisite cosmic attack against "crippled bodies and souls," but mere tinkering with the mechanical aspects of life. "Not new politics," he declared, was necessary, but "new religion! Discovery of a new Dionysus, a God of new ecstasies and songs, drunkenness for torpid souls."⁹

The myriad of literary and art journals which published similarly frenzied articles on activism, pacifism, Russia and Marxism gave readers the illusion of participating in the dizzying events of the day. A typical declaration, by Dresden publisher and writer Felix Stierner, appeared in *Die Bücherkiste*, "The swindle of individualistic economy topples. The abyss is open. . . . we want to destroy, we want to build, we are at work Soviet Russia! Send us MEN!"¹⁰ These rousing harangues sparked new appeals, but little action. A seminal, influential article on activism by the writer and publicist Kurt Hiller offers some insights into the reasons that these appeals remained in the realm of words, not deeds. The article, "Vom Aktivismus" ("About Activism"), written in response to an essay by the novelist Thomas Mann, appeared in the April 1917 issue of *Die weissen Blätter*. It attempted to clarify the concept of activism in the erudite, abstruse terms of philosophy and semantics.

Hiller analyzed the legacy of Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Nietzsche and proclaimed, in opposition to Mann, "The activist is no enemy of art."¹¹ Hiller, nonetheless, defended the "German antithesis between philosophy and politics," and explained that in discussing the concept of "politics" he was interested not in the "empirical" events of a period, but in exploring the distinction between philosophy as idea and politics as idea. Thus, even to this influential disciple of activism, the world of time- and place-bound politics was outside and

beneath his concern. The Expressionists' battles were fought in literary journals, not on barricades; theirs was a "politics" of the spirit not power, of ideas not systems.

This essential bias against participation in the sully world of politics underlies even the activist Burschell's explanation for changing the title of his new periodical from *Revolution* to *Neue Erde*. The title, *Revolution*, he explained, sounded too loud and categorical and seemed to suggest too great a bias towards pure politics whereas *New Earth*, on the other hand, seemed to him to better express the then-widespread chiliastic expectations. The goal of the *Neue Erde* would, therefore, be to "attempt to gather together all the human, warm, benevolent and vitally passionate voices which, from beyond the din and purely political activity, call for that which is all-important, the revolutionizing of the individual."¹²

The assumption among Expressionist artists was that simply by being Expressionists they were revolutionaries. A typical article by Hans Hansen in *Der Weg* expressed this assumption: "Expressionism," he asserted, "is revolution in itself. . . . perpetual revolution. What is Revolution? Overthrow—rebellion. What is art? Revolution—Revolution!"¹³ In this revolution of the spirit, *Novembergruppe* artist Karl Jacob Hirsch commented, one ideal, "Love of Humanity," was enthroned, and "to realize it was our task."¹⁴ The artists expressed their commitment by designing posters and contributing prints to the new radical journals which sprang up despite paper shortages. They were the outlet for the torrent of pent-up emotions released by the lifting of Wilhelmine censorship.

Two prints by Hirsch for *Die Aktion* typify the artists' efforts. One, *Die Freiheit fliegt über die Menschen* (*Freedom Flies over Mankind*) (figure 62), expresses the Expressionists' elation at the liberating prospects of the revolution. In the other (figure 63, page 50), a resplendent fetus symbolizes the optimistic celebration of new beginnings. This radiant, supernatural being is the potential "new man" which the Expressionists sought so ardently to nurture. A print by a *Novembergruppe* associate from Munich, Fritz Schaefer, for *Der Weg* expresses the artists' apocalyptic revolutionary élan (figure 64). An agitator stands before a crowd and gestures towards a gleaming spiral path which will lead to the glorious new day dawning behind the mountains, presumably the Bavarian Alps.

Many of the Expressionists' prints resonated with a vibrant spirituality. *Erlösung* (*Redemption*) (figure 65) by Alois Wach (Wachelmaier), for example, exudes the introspective, anxiety-ridden, revelatory atmosphere so congenial to the Expressionist sensibility steeped in mysticism and metaphysics. A title-page woodcut for *Das Tribunal* by another Munich *Novembergruppe* associate, Josef Eberz, expresses this same visionary tendency (figure 66). Like his prophet (figure 89), Eberz's seer is plunged in an awesome darkness, symbolic of his brooding forebodings. This darkness is shattered by illuminating rays of divine intelligence, intimations of the numinous embodied in powerful, primitive, emotional terms. Eberz was himself a devout Catholic; his mysticism was therefore a product both of his religious beliefs and his Expressionist temperament. In an autobiographical statement he explained that he tried to express, in unhistorical, transcendent terms, the relationship between religious experience and being.¹⁵

After the war, such religious imagery was prevalent in Expressionist art. In this exhibition we see it not only in the work of Wach and Eberz, but also in Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (figures 25, 26 and 27), Otto Lange (figure 108 and catalogue number I-69), Christian Rohlf (figure 28) and Max Pechstein (figures 80 and 81). In his monograph on Schmidt-

DAS TRIBUNAL

HESSISCHE RADIKALE BLÄTTER



66. Josef Eberz, title page illustration for *Das Tribunal*, (May 1919). Woodcut.

Der Weg

München

Februar 1919

Hef 2



A. Wach

65. Alois Wach (Wachelmaier), *Erlösung* (Redemption), title page illustration for *Der Weg*, February 1919. Woodcut.

DER ANBRUCH



67. Franz Maria Jansen, Untitled, in *Der Anbruch*, 1922. Reproduction of a woodcut.

Rottluff, art historian Will Grohmann tried to offer some explanations for this phenomenon. "The striving for the supernatural" appeared to him to be "the reverse side of radical socialism," the expression of "a psychosis awakened through war and revolution." The desire for contact with the numinous among the Expressionists, he felt, had been heightened by the wartime omnipresence of death, and had, therefore, little to do with religious art in the traditional sense. "The theologian," he concluded "would perhaps speak of mysticism and ecstasy, not of religion."¹⁶

The Expressionists' postwar activism was fundamentally an intensification and vague politicization of prewar postures. Two quotations from the short-lived *Revolution* (1913) exemplify the prewar tone. The first is by anarchist publisher and writer, Erich Mühsam, who was later an associate of Gustav Landauer, Ernst Toller and Kurt Eisner in the Bavarian Soviet. He wrote: "A few synonyms for revolution: God, Life, Passion, Delirium, Chaos. Let us be Chaotic."¹⁷ The second comes from Expressionist poet and writer Johannes R. Becher's "Freiheitlied" ("Song of Freedom"), a quintessential expression of revolutionary *Rausch*:

Merchants! Citizens! Aviators! Soldiers! Prostitutes! . . . Syphilitics! Brothers, Children of Man all! Awaken! Awaken! . . . Revolution! Revolutionaries! Anarchists! Against Death! . . . I lead you. Forward! March! March!¹⁸

Before the war there was much talk of cultural revolution, but one could legitimately have asked wherein lay the storm in *Der Sturm*, the revolution in *Revolution* and the action in *Die Aktion*. After the war, the urgent tone of prewar revolutionary rhetoric was retained, but the new calls to action were couched in a politicized vocabulary; beneath the political veneer, however, the appeals remained apolitical Expressionist *Rausch*.

Before the war, anarchism had been the most appealing form of political non-ideology among the Expressionists; after the war, they espoused a vague socialism, and romanticized a dreamy abstraction, "humanity," which had little to do with the real masses. Once their illusions about the essential goodness and perfectability of the masses were shattered, the artists retreated into their cafes and studios, their flirtation with radical politics ended. The radical artists were revolutionaries in their own realm, the world of art and literature. In their postwar euphoria, they temporarily confused the worlds of art and politics. Free self-expression was their supreme value, and in the new order they saw a chance for artistic freedom; they then romanticized the workers who, through demonstrations, strikes and street fighting, had created the opportunity for it. Socialism seemed the bridge between dream and reality, between *Rausch* and realization.

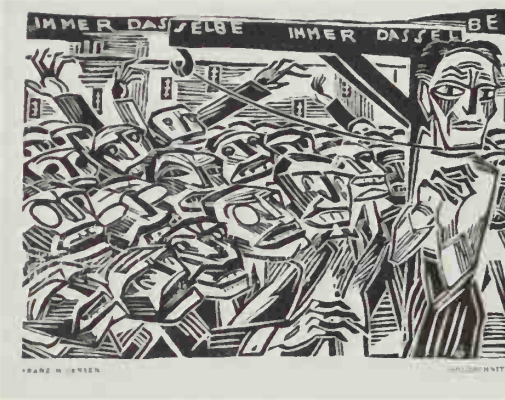
In an article in the *Neue Blätter für Kunst und Dichtung*, critic Herbert Kühn discussed what he perceived as the affinity between Expressionism and socialism:

Expressionism—like socialism—is the same outcry against materialism, against the unspiritual, against machines, against centralization of the spirit, of God, for humanity in men. . . .

There is no Expressionism without socialism. . . .

It is not chance that the new art has devoted itself [to the fight] against war, against militarism, just as the best of the Social Democrats have.¹⁹

The activist, or at least rhetorically engaged, phase of Expressionism was well over by 1922 and had waned much earlier. A woodcut by Franz Maria Jansen published in *Der Anbruch* in 1922 expresses this disenchantment (figure 67). In the print a saintly, saddened dreamer departs from the city. Jansen's more brutal *Immer dasselbe, Immer dasselbe* (*Always the Same, Always the Same*) (figure 68), carried in the same issue, more brutally expresses the widespread disillusionment. The image is of a scene often



68. Franz Maria Jansen, *Immer dasselbe, Immer dasselbe*, (Always the Same, Always the Same) in *Der Anbruch*, 1922. Reproduction of a woodcut.

repeated during the revolutionary days when hundreds were summarily executed, or, like Landauer, beaten to death. In this woodcut the viewer shares the martyred revolutionary's view of the hideous faces of his snarling, jeering taunters.

Dispirited, the Expressionists abandoned their political goals. Commitment to a sustained effort could not be theirs. Not only did they abjure politics, but they were easily bored by those whose unpoetic souls they would have to illuminate in order to effect real change. They relied on revelation and self-evidence rather than education. In retrospect Richard Huelsenbeck justified their position:

The German Revolution did not fail because I appeared in a Cabaret. . . . It did not fail of a surfeit of romanticism, but of a lack of romanticism, a missing impetus, a pathological lack of revolutionary temperament. In my opinion it failed because of the small-minded, timid and therefore malicious spirit of the mediocre type of German who, incapable of any heroic gesture, is frequently found among party officials. If the German Revolution, German Social Democracy had known how to attract more men like us, it would not have failed. Every movement which despises the spiritual is bound to get bogged down.²⁰

The artists' orientation was inward. For them the temporal world was inconsequential. In an article in *Die Bücherkiste*, Dresden activist publisher Felix Stierner commented on this phenomenon. The Expressionist, he explained, worked on the assumption that his inner struggle, thoughts and feelings were the source of his art, which transformed nature into a subjective expression dictated by his soul.²¹

Most radical artists, critics and art historians were satisfied to assume the essentially revolutionary nature of art and adhered to a simple faith in its humanizing powers. Only a few felt it necessary to join political parties or to work actively for the republican cause. Most of those who continued to be political were Communist Party members. The self-abnegating demands of that propaganda-oriented affiliation did not appeal to the Expressionists. A quick glance at the 1924 declaration of the communist artists' group, the *Rote Gruppe* (Red Group), indicates why. It stipulated that one was first a communist, who would dedicate all one's talents to the class struggle, and secondarily an artist.

The *Rote Gruppe's* ten-point organizational plan included the following provisos: that artists arrange propaganda evenings; give guidance in the preparation of placards; design wall newspapers; organize travelling exhibitions; forward ideological education among revolutionary artists; work against counter-revolutionary cultural manifestations and bourgeois artists; and use bourgeois exhibitions for propaganda purposes.²² This was all too deliberate, systematic, programmatic and dull for the Expressionists.

The engaged former Dadaists, Communist Party members and the *Malik-Verlag* circle scorned Expressionist *Rausch* as aesthetic self-indulgence. These artists' and writers' politics were born of anger, not visionary exultation. When the subject of the failure of their revolutionary ideals was raised, some artists blamed one another. Activist artist and former Dadaist Raoul Hausmann (figure 85), for example, published an article in *Der Gegner* attacking the delusions of the Expressionists; he called Walden's *Sturm* a "tea party," just when Walden began inviting political speakers to his soirées. Another article in *Der Gegner* lambasted the *Novembergruppe* for mitigating its original revolutionary élan. In the final analysis, however, most artists did not blame themselves. Like Huelsenbeck, they blamed instead the politicians and a society which was not ready for them.

Notes

- 1 Herbert Eulenberg, "Vorspruch," in Galerie Alfred Flechtheim, Düsseldorf, *Expressionisten, 1919* (Potsdam, Berlin: Gust. Kiepenheuer Verlag, 1919), p. 3.
- 2 Wilhelm Hausenstein, "Kunst und Revolution," in Galerie Alfred Flechtheim, pp. 25-28.
- 3 Karl Scheffler, "Die Kunst und die Revolution," *Kunst und Künstler* 17:5 (Februar 1919), p. 165.
- 4 *Die Kugel* 1:1 (1919), p. 1.
- 5 Erwin Piscator, "Die politische Bedeutung der Aktion," in Gesellschaft der Bibliophilen EV Frankfurt a. Main, *Imprimatur ein Jahrbuch für Bücherfreunde*, Neue Folge Band III, 1961-62 (Hamburg: Siegfried Buchenau, 1962), p. 214.
- 6 Friedrich Burschell, "Revolution und Neue Erde," in Gesellschaft der Bibliophilen, p. 245.
- 7 Ernst Toller, "Anklage gegen Euch," *Das Tribunal* 1:10/11 (Oktober/November 1919), p. 113.
- 8 Th. Haubach, "Wider die Politik," *Das Tribunal* 1/4 (April 1919), p. 53.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Felix Stierner, "Was erwarten wir von Sowjet-Russland?" *Die Bücherkiste* 5/6/7 (1919), p. 5.
- 11 Kurt Hiller, "Vom Aktivismus," *Die weissen Blätter*, 4:4 (April 1917), p. 90.
- 12 Burschell, p. 246.
- 13 Hans Hansen, "Revolutionäre Künstler," *Der Weg* 1:4 (April 1919), pp. 2-4.
- 14 Karl Jakob Hirsch, p. 67.
- 15 Josef Eberz, "Der Künstler über sich," in Leopold Zahn, *Josef Eberz, Junge Kunst* 14 (Leipzig: Verlag von Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1920), pp. 15-16.
- 16 Will Grohmann, *Karl Schmidt-Rottluff* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1956), p. 90.
- 17 Erich Mühsam, "Revolution," *Revolution* 1:1 (1913), p. 2.
- 18 Johannes R. Becher, "Freiheitlied," *Revolution* 1:1 (1913), p. 2.
- 19 Herbert Kühn, "Expressionismus und Sozialismus," *Neue Blätter für Kunst und Dichtung* 2:2 (Mai 1919), p. 29.
- 20 Richard Huelsenbeck, "Zurich 1916, As It Really Was," in Paul Raabe, ed. *The Era of German Expressionism*, J. M. Ritchie, trans. (Woodstock, New York: The Overlook Press, (1974), pp. 172-173.
- 21 Felix Stierner, "Neue Kunst," *Die Bücherkiste* 1:3 (1919), pp. 33-34.
- 22 Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, *Wem gehört die Welt: Kunst und Gesellschaft in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1977), p. 314.



75. Käthe Kollwitz, *Hunger*, 1925. Woodcut.

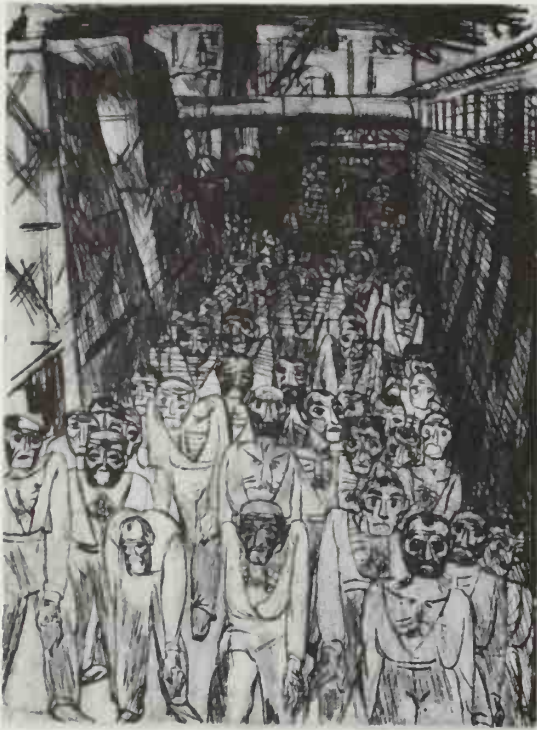
7 Empathy with the Proletariat

THE corollary of "Oh-Mankind" Expressionism was an infatuation with the working class. Stirring tales like pacifist writer and poet Leonard Frank's "The Waiter," first published in *Die weissen Blätter* in 1916, were circulated and read aloud at publisher Paul Cassirer's and the *Neue Jugend* evenings. In this story a waiter who has lost his only son at the front realizes that the war has served only the capitalists and becomes a revolutionary. Subsequently, Frank, who was in exile in Zurich, wrote four more stories in which the waiter's revolt spreads. The cycle was published in Zurich under the title *Man Is Good*, 1918. This title gave the "Oh-Mankind" Expressionists a banner phase under which to march.

In this period of intoxicated idealism, the nature of man was a popular topic for pronouncements. Kurt Pinthus soberly countered the Expressionists' slogan "Man Is Good" with the statement that man was neither good nor bad, but had to be made good. George Grosz blamed the social system for mankind's degraded condition. In his introduction to a 1922 exhibition he declared, "Man is not good—but a beast! Men have created a vile system . . . A few are served by millions."¹

Temporarily politicized by war and revolution, the artists cherished the illusion that the two avant-garde groups, the proletariat and the artists, would join together to revolutionize German society. Artists and critics held spirited exchanges over the merits of political activism in the pages of the Expressionist journals. An illuminating article, "Der Proletarier und die Kunst" ("The Proletarian and Art"), by one of the most politically committed artists, Raoul Hausmann (figure 85), appeared in *Das Kunstblatt*. In its assumptions, the article makes clear why even the more political artists were ultimately as ineffectual in forming an alliance with the proletariat as were the Expressionists whom they denounced. Their fundamental concerns, too, were aesthetic.

Hausmann addressed most of the concerns of the activists. A primary issue was sustained commitment. The Expressionists' seeming fickleness, Hausmann pointed out, stemmed from the difference in motivation between the romantic, whose anguish is metaphysical and vicarious, and those actually afflicted. He pointed out that the Expressionists' goal, "to bring the proletariat to a better understanding of the grand realm of human experience and suffering," was simply too remote from pressing everyday concerns to have any meaning for the workers for whom suffering was not a grand metaphysical experience, but unremitting toil, hunger and debilitating disease. On the other hand, Hausmann also criticized the putatively engaged artists, who, "inspired by . . . Tolstoi, wanted to create an art especially for the proletariat," an art which "imagines itself elevated above the 'frivolous meaninglessness' of art, which comes out of the desire to play."²



69. Franz Maria Jansen, *Untitled*, 1921. Etching.

He then castigated the workers for allowing their puritanism to prevent them from responding to a playful and fantastic art, and for insisting on either a soberly realistic or a didactic, idealistic art. He proceeded to take issue with the one-dimensional view which identified a person with an economic group, and with the priorities of ideologues who insisted that artists be first and foremost proletarian propagandists. He concluded that the proletariat needed only to learn to understand the role of art, which is play, in the resolution of its conflicts. "Either," he wrote, "the proletariat denies his desire for play and rejects all art, . . . or realizes his claim to the new creative power . . . of man. Then he will scorn and reject all activist, passionate, separatist art. Let us proclaim the participation of the proletariat in play . . . and in the nonutilitarian."³ In the final analysis the Dadaist Hausmann was as obtuse about the workers' real needs as were the Expressionists whom he condemned.

A few artists did continue their commitment to a socially engaged art. Most prominent among them were Otto Dix, Franz Maria Jansen, Conrad Felixmüller, Kaethe Kollwitz and George Grosz. The Rhinelander Jansen had studied architecture with Otto Wagner in Vienna before teaching himself painting and printmaking. Politicized by his war experience, Jansen's radical politics led him to make prints on the themes of war and revolution and protesting the effects of industrialization on the masses.

His first portfolio, *Krieg (War)*, was a bitter cry of outrage against the war. Subsequent portfolios, *Industrie 1920 (Industry 1920)*, 1921, and *Grosstadt (Metropolis)*, 1920, as well as individual prints, addressed the failure of the revolution (figure 67) and the disparities between the rich and poor (figure 35). In the concluding print in the *Grosstadt* portfolio a prisoner, much like the disillusioned prophet in a later print (figure 68), sighs "All for naught, all for naught."⁴ Despite the despondent embittered tone of many of his prints, Jansen was one of the few artists to continue working with proletarian themes, and in 1924, at the German art exhibition in Moscow, his work was among the best received by Soviet critics.

The portfolio *Industrie 1920*, executed when Jansen was thirty-six, contains ten etchings on the theme of the daily lives of the workers. The title plate depicts the suffocating complex of silos, smokestacks, scaffoldings, tanks, towers, warehouses and factory buildings which swallows and crushes its victims in a jungle of metal, asphalt and concrete (catalogue number 53). In only one plate do the workers seem heroic, and even there, although they appear herculean, matching their brute strength against powerful machines, their gaunt faces are a grim reminder of the early consumptive deaths which await briefly robust bodies.

The prints follow the workers' daily routine as they trudge to work (figure 69), labor, hunch over bowls of soup at a break which offers no camaraderie (catalogue number I-55) and, exhausted, exit from the choking canyons of concrete and steel (figure 70). Meanwhile their families scavenge the city's despoiled outskirts (figure 71). Contemporaries read Jansen's portfolio as "a convulsive human indictment" which exposed the "true Medusa face" of capitalist exploitation.⁵

For the painter Conrad Felixmüller, the factory was a monster which made slaves of his ancestors, people engulfed in the hellish stench, smoke and heat of the factory inferno. According to his own report, Felixmüller had watched his father, a factory blacksmith, become a "twisted, bull-necked, empty-headed," dehumanized relic.⁶ Whereas Jansen came from outside, Felixmüller spoke for the artist of proletarian origins. He had, as he wrote, been "transported by . . . the emancipation of the working classes (I was their son) . . . I was there body and soul."⁷



70. Franz Maria Jansen, *Untitled*, 1921. Etching.



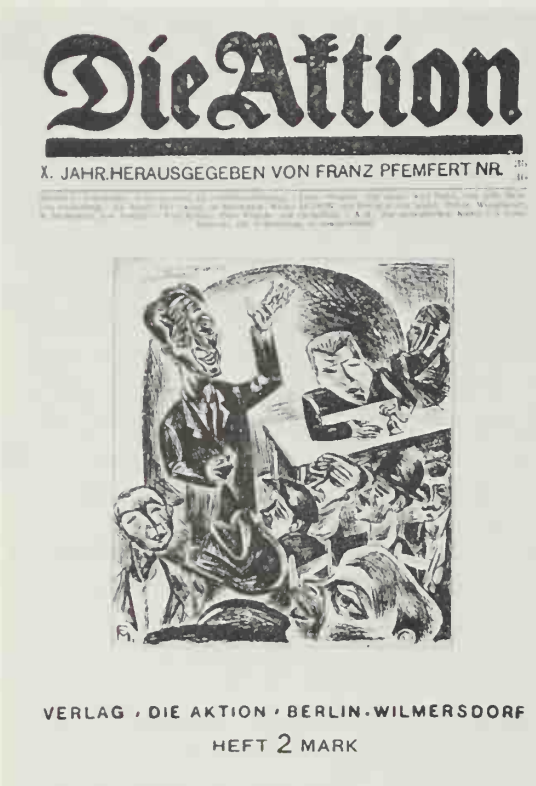
71. Franz Maria Jansen, *Untitled*, 1921. Etching.

Felixmüller had left his proletarian home in order to pursue art and music. His work was first exhibited in 1914 in Berlin at J. B. Neumann's *Graphisches Kabinett* (figure 106). In Berlin he associated with Herwarth Walden's Expressionist *Sturm* circle, until 1916 when, through Raoul Hausmann, he came to know Franz Pfemfert, and found the political, pacifist stance of Pfemfert's *Aktion* group more congenial than the more literary environment around Walden. In 1917 at the age of twenty, he began producing title page illustrations for *Die Aktion*, often under the pressure of an urgent telegram from Pfemfert, bearing an immediate deadline. In a 1920 lithograph, *Pfemfert Spricht* (*Pfemfert Speaks*), published in *Die Aktion* as *Volksversammlung in Leipzig* (*People's Assembly in Leipzig*), Felixmüller showed Pfemfert the activist addressing a workers' meeting (figure 72). Felixmüller too attended mass meetings in the auditoriums and dance halls in the workers' quarter and marched in demonstrations (figure 56). In his studio Felixmüller and his friends eagerly listened for news from Russia, and in 1919 he joined the Communist Party.

Because of his interests in art and literature, and his marriage to a baroness, Felixmüller continued to be welcome in the bourgeois salons. In 1920 he was awarded the Saxony state prize, a stipend which recipients had traditionally used to finance a sojourn in Italy. Felixmüller used it instead for travel in the coal mining districts of Saxony, where he reaffirmed his working class roots. In his autobiographical parable, "Der Prolet (Pönnecke)," Felixmüller reported his own realization that: "Your birth has fixed your life, your actions, . . . you live in a time of social revolution and must be its soldier and fighter in every way. . . . Your art must admonish and awaken, and help love, struggle and victory." To that end, he concluded, his art had to be one of "love and human relations."⁸

In this spirit, Felixmüller executed prints on two basic themes: the lives of the workers (figure 72) and basic human relationships (figure 99). These were executed in a style which, typical of postwar Expressionism, fused a variety of avant-garde styles. Felixmüller used a cubo-futurist structure overlain with the emotional distortions of Expressionism. His avant-garde, abstract style embodied his commitment to radical politics. Soon, he explained, however, he "returned closer to reality," as his "fascination for the fullness of life" replaced the "*Sturm und Drang*" (storm and stress) of his immediate postwar Expressionism.⁹ "Art," he wrote in 1921, reflecting his communist ideological affiliation, "is an historical matter, . . . The expression of human society," and should therefore be terse, objective, critical, analytic and rational. It should be of and responsible to its time. Art had therefore to cast off its esoteric, timeless, subjective tendencies in order more intensely to grasp the present.¹⁰ A 1923 woodcut, *Liebespaar (Vor Industrielandschaft)* (*Lovers, In Front of an Industrial Landscape*) (figure 73), exemplifies this increasingly objective stance. "I have no ideological morality, no critique of creation nor of the creator," he wrote. "This is what I saw, what one can see everywhere today: working people and the things that they work with."¹¹

Another artist who continued to dedicate herself to the workers was Kaethe Kollwitz. Since her marriage to the physician Karl Kollwitz in 1891, she had lived in a working class suburb of Berlin among the poor people whom he served. Their deprived conditions were summarized in the responses to a questionnaire given to proletarian children in a Berlin *Volkschule* in 1927: 70 percent had no concept of a sunset; 62 percent had never heard a lark; and 76 percent had never seen a mountain.¹² Despite their privations, these people had for her "a grand style," a powerful human presence which she did not sense in the bourgeoisie.¹³



72. Conrad Felixmüller, *Volksversammlung in Leipzig* (People's Assembly in Leipzig), title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, September 4, 1920. Reduced reproduction of a lithograph, Pfemfert *Spricht* (Pfemfert Speaks).



73. Conrad Felixmüller, *Liebespaar (Vor Industrielandschaft)* (Lovers, In front of Industrial Landscape), 1923. Woodcut.

Without concern for ideology, party affiliation or nationality, Kollwitz contributed her talents wherever she felt the poor might benefit. Her 1920 poster, *Wien Stirbt! Rettet seine Kinder!* (Vienna Is Dying! Save Her Children!) (figure 74), was designed to aid the starving children of Vienna. After exploring a series of conceptions, she finally settled on the image of death, the scourge of famine in hand, lashing his victims. In her diary Kollwitz described the anguish born of her commitment to the poor:

I have again agreed to make a poster for a large-scale aid program for Vienna. . . . I drew, and wept along with the terrified children. . . . I have no right to withdraw from the responsibility of being an advocate. It is my duty to voice the suffering of men. . . . Work is supposed to relieve you. But is it any relief when in spite of my poster people in Vienna die of hunger every day?¹⁴

Reworked as a woodcut, the image was published as the *Hunger* plate (figure 75, page 58) in the portfolio, *Das Proletariat*, 1925. The woodcut went through fifteen states. In the final solution a lightning flash briefly illuminates the gaping mouths, terrified eyes and strong proletarian hands of the famished masses and the hovering form of their tormentor. In a moment they will be plunged back into the darkness of oblivion, the brief illuminating flash that is Kollwitz's work having passed by.

Kollwitz's empathy with the destitute led her to donate posters to societies which aided the poor. The poster for an anti-alcohol week was commissioned by the German Good Templar's Order (figure 76). Part of a public awareness campaign, it called on workers to support the procession, welfare exhibition and other programs associated with the drive. Often, as was the case with the German Cottage Industries Exhibition poster for the Berlin Society for Social Reform (catalogue number II-8), the poster was also printed without the text and sold to benefit the commissioning society. In that form, the images became enduring testaments to the pervasiveness of human suffering.

Her posters sold well. Kollwitz was a famous artist, and her work had received official recognition when in 1919 she became the first woman to be appointed to the Berlin Academy of Art. Her work appealed to a broad, liberal, art-buying public because of her humanistic treatment of her subjects. Her opposition came from the communists who criticized her "pessimistic emphasis" on suffering. A 1920 article in their newspaper, *Die Rote Fahne*, for example, praised her early series *The Weavers and Peasants' War*, but criticized her recent work for overemphasizing the hopelessness of the workers' plight and thereby not encouraging them to transcend their oppressed circumstances. Kollwitz answered that it was life itself which she was representing, not social misery, and that life was suffering.

For Grosz, anger sustained his commitment to social protest. In retrospect he explained the motivation behind his political art: "We wanted something more. . . . Thus we were naturally driven more and more to the left. . . . Within us there was the will to help, to be active in the creation of a new structure."¹⁵ For Grosz this meant circulating Spartacist pamphlets, membership in the Communist Party and publishing often banned and confiscated materials. His prints were published in ordinary and deluxe editions by Herzfelde's *Malik-Verlag* and gathered into books like *Das Gesicht der Herrschenden Klasse*, 1921, of which three editions, or a total of 25,000 copies, were printed, and *Abrechnung Folgt*, 1923.

Although he championed their cause, Grosz held the workers in as much contempt as he did their exploiters. For him stupidity was the enemy, and its face was classless. The pitifully weak, oppressed workers are no heroes (catalogue number I-39). Grosz despised the bourgeoisie, not only because of the suffering it caused, but because its members, like stupid fools, applauded their detractors. By 1920 Grosz himself sold well



74. Käthe Kollwitz, *Wien stirbt! Rettet seine Kinder!* (Vienna Is Dying! Rescue Her Children!), 1920. Lithograph poster.

at Hans Goltz in Munich and was a fashionable artist when he began showing at the prestigious Flechtheim Gallery in Berlin in 1923. He explained his popularity among those whom he reviled:

Many of the rich and fortunate, instead of being content with the elaborate feast God had set before them, were dissatisfied, and this dissatisfaction in turn was a great blessing for those among us who were actors and comedians. Many of these rich and powerful people would come to us and say, "If you could only present something startling. That is, for instance, if you could imitate my crooked legs or how my friend Oscar is always gorging and then puking all over the carpet, or how Hugo sits around in his wine cellar counting empty bottles. . . . Just show us as repugnant as we are. Ha, ha, ha."¹⁶

When radical critic and art historian Willi Wolfradt's monogram on Grosz was published in Georg Biermann's important monograph series, *Junge Kunst*, instead of providing the customary autobiographical statement, Grosz provided an essay, "Statt einer Biographie" ("Instead of a Biography"), written in August 1920. In it he attacked the assimilation of artists into the bourgeois ethic and capitalist market system and admonished artists to leave their pretentious illusions of aesthetic revolution and work for a truly revolutionary cause, that of the proletariat. "Your brushes and pens, which should be weapons are empty straws," he declared, and counselled artists to leave their drawing rooms and individual isolation, take inspiration from the workers and help in the struggle against a rotten society.¹⁷

Dedicated to exposing the abuses of the system, Grosz drew stereotypical caricatures, the purpose of which was to "reveal to the downtrodden the true face of their rulers."¹⁸ The capitalists, for example, are invariably gluttonous and debauched (figure 24) and the militarists arrogant and swinish (figure 21). Grosz's print, *The Boss*, 1922 (figure 77), is a striking companion piece to Kollwitz's *Hunger* (figure 75). Kollwitz, the humanist, focuses on the victims, Grosz, the *Realpolitiker*, on the criminal.

The Boss was part of Grosz's portfolio, *Die Räuber* (*The Robbers*), inspired by Schiller's play of the same name which had recently been performed in Hamburg in contemporary dress. The uncouth factory director, with his phallic cigar (a symbol in Grosz's work of male ego), small brained, Neanderthal, flat head, alcohol dazed eyes and fleshy grin, seems to have just emerged from a drunken wallow in one of Grosz's bordellos. The accompanying quotation from Schiller, "I will root up from my path whatever obstructs my progress towards becoming master," expresses with a vengeance what Grosz described as the "stupidity and recklessness of today's authorities."¹⁹ The quotation from Schiller for the second plate could as well apply to Kollwitz's *Hunger*: "Under my rule it shall be brought to pass that potatoes and small-beer shall be considered a holiday treat; and woe to him who meets my eye with the audacious front of health. Haggard want and crouching fear, are my insignia, and in this livery will I clothe ye."

Grosz's portfolio, *Gott mit Uns*, addresses the role of the military in suppressing the workers. The socialist government, Grosz felt, had betrayed the proletariat by calling out the Free Corps (figures 22 and 24). In *The World Made Safe for Democracy* (catalogue number I-41), Grosz mocks the Social Democrats by quoting Woodrow Wilson. The print was also reproduced as *Germany Has the Freest System of Government in the World and The Realized Democracy*. Another print from the portfolio, *The Workman's Holiday* (catalogue number I-39), appeared on the cover of the May 1919 number of Wieland Herzfelde's *Die Pleite*. According to Count Harry Kessler, a financial supporter of the *Malik-Verlag*, this issue ran ten to twelve thousand copies, attesting to the wide distribution of radical publications. The title used in *Die Pleite*, *Mayday in Plötzensee*, refers to the Social



76. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Alkoholgegnerwoche* (Alcohol Opponents' Week), 1923. Lithograph.

Democrats' betrayal of the workers by imprisoning dissidents in Plötzensee prison. It is also ironically called *Licht und Luft dem Proletariat* (Light and Air for the Proletariat).

Like Kollwitz, Grosz was criticized by the communist press. *Die Rote Fahne* argued that the "pure negative element" hindered his effort to advance the cause of the proletariat.²⁰ For Grosz, of course, the work was pure, unrelenting realism. In his autobiography he reported: "Barbarism prevailed. The streets became dangerous and were markets for prostitution, murder and cocaine deals."²¹ In an article published in a Soviet publication, *The Search Light*, in 1928, Grosz answered the charges persistently leveled in the communist press. He explained that he did not find it necessary to comply with the "hurrah-bolshevism" which exalted the workers, whom he saw as oppressed, poorly clothed inhabitants of dark, stinking hovels. He felt that his realism would compel the worker to understand and take responsibility for his misery and slavery. "The task of art," he declared, was "to awaken self-awareness in him and inflame him to class warfare, . . . I serve this task."²² Grosz was, therefore, glad to have his drawings called journalistic satire, not art. For him, art was a bourgeois concept implying self-indulgent withdrawal from the world of politics. In *Der Gegner*, he and John Heartfield declared that "The term art is an annulment of human equality."²³

Most artists, even those who continued to be concerned with social issues, shunned the Communist Party because of its propaganda orientation. One Communist-sponsored action, the relief effort for the twenty million victims of the Russian famine of 1921, however, brought together many liberal and radical artists. In response to Lenin's request, the Comintern propaganda specialist Willi Münzenberg organized the effort in the summer of 1921. The *Malik-Verlag* handled the publicity. Kollwitz immediately responded by designing a poster. Her reluctance to participate in political activities was shared by many artists: "I work with the communists against the horrible hunger in Russia. I have thereby been dragged into politics again completely against my will."²⁴

Münzenberg held an international convocation in Berlin in December 1921 and founded the *Internationale Arbeiterhilfe* (International Workers' Aid) or IAH. It included liberal bourgeois idealists as well as communist intellectuals, and Münzenberg was careful to emphasize the humanitarian intentions rather than political affiliations of the IAH. Among its supporters were Grosz, Dix, Kollwitz, actor and director Erwin Piscator, the painter and Kollwitz's biographer, Otto Nagel, Albert Einstein, Maxim Gorki, Anatole France, the French pacifist Henri Barbusse, George Bernard Shaw and Leonhard Frank. *Der Gegner* announced the formation of an artists' section, the "Committee for Artists' Aid to the Hungry in Russia" or *Komitee Künstlerhilfe*. The IAH increasingly turned its attention to relief efforts for the German workers. In February 1924 the *Künstlerhilfe* mounted a benefit exhibition at Wertheim department store; it also sold postcards, posters and portfolios of original prints, like *Hunger*, 1924, which included work by Dix, Grosz, Kollwitz, Nagel and Heinrich Zille.

The most important event to consider in assessing the success of the artists in forging the desired link with the proletariat was the First General German Art Exhibition in Soviet Russia, an event sponsored by the IAH and organized by Nagel, then secretary of the *Künstlerhilfe*. On display were 501 works of art by 126 living artists. Architect Adolf Behne wrote the introduction to the catalogue. The exhibition opened in October 1924 in Moscow, and in January 1925 it moved to Leningrad. Among the thirteen artists' groups represented were the *Sturm*, *Berlin Sezession*,



77. George Grosz, *The Boss*, 1922. Photolithograph from an ink drawing.

Novembergruppe, Dresden *Sezession*, *Gruppe 1919*, *Rote Gruppe* and the *Bauhaus*. Artists who participated in the exhibition who are represented in this present exhibition were Ernst Barlach, Dix, Kollwitz, Felixmüller, Grosz, Erich Heckel, Eugen Hofmann, Franz Maria Jansen, Cesar Klein, Max Pechstein and Christoph Voll.

The perpetual gap between the workers and the artists was graphically revealed in the response of the Soviet press. The most frequent criticism of both the realist and Expressionist art was that it was destructive, demoralizing and devoid of positive inspiration. For the Russian critics, however, the Expressionists were the most problematical, both in terms of subject matter and style. One critic, Fedorov-Davydov, raised typical concerns when he wrote:

Is this truly the art of the revolutionary proletariat? . . . How torn the social psyche must be. . . . when artists . . . proletarian in their class consciousness come across as plain nihilists. . . .

Who . . . presents a positive ideal? What can an Otto Dix offer against the decay of the bourgeois and mass prostitution? . . .

In the exhibition are many anti-military paintings, but what do we find in them but representations of the horrors of war? . . . Käthe Kollwitz . . . [offers] only a heap of crying and shuddering women.

Horrors, nightmares, fever dreams on all sides. It may be that contemporary German reality is like this, but must the revolutionary agitation of art be so?²⁵

Grosz of course answered that this was the face of Germany which he later vividly described in his autobiography: "The world of the 1920's was like a boiling cauldron. . . . A real orgy of hate was brewing, and behind it all the weak Republic was scarcely discernible. An explosion was imminent."²⁶

Russian critics immediately grasped the attribute of the German artists' work which barred it from being truly activist: its metaphysical essence. This quality reflected the persistent German inclination to seek out ungraspable, deep emotions in a world-eschewing art. The result for the Russians was incomprehensible. They insisted that socially useful art needed to be clear and intelligible.²⁷

One critic complained that the Expressionist "stands upon a tribune and begins to cry in pain, . . . but it is clear to no one to what end." "Expressionist art," he continued, "expires in muttering, groaning, in the chaotic confessions of a suffering soul . . . in a flirtation with the soul's own inner conflicts which are allegedly so deep that they are inaccessible to the understanding of the masses."²⁸ To the Russians, Expressionism appeared elitist and self-indulgent in the extreme; they only saw undecipherable forms, obliterated drawing, strident colors and foggy symbolic forms in service of an incoherent content. Such an escapist art, they concluded, could not be revolutionary: "Not the dissolution of self in nightmares," stated Fedorov-Davydov, "but a strong will, iron protest and courage must be the properties of anyone who wants to clean the Augean Stables of the present."²⁹

To the Russian critics the Expressionist and verist images of prostitutes were not metaphors for societal corruption, but symptomatic of a sadistic and sick eroticism. The workers' puritanical mores were offended by the explicit nudes, and they simply viewed Grosz's scenes of *Lustmord* (lust murder) and Dix's Venuses and prostitutes as psychopathic. As were their proletarian brothers in Germany, the Russians were affronted.

Russian critics were especially sensitive to the Expressionists' aversion to industrialization and mass culture. The Russians looked to technology to improve the living conditions of the masses and the Expressionists' stance seemed reactionary and out of touch with the life

and needs of the proletariat. In a final comment on the Soviet exhibition, A. A. Sidorov concluded that given the sadism, psychopathic preoccupation with abnormalities, the painful grimaces, erotic demeanors and poor taste of so much of the German work, the censors had acted the part of forbearing, hospitable hosts in not having more rigorously censored the work of these foreigners.³⁰

The cause of the failure of the Expressionists' revolutionary aspirations was ignorance, ignorance of the workers and ignorance of themselves. The artists considered themselves revolutionaries, but did not understand what the Russian critics knew, that intensity of vicarious experience was no substitute for active involvement. They romantically idealized the workers because they had effected a revolution, and assumed that a revolutionary style in art would appeal to revolutionaries in the spheres of economics and politics. In concluding his article Fedorov-Davydov asked the pivotal question: "What do these convulsive and oppressed souls, these sick, perverted psyches have to do with positive subjects: The working class, the revolution?"³¹ The answer was of course, nothing at all.

Notes

- 1 George Grosz, "Vorwort zum Katalog der George Grosz Ausstellung bei Garvens Hannover," *Der Gegner* 3:1 (1922), p. 60.
- 2 Raoul Hausmann, "Der Proletarier und die Kunst," *Das Kunstblatt*, no. 12 (Dezember 1918), p. 388.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 388-389.
- 4 The *Grosstadt* portfolio is illustrated in J. B. Neumann, J. B. Neumanns *Bilderhefte* 5 (Berlin: Verlag Graphisches Kabinett Israel Ber Neumann, 1920), pp. 74-79.
- 5 Joseph Winckler, "Der rhenische Graphiker F. M. Jansen," *Jahrbuch der jungen Kunst* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1922), p. 317.
- 6 Conrad Felixmüller, "Der Prolet (Pönnecke)," in Uwe M. Schneede, ed., *Die Zwanziger Jahre: Manifeste und Dokumente deutscher Künstler* (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1979), p. 48.
- 7 G. H. Herzog, ed., *Conrad Felixmüller, Legenden 1912-1976* (Tübingen: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1977), p. 46.
- 8 Felixmüller, "Der Prolet," p. 49.
- 9 Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister, *Kunst im Aufbruch: Dresden 1918-1933* (Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister, 1980), p. 50.
- 10 Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, *Wem gehört die Welt: Kunst und Gesellschaft in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1977), p. 309.
- 11 Carl Sternheim, "Felixmüller," *Der Cicerone* 15:19 (Oktober 1932), p. 300.
- 12 Louise Diel, *Käthe Kollwitz: Ein Ruf ertönt* (Berlin: Fricke Kunstverlag, 1927), p. 34.
- 13 Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, p. 314.
- 14 Käthe Kollwitz, *The Diary and Letters of Käthe Kollwitz*, Hans Kollwitz, ed. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), p. 96.
- 15 George Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No: The Autobiography of George Grosz*, Lola Sachs Dorin, trans. (New York: The Dial Press, 1946), pp. 161-62.

- 16 Ibid., p. 172.
- 17 George Grosz, "Statt einer Biographie," in Willi Wolfradt, *George Grosz, Junge Kunst* no. 21 (Leipzig: Verlag von Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1921), pp. 14-15.
- 18 Beth Irwin Lewis and Sidney Simon, *Grosz-Heartfield: The Artist as Social Critic* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1980), p. 31.
- 19 George Grosz, *Der Spiesserspiegel und das Neue Gesicht der Herrschenden Klasse* (Frankfurt am Main: Makol Verlag, 1973), n.p.
- 20 Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, p. 207.
- 21 Grosz, *A Little*, p. 168.
- 22 Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, p. 208.
- 23 Ibid., p. 201.
- 24 Hans Kollwitz, ed., *Ich Sah die Welt mit Liebevollen Blicken. Käthe Kollwitz: Ein Leben in Selbstzeugnissen* (Wiesbaden: Fourier Verlag, [1981]), p. 200.
- 25 Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, p. 244.
- 26 Grosz, *A Little*, p. 201.
- 27 Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, p. 212.
- 28 Ibid., p. 213.
- 29 Ibid., p. 244.
- 30 Ibid., p. 245.
- 31 Ibid., p. 244.



96. Conrad Felixmüller, cover for *Sezession Gruppe*, 1919 (*Secession Group*, 1919), 1919. Woodcut.

8 Radical Artists' Groups in Berlin and Dresden

AFTER the revolution, dozens of radical artists' groups formed throughout Germany. This exhibition focuses on three of those, the Berlin *Novembergruppe* (November Group) and *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* (Workers' Council for Art) and the Dresden *Sezession, Gruppe 1919* (Secession, Group 1919). The politically active life of each was short. The political members of the *Sezession, Gruppe 1919* left within the year; the *Arbeitsrat* disbanded in 1921, and by then the political élan of the *Novembergruppe* had dissipated, even though it exhibited into 1932.

Novembergruppe

Typical of the political tone of the artists' rhetoric, the draft manifesto of the *Novembergruppe* proclaimed: "We stand on the fertile ground of revolution. Our motto is Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"; and the artists dedicated their talents to the "new free Germany."¹ On December 3, 1918, under the direction of co-founders Cesar Klein, Max Pechstein, Georg Tappert, Heinrich Richter-Berlin and Moritz Melzer, the *Novembergruppe* held its first meeting. Karl Jakob Hirsch, Bernard Hasler, Richard Janthur, Otto Mueller, Heinrich Campendonk and Otto Freundlich were among those in attendance. The December, 1919 issue of Tappert's and Adolf Harm's *Die Schöne Rarität*, called upon all Expressionists, cubists and Futurists to join together to bring art to the people. During 1919 over forty artists exhibited with the *Novembergruppe*; fifteen of these are included in this exhibition. Among the architects whose projects were included were Walter Gropius, Bruno Taut, Max Taut, Hans Poelzig, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Erich Mendelsohn and Ludwig Hilberseimer. The group also included poets, composers and writers.

Their press was mixed. Although generally positive, the art magazines' reviewers noted a lack of stylistic uniformity and a confusion over goals. The newspapers were less friendly. The socialist workers' press accused them of "unbearable intellectualism" and "blasphemy." Moderate newspapers reported with great hilarity that the work was received as swindle, bluff and fraud by the good burghers who demanded their money back.²

In order to spread their ideas, the *Novembergruppe* published catalogues and two periodicals, *Der Kunsttopf* and *Novembergruppe*. Their most important publication, the book *An alle Künstler!* appeared in the fall of 1919. Its cover, a flaming, apocalyptic image, was designed by Pechstein (figure 78, page x). Cesar Klein contributed a drawing (figure 79) which symbolized the artists' hope that, phoenix-like from the flames of war, there would arise a new Germany. Here, astride the phoenix, the



79. Cesar Klein, *Der neue Vogel Phönix* (The New Bird Phoenix), 1919, in *An alle Künstler!* Reproduced drawing.

Expressionists' "new man" ascends towards celestial new beginnings symbolized by the sun, moon and stars. The introductory essay, "Aufruf zum Sozialismus" ("Call to Socialism"), however, declared the artists' early disillusionment: "There were too few flames in the streets, how could the phoenix be born? What we have experienced since November is the most extreme cliché of a revolution."³ The book included a poem by Johannes R. Becher and essays by Ludwig Meidner, Pechstein and Walter Hasenclever, and Kurt Eisner's address to the Bavarian Provisional Assembly. Pechstein's "Was wir Wollen" ("What We Want") expressed his faith that the new socialist state would create a more healthy climate for artists in the unity of "the people and art."⁴ Meidner's "An alle Künstler, Dichter, Musiker" ("To All Artists, Poets, Composers"), printed earlier in *Der Anbruch* and *Das Kunstblatt*, proclaimed that "socialism must be our new creed. . . . We painters and poets [must] join in a holy alliance with the poor."⁵

Active opposition came from the more political Dadaists gathered around Wieland Herzfelde's *Malik-Verlag*. In 1921 Herzfelde's *Der Gegner* published an open letter to the *Novembergruppe*, signed by, among others, Otto Dix, George Grosz and Raoul Hausmann (figure 85). Grosz had exhibited with the group and Hausmann would edit *Novembergruppe*. They accused the group of betraying its founding principles of dedication to political revolution by concerning itself with a "purely aesthetic revolution" and embracing the "snobbish art-clubs" and "dealer speculation" they had earlier abjured. By retreating into "bourgeois individuality" rather than nurturing the new communality, the group had abandoned its task of building the new society.⁶ By 1922 the group had, in fact, become an exhibition society for avant-garde artists.

The selection of prints by *Novembergruppe* members included in this exhibition indicates the confusing diversity of styles and politically unengaged quality of most of the artists' work. The common denominator was the rebellious desire for the artistic freedom to explore avant-garde styles, a desire often confused with radical political commitment. Even the few activist artists quickly tired of politics. One of those initially most involved, Pechstein, who had actively designed political posters (figure 40, page 32, and figure 41), left after the first exhibition. He retreated from the turmoil of Berlin to the Baltic fishing village of Nidden and re-established his alliance with the apolitical Berlin Secession.

Two hand-colored woodcuts from Pechstein's *Vater Unser* (Our Father) portfolio (figures 80 and 81) express the same strong religious yearnings evidenced in other postwar Expressionist work. The bold paganism of the Adam and Eve image continues the *Brücke* artists' interest in incorporating African and Polynesian motifs in order to intensify the emotional contents of a composition. Pechstein himself traveled to the South Seas in 1914. The portfolio also indicates his abandonment of political subject matter for more traditional themes.

The painter Karl Jakob Hirsch was a member of the younger generation. He was twenty-six when the revolution occurred and a founding member of the *Novembergruppe*. His memoirs have often been quoted in this book and his work for revolutionary periodicals has been discussed (figures 39, 62 and 63, page 50). A nonpolitical print which indicates his affinities with broader Expressionist concerns is included in this exhibition. The etching, *Wahnsinniger* (Insane One), 1922 (figure 82), is an example of the Expressionist interest in the extremes of the human condition, including madness.

Georg Tappert, a close friend of Hirsch's, was the most active recruiter for the *Novembergruppe*. His prints, however, did not reflect his political life which included designing posters for the provisional govern-

ment, his friendship with Franz Pfemfert of *Die Aktion* and membership in the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* and the *Novembergruppe*. They reflected the more aesthetic tone of *Die Schöne Rarität*, a periodical he co-founded with Adolf Harms. His work is represented in this exhibition by two plates from his illustrations to Theodor Däubler's poem, *Der Nachtwandler* (*The Sleepwalker*) (figure 83 and catalogue number I-93). Alfred Flechtheim, who published the portfolio, wrote that the plates were "dream pictures. . . . cast light, dark points and circles move by us, and gliding together, . . . like in a kaleidoscope, before our eyes they become houses and faces and boats and stars and shapes—all in a state of becoming and passing away."⁷ Tappert was a teacher and with fellow *Novembergruppe* founder-member, Moritz Melzer had opened a school for "free and radical art" in 1910.

The visionary Expressionist painter and poet Ludwig Meidner joined both the *Novembergruppe* and the *Arbeitsrat*. Before he was called into the infantry, he had been active in Café des Westens and *Die Aktion* circles. He was soon sent to a German prisoner of war camp to act as an interpreter for the French internees. There, to his delight, he could draw and write poetry. In January 1918, Paul Cassirer gave him an exhibition in his Berlin gallery. Meidner's fervent essays on the metropolis and on art and his drawings appeared frequently in the radical journals. His ecstatic essay, "An alle Künstler, Dichter, Musiker," ("To All Artists, Poets, Composers") has been quoted earlier. In it, in his characteristic delirious tone, Meidner warned artists not to shame themselves before the cosmos by turning their backs on the workers in their struggle against the common enemy, the bourgeoisie. It was the artist's job, through *Rausch* (ecstasy) and *Wonne* (rapture) to lead a poor wretched humanity to great spiritual heights.⁸

For Meidner, drawing was the most direct medium of pure, ecstatic expression. The two Meidners in this exhibition, the *Selbstbildnis* (*Self Portrait*), 1921 (figure 84) and portrait of the Dadaist Raoul Hausmann, 1914 (figure 85), epitomize the extraordinary expressive power of his draftsmanship. In an article, "Vom Zeichnen" ("On Drawing"), Meidner wrote:

When you want to draw, you must feel in yourself a sublime abundance of spirit, serenity, soaring and world love.

Do not fear the empty white of the paper. . . . There is . . . the horrible uncertainty—and here is your spirit and your hot will, to create a new world. . . . We draftsmen. . . . swim in a magic current, and with hot fingers and powerfully tense brains bore, scratch and burrow our inner vision in stone, metal, wood and cardboard.⁹

Of portraiture, he counselled:

Do not fear the human face, which is a reflection of heavenly beauty, . . . gather tightly together the knitted brow, root of the nose and eyes. Bore like a burrowing animal into the pupil's unfathomable depth and the whites of the eyes of the person facing you and do not let your pen rest until you have married your opposite's soul with yours in an expressive union. Sink yourself in the . . . surging intimacy of a pair of lips. Observe the point or the scarred weakness of the chin. The ornament of the ear should always charm you, and the flaming hair, the hair waves, the ashes of hair around lean cheeks, the piercing bristles, the small hairs around the mouth should be a pleasure for your dashing pen.¹⁰

In 1912, Meidner, Richard Janthur and Jakob Steinhardt founded *Die Pathetiker*, a group dedicated to incorporating emotion and pathos into an art world then dominated by impressionism. Janthur worked with the *Sturm* and *Aktion* circles, participated in the founding meeting of the *Novembergruppe* and joined the *Arbeitsrat*. A drawing for his illustrations to Fritz Gurlitt's edition of Johnathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is included in the exhibition (catalogue number I-52).

Max Burchartz, like Otto Gleichmann, came to Hannover at the end of the war and joined the Hannover *Sezession*. His 1919 *Raskolnikoff*



80. Max Pechstein, *Führe uns nicht in Versuchung* (Lead Us Not into Temptation), 1921. Woodcut, hand colored.



81. Max Pechstein, *Geheiligt werde Dein Name* (Hallowed Be Thy Name), 1921. Woodcut, hand colored.



82. Karl Jakob Hirsch, *Wahnsinniger (Insane One)*, 1922. Drypoint.



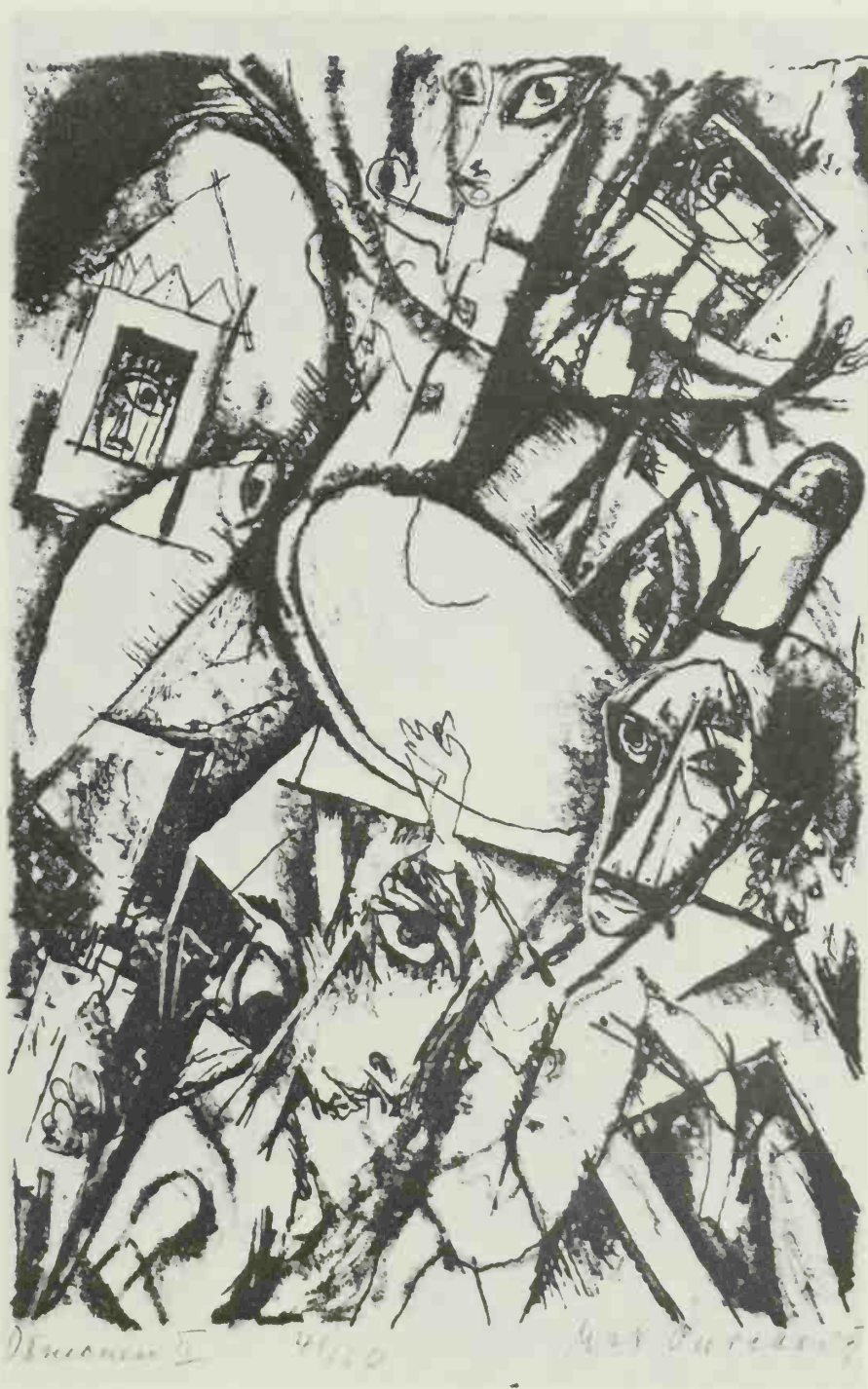
83. Georg Tappert, *Betende vor der Stadt (Beggars before the City)*, 1918. Woodcut.



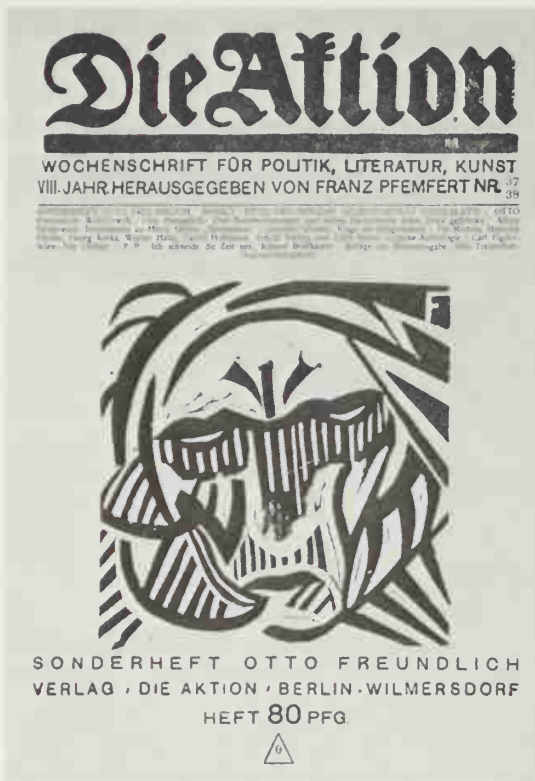
84. Ludwig Meidner, *Selbstbildnis (Self Portrait)*, 1921. Black crayon drawing.



85. Ludwig Meidner, *Bildnis Raoul Hausmann* (Portrait of Raoul Hausmann), 1914. Lithograph.



86. Max Burchartz, *Dämonen, II* (Demons, II), undated. Lithograph.



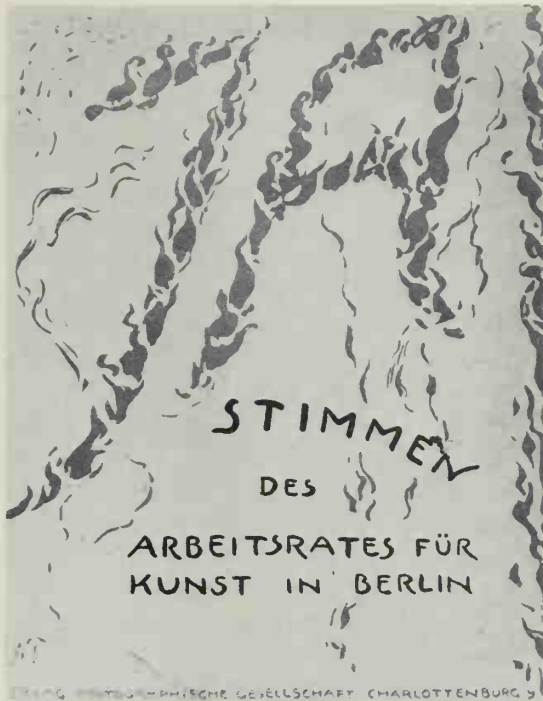
87. Otto Freundlich, *Selbstporträt* (Self Portrait), title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, September 21, 1918. Reproduction of a woodcut.



89. Josef Eberz, *Prophet* (Prophet), 1918. Woodcut.



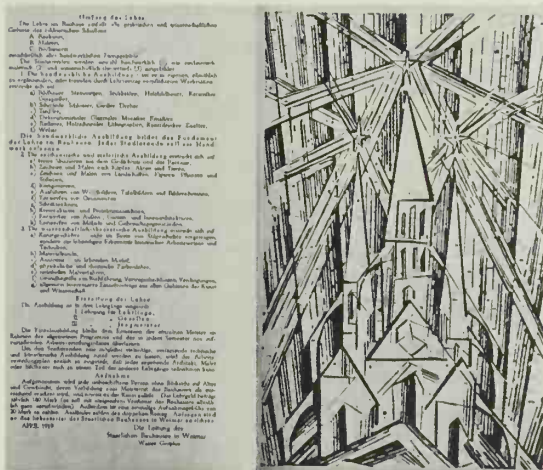
88. August Wilhelm Dressler, *Der Intellektuelle* (The Intellectual), 1920. Etching and aquatint.



90. Bruno Taut, cover illustration for the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst*'s book, *Ja! Stimmen des Arbeitsrates für Kunst in Berlin*, 1919. Reproduction of a drawing.



92. Erich Heckel, *Der Narr (The Fool)*, 1917. Woodcut.



91. Lyonel Feininger, *Kathedrale (Cathedral)*, title page woodcut for the *Bauhaus Manifesto: Programm des staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar*, April 1919. Woodcut.



93. Erich Heckel, *Der Spaziergang* (*The Stroll*), 1919. Woodcut.



94. Otto Mueller, *Polnische Familie* (*Judenfamilie, Polen*) (*Polish Family, Jewish Family, Poland*), 1920-1921. Lithograph, hand colored.

portfolio (published by Alfred Flechtheim) was exhibited in the *Novembergruppe* exhibition in 1919. His portfolio, *Die Dämonen* (*The Demons*) (figure 86 and catalogue number I-2), in the typical, postwar fusion of Expressionist distortions and cubo-futurist dynamic linear grid and transparency, continues the dark, brooding, Dostoevskian atmosphere of the *Raskolnikov* portfolio. Dostoevsky's probes into the darker realms of human motivation were favored reading among the Expressionists, whose work reflected the psychologically penetrating, anxiety-ridden atmosphere of his novels.

The painter and sculptor Otto Freundlich was among the most political of the artists; he belonged to both the *Novembergruppe* and the *Arbeitsrat*. He contributed a powerful, Expressionist self-portrait title page print to the issue of *Die Aktion* in which the essay "Welt-Urwelt" ("World-Primeval World") was published (figure 87). Another member of both organizations, Bernhard Klein, represented in the exhibition by a woodcut published in the *Schwarze Turm*, 1919 (catalogue number III-19), exhibited with the *Novembergruppe* every year from 1919 through 1931.

Among the other *Novembergruppe* artists were August W. Dressler (figure 88), Otto Möller and Bernhard Hasler. Dressler exhibited with the group in 1920 and sporadically thereafter. Möller adopted an animated, Futurist style which captured the tempo and pulse of postwar Berlin and in its kaleidoscopic qualities reflected the scrambled space of Dada collage (catalogue number I-78). Möller and his friend, *Novembergruppe* founder member Hasler, worked together on new programs for art education. Hasler's is a more dreamy, storybook evocation of the city's factories, towers and tanks, softened by the presence of leave-taking lovers and a foraging goose (catalogue number I-46).

The work of Josef Eberz (figures 66 and 89), Fritz Schaeffler (figures 55 and 64) and Alois Wach (figure 65), three Munich associates of the group, has been discussed earlier. Many progressive and radical artists from throughout Germany affirmed their desire to merge avant-garde art and radical politics by answering the *Novembergruppe's* "call to all artists" and became associate members.

Arbeitsrat für Kunst

The membership of the *Novembergruppe* and *Arbeitsrat für Kunst*, a group modelled after the soldiers' and workers' soviets, overlapped. Although both organizations declared it their duty to support the new republic, the *Arbeitsrat's* program, signed on December 18, 1919 by dealers, critics, publishers, historians, collectors and architects, as well as artists, was more practical in its orientation:

Art and the people must build a unity. Art must no longer be the pleasure of a few, but the happiness and life of the masses. The unification of the arts under the wing of a great architecture is the goal. Henceforth the artist as the form-giver of the people's feelings alone is answerable for the visible vestments of the new state. . . . from the general aspect of a town to the coins and stamps.¹¹

On the *Arbeitsrat's* original central business committee were *Novembergruppe* members Gropius, Cesar Klein, Pechstein, Hasler and Meidner, under the leadership of architect Adolf Behne, Gropius and Klein. On the original artists' study group were Freundlich, Hirsch, Melzer and Tappert. A merger was in fact proposed, but rejected by the *Novembergruppe's* membership, in part because the *Arbeitsrat* was dominated by its architect organizers, Gropius, Bruno Taut and Adolf Behne; the *Novembergruppe* was composed predominantly of painters. These differences in emphasis were reflected in their publications and exhibitions.



95. Heinrich Campendonk, *Deo (Deo)*, 1920-1921. Woodcut.

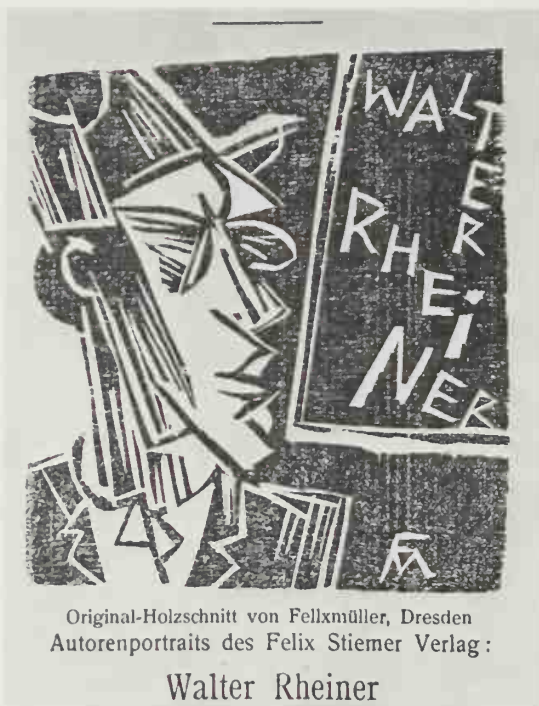
In April, 1919, the *Arbeitsrat* presented an "Exhibition for Unknown Architects" at J. B. Neumann's *Graphisches Kabinett* (figure 106). The accompanying pamphlet by Bruno Taut stated that in the Middle Ages, architecture, symbolized by the Gothic cathedral, had been the "crystallized expression [of] the noblest thoughts of humanity, its ardour, its humanity, its beliefs, its religion!" He called on artists to again knock down the walls which "separate the arts in order again to be builders all!" Then, he declared, the term architect would regain its original meaning, "master of the arts."¹² This concept of architecture as the unifier of the arts is symbolized in Lyonel Feininger's resplendent celebration of the "cathedral of socialism" for Walter Gropius's "Bauhaus Manifesto" (figure 91). As was typical of much postwar Expressionism, Feininger merged Futurist force lines and transparencies with Expressionist ecstatic transformations to create a visionary image. The *Arbeitsrat*'s ideas were put into practice at the *Bauhaus*, where Feininger was one of the first teachers.

In line with their goal of bringing art to the people, the *Arbeitsrat* held exhibitions of art and architecture; the latter was featured in two special exhibitions, the one in April 1919 and the other in May 1920. In the winter of 1919-1920, in an effort to in fact forge a union with the workers, they held a workers' art exhibition. It won praise in the art press for "revealing the innate creative tendencies" of the common people,¹³ but despite the group's genuine efforts to bring art to the people, the more political artists soon attacked it as they did the *Novembergruppe*. Otto Freundlich (figure 87) expressed the radical political artists' disaffection when, in announcing his withdrawal from both groups, he accused them of lying "in the bed of bureaucracy," and being "baptized in the waters of the bourgeois churches" and "saturated with the spirit of snobbism," "careerism" and "mercantile infection."¹⁴

In December 1919 the *Arbeitsrat* published their book, *Ja! Stimmen des Arbeitsrates für Kunst in Berlin*, a compilation of twenty-eight members' responses to a questionnaire circulated earlier that year. Architect Bruno Taut designed the flaming cover (figure 90) and Lyonel Feininger contributed the frontispiece, *Das Rathaus (The City Hall)*, 1919. There was no consensus among the respondents who included Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Heinrich Campendonk, Behne, Cesar Klein, Freundlich, Tappert, Gropius, the sculptor Gerhard Marcks, the collector Karl Ernst Osthaus and architects Bruno and Max Taut. Each respondent was to answer questions about art education, the reform of art-related institutions and state support for art and artists, and then offer a proposal for an ideal building. There was a wide range of viewpoints presented.

Many members of the *Arbeitsrat* have been discussed with the *Novembergruppe*; they are Freundlich, Hasler, Hirsch, Janthur, Bernhard Klein, Cesar Klein, Meidner, Melzer, Pechstein and Tappert. Of those who belonged only to the *Arbeitsrat*, Christian Rohlf and Schmidt-Rottluff have been discussed in chapter two, and George Grosz has figured prominently throughout. Lasar Segall was active in Dresden and will be discussed with the *Sezession, Gruppe 1919*.

As was the case with the *Novembergruppe*, despite the radical rhetoric, the artists' work was itself by and large not political. Of the old *Brücke* group, Erich Heckel, Otto Mueller, Schmidt-Rottluff, Pechstein and Heckel were on the central business committee, and Nolde and Mueller were members of the original artists' study committee. Schmidt-Rottluff and Pechstein have been discussed earlier. Nolde, represented here by his *Der Tod als Tänzerin (Death as a Female Dancer)*, 1918 (figure 1), was embittered by the war and defeat, but remained aloof from any real political activity.



97. Conrad Felixmüller, Walther Rheiner (Walter Rheiner), in *Menschen*, May 15, 1918. Woodcut.

Heckel's nerves suffered from the war, in which he served as a medic. The tense, nervously debilitated atmosphere and Dostoevskian *Angst* conveyed in his prewar work was intensified, and the lassitude, withdrawal and inwardness of his subjects was accentuated by his depressed state during the war. His 1917 woodcut, *Der Narr* (*The Fool*) (figure 92) reveals vestiges of Heckel's physiognomy. The watchful, forlorn nervousness reflects Heckel's own anxious state of mind. The image perhaps can be read symbolically in that by 1917 Heckel may have begun to see himself and his fellow artists as commentators who, like court jesters, had to hide their disillusionment and opposition behind the canny visage of the clown. The symbolism of his 1919 *Der Spaziergang* (*The Stroll*) (figure 93) is also elusive, more implied than stated. Here a youth, his head surrounded by radiant energy, looks to his worn, sober mentor for guidance. As in so much postwar Expressionist art, a spiritualized, apocalyptic atmosphere, more than overtly republican symbolism, testifies to the artist's dedication to the revolutionary cause.

Otto Mueller, although already in delicate health, was called into the infantry and sustained the lung damage which contributed to his early death. He never deviated from his prewar commitment to executing idyllic, lyrical, nature-bound images of humanity restored to primal innocence (catalogue number I-80), manifestations of the romantic primitivism so integral to prewar *Brücke* Expressionism. The *Polnische Familie*, (*Judenfamilie, Polen*)(*Polish Family, Jewish Family, Poland*), 1922 (figure 94), is typical of his sanctified family images and universal celebrations of motherhood with ecumenically interchangeable gypsy and Jewish madonnas.

Of the artists who had been associated with the *Blaue Reiter*, only Heinrich Campendonk and Lyonel Feininger (figure 91) signed the *Arbeitsrat's* program. Campendonk was present at the initial meetings of the *Novembergruppe*, but never exhibited with them. He is represented here by a typical, mystical-mythological vision imbued with portentous symbolism, *Deo* (*Deo*), 1920-21 (figure 95) and *Die Bettler* (*Nach Brueghel*) (*The Beggars, After Brueghel*) (figure 34), discussed in chapter two.

Although dozens of artists joined the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst*, at the core were its architect organizers. Like the artists, they were romantic idealists; many of their ideas were more visionary than Germany needed in 1918 when the country was short 800,000 lodgings.¹⁵ Although the *Arbeitsrat* was itself short-lived, disbanding in May 1921, its commitment to a social architecture was strong and was carried on by Gropius at the *Bauhaus*, which he founded in Weimar in 1919.

Dresden Sezession, Gruppe 1919

Dresden, an industrial city and the vital cultural center of Saxony, was, like Berlin, fertile ground for radical activity. In January 1919, Conrad Felixmüller and the architect Hugo Zehder organized the *Dresden Sezession, Gruppe 1919* with the hope that it would be political in orientation. The founder members were Felixmüller, Otto Schubert, Wilhelm Heckrodt, Otto Dix (whose wartime sketches Felixmüller had admired and whom he then invited to join), Zehder, Lasar Segall and Constantin von Mitschke-Collande. Peter Böckstiegel and Otto Lange were soon voted in. Close associates included the publisher Heinar Schilling, proprietor of the *Dresden Verlag* 1917, Felix Stierner, editor of *Menschen*, Dr. Paul F. Schmidt, director of the *Städtischen Kunstsammlung*, art historian Will Grohmann, then an assistant master at a local secondary school, and the poet Walter Rheiner.

In the spirit of its forerunner, the *Brücke*, the *Sezession, Gruppe 1919* dedicated its "youthful energy" to the task of preparing "the way for



98. Peter Böckstiegel, *Leben (Life)*, in *Menschen*, October 15, 1918. Woodcut.



99. Conrad Felixmüller, *Zwischen Mann und Frau (Between Man and Woman)*, 1917. Lithograph.



101. Otto Dix, *Technisches Personal* (Technical Personnel), 1922. Drypoint.



102. Otto Dix, *Elektrische* (Electric Tram), 1920. Woodcut.



100. Peter August Böckstiegel, *Bildnis Felixmüller* (Portrait of Felixmüller), 1914. Lithograph.



103. Otto Dix, *Die Prominenten (Konstellation)*
(*The Prominent Ones, Constellation*), 1920. Woodcut.



104. Otto Dix, *Lärm der Strasse* (Noise of the Street), 1920. Woodcut.



105. Otto Dix, *Apotheose (Apotheosis)*, 1919. Woodcut.



106. Otto Dix, *J. B. Neumann*, 1922. Drypoint.

the future" and to their principles, "Truth—Brotherhood—Art."¹⁶ In March, they published a thirty-five page brochure with a title page woodcut by Felixmüller (figure 96, page 68). In it, a rousing essay by Rheiner (figure 97) "Die Neue Welt" ("The New World") set the tone for the group's endeavors. Rheiner called on the "young painters . . . prophets of a new world" to step forth and join the members of the *Sezession, Gruppe 1919* whom he described as artists "full of the cosmos which forms itself anew within them, daily and hourly," artists who "speak of the magic which lives in everything . . . of the inner night, of the inner day, . . . of loneliness, . . . of I and Thou and of the battle against the external, which oppresses and convulses them," whose paintings represent "the new being, which arises within them. . . . a new cosmos."¹⁷

Elsewhere in the pamphlet Zehder, editor of the *Neue Blätter für Kunst und Dichtung*, dedicated his journal to the support of the artists' "resistance against the mechanization of human activity,"¹⁸ and declared it the group's mouthpiece. Heinar Schilling's and Felix Stierner's radical periodical *Menschen* published the members' poems and prints. The group also had the support of the progressive Dresden art dealers, Emil Richter and Rudolf Probst. For their first exhibition, held in April 1919 at Richter's, Probst wrote the catalogue essay. He described the group's efforts as the "labor pains of the new humanity," a testament to the power and vitality of the newly awakened self in relation to the world. This struggling new consciousness, he declared, "storms through all the spheres of the emotions of the soul" and "would transform the whole cosmos."¹⁹ Böckstiegel's woodcut, *Leben* (figure 98) published in *Menschen*, embodies this Expressionist preoccupation with the inner world and their proclamation of subjective reality as the core of artistic expression.

The first exhibition sponsored by the *Sezession, Gruppe 1919*, contained work executed in Expressionist, Dadaist and Futurist styles, some of the imagery was political. The work of the most politically engaged artist, Felixmüller, was praised by the liberal press, but to his dismay, the socialists criticized it for being "unclear." The issue was of course style. This was the typical workers' response to cubo-futurist and Expressionist forms. Dix's social commentary met with universal disapprobation for its tastelessness and vulgarity. The rest of the group, artists whose work was not overtly political, was well received.

Initially Felixmüller, Zehder and Mitschke-Collande had hoped that the group would engage in radical politics. When it did not, they left, Felixmüller after the first exhibition, Zehder in August 1919 and Mitschke-Collande in 1920. Böckstiegel, although unpolitical, followed his brother-in-law Felixmüller. In retrospect Felixmüller commented:

Except for Mitschke-Collande, everyone had grounds for refusing to join the Communist Party. Otto Schubert: As a soldier I lay long enough in the mud at the front – I want peace. Segall: As a foreigner, a Polish Jew, I cannot be in a German party. . . . Otto Lange held back as a trade unionist. Dix said: Leave me out of your stupid politics.²⁰

What, he asked, could he do in such a group?

Many members of the *Sezession, Gruppe 1919* have been discussed in earlier chapters and will be only briefly characterized here. Felixmüller, the youngest, joined the Communist Party in 1919. In 1920 he used the Saxony state prize stipend to travel in the coal mining districts rather than to Rome, in order to return to and rediscover his proletarian roots. The subjects of his many prints for *Die Aktion* (figures 58 and 72) reflected his political commitments. He also prepared prints for *Menschen*, including its logo representing the Expressionist "new man." He also contributed woodcut portraits of *Menschen*'s publisher and his contributors (figure 97) and political figures (figure 57). Felixmüller's style was an Expressionist

activated cubism, reflecting what he termed the "dynamism on all sides" of us.²¹ He depicted basic human relationships as well as proletarian themes. His lithograph *Zwischen Mann und Frau* (*Between Man and Woman*), 1917 (figure 99) addresses a personal, intimate theme in his Expressionist-cubist style, embodying his statement that "we are cubists of life. . . . swirled around in the stream of time!"²²

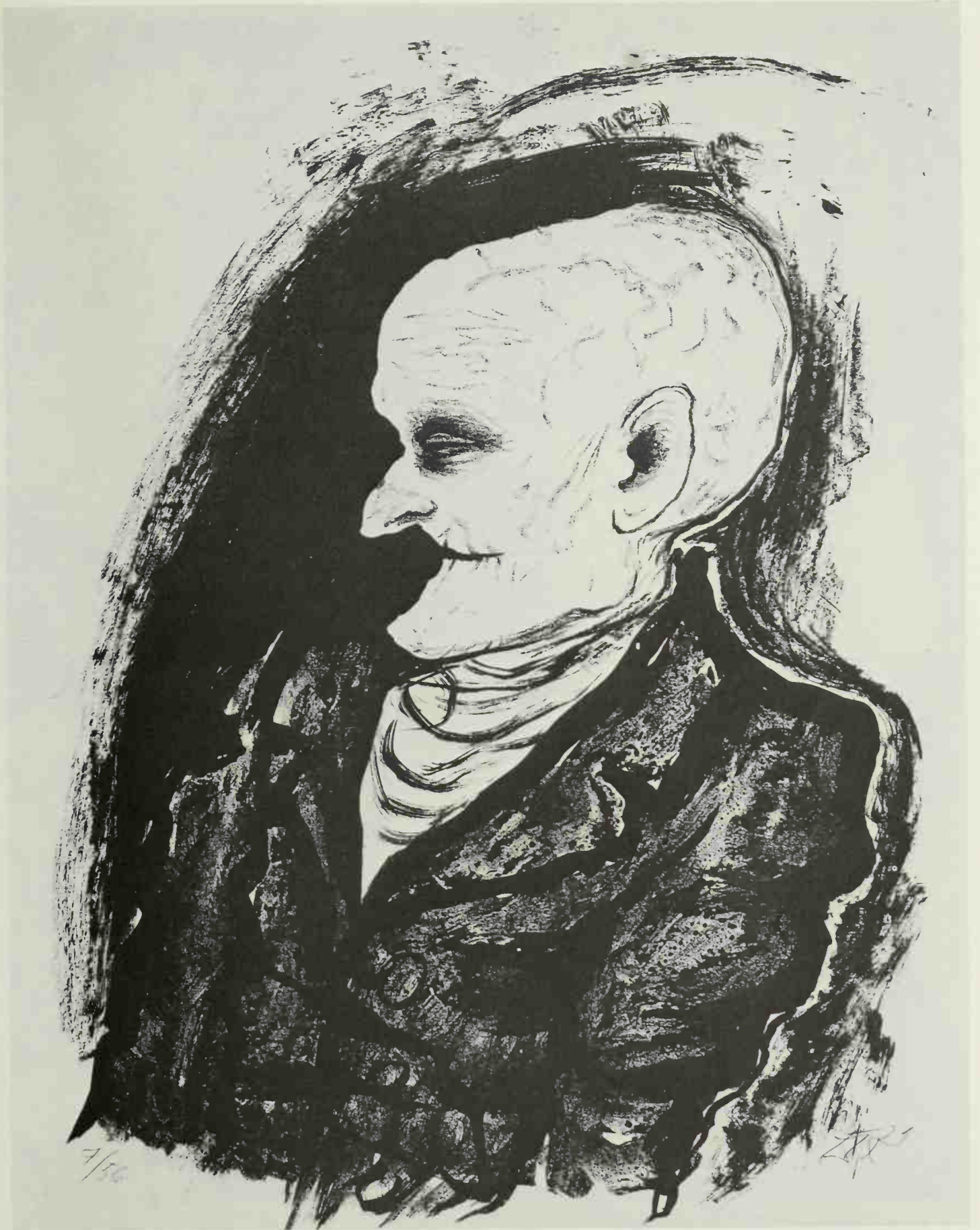
In a 1914 portrait (figure 100), Felixmüller's brother-in-law, Böckstiegel, captured Felixmüller's presence as Grohmann characterized it: "Felixmüller lives like lightning, works quickly and can hardly wait for fruition."²³ Felixmüller soon, however, moved away from this impetuous, emotional Expressionism and the overtly political and proletarian themes to presenting images which reflected a more objective, detached observation of life around him (figure 73). This retreat from Expressionist emotionalism to sober realism was characteristic of the development of postwar German art. It was followed by Felixmüller's friend Otto Dix, but in the case of Dix, his work gained in power and authenticity in its focus on the concrete (figures 10 – 18), whereas Felixmüller's work more often led to banality.

Dix, the son of an ironworker, was influenced by his friend Felixmüller to seek inspiration in his own proletarian background and to work in an increasingly realistic style. His etching, *Technisches Personal* (*Technical Personnel*), 1922 (figure 101), presents a healthy, robust image of rough-hewn broad-shouldered, working class dignity. His portfolio, *Neun Holzschnitte* (*Nine Woodcuts*), published in 1922 by Schilling, includes woodcuts executed in 1919 and 1920. In its theme, the metropolis, Dix's portfolio parallels Grosz's concerns (figure 20). The frantic tempo of the city became an important source for his compositions. Sometimes the sensations are confused and kaleidoscopic, as when embedded in a style derived from chaotic Dada collages (figure 104); in other cases the city's dynamism is celebrated in hectic, comic terms (figure 102).

Often this vitality is given obtrusively elemental, erotic expression, as in *Apotheose* (*Apotheosis*), 1919 (figure 105). This maelstrom of lust, ecstasy and desire is Dix's instinctual celebration of woman, one of his favorite themes and one which won Dix his reputation for rebellious vulgarity and poor taste. Dix lived at the end of the *Ziegelgasse*, the bordello row in Dresden, and observed with interest the daily lives and encounters of the prostitutes. Sometimes his eroticism is given a humorously grotesque appeal in lustful fantasies such as the *Mann und Weib Nächtliche Szene* (*Man and Woman, Nocturnal Scene*), 1919 (catalogue number I-10).

Another print in the portfolio, *Die Prominenten, Konstellation* (*The Prominent Ones, Constellation*) (figure 103), reveals Dix's ironic view of contemporary events. In an amusing aside, the hydra scratches his professorial head, giving Dix's very serious subject, the consolidation of the old order under the new republic, comic relief. The stylistic influence of Dada is apparent in the collage-like scattering of elements and its irreverent, irrational approach to life epitomized by the proclamation held by the jaunty hydra: "Love, Order, Fatherland, DADA."

In 1920, Dix, like other German artists, began to turn toward more realistic representations. He stated, "The Expressionists made enough art. . . . We wanted things completely naked, clearly seen – almost without art."²⁴ Three prints from 1922, *Technisches Personal* (*Technical Personnel*) (figure 101) and his probing portraits of the art dealer and publisher, J. B. Neumann, in whose *Graphisches Kabinett* Felixmüller first exhibited and who held the *Neue Jugend* anti-war evenings (figure 106), and of the progressive editor of *Das Kunstblatt*, Paul Westheim (catalogue number I-12), evidence this movement towards a renewed realism. These



107. Otto Dix, *Greis (Old Man)*, 1923.
Lithograph.



Die Aktion

IX. JAHR. HERAUSGEGEBEN VON FRANZ PFEMFERT NR. 37

INHALT: Eugen Hoffmann: Die deutsche Bewegung (Hoffmann). Vier Kontinente des „Sozialismus“ anlässlich der Sozialdemokratie. (Lorenz). Hans. Köster: Rückblick. (Hoffmann). Adolf. Stedinger: Liebe Aktion. (Lorenz). Roseberg: Die Geschichte der Münchener Kommune von 1919. (Hoffmann). Eugen. Vogt: Ein in München. R.W. Witsch: Städtchen. Hans Hoffmann: Rinde. (Hoffmann). Albert. Ehrenstein: Kugel. (Hoffmann). Adolf. Stedinger: Ein. (Hoffmann). Johann. Lutz: Stern aus dem Boudoir der weißen Giraffe. R. de la Brosse: Im Jahre vierundzwanzig.



VERLAG, DIE AKTION, BERLIN-WILMERSDORF

HEFT EINE MARK

109. **Eugen Hoffmann**, Untitled, title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, September 20, 1919. Woodcut.



110. Eugen Hoffman, *Kopf (Head)*, 1919.
Woodcut.



111. Christoph Voll, *Selbstbildnis* (Self Portrait), undated. Drypoint.

prints, and the *Blinder* (Blind Person) and *Greis* (Old Man), both from 1923 (figures 36 and 107), demonstrate the facility which won for Dix the reputation of being one of Germany's strongest draftsmen.

Religious and mystical themes played a prominent role in the work of another *Sezession*, *Gruppe 1919* member, Otto Lange, as it did in the work of many of the postwar Expressionists. Lange's two, undated, hand-colored woodcuts *Verspottung Christi* (Mocking of Christ) (figure 108) and *Vision* (Vision) (catalogue number I-69) continue the *Brücke* woodcut tradition of heightening emotional impact through using primitive, mask-like faces gouged in quick, energetic gestures and brittle, angular, tension-ridden forms slashed with nervous strokes.

Lasar Segall's accessible, whimsical, Chagall-like reminiscences of his childhood in the Jewish ghetto of Wilna were well received (catalogue number I-92). In 1916 he had returned home only to find famine and suffering; his melancholy tone reflects this experience. In 1923 he settled in Brazil.

The last two artists to join the group were the sculptors Eugen Hoffmann and Christoph Voll. Hoffmann, a politically inclined artist, (figure 109), showed as a guest in their second 1919 exhibition, presenting four woodcut heads and a sculpture. He joined the group in 1920. Included in this exhibition are two woodcuts which indicate the monumental power of his postwar prints (figure 110 and catalogue number I-51). Voll was born in Munich and settled in Dresden after the war, where he worked with Oskar Kokoschka. Will Grohmann and Paul F. Schmidt wrote that his work compared in intensity to Dix's. In 1919 Voll's drypoints won critical attention. The two undated drypoints included in the present show exhibit the technical facility and intensity for which he was admired (figure 111 and catalogue number I-96).

Although the more political artists had left, the *Sezession*, *Gruppe 1919* continued to exhibit into 1925; its guests included Grosz, Schmidt-Rottluff, the Hannover Dadaist Kurt Schwitters, Feininger, Alexei Jawlensky, Heckel, Paul Klee, Campendonk and Max Beckmann.

Although many artists continued to decry the injustices perpetrated by the new regime which they believed had sold out socialism to the reaction, the concerted group effort, so intense after the revolution, soon dissipated as artists deserted politics and radical groups devolved into associations for organizing and promoting exhibitions. The Expressionists, as fierce individualists, could not long commit themselves to organized activity nor maintain sustained confrontation with the material world. In a letter written to his architect friend Hans Poelzig on June 4, 1921 assessing the illusions and failed aspirations of his associates in the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst*, Adolf Behne wrote the epitaph to the activist Expressionist era:

On May 30 the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* disbanded. . . . We erred in overestimating the general will to renewal, in believing that an artistic collaboration was already possible today. We realize that it could not be brought forth through will and desire, since human community is its prerequisite—and this prerequisite is missing. . . . We give up . . . our organized being . . . in order to work so much the more intensely on an inner, unorganized alliance which, in mutual communication, is directed towards the common cause. —We know that our many critics will remind us: "Didn't we predict this end two years ago?" . . . We will never convince our critics that, had we followed their skepticism, we would, today and forever, still be at the same point [as previously], where art is commodity and goods — and that through our error we were allowed to learn something more than taking their wise, although resigned, advice would have made possible. We are in no way resigned: brought closer together, invisible from outside, without illusion, no longer visionary, but cognizant, we stand hereafter as before behind the word of our book: Ja!²⁵

The Expressionists' affirmation continued to be a celebration of the human spirit, based on faith in mankind and the future, yes, but grounded in the conviction that only the individual, not an organized movement, could contribute to the elevation of humanity.

Notes

- 1 Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, *Wem gehört die Welt: Kunst und Gesellschaft in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1977) p. 307.
- 2 Helga Kliemann, *Die Novembergruppe* (Berlin: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst [Kunstverein Berlin], 1969), p. 84.
- 3 "Aufruf zum Sozialismus," in *An alle Künstler!* (Berlin: [Kunstanstalt Willi Simon], 1919), p. 4.
- 4 Max Pechstein, "Was wir Wollen," in *An alle Künstler!*, p. 19.
- 5 Ludwig Meidner, "An alle Künstler, Dichter und Musiker," in *An alle Künstler!*, p. 7.
- 6 [Otto Dix, Raoul Hausmann, George Grosz, et al.], "Offener Brief an die Novembergruppe," *Der Gegner* 2:8/9 (1920-1921), pp. 297-301.
- 7 Gerhard Wietek, *Georg Tappert, 1880-1957. Ein Wegbereiter der Deutschen Moderne* (Munich: Verlag Karl Thiemig, 1980), p. 56.
- 8 Ludwig Meidner, "An alle Künstler, Dichter, Musiker," *Der Anbruch* (Januar 1919): 1.
- 9 Ludwig Meidner, "Vom Zeichnen," *Das Kunstblatt* no. 4 (April 1917), p. 97.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Akademie der Künste, *Arbeitsrat für Kunst: 1918-1921* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1980), p. 87.
- 12 Ibid., p. 90.
- 13 Ibid., p. 112, for selections from press clippings.
- 14 Otto Freundlich, "Absage," *Die Erde* 1:24 (25 Dezember 1919), p. 686.
- 15 Neue Gesellschaft, p. 72.
- 16 Fritz Löffler, Emilio Bertonati, and Joachim Heusinger v. Waldegg, *Dresdner Sezession 1919-1925* (Munich and Milan: Galleria del Levante, [1977]), n.p.
- 17 *Sezession, Gruppe 1919* (Dresden: Verlag E. Richter, March 1919), p. 7.
- 18 Ibid., p. 24.
- 19 Rudolf Probst, "Ausstellung Gruppe 1919, Galerie Emil Richter, April 1919," in Löffler, Bertonati, n.p.
- 20 Fritz Löffler, "Die Dresdner Sezession, Gruppe 1919, 1919 bis 1925," in Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister, *Kunst im Aufruch, Dresden 1918-1933* (Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister, 1980), pp. 43, 45.
- 21 Ibid., p. 50.
- 22 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
- 23 Ibid., p. 49.
- 24 Lothar Fischer, *Otto Dix: Ein Malerleben in Deutschland* (Berlin: Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1981), p. 28.
- 25 Akademie der Künste, *Arbeitsrat für Kunst: 1918-1921* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1980), p. 114.



25. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Christus (Christ)*,
1918. Woodcut.

9 Conclusion

THE artists who responded to the postwar turmoil were of two generations. Some were triumphant veterans of the aesthetic battles of prewar Expressionism: the formation of the Dresden *Brücke*; the conflicts within the Berlin *Sezession*; the avant-garde exhibitions of the Munich *Blaue Reiter*; and the fervent discussions at Berlin's famed Café des Westens. Others were too young to have participated in the exhilarating discoveries of prewar modernism, but their sensibilities were formed by it. These new radicals were convinced that their powerful reactions to the compelling times and their radical political sentiments could only be conveyed in an intensely emotionalized, revolutionary idiom, and they readily marshalled the prewar generation's avant-garde, abstract style to serve a new, more political content. Theirs was often a less pure Expressionism than that of their mentors; instead they merged Dadaist, Futurist and Expressionist elements into an explosive unity.

The styles called upon to express this new, political stance among German artists, evolved before the war; likewise, the graphic arts, the most visible vehicle of its expression, had been given new life by the prewar generation which had led a renaissance in printmaking. During the immediate postwar years, prints became the common currency of the activist artists. As title page designs, illustrations and inserts in the radical Expressionist journals, prints gave visible form to the ecstatic sentiments contained in their pages. The woodcut, with its extraordinary potential for conveying powerful, intense emotions through stark light and dark contrasts and strident angularities, had held a favored position before the war and continued to do so. Quickly produced and widely and speedily disseminated, these prints revealed the frantic pulse of the time. Less political artists also directly recorded their intense, emotional responses to the war and its aftermath in prints and portfolios which found their way not onto the cafe tables and newsstands, but into collectors' print cabinets. These, like Karl Schmidt-Rottluff's *Christus* (figure 25, pages 20 and 92), remain memorials to those months of anguish and ecstasy. The most populist form of print, the poster, turned the streets into a grand celebration of the lifting of Wilhelmine censorship and a colorful political forum.

In celebration of their new-found freedom of expression, artists dedicated their efforts to those whom they hoped would institutionalize artistic freedom: the socialist politicians and their constituency, the workers. Artists signed manifestoes, formed artists' associations and declared their solidarity with the revolutionary proletariat. For them the new age was dawning in which the fully realized Expressionist "new man," heralded in prewar Expressionist art and literature, could be nurtured. The socialist revolution seemed to guarantee his advent. The radical artists

therefore rose to its defense and designed political posters and contributed prints to the radical journals which published paeans to socialism and the workers.

The radical artists assumed that the working class revolutionaries would be inspired by their energetic avant-garde styles, but the workers took the unfamiliar and uncongenial forms as an affront. The artist-revolutionaries were, as *Novembergruppe* activist Georg Tappert outlined in a letter to his friend Franz Pfemfert of *Die Aktion*, faced with two alternatives: either, as party hacks, to produce statues of Karl Marx, by the dozens, or, as artists, to devote themselves to the circumscribed, but international circle of socialist intellectuals who were dedicated to making a more human society. The choice was clear. If, in order to be politically effective, abstraction, which was their revolution, had to be sacrificed, they would forswear politics. Even for the more political second generation Expressionists, the cafe tables and exhibition spaces remained their barricades.

Walther Georg Hartmann's book, *Der begeisterte Weg* (*The Inspired Way*), illustrated by Constantin von Mitschke-Collande in his portfolio of woodcuts (figures 49–54), is a parable of the spiritual and political awakening of the Expressionists. The war definitively exposed for them the spiritual corruption of the old order, and the revolution inspired exaltation. The parable, however, also preached the lesson the Expressionists were incapable of applying: that revolution required concentrated commitment to political work with the masses. The radical artists' groups formed alliances among the "spiritual workers," the artists, poets, composers, writers, collectors and progressive museum directors, but did not reach down into the masses. These artists romanticized the workers, and when they were disenchanted by reality, they quickly retreated from politics to proceed with their individual aesthetic revolutions. The ecstatic, heady commitment and frenetic pace could not be sustained. Expressionism, its ascendancy brief, itself gave way to the new, more soberly realistic emphasis of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity). Postwar Expressionism quickly spent itself in mystical ecstasy and a euphoric politics of the spirit. Individual artists returned to their studios; radical groups either disbanded or lost their political veneer and became exhibition societies. After a brief flirtation with the external world, the inner world triumphed. The Expressionists' essentially metaphysical nature reasserted itself as their commitment to revealing and nurturing humanity's spiritual life was reaffirmed. Postwar Expressionism continued the prewar concerns, with, under the duress of compelling times, a temporary diversion into politics. The artists hoped to consolidate their gains under socialism, but soon felt betrayed by politics and rededicated themselves to their own spiritual revolution.

Catalogue of the Exhibition

by Andrew Lloyd

Catalogue of the Exhibition

The exhibition is a collection of works by the artist, including paintings, drawings, and prints. The works are arranged in a chronological order, showing the development of the artist's style and technique. The exhibition is a comprehensive survey of the artist's work, and it is a must-see for anyone interested in the artist's art.

PRINTS AND DRAWINGS

The exhibition includes a selection of the artist's prints and drawings, which are displayed in a separate section. These works are often smaller in scale than the paintings, but they are equally important in the artist's oeuvre.

Prints and drawings are displayed in a separate section of the exhibition, highlighting the artist's versatility and skill in different media.

The prints and drawings are arranged in a chronological order, showing the evolution of the artist's work in these media.

The exhibition also includes a selection of the artist's books and publications, which are displayed in a separate section. These works provide a deeper understanding of the artist's thought and creative process.

The books and publications are arranged in a chronological order, showing the artist's intellectual and creative growth over time.

The exhibition also includes a selection of the artist's photographs, which are displayed in a separate section. These works provide a visual record of the artist's life and work.

The photographs are arranged in a chronological order, showing the artist's visual and creative development.

The exhibition also includes a selection of the artist's letters and documents, which are displayed in a separate section. These works provide a personal insight into the artist's life and work.

The letters and documents are arranged in a chronological order, showing the artist's personal and professional growth.

The exhibition also includes a selection of the artist's sketches and studies, which are displayed in a separate section. These works provide a glimpse into the artist's creative process.

The sketches and studies are arranged in a chronological order, showing the artist's creative development.

The exhibition also includes a selection of the artist's models and props, which are displayed in a separate section. These works provide a visual record of the artist's creative process.

The models and props are arranged in a chronological order, showing the artist's creative development.

Catalogue of the Exhibition

Jean Henderson Glover

ALL dimensions are given in centimeters, height preceding width, and represent plate size for the etchings and drypoints, and composition size for the woodcuts and lithographs. Some publications are exceptions. Unless otherwise indicated, the prints are originals, not reproductions.

I. PRINTS AND DRAWINGS

Cat. 1-2, Max Burchartz, from the portfolio, *Die Dämonen (The Demons)*, undated:

Max Burchartz
1887, Elberfelde-1961, Essen

1. *Dämonen, II (Demons, II)*, undated
Lithograph, 36 x 25.5 cm., figure 86
2. *Dämon, VI (Demons, VI)*, undated
Lithograph, 36 x 25.5 cm.

Peter August Böckstiegel
1889, Arrode bei Werther-1951, Arrode

3. Peter August Böckstiegel, *Bildnis Felixmüller (Portrait of Felixmüller)*, 1914
Lithograph, 61.1 x 43 cm., figure 100

Heinrich Campendonk
1889, Krefeld-1957, Amsterdam

4. Heinrich Campendonk, *Die Bettler, Nach Brueghel (Beggars, After Brueghel)* from the *Ganymed-Mappe, II (Ganymed-Portfolio, II)*, 1922
Woodcut, 14.2 x 17.2 cm., figure 34
5. Heinrich Campendonk, *Deo (Deo)*, 1920-1921
Woodcut, 33 x 20 cm., figure 95

Cat. 6-10, Otto Dix, from the portfolio, *Neun Holzschnitte (Nine Woodcuts)*, 1922:

Otto Dix
1891, Untermhaus bei Gera-1969, Singen

6. *Elektrische (Electric Tram)*, 1920
Woodcut, 28 x 23.8 cm., figure 102
7. *Die Prominenten (Konstellation) (The Prominent Ones, Constellation)*, 1920
Woodcut, 25 x 19.9 cm., figure 103
8. *Lärm der Strasse (Noise of the Street)*, 1920
Woodcut, 23 x 23.8 cm., figure 104
9. *Apotheose (Apotheosis)*, 1919
Woodcut, 28.2 x 19.8 cm., figure 105
10. *Man und Weib (Nächtliche Szene) (Man and Woman, Nocturnal Scene)*, 1920
Woodcut, 24.9 x 15.9 cm.

11. Otto Dix, *J. B. Neumann*, 1922
Drypoint, 29.5 x 24 cm., figure 106
12. Otto Dix, *Paul Westheim*, 1922
Lithograph, 38.8 x 47.5 cm.
13. Otto Dix, *Technisches Personal (Technical Personnel)*, 1922
Drypoint, 30 x 19.8 cm., figure 101
14. Otto Dix, *Blinder (Blind Man)*, 1923
Lithograph, 48.7 x 37.8 cm., figure 36
15. Otto Dix, *Greis (Old Man)*, 1923
Lithograph, 55 x 39.5 cm., figure 107

Cat. 16-26, Otto Dix, from the portfolio, *Der Krieg (The War)*, 1924:

16. *Maschinengewehrzug geht vor (Somme, Nov. 1916) (A Machine Gun Squadron Advances, Somme, Nov. 1916)*, 1924
Etching and aquatint, 23.9 x 29.2 cm., figure 10
17. *Mahlzeit in der Sappe (Lorettohöhe) (Mealtime in the Trenches, Loretto Heights)*, 1924
Etching and aquatint, 19.3 x 28.5 cm., figure 11
18. *Besuch bei Madame Germaine in Mericourt (A Visit to Madame Germaine in Mericourt)*, 1924
Etching, drypoint and aquatint, 25.5 x 19.2 cm., figure 14
19. *Leiche in Drahtverhau (Corpse in Wire Entanglement)*, 1924
Etching and aquatint, 29 x 24.2 cm. figure 12, page 4
20. *Frontsoldat in Brüssel (Front Soldier in Brussels)*, 1924
Etching, aquatint and drypoint, 28.2 x 19.2 cm., figure 13
21. *Sturmtruppe geht unter Gas hervor (Storm Troops Advance under Gas)*, 1924
Etching, drypoint and aquatint, 19.2 x 28.5 cm., figure 15
22. *Die Sappenposten haben Nachts das Feuer zu unterhalten (The Trench Sentries Have to Keep Up the Firing at Night)*, 1924
Etching, aquatint and drypoint, 24 x 29.2 cm., figure 16
23. *Trichterfeld bei Dontrix, von Leuchtkugeln erhellt (Crater-Field at Dontrix Lit by Fire Bombs)*, 1924
Etching and aquatint, 19.3 x 25 cm.
24. *Fliehender Verwundeter (Wounded Man Fleeing)*, 1924
Etching and drypoint, 19 x 13.6 cm.
25. *Nächtliche Begegnung mit einem Irrsinnigen (Night Meeting with a Madman)*, 1924
Etching, aquatint and drypoint, 25.6 x 19.4 cm., figure 17
26. *Verwundeter, Herbst 1916, Bapaune (Wounded Man, Fall 1916, Bapaune)*, 1924
Etching and aquatint, 19.2 x 28.5 cm., figure 18

August Wilhelm Dressler
1886, Bergesgrun-1970, Berlin

27. August Wilhelm Dressler, *Der Intellektuelle (The Intellectual)*, 1920
Etching and aquatint, 29.8 x 22.7 cm., figure 88

Josef Eberz
1880, Limburg-1942, Munich

28. Josef Eberz, *Prophet (Prophet)*, 1918
Woodcut, 27.3 x 19.9 cm., figure 89

Conrad Felixmüller, 1897, Dresden-1977, Berlin

29. Conrad Felixmüller, *Soldat im Irrenhaus (Soldier in a Psychiatric Ward)*, 1918
Color lithograph, printed in red and blue-violet, 38 x 31 cm., figure 30

30. Conrad Felixmüller, *Soldat im Irrenhaus II* (*Soldier in a Psychiatric Ward II*), 1918
Lithograph, 33.5 x 26.5 cm.

31. Conrad Felixmüller, *Zwischen Mann und Frau* (*Between Man and Woman*), 1917
Lithograph, 28 x 22 cm., figure 99

32. Otto Gleichmann, *Der Erstochene* (*The Bayonnetted Man*), 1923
Watercolor, gouache and ink drawing, 47.8 x 64 cm., figure 19

33. George Grosz, *Menschen in der Strasse* (*People in the Street*), 1915-1916, plate 5 from the portfolio, *Erste George Grosz-Mappe* (*First George Grosz-Portfolio*), 1917
Lithograph, 27.6 x 21 cm.

Cat. 34-35, George Grosz, from the *Kleine Grosz-Mappe* (*Small Grosz-Portfolio*), 1917:

34. *Strassenbild* (*Street Picture*), plate 3, 1917
Lithograph, 23.4 x 14 cm. figure 20

35. *Strasse des Vernügens* (*Street of Pleasure*), plate 7, 1915-1916
Lithograph, 22.6 x 14.7 cm.

Cat. 36-43, George Grosz, from the portfolio, *Gott mit uns* (*God for Us*), 1919:

36. *Gott mit uns* (*God for Us*), plate 1, 1919
Photolithograph from an ink drawing, 29.5 x 43.5 cm.

37. *The Germans to the Front*, plate 2, 1919
Photolithograph after a pen drawing, 38.3 x 31.3 cm., figure 21

38. *Feierabend* (*Evening Leisure*), plate 3, 1919
Photolithograph from an ink drawing, 39.3 x 30 cm., figure 22

39. *The Workman's Holiday*, plate 4, 1919
Photolithograph from an ink drawing, 35.1 x 29.8 cm.

40. *Die Gesundbeter* (*The Faith Healers*), plate 5, 1918
Photolithograph from an ink drawing, 32.4 x 30 cm., figure 23

41. *The World Made Safe for Democracy*, plate 7, 1920
Photolithograph from an ink drawing, 45 x 30.3 cm.

42. *Blood Is the Best Sauce*, plate 8, 1919
Photolithograph from an ink drawing, 30.8 x 45.7 cm., figure 24

43. *Made in Germany*, plate 9, 1919
Photolithograph from an ink drawing, 23.4 x 24.7 cm.

44. George Grosz, *The World Made Safe for Democracy*, 1919
Ink drawing, 50 x 33.3 cm.

45. George Grosz, *The Boss*, plate 1 from the portfolio, *Die Räuber* (*The Robbers*), 1922
Photolithograph from an ink drawing, 57.6 x 42.5 cm., figure 77

46. Bernhard Hasler, untitled, undated
Lithograph, 12.4 x 18.2 cm.

47. Erich Heckel, *Der Narr* (*The Fool*), 1917
Woodcut, 35.6 x 27.1 cm., figure 92

Otto Gleichmann
1887, Mainz-1963

George Grosz
1893, Berlin-1959, Berlin

Bernhard Hasler
1884, Schenkindorf/Grafschaft Glatz-1945, Bad Oldesloe

Erich Heckel
1883, Döbeln/Sachsen-1970, Hemmenhofen/
Bodensee

Karl Jakob Hirsch
1892, Hannover-1952, Munich

Eugen Hoffmann
1892, Dresden-1955, Dresden

Richard Janthur
1883, Zerbst-1956, Berlin

Franz Maria Jansen
1885, Köln-1953

Kaethe Kollwitz
1867, Königsberg-1945, Moritzburg, near Dresden

48. Erich Heckel, *Der Spaziergang (The Stroll)*, 1919
Woodcut, 46 x 32.6 cm., figure 93

49. Karl Jakob Hirsch, *Wahnsinniger (Insane One)*, 1922
Drypoint, 20 x 16.5 cm., figure 82

50. Eugen Hoffmann, *Kopf (Head)*, sheet 3, 1919
Woodcut, 45.3 x 40 cm., figure 110

51. Eugen Hoffmann, *Kopf (Head)*, sheet 4, 1919
Woodcut, 44.5 x 39.9 cm.

52. Richard Janthur, *Gulliver and Two Houyhnhnms*, ca. 1919
Ink brush drawing, 23.7 x 18.8 cm.

Cat. 53-57. Franz Maria Jansen, from the portfolio, *Industrie 1920 (Industry 1920)*, 1921:

53. Frontispiece, 1921
Etching, 24.5 x 34.9 cm.

54. Untitled, 1921
Etching, 25 x 19.3 cm., figure 69

55. Untitled, 1921
Etching, 19.5 x 29.2 cm.

56. Untitled, 1921
Etching, 18 x 23.9 cm., figure 70

57. Untitled, 1921
Etching, 21.5 x 27.6 cm., figure 71

58. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Gedenkblatt für Karl Liebknecht (Commemorative Print for Karl Liebknecht)*, 1919
Lithograph, 40 x 65 cm., figure 60

59. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Gedenkblatt für Karl Liebknecht (Commemorative Print for Karl Liebknecht)*, 1919-1920
Woodcut, 35.7 x 50.2 cm., figure 59

Cat. 60-66, Kaethe Kollwitz, from the portfolio, *Sieben Holzschnitte zum Krieg (Seven Woodcuts about War)*, 1924:

60. *Das Opfer (The Sacrifice)*, plate 1, 1922/23
Woodcut, 37 x 40 cm., figure 5

61. *Die Freiwilligen (The Volunteers)*, plate 2, 1922/23
Woodcut, 35 x 49.5 cm., figure 6

62. *Die Eltern (The Parents)*, plate 3, 1923
Woodcut, 35 x 42.6 cm., figure 7

63. *Die Witwe I (The Widow I)*, plate 4, 1922/23
Woodcut, 37 x 21.5 cm.

64. *Die Witwe II (The Widow II)*, plate 5, 1922/23
Woodcut, 30 x 53 cm.

65. *Die Mütter (The Mothers)*, plate 6, 1922/23
Woodcut, 34 x 40 cm., figure 8

66. *Das Volk (The People)*, plate 7, 1922/23
Woodcut, 36 x 30 cm., figure 9

Otto Lange
1889, Dresden-1944, Dresden

Ludwig Meidner
1884, Bernstadt, Silesia-1966, Darmstadt

Constantin von Mitschke-Collande
1884, Collande-Schlesien-1956, Nürnberg

Otto Möller
1883, Schmiedefeld/Thuringia-1964, Berlin

Otto Mueller
1874, Liebau, Silesia-1930, Breslau

Emil Nolde
1867, Nolde-1956, Seebüll

Max Pechstein
1881, Zwickau-1955, Berlin

67. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Hunger*, (*Hunger*) plate 2 from the portfolio, *Das Proletariat*, (*The Proletariat*), 1925
Woodcut, 58.2 x 42.9 cm., figure 75, page 58

68. Otto Lange, *Verspottung Christi* (*The Mocking of Christ*), ca. 1919
Woodcut in two colors, black and red, 52.3 x 46.4 cm., figure 108

69. Otto Lange, *Vision* (*Vision*), ca. 1919
Woodcut, with hand-printed color elements, 52.7 x 46.7 cm.

70. Ludwig Meidner, *Selbstbildnis* (*Self Portrait*), 1921
Black crayon drawing, 43 x 35 cm., figure 84

71. Ludwig Meidner, *Bildnis Raoul Hausmann* (*Portrait of Raoul Hausmann*), 1914
Lithograph, 41.7 x 27.3 cm., figure 85

Cat. 72-77, Constantin von Mitschke-Collande, from the portfolio, *Der begeisterte Weg* (*The Inspired Way*), 1919:

72. *Der begeisterte Weg* (*The Inspired Way*), plate 1, 1919
Woodcut, 34.3 x 29.8 cm., figure 49

73. *Da Habt ihr mich* (*Here You Have Me*), plate 2, 1919
Woodcut, 34.4 x 29.7 cm., figure 50

74. *Freiheit* (*Freedom*), plate 3, 1919
Woodcut, 35 x 29.8 cm., figure 51

75. *Du hast deinen Bruder getötet* (*You Have Killed Your Brother*), plate 4, 1919
Woodcut, 34.5 x 29.7 cm., figure 52

76. *Steh auf und verkünde die Liebe Erweckter* (*Stand Up and Proclaim Love, Awakened One*), plate 5, 1919
Woodcut, 34.5 x 29.6 cm., figure 53

77. *Die Zeit ist reif* (*The Time Is Ripe*), plate 6, 1919
Woodcut, 35.2 x 30 cm., figure 54

78. Otto Möller, *Berliner Expression* (*Berlin Expression*), undated
Lithograph, 25 x 20.5 cm.

79. Otto Mueller, *Polnische Familie* (*Judenfamilie, Polen*) (*Polish Family, Jewish Family, Poland*), 1920-1921
Lithograph, hand colored in crayon by the artist, 25.7 x 19 cm., figure 94

80. Otto Mueller, *Adam and Eva* (*Adam and Eve*), 1920-1923
Lithograph, 43.7 x 33.8 cm.

81. Emil Nolde, *Der Tod als Tänzerin* (*Death as a Female Dancer*), 1918
Etching and aquatint, 60 x 46 cm., figure 1

Cat. 82-83, Max Pechstein, from the portfolio, *Das Vaterunser* (*Our Father*), 1921:

82. *Führe uns nicht in Versuchung* (*Lead Us Not into Temptation*), 1921
Woodcut, hand colored in watercolor, 41.8 x 31.8 cm., figure 80

83. *Geheiligt werde Dein Name* (*Hallowed Be Thy Name*), 1921
Woodcut, hand colored in watercolor by the artist, 39.9 x 29.7 cm., figure 81

Christian Rohlfs
1849, Niendorf b. Leezen/Hst.-1938, Hagen

84. Christian Rohlfs, *Tod mit Sarg (Death with a Coffin)*, ca. 1917
Woodcut 21.5 x 15.1 cm., figure 28

85. Christian Rohlfs, *Der Gefangene (The Prisoner)*, 1918
Woodcut (second state), 61.2 x 46.6 cm., figure 29

Cat. 86-87, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, from the portfolio, *Neun Holzschnitte (Nine Woodcuts)*, published by Kurt Wolff, 1919:

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff
1884 as Karl Schmidt in Rottluff, near Chemnitz-
1976, Berlin

86. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Christus (Christ)*, 1918
Woodcut, 50 x 38.9 cm., figure 25, page 92

87. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Christus und Judas (Christ and Judas)*, 1918
Woodcut, 39.7 x 49.9 cm., figure 26

88. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Reichswappen (German Coat of Arms)*, 1919
Woodcut, 49.8 x 39.6 cm., figure 48

Otto Schubert
1892, Dresden-1970, Dresden

89-91. Otto Schubert, from the portfolio, *Das Leiden der Pferde im Krieg (The Suffering of Horses in the War)*, 1919:

89. *Hitze (Heat)*, 1919
Lithograph, 27 x 42 cm., figure 3

90. *Tod (Death)*, 1919
Lithograph, 38 x 44 cm.

91. *Angst (Fear)*, 1919
Lithograph, 26 x 44 cm., figure 4

Lasar Segall
1891, Wilna-1957, São Paulo

92. Lasar Segall, *Religiöser Feiertag (Religious Holiday)*, 1920
Woodcut, 35.1 x 30 cm.

Georg Tappert
1880, Berlin-1957, Berlin

93-94. Georg Tappert, from the portfolio, *Der Nachtwandler (The Sleepwalker)*, 1918:

93. *Die Reiterin (Female Rider)*, 1918
Woodcut, 20.4 x 20.4 cm.

94. *Betende vor der Stadt (Beggars before the City)*, 1918
Woodcut, 30.2 x 20.5 cm., figure 83

Christoph Voll
1897, Munich-1939, Karlsruhe

95. Christoph Voll, *Selbstbildnis (Self Portrait)*, undated
Drypoint, 27 x 20 cm., figure 111

96. Christoph Voll, *Kopf (Head)*, undated
Drypoint 19.7 x 13.5 cm.

II. POSTERS

1. Anonymous, *Konsumenten! Vereinigt euch (Consumers! Unite)*, ca. 1919
Color lithograph poster, 79.7 x 57.8 cm., figure 47

2. Anonymous, *So führt euch Spartakus! (So Spartacus Leads You!)*, undated
Color lithograph poster, 91.4 x 67.4 cm.

3. Rudi Feld, *Die Gefahr des Bolschewismus (The Danger of Bolshevism)*, ca. 1919
Color lithograph poster, 94 x 69 cm., figure 45

4. Heinz Fuchs (1886, Berlin-1961, Berlin), *Wollt Ihr satt werden? Ohne Kohl keine Lebensmitteln (Do You Want Enough to Eat? Without Coal, No Foodstuffs)*, ca. 1918-1919
Color lithograph poster, 63.5 x 85.5 cm., figure 43
5. Cesar Klein (1876, Hamburg-1954, Pansdorf near Lübeck), *Arbeiter Bürger Bauern Soldaten (Workers Citizens Farmers Soldiers)*, ca. 1919
Color lithograph poster, 65 x 94 cm., figure 42
6. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Wien stirbt! Rettet seine Kinder! (Vienna Is Dying! Rescue Her Children!)*, 1920
Lithograph poster, 91 x 53.5 cm., figure 74
7. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Alkoholgegnerwoche (Alcohol Opponents' Week)*, 1923
Lithograph, 33.6 x 40 cm., figure 76
8. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Deutsche Heimarbeit Ausstellung (German Cottage Industry Exhibition)*, 1925
Lithograph poster, 68.5 x 46.5 cm.
9. Max Pechstein, *An die Laterne (To Die Laterne)*, ca. 1919
Color lithograph poster, 69 x 91 cm., figure 44
10. Max Pechstein, *Erwürgt nicht die junge Freiheit (Don't Strangle the Newborn Freedom)*, ca. 1919
Color lithograph poster, 99.1 x 65 cm., figure 41
11. Max Pechstein, *Die Nationalversammlung (The National Assembly)*, ca. 1919
Color lithograph poster, 65 x 43.5 cm., figure 40, page 32

III. ILLUSTRATED BOOKS, PERIODICALS AND DOCUMENTS

1. Anonymous, *The Carnival Master*, from *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, 1919
Silverprint, 25.2 x 33 cm., figure 31
2. Anonymous, *Cesare the Somnambulist*, from *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, 1919
Silverprint, 25.5 x 33 cm.
3. Ernst Barlach (1870, Wedell-1938, Rostock), *Der heilige Krieg (The Holy War)*, in *Kriegszeit*, December 16, 1914
Lithograph, 41.3 x 25.4 cm., figure 2
4. Max Beckmann (1884, Leipzig-1950, New York), *Der Nachhauseweg (The Way Home)*, plate 1 from *Die Hölle (The Hell)*, 1919, portfolio published by Verlag Graphisches Kabinett, J. B. Neumann, Berlin, 1919
Reduced reproduction from the original lithograph, 27 x 18 cm., figure 33
5. Josef Eberz, title page illustration for *Das Tribunal* 1:5 (May 1919)
Woodcut, 30 x 22.5 cm., figure 66
6. Conrad Felixmüller, *Porträt Karl Liebknecht (Portrait of Karl Liebknecht)*, and logo for *Menschen*, in *Menschen*, January 15, 1919
Reproductions of woodcuts, 48 x 32 cm., figure 57
7. Conrad Felixmüller, *Menschen über der Welt (People over the World)*, title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, July 5, 1919
Reproduction after a lithograph, 29.5 x 22 cm. figure 58
8. Conrad Felixmüller, *Volksversammlung in Leipzig (People's Assembly in Leipzig)*, title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, September 4, 1920
Reduced reproduction of a lithograph, *Pfemfert Spricht (Pfemfert Speaks)*, 29.5 x 22 cm., figure 72

9. Conrad Felixmüller, cover for *Sezession Gruppe 1919 (Secession Group 1919)*, Dresden, 1919
Woodcut, 28.5 x 22 cm., figure 96, page 68
10. Otto Freundlich, *Selbstporträt (Self Portrait)*, title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, Sonderheft Otto Freundlich, September 21, 1918
Reproduction of a woodcut, 30.5 x 23.2 cm.
11. George Grosz, cover illustration for *Schutzhaft*, special issue of *Die Pleite*. Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1919
Reproduction of a drawing, 21 x 14.2 cm., figure 61
12. Karl Jakob Hirsch, *Die Freiheit fliegt über die Menschen (Freedom Flies over the People)*, title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, August 10, 1918
Reproduction after a design by Hirsch, 29.5 x 22 cm., figure 62
13. Karl Jakob Hirsch, Untitled, title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, May 24, 1919
Reproduction of a woodcut, 29.5 x 22 cm., figure 63, page 50
14. Karl Jakob Hirsch, Untitled, in *Der Schwarze Turm*, 4, plate 4, 1919
Woodcut, 23 x 18.5 cm., figure 39
15. Eugen Hoffmann, Untitled, title page illustration for *Die Aktion*, September 20, 1919
Woodcut, 29.8 x 22 cm., figure 109
16. Franz Maria Jansen, Untitled, in *Der Anbruch (IV:9)* 1922
Reproduction of a woodcut, 29.5 x 22 cm., figure 67
17. Franz Maria Jansen, *Zeitgenossen (Contemporaries)*, in *Jahrbuch der jungen Kunst*, G. Biermann, ed. Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1922
Woodcut, 19.8 x 15.8 cm., figure 35
18. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Verbrüderung der Nationen (Fraternization of the Nations)*, frontispiece for Henri Barbusse, *Der Singende Soldat*. Leipzig: Friedrich Dehne, 1924
Lithograph, 24 x 17.5 cm., figure 38, page 26
19. Bernhard Klein, *Der Reiter auf der Brücke (The Rider on the Bridge)*, in *Der Schwarze Turm*, 2, plate 6, 1919
Woodcut, 23 x 18.5 cm.
20. Max Pechstein, *Ein Verwundeter (Wounded Man)*, in *Die Rote Erde*, 8-10, January 4–March 1920, p. 253
Woodcut, 25 x 16 cm., figure 32
21. Max Pechstein, cover illustration for the *Novembergruppe's* book, *An alle Künstler!* Berlin: [Kunstanstalt Willi Simon] 1919
Reproduction of a drawing, 20 x 14 cm., figure 78, page x
22. Max Pechstein, cover illustration for the pamphlet, *Rührt Euch! Zum 19 Januar 1919 (Bestir Yourselves! For the 19 January 1919)*, 1919
Lithograph, 37.5 x 28 cm., figure 46
23. Fritz Schaepler (1888, Eschau-1954, Cologne), *Porträt Kurt Eisner (Portrait of Kurt Eisner)*, in *Der Weg*, p. 3, March 1919
Woodcut, 32.2 x 24 cm., figure 55
24. Fritz Schaepler, Untitled, title page illustration for *Der Weg*, January 1919
Woodcut, 32.2 x 24 cm., figure 64
25. Bruno Taut (1880, Königsberg-1967, Berlin), cover illustration for the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst's* book, *Ja! Stimmen des Arbeitsrates für Kunst in Berlin*. Berlin: Photographische Gesellschaft, 1919
Reproduction of a drawing, 24.5 x 19 cm., figure 90
26. Alois Wach (Wachelmaier) (1892, Lambach, Austria-1940, Braunau a/ Inn), *Erlösung (Redemption)*, title page illustration for *Der Weg*, February 1919
Woodcut, 32.2 x 24 cm., figure 65

IV. WORKS OF ART FROM THE ROBERT GORE RIFKIND FOUNDATION ILLUSTRATED BUT NOT INCLUDED IN THE EXHIBITION

1. Peter Böckstiegel, *Leben (Life)*, in *Menschen*, No. 8, October 15, 1918
Woodcut, 48 x 32 cm., figure 98
2. Lyonel Feininger, *Kathedrale (Cathedral)*, title page woodcut for the *Bauhaus Manifesto: Programm des staatlichen Bauhauses in Weimar*, April 1919
Woodcut, 30.5 x 18.7 cm., figure 91
3. Conrad Felixmüller, *Liebespaar (Vor Industrielandschaft) (Lovers, In Front of an Industrial Landscape)*, 1923, in Georg Biermann, editor, *Jahrbuch der jungen Kunst*, 1923, III. Leipzig: Verlag Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1923
Woodcut, 22.5 x 15.7 cm., figure 73
4. Conrad Felixmüller, *Toter Genosse (Dead Comrade)*, plate 6 in *Das Kestnerbuch*, edited by Paul Reich Küppers. Hannover: Heinrich Böhme Verlag, 1919
Lithograph, 15.2 x 12.3 cm., figure 56
5. Conrad Felixmüller, *Walter Rheiner (Walter Rheiner)*, in *Menschen*, No. 3, May 15, 1918
Woodcut, 48 x 32 cm., figure 97
6. Franz Maria Jansen, *Immer dasselbe, Immer dasselbe (Always the Same, Always the Same)*, in *Der Anbruch*, 1922 (IV:9)
Reproduction of a woodcut, 29.5 x 22 cm., figure 68
7. Cesar Klein, *Der neue Vogel Phönix (The New Bird Phoenix)*, 1919, in *An alle Künstler!* Berlin: [Kunstanstalt Willi Simon], 1919
Reproduction of a drawing, 13.8 x 8.8 cm., figure 79
8. Kaethe Kollwitz, *Heraus mit unsern Gefangenen (Turn Free Our Prisoners)*, 1920
Lithograph poster, 67.8 x 91.2 cm., figure 37
9. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Der Heilige (The Saint)*, in *Die Rote Erde*, 6, November 1919, p. 154
Woodcut, 26 x 20 cm., figure 27

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THE most important sources for information on the Expressionist movement are the periodicals listed and annotated in Paul Raabe, *Die Zeitschriften und Sammlungen des literarischen Expressionismus. 1910-1921* and Geoffrey C. Perkins, *Expressionismus: Eine Bibliographie zeitgenössischer Dokumente. 1910-1925*. The publishers' yearbooks and almanacs and series such as Kasimir Edschmid's *Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit* and Georg Biermann's *Junge Kunst* are also essential resources, as is Paul Raabe's *The Era of German Expressionism*, an anthology of the Expressionists' memoirs. Orrel P. Reed's *German Expressionist Art. The Robert Gore Rifkind Collection: Prints; Drawings; Illustrated Books; Periodicals; Posters*, is not only a thorough, annotated documentation and catalogue of the Rifkind Collection holdings in 1977, but also an indispensable resource for researching the prints and publications of German Expressionism.

All of the sources listed in the bibliography can be found in the library of the Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation.

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Der Cicerone (Leipzig: 1909-1930, Georg Biermann)

Die Erde (Breslau, then Berlin: 1919-1920, Walther Rilla)

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Die Schöne Rarität (Kiel: 1917-1919, Adolf Harms, Georg Tappert, Gerhard Ausleger)

Die Sichel (Regensburg, then Munich: 1919-1921, Georg Britting and Josef Achmann)

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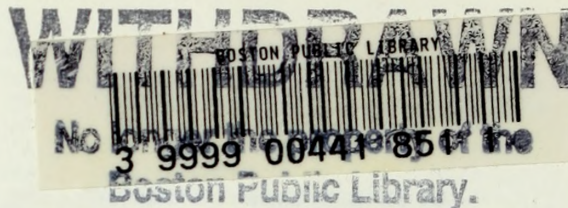
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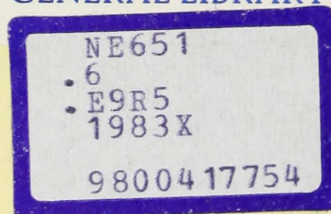


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