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THE POLITICS OF COLLABORATION: BROTHERS, FRIENDS, THE PARTY AND THE PERFORMANCE OF JOHN HEARTFIELD, 1915-1938

by

Nancy Ann Roth

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1996

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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Abstract

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THE POLITICS OF COLLABORATION:
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JOHN HEARTFIELD, 1915-1938

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Nancy Ann Roth

Adviser: Professor Rose-Carol Washton Long

When the German painter Helmut Herzfeld began using the new name John Heartfield in 1916, he signalled not only a protest against the nationalist sentiment of wartime Germany, but also the intention to develop a new identity. "Heartfield," this study proposes, began as a collaborative performance involving Helmut, his brother Wieland Herzfelde, and the painter and caricaturist George Grosz. Initially the project helped to resolve a series of social and psychological conflicts centered on the relationships among the three men. Once established, however, it functioned to specify a range of media (photographs, type), a division of labor among collaborators, and a sense of dramatic conflict between the collaborating group and a shared external enemy. These proved stable enough to define an artistic identity for over two decades.

Heartfield's identity is most clearly legible in the series of 237 photomontages made for the Communist weekly newspaper Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung (A.-I.-Z.). In this body of work, the artist appears to share with his audience a perception of

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current events distinguished by its difference from the kind of perception ordinarily demanded by print media. Heartfield finally emerges as a figure whose engagement in mechanized and collaborative production carried with it a new relationship to his audience, and a radical challenge to the underpinnings of a "personal" artistic identity.

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Acknowledgements

This study began, in 1988, as a paper for Professor Rose-Carol Washton Long's course in German modernism at the the City University of New York. It subsequently grew, under Professor Long's strong encouragement, into a dissertation topic. I continue to be most grateful for her advice and assistance in every aspect of the project.

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I have been most fortunate in finding wise and generous colleagues at every stage of my work. Christopher Phillips, among the very first to warm to the idea of a new study of Heartfield, was generous with both his knowledge and his enthusiasm for photography of the interwar period. Professor Mark Haxthausen, on the faculty of the University of Minnesota as the work began, provided encouragement and sound advice at key junctures. Michael Krejsa, archivist of the John-Heartfield-Archiv in Berlin was charming, prompt and energetic in locating materials and answering question, as was his American colleague Brent Sverdlof of the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica.

It has been a special privilege to have the support of the American branch of my subject's own family. John Heartfield's son and daughter-in-law, Tom and Lina Heartfield, and their son, John, all of Elmhurst, New York, were always generous with their hospitality and their insights into my subject. Sadly, Tom died in 1990. John Heartfield grandfils remains keenly engaged and supportive of the project, and I have always both enjoyed and profited from our conversations.

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[Unless otherwise noted, all works are by John Heartfield]

[The designations "0/00" for the A.-I.-Z. photomontages, figures 27 - 75, refer to the catalogue raisonne by David Evans, John Heartfield: AIZ/VI 1930-1938, New York: Kent Fine Arts, 1992. Evans gives the number of the photomontage within each year is given first, followed by the last two digits of the year after the diagonal. The second photomontage of 1930, then, would be designated 2/30.]

1. Neue Jugend (Wochenschrift) Berlin: Malik Verlag, May-June, 1917.

2. Neue Jugend (Monatsschrift) Berlin: Malik Verlag, June, 1916.

3. Die Hütte im Walde, oil, c. 1907.

4. Kleine Grosz-Mappe, Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1917, 2.

5. Hannah Höch, Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands, photomontage, 1920. Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Nationalgalerie.

6. Detail of 5.) showing John Heartfield in bathtub.

7. Dada 3, 1919, Berlin: Malik-Verlag, Abteilung Dada.

8. Leben und Treiben in Universal-City, 1920 [reproduction, original no longer extant].

9. Grosz-Heartfield mont., Dada-merika, 1919 [reproduction, original no longer extant].

10. George Grosz, John der Frauenmörder, oil on canvas, 1918, Hamburger Kunsthalle.

11. _____, Der kleine Frauenmörder, oil on canvas, 1918, Private Collection, Mailand.

12. _____, "Der Sträfling". Monteur John Heartfield nach Franz Jungs Versuch ihn auf die Beine zu stellen, 1920. Watercolor, ink, montage, 1920. New York, Collection The Museum of Modern Art, gift of A. Conger Goodyear.

13. _____, "Daum" marries her pedantic automaton "George" in May, 1920. John Heartfield is very glad of it. (Meta.-Mech. constr. nach Prof. R. Hausmann), 1920.

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watercolor, pencil ink, photography and typography on board, Berlin, Galerie Nierendorf.

14. Book cover for Franz Jung, Die Eroberung der Maschinen, Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1924.

15. Dust cover for Alfred Polgar, Gestern und Heute, Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1922.

16. Covers for Platz dem Arbeiter! [press yearbook], Berlin:Malik-Verlag, 1925.

17. Dust cover for Upton Sinclair, Boston, Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1929.

18. Dust cover for John Dos Passos, Drei Soldaten (second version), Berlin:Malik-Verlag, 1928.

19. Staged photographs, 1931.

20. Dust dover (using staged photograph, above) for Upton Sinclair, So Macht man Dollars, Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1931.

21. Dust cover for Ilya Ehrenburg, Die heiligsten Güter, Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1931.

22. Fünf Finger hat die Hand, campaign poster, 1928.

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24. "Statistik", Deutschland, Deutschland, 46-51.

25. "Deutscher Sport," photomontage, Deutschland, Deutschland, 109.

26. "The Sleeping Reichstag," negative collage, Deutschland, Deutschland, 138.

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28. "Ein neues Jahr!" A.-I.-Z. 9 (1930) number 52, 1023 [Evans 11/30].

29. "Vereint kämpfen," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 8, 19 February 1933, 169 [Evans 4/33].

30. "Seht nach Spanien und Frankreich!" A.-I.-Z. 15 number 20, 13 May 1936, 320 [Evans 18/36].

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31. "Zum Krisen-Parteitag der SPD," A.-I.-Z. 10 (1931) number 24, 477 [Evans 2/31].

32. "Dr. Goebbels, der Gesundbeter," A.-I.-Z. 13 number 20, 17 May 1934, 320 [Evans 20/34].

33. "Ist es auch Wahnsinn, hat es doch Methode," VI 1937, number 5, 3 February, 77 [Evans 4/37]."

34. "Hurrah, die Butter is alle!" A.-I.-Z. 14 number 51, 19 December 1935, 816 [Evans 26/35].

35. "Adolf, der Übermensch: Schluckt Gold und redet Blech," A.-I.-Z. 11 number 29, 17 July 1932, 675 [Evans 4/32].

36. "S. M. Adolf,," A.-I.-Z. 11 number 34, 21 August 1932, 795 [Evans 6/32].

37. "Der Sinn des Hitlergrusses: kleiner Mann bittet um große Gaben," A.-I.-Z. 11 number 42, 16 October 1932, 985 [Evans 11/32].

38. "Werkzeug in Gottes Hand? Spielzeug in Thyssens Hand! A.-I.-Z. 12 number 31, 10 August 1933, 529 [Evans 18/33].

39. "Der Galgengruß," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 38, 28 September 1933, 643 [Evans 25/33].

40. "30 Juni 1934 Heil Hitler," A.-I.-Z. 13 number 29, 19 July 1934, 464 [Evans 29/34].

41. "Diagnose," A.-I.-Z. 14 number 12, 21 March 1935, 192 [Evans 10/35].

42."MacDonald-Sozialismus," A.-I.-Z. 9 (1930) number 28, 543 [Evans 5/30].

43. "Die Nation steht geschlossen hinter mir," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 27, 13 July 1933, 467 [Evans 14/33].

44. "Deutsche Naturgeschichte," A.-I.-Z. 13 number 33, 16 August 1934, 536 [Evans 34/34].

45. "'Völkische' ohne Volk," VI 1 number 2, August 1936, 32 [Evans 30/36].

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48. "Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand..." A.-I.-Z. 12 number 33, 24 August 1933, 561 [Evans 20/33].

49. "Das Kreuz war noch nicht schwer genug," A-I.-Z. 12 number 23, 15 June 1933, 403 [Evans 10/33].

50. "Durch Licht zur Nacht," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 18, 10 May 1933, 321 [Evans 5/33].

51. "Goering der Henker des dritten Reichs," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 36, 14 September 1933 [Evans 23/33].

52. "Der Richter Der Gerichtete," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 45, 16 November 1933, 755 [Evans 30/33].

53. "Das Urteil der Welt!" A.-I.-Z. 12 number 51, 28 December 1933, 851 [Evans 33/33].

54. "Das Neuste: der Reichstag brannte in Moskau!" A.-I.-Z. 14 number 37, 12 September 1935, 592 [Evans 14/35].

55. "Sorgen Brauner Generale," A.-I.-Z. 15 number 33, 12 August 1936, 528 [Evans 28/36].

56. "Hurra, Hurra! Der Brüning-Weihnachtsmann ist da!" A.-I.-Z. 9 (1930) number 51, 1003 [Evans 10/30].

57. "Grosses Monstre-Lügenkabinett," VI 1 number 5, 16 September 1936, 80 [Evans 33/36].

58. "Das gigantischeste Lügenmaul aller Zeiten," VI 1938 number 40, 5 October [Evans 15/38].

59. "Die Mütter an ihre Söhne in Francos Diensten," VI 1 number 19, 23 December 1936, 301 [Evans 43/36].

60. "Zwangslieferantin von Menschenmaterial," A.-I.-Z. (1930) number 10, 183 [Evans 2/30].

61. "Ruhe herrscht wieder in Barcelona," A.-I.-Z. 13 number 42, 18 October 1934, 680 [Evans 43/34].

62. "Deutscher Mütter Los," VI 1937, number 10, 10 March, 157 [Evans 8/37].

63. "Baskenland," VI 1937 number 22, 2 June, 345 [Evans 17/37].

64. "Zum Mord der Hohn!" A.-I.-Z. 13 number 48, 29 November 1934, 784 [Evans 49/34].

65. "Der Sekt ist Steuerfrei! Und das ist: Deutscher Sozialismus," A.-I.-Z. 15 number 8, 20 February 1936, 128 [Evans 7/36].

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66. "So ward aus Hugenberg der Hugenzwerg," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 26, 6 July 1933, 451 [Evans 13/33].

67. "Auch ein Propagandaminister," A.-I.-Z. 14 number 34, 22 August 1935, 544 [Evans 12/35].

68. "Brauner Künstlertraum," VI 1938 number 29, 20 July [Evans 9/38].

69. "Der Krieg," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 29, 27 July 1933, 499 [Evans 16/33].

70. "Die Freiheit selbst kämpft in ihren Reihen," VI 1, 19 August 1936, 16 [Evans 29/36].

71. "Lied der Heil-Armee," A.-I.-Z. 14 number 46, 14 November 1935, 736 [Evans 21/35].

72. "Meck und Mies im dritten Reich," A-I.-Z. 13 number 27, 5 July 1934, 432 [Evans 27/34].

73. "Mit seinen Phrasen will er die Welt vergasen," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 21, 1 June 1933, 371 [Evans 8/33].

74. "Zum Fall Hamsun-Ossietzky," A.-I.-Z. 15 number 6, 6 February 1936, 96 [Evans 5/36].

75. "Herr von Papen auf dem Jagdpfad," A.-I.-Z. 13 number 41, 11 October 1934, 664 [Evans 42/34].

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I. Introduction

John Heartfield's career began, according to later accounts, at that moment in the summer of 1915 when the Herzfeld brothers--Helmut and Wieland--first saw the drawings of George Grosz. Suddenly, the world seemed different: over the next few months the former Helmut Herzfeld began using a new name, John Heartfield. He burned his own earlier drawing and painting, and devoted his energies to helping Grosz, mainly by attending to details of publishing his new friend's drawings. From that moment on Heartfield would work primarily with type, photographs, the tools and spaces of print media, and in collaboration with other artists, writers, performers. etc.

Berlin Dada (1918-1920) was the only recognized art movement in which Heartfield participated. As it ended, he was gainfully employed both as a film producer and as a set designer. The film work was to be short-lived; but Heartfield would continue to design stage sets through the 1920s, and at intervals for the rest of his life. By the time Dada ended Heartfield was also a member of the German Communist Party (KPD[1]) having joined on its founding day in 1919. His maintained strong, though not untroubled ties to the Party during the years of the Weimar Republic, his main employers being presses and magazines Communist in political

[1] Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands

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orientation. Most prominent among them was the Malik Verlag, owned and operated by his brother, Wieland Herzfelde. Heartfield's reputation initially rested on his unprecedented use of type, a mixing of fonts, sizes, colors. Other innovations attributed to him in the 1920s included the use of photographs on book jackets, the treatment of book jacket design as a three-dimensional problem, using the surfaces for contrasting images that would lead the viewer to a third, unstated meaning, and the combining or montaging of photographs and type to similarly produce new meanings. Toward the end of the decade, several very widely-admired posters, produced for the KPD, substantially enhanced his reputation as a producer of effective--attention-getting--graphics. In 1929, he collaborated with the celebrated humorist Kurt Tucholsky on one of the best-selling satirical works of the decade, Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles.[2] By the end of the 1920s, he was among the best-known graphic designers in Europe.

Following a spectacular showing at the German Werkbund's prestigious international Film und Foto exhibition in 1929 (one room almost entirely devoted to his work), Heartfield began a steady collaboration with the New German Press (NDV[3]),

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[2] Kurt Tucholsky, Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles. Ein Bilderbuch von Kurt Tucholsky und vielen Fotografen. Montiert von John Heartfield, Berlin: NDV, 1929.

[3] Neuer Deutscher Verlag

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the same press that had published his satirical collaboration with Tucholsky. Diverse in its interests and known for its inventive projects, the NDV was Communist, but linked to the Party's central administrative body--the Third Communist International in Moscow, commonly shortened to "Comintern"--directly through its director, Willi Münzenberg. As a trusted representative of the Comintern through the 1920s and early 1930s, that is, Münzenberg could initiate projects quite independently of the organization's German branch--the KPD--as long as these projects conformed more broadly to policy as it developed in Moscow. The centerpiece of the NDV's operations was the weekly Worker's Illustrated Newspaper (A.-I.-Z.)[4], Germany's third largest newspaper at the time Heartfield joined the staff in 1930. Over the following eight years, Heartfield designed 237[5] photomontages for the A.-I.-Z. in a format of his own invention ressembling full-page advertisement. In most of them he was able to make specific elements of current news reports, including selected kernels of Nazi propaganda, appear absurd, banal or vicious. These photomontages are the main basis for his very widespread reputation as a "revolutionary" artist, with all the diverse and potentially conflicting understandings the term can carry.

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[4] Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung.

[5] The figure is from David Evans's catalogue raisonné of the photomontages, John Heartfield: AIZ/VI 1930-38, New York: Kent Fine Arts, 1992.

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When the National Socialists came to power in Germany in 1933, the A.-I.-Z. was able to move its operation to Prague and continue publishing with only a very short interruption. Heartfield, too, escaped, literally steps ahead of Gestapo agents who were waiting in his apartment to arrest him. He arrived in Prague on foot after a harrowing walk from the Czech border, and resumed his work on the newspaper. Although fully aware of the growing threat to his physical safety, Heartfield stayed in Prague, except for an extended visit to Paris in 1935, until December, 1938. By then the Nazis had already banned the newspaper, which had meanwhile changed its name from A.-I.-Z. to VI[6], or People's Illustrated, and issued a warrant for Heartfield's arrest. With the help of the Artists International Association, based in England, he got a seat on what was reportedly the last direct flight to London.

Heartfield did design more book jackets, stage sets, and costumes both in England and later, after his return to the German People's Republic, or East Germany (DDR[7]) in 1950. But it was not possible to reconstitute the conditions of collaboration that had sustained his political photomontage in more than a very temporary and fragmentary way, either in exile or in postwar Germany. In 1938 his work was, in one sense, over. By the early 1940s, he himself had begun to

[6] Volks-Illustrierte

[7] Deutsche Demokratische Republik

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reflect on it as on something past. He also knew that as his time in exile grew longer, the threat of his own historical oblivion became more and more acute.

When Heartfield did return in 1950 there were already two German republics, marking a deepening ideological rift in Europe. The dynamics of a split modernism, too, with profoundly divergent understandings of modern art and its history were coming into view.[8] Heartfield positioned himself decisively with the East, even going so far as to "update" his own earlier work precisely in terms of contemporary Cold War tensions. Heartfield had ostensibly come back too late, and "aus der falschen Richtung" ("from the wrong direction"), from England rather than Russia, to be immediately received into the East German Communist Party, newly amalgamated and named (1946) the Sozialistische Einheitspartei (SED). His association with Berlin Dada, always a mark against him in the Party's estimation, no doubt continued to arouse suspicion.[9] More than these, however, it was Heartfield's former association with Willi Münzenberg that would have raised the most substantial problems. For when the Party expelled

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[8] A concise summary of how the ideological division was articulated in various forms of culture, particularly in visual arts, is given in Walter Grasskamp, "A historical continuity of disjunctures," Divided Heritage, Irit Rogoff, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 14-23.

[9] From 1920 on, the Party quite consistently dismissed Dada as a "decadent" project.

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Münzenberg in 1938, it also adopted a policy of denying Münzenberg's past importance. Heartfield and his famous photomontages, that is, could easily have reminded their viewers--in a positive way--of a figure the Party wanted everyone to forget.

Through the efforts of friends, including Bertolt Brecht, as well as a general loosening of cultural controls in the East Block after Stalin's death in 1953, Heartfield was nevertheless readmitted to the Party and installed as a member of the Akademie der Künste der DDR, East Germany's state arts academy, in 1956. He was showered with honors. East German writers, perhaps echoing a statement by Brecht on Heartfield's behalf in 1953, began to refer to him as a "classic"[10]; still, there were no commissions for "dialectical photomontage," the name he and his brother gave his politically critical work, from the time he returned to the DDR until his death 18 years later.

This study began in the pages of The Labor Photographer (Der

[10] Brecht referred to Heartfield's work as "classic" in a typescript letter, "An John Heartfield" of 1951 (John-Heartfield-Archiv, Berlin), apparently written in explicit support of Heartfield's application for Party membership. It is reprinted in, among others, Roland März, ed. with cooperation of Gertrud Heartfield, John Heartfield: Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit, Selbstzeugnisse--Erinnerungen--Interpretationen, Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1981, 437.

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Arbeiterfotograf[11]) a newsletter published expressly for members of the Union of Labor Photographers of Germany (Verein der Arbeiterfotografen Deutschlands) between 1926 and 1933. The Labor Photographers had their headquarters at the NDV, and their efforts were largely devoted to serving the press's photographic needs. The Labor Photographer, that is, was published at the same press and over some of the same years when Heartfield was producing his celebrated photomontages.

Modest in scale and circulation, The Labor Photographer had high ambitions: it sought to instruct working-class amateur photographers in the technical, esthetic and political dimensions of a socially revolutionary photography. Its articles on photographic esthetics, concentrated in the years 1928-1932,[12] promoted the value of single, focussed,

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[11] The designation "Arbeiterfotografie" has almost always been translated into English as "worker photography"; I prefer "labor photography," because the English associations--with, for example the Labor Movement or Labor Party--seem to me appropriate and helpful in grasping the aims and historical significance of the photographic project under consideration.

[12] The journal itself is extremely rare. a sampling of reprints from it are included in Joachim Büthe, Der Arbeiter-Fotograf: Dokumente und Beiträge zur Arbeiter-fotografie, 1926-1932. Cologne: Prometh, 1977. English translations of selected articles from the journal include: Edwin Hoernle, "The Working Man's Eye" Germany: The New Photography 1927-33, David Mellor, ed., London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 47-50; Franz Höllering, "Photomontage," 1930 (128-131), Durus (Alfred Kemény), "Photomontage, Photogram" (182-185), and "Photomontage as a Weapon in Class Struggle," (204-206), all in Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913-1940, Christopher Phillips, ed., New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Aperture, 1989.

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information-rich images. Conversely, it condemned as "self-indulgent" all experimentation with such novelties as extremely high or low camera angles, staging, dramatic lighting or, most particularly, montage; it likewise rejected all "sentimental" subject matter, i.e. flowers or landscapes or nudes or smiling children. In sum, it extolled the virtues of a conventional journalistic photography and dismissed the full range of photographic art, both the experimentation concurrently being pursued by such contemporary figures as Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer, Lux Feininger, Max Ernst, etc., and the more familiar modes of art photography established in the nineteenth-century. At the same time, and with only halting and fragmentary attempts to explain the inconsistency, The Labor Photographer nevertheless claimed the photomontages of John Heartfield to be not only art, but art of the most praiseworthy, revolutionary sort.

The Labor Photographer, that is, presented but never resolved an outright contradiction in its judgment of Heartfield's work as art. On the one hand, it abruptly exempted Heartfield from all the formal photographic "rules" that were otherwise so much at issue in its pages; at the same time, it exempted him from the charge of artistic "self-indulgence" leveled against all other art photography. A second curiosity in The Labor Photographer's discussion was the absence of the artist's own voice. The articles were published, possibly even written in

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the offices of the NDV, in exactly the same rooms in the same years where Heartfield himself was working, at least toward the end of the period in question. The writers, that is, could have asked Heartfield to speak for himself, could have quoted or paraphrased him, could have incorporated his insights with their own. They did not. They wrote instead as though Heartfield were a depersonalized manifestation, an effect.

These features of The Labor Photographer discussion would perhaps not seem so remarkable had they not proven so pervasive in the Heartfield literature. Far from disappearing, for example, the unsettled question of Heartfield's work as art began, after 1956, to be implicated in the deepening cultural division between East and West in Europe. In East Germany, Heartfield became a revered professor, a member of the national arts academy; in the West, he was marginalized as a mere propagandist or, more charitably, a graphic designer: although credited with technical innovations, he was never definitively institutionalized as an artist.[13]

[13] The issues were set out concisely in a brief correspondence published in Artforum between the prominent West German artist Hans Haacke and William Rubin, Director of Painting and Sculpture at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1981. In a letter that appeared in the Summer, 1981 issue of the journal, Haacke objected to Heartfield's exclusion from the 1968 MoMA exhibition Dada, Surrealism and their Heritage, and asserted that this exclusion was an ideologically-motivated decision on Rubin's part. Rubin's reply, along with Haacke's rejoiner, were published in Artforum 20

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Initially appearing unrelated to the work's contested status as art, the absence of Heartfield's own voice in the literature proved equally persistent. Heartfield did write and publish various statments; but he did not write at all about his own work. Instead, in its highly polemicized construction of people and events, its rhetorical language, its open attempt to persuade, his writing functioned publicly very much as his art work did. Rather than reflecting on his own process or technique, one might say, Heartfield's writing simply carried his established project on in written form. Perhaps even more unusual, those who wrote about Heartfield tended to position themselves in the same way, namely as participants in Heartfield's own political project. Neither Heartfield himself nor his commentators, at least until long after his death, ever showed great interest in elucidating a unique "creative process," identifying his specific sources, or establishing his personal motivations, matters that are ordinarily of central concern in studies of artists.

On closer consideration, these two fields of uncertainty in the Heartfield literature, one pertaining to the artist, the other to his work, began to seem closely related, in fact to

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(September, 1981) 2. The substance of the exchange concerns the political motivation of exhibition funding, but Rubin noted that he had tried and failed to borrow Heartfield works for the exhibition, that Heartfield--"hardly a major figure, to be sure"--was mentioned in the accompanying catalogue, and that two of his works were reproduced in the larger book concurrently in production at Harry N. Abrams.

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represent two mutually dependent aspects of Heartfield's public persona. It seemed possible, that is, that Heartfield's work failed to rouse the standard communist antagonism toward "self-indulgent" avant-garde art exactly because it failed to project a sense of a "self" in the first place. For without faith in a unique, creating subject, no privileged knowledge can be expected in the interior of the artist's mind. There would have been, that is, no particular purpose in asking him about it. In light of the elusiveness, the consistent absence or perceived irrelevance of inner thoughts and emotions, in any case, Heartfield's identity began to appear increasingly abstract and calculated, something quite radically distinct from the flesh-and-blood man, Helmut Herzfeld, who entered into this role. Rather than a maker of objects, that is, Heartfield himself began to seem the object of an enterprise.

The prospect of a constructed, or performed Heartfield resolved a number of issues that presented difficulties in a more familiar model of an artist's practice. If Heartfield was an ongoing project to be worked on, for example, it follows that more than one person might have participated in the construction. The fact of Heartfield's constant collaboration with others, above all with his brother, but also for varying periods with artist George Grosz, playwright Erwin Piscator, Tucholsky, not to mention dozens of writers

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whose books he designed, editors, phototechnicians and photographers, can then readily be taken into account. Some of the most startling moments in Heartfield biography, too, take on a more appropriate weight or solemnity with this new model in mind. At the same time he adopted the name Heartfield, for example, he abruptly abandoned all conventionally "artistic" media, i.e. paint, charcoal, pastel. The new name is invariably explained in the literature as an act of solidarity with England during W.W.I., and so a gesture registering opposition to the war. But if the new name also registered a much larger ambition to embark on a new persona, a life performance, then the rejection of painting and drawing appears as an active statement, an act establishing the terms, the framework within which "Heartfield" would henceforth be articulated.

The study that follows represents Heartfield as a constructed identity, his work as long and passionately committed performance of that identity. This hypothesis serves, in Chapter II, as the basis for reconsidering the texts that construct Heartfield--his work, his writing, the work and writing of colleagues, critics and collaborators. More specifically, it asks whether and how these various documents cooperated in the performance. The post-structuralist idea of a text, articulated most fully in the work of Roland Barthes, informs this reconsideration at many levels, for the very idea

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of a "constructed" Heartfield rests on the conviction that all kinds of complex meaning, including personal identity, is produced through various kinds of texts--speech, writing, images, gestures.

It was in the effort to understand Heartfield as a textual construct, in fact, that the triangular form of the supporting relationships first became apparent--the first instance being Helmut, Wieland, and Grosz. Chapter III., "Inventing an Artist," outlines the historical circumstances under which John Heartfield appeared. It proposes that "Heartfield" resolved a crisis in the very close relationship between Helmut and his brother Wieland, precipitated by their encounter with George Grosz. The primary object of study, that is, is not an individual, but a relational "triangle."

As Maud Ellmann has pointed out in her introduction to a recent anthology of psychoanalytical literary theory, the very core of Freudian psychoanalysis--the Oedipus complex--actually establishes a pattern of "triangular" relationships among individuals, namely the struggle of the young child to establish itself with respect to a mother and father.[14] If personality is actually formed in such a situation of profound interdependence, it seems reasonable that subsequent "personal

[14] Maud Ellmann, ed., Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism, London and New York: Longman, 1994, 13.

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identity," too, would be forged and maintained in some kind of group dynamic, rather than primarily within the psychic processes of a single individual. It was long after Freud's turn-of-the-century publications on the subject, however, and apparently not as a direct logical derivation from his work, that the viability of a triangle as the basic psychological "unit" was examined more thoroughly. In a study published in 1965, in particular, René Girard traced the centrality of triangular relationships--usually involving two men and one woman--in a wide range of the canonical works of Western literature.[15] Some twenty years later, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick again took up the idea of an erotic triangle as a remarkably regular feature in specifically English literature across several centuries.[16] Sedgwick, however, was concerned not simply with the fact of structuring interpersonal triangles, but with the specifically sexual identities built into the the dynamics of these groups. The "homosocial" pattern Sedgwick describes, in fact, in which men act to promote the interests of other men, making women markers of relative value between them, proved extremely helpful in understanding the relationships that gave rise to John Heartfield.

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[15] René Girard, Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure. Trans. Yvonne Freccero, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965.

[16] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

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Also in the 1960s, and again in contexts far removed from Freud's original descriptions of the Oedipal triangle, some clinical psychologists, particularly in the United States, began to rethink the therapeutic context in terms of key relationships that affected the patient's functioning. It appears that the idea occurred at nearly the same moment in several different locations,[17] but the clinician whose work particularly stressed the triangle as the basic unit of psychological functioning was Murray Bowen.[18] Bowen theory, or family systems theory, represents a synthesis of concepts drawn from English object relations psychology, especially as represented in the work of D.W. Winicott, and cybernetics, the study of systems of control, especially in communications. A colleague of Bowen's, Michael E. Kerr, has been instrumental in articulating the principles of family systems theory and their value in clinical practice for a broader audience.[19] Focussed as it is on the dynamics of an interpersonal triangle, this clinical model proved particularly helpful in grasping the dynamics of the historical relationships under consideration here.

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[17] A lucid summary of the various research groups and their distinctive concerns is given by Lynn Hoffman, in Foundations of Family Therapy, New York: Basic, 1981, 16ff.

[18] Muray Bowen, "The Use of Family Theory in Clinical Pratice," Clinical Psychiatry 7 (1966), 345-374.

[19] Michael E. Kerr and Murray Bowen, Family Evaluation:an Approach based on Bowen Theory, New York: Norton, 1988.

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Bowen's theory takes it as a premise that human individuals, like most animals, are profoundly social beings, and that their individual personalities and modes of behavior are formed in response to the dynamics of a group. Rather than analyzing an individual, therefore, Bowen identifies a group of three, which may be but is not necessarily a biological family, as the unit of analysis. Such a group is "successful" to the extent it meets its members' emotional needs and maintains its equilibrium, that is, continues to operate in the face of outside pressures.

According to Bowen's theory, relational triangles are regulated through an economy of energy and anxiety. The energy in the system is the energy with which the members attempt to meet their fundamental competing needs for "distance" and "togetherness" with respect to one another. Each individual both desires and fears "togetherness," and feels most comfortable and stable in relationships that exhibit some balance between the two, the particular character of the balance being part of the particular character of the person in question. People become anxious when such a comfortable balance is disturbed. Disturbances are most often small, commonplace and easily resolved, a part of everyday life that may scarcely be noticeable. If A becomes anxious with respect to B, for example, he or she may complain about B to C. This tends to bring A and C closer together,

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particularly if C responds sympathetically. B may then respond in a variety of ways--or not at all. The key point is that his or her action--and "action" here can be anything with emotional significance, a statement in words as much as a kiss or a punch in the jaw--will affect not just one other person, but the whole system.

The social life of a healthy adult person ordinarily sets him or her in a wide range of positions in a great variety of such triangles. In fact the tendency to form the same kinds of relationships again and again, to function in a "narrow" or "inflexible" way, as Bowen puts it, indicates difficulty or dysfunction. Rather than tracing of such dysfunction to particular past events, as a Freudian analyst might try to do, however, systems theory attempts to draw an analogy between the individual's current functioning and his or her position within the family of origin, most often his or her position vis-à-vis the parents. In cases where an individual's function is so inflexible as to severely limit his or her capacity to form and maintain relationships at all, a childhood emotional dependence on the parents is often in the background. A "common example of fairly inflexible functioning positions," Kerr writes, "is a triangle of two parents and a child in which the child functions as an emotional appendage of his parents. He chronically adapts his thoughts, feelings, and behavior to reduce tension in the

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parents."[20] Among the results of Bowen's research, too, has been the recognition that such triangles can continue to function not only through the lifetimes of the individuals concerned, but even through generations of the same biological family, surviving all the individual participants as well as profound changes in the external environment.

This very abstract scheme in itself says nothing about the content of these interactions--whether A or B is male of female, old or young, energetic or lethargic, black or white, for example. It does not specify anything about what B actually says to C, or how A's original anxiety may have been triggered by concerns outside the group--a threat of war, a shortage of food, etc. Exactly as a result of its highly schematic form, however, the concept is highly adaptable, offering a way of organizing a range of disparate details--even of relationships that were active decades earlier--into a meaningful regularity that was not apparent before. It becomes possible to describe how, in the social dynamics of a very specific historical moment, a new artistic identity, such as that of John Heartfield, could appear and be sustained.

There are a number of potential difficulties in accomodating historical data to such a model, which was developed specifically for use in clinical practice. Instead of data

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[20] Kerr, Family Evaluation, 143.

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solicited for the purpose directly from individuals interested in resolving personal problems, for example, historical analysis must rely on a body of extant texts, produced in a variety of contexts and for quite different reasons. Yet this theory does not claim to gain access to the patient's unique conscious or unconscious motivations, i.e., to invisible and unverifiable processes; Bowen's theory rather addresses the behavior patterns between individuals which can be verified by at least the others in the group, and often by outsiders as well. Unlike a psychoanalytic investigation of a single subject, an effort to expose hidden material, this is a process focussed outside the self, a project of seeing behavior, including one's own speech, as affecting and affected by others.

Unlike the therapist, who has direct access to the subject's own self-representations and concerns about his or her capacities to form and maintain relationships, the historian must usually rely on data--in the form of diaries, letters, articles, works of art, etc.--produced for any number of purposes and probably far less complete and less directly relevant to relational patterns. Still, Bowen's theory would suggest that virtually any communication among members of a relational triangle will conform to the established "rules" or dynamics of that groups's functioning. Any such communication will therefore embody evidence of such functioning. Both the

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therapist's and the historian's procedures, then, involve the interpretation of such evidence, spoken and written words, actions, silences, etc., in the interests changing the framework in which they can be read.

Another potential disjunction between therapeutic practice and historical analysis arises in the two procedures' seemingly disparate goals. "Success," in the clinical situation, is judged by the degree to which members of a consulting group, usually a family, are able to reduce the anxieties generated in their relationships; the "success" of an historical analysis, on the other hand, lies in its power to interpret documents of the past in a way that becomes meaningful in the present. Put another way, the therapeutic model, directed primarily toward solving problems, concentrates on the character of dysfunctional relationships, or the negative and painful aspects of functional ones. It looks, in a word, for what <u>isn't</u> working. The historian, on the other hand, can ordinarily afford to be rather more callous in this respect, and ask what nevertheless <u>did</u> work, that is, what the larger social or political or esthetic achievements of a relationship may have been, however poorly it served the emotional needs of the individuals concerned. This opens a question raised only very tangentially in the therapeutic construct, namely how a particular kind of relationship may reproduce tensions within the larger social context in which it occurs.

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This third chapter undertakes, on the one hand, a reading of the available documents for insights into the relationship between Helmut and Wieland Herzfeld. Rather than asking how well that relationship served the brothers' respective emotional needs, however, it looks for the conditions, the emotional climate under which John Heartfield appeared. In the background is the question of how so many abstractions usually remote from personal relationships in the present--e.g. social class, fascism, capitalism, and Communism, came to occupy such a central place in their personal identities, and what consequences it had for their subsequent life and work. The project of locating Heartfield and his work historically then need no longer be the unrewarding task of deciding how he does or does not "fit" within a structure of stagnant oppositions, e.g. bourgeois versus Communist, selfless versus selfish, art versus mass-communications, painting versus photography, among many others. It rather becomes possible to reconstruct John Heartfield as a response to the nexus of social, technical, esthetic and political, as well as personal pressures that confronted Helmut Herzfeld at a specific historical moment.

Once assembled, the set of conditions, goals and limitations that defined Heartfield appear not so much to change as to intensify with passing time and increasing experience. Chapter IV., "The Photomonteur and His Family," identifies

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Heartfield's engagement with varied media--film, graphic design, theater--within the larger project of articulating a personal identity. For different as they were, these various endeavors shared an identifiable collaborative structure. Each involved a small, closely-knit group (editorial staff, cast, crew, etc.) which included one or more of a small group of men close to Helmut, in most cases one of the original "triangle" outlined in Chapter III. Within the various working groups in question, "Heartfield" was in a sense distinguished by his lack of distinction: he is repeatedly identified as the one who did not assert a strong personal identity. He was rather the one who would bind, facilitate, expedite the functioning of the group. This identity is legible in all aspects of his career. But it is most fully and clearly legible in that work which was the longest--spanning eight years--and which it at once the most formally determined and conceptually open, namely the A.-I.-Z. photomontages.

Chapter V., "Commrades and Cabbageheads: The Fiction of the A.-I.-Z. Photomontages," broadly examines how the entire, eight-year series of photomontages constructs its own maker. Briefly, Heartfield comes into view in terms of his similarity to and difference from the "producer," or producing organization of the newspaper. On the one hand, the photomontages appeared in the newspaper, using the same

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materials, and much of the same content as contemporary news reports; the photomontages differed profoundly from news reports, on the other hand, in terms of the way they were produced, the way they treated their constituent materials (photographs and type), and in the esthetic demands they made on their audience. Specifically, Heartfield appeared as someone who flaunted, undermined the conventions of the newspaper. In those spaces signed "Heartfield," that is, the conventional "reading" situation turned into something more closely resembling a performance, in which the readers' senses of hearing and touch, as well as vision, might be engaged. Heartfield emerges, finally, as a broadly heroic figure, someone who is in possession of a heightened perception and so an extraordinary insight into current events.

The following chapter, "From Helmut to John," contrasts the photomonteur's heroic performance with the actual collaborative conditions in which Helmut was working, and attempts to establish a relational pattern between the two. Relying in particular on contemporary accounts of his collaborations, it links the thematic content of the photomontages, outlined in Chapter V.--with the processes of their production. It goes on to specify, in the production process, Helmut's rejection, or emptying out of "private" thoughts or "introspective" reflections in favor of shared perception and collaborative acting. The particular form of

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this transformation, in turn, recalls the drama of Heartfield's initial appearance, the moment in which the possibility of acting, rather than reflecting, first presented itself in the figure of George Grosz. The photomontages in particular, but more broadly the performance of Heartfield as a whole, then can be grasped as a distillation and continual repetition of this first decisive moment, the transformation of Helmut into John.

To avoid confusion caused by the similarity of the names "Herzfeld" and "Herzfelde" (the surname name adopted by Wieland Herzfeld in early 1917), I shall use the names "Helmut" and "Wieland" throughout to refer to the two Herzfeld brothers. The name "John Heartfield" will always designate something approaching a corporate identity, in which Helmut Herzfeld was a necessary, but not sufficient factor. A thought or action of "Heartfield," that is, should be understood to involve others, whose roles are only rarely and partially specifiable. For the sake of clarity and legibility, I shall nevertheless treat this identity as grammatically singular and masculine, making use of the pronouns "he," or "him," as appropriate.

The concluding comments of this study concern Heartfield's historical position. Many of the commentators who have attempted to situate his photomontage historically have

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followed Heartfield's own lead in identifying him with Honoré Daumier (1808-1879), and his work, broadly, with caricature. This sets Heartfield into a tradition of pictorial social criticism embracing Goya, Hogarth, Rowlandson.[21] It tacitly credits him, by analogy with these figures, with a specifiable artistic style, located in the skills and personality of a single individual.

Heartfield's work does resemble caricature in its function as "counterdiscourse" to the newspaper.[22] And yet it marks a distinct break from caricature in what are arguably more significant ways. As the psychoanalyst Ernst Kris and art historian E. H. Gombrich pointed out,[23] the practice of caricature depends on the idea of recognizability, moves between the identity of an individual and his or her visual respresentation on the one hand, and the possibility of safely distorting, or "loading" that representation on the other ("safely" implies that such distortion is no longer thought to risk actual damage to the subject). From the beginning, Kris

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[21] The most complete study to date of the links between Heartfield and Daumier is Roland März's Politische Satire im Dialog, Berlin (East): Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 1981.

[22] The term is drawn from Richard Terdiman, "Newspaper Culture: Institution of Discourse; Discourse of Institutions," Discourse/Counterdiscourse, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, 117-463.

[23] Kris, W. and E.H. Gombrich, "The Principles of Caricature," Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art, New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1952, 189-203.

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and Gombrich point out, caricature drawing was sketchy, schematic, a style that in which that the idiosyncracies of the caricaturist himself, the link between the "author" and the representation was prominent. Daumier's artistic identity, to take well-known example, depended substantially on a distinctive, immediately recognizable style of drawing, ultimately resting on the physical connection between that style and the singular individual to whom it belonged.

In relying on mechanical means--photography--to represent his subjects, however, Heartfield shifted his focus from the individual--from the play with specific personal features--to a play of relationships--of head to body, figure to figure, figure to emblem, word to image. The mechanized representation further shifted "responsibility" for this distortion away from any one physical person, from any direct connection with a human hand. In fact Heartfield obsessively effaced, as outlined in Chapter VI., all traces of physical connection to the flesh-and-blood Helmut. His practice is more readily understood as a performance that steadily supressed any such projection of unique individuality, and that developed in its place the idea of a collaboratively seen, cooperatively-produced reality.

On the basis of evidence assembled in this study, it becomes possible to relocate Heartfield's practice not <u>as</u> caricature,

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but as related to caricature in the broader history of communication media. Specifically his work becomes legible at an early point in the dynamic exchange between print and electronic media, which has become such a central feature of contemporary cultural experience. In a series of books published in the 1960s, scholar and media historian Marshall McLuhan proposed that any given communication technology--speech, drawing, dance, film, video, etc., as well as print--requires a particular, distinctive form of perception, or more precisely, a particular relationship among, for example, auditory, tactile, or visual forms of perception.[24] Literacy itself, he observed, demands an exclusive reliance on visual perception, reliance heightened much further with the advent of print.[25] This privileging of vision, he suggested, affected all aspects of the associated print culture, from institutional structure to personality formation.

Whether McLuhan's rather sweeping association of a particular medium with a particular form of perception, social organization, personality, etc., is convincing or not, his

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[24] The ideas are presented most fully in The Gutenberg Galaxy: the Making of Typographic Man, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962 (Reprinted 1966, 1967) and Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, New York: McGraw Hill, 1964 (Reprinted Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994).

[25] The strong visuality of print in one of the main themes that runs through the entire text of The Gutenberg Galaxy. The tactility of electronic media, in particular, is discussed on p. 39.

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proposal of significant distinctions in the ways various images address the senses helps to illuminate the difference between Heartfield's work and caricature. For by abandoning the distortion of faces and figures, and by breaking the direct physical link between his person and the printed image, Heartfield no longer "appeared" in the work in the same sense a caricaturist did. He, like them, produced parts of the newspaper which stood apart, demanded that the audience imaginatively see and hear people and events, that they employ forms of perception different from those required for conventional reading. But in adopting the mechanized, depersonalized medium of photography, Heartfield began to anticipate both the collaborative production and the perceptual demands--McLuhan called them "audio-tactile"--of time-based media: film, radio and television. Heartfield, considered as a collaborative construct, is seen to have much in common with the largely anonymous, yet vaguely discernable entities that are the "authors" of contemporary media productions--films, radio broadcasts, television. Far from coincidental, this similarity bears witness to Heartfield's position at the edge of a new historical configuration, the forms of self-understanding, technically-mediated communications and the exercise of political power that has become familiar today as media culture.

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II. Heartfield's Effects

John Heartfield's centenary exhibition opened at the Altes Museum in a newly-reunited Berlin in May of 1991, a poignant celebration of the artist who had been, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, among the most stalwart standard-bearers for the East German regime.[1] From its beginnings in 1988, the exhibition had been a collaboration between the John-Heartfield-Archiv, the main repository of the artist's work and administratively part of the arts academy of East Germany and three cultural administrative entities in West Germany. In the catalogue, organizers Klaus Honnef and Peter Pachnicke state unequivocally that the project's unfolding was not affected by the remarkable events that occurred between the initial conception and the exhibition opening--the collapse of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, the electoral defeat of the East German government a short time later, the currency union with the Federal Republic in July of the following summer, and complete political unification of the two Germanies in October, 1990. But even if unification did not directly affect the organizers' plans, a shift in political perception, a weakening of the polarization between East and West was, as will be argued in more detail below, a condition

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[1] John Heartfield, exh. cat., Peter Pachnicke and Klaus Honnef, eds., with contributions by Helen Adkins, Hanne Bergium, Ilse-Maria Odrfstecher, Hilmar Frank, Hubertus Gassner, Klaus Honnef, Michael Krejsa, Heiner Müller, Harald Olbrich, Peter Pachnicke, Elizabeth Patzwall, Dieter Ronte, Rolf Sachsse and Hermann Weber, Berlin: Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, 1991.

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condition of the exhibition's possibility.

In fact Heartfield's reception is marked at all points by an unusually clear rapport between the work itself and the immediate social and political context in which it has been seen and discussed. For Heartfield's critics show a strong propensity to adopt the polemical structure of the artist's work to their own writing, implying a form of identity between artist and writer, image and verbal text. The pattern appeared with the first rough construction of Heartfield, in Wieland Herzfelde's text for the catalogue of the 1920 International Dada Fair. Wieland's introduction, including his well-known statement about photomontage, established his general sympathy with Dadaist principles.[2] He "collaborated" even more fully, however--arguably even incorporating loosely "Dada" principles into his writing--in his catalogue entry for Heartfield's collage work, Leben und Treiben in Universal-City 12 Uhr 5 mittags (fig. 8):

> This picture, which the poet Wieland Herzfelde says particularly pleases him, depicts the life and times of the Universal City using the techniques of film. It is not a futuristic picture, it is in fact a dadaistic picture, and in fact an excellent one. In order to get an accurate overall impression, it is best to take forty steps back through the wall (Watch out for the stairs!). Then it becomes self-evident that the Dadaist John

[2] Wieland Herzfelde, "Zur Einführung," Erste Internationale Dada-Messe. exh. cat., 1920, 2. English translation in German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism, Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed., New York: G.K. Hall, 1993, 272-274.

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> Heartfield in the enemy of the picture. He actually destroyed it. A very simple and useful test of this can be made on any street having ordinary street lamps.[3]

By reproducing something of the irreverent high spirits of the work under consideration, that is, Wieland's text cooperates in the artist's own project. A great deal of the Heartfield literature has issued in comparable ways from individuals and groups who directly collaborated with the artist himself. Even after Heartfield's death, the forms of this collaboration were perpetuated in the literature, as admirers of the artist's work, themselves enacting their opposition to fascism or capitalism, recruited Heartield's voice in the service of contemporary political and esthetic conflicts.

This "collaborative" literature is central to Heartfield's project as a whole. And yet it can not be considered "critical" in the sense of negotiating an acknowledged distance between writer and object. Rather it represents a substantial sharing of the artist's own position with respect to the audience, an identification with the artist. Not only

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[3] ibid, 3. Dieses Bild, von dem der Dichter Wieland Herzfelde aussagt, daß es ihm ausgezeichnet gefällt, schildert mit den Mitteln des Filmes das Leben und Treiben in Universal-City. Es handelt sich um kein futuristisches Bild, es ist nämlich ein dadistisches Bild, und zwar ein ausgezeichnetes. Um zu einem richtigen Gesamteindruck zu kommen, trete man am besten 40 Schritte durch die Wand (Achtung, Stufe!) zurück. Dann ergibt sich von selbst, daß der Dadaist John Heartfield der Feind des Bildes ist. Er hat es auch für sich zerstört. Eine sehr einfache nutzbringende Probe darauf kann man in jeder beliebigen Straße anstellen, in welcher gewöhnliche Straßenlaternen sind.

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to the audience, an identification with the artist. Not only Heartfield's own publications, but virtually all of Herzfelde's writings concerning his brother belong in this category, along with Grosz's writing between 1915 and 1925, Sergei Tretjakow's monograph on Heartfield of 1936,[4] and even to some extent the more recent studies by Eckhard Siepmann, Roland März, and David Evans, all of whom were directly acquainted with Gertrud Heartfield, Heartfield's widow and active administrator of his archive until her death in 1983.

The difficulties, as well as the advantages, of separating the critical literature from writing that actively collaborates in Heartfield's own project can perhaps best be introduced through an early example. At the high point of Berlin Dada, the Dadaists collaboratively produced an anonymous article entitled "Unser John." It was never actually published, but rather exhibited as a composed text at the Dada Fair of 1920. Flagrantly fictitious and dadaistically irreverent, it constructs "John Heartfield"--Heartfield himself had tried and failed to adopt the name legally, but had been using it intermittently since 1916--as a fantastic, absurdly heroic blend of American Indian chieftain and English aristocrat.[5]

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[4] Sergei Tretjakow and Salomon Telinger, John Heartfield: eine Monographie, Moscow, 1936.

[5] Heartfield's position within Berlin Dada, especially his role in the Dada Fair of 1920, is described in Helen Adkins, "Der Sträfling: Monteur John Heartfield," John Heartfield, exh. cat., Köln: Dumont Buchverlag, 1991, 256-265.

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Presented as an exhibitable "work" of art, the piece functions as a broad attack on the conventional constructs of "artist," "work," and "criticism". A short time later, Heartfield and George Grosz published "Der Kunstlump," ostensibly a piece of criticism which appeared in Der Gegner[6]. As different as "Der Kunstlump" is from "Unser John" in terms of content, they are very similar in terms of function. Both bring a characteristically explosive, annihilating Dada wit to bear on "bourgeois" art: "Der Kunstlump" concentrates its vitriol on the Austrian painter Oskar Kokoschka, but the object of derision ultimately expands to include Rubens, Rembrandt, and the whole of the fine art tradition. Both attack, if from different directions, the idea of art's meaning being primarily "personal," and both perform a role in the "public" sphere represented by the journal.

Once "Der Kunstlump" is repositioned this way, namely as an episode, or "prop" in the ongoing performance of Heartfield, the response to it that appeared in the Communist press (Heartfield would undoubtedly have welcomed an angry response in the mainstream press) emerges as the first properly critical Heartfield literature. The art critic for the Communist newspaper Die Rote Fahne, Gertrud Alexander, took

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[6] John Heartfield and Georg Grosz, "Der Kunstlump," Der Gegner (Berlin) 1, 1919/20, no. 10-12, 48-56. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 104-111.

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earnest issue with "Der Kunstlump,"[7] asserting that the tradition of bourgeois art was of enormous potential value in the class struggle. Whether as a direct result of the criticism or not, Heartfield thereafter restricted his antagonism toward "bourgeois" art to twentieth-century manifestations; on occasion he even adopted monuments of art history as emblems of legitimate revolutionary sentiment.[8]

Heartfield entered into the critical fray again in 1926, in a short published skirmish with the critic Adolf Behne. The immediate issue was an innovative exhibition organized by an artist, Otto Nagel, and held in a department store in Wedding, a large working-class district in Berlin. Having described how the work on view acknowledged and reflected the suffering of the working class, Behne argued that this was not in fact progressive art, but rather employed the same artistic means as bourgeois art:

> To order red to green in such a way that both measures of color achieve the greatest possible power, honor and freedom is much more revolutionary than painting handgrenades or "Victory at the

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[7] Gertrud Alexander, "Herrn John Heartfield und George Grosz," Die Rote Fahne(Berlin) 3, no. 99, 9 June 1920. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 112-114.

[8] The photomontage "Die Freiheit selbst kämpft in ihren Reihen" (Liberty Herself Fights in their Ranks"), for example, uses a reproduction of Eugène Delacroix's painting Liberty Leading the People of 1830. VI 1 number 1, (19 August 1936) 16.

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Barricades."[9]

In his response to Behne's review,[10] Heartfield insisted that it is more important to provide the working class with a reflection of itself, assuring that class that it does have allies among artists, than to solve a set of formal problems within the practice of painting.[11] This discussion is, finally, highly abstract. Neither Behne nor Heartfield is saying anything in particular about Heartfield's work; both are rather mapping out critical positions. As in the "Kunstlump" exchange, that is, Heartfield is performing, rather than elucidating Heartfield.

Properly critical statements regarding Heartfield in the twenties include the many short theater reviews in which Heartfield's various set designs, lighting, slide and film projections for the theater are assessed with respect to the

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[9] Adolf Behne, "Kunstaustellung Wedding," Die Weltbühne (Berlin) XXII. vol. 2, March, 1926, nr. 9, pp. 147-8. Cited in März, Der Schnitt, 141-2. Rot zu Grün zu ordnen so, dass beide Farbquanten ihr höchstes Mass an Kraft, Würde, Freiheit erhalten, ist sehr viel revolutionärer also Handgranaten oder 'Sieg der Barrikade' malen.

[10] John Heartfield, "Grün oder--Rot?" Die Weltbühne (Berlin) XXII, vol. 16, March, 1926, nr. 11, pp. 434-5. Cited in März, Der Schnitt, 143-4.

[11] A more detailed discussion of the issue appears in Harald Olbrich, "'Grün oder--Rot?'--Streit under Avantgardisten," John Heartfield, exh.cat. 1991, 348-356.

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broader aims of the respective plays.[12] These begin in 1920, the year Heartfield began to work regularly for the theater. The first published article addressed wholly to Heartfield's work, however, appeared in 1927 in the design journal Gebrauchsgraphik and presented him as a book designer.[13] And it was primarily in this role, through the vehicle of the "bourgeois" or mainstream press, that he began to gain wider recognition in the later 1920s. His work was aligned among contemporary developments in advertising, presenting his choice of photography in general as well as his handling of particular photographs as serving the advertiser's needs: the strongest possible impact on the greatest numbers of people. In this writing, Heartfield's specific political position is rendered neutral, assimilable as the particular "product" to be advertised; the innovative quality of the design, that is, can be credited to the individual, and assessed independently of the message.

Within Communist circles in the later 1920s and 1930s, on the other hand, debates revolved less around the success of particular images than the quality of one or another set of criteria that might be applied to them. By the late 1920s,

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[12] Segments of the theater reviews from the 1920s that pertain to Heartfield are assembled in März, Der Schnitt, especially pp. 202-226.

[13] H.K. Frenzel, "John Heartfield und seine photographisch-graphischen Arbeiten," Gebrauchsbraphik (Berlin), July, 1927, pp. 17-32. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 229-231.

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the technique of photomontage, its potential, its appropriate use in the class struggle was the dominant issue. In Russia, this discussion centered on the idea of an "organic," versus an "inorganic" work of art. Heartfield was ultimately drawn into it as the invited guest of the Russian government for a nine-month visit to Moscow in 1931.[14] Initially held up to Russian montagists, among them Gustav Klutsis, as a model, Heartfield's work eventually began to draw adverse criticism. It was at this time, in fact, that the charge of "formalism" was first leveled against him. Heartfield's main guide and translator during his time in Moscow was the Russian writer Sergei Tretjakow. From notes made during this period, Tretjakow wrote the first monograph on Heartfield, which includes the only extended--albeit secondhand--theoretical statement Heartfield is known to have made.[15] The writer, that is, is acting as a kind of spokesman on Heartfield's behalf--once again collaborating, participating, rather than criticizing the artist's project.

The German Communist discussion of photomontage at the same moment took a different form, namely the participation of workers themselves in making photographs. It was conducted in the pages of Der Arbeiterfotograf, a small-format magazine

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[14] Hubertus Gaßner, "Heartfields Moskauer Lehrzeit 1931-1932," John Heartfield, exh. cat., 1991, 300-338.

[15] Sergei Tretjakow and Salomon Telinger, John Heartfield: eine Monographie, Moscow, 1936.

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published by the NGP expressly for the members of the photographers' organization of the same name (see pp. 6-9 above). In keeping with its mission to recruit, train, and support a network of photographers, assuring a steady supply of appropriate visual documentation for the newspaper, Der Arbeiterfotograf sang the praises of conventional journalistic photography. It did its best, at the same time, to dissuade its working-class readers from dabbling in the sort of experimentation--unusual angles, close-focus, solarization, or montage, that was widely understood as "artistic".[16] The discussion touched often on Heartfield, invariably to single him out as a special case. On the one hand, he was to be distinguished from bourgeois artists who turned photomontage into bourgois art; on the other, his long training and experience would always distinguish him from ordinary workers. He was, rather, an artist, and as such an appropriate wielder of photomontage; ordinary workers would simply be wasting their time in trying to do the same.

The discussion of photographic esthetics in Der Arbeiterfotograf appears to be a debate. Yet on closer examination, it takes Heartfield's status as a revolutionary artist as given, a point of certainty from which other

[16] Werner Graff's Es kommt der neue Fotograf! (Berlin, 1929), Lazlo Moholy-Nagy's Malerei, Film, Photographie, Bauhausbucher Band 8, Munich, 1927 and Albert Renger-Patzsch's Die Welt ist schön, Munich: Kurt Wolff, 1928 are among the basic contemporary statements of the so-called "New Vision" photography.

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considerations, e.g. the relative value of other forms of montage, the status of montage as art, the value of montage for political purposes, might be derived. The discussion, that is, seems fully cooperative in Heartfield's own project. Over most of the time in question (the esthetics discussions are concentrated between about 1928 and 1932), Heartfield was actually working for the NDV, and was in regular contact with the Labor Photographers, some of whom collaborated directly with him in staging photographs for book jackets and photomontages.

Heartfield's next significant project, too, his 1929 collaboration with the prominent humorist Kurt Tucholsky on the photo-satire book Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles,, was sponsored by the NDV. According to Babette Gross, the assistant and life companion of NGV's director Willi Münzenberg, the book was actually Münzenberg's idea. The ways in which resulting volume marked a turning point for Heartfield will be discussed more fully in Chapter IV., below. It provided him, in any case, with a new and closer form of collaboration with both photographers and writers; it also provided a framework in which he could focus on a single theme, namely German nationalism, over an extended period. When his association with the NDV solidified into a regular position the following spring, he continued to incorporate emblems of German national identity as marks of insensitivity,

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stupidity or absurdity, bringing him into another, uniquely explosive set of oppositions.

The Nazis did publish their position on Heartfield's work, in addition to acting it out as violent censorship, on more than one occasion.[17] The most complete statements appeared in 1934, 1936 and 1937, when Heartfield's work was exhibited at the prestigious Mánes Artists Union in Prague. At all three events, Nazi diplomatic representatives issued formal complaints to the Czech government asking that certain work be removed from the exhibition. In 1934, in particular, Prague newspapers carried more extended commentary on the confrontation, which engaged the Czechs' sense of national identity in an increasingly precarious political balance.[18]

News of the 1934 incident of Nazi censorship also spread abroad, where it attracted the attention of the French artist Paul Signac and writer Henri Barbusse. As a result, Heartfield was invited to exhibit his work in Paris, which he did the following spring, at the Maison de la Culture. Among the papers given in connection with this exhibition was Louis

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[17] Michael Krejsa, "NS-Reaktionen auf Heartfields Arbeit 1933-1939," John Heartfield, exh. cat., 1991, 368-378.

[18] The most complete documentation of the exchanges appears in März, Der Schnitt , 331-375.

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Aragon's "John Heartfield et la beauté révolutionnaire,"[19] which asigns Heartfield a place in a tradition of realist painting. The exhibition and talk immediately preceded and in some respects prepared for the International Congress for the Defense of Culture, in which the identity of Socialist Realism--the cultural front against fascism--was to be discussed. For Aragon, Heartfield's work, coupled with the concept of "realism," presented an opportunity to reconcile his loyalty to Soviet Communism with his regard for a long, rich tradition of painting. The article, in Wieland Herzfelde's own German translation, later became one of the cornerstones of Heartfield's reception in the DDR, regularly reprinted in exhibition catalogues.[20]

The issue of "realist" representation also lay at the center of the well-known "Expressionist" debates of the mid-1930s, involving Georg Lukács, Bertolt Brecht and Ernst Bloch, among others, and carried mainly in the Moscow-based, German language journal Das Wort.[21] Heartfield's work was not

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[19] Louis Aragon, "John Heartfield et la beauté révolutionnaire," Commune 20, May, 1935, 985-91. English translation by Fabrice Ziolkowski in Phillips, Photography and the Modern Era, 60-67.

[20] The translation appears among the documents included in Wieland's biography of his brother, John Heartfield: Leben und Werk. Dargestellt von seinem Bruder Wieland Herzfelde, 3rd ed., Berlin (West): deb, 1986, 324-330.

[21] Much of the debate is reprinted in Hans-Jürgen Schmitt, ed., Expressionismusdebatte, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973. The outlines of the discussion are given in selected texts in English

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treated in any depth in these debates; it seems rather to function as a reference point, a convenient example of montage which everyone would certainly know. At the outset, Lukács, who subsequently emerged as the major literary theorist of postwar European Communism, attacks Expressionism. He does so by opposing it to a "Realism" modelled on 19th-century Realist novels, the only style he finds adequate to represent the world to a mass audience. In the terms of this Realism-Expressionism opposition, Expressionism comes to stand in for modernism as a whole, and the modernist technique of montage, visible across a spectrum of different arts, becomes a central term in opposition to a continuous, "total" representation. In one of the best-known passages, for example, Lukács refers to Heartfield clearly, if indirectly, as the best case of an ultimately ineffective, a bad "formalist," as opposed to a good "realist" technique: photomontage, he says, can at best have the force of "a good joke." Elsewhere, Bloch tries to counter Lukács's reductive dismissal of montage by setting Picasso and Heartfield at opposite ends of a continuum, Picasso's use of the technique being so remote from a mass audience as to be completely incomprehensible, Heartfield's being so accessible to the masses as to be suspect as art. Although the debates are not in any sense about Heartfield,

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translation in Aesthetics and Politics, transl. ed. Ronald Taylor, afterword by Fredric Jameson, London: New Left Books, 1980. Also see excerpts translated in German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism, Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed., New York: G.K. Hall, 1993, 312-327.

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they do mark a final point in his German critical reception before the war and the division in modernisms that followed; they also form the background of Heartfield's subsequent reception in the DDR, in particular to the charge of "formalism" that was levelled against him initially after his return from England.

In the two months before Heartfield left Prague in 1938, an exhibition of photomontages, probably the same work that had been exhibited in Paris in 1935, was on view at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York under the sponsorship of the Photo League.[22] Far from the immediate conflict in which Heartfield's himself was still living, the writers Oskar Maria Graf and Günther Anders began, in papers prepared for delivery at the exhibition opening, critically to examine the mechanisms through which Heartfield conveyed his message. Both fully in sympathy with Heartfield's announced polticial aims, that is, these writers also take a new and genuinely critical position with respect to the work's function. Anders's talk in particular, nearly as well-known in the GDR as Aragon's,[23] described Heartfield's work as a process of making visible what is not ordinarily visible, namely the

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[22] A review of the exhibition by the staff critic Elizabeth McCausland appeared in The Springfield Sunday Union and Republican for October 16, 1938, 6E.

[23] Günther Anders, "Hieroglyphen: Eine neue Kunst: Photomontage," presented at the ACA Gallery, 1938. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 398-400.

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relationships, connections, associations among various objects--people, events, institutions.

The new national alignments established during and after W.W. II had a particularly direct and lasting effect on Heartfield's reception. Perhaps most obviously, there was no longer a venue for Heartfield's characteristic political work. There was, instead, a newly urgent need to position the work as art. And more strictly than any of the commentary produced during the 1920s and 1930s, the postwar literature on Heartfield observes older proprieties of visual art history: the "life and work" monograph, the catalogue raisonné, assertions of a universal and durable meaning. In the process of assimilating Heartfield to the models of the artist that predominated after W.W. II. the literature registers, with remarkable precision, the tension between two distinct modernist cultures--East and West--which, if often not gladly or even consciously, persistently identified themselves in opposition to one another. The nature of the opposition was by no means fixed or consistent, but it broadly set an art of social function in the East against an art of personal expression in the West. With the hardening of positions in the Cold War, each side began thinking, making, theorizing, and institutionalizing art in apparent isolation.

One example of how this ideological difference was articulated

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in Heartfield's reception can be seen in the relative significance a given writer might attach, on the one hand, to Heartfield's participation in Berlin Dada (1918-1920)[24] or, on the other, to his production of A.-I.-Z. photomontages between 1930 and 1938. In Western--mainly Anglo-American literature, if Heartfield was discussed at all, it was in the context of Dada, at least until roughly the end of the 1970s. The rest of Heartfield's career would then usually be absorbed as an expansion and articulation of the montage technique developed before 1920. This is the case, for example, in Beaumont Newhall's treatment of Heartfield in the context of his survey history of photography,[25] as well as with those

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[24] The very extensive literature on Dada in general, and Berlin Dada in particular, includes accounts by partipants, such as Grosz, Richter, Mehring, Huelsenbeck, secondary sources such as Timothy O. Benson, Raoul Hausmann and Berlin Dada, Ann Arbor: UMI Research press, 1987 or Hanne Bergius, Das Lachen Dadas, Giessen: Anabas, 1989. In all of these accounts, Heartfield figures among the key participants.

[25] The History of Photography (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, revised and enlarged edition, 1982, pp. 210-212). Heartfield's montage technique is described in a chapter entitled "In Quest of Form," and is situated between the English Victorian "combination" works of H.P. Robinson or Oscar Rejlander and the "wholly..original dynamism" of work by Alexander Rodchenko and El Lissitzky. Aaron Scharf's Art and Photography (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1968, 1974, 282-284) gives a far more comprehensive and thoughtful accound of important differences between Heartfield's work and that of other Berlin Dadaists, as well as drawing a persuasive comparison between it and Surrealist photomontage; again, it is based primarily on Heartfield's Dada work. Naomi Rosenblum, in A World History of Photography (New York: Abbeville, 1984), first mentions Heartfield in connection with the development of photomontage as an artist's technique (397), then later notes that by publishing his work he adapted this technique to a different--non-elite--audience and an instructional, rather than esthetic purpose (468).

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writers concerned to establish Heartfield as the inventor of photomontage,[26] that is, to resolve the vexed question of priority.[27] Those who wrote in an East German context at approximately the same time, on the other hand, tended to concentrate on the book jacket designs and photomontages, that is, on the more explicitly Communist work, and to explain, or even actually "excuse" the Dada episode as a youthful, not yet fully disciplined stage in the artist's development. This is the general position taken by Wieland, for example, in his postwar writing.

The timing of significant events in Heartfield's reception, too, corresponded to the state of political tension between East and West. In the United States, for example, a spate of

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[26] Dawn Ades, in Photomontage (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), treats this issue in her opening discussion. In a subsequent section, she goes on to discuss the later newspaper photomontages, without resolving the substantial differences between the two.

[27] This issue of who invented photomontage has been debated often, the prime contenders being Raoul Hausmann and Heartfield. In fact, photomontage was a common feature of both advertising and commercial photography well before W.W.I. Sergei Tretyakow took this for granted in his monograph on Heartfield, published in 1936; Sally Stein has more recently investigated early commercial photomontage more thoroughly ("The Composite Photographic Image and the Composition of Consumer Ideology") Art Journal (Spring, 1991), 39-45. A concise and fair-minded summary of the issues is given by Christopher Phillips in his "Introduction" to the exhibition catalogue Montage and Modern Life 1919-1942, Matthew Teitelbaum, ed., Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992, 22.

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three Heartfield exhibitions just before and during W.W. II[28] was followed by nearly forty years--spanning the height of the Cold War --in which his work was not seen at all. Since 1980[29], however, in the context of a broader awareness and concern with the political conditions in which art is made, seen, and discussed, Heartfield has become more familiar to American audiences, appearing in a wide variety of contexts, often as the representative par excellence of a "political artist."[30] The growth in reputation was formally registered

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[28] The 1938 exhibition was instigated by George Grosz in collaboration with the artist's son, Tom Heartfield, both of whom were living in the New York area at the time. It was held at the A.C.A. Gallery under the auspices of the Photo League. The Photo League newsletter contains perfunctory records of two more exhibitions over the next few years, persumably of the same materials.

[29] The impetus for the exhibition seems to have come from John Coplans at the Akron Museum of Art. Coplans was able to borrow 75 photomontages from the collection of Marco Pinkus in Zurich, and to engage Beth Irwin Lewis to curate an exhibition of this work at Akron; in the summer of 1979, the work was shown at the Jewish Museum in New York. Twenty-seven of them were later shown in connection with a more comprehensive exhibition at the University of Minnesota (Grosz/Heartfield: the Artist as Social Critic, exh. cat., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980.), 1 October - 8 November 1980.

[30] At The Vancouver Conference on Modernism (March 12 - 14, 1981), for example, when a member of the audience asked the activist art historian and photographer Allan Sekula "What ...would you propose as an ideologically correct use of the photographic medium? What work or what artist or what photographer?" Sekula answered, "...I think of the work of John Heartfield..." (Modernism and Modernity: the Vancouver Conference Papers, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, et. al., eds., Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983, 156). In a much different context, although once again as an instance of "political" art, Peter Bürger used two Heartfield montages to illustrate the difficulties in using photomontage in developing his theory of avant-garde art (Theory of the Avant-Garde, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983, 75-77. First published as Theorie der

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in 1992, when three of the nation's most prominent museums--The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the San Fransciso Museum of Modern Art, and the Los Angeles County Museum--hosted a small travelling exhibition of materials[31] selected from the Heartfield centenary exhibition[32] (The centenary closed in May, 1992, following a year-long tour of Germany and Great Britain.).

The far more nuanced pattern of Heartfield's reception in East Germany and the East Block countries, on the other hand, showed Heartfield tending to reclaim public attention at moments of significant change in political consciousness concerning Germany, a pattern that sometimes extended to West Germany and England as well from the late 1960s. Heartfield's first retrospective, for example, took place in 1957, just as East Germany had begun to develop an independent identity within the East Block, and to define itself more assertively against the West. Wieland's biography of his brother, to be

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Avantgarde, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974).

[31] Rather than stressing the artist's political engagement, however, this selection spotlighted the hand-made, camera-ready boards for the photomontages, which had never been exhibited in this country before. The exhibition thus tacity attributed to Heartfield a unique touch, or sensiblity.

[32] Accompanying this selection of materials was an English-language version of the very extensive centenary exhibition catalogue, John Heartfield (see note 4. above). The English edition, containing my introductory essay for English-speakers, "Heartfield and Modern Art" and translations of the essays contributed by Honnef, Pachnicke, and Gaßner, was published by Harry N. Abrams, New York, in 1992.

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discussed more fully below, first appeared in 1962, just after the Berlin Wall was erected. Heartfield's 1991 centenary exhibition, finally, the most comprehensive and widely circulated exhibition with the most extensive catalogue of Heartfield's work to date,[33] coincided with another series of momentous events in German history, outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

In short, the questions under consideration here, namely whether, how, and to what extent the Heartfield literature cooperated or collaborated in the artist's own project, becomes decidedly more complex against the postwar background of deep ideological division. For although postwar commentators in general continued to "collaborate," that is, to link their various political positions to Heartfield's, they began to do so in at least two quite sharply different ways, according to the commentator's own circumstances: Western writers virtually always "translated" Heartfield's oppositional stance into the terms of conflicting interests within a single society, namely the writer's own; East German writers, on the other hand, Wieland being the most prominent among them, "updated" Heartfield's opposition in terms of an antagonism between the socialist East and the capitalist West.

Wieland's word on the subject of his brother has always had a

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[33] see note 1, above.

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unique authority. This rests, first, on a privileged knowledge of biographical detail, for Wieland was an "eyewitness" at almost every stage of his brother's life. Second, and perhaps even more importantly, Wieland functioned as a kind of authorized spokesman for his brother through most of their lives. Wieland's word, that is, largely replaces Heartfield's own in the reception literature. It represents the richest, and on biographical matters often the only source of information. Finally, Wieland's actual participation in the making of Heartfield's work was extensive. The fact was readily acknowledged by both the brothers and outside observers at all points. A contest over authorship did arise in the 1950s, in a country where the norms of Socialist Realism included a keen concern with artistic originality and authenticity. Even then it seems not to have involved the brothers themselves, but rather their heirs. Since the present study proposes Heartfield as a collaborative construction, in any case, Wieland's writing about his brother clearly represents not only a key source of information, but also the documentation of the primary, course-setting collaboration. Accordingly, this writing deserves close consideration here.

Wieland's earliest writing about his brother--comprised primarily of two letters from about 1913--was published nearly a half-century later, as part of the biography Leben und Werk.

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The first published writing concerning Heartfield, as opposed to Helmut, appeared, as described above, in the catalogue for the Erste Internationale Dada-Messe in 1920, and was more collaborative than constructive of Heartfield's identity. In the postwar period, however, Wieland embarked on what now seems a quite deliberate literary "construction" of John Heartfield--in conjunction, almost inevitably, with a construction of himself. The first collection of Wieland's autobiographical pieces appeared in 1949. Entitled Immergrün,[34] it contains a series of sketches of childhood events in which Helmut figures significantly, as well as the memoir "A Merchant from Holland," which narrates the story of the first meeting between Wieland and George Grosz.

Wieland's biography, John Heartfield: Leben und Werk, was initially envisioned as a solution to the problems caused by Heartfield's long isolation in exile, a way of reintroducing him to a post-war German audience. The brothers had begun discussing plans for the volume in letters, even before both had returned to Germany (Wieland was in New York until 1949). Wieland had accepted a professorship at the University of Leipzig, and so was assured of at least an income for the immediate future. But Helmut was returning to no certainties at all, making the volume all the more important.

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[34] The full title is Immergrün: Merkwürdige Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen eines fröhlichen Waisenknaben, Berlin and Leipzig (DDR): Aufbau-Verlag, 1949.

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More than a decade passed before the book actually appeared, a delay caused in part by Helmut's fragile health (he suffered two heart attacks in the the early 1950s), and in part by difficulties in assembling documentation, for he had had to leave everything behind when he left Berlin in 1933 and again when he left Prague in 1938. Compounding these problems was the rejection of his application for membership in the SED, which meant that he would get no pension and few opportunities for work. He was dependent on the generosity of his brother and other friends for support.

Amid a broad liberalization of cultural policies in East Germany in the mid-1950s, Heartfield was admitted to the party and to the state arts academy, the Akademie der Künste der DDR, in 1956. A large travelling exhibition of his work was mounted by the Academie the following year. In the meantime, his son Tom, living in New York, had returned some fifty preparatory boards for the photomontages that had been stored there since being exhibited in 1938. And when the exhibition travelled to Moscow the following year, Heartfield learned that two crates of his work--the contents of an exhibition held there in 1931--had been preserved, and would be forwarded to him in Berlin. By this time Heartfield's health had also stabilized, and work on the biography proceeded quickly.

Wieland had been a publisher for most of his life--he knew

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from long experience what would make a popular book: it is generously illustrated, the text is short, the writing clear and engaging. Above all, the shape of the story is familiar, for it formally resembles a traditional, even archaic artist's biography. Wieland constructed the artist as an individual of unique innate gifts who, overcoming much adversity, at length is recognized, and showered with justly deserved honors.[35] It departed from tradition inasmuch the artist's gift, rather than the more typical innate skill at painterly mimesis, is a "produktiver Jähzorn,"[36] a reservoir of energizing anger triggered by the sights and sounds of social injustice. Again departing from tradition, Herzfelde made clear elsewhere that his brother's distinctive "gift" was not a mysterious and inexplicable mark of godly favor, nor was it precisely innate. Rather it was the material consequence of childhood trauma, specifically the early and sudden loss of his mother. Wieland never explains, and apparently never recognized a need to explain, how his brother's emotional volatility was sublimated to the cause of world socialism. Both brothers seem to have experienced their political commitment and Party membership as obvious steps that did not require debate:

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[35] In their well-known book on artistic anecdote, Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz devote a chapter to the recurrent motifs and structures in representations of artists' lives from ancient Greek literature to the twentieth century. "The Heroization of the Artist in Biography," Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979, 13-60.).

[36] Leben und Werk, 18.

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> And the revolution of October, 1917, was an event to which we responded in the same way, having learned of it independently of one another--I was at Arras on the Western Front: it was a natural event that had to come, in Germany, too. The Bolshevists were fighting the fight of all humankind deserving of the name. We counted ourselves among them, to the great, international family of revolutionaries. No discussion was needed between us to join the Communist Party immediately after its founding on New Year's Eve, 1918.[37]

Rather than describing a process of political persuasion, that is, the Leben und Werk narrative constructs socialism as a family trait. Wieland here refers to the Party as a "great international family". Elsewhere he more specifically narrates the brothers' initial discovery of their parents' political background, of their uncle Joseph's socialist leanings ("Onkel Joseph," their father's brother, was a prosperous Berlin lawyer with whom the children had only very sporadic contact). Despite a lack of direct communication, then, the inherent family socialism "wills out" in father, brother and sons. In Leben und Werk, then--the only book on Heartfield which makes any attempt to relate the artist's life to work in any systematic way, the life remains more or less

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[37] Leben und Werk, 23. Und die russische Revolution im Oktober 1917 war ein Ereignis, auf das wir, als wir davon erfuhen unabhängig voneindander--ich lag bei Arras an der Westfront--auf gleiche Weise reagierten: Sie war für uns ein natürliches Ereignis, das kommen mußte, auch in Deutschland. Die Bolschewisten kämpften den Kampf aller Menschen, die diesen Namen verdienten. Wir zählten uns zu ihnen, zur großen internationalen Familie der Revolutionäre. Es bedurfte keiner Diskussion zwischen uns, um der Kommunistischen Partei sogleich nach ihrer Gründung beizutreten, in der Silvesternacht 1918.

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an effect of an "innate" political conviction.

A narrative as clear and logical as Wieland's biography inevitably required many omissions and simplifications. Perhaps most significantly, Heartfield's relationship to the Communist Party is characterized simply as lifelong loyalty: there is no discussion of the suspicion that attached to him in Party circles as a result of his participation in Berlin Dada, no suggestion that the dangers to which he had been exposed--the harrowing, last-minute nature of his escapes from Berlin in 1933, and again from Prague in 1938--were caused by anything other than his own selfless desire to help the cause. There is no mention in the book of Willi Münzenberg, the flamboyant Comintern reresentative and media entrepreneur who fell out with the Party in 1938, although Heartfield's long and extremely productive association with Münzenberg's press, the NDV, embraced the collaboration with Kurt Tucholsky on Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles as well as the entire body of photomontages in the A.-I.-Z. The six-year delay in Heartfield's admission to the Akademie der Künste after his return from England (membership in the Akademie constituted the best, perhaps the only possibility of financial security and recognition in the DDR) is explained by way of the conservatism of the voting membership, i.e., painters unwilling to extend equity to a photomontagist, or by an overly strict understanding of "formalism," the term

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associated with George Lukács's blanket condemnation of the interwar avant-garde in the Expressionist debates mentioned earlier. Finally, the complete dearth of commissions for critical work in the DDR asks for clarification. Recent critics have suggested that the Party issued an unofficial "Berufsverbot," a direct injunction against Heartfield's engagement in political criticism; Wieland didn't mention it.

Wieland represented his brother as an artist within these boundaries. It meant at least qualifying all relationships to artists and movements of the established European avant-garde. According to Wieland, Heartfield had never been sympathetic to Expressionism; his participation in Dada had been a brief, rebellious stage in his development, a youthful flouting of all authority with the positive purpose of establishing an independent identity more firmly for the future; a hard-headed realist in the tradition of Hogarth and Daumier, he had had nothing in common with the inward-looking, dream-obsessed Surrealists, either.

Wieland was always clear about the political goals of his writing, and never apologetic about the need to simplify or omit things in order to achieve those goals. He set forth the logic of his views with characteristic force in his foreword to the third edition of the biography. Having noted the

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recent appearance of Krieg im Frieden,[38] a volume which included Friedrich Pfäfflin's first attempt at a complete bibliography of Heartfield's photomontages, he explains why Pfäffin's work was not included in this new edition of his own volume:

> I, like my brother, had and have no interest in lexical thoroughness. Rather we made a selection in keeping with political and artistic criteria. Our interest, as was emphasized in the first edition and repreated at the end of the preface to the second edition, was "to promote that which must happen today and tomorrow if the world is to be and remain inhabitable."[39]

Writing in 1976, Herzfelde seems already to have become impatient with deviations from the "correct" historical treatment of his brother's work: any exhibition or publication, he implies, should always be what the biography itself is, namely an effort "zu begeistern"--to inspire, or motivate viewers to action that will effect social and

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[38] Friedrich Pfaffin, ed., Krieg im Frieden. Fotomontagen zur Zeit 1930-1938. Munich: Hanser-Verlag, 1972.

[39] Wieland Herzfelde, John Heartfield. Leben und Werk, dargestellt von seinem Bruder Wieland Herzfelde, (paperback edition), Berlin (West): deb, 1986, 8. The paperback edition is unchanged from the third edition, Berlin DDR, 1976; Both the third and the second (Berlin, 1970) editions represent revised and expanded versions of the first (Dresden, 1962). ... ich bin und war, wie mein Bruder, nicht daran interessiert, lexikalische Vollständigkeit zu erzielen. Wir trafen vielmehr eine Auswahl unter politischen und künstlerischen Gesichtspunkten. Es kam uns darauf an, wie in der ersten Auflage betont und im Schlusswort der Vorbemerkung der zweiten Auflage widerholt wird, "zu begeistern für das, was heute und morgen geschehen muss, damit die Erde bewohnbar wird und bewohnbar bleibt."

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political change. In his estimation, this goal even justified actual changes in the works themselves.[40] In the text, too, Herzfelde describes other kinds of efforts Heartfield made in the last years of his life--radio interviews, gallery talks, group discussions--to insure that his exhibitions would always function as "kulturpolitischen Ereignisse."[41]

The particular historical catastrophe Heartfield experienced and represented--the rise of fascism in Europe between the wars--lived on in such sheer infamy as to retain an extraordinary degree of familiarity for later audiences. It was therefore possible for Heartfield enthusiasts to go on arguing, as the brothers themselves had, that the work was "leider noch aktuell" ("regrettably still current"), that its political message still was, and would remain, translatable into the terms of the immediate political situation wherever and whenever the work might be seen. It was a view that overtly marginalized the works' status as art, even as it reasserted, in another form, something of great art's alleged "timelessness." It tended, that is, to reduce the scope of Heartfield's accomplishment to the representation of a

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[40] In 1962, in preparing images to accompany the new biography, Wieland and Helmut collaboratively updated quite a number of the photomontages, replacing names and events that had been familiar to audiences thirty earlier with more current references. In the entries for the catalogue raisonné, John Heartfield: AIZ/VI 1930-38, David Evans gives detailed information about which montages were altered.

[41] Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 126.

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political standpoint. Wieland's privileged knowledge, engaging writing style and reliable scholarship themselves lent considerable weight to this perspective. The book would remain the definitive construction of Heartfield for many years.

Wieland's subsequent commentary about his brother--articles, catalogue essays, and interviews--generally amplified the views presented in Leben und Werk or defended against false constructions of the events. The most detailed and significant of these later writings is the memoir "George Grosz, John Heartfield, Erwin Piscator, Dada und die Folgen--oder die Macht der Freundschaft,"[42]
which traces the interaction among the intimate group of four.

Heartfield's actual position in official East German Kulturpolitik was surely very complex and contradictory--he somehow went from outright rejection by the Party in 1950 to celebratory status in 1956. Relevant records are only beginning to become available now. In any case the image that was presented for export to the West during the 1960s and 1970s was, somewhat ironically from a Western standpoint, that of a "classic," widely-cited and praised, but not too closely examined and not, as Wieland Herzfelde pointed out, really influential. Evans has suggested that Heartfield helped to

[42] Sinn und Form 23:6 (1971) 1224-1251.

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legitimate the East German regime by representing a tradition of antifascism stretching, unbroken, from the 1920s into the 1960s.[43] For this purpose, Heartfield's work needed to be positioned positively: within East German society itself, that is, it "read" as art contributing to social unity.

Heartfield died in the spring of 1968, as the student movements were gaining momentum in West Germany, France, and the United States. West German students suddenly rediscovered John Heartfield. On several occasions they selected images to enlarge to poster size, to carry on standards in street demonstrations.

In direct contrast to the prevailing East German understanding of Heartfield's work as contributing to social unity, that is, radical West German students enlisted him as a model of internal social opposition. In choosing Heartfield, they strategically alluded to the opposition between West Germany and its most clear and present political "other" at that time, namely the East, but within a discourse on artistic, rather than direct political practice. They did not, that is, actually engage the Communist nation's current political perspectives. In other Western nations, where Heartfield's ongoing affiliation with the Communist "enemy" had less direct political import, it still implicitly enhanced his force as an oppositional model. Particularly in the United States, where

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[43] Evans, John Heartfield, xv.

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details of the artist's actual historical practice remain most obscure, Heartfield has surfaced almost exclusively in the context of attempts to theorize a politically oppositional artistic practice.

An East-West political polarization was reflected in the more recent exhibition history of Heartfield's work as well. From 1956 on, the East German Academy of Arts organized Heartfield exhibitions broadly in keeping with the aims Wieland set forth in the biography. Uniformly modest in scale, they conveyed a political message: the anti-capitalist artist, once the enemy of Hitler, had become the enemy of a decadent capitalist West and a loyal citizen of the East. To this message, neither Heartfield's very early nor his very late work was usually deemed relevant: the book jackets and photomontages of the 1920s and 1930s were the heart of the matter, and it was these that formed the body of exhibitions that circulated with regularity through the Warsaw Pact nations, and occasionally to Western Europe as well. In the meantime, in accordance with his wish, the John-Heartfield-Archiv was created, which took over all his work, letters, notes, photographs--even his library and art collection. It was initially administrated by the artist's widow Gertrud, known to intimates as "Tutti".

Among the students who rediscovered Heartfield and were befriended by his widow in the late 1960s was a fledgling art

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historian, Eckhard Siepmann, whose 1972 masters thesis[44] evolved, in 1977, into the first substantial new treatment of Heartfield since the Herzfelde biography fifteen years earlier. The work suffers from the multiplicity of aims: it is at once a collection of historical documents, a theoretical statement about the position of montage in art history, and a declaration of solidarity with the working class, which includes an open exhortation to young artists to adopt montage as a technique of political intervention. But in addition to providing a great deal of new information, including several historical documents that are still unavailable elsewhere, Siepmann was the first to seriously raise, and begin to answer, questions regarding Heartfield's achievements as an artist. Siepmann's bibliography of Heartfield's work is still the most extensive available (although he cautioned then that it was not complete); he also included a list of exhibitions and a bibliography of Heartfield's own writings, secondary literature, and related books and articles.

Rather than mustering information in support of a coherent representation of a political activist, as Herzfelde had done, Siepmann's own text--interspersed at intervals among the many

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[44] Eckhard Siepmann, "Heartfields 'Millionen'--Montage. Zur Dialektik von politischer Intention und künstlicher Technik," masters thesis, Technische Hochschule, Berlin, 1972 (unpublished typescript). Cited in Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield. vom Club Dada zur Arbeiter-Illustrierten Zeitung, Berlin (West): Elephanten Press Verlag, 1977.

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historical documents--is concerned with building art into a left activist political position. Instead of arguing from a study of Heartfield's work to a conclusion about what the work achieves, for example, Siepmann took it as a premise that Heartfield was the premier practitioner of photomontage. It remained, then, to establish photomontage as the last phase of a radical break with bourgeois art. Against the rationally organized image inherited from the Renaissance, with its coherent ordering of space and time, its status as a hand-made product of a single individual, montage introduced the disjunctive combination of "real-life" fragments, an image embodying the discontinuous perception, the "shocks" associated with mechanically accelerated movement and communication in modernity. Heartfield then appears as the heroic explorer of a new visual age:

> Anyone who wants to do justice to Heartfield must see him in historical perspective. The two lines formed by this perspective are, on the one hand, the history of democratic pictorial agitation and progaganda, and on the other, the development of montage technique in communications media. John Heartfield stands at the intersection of these two lines.[45]

The weaknesses in this construction become apparent in

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[45] Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield, 196. Wer Heartfield gerecht werden will, muss ihn in historischer Perspektive sehen. Die beiden Linien, die diese Perspektive bilden, sind zum einen die Geschichte der demokratischen Bildagitation und -propaganda, zum anderen die Entwicklung der Montagetechnik in den Kommunikationsmitteln. John Heartfield steht historisch im Schnittpunkt dieser Linien.

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comparison with a work that appeared the year after Siepmann's, Annegret Jürgens-Kirchhoff's Technik und Tendenz der Montage.[46] In a far more tightly-focussed discussion of montage, Jürgens-Kirchhoff denied that montage per se could be assigned to any particular political tendency. Instead, she argued for a continuum of possible practices, ranging from that of Schwitters--fully reconciled to bourgeois expectations of sensual enjoyment, harmony, coherence, salability in a work of art--to that of Heartfield--revolutionary in its effort to make those expectations conscious, and so provide the conditions for a critical response.

Both Siepmann and Jürgens-Kirchhoff identified Heartfield primarily as the practitioner of a technique, and both were concerned with integrating that technique into a larger theoretical structure. In contrast to Jürgens-Kirchhoff, however, Siepmann treated montage as one single, more or less homogeneous entity. He can therefore speak of montage's relationship to art only in terms of an opposition, or more exactly of montage superceding art as a more adequate representation of modern life. "Bourgeois" art history--almost everything written so far--then, becomes irrelevant. Siepmann expands Marx's well-known dismissal, "Kunstgeschichte gibt es nicht," for example, into justification for assigning

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[46] Annagret Jürgens-Kirchhoff, Technik und Tendenz der Montage in der bildenden Kunst des 20.Jahrhunderts, Giessen: Anabas, 1978.

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Heartfield a place in art history on the basis of his innovations in mass media, i.e., for not relating his work to his biography (although he does include a considerable amount of biographical information in the book), not tracing iconographic connections, not comparing or contrasting it with the work of other artists at all:

> When Marx says that there is no such things as art history, he means that art does not develop from itself--and this in two respects: neither with regard to the origin of an individual work nor to the development from one artist to the next.[47]

In rejecting the idea of an internally-driven history of art, however, Siepmann also held himself aloof from a series of other questions--originality, for example, and development within an oeuvre--which are of particular interest in Heartfield's case. Ironically, that is, because he rejected the structure in which to question it, Siepmann largely accepts and perpetuates the image of the traditional artist inherited from Wieland Herzfelde, namely of an inherently admirable individual acting independently, creating an oeuvre over which he wields legitimate proprietary rights, moving from obscurity through obstacles to fame.

Jürgens-Kirchhoff, on the other hand, defined her topic not as

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[47] Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield, 196. Wenn Marx sagt, dass es die Kunstgeschichte gar nicht gibt, dann meint er, dass die Kunst nicht aus sich selbst heraus entwickelt--und das in doppelter Hinsicht: weder was die Entstehung des einzelnen Werkes, noch was die Entwicklung von einem Künstler zum "folgenden" angeht.

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Heartfield, but as montage, a technique whose relationship to modern art she takes to be at issue. More exactly, she starts from the premise that Heartfield's work--as well as Schwitters's--is avant-garde, i.e., modern. This brings her into a direct conflict with the theory of the avant-garde introduced by Peter Bürger four years earlier,[48] for Bürger had discussed Heartfield specifically as an example of what was not avant garde. Bürger defined an avant garde work as, first "inorganic," rather than "organic" in formal structure, and secondly, as opposing, rather than cooperating with art institutions of its moment. He finds Heartfield's montages, which disguise the breaks between the constituent photographs by careful airbrushing and integration into a pictorial unit, insufficiently recognizable as montage to qualify as a challenge to the norms of a harmonious, unified artwork.

Introducing as evidence Heartfield's role within an actual historical attempt at revolution, Jürgens-Kirchhoff undermines Bürger's argument at several points. The terms "Technik" and "Tendenz," of her title are drawn from Walter Benjamin's use of them in his well-known lecture of 1934, "Der Autor als Produzent"[49]. There, Benjamin contends that political tendency is inseparable from technique, that the question of

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[48] Peter Burger, Theorie der Avantgarde, Frankfurt/M., 1974.

[49] Walter Benjamin, "Der Autor als Produzent," Versuche über Brecht, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967.

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quality is legitimately asked only within a larger social framework, i.e., how, for whom, and to what purpose does the work function? Instead of defining avant-garde in terms of formal characteristics, Jürgens-Kirchhoff defines it in terms of a work's address to a viewer. Schwitters may be considered within a bourgeois avant-garde, she concludes, and may expand a viewer's perception of real objects, but he does not challenge the autonomy of an independent, integrated viewing subject or the unconflicted, pleasurable apprehension of those objects. Heartfield, on the other hand, forces the viewer to consider breaks or conflicts in the reality he or she perceives, thus opening up a space for critical reconsideration. On this basis, Jürgens-Kirchhoff places Heartfield--in fact, constructs for him--a "realist," non-bourgeois avant garde. Her book remains, of course, primarily a study of montage, and only secondarily of Heartfield. Yet it is the most historically specific assessment of his work to date. It is also the only one to acknowledge the difficulties in accommodating Heartfield to available modernist categories (e.g. "avant-garde").

Siepmann's essay, and to a lesser extent Jürgens-Kirchhoff's and Bürger's discussions of Heartfield, belong to a Western discussion of montage that arose in West Germany in the 1970s, and that grasped Heartfield's work primarily as a model for revolutionary artistic practice in the present. This framing

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of Heartfield's relevance arose among postwar art and art history students dissatisfied with what seemed an unacceptably self-absorbed, politically isolated art practice of the time. The Heartfield/Herzfelde model for the work's continuing relevance, resting on the reframing of contemporary events as the evil of capitalism-fascism countered by the good of communism--had never really been workable in a West Berlin substantially defined by its alliance to Western capital; the new model proposed that Heartfield's method--photomontage--might be employed in a socially oppositional way in the present. This remains today the framework within which Heartfield's historical significance is most widely understood in the West.[50] Certain Western European graphic artists in particular--Peter Kennard in England or Klaus Staek in Germany perhaps most prominent among them--have consciously stayed quite close to Heartfield's model in formal respects, employing photomontage techniques in black and white, recontextualizing fragments of current news reports in such a way as to turn or reverse their meaning, seeking mass-media venues.

East German Heartfield reception after Leben und Werk was, by contrast to West German, keenly concerned with historical context. To mark Heartfield's ninetieth birthday in 1981, for

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[50] David Evans and Sylvia Gohl, Photomontage: a Political Weapon, London: Gordon Fraser, 1986; Douglas Kahn, John Heartfield: Art and Mass Media, New York: Tanam, 1985.

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example, Roland März, curator of modern art at the Nationalgalerie in East Berlin, published two essays and a book of documents that substantially enlarged the framwork for Heartfield's reception. In the brief text in Daumier und Heartfield: Politische Satire im Dialog[51], which accompanied an exhibition of works by both artists at the Nationalgalerie, März called attention to a striking formal and iconographic similarity between certain Heartfield images and selected precedents of Daumier. He argued further for analagous political impetus and intention by comparing France of the July Monarchy with Germany of the Weimar Republic. Both Daumier and Heartfield, he contended, employed the most technically advanced mass-media technology of their respective times to combat political injustice. März's other short text of the same year is primarily an iconographic study devoted entirely to a single work, the 1932 photomontage "Der Sinn von Genf: Wo das Kapital lebt, kann der Friede nicht leben!"[52] Showing a dove skewered on a bayonette, it is quite probably the best-known of all Heartfield's images. In his study, März traced the facture of this particular image based on a close examination of sketches and the hand-marked preparatory board, then linked the representation of the dove to doves that appear in other Heartfield photomontages, as well as in a wide

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[51] März, Daumier und Heartfield, 1981.

[52] Roland März, Der Sinn von Genf: Wo das Kapital lebt, kann der Friede nicht leben! 1932 Fotomontage, Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 1981.

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range of earlier and later painting, sculpture and art photography and mosaic.

Finally, in a book of more than 600 pages, also of 1981, März, in cooperation with Gertrud Heartfield, provided a comprehensive, chronologically organized and annotated collection of documents by and about Heartfield. The book, John Heartfield: der Schnitt entlang der Zeit, both opened new issues and provided far more extensive information about some existing ones. Among März's notable successes was the discovery of a number of Heartfield's own statements, for example the text of the interview with Francis Klingender from 1944, in which Heartfield looks back on his own career. März included, for the first time, the Communist Party's chastening response to Heartfield's early Dada-related texts, as well as some of the literature debating photomontage in the context of Russian Communism in the early 1930s. There is substantial discussion of Heartfield's work for the theater in the 1920s, his book design, his exhibitions in the late 1920s and early 1930s, his expanding reputation as a graphic designer. März's book reproduces detailed documentation of the three episodes of Nazi censorship in connection with the Mánes Union in Prague. It expands documentation available in Herzfelde or Siepmann on the exhibition of Heartfield's work held in Paris in 1935, and that held in New York in 1938. There are discussions by contemporary artists and critics, offering

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newer perspectives on Heartfield's work as well.[53] März's book, in short, although it remains a collection of documents rather than a study of Heartfield's work, exhibits much of the very "lexikalische Vollständigkeit" that had held so little interest for Wieland Herzfelde. It begins, carefully and systematically, to consider Heartfield as a distinct historical figure.

By the time plans for a centenary exhibition were initiated in 1988, then, some marks of a rapprochement between the Western and Eastern understandings of Heartfield were already in place, notably in regard to the question of "lexikalische Vollständigkeit." It was at this time that the English scholar David Evans was admitted to the Heartfield-Archiv for some five months of study, in order to prepare a catalogue raisonne of the A.-I.-Z. photomontages. Evans's essay does not depart significantly from interpretations available in German sources. The most significant contribution of this volume,[54] fully illustrated with high-quality reproductions and translations of the photomontage texts, is exactly its thoroughness. It constructs a substantial, reliable scholarly

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[53] None of the documents cover Heartfield's own, the Malik Verlag's or the NDV's relationship to the Party in these years, nor is there any discussion of Heartfield's relationship to the SED after his return in 1950.

[54] David Evans, John Heartfield: AIZ/VI 1930-1938, New York: Kent Fine Arts, 1992.

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basis for continuing studies of the photomontages.[55]

It was in the late 1980s, too, that the East German Heartfield-Archiv personnel began talking with West German arts administrators about plans for the centenary exhibition. Apparently they had no difficulty agreeing that it should be a retrospective exhibition, and as comprehensive and thorough as possible. By contrast to the pattern of Heartfield exhibitions up to that point, that is, the centenary did aim, if not at "lexical thoroughness," then at least at a comprehensive representation of each major segment of Heartfield's career, including the time in England and the period after his return to the DDR in 1950. This chronological rigor meant that the range of purpose and uneven success of Heartfield's work as a whole would become more apparent than it had ever been before. Reframing the exhibition's subject more broadly as the production of one person, rather than the statement of one political position, further supported an unprecedented emphasis on Heartfield's facture.

In many highly visible ways, then, the centenary exhibition adopted the values of ambitious Western European exhibitions: it treated Heartfield's work not as the means to a specified

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[55] Nancy Roth, "John Heartfield: AIZ/VI 1930-1938" [review of David Evans, John Heartfield: AIZ/VI 1930-1938] Print Collector's Newsletter, 23:6 (Jan.-Feb. 1993), 239-241.

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political end, but as an artistic oeuvre. The exhibition was large, expensive, and keenly concerned to appear advanced and progressive, to present Heartfield in a fresh, challenging light. The work was selected and organized so as to enable visitors to appreciate a broad coherence over an entire lifetime of work, high level of craft, and particular sensitivity to the visual--all values utterly new to the Heartfield reception.

And yet, taken as a whole, the centenary exhibition seems to have simply asserted a coherence in Heartfield's oeuvre, as if enough archival diligence in assembling work from all periods would inevitably yield a coherent picture. The catalogue contained nothing from either of the two best-established Heartfield scholars--Eckhardt Siepmann and Roland März--and instead presented an eclectic range of statements treating a range of new or previously obscure aspects of Heartfield's career: his individual role in Berlin Dada, his place in the Film and Foto exhibition, his standing within the Russian debate on photomontage about 1930-1, the iconography of death that permeates his work, his direct encounters with the National Socialists, his postwar stage designs.[56] There is

[56] A supplementary volume to the catalogue has recently appeared as well. John Heartfield: Dokumentation; Reaktionen auf eine ungewöhnliche Ausstellung, Klaus Konnef, Petra Albrecht, eds., [a publication of the Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin, and the Landschaftsverbandes Rheinland], Cologne: DuMont, 1994. This includes essays on the exhibition's reception in New York and Los Angeles, on Heartfield's film work, and a

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a biographical essay as well, but in a highly schematic chronological format, unrelated to any of the narrative texts. The essays suggest so many elaborations around such a supposed central core, a consensus about the artist that is already in place; and yet there really is no such consensus, nor are these extremely diverse texts likely to lead in that direction.

As the exhibition travelled from Berlin to Hannover, Bonn, and Tübingen in 1991-2, many German critics objected that the exhibition had "museumized," or "embalmed" the artist.[57] They pointed to the exhibition's unprecedented focus on the camera-ready, hand-crafted "original" art, the enormous, lavishly-illustrated and expensive catalogue, the atypical, apolitical image (a huge bird's wing against a star-lit sky made during Heartfield's 11-year exile in London) used to promote the project[58]. In pressing Heartfield into the mold

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bibliographical essay, among others.

[57] Eugen Blume, Klaus Staek, Eckart Gillen, Gerhard Steidl, Rob Moonen, Christoph Tannert, Ludo Slagmolen, "Good Bye Johnny!," BZ [Berliner Zeitung] May 30, 1991, 17; Michael Nungesser, "Flugel statt Schere: Ab in den burgerlichen Kunsthimmel!" Die Zeit, June 7, 1991, 17.

[58] Among the images made in English exile was the one selected for the catalogue cover. Many critics singled it out as emblematic of everything that was wrong with the exhibition: it was in color, when practically everything Heartfield did was black-and-white (Staek refers to the "color"--shades of grey, blue, brown in the preparatory boards); it had no identifiable political meaning, when practically everything else Heartfield ever made did have such meaning; it "packaged" the exhibition in the manner of consumer products, when Heartfield had always avoided making marketable

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of a bourgeois artist, they argued, the exhibition had effectively masked the force of his work. Among the most vehement of these critics was Klaus Staek. In a signed, published statement,[59] Staek not only accused organizers of the exhibition of turning the DDR's master of agitation art into a "verkappten Romantiker," but went on to accuse the editors and above all the publishers of the catalogue, DuMont Buchverlag, Cologne, of misrepresenting Heartfield in order to increase their own profits. The most serious charge was that DuMont had forced another press, Leipzig Editions, to postpone publication of the East German curator and scholar Roland März's most recent book, Heartfield montiert,[60] in order to

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objects.

[59] The statement has six other signatures in addition to Staek's: Eugen Blume, Klaus Staek, Eckart Gillen, Gerhard Steidl, Rob Moonen, Christoph Tannert, Ludo Slagmolen, "Good Bye Jonny!" BZ [Berliner Zeitung] May 30, 1991, 17.

[60] More modestly-scaled, yet nearly as expensive as the centenary catalogue, Heartfield montiert:1930-1938 was finally published in April, 1993. And even though it had actually been completed earlier, it seemed like a East German scholar's patient rejoiner to the centenary catalogue: it built on the author's own earlier work, expanding into several relationships that had been explored earlier by Siepmann, namely Surrealism and film; it explicitly rejected "lexical thoroughness" and reinstated the photomontages as the central issue and the subject of the book; it did not really arrive at any new perspective on Heartfield. März employed the word "montieren" to both refer to Heartfield's method and to describe the book's own operation, a montaging of various perspectives on the photomontages--their way of "citing" historical facts, their place in the history of caricature, their relationship to film, their difference from Surrealist montages. And yet rather than "montaging" these perspectives in Heartfield's sense, that is, shaping the segments precisely in scale and value to a specific place in an integrated final image, März rather loosely "superimposed" one over the other. He made no connection between caricature and Surrealism, or between caricature and the idea of

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avoid competition for sales. DuMont, through its representative Karin Thomas, countered that the arrangement had been a "compromise solution" between the two presses, and that in any case März had turned down an invitation to to co-edit the exhibition volume as the project began.[61]

As a designer who considers photomontage a valid medium of political intervention in the present and whose loyalty to Heartfield runs deep, Staek's engagement with these issues was unusually intense, perhaps, and his tactics extrordinarily oppositional. But many other critics voiced similar objections. Nor is the underlying tension that fueled these arguments new: it has, as outlined above, informed Heartfield's Western reception since the time of Germany's division. Ostensibly it is an argument over whether Heartfield's work should be valued primarily for its efficacy in changing minds and hearts, or for its esthetic value as a particular choice and treatment of materials--i.e., as politics or as art. From this standpoint, the centenary exhibition had at last realized a threat that was palpable from the moment Heartfield began to exhibit his work, namely that the work might be "aestheticized," and rendered

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"citation"--excising bits of image and text from one context and embedding them in another--and no unified conclusion results. Heartfield remains, as before, dispersed among a variety of discourses, his historical significance fragmented.

[61] Pan-Aktuell, June 28, 1991.

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politically irrelevant.

From another perspective, however, this entire polemic--esthetics in opposition to political efficacy--emerges as symptomatic of postwar modernism in the West. For in the East, where Heartfield lived the last twelve years of his life as an honored professor, no such argument developed. There, his work embodied social solidarity--art in the support of existing political relationships. Given his impeccable prewar credentials as anti-fascist and anti-capitalist, this position was essentially unassailable. He could be read as oppositional only with respect to foreign enemies, such as the United States or West Germany.

A number of other critical voices demonstrated a more acute sense of the historical moment by seeking the specific possibilities available to viewers looking at Heartfield again in 1991. Some expressed satisfaction that the beleaguered Heartfield, so long relegated to a rather dry slot as a "political" artist, had at last earned his overdue reward, had been recognized as a "real" artist; others contended that with this exhibiton, Heartfield could finally be pronounced "dead," that the terms within which his work had once had meaning and impact--identity of capitalism with fascism and the opposition of both to Communism--no longer applied, and that the basis for its interest for contemporary viewers had disappeared.

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And a few times, in passing, some critics gave voice to a genuinely new regret, namely that the exhibition had given so little consideration to Heartfield's biography, usually so central to a retrospective exhibition. For decades, this artist had been essentially reduced to a political message in the East, a means of social opposition in the West. Simply by being a retrospective, that is, the centenary had framed a new subject: rather than either Heartfield the master of oppositional photomontage or Heartfield the true, "lifelong" Communist, this exhibition proposed something new, namely a "whole" Heartfield, an historical figure whose Dada antics, book jacket designs, political photomontages, and theater sets, spanning over a half-century, constituted an oeuvre, literally a lifetime of work. It was arguably the first time the biographical underpinnings of such an oeuvre could be missed.

Despite the exhibition organizers' undoubted thoroughness and exacting scholarship in documenting each aspect of the artist's career, in any case, a three-dimensional, historical figure failed to materialize. Strangely, for example, the subject of the exhibition appears to have had no childhood worthy of note, no youthful or student work; he suddenly appears in 1916 as a twenty-five year-old man, quite clear about his commitment to type, photographs, and reproduction

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technologies. Nor, in room after room of work, was any mark of recognizably "subjective" artistic expression to be seen--no hand-made marks,[62] no "private" symbolism, no experimental play with media. Marked changes in the work, notably the dramatic break occasioned by his flight to England, are fully explainable through external circumstances, a shift in work opportunities, rather than anything like a change of perspective--of heart. From Dada periodical layouts and collages (the exhibition included a full-scale, complete reconstruction of the 1920 Dada fair), to late stage designs made in the DDR, the work always related to photographs and texts; all testified to a consistent esthetic judgement, a consummate technical skill, a political commitment passionate enough to energize a lifetime of work. And yet the guiding figure itself, the unique artist one hopes to discover between the texts, work and commentary in a retrospective exhibition, remained flat, inaccessible. In place of sensual experience, there is moral fervor, instead of clues to a unique personal identity, the map of a political location. Heartfield emerges, finally, as too distant and abstract, too detached from sensual experience, too fully absorbed in his rhetoric to be quite convincing as an actual flesh-and-blood person. Tim

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[62] The camera-ready boards of the photomontages did contain hand-painted strokes. Since these served only to block off a specified area to be printed at a particular level of light or dark, however, and since the finished edition, rather than the board, was the image that finally reached its audience, these "strokes" never carried meanings remotely like those of painting.

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Hilton, writing for the London Guardian, wrote of the exhibition:

> I didn't see that it could be anywhere else than in an art gallery, but still we are looking at an archive rather than at art. The aesthetic interest is soon exhausted. The real lessons of the works on the walls is in their circumstances. This is why the show makes one want to read a good biography of Heartfield...I think Heartfield's life should be written by someone who doesn't worry about art and is able to lament the downfall of communist hope.[63]

The following study is not the biography Hilton wanted to read; it does, however, address the gaps, the flatness, the disappointment that prompted these observations. For it contends that the difficulty in grasping a "whole" Heartfield, in sensing a three-dimensional, historical person behind the various texts that construct him, is neither the "fault" of the exhibition organizers nor a problem that might be solved in some still more systematic study of Heartfield's entire work. This study rather asserts the historical absence of any such figure. The immediate evidence for this proposition includes the invented status of the name "Heartfield," the abrupt and permanent change in professional activity that accompanied it, the constantly collaborative nature of this artist's work at all points, the near-total relegation of all statements about the work to others, notably to Wieland, and finally, the failure of even this very conscientious

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[63] Tim Hilton, "Eloquent collage of negatives," The Guardian (London) August 20, 1992.

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retrospective to produce a convincing link between life and work.

Although Heartfield did not write about himself, what he did actually say, in his own sporadic writing, confirms the conclusion. The first such pieces, "Der Kunstlump," in particular, bears all the marks of a Dada performance, a deliberate staging of antagonistic character whose "authenticity," in the sense of a link to a particular author, was certainly beside, if not directly antithetical to the point. Such difficulty in sensing an author could in this case be attributed to the collaborative nature of the writing, for "Der Kunstlump" was published as a collaboration with Grosz. But this staged, rhetorical character appears systematic throughout Heartfield's writing. The grounding of this condition in the relationship between the two Herzfeld brothers--a tacitly understood division of labor between writing and image-making--will be pursued in more detail in the following chapters. There is in any case a singular dearth of documented obeservations or reflections by Heartfield on his own development, any generalization about a unique, personal experience. The most complete--arguably the only--statement of his theory of montage, for example, was written by Sergei Tretjakow, as described above, and published only some five years after the fact. The statement, is about, as much as actually by Heartfield, mediated through a second

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author. Another important interview, with the English art historian Francis Klingender, took place in 1944, when Wieland was living in New York and so not available to "do the talking".[64] The text was in any case reconstructed from Klingender's notes. Like Tretjakow's monograph, that is, it represents a text mediated through a second author. Later, in the DDR, Heartfield also occasionally gave interviews, the transcripts of which always represent a collaboration between himself and the journalist.

The two texts of Heartfield's that are arguably the most revealing of his self-perception were published in 1937 and 1942, respectively. Both concern the nineteenth-century French caricaturist Honoré Daumier; more exactly, they assert an identity between Heartfield and Daumier. The second, in particular, creates a poetic image of ecstatic reunion between the living and dead figures, a sort of cross-temporal merging of artistic ambitions. In contrast to any attempt to establish a unique, distinctive artistic identity, that is, these texts work to dissolve, or merge one identity with another, to blur the boundaries of a definable, historical figure. Helmut Herzfeld, one might conclude, did not write at all, and John Heartfield wrote only in the interests of destabilizing his own identity. Or to put it in another way, not to represent his own work in written form was among

[64] März, Der Schnitt, 48, 57-63.

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Heartfield's defining features.

Heartfield's own writing, then, ultimately joins with his work and that of his commentators in constructing, rather than criticizing or reflecting on an artist. Clearly the image or idea that organized such an artist's work could not have been any exploration of inner character, perception, sensibility. Rather his success would have to be measured by some criterion that could, theoretically at least, involve many people, collaborators as well as audience, in the judgment. He himself and almost everyone who ever wrote about him identified this criterion as the work's political effect: by undermining Nazi propaganda efforts, we are given to understand, Heartfield's work effectively fought fascism.

It is clear from even a cursory reconsideration of the circumstances, however, that Heartfield's work was not effective in deterring fascists. There is no reliable report of even one "conversion" from fascism to Communism as a result of Heartfield's efforts; nor, certainly, did his work occasion any perceptible shift in the Nazis' hold on political power in Germany. It hardly seems likely that Heartfield's work even reached readers at the political center or right with any regularity. Appearing almost exclusively in Communist-oriented publications, it must necessarily have affected a left-oriented readership most regularly and deeply.

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Contemporary responses to his work, printed and otherwise, invariably expressed admiration, amusement or satisfaction, and came from this group as well. Heartfield's main effect, then, as I shall contend in this study, was not to confuse or embarrass fascists, as the artist himself and nearly all his commentators have so fervently contended; rather his work provided individual anti-fascists, who were mainly but not exclusively Communists, with a sense of group unity, historical continuity, and political legitimacy.

The achievement of this effect depended not only on the individual artist, but on collaborators and on an institution as well, for Heartfield always worked in the context of a press, theater, or film company. It depended, too, on extant images and texts, especially those constituting the mass-media news. In order to actually account for Heartfield, then, it becomes necessary to radically reposition the physical objects that remain--the book jackets, sketches for stage designs, the photomontages. No longer precisely "works" in the sense of goals in themselves, they appear as "properties," objects that "worked," or took effect within a larger, historically specific action. Heartfield's work was accomplished not only in writing, speech and photography, but in streetfights and committee meetings as well. It comprehended a range of actions regulated by a sort of script in which a situation, a set of purposes, values, and limitations are consistent. In

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preference to the idea of an oeuvre, in short, his work is better served by another designation: performance.

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III. Inventing an Artist

"John Heartfield" was not exactly born, did not really grow up in any conventional sense. Rather his identity was invented in response to a particular set of personal and political conditions in Berlin during W.W. I. The fullest account of the circumstances, in Wieland Herzfelde's biography John Heartfield: Leben und Werk, has been repeated, with little inflection, in virtually every discussion since its first publication in 1962: Helmut's fervent anti-war sentiment motivated him to anglicize his name, perversely to identify himself, a German, with Germany's professed enemy.[1] Wieland explained the name as a manifestation of Helmut's "produktiver Jähzorn,"[2] an innate personal reservoir of anger unleashed, in this case, by the spread of a new popular greeting among citizens of a nation at war: when a loyal German met another, rather than "hello," one of them would say "Gott strafe England!" The other would then answer, "Er strafe es."[3] By becoming "Heartfield," Helmut rejected the ritual and all its underlying assumptions--religious, political, and social. By so narrowly specifying the motivation for adopting the new

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[1] Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 18. Another version, less frequently given, holds that Helmut joined in Grosz's admiration for things American to the point of anglicizing his own name [See, for example, Benson, Raoul Hausmann and Berlin Dada, 63].

[2] Leben und Werk, 6.

[3] ibid, 18.

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name, Wieland effectively contained its possible significance, integrating it into the narrative as one logical step in his brother's lifelong pursuit of justice.

Leben und Werk is organized as a chronological narrative. In fact the precision with which Wieland was able, writing in the 1960s, to give the year, often even the month of various incidents is among the many reasons for the book's explanatory force. Perhaps in meeting the demands of a clear and compelling story line, however, the narrative order does sometimes depart from strict chronology. Wieland describes the appearance of the name "Heartfield," for example, before reporting on his brother's induction into the army in the autumn of 1915.[4] The paragraph describing the initial meeting with Georg Grosz comes later, at the beginning of the next chapter.[5]

According to the actual dates given in Wieland's narrative, however, these events occurred in reverse order. The Herzfelds met Grosz--then still Groß--in the summer of 1915[6]; Helmut was inducted in October of the same year, and was discharged as "unfit" after a few months.[7] In May of 1916 he

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[4] ibid, 18.

[5] ibid, 19.

[6] ibid, 19.

[7] ibid, 18.

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was still "Helmut Herzfeld" on the masthead of Neue Jugend.[8] The construction of "Heartfield" probably began in the fall of 1916, at the same time Grosz adopted the new spellings of his name.[9] The name "John Heartfield" appeared in print for the first time on the masthead of Jedermann sein eigener Fußball, published on 15 February, 1919,[10] and Helmut stopped using the name "Helmut" altogether on the third issue of Die Pleite, still in 1919.[11]

With the sequence of events more clearly in place, "Heartfield" appears less the artifact of anti-war sentiment alone, and more the resolution of a crisis which was certainly affected by the war, but which also concerned a set of personal relationships, most crucially those involving Wieland and Grosz. This is not to say that Wieland's "Gott strafe England" story is inaccurate, only that it is, in itself, insufficient to account for the magnitude, the permanence, or the specific character--including the choice of name--that were sealed into place with the invention of John Heartfield.

Grosz's active collaboration with the Herzfelds lasted roughly

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[8] ibid, 21.

[9] ibid, 19 [Wieland gives the date of the change as September, 1916.].

[10] ibid, 24.

[11] ibid, 25.

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a decade, and involved publishing, exhibition and performance, as well as animated film production and stage design. In the course of this interaction and very largely as a result of it, Wieland shifted his focus from writing to publishing.[12] Georg Groß became George Grosz--the English spelling of "George" being the most notable alteration--and achieved, mainly through the publishing efforts of Wieland and Helmut, a considerable degree of fame. Helmut Herzfeld not only abandoned his family name for one that obscured both his nationality and his relationship to his brother, but also destroyed his entire earlier identity as an artist. The three, along with the young playwright-producer Erwin Piscator, whom Wieland had met at the front as a fellow communications specialist, became Communists.

Assessments of the collaboration to date have tended to focus on the last point, perhaps because it became the central tension in a very rich correspondence between Grosz and Herzfelde after 1933, when Grosz had emigrated to New York and was conspicuously espousing American capitalist attitudes and goals. Wieland himself, among others, has suggested that Grosz "politicized" the Herzfelds, opening their eyes to the

[12] According to his own account, Wieland had already adopted a typographical error in the spelling of his name at that point: at the suggestion of Elsa Lasker-Schüler, who thought the name looked more up to date that way, he added a final "e".

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real, material causes of social inequity[13]; roughly the opposite assessment has been proposed as well, namely that it was only through the efforts of the Herzfelds and the Malik-Verlag that Grosz's work appeared to have a consistent political meaning.[14] These descriptions are not mutually exclusive--both seem valid to some extent; but neither explains how, for more than three years, collaborative work proceeded in the absence of any concrete political goals at all.

Between the initial meeting with Grosz in 1915 and the collective entry into the Communist Party on the first day of 1919, these men shared an intense, but politically quite chaotic opposition to the war and its supporting social institutions. All three were drafted. Available information--scanty and contradictory as it is--suggests that Helmut and Grosz, in particular, suffered severe emotional disturbances in the course of their military service, for although neither was wounded, both were hospitalized.[15] I am suggesting here

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[13] Wieland Herzfelde, "Dada und die Folgen," 1232.

[14] Hans Hess, George Grosz, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974, 67.

[15] Grosz volunteered once, in the certainty of being inducted, and was inducted a second time; both times he was discharged as mentally unfit for duty. Grosz's own report, which includes some time at the front, is at odds with official records, which show him hospitalized for virtually his entire period of service [M. Kay Flavell, George Grosz: a Biography, London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, 24-5.].

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that the collaborative, performance-oriented nature of their work over those years provided at least part of the mechanism for resolving these emotional conflicts. Most of it took the form of an extended role-playing and reality-testing. In the collaborative publications Neue Jugend, Jedermann sein eigner Fussball, die Pleite--as well as the various Dada productions a few years later, combative, insulting, arrogant positions are taken. Lines are delivered. But the personal identity of the position-takers and line-deliverers is constantly invented, revised, cut and spliced. Grosz was reportedly engaged in such play with names and personal attributes almost constantly. A gifted, spontaneous mimic, he could sometimes adopt an alternative persona mid-sentence, fitting it out with suitable accents, gestures, and philosophies. Such play with identity went on to become a distinguishing feature of Berlin Dada. Its readings, contests, "soirées" were staged confrontations between "constructed" individuals as well as between "us" and "them"--the participation, the response of an audience was essential; but the "individuals" were for the most part quite fluidly constructed, provisional, experimental. The goal of this identity-play was announced, shrilly, as destructive, an undermining of conventional thinking and values that had led, in a perfectly reasonable way, to a perfectly unreasonable, brutal war. This is certainly the way these performances functioned from the audience's standpoint. From the performers' standpoint,

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however, the shared opposition to society at large also generated internal cohesion, met the conditions for a degree of function as a separate community. As an internal structure of identities, expectations, boundaries emerged, this community could, at least potentially, meet its members' emotional needs at a moment when the larger society and its institutions could not. The presence of such an internal communal structure became far more apparent later in Berlin Dada itself, with its specific functional designations of "Oberdada," "Monteur-Dada," "Dadasoph"; but a closer look at the Herzfelds and Grosz in particular reveals an identifiable relational pattern in this core group that both preceded and outlived the brief episode that was officially labelled "Dada". It was within the dynamic economy of these crucial relationships, governed by the general impulse to maintain emotional equilibrium, to accommodate change through group action and response, that John Heartfield first appeared.

The relationship between the Herzfeld brothers of course changed constantly with the age and circumstances of the participants. But certain features remained constant, if arguably not through their entire lives, at least from childhood until their wartime separation in late 1938--Helmut was 47 at the time, Wieland 42. Both brothers appeared, for example, to privilege this fraternal relationship over all others, including relationships with women. Consistent, too,

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was Wieland's tendency to dominate the process of making decisions which concerned both of them. As the collaboration with Grosz developed and, in the process, gave rise to Heartfield, this asymmetry was articulated more fully through a series of divisions in intellectual labor. Wieland created with words, John with images; Wieland ran a press, established its political position and policies, solicited the cooperation of others, especially writers; John accommodated himself to others--individuals and institutions, was solicited by them to carry out specific commissions. These relational terms are occasionally stated outright by the brothers themselves or contemporary observers. They are also structured into letters and autobiographical writing, the patterns of their collaborative practice, and decisions regarding where and how they would live.

In tracing the background of these patterns, it is necessary to rely very heavily on documents written by Wieland Herzfelde after after 1945, documents generated, that is, under historical conditions significantly different from those in which the described events took place. For all the differences in language, interests, opinion, context between, say, Wieland's earliest writing in 1913-1914 and the very much larger body of texts dating from after the Second World War, however, an analysis focussed on his relationship to his brother and Grosz reveals--as Bowen's theory would in fact

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predict--a remarkably stable object.

It is probably rare for any siblings to recognize a "founding moment" in their shared experience, a single incident or image that linked them together and shaped their lives; it must be exceedingly unusual for such a moment to have been so tragic and portentous as it was in the Herzfeld brothers' memory. In a short piece entitled "Die Hütte im Walde," which opens the autobiographical collection Immergrün of 1949, Wieland recounted the day in 1899 when he, his brother, and their two sisters were abruptly abandoned by both parents. Later in the story, he suggests that their parents had been emotionally unstable for some time, and finally became so disoriented as to simply wander into the forest.[16]

Wieland reports that he himself, a three-year-old at the time, did not really grasp the enormity of the loss, and as a result suffered no lasting trauma, but that this was not the case with Helmut.

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[16] No satisfactory explanation of the parents' disappearance is available, nor is any medical assessment of their condition. It may be that because mental illness carried such a serious social stigma at the time, the children were initially "protected" from such information, or that the explanations offered had little meaning for them. Apparently none of them ever tried to recover any medical records, either. From fragments of information elsewhere in Wieland's writing, in any case, it is clear that the family's situation at the time was untenable: six people were living together, isolated from any village or town in what must have been a very rudimentary shelter, with no income whatsoever. Both parents were hospitalized.

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> But my brother, who was five years older, experienced the full impact of the loss. For four days and nights he was alone with us younger siblings in the isolated hut. The eight-year-old never thought of going down into the village. Frightened and helpless, he ran into the woods again and again and called, despairing more completely with each passing hour and day, just the one word: "mother." These four lost days and nights indelibly marked my brother's features and, I believe, brought out the most singular trait of his personality: he perceives any injury he witnesses as a personal attack.[17]

This memory is presented as Wieland's own, although he generally credits what little early information he has about his parents to Ignaz Varnschein, mayor of the conservative, Catholic village of Aigen bei Salzburg who had befriended the Herzfelds when they arrived in Austria. It was Varnschein and his wife who rescued the children four days after their parents had disappeared. According to Wieland, Varnschein never tired of describing the chaotic scene of discovery:

> The youngest lay peacefully in a soaking wet cradle, sucking on a thumb stuck deep in her mouth. Our sister stirred flour and water in a kettle,

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[17] Wieland Herzfelde, Immergrün, New York Aurora-Bucherei/Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1949, 14. Mein um fünf Jahre älterer Bruder hingegen erlebte den Verlust in aller Krassheit. Vier Tage und vier Nächte verbrachte er allein mit uns kleineren Geschwistern in der einsamen Hütte. Auf den Gedanken, ins Dorf hinabzugehen, kam der Achtjährigen nicht. Wieder und wieder lief er in die Wälder voller Angst und Ratlosigkeit, und rief und schrie mit von Stunde zu Stunde, von Tag zu Tag zunehmender Verzweiflung immer nur das eine Wort: "Mutter."

Diese vier Tage und Nächte der Verlorenheit haben sich unauslöschlich in den Zügen meines Bruders eingegraben, und, ich glaube, die eigentümlichste Seite seines Wesens hervorgerufen: er empfindet jedes Leid, dessen Zeuge er wird, wie eines ihm persönlich geltenden Angriff.

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> declaring that she was making omelettes. As the newcomers began to ask about our parents, my brother began to sob convulsively, as I, taking no notice of anyone, continued to alter the borders of the puddle that had formed around the baby's cradle with my index finger.[18]

Wieland's account of their parents' disappearance, written fifty years after the event, preserves a childlike acceptance of the fact that two adults could simply wander into the woods one day, leaving four young children with no means of support or protection. We learn more later in the narrative, as the children themselves are shown gradually learning about their parents. The Varnscheins initially cared for all four Herzfeld children in their own home. The foster father did not talk about the parents often or in great detail, but the children did know that their father, Franz Herzfeld, had been a poet and playwright who published under the pseudonym Franz Held. Having been convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to prison in Berlin in 1895, he had left Germany with his wife Alice (maiden name, Stolzenberg). At the time they had two children, Helmut and his younger sister, Herta. The family had gone briefly to Switzerland, where a third child, Wieland, was born; as foreigners without means, they were soon forced

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[18] ibid, 14-15. Das Jüngste lag friedlich in einem gänzlich durchnässten Korb und saugte an seinem tief im Munde steckenden Daumen. Die Schwester rührte Mehl und Wasser in einem Topf und erklärte, sie mache Omeletten. Mein Bruder begann, als die Fremden ihn nach den Eltern fragten, krampfartig zu schluchzen, während ich, von ihnen keine Notiz nehmend, fortfuhr, mit dem Zeigefinger die Ränder des kleinen Sees zu verändern, der sich neben dem Korb der Jüngsten gebildet hatte.

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to move again. In the wooded mountains outside the village of Aigen bei Salzburg, they took up residence in an abandoned hut, where another daughter, Lotte, was born. Wieland doesn't mention ever seeing his father again after the traumatic disappearance, but reports only that Franz Herzfeld died in an asylum in 1908. Their mother was hospitalized near Salzburg initially, and the children were taken to visit her occasionally. In 1909, however, because she was a German, rather than an Austrian citizen, she was moved to Berlin. Wieland visited her there at least once. Eventually she was released from the hospital, but returned voluntarily, unable to cope with the responsibilities of living on her own. She died in 1911, when Wieland was 15, and Helmut 20.

Wieland acknowledges that his memory of his parents was substantially conditioned by the opinions of the adults around him at the time, Varnschein in particular; there seems no reason to doubt, however, that Wieland is reporting these memories in good faith, and is therefore reproducing the way the brothers constructed their absent parents in childhood, whatever the facts may have been. Varnschein reportedly had no sympathy, or even comprehension of the political and religious views of Franz Herzfeld and his wife: Herzfeld had been a religious free-thinker, his wife a Protestant, and they had both been Socialists. But the children never heard their foster-father belittle their parents, or suggest that they had

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brought catastrophe upon themselves. At most, the Varnscheins conveyed a sense of uncertainty or mystery about the Herzfelds' motivations and judgement.

Initially, Wieland writes, he himself saw things much as the Varnscheins did, inasmuch as he was simply unable to understand, and could at best accept what had happened to his parents. Over many years, however, he would piece the information he acquired about them into coherent structure, plausibly linking what he knew and learned of them with his own and his brother's traits and experiences. This work of constructing a coherent past would in fact comprise a substantial part of his published writings, both those that were overtly autobiographical and those that were not.

In the passage cited above, Wieland narrated the traumatic event of the parents' disappearance in an ostensibly neutral, way, presenting the facts in the style of sober, authoritative documentation. Yet one phrase stands out: "The eight-year old never thought of going into the village" adds no concrete information. It rather reads as a veiled reproach, an implication that at age eight Helmut <u>might</u> have thought of getting help in the village, and didn't. Later, too, when the Varscheins arrive, Helmut continues to be useless, responding to their questions only with convulsive sobbing, while the other children are left to their own devices, each completely

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self-absorbed and oblivious to the actual peril that confronts the group.

It is clearly impossible that such a judgement of his brother would have been part of author's own--a three-year-old's--first-hand memory of the event. It may represent a memory of Varnschein's account, or a far more generalized understanding in the culture that would assign responsibility to an older child in such circumstances. But whatever the source, the comment itself embodies the terms of a relationship. It is a relationship that arises, or takes its specific form at the loss of a third term, namely the parents--folded here into just the mother. In the narrative, Herzfelde tacitly acknowledged that his older brother's perceptual capacities were adequate to the situation: Helmut was the only one of the children who fully appreciated the scope of the disaster and responded, emotionally, in an appropriate way. But the strength of his perceptive apparatus in itself was not enough. He lacked the focus and emotional self-control to act appropriately. Wieland, by contrast, both as the three-year-old in the story and as the story's fifty-two-year-old narrator, is emotionally unruffled. As if somehow insulated from what has happened, he continues methodically to pursue his own activity. To summarize, then, because one brother is capable of perceiving and the other of acting effectively, it is absolutely essential that they cooperate in the face of

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catastrophe. Neither sister, significantly, figures in the equation, except to heighten the scope of the disaster, the weight of responsibility that rested on the brothers.

"Himmel und Hölle," the next story in the collection Immergrün, narrates a number of incidents which construct Helmut as a deeply troubled child. A Protestant among Catholics, a small, nervous, emotionally volatile boy in a rural community that valued calm, deliberate behavior, Helmut is constantly at odds with foster-parents, classmates, and teachers. Wieland, by contrast and through no particular effort of his own, seems to be able to please everyone. Wieland, that is, appears to be the happier, more balanced personality. From the standpoint of family systems, the assymmetry might furnish evidence of a common pattern, in which the oldest child adapts to the parents by becoming an outlet for their tensions: by periodically becoming a "problem" for them, for example, he or she serves to deflect attention from their own difficulties; this in turn logically opens a position for a "good" child--in this case, Wieland--whose function is defined by contrast with that of the "problem."

In the context of the story "Himmel und Hölle," in any case, Helmut's obvious pain continually makes Wieland--the author's younger self--feel sad and helpless. The story ends with an

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account of the day their sister, having just returned from school, spit at Helmut rather than greeting him in the usual way. She explained that this was the appropriate way to treat Protestants, who would all go to hell:

> My brother did not answer her. He went silently out the door. I followed him. When I saw tears running down his cheeks, I stood in front of him, on his toes, so that I could put my arms around his neck, and said: "Muti, think nothing of it. I'll stick by you. I don't even want to go to their heaven. I'd rather go to hell with you."
>
> Here and there we could still see patches of snow in the fields, as we both stared out the window of the train that would soon bring us to Germany.[19]

Poorly concealed behind Wieland's display of fraternal sentiment at the beginning of the passage is a picture of the author's own emotional strength and clarity in contrast to older brother's helplessness. Read against the account of the parents' disappearance from "Die Hütte im Walde," too, this incident reenacts a scene of feminine rejection--the mother's abandonment, the sister's unreflected embodiment of religious

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[19] Immergrün: Merkwürdige Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen eines fröhlichen Waisenknaben, Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1949, 30-31. Mein Bruder antwortete ihr nicht. Stumm ging er auf den Gang hinaus. Ich folgte ihm. Und als ich Tränen über seine Wangen rinnen sah, stellte ich mich vor ihm auf die Zehen, damit ich die Arme um seinen Hals legen konnte, und sagte, "Mach dir nichts draus, Muti. Ich halte zu dir. In deren ihren Himmel will ich gar nicht. Lieber komme ich mit dir in die Hölle."

Da und dort sahen wir noch Schneeflecken auf den Feldern, als wir beide aus einem Waggonfenster des Zuges starrten, der uns bald darauf nach Deutschland brachte.

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bigotry, which propels the brothers into a new "chapter" of their lives.

Used here apparently for the first time in print, too, is the nickname "Muti." An unusual shortening of "Helmut," "Muti" is a diminutive, possibly a register of Helmut's small physical size. It is, literally, a diminutive of the German word "Mut," meaning "courage" or "spirits" (as in mood, or state of mind). But it also bears a ressemblance to "Mutti," the common shortening of "Mutter," ("mother") used by German children as English-speaking children use "mommy" or "mummy."

Wieland later opened biography, John Heartfield: Leben und Werk, with a reference to this nickname:

> His name was Helmut, and before anyone called him Johnny, he was called Muti. By uncles, aunts and siblings; even by his parents.[20]

The phrase "auch von den Eltern" seems like an afterthought. It asserts that Helmut was called "Muti" before the parents disappeared. But it is not clear how Wieland could possibly be so sure of this: an older brother's nickname does not seem like something a three-year-old would remember and be able to reproduce fifty years later. If in fact this name appeared after the parents disappeared, it could have stood for unusual

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[20] Er hieß Helmut und wurde, ehe man ihn Johnny nannte, Muti gerufen. Von Onkeln, Tanten und Geschwistern; auch von den Eltern. Leben und Werk, 1976, 10.

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the and probably very painful situation in which Helmut found himself. The name's similarity to "Mutti," for example, might suggest that Helmut was cast by circumstances in the role of a mother, perhaps in the sense of being the older and more responsible of the siblings, and the one silently designated by the others to play the now-absent mother's role.[21] At the same time, "Muti" is not "Mutti," and would have marked the difference between Helmut and an actual "Mutti," in other words for Helmut's inadequacy in this role. To begin an entire biography with these names, is, in any case, to forcefully insist on a time and place prior to "John Heartfield," a field to which the author, Wieland, has privileged access. For as these first lines themselves strongly imply, the name "Heartfield" and its diminutive, "Johnny," eventually displaced both Helmut and "Muti." The nickname and the identity it signified, that is, may have been among those things that Helmut was putting behind him when he became Heartfield.

The trip to Germany mentioned in the Immergrün passage given above, in any case, marks the end of the Herzfeld brothers' childhood as Wieland constructed it. Helmut was going to serve an apprenticeship as a bookseller, having completed his formal schooling in Austria. The decision was based in part

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[21] Wieland did claim (see note below) that the nickname "Muti" was in place before the parents disappeared.

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on Helmut's well-established interest in books, and in part his having been accepted for this training by his aunt's (mother's sister's) husband, a bookseller based in Wiesbaden; Wieland, it appears, was accompanying Helmut simply because the brothers did not want to be separated.

The lapse in time between events narrated in the two paragraphs cited above--Wieland's declaration of fraternal loyalty and the trip to Germany--is not quite clear. Through the juxtaposition of the two events, in any case, an opposition between heaven and hell is superimposed on the difference between Austria and Germany. Wieland's childlike sympathy for his brother, he implies in retrospect, underwent the test of a real commitment: he really did have to choose between going to "hell," that is, to Germany, with his brother, and staying in Austria, where he had been happy.[22]

Given the age difference alone, such a change in location would certainly have affected the brothers very differently. Both faced new caregivers, new schools, a new landscape. But Helmut was also facing the end of his prospects for a university education. According to Wieland's later account, Varnschein had written to their uncle, Josef Herzfeld, in

[22] This uncritical association between "Austria" and "good, wholesome human community" appears more than once in Wieland's autobiographical writing, ultimately figuring into a kind of broad moral geography of Europe, in which "the good East" was locked in deadly combat against "the bad West."

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Berlin--"Onkel Josef" was a comfortably-established lawyer--asking for his opinion on whether Helmut should "study" (the German "studieren" usually means university study). The uncle answered that Helmut should just continue going to school for the time being. Varnschein took this to mean that Helmut should not aspire to a university degree, whereas Onkel Josef had actually meant that he thought the decision should be postponed. According to Wieland, then, Helmut was effectively barred from university study because the verb "studieren" means different things in Salzburg and Berlin.[23]

The issue had arisen in the first place, Wieland reported, because Varnschein knew that the childrens' father, Franz Herzfeld, had been an educated man, a writer, an intellectual. It was not a question Varnschein would have entertained in regard to just any child. It would probably not have arisen in regard to his own children. Certain mechanisms of class difference, then, operated between the Herzfeld children and their provincial foster family. The Herzfelds were, further,

[23] It seems possible that the decision to enroll Helmut in a vocational training program, rather than one leading to university study, was more directly related to a long history of difficulties in school rather than to semantic differences, and that this report by Wieland, written in the early 1960s, was tailored to ease Helmut's regrets about his education. In any case, it alludes to a sharp disparity between the brothers in terms of academic achievements, Wieland having always been the more successful.

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Germans,[24] and in the part of Austria where they were living, Wieland suggests elsewhere, Germany registered as distant, exotic territory. It seems clear, then, that Helmut and Wieland Herzfeld were made aware of differences between them and most of those around them from a very early age. Wieland identified the new setting in Wiesbaden, however, as the site where they began to articulate this sense of difference through a special language, to construct a kind of independent community exclusively their own. This is Wieland's later description of the development, from Leben und Werk:

> A more than brotherly relationship existed between my brother and me even in Salzburg; a kind of pact against adults, of whom one never knew quite what to think, even when they were being friendly. In Wiesbaden, a city we disliked from the very first day, we really began to stick together. Mr. Heuss considered himself a gentleman, an aristocrat. All day long he sat, not, as you might suppose, in his bookstore, but in a wine bar called "Bodega," where his wife drove him and picked him up at night. He was a stately man: that is to say, big and fat, who smoked cigars with colored bands, tyrannized his wife, and threw up each morning as he brushed his teeth. "A Heuss"--became and remained our general term for someone puffed up, absorbed in his own possessions. We were not allowed to live in his villa. This made our dear aunt very sad--not us. There were just two worlds: the "Heuss's" and ours. It got to the point that shortly after our arrival in Wiesbaden, we began to rename everything. The things we liked got names that sounded good, things that displeased us got ugly names. Even streets and squares got new names, the most beautiful going to those whose shops gave us the most sweets and presents. It seemed to us that what mattered were

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[24] Wieland was in fact born in Switzerland. German law made him a German citizen through his parents; at the time of his emigration from Prague in 1938, however, his Swiss birth made him eligible for a United States visa, whereas Helmut was not.

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> mountains and trees, books and pictures--not wealth.[25]

Wieland's description suggests that at least during the early years in Wiesbaden--about 1905 to 1908--and quite possibly for much longer, he and his brother constituted a distinct, exclusive community, with an elaborate set of meanings, relationships, values--a reality recognizable in terms of its difference from that of the community at large. Given the actual conditions of the brothers' childhood--their abrupt early loss of their parents, their sense of similarity to one other in the face of an ongoing perception of difference from people around them, this appears to be an entirely understandable response. For they could maintain considerable stability and control within their relationship, even as they

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[25] Leben und Werk, 11. Zwischen meinem Bruder und mir bestand schon in Salzburg eine mehr als brüderliche Verbundenheit; eine Art Bündnis gegen die Erwachsenen, von denen man, selbst wenn sie freundlich waren, nie genau wusste, was von ihnen zu halten war. In Wiesbaden, einer Stadt, die uns vom ersten Tag an zuwider war, heilten wir erst recht zusammen. Herr Heuss hielt sich für einen feinen Mann, für einen Patrizier. Er sass von morgens bis abends nicht etwa in seiner Buchhandlung, sondern in einer"Bodega" genannten Weinstube, wo seine Frau ihn hinführen und nachts abholen musste. Er war ein stattlicher, das heisst: grosser und feister Mann, der Zigarren mit bunter Bauchbinde rauchte, sine Frau tyrannisierte und sich jeden Morgen beim Zähneputzen erbrach. "Ein Heuss"--das wurde und blieb unser Sammelbegriff für aufgedunsene, auf ihr Vermögen pochende Herren. Wir durften nicht in seiner Villa wohnen. Die liebe Tante was sehr traurig darüber--wir nicht. Es gab eben zwei Welten: die der "Heusse" und die unsre. Das ging so weit, dass wir bald nach der Ankunft in Wiesbaden damit anfingen, alles umzebenennen. Was uns gefiel, bekam wohlklingende, was uns missfiel, hässliche Namen. Sogar Strassen und Plätze bekamen neue Namen, die schönsten jene, in deren Geschäften man uns die meisten Stollwerk- und Liebigbilder schenkte. Auf Berge und Bäume, auf Bücher und Bilder, so schien uns, kam es im Leben an--nicht auf Reichtum.

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were, in "outside" reality, being passed from foster home to foster home.

Family systems theory designates a relationship such as this one, between just two individuals, otherwise isolated emotionally, as essentially unstable. The theory would suggest, in fact, that the more exclusive such a relationship actually is, the more probably one of the participants--the less satisfied of the two--will try to "triangle in" a third person. In 1913, Wieland made just such an attempt.

The 17-year-old Wieland, still living in Wiesbaden at the time, had never met the celebrated poet Else Lasker-Schüler, but knew her only through her poetry.[26] The long letter he wrote to her is couched as an extended introduction, describing the writer, his family, his vast admiration for his correspondent. A particularly long passage is devoted to a description of the Herzfelds' mother, whom the children knew only from periodic visits to the hospital where she lived. More exactly, the letter gives a description of Wieland's interior experience of his mother, the effect she had on him. It is quoted here at length as a point of reference, for by Wieland's own estimation, his response to his mother singled him out, defined him with respect to others. Wieland's elevation of mental illness, more broadly his identification

[26] Helmut, having completed a period of formal training in advertising design in Munich, had already moved to Berlin.

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of suffering and isolation as "beautiful," is clearly recognizable as the Expressionist esthetic Lasker-Schüler articulated in her writing.

His mother, Wieland wrote, appeared to him

> ...so familiar, so strange, so exquisitely untouchable as a star. It goes without saying, what a mother is, but mine was for me a prophet, a strange flower...when I was away from her and heard someone speak about her, I was embarassed about her illness. But when we entered the hospital garden, I felt myself in fairyland...I had fantasies of adventures in high mountains, tales of magic, stage sets and sacred grottos...
>
> And you see, what was strange about these people didn't seem sick to me, rather the sick seemed strange. And therefore beautiful. For everything that arouses curiosity is beautiful...When she said she was Christ crucified and an imprisoned queen, then I really believed, and felt like an enchanted prince...and when she cried and cried, ate nothing and looked at us with her distant, reddened eyes, I felt the beauty of pain and sorrow, the nobility in losing one's self-control. And I hated Frau Varnschein when she took us aside and told us, in a voice that must have resembled Judas Iscariot's, how poor we were and how terrible it was that our dear mother was so hopelessly ill and lost, that we should always behave ourselves and pray to the dear Lord to give us our mother back. I didn't want to pray to the dear Lord, I would have liked to pray to my mother, for she was beautiful and happy. At that time quiet tears were the essence of all beauty for me, and all genteel happiness. My mother wasn't sick, I couldn't feel sorry for her while I was trying to understand her and to make her happy...And yet my love for this woman still died. Why? Because the words of reasonable people overpowered me and I saw in her a poor, crazy woman, a lost soul for whom death could be the only release.[27]

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[27] Wieland Herzfelde, "Kürzlich vor 60 Jahren," Zur Sache: Geschrieben und Gesprochen zwischen 18 und 80, Berlin und Weimar (DDR), Aufbau-Verlag, 1976, 12-13. "so traut, so fremd, so göttlich

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In later years, Herzfelde recalled this letter with evident satisfaction, and not without a certain amazement that as a raw teenager, with no facilitating connections, he had presumed to write at great length, even using the familiar "Du," to a famous poet. He states the motivation for his action forthrightly in the letter itself: Wieland sees his mother in her.

> But understand that the letter comes from someone who so wanted to be a child and never could be. Now this child, who for so long had only a father--

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unfassbar wie ein Stern. Die Mutter ist etwas Selbstverständliches, doch meine Mutter war für mich ein Prophet, eine seltsame Blume...Solange ich fern von ihr war und man erzählte von ihr, schämte ich mich meiner Mutter Krankheit. Doch wenn wir in den Garten der Anstalt traten, glaubte ich, in einem Feenlande zu sein...Ich fabulierte von Hochgebirgstouren, Zaubermärchen, von Theaterkulissen und Götterhainen...

Und siehst Du, mir kam nicht das Fremde an den Leuten Krank vor, sondern das Kranke fremd. Also schön. Denn alles, was Interesse erweckt, ist schön...Wenn sie sagte, sie sei der gekreuzigte Christus und eine gefangene Königen, dann war ich wirklich fromm und kam mir vor wie ein verträumter Prinz...und wenn sie weinte und weinte, nichts ass und uns ansah mit ihren fernen, geröteten Augen, habe ich gefühlt, wie schön Trauer und Schmerz sind, wie edel die Fassungslosigkeit der Seele, des Geistes. Und ich hasste Frau Varnschein, wenn sie uns beiseite nahm und mit einer Stimme, die der des Judas Ischariot ähneln musste, sagte, wie arm wir seien und wie schrecklich es sei, dass unsere liebe Mutter so hoffnungslos krank und verloren sei, dass wir schön artig sein sollten immer und zum lieben Gott beten, er möge uns unsere Mutter wiedergeben. Ich wollte aber nicht zum lieben Gott beten, meine Mutter hätte ich anbeten mögen, denn sie war schön und glücklich. Stille Tränen waren mir damals der Inbegriff aller Schönheit und allen vornehmen Glücks. Meine Mutter war nicht krank, ich konnte sie nicht bedauern, weil ich mich bemühte, sie zu begreifen und ihr Freude zu machen...Und dennoch ist in mir die Liebe zu dieser Frau gestorben. Warum? Weil die Worte der vernüftigen Leute mich überwältigt hatten und ich nun in ihr eine arme, verrückte Frau sah, ein verlorenes Wesen, für das nur der Tod zur Erlösung werden konnte.

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my brother--has found a mother.[28]

This odd conflation of father and brother is followed directly by a far more frequently-cited passage in which Wieland takes on a quasi parental role, asking his mother-designate for a favor:

> I am asking you for a Christmas gift, dear mother of my choosing. Write to my brother. He knows nothing of this letter. I'll surprise him with it, if you answer me or if you have already surprised him. Helmut is more shy than I am, for his youth was hard and lonely. To me, no one's a stranger. Everybody is my friend, whom I like. My brother is all, all alone in the big city and longs for someone who is not a stranger. Be that one friend.[29]

It is clear from the letters not only that Wieland and Helmut are bound together in a way that effectively includes, or replaces all other familial relationships, but also that Wieland now openly considers himself the stronger, the luckier, the more responsible brother, who promotes and protects the other.

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[28] ibid, 23. Aber sieh, er [der Brief] kommt von einem Menschen, der so gerne Kind sein möchte und es nie sein konnte. Nun hat dieses Kind eine Mutter gefunden, das so lange nur einen Vater hatte: meinen Bruder.

[29] Wiesbaden, November 30, 1913. Heartfield-Archiv, Berlin. Ich bitte Dich um ein Weihnachtsgeschenk, liebe Mutter meiner Wahl. Schreibe meinem Bruder. Er weiss nichts von dem Brief. Ich werde ihn damit überraschen, wenn Du mir antwortest oder wenn Du ihn schon überrascht hast. Helmut ist schüchterner als ich, denn seine Jugend war hart und einsam. Ich kenne keine fremden Menschen. Jeder is mein Freund, den ich lieb habe. Mein Bruder ist ganz, ganz allein in dieser grossen Stadt und sehnt sich nach einem Menschen, der ihm nicht fremd ist. Sei Du dieser eine Freund.

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Bowen's theory does not require that the identities of father, mother brother be clearly established, nor that a specific motive be defined in order to identify Wieland's approach to Lasker-Schüler as "triangling," a move to stabilize a relationship by introducing a third person into it. Lasker-Schüler was a woman whose age and literary achievements made her a persuasive "mother" figure for the Herzfelds, in the sense of being admirable to both without raising the potentially explosive issue of a sexual relationship. She was also someone in a good position to help Wieland advance his writing and publishing interests, and toward the end of the letter he does not neglect to mention an article he had just written on mental illness, which he hoped would be published shortly.[30]

In another letter written about a week later, Herzfelde provided Lasker-Schüler with a physical description of Helmut. In it, a multitude of observations--size, posture, gait, coloring, gestures, clothes, facial expression--converge on one succinct assessment:

> His critical understanding is perhaps only average, but his critical feeling is so strong and sure, so clear and sensitive, that it shows in every

[30] This article, "Die Ethik des Geisteskranken," was published in Die Aktion 4 (1914), 298-302.

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movement, glance and gesture.[31]

The opposition between "critical understanding" and "critical feeling" in this passage only implies a contrast between Wieland himself and Helmut. But Wieland developed this idea of their complementary assets much more fully in a letter written a few months later, to Helmut:

> ...It can seem as if we have completely different capacities, then again, as if we are just the same...I mean: we're made of the same stuff, only formed differently. Your gifts are more original, chaotic, productive...So in a subtle sense feminine. In me, the same basic elements take a different form. Alois says I'm an intellectual. That's not true. At least not if a scientist is an intellectual. Without something concrete, I'm frightfully stupid, just like you--even worse than you (chemistry, formulas, etc.).
>
> Your psyche is chaos. It can seethe. Sometimes it explodes. Then it surges. Wind, sleep, brooding heat. Flood. This is why it is difficult for anyone to get along with you who lacks the instinct, who can't anticipate your weather. Ordinary social life...reins your chaos in, so to speak...restrains it--with heavy beams, boundaries. That's why your're sad when you're with people... Among intellectuals you can have a tremendous number of latent ideas, because you soak them up, and are more conscious than anyone else of having them, because they are new to you...But when you're alone, you notice how foreign it is to you, the very thing that allows you to be sociable at all. You really are yourself, for example, at the Wenglotz's [a working-class family that the Herzfeld brothers had befriended in Wiesbaden--N.R.]. That's probably why you're more lighthearted, less somber when you've visited them

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[31] Wiesbaden, December 6, 1916. Heartfield-Archiv, Berlin. Er hat vielleicht nur einen durchschnittmässig kritischen Verstand, aber ein kritisches Gefühl von solcher Stärke und Sicherheit, Eindeutigkeit und Empfindsamkeit, dass es sich in jeder Bewegung, jedem Blick, jeder Stellung widerspiegelt.

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than when you've been talking, for example, with Dr. Deri. The ideas themselves don't concern you, they're just ploughshares that open up your mind, diversify it, but also overpower it. That's why you'll feel rich, then poor, strong and weak, free and obligated, depending on whether your nerves are stimulated or estranged by any given intellectual challenge...

I am sea. If I'm all alone, I'm inactive, irresolute and incapable of doing anything about it. At such times I'm an Impressionist, but--luckily--unable to express it. That's why I have pictures of many things inside me, like photographs. But they're of no use to me...in order to write, I need outside influences. When I come into contact with other people and their fates, I myself become independent. I can only live when another life touches mine. That's why I attached myself to you so early, you who carried life in you from the time you were small...Unlike me, you write so few letters...[For me] Ideas only come alive through all the concepts that confront me from outside...Only then they are no longer ideas, but perceptions. One could draw the distinction: your art expresses feelings, mine makes perceptions conscious. You'll notice how the two words differ...

The question to you is: to what extent are the parts of your being brought to bear on an impersonal, that is, an immortal form. You have better prospects of becoming immortal than I do, inasmuch as it depends, in your case, only on the development of a form of expression...[32]

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[32] Wiesbaden, March 28, 1914. Heartfield-Archiv, Berlin. Reprinted in Leben und Werk, 320-1 [ommissions as in Herzfelde's text]. ...Oft scheint es, als ob wir zwei ganz verschieden veranlagt seien, dann wieder, als ob wir ganz die Gleichen seien...Ich meine: Wir sind gleicher Stoff, aber ungleiche Form. Deine Veranlagungen sind ursprünglicher, chaotisch, gebärend...Daher oft im feinen Sinne weiblich. Bei mir haben die gleichen Grundelemente, wie Du sie hast, andre Form. Alois sagt, ich sei Intellekt. Das ist nicht wahr. Wenigstens dann nicht, wenn ein Wissenschaftler Intellekt ist. Ich bin furchtbar dumm ohne sinnliches Objekt, genau wie Du,--noch viel mehr als Du (Chemie, Formeln etc.)

...Deine Psyche ist Chaos. Oft gärt sie. Manchmal explodiert sie. Dann wogt sie. Wind, Schlaf, Brütende Hitze. Überschwemmung. Aus

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Overtly satisfying a teenager's predictable need to establish an independent identity, the text nevertheless displays an unusual intensity and precision, as though a very great deal of energy had been invested in it. In some ways, in fact, it

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diesem Grunde ist es schwierig, mit Dir zu verkehren, wenn man nicht einen Instinkt hat, der Dein Wetter gleichsam vorausahnt. Die Zivilisation der Allgemeinheit...reguliert Dein Chaos sozusagen.. Gleicht aus--durch zentnerschwere Balken, Schranken. Daher Deine Schwermut gerade mitten unter Menschen...In der Sphäre Intellektueller kannst Du ungemein viel latente Gedanken haben, weil Du sie in dich saugst und Dir ihres Besitzes mehr bewusst wirst als alle andern, da sie Dir neu sind...Bist Du aber allein, so merkst Du, wie fremd das in Dir ist, was Dich in der Gesellschaft überhaupt möglich macht. Dein eigentliches Wesen zeigst Du, z.B., bei Familie Wenglorz. Darum bist Du wahrscheinlich nach einem Besuch bei ihr froher, weniger ernüchtert, als wenn Du, sagen wir, mit Dr. Deri gesprochen hast. Die Gedanken selbst haben nichts mit Dir zu tun, sie sind nur Pflugscharen, die Dein Gemüt aufackern und es so berechenbarer, vielseitiger machen, aber es auch vergewaltigen. Darum wirst Du jetzt reich, dann arm, stark und schwach, frei und epigonenhaft fühlen, je nachdem, ob die Intellektualität Deine Nerven anreizt, oder ob Du Dich ihrer Fremdheit bewusst wirst...

Ich bin Meer. Bin ich ganz allein, bin ich verzweifelt still und unfähig, mich zu ändern. Ich bin dann Impressionist, aber--glücklicherweise--unfähig, das zu äussern. Daher habe ich von vielen Dingen Bilder in mir wie Photographien. Aber sie nützen mir nichts...um zu schreiben, bedarf es äusserer Einflüsse. Wenn ich in Reibung gerate mit dem Sturm der übrigen Menschen und ihrer Schicksale, so werde ich selber selbständig. Ich kann erst leben, wenn fremdes Leben mich berührt. Darum habe ich mich schon so klein an Dich geschlossen, der Du Leben in Dir trugst von klein auf...Du schreibst im Gegensatz zu mir so wenig Briefe...Alle Begriffe, die von aussen an mich herankommen, machen erst die Gedanken lebendig. Dann sind es aber keine Gedanken mehr, sondern Empfindungen. Man könnte den Unterschied machen: Deine Kunst ist die Äusserung von Gefühlen, meine das Bewusstwerden von Empfindungen. Du wirst merken, worin sich die zwei Wörter unterscheiden...

Bei Dir muss man fragen: In welchem Masse sind die Stücke Deines eigenen Wesens auf eine unpersönliche, d.h. unsterbliche Form gebracht. Du hast mehr Aussicht, unsterblich zu werden als ich, insofern, als es bei Dir nur von der Entwicklung der Ausdrucksform abhängt...

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suggests an act of diplomacy, of reconciliation after a falling out. Its timing, in any case, corresponds to an important shift in the brothers' relationship. Helmut had gone to Munich to school in 1908, and taken a job in Mannheim in 1912. That is, the brothers had been living in different cities for nearly four years. At the point the letter was written, Helmut had just moved to Berlin, the city that was Wieland's immediate goal as well.

Wieland opens the passage with a statement of the similarity between the brothers; almost immediately, however, he draws on the metaphor of sexual difference--describing his brother's consciousness as "in a subtle sense, feminine." ("im feinen Sinne weiblich")--to introduce a series of contrasts. In describing Helmut's emotions he uses metaphors of natural phenomena, specifically weather: chaotic, unpredictable, uncontrollable, productive. Wieland's own emotional life, by contrast, is dependent on contact with other people. To rewrite this difference slightly, in terms more immediately recognizable today, Herzfelde contructs himself in terms of culture or social interaction, and his brother in terms of nature, defined as originary creativity. He goes on to link other patterns of difference to this central one: the importance of ideas to himself, versus a fundamental irrelevance of ideas to Helmut; his own strong propensity toward writing versus Helmut's conspicuous lack of any such

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propensity; Wieland's need for stimulus from others in order to act, versus Helmut's need only to find a form to contain his internally-generated actions, the latter condition being more likely to lead to lasting fame.

The idea that Wieland is "feminizing" Helmut lies ready to hand, but needs to be understood in context. A teenage heterosexual man writing or speaking today could clearly not, for example, describe his older brother as "feminine" even "in a subtle sense" without causing offence. But particularly in the context of Wieland's other writing, this passing remark about the feminine links smoothly into an understanding of gender that may be taken as at least widely acceptable, in fact very close to the social norm for its time and place. References to women are not frequent in either brother's work at any time. Wieland in particular reliably respresented his life, his relationships with his brother, with Grosz, with virtually all of those who made up personal life (excepting Lasker-Schüler, whose literary success arguably qualified her for a separate category) as constituting a society of men: ideas, resources, goals are shared or traded among men in the interests of other men.[33] He constructs those he admires--

[33] The evidence for Wieland's misogyny is actually substantial. Apart from treating Helmut's three wives as near footnotes, inert catalysts of really significant events, (e.g. the birth of a male child) in the biography Leben und Werk, Wieland summed up his perception of women efficiently in "Gesellschaft, Künstler und Kommunismus," an essay of 1921. Referring to an idealizing construct of art his wants to discredit, he wrotes, "It is, so to

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notably Grosz, and later Helmut, in the same way: women are there, may provide assistance in certain matters, bear children, etc., but they don't really matter to the mens' work.[34] This is emphatically not to make any imputation of homosexuality. It is to say that the main business of these mens' lives, the making, exhibition or performance of art, the writing, publishing and discussion of literature, was conducted through their relationships with one another, relationships from which women were systematically excluded. In the whole of Leben und Werk, for example, this is what Wieland wrote about his brother's three wives:

> Life with this man demanded an extraordinary measure of insight and patience. In order to be able to marry John, Mrs. Lena[35] had had to give up her work as a teacher. Now she sat in Halensee on

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speak, the art of a moral hangover, a turning away from the world at large. Some sort of heaven serves so to speak as a redemptive principle, a little garden, a little wife, a quiet brook. Or castles in the air, gilded letters, flowing white hair. Such phenomenon affect women, children and weak intelligences above all; they are mainly produced by pastors, older virgins and similarly impotent figures." ["Es ist sozusagen die Kunst des moralischen Katzenjammers, der Abkehr von der großen Welt. Irgendein Himmel dient da sozusagen als erlösendes Prinzip, ein Gärtchen, ein Weibchen, ein stilles blaues Bächlein. Oder Wolkenpaläste, vergilbte Briefe, schlichtweisses Haar. Solche Erzeugnisse sind vor allem auf Frauen, Kinder und schwache Intelligenzen wirksam; sie werden meist von Pastoren, älteren Jungfrauen und ähnlich impotenten Figuren hergestellt."]

[34] Helmut's third wife, Gertrud Fietz Heartfield, appears to have been an exception, suggesting in turn that the experience of separation, coupled with the very different circumstances of life in the DDR, had substantially altered the fraternal relationship as well.

[35] A shortening of Helene [Balzer]. According to the Heartfield-Archiv records, they were married in 1917.

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> the fifth floor of an off-street building with continual financial worries and two children in an apartment that also served as archive and workspace. These two people held on for ten years. But their nerves gave out more and more often. In the end, divorce was the only way out.
>
> Barbara, journalist and translator, daughter of a Hungarian immigrant, became Heartfield's second wife. They moved into the Hohenzollerndamm in Wilmersdorf, later into a spacious apartment in Potsdam Street, near the Potsdam Bridge. There they entertained their many friends.[36]
>
> On the evening before Easter Sunday [1933--Hitler had secured his power in recent elections, and the police were energetically pursuing Communists--N.R.] he met Barbara, his wife, in a busy pub. Neither of them dared to go home. In parting, she gave him five marks. "They saved my life," he said.[37]

The five marks, as Wieland explains later, were pressed into a taxi driver's hand early the next morning in payment for one segment of Helmut's hair's breadth escape from the Gestapo, who were waiting in his apartment. In Wieland's framework,

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[36] Leben und Werk, 31. Das Leben mit diesem Mann verlangte ein Übermaß an Einsicht und Geduld. Frau Lena hatte, um John heiraten zu können, ihren Lehrerinnenberuf aufgeben müssen. Nun saß sie in Halensee im 4. Stock einen Hinterhauses mit ewigen Geldsorgen und zwei Kindern in der Wohnung, die auch als Archiv und Arbeitsplatz diente. Die beiden Menschen hielten es fast zehn Jahre aus. Aber immer öfter versagten die Nerven. Scheidung war zuletzt der einzige Ausweg.

Barbara, Journalistin und Übersetzerin, Tochter eines Emigranten aus Horthy-Ungarn, wurde Heartfields zweite Frau. Sie zogen nach dem Hohenzollerndamm in Wilmersdorf, später in eine großräumige Wohnung in der Potsdamer Straße, unweit der Potsdamer Brücke. Dort pflegten sich seine viele Freunde zu treffen.

[37] Leben und Werk, 58. In der Nacht zum Ostersonntag hatte er in einem belebten Lokal Barbara, eine Frau, getroffen. Sie wagten sich beide nicht nach Hause. Beim Abschied gab sie ihm 5 Mark. "Die haben mir das leben gerettet", sagte er.

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then, Lena is significant because she had children and tolerated Helmut for a remarkably long time; Barbara was significant because she had a number of useful skills and was the conduit of a critical sum of money. Helmut's third wife, Gertrud, does not appear at all. There is no discussion of how any of these women affected Helmut's life. Nor is there any concrete information--anywhere--about when and how the first two marriages ended.

Such a pattern--in which men promote the interests of other men, and to which women are peripheral, "objects of exchange"--has been usefully labelled "homosocial" by Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick.[38] Homosocial men, which is to say most men who have exercised power in Western societies at any time, may guard their difference from homosexual men--or not; the boundaries of the acceptable vary widely with the cultural values of any particular time and place. It is not unusual, in any case, for them to articulate their differences from one another in the same terms that designate sexual difference in the society at large. That is, a homosocial man can be "feminized" with respect to another without losing identity, position, and respect as a man among men. In the case of the letter under consideration here, Wieland does not use "weiblich" (feminine) to refer to any fixed set of

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[38] Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick, Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, 1-20.

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characteristics, but rather to a very general quality of difference which he then goes on to specify in quite considerable detail. In fact his initial stipulatation of a "fein"--delicate, refined, subtle sort of "feminine"--implies its difference from another, cruder, sort, presumably that of actual biological women. Having clearly signalled at the outset that he is not discussing actual sexual difference, he organizes the terms of difference freely: he associates himself with "sea," for example, and his brother with "weather," hardly a practiced or familiar contrast, but one which neverthess acquires meaning in the context of the passage. Far from casting any doubts on Helmut's sexual identity, then, the passage rather marks out particular place for him within a society of men, with the unspoken understanding that actual women play no part in it.

There is no record of any objection on Helmut's part to this formulation. In fact the letter was reprinted among the apendices to Leben und Werk. This may not actually indicate Helmut's wholehearted endorsement; these is some evidence, to be cited more fully below, that Wieland effectively controlled collaborative decisions even then, very late in their lives. It does, however, affirm that Wieland's understanding of a "division of personality," not to say of artistic and intellectual labor along the lines suggested in this passage forcefully shaped John Heartfield's entire reception: Wieland

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thought and wrote, handled money effectively, organized records, kept schedules, was reputedly dispassionate, dependable, responsible, and emotionally guarded; Helmut, with certain notable exceptions--usually in collaboration with others--did not write. He was known to be explosive, inventive, impulsive, passionate and generous to a fault.

The Herzfeld brothers met Georg Groß in the summer of 1915. Wieland referred to this meeting repeatedly in his writing; in addition to the account in Leben und Werk mentioned above, there are two fuller descriptions. The best-known and most extensive of them was entitled "Ein Kaufmann aus Holland."[39] In it, Wieland describes the setting--Ludwig Meidner's studio--where Grosz was acting the part of an elegantly-dressed Dutch businessman, quite pleased with the very profitable foreign war. At the beginning, the author is fascinated--rather morbidly--with Grosz's performance, the stranger's elegant clothing and arrogant demeanor, his charismatic power to shock and fascinate his audience. Wieland goes on to report his own perception of tiny discrepancies in the accent and gestures. Finally he arrives at a conviction that Grosz was in fact "one of us," a Berliner and an artist who was only pretending to profit from the war. The story concludes with Herzfelde's

[39] This account was written on the occasion of Grosz's fiftieth birthday--both Herzfelde and Grosz were living in New York at the time. It was first published in English translation as "The Curious Merchant from Holland," Harper's Magazine 187 (1943), 569-576. The German text was later included in Immergrün, 82-95.

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ultimate recognition of Grosz's drawings, seen later at the artist's studio, as objects requiring his own response, needing the publisher he himself would shortly become. Wieland makes no mention whatsoever of Helmut.

Nor did Grosz, in recounting his initial meeting with Wieland,[40] recognize Helmut as having played any significant role. There is no way of judging whether such marginalization is fair or accurate; it is clear only that Herzfelde and Grosz--who did write about the encounter--chose to put themselves in the foreground, initially ignoring Helmut--who did not write about it. Only considerably later did Wieland construct the story of his brother's collaboration with Grosz. The 1971 essay "George Grosz, John Heartfield und Erwin Piscator, Dada und die Folgen--oder die Macht der Freundschaft," could in fact be seen at least partly as an attempt to rectify the distortions caused by considering the relationships among these four men in isolation.

> John and I, we were basically different from him, not entirely without a sense of humor, but essentially empathetic and sentimental...Grosz's appearance and presence, his unique way of speaking

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[40] George Grosz, A Little Yes and a Big No, 1946. Wieland Herzfelde at one point ridiculed those who had actually believed the book to be an autobiography, just because it was labelled that way on the title page. He said he had it on good authority--Grosz himself--that the book was a satire on the "life-and-work" monograph [Herzfelde, "George Grosz, John Heartfield, Erwin Piscator, Dada und die Folgen -- oder Die Macht der Freundschaft," Sinn und Form (Berlin) 23 (1971), 6, 1223-1251. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 79.

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> and listening were a pleasure for us--but his art was a revelation. At the same time a cold shower: shocking, sobering, invigorating and energizing. My brother and I were in the habit of understanding art as that which made the beauty embedded in life--as metal in stone--visible and audible. Through Grosz's efforts we stopped seeing the everyday world as sober, banal and boring, and henceforth saw it as a drama in which stupidity, crudity and sloth played the starring roles.[41]

In contrast to the letters of 1913-1914, such postwar writing as this uniformly presents the brothers as seeing through the same eyes, thinking with the same mind. And characteristic of Wieland's autobiographical style at all points, the paragraph repeats a pattern of contrasts, setting one phrase, and finally one whole sentence, against its opposite. At the very outset, for example, "John und ich" is established as one term, against "Grosz," on the other. Then, Grosz's performance--his "way of speaking and listening," appears against his drawings: the performance is engaging, he implies, but it is drawings that are really significant.

With this somewhat unstable formulation of the relative value

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[41] "Dada und die Folgen," 1230-1. John und ich, wir waren anderer Natur als er [Grosz--N.R.], auch nicht ganz humorlos, doch im wesentlichen pathetisch und sentimental...Die Erscheinung und das Wesen von Grosz, seine originelle Art zu erzählen und zuzuhören, liebten wir--seine Kunst aber war für uns eine Offenbarung. Zugleich eine kalte Dusche: schockartig, ernüchternd, prickelnd und belebend. Mein Bruder und ich waren daran gewöhnt, die Kunst als das Sichtbar- und Hörbarmachen der Schönheit zu begreifen, die dem Leben innewohnt, wie Metall dem Gestein. Grosz aber bewirkte, dass wir fortan die alltägliche Welt nicht mehr als nüchtern, banal und langweilig empfanden, sondern als ein Drama, in dem Dummheit, Roheit und Fäulnis die Hauptrolle spielten.

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of "art" and "performance" in mind, the structure of Wieland's earlier narrative, "Ein Kaufmann aus Holland," takes on a new significance. The story takes the rough form of a romance--a tale of obstacles overcome, harmony restored. Not without an element of erotic conquest, it describes Wieland's penetration of Grosz's disguise. Stripped of his mask of cynicism and defense, the "real" Grosz is revealed, the artist who is no longer performing. Endowed with the usual human complement of doubts, limitation, and faulty perception, this Grosz needs the understanding, help, human connection Wieland himself can and shortly will provide. In this story, then, performance emerges as a kind of pseudo-art, something to be seen through, cleared away before true art can be recognized.

Grosz's tangible impact on the Herzfeld brothers was itself dramatic. This is Wieland's description, a continuation of the "before and after" passage cited above:

> Helmut burned everything he had made up to that time in charcoal, pencil, chalk, ink, tempera and oil. I wrote my last expressionistic poem toward the end of the war, gave up my attempts to draw and paint completely, concentrated on building and managing the Malik press and wrote--apart from Tragigrotesken der Nacht, a book of dreams illustrated by Grosz that was published in 1920--no more lyric or narrative prose, but rather only book reviews and introductions, essays, lectures and journalism, as well as (anonymously) titles of Malik press books, along with captions and occasional agitational verses for the drawings, portfolios and collected works of Grosz and above all--even later, in exile--for my brother's book jackets and photomontages. And like John, for the entire time of our friendship with Grosz I

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> considered our most important task to distribute his work in good reproductions and to preserve it for posterity.[42]

From the standpoint of the brothers' relationship, the encounter--one might almost say the collision--with Grosz ressembles the earlier one with Lasker-Schüler in some respects. It too, represents a "triangling" operation, an effort to diffuse tension between the brothers through a third person. Although Grosz had neither her superior age nor her established reputation on which to found a "natural" authority, however (Grosz was actually older than Wieland by only a year), he seems to have been far more emotionally independent--and so more effective in stabilizing the Herzfelds--than Lasker-Schüler had been. The passage describes clearly how, in the presence of Grosz, each brother felt obliged to recognize and focus on his own strengths--defined, for the moment, as those qualities that would best

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[42] Herzfelde, "Dada und die Folgen," 1231. Helmut verbrannte alles, was er bisher mit Kohle, Bleistift, Kreide, Tusche, Tempera und Ölfarbe geschaffen hatte. Ich schrieb gegen Kriegsende mein letztes expressionistisches Gedicht, gab meine Versuche, zu zeichnen und zu malen gänzlich auf, konzentrierte mich auf Herstellung und Redaktion der Malik-Produktion und verfasste--abgesehen von den 1920 veröffentlichten Tragigrotesken der Nacht, einem von Grosz illustrierten Buch mit Träumen--bis 1933 keine Lyrik und erzählende Prosa mehr, sondern nur noch Buchkritiken und Einleitungen, Essays, Vorträge und journalistische Arbeiten sowie (anonym) Titel zu Malik-Büchern und Über- und Unterschriften, gelegentlich auch satirische und agitatorische Verse zu Zeichnungen, Mappen und Sammelbänden von Grosz und vor allem--auch später noch, im Exil--zu vielen Buchumschlägen und Fotomontagen meines Bruders. Und gleich John hielt ich es während der ganzen Zeit unserer Freundschaft mit Grosz für wichtigste Aufgabe, seine Arbeiten in guten Reproduktionen zu verbreiten und der Nachwelt zu erhalten.

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serve Grosz's needs.

Wieland formally presents his and Helmut's responses to Grosz here as parallel and equal. But the destruction of Helmut's earlier artistic work, amounting to a destruction of his former identity as an aspiring artist, weighs considerably more heavily in the balance than Wieland's new privileging of expository over narrative writing and a focus on publishing, an ambition he had harbored for some time in any case. Of the total emotional and intellectual "labor" required to accomodate Grosz, that is, Helmut had to do the greater share. The problem he faced--and there is no way of knowing whether this was conscious or not--was to establish a productive, sustainable link with Grosz that would not compete with Wieland's effort to do the same.

Between the initial contact with Grosz and the invention of John Heartfield, Helmut was inducted into the German army. Again, information about this traumatic episode comes exclusively from Wieland's later writing, which constructs the evolution of John Heartfield quite strictly as an effect of political conviction. At this point, however, Wieland "slips up" a bit. Elsewhere he had integrated Helmut's well-known emotional volatility positively into the narrative as "produktiver Jähzorn"; here, however, it is revealed as a means he himself, among others, used to manipulate Helmut:

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> On the evening before his transport, John had furlough for the last time. We waited for him in the Romanische Café, downcast and silent. Then Else Lasker-Schüler had an idea: we should all speak to him as though what he was saying was incoherent, incomprehensible, go out of our way to seem indulgent, concerned. He would, if she knew him, get extremely upset about it, and then she would persuade him that the doctor was wrong, John was not fit for field service, but belonged, as any of us would confirm, in a mental hospital, not at the front. We pulled this off so well that he finally began to doubt his own mental stability. So it was easy for the poetess [Lasker-Schüler], whom he admired greatly, to extract a promise from him that he would inform the authories of his condition when he was called up in the morning.
>
> The next news of him came from a Berlin hospital. When I went to visit him, I encountered a pale being, who spoke haltingly and tried to gather together the leaves in the park with a rake. The striped hospital gown added to my discomfiture. Could our "psychotherapy" have actually made him ill? More probably it was the events of that morning, for of all the members of his detachment, he alone had stepped out of formation at the call up and forthrightly announced that he, Infantryman Herzfeld, was mentally ill. The company commander had dared to laugh. And that had made my brother so furious that two petty officers came over to hold him down and talk to him, carefully, just as we had on the previous evening, until orderlies got there to take him away less carefully.[43]

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[43] Leben und Werk, 18. Am Abend vor dem Abtransport hatte John zum letztenmal Stadturlaub. Im Romanischen Café warteten wir auf ihn, betrübt und schweigsam. Da hatte Else Laske[r]-Schüler eine Idee: Wir all sollten übertrieben schonend und rücksichtsvoll so mit ihm reden, als sei, was er äusserte, ohne Sinn und Zusammenhang. Er werde, wie sie ihn kenne, höchst erregt darauf reagieren, und dann wolle sie ihn davon überzeugen, der Arzt habe sich geirrt, John sei nicht "felddiestfähig," er gehöre, das könne jeder von uns bestätigen, in ein Lazarett für Nervenkranke und nicht an die Front. Die Art, wie wir das Komplott durchfühten, liess ihn zuletzt selber an seiner geistigen Gesundheit sweifeln; es fiel daher der von ihm ungemein verehrten Dichterin nicht schwer, ihm das Versprechen abzunehmen, er werde in der Frühe beim Appell vor dem Ausmarsch auf seinen Zustand hinweisen.

Die nächste Nachricht von ihm kam aus einem Berliner Krankenhaus.

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There are many stories from these years, from many sources, showcasing Helmut's extraordinary trust in those close to him, on the one hand, and his explosive temper on the other. All of them testify to his extreme emotional dependence, on his brother above all. Sometimes they also reveal the group's willingness--with Wieland present and doing nothing to inhibit it--to exploit this weakness, even for sheer sport.[44] Wieland presents the induction episode as a--successful--effort to save Helmut's life by saving him from combat duty; still, especially given the family history of mental illness, it is strikingly cruel.

Perhaps exactly because of the ambiguity of Wieland's description, historians have uniformly trivialized Helmut's hospitalization. One very recent account, for example, states

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Als ich ihn besuchte, begegnete ich einem blassen Menschen, der stockend sprach und mit einem Rechen versuchte, das Laub im Park auf einem Haufen zu scharren. Der gestreifte Anstaltskittel tat ein übriges, mich zu beunruhigen. Sollte unsre "Psychotherapie" ihn wirklich krank gemacht haben? Eher schon die Vorgänge an jenem Morgen, da er als einziger seines Truppenteils beim Appell aus dem Glied getreten war und stramm stehend gemeldet hatte, er, Garde-Infanterist Herzfeld, sei nervenkrank. Der Kompanieführer hatte zu lächeln gewagt. Und das hatte meinen Bruder in solche Wut versetzt, dass zwei Unteroffiziere herbeiliefen, ihn festheilten und auf ihn einsprachen, ähnlich behutsam wie wir am Vorabend, bis Sanitäter kamen, die ihn weniger behutsam wegführten.

[44] One of the grimmer examples is Richard Huelsenbeck, Mit Witz, Licht und Grütze. Auf den Spuren des Dadaismus, Wiesbaden, 1957, 98-99. Cited in März, Der Schnitt, 64. After a full night of drinking and drug-taking, Huelsenbeck writes, John Heartfield became so unmannerly (ungebärdig) that he had to be forcibly held back. The group packed him in a taxi and took him to Wieland's studio, where they tied him to a chair and prodded him, physically and verbally, "as one provokes an animal in the zoo."

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that "Heartfield had avoided service altogether by faking a mental breakdown on the day he was to have been sent to the front."[45] A careful reading of the passage, however, reveals no implication of "faking" on Helmut's part; all the faking was done by Wieland and associates. Rather than denying the reality of Helmut's illness or disorientation, Wieland's account in fact denies the connection between this illness and the performance of the evening before. Wieland denies, that is, his own responsibility in the matter. For it was not hatred of war or fear of death that had undermined Helmut's stability; it was exactly the devaluation, the threatened loss of connection with his intimate group, delivered in the form of the commander's laughter. The manipulative theater staged in the cafe the evening before had laid bare the real ground, and the fragility of the faith that kept Helmut functioning. It may have forcefully demonstrated, at least to Helmut, the potential impact such performances might have. Stated another way, the experience pushed Helmut to, actually over for a time, the boundaries of social reality, revealing this reality as conventional, provisional, and manipulable.

On discharge from the hospital, Helmut was declared unfit for combat, but still fit for active service. He was commissioned as a postal deliveryman in Berlin-Grunewald, a duty which,

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[45] Peter Jelavich, Berlin Cabaret, London and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993, 144.

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according to Wieland, he discharged in a satisfactorily proto-Dada fashion by stuffing the mail down the rain gutters. It is the first mention of anything Helmut had done in the way of deliberate, public transgression, a goal-oriented breach of socially sanctioned responsibility. A page after the description of this in Leben und Werk, Wieland mentions that the solution particularly impressed Grosz, who, in an analogous effort to thwart critical acceptance of the war, had been deliberately trying to irritate acquaintances at the front by sending them packets of things like sleeve guards, shirt fronts (for tuxedos), shoehorns, etc., of no conceivable use to them in their circumstances. Other accounts describe Helmut cooperating in these performances.

Helmut's distinctive manner of mail delivery marked an independent success with Grosz. If it was not this particular incident, it was undoubtedly one very like it that opened a common ground completely separate from the writing and publishing activities that were Wieland's terrain. For in contrast to Wieland's effort to distribute Grosz's drawings, to establish their value and permanence, Helmut's own engagement with Grosz consisted primarily of actions, improvisational, emphemeral performances unfolding in time. If Helmut ever saw Grosz's work in the same terms Wieland did, namely as divided between the making of durable objects on the one hand, performance on the other, then he apparently "sided"

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with performance: for in comparing the two collaborative relationships that arose between Wieland and Grosz on the one hand, Helmut and Grosz on the other, it is striking how consistently Wieland's energy is addressed to the reproduction and distribution of Grosz's objects, and Helmut's to the expediting and appreciation of Grosz's performance. The content of these performances--even before the official onset of Berlin Dada--was disruptive, antagonistic toward "German society" conceived in the abstract. Their stated purpose was to undermine the kind of reason and good manners that had led to a completely irrational and brutal war. United in their social opposition, however, these three--in looser association with a number of others, particularly Erwin Piscator--also began to constitute a community of their own, with shared meanings, positions, boundaries, and regulating mechanisms. The "border work," solidifying the difference between the inside and outside of this community, was the project of Helmut and Grosz, and the basis a solid link between the two, quite independent of Wieland. This was the key factor in establishing what Lasker-Schüler had not, namely the first stable interpersonal triangle the Herzfelds had known.

It was within the dynamic functioning of this triangle that the name Heartfield--or more exactly, the invented identity to which it referred--began to take shape. Symbolically, it resolved a crisis in Helmut's life, a crisis which Wieland

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quite possibly never appreciated, exactly because he himself figured so centrally in it. As measured by the induction incident alone, Wieland's behavior toward his brother had become--under the guise of comradely good humor--unbearably cruel and contemptuous. The object of Wieland's first "triangling" effort--Else Lasker-Schüler--is here revealed as worse than useless as a stabilizing factor: she took Wieland's side fully, not only participating in the manipulative treatment of Helmut, but actually instigating it. Masked here as an effort to save Helmut's life, this incident in particular raises questions about much of Wieland's construction, the sugary sentimentality of his descriptions of their childhood relationship, as well as the moral rigidity with which he later set forth their shared political commitments.

Helmut did participate in the initial efforts to publish Grosz's work, efforts that coalesced, in 1917, into the Malik Verlag. In fact Helmut technically founded the press. This happened just when Wieland was away from Berlin altogether, serving the second of two terms of wartime military duty.[46] The remarkable timing, to be examined further in the next chapter, actually suggests that Wieland's absence was the condition under which the Helmut-Grosz team could act

[46] Wieland Herzfeld, Der Malik-Verlag 1917-1949, exh. cat., Berlin (East): Akademie der Künste, 1966, 17.

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effectively, in this case finally break through the thicket of press laws to which Wieland had, with praiseworthy ingenuity, always conformed.[47]

The first product of the newly-founded press, in any case, was the celebrated issue of Neue Jugend in which Helmut began to break the "rules" of typographical order (fig. 1). There is a playful, improvisational quality in it that was never a feature of the Wieland-Grosz collaboration. Helmut's work with Grosz came to embrace Dada exhibitions and soirees, a performance for the cabaret Schall und Rauch, an animated film for the newly-founded Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft (UFA), and stage sets for various theatrical productions through the 1920s, which in turn led to other theatrical projects which did not involve Grosz. These projects share, in addition to an inherently collaborative process, the incorporation of art objects--paintings, drawings, photographs--within a performance that takes place in time. As "props," they make no claim to timelessness, their value being explicitly ephemeral, contingent on the circumstances of the performance.

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[47] Publishers were required to hold a license from the government at the time. Given that the journal under consideration opposed a war in which that government was engaged, a new license could be obtained only under some reasonable pretext. Initially, the the Herzfelds took an easier route--they took over an extant license, and with it the name, Neue Jugend, as well as certain difficulties associated with the registered publisher, Hans Barger; the later application for a new license, under the name "Malik," did involve a pretext, namely the continuing publication of Lasker-Schüler's novel, der Malik.

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The name John Heartfield coincides exactly with Helmut's adoption of a kind of practice unconcerned with the durability of art objects.

At one level, then, the name "Heartfield" established a limit, an end to a life fraught with painful memories and ongoing emotional dependency; it simultaneously laid the foundation of another kind of life and artistic practice. "Heartfield" is nominally no longer recognizable as the brother of "Herzfelde," or indeed as any kind of family relation at all, not even as a fellow speaker of German. "Heartfield" does, however, extract and retain something of "Herzfeld's" former meaning, an imprecise but broadly positive juxtaposition of old, richly associative Anglo-Saxon words. In other words, "Heartfield" pulls the core, the "heart" of the name out from its specifically German context, and sets it into English--something close enough to be comprehensible, yet definitively outside the specific associations that would probably have remained painful for him. It seems clear that English was adopted on this basis--not out of any profound sympathy with England,[48] with which he had no positive personal connection at all at this point, but out of loathing for a form of Germans'--perhaps not excluding his brother's--behavior.

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[48] The anecdote related by Wieland Herzfelde, regarding the popular greeting "Gott strafe England!" actually supports this explanation: Helmut's motivation to change his name, that is, came not from England, but from certain Germans' manner of representing England.

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The new name, then, involves radical rejection, but also represents a move to preserve something fundamental from the past. Under the immediate circumstances in which it was adopted, it registered the possibility of maintaining the clearly satisfying and productive relationship with Grosz, which in turn rendered his relationship to Wieland far more flexible. The name, one might say, registered the possibility of a satisfactory social existence altogether. "Heartfield," that is, embodied the idea of a space that was not exactly here, a time that was not exactly now, a point from which the confusing and painful circumstances of the present could be understood and resolved. "Heartfield" would live in such a time and place: his existence would stand for, would guarantee its existence. Heartfield's "work," then, although it involved the making of physical objects, was more fundamentally the ongoing project of making Heartfield "real," of creating a resonance, a public celebration not for the troubled and needy Helmut Herzfeld, but for Heartfield, the fearless, inexhaustible citizen of a possible, imaginable harmonious society.

Heartfield, in a word, was an imaginary construct, energized by an actual, physical person, but functionally dependent on a fairly specific collaborative structure. This identity was bounded, most importantly, by Wieland's presence and authority, even at moments when the brothers were not actually

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together. A third term, often representing an institution, completed the requirements for a Heartfield work, determining its specific form and venue. The initial catalyzing figure in this third position was clearly Grosz: through him, it became possible for Helmut to become Heartfield, to pursue a "work" which would both engage Wieland and still be distinct from him. But the collaborative structure, once formed, was flexible enough to engage many others in the "Grosz" position--writers, theater directors, photographers, editors. Lilly Becher, an editor at the A.-I.-Z. both in Berlin and Prague, for example, not only figured in such a collaboration for many years, but also proved an astute observer of how it worked:[49]

> Kisch and Heartfield had one trait in common: one could threaten Egon Erwin Kisch: I'll tell your grandmother; when there was trouble with Jonny: We'll tell your brother...He could be so angry he'd be hanging three feet in the air--he outdid Gagarin. Mentioning his brother was one of the very few ways I had [of calming him down]...It was a genuine collaboration [between] these Siamese twins, Castor and Pollux, as the saying goes, a real collective. It wasn't because they were related, but because they had the same perspective.[50]

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[49] The remarks were made on the occasion of Heartfield's 70th birthday, celebrated at the offices of the Berliner-Illustrierte in 1981.

[50] Lilly Becher, "Aus einer Ausprache von Lilly Becher..." typescript [1981]. Heartfield-Archiv, Berlin. Es gibt einen verwandten Zug bei Kisch [prominent journalist in the Weimar Republic.--N.R.] und Heartfield: Egon Erwin Kisch konnte man drohen: Ich sags der Grossmutter -- wenn es Krach mit Jonny gab: Wir sagen es Deinem Bruder...Er konnte vor Wut so hoch hüpfen, dass er einen Meter über den Boden in der Luft hängen blieb--er nahm Gagarin vorweg. Ein Hinweis auf den Bruder war eines der ganz wenigen Mittel, die mir zur Verfügung standen...

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Becher confirms the collaborative nature of Heartfield's A.-I.-Z. work, emphasizing the steadying, regulating force Wieland--sometimes even silently--exerted on his brother, and also the way the third point on the triangle--in this case, Becher herself--could, if necessary, activate this force.

Another, fuller account of the brothers' personal relationship in the late 1920s came from an altogether different direction. Elias Canetti was a young Austrian writer whom Wieland invited to Berlin expressly to produce a biography of the Malik-Verlag's most celebrated author at the time, Upton Sinclair.[51] Like so many "eyewitness" accounts of Heartfield, Canetti's was produced long after the actual encounter--"The Brothers" ("Die Brüder") was published in a collection of such short memoirs as Die Fackel im Ohr in 1980. "The Brothers" appears, at first, to be a sketch of just Wieland; in its attempt to grasp something significant about Wieland, however, the text moves--the logic is eventually made clear--into the most revealing description of Helmut (referred to here as John) to date. After noting some of Helmut's most distinctive patterns of behavior, particularly his tendency to

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Es war eine echte Gemeinschaftsarbeit dieser siamesischen Zwillinge, sprichwörtlich Castor und Pollux, ein echtes Kollektiv. Es beruhte nicht auf den Blutsbanden, sondern auf die gemeinsamen Weltanschauung.

[51] Although the biography was never completed, Canetti did provide a number of translations into German for the press.

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become angry whenever confronted with a new piece of information, Canetti goes on to outline a relationship, or complementarity between Helmut's and Wieland's respective characteristics. The text deftly suggests that the two men were so tightly bound together as to effectively represent two complementary aspects of the same personality:

> John was, in my opinion, the most unreflecting of all men. He consisted of spontaneous and intense moments. He thought only when he was busy with a montage. Since he was not always calculating things out like other people, he remained lively and choleric. His reactions did constitute a kind of anger, but not egotistical anger. He learned only from those things that he perceived as attacks, and in order to experience something new, he had to understand it as an attack. Others allow the new to be directed toward them or they swallow it like syrup. John had to shake it angrily, in order to be able to hold on to it without diminishing its power.
>
> Only gradually did I realize how indispensible these two brothers were to one another. Wieland never criticized anything about John. He did not excuse his extraordinary behavior, nor did he try to explain it. He took it as a matter of course, and only when he began to speak of his childhood did I grasp what bound the two together. They were orphan children, four in number, two brothers and two sisters, and were taken in by foster parent in Aigen bei Salzburg. Wieland was lucky with stepparents, Helmut, the elder (this was John's name before he adopted the English name) had a more difficult time. They were always aware that they did not have their real parents, and became very attached to one another. Wieland's real power was his attachment to this brother. They set up their lives in Berlin together. Helmut had officially [In fact the name change was not "official"--legal--until 1964. N.R.] changed his name to John Heartfield as a protest against the war. It took courage to do that as the war was still being fought. George Grosz, whom they encountered at that time, became an equally close friend to both. When the Malik Verlag was founded, there was no

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> question that John Heartfield would design the dust covers for the books. They had their families, they lived separately, they did not burden or inhibit one another, but at the same time they were there, in the turbulent, extravagantly active life of Berlin, together.[52]

Canetti's observation that an unspoken understanding existed between the Herzfelds at all points is substantiated in a closer look at their respective work. The scope of

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[52] Elias Canetti, "Die Brüder," Die Fackel im Ohr: Lebensgeschichte 1921-1931, Munich and Vienna: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1980, 1993, 253-5. John war, meine ich, der Unbedachteste aller Menschen. Er bestand aus spontanen und heftigen Augenblicken. Er dachte nur, wenn er mit einer Montage beschäftigt war. Da er nicht immer an etwas herumrechnete wie andere Menschen, blieb er frisch und cholerisch. Es war schon eine Art von Zorn, womite er reagierte, aber es war kein selbstsüchtiger Zorn. Er lernte nur von dem, was er als Angriff empfand, und um etwas Neues zu erfahren, mußte er's für einen Angriff halten. Andere lassen Neues an sich abgleiten oder schlucken es wie Sirup. John mußte es wütend schütteln, um es halten zu können, ohne es zu entkräften.

Erst allmählich kam ich drauf, wie unentbehrlich diese beiden Brüder füreinander waren. Wieland kritisierte nie etwas an John. Er entschuldigte sein ungewöhnliches Verhalten nicht, er suchte es auch nicht zu erklären. Es war ihm selbstverständlich, und erst als er von seiner Kindheit sprach, begriff ich, was die beiden verband. Sie waren Waisenkinder, zu viert, zwei Brüder und zwei Schwestern, und waren von Zieheltern in Aigen bei Salzburg ins Haus genommen worden. Wieland hatte Glück mit dem Zieheltern, Helmut, der Ältere (so heiß John, bevor er diesen englischen Namen annahm) hatte es schwerer. Sie waren sich immer dessen bewußt, daß sie ihre wirklichen Eltern nicht hatten, und schlossen sich sehr eng aneinander an. Wielands eigentliche Kraft war die Bindung an diesen Bruder. Zusammen faßten sie Fuß in Berlin. Aus Protest gegen den Krieg hatte Helmut seinen Namen offiziell [In fact the name was not legally until 1964--N.R.] in John Heartfield ändern lassen. Es gehörte Mut dazu, da da das noch im Krieg geschah. George Grosz, auf den sie damals stießen, wurde beiden ein gleich naher Freund. Als der Malik Verlag gegründet wurde, war es selbstverständlich, daß John Heartfield die Umschläge für die Bücher entwarf. Sie hatten ihre Familien, sie lebten getrennt, sie bedrängten und beengten einander nicht, aber es gab sie zugleich, im turbulenten, unerhört aktiven Berliner Leben waren beide zusammen da.

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Heartfield's work was initially defined in the common ground between Helmut and Grosz, and more specifically in contrast to the common ground between Wieland and Grosz: these rarely, if ever overlapped. Wieland was, from the beginning, Grosz's publisher, a relatively well-defined relationship that might be characterized as distributer or promoter. On one occasion--In 1920, Wieland published a book narrating a selection of his own dreams entitled Tragigrotesken der Nacht[53]--they were writer and illustrator, respectively; in another--Die Kunst ist in Gefahr of 1925--they were coauthors. In yet another kind of collaboration--the catalogue for the Dada Fair of 1920--Wieland acted as presenter or liaison between the art on view and the public.[54] They were assiduous correspondents for literally decades, sharing a love of disciplined argumentation of which Helmut was not a part. Throughout their very long and at points very intense interaction, in any case, Grosz remained the creator of objects, Wieland their conduit to a wider public.

The movement in the Wieland-Grosz project, taking place within a social construct, can effectively be contrasted with the movement in the Helmut-Grosz collaboration, culminating in the invention of Heartfield, which proposed to break through the limits of such a construct. Painting and drawing, in any

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[53] Berlin: Malik Verlag, 1920.

[54] Erste Internationale Dada-Messe, Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1920.

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case--and the searching exploration of one's inner life, sensibility, belief it signified--was what Grosz did and what Wieland published; it was not part of Heartfield's possibilities.[55] Photographs, type, graphic design, on the other hand, were safe ground. The work of the Malik-Verlag was done by all three, but according to a regularized pattern: Wieland worked with Grosz; he also worked with Helmut. With the exception of the press's founding moments, however, Wieland never relinquished control of the Malik-Verlag to the point of allowing Helmut and Grosz--or anyone else, for that matter--to collaborate independently in its name.

Not being precisely an individual, John Heartfield did not exactly grow or evolve in the sense associated with the practice of sustained self-criticism of a modernist artist; he "developed" rather in the sense one might speak of a photographic image emerging when the exposed print is swirled through its developer bath. A kind of intensification--clearer focus, stronger command of craft, a greater public presence--is observable between Heartfield's first appearance about 1916 and his flight to England in 1938. After that date, both in England and the the DDR, the evidence suggests that Heartfield's work took the form of a recuperative operation, an attempt to reconstitute the identity of the

[55] The few exceptions that occurred later--Heartfield made drawings for at least one book jacket and a number of stage designs--tend to broadly confirm this "rule."

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interwar years by reassembling the elements that had supported it, e.g. a politically like-minded mass audience, a sympathetic press, theater, or film company, and the collaboration of Wieland. The effort was never really successful in a literal sense, for the constellation of political and economic conditions, the linguistic environment, the fraternal relationship which had once sustained, even demanded Heartfield was definitively past. The particular forms the recuperative effort took, the responses it generated, the boundaries it exposed, may be read as a kind of core sample in the shifting construction of artistic identity in the postwar period.

Between Heartfield's arrival in England, in December, 1938, and the declaration of war against Germany in September, 1939, his identity as a citizen of a possible Germany, a politically responsible, humane, peaceful Germany, remained viable. With the declaration of war, this identity was dramatically undermined, and with passing time it eroded still further. He did make some effort to "translate" his identity into English, to "stand" for the possibility of whole, humane England. But even if he had really been equipped, in language or education, to draw on English literature, history, political convention as freely and imaginatively as he did on German equivalents, his audience there could hardly have understood: at that moment, in much of the world, England

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already did effectively signify wholeness and humanity. An oppositional defense of this possibility, particularly from one whose very name suggested alliance rather than opposition--could have made no sense.

Apart from the fortunes of John Heartfield, it is clear even from the meager evidence available that Helmut Herzfeld--this name appears more regularly on correspondence at this point--was lonely and often ill during his years in England. The symptoms were vague and intermittent, involving headaches and disturbances in vision, apparently neurological in origin. They were, he reported, substantially aggravated by his six-week internment as an enemy alien during the first months of the war,[56] and still further by the bombing of London.

And yet there was another aspect of those years that is conspicuously absent from the biography. In England, definitively separated for the first time from Wieland, with no solid assurance that they would ever be reunited, Helmut met and began living with Gertrud Fietz, a woman who had been active in the Communist Party in the 1920s, and whom he had

[56] This information, like almost everything about Helmut, comes through a mediator, rather than directly from him. In this case, it was reported through his companion of the time, Gertrud Fietz, who later became his third wife.

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met, but not known well at the time.[57] She became his companion during their years in England, and later his third wife,[58] as well as defender and spokeswoman for the rest of his life.[59] In England, too, this man who had spent his entire working life at the frenetic center of one or another metropolis--Munich, Berlin, Prague, with no leisure at all for what might be loosely termed "domestic" pleasures, began to cultivate fruit trees in the garden of his landlord's house at 1 Jackson's Lane in Hampstead, to take weekend car trips into the countryside, raise kittens and rabbits, foraging for their food on the Hampstead Heath. His nearly obsessive attachment to a dog, Adam, became a distinguishing mark, one that seems to have effectively endeared him to the animal-loving English.[60] It can be no coincidence that these patterns--which, modest as they are, read as "indulgences" against the

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[57] She remembered, for example, the Party's hesitation in designating funds for the publication of Heartfield's campaign poster, "Fünf Finger hat die Hand" in 1928 ("Aktennotiz über das KPD-Wahlplakat, '5 Finger hat die Hand,'" Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 151.).

[58] They were married in 1952.

[59] There is no published source of information regarding Gertrud Heartfield. During her years as the administrator of the Heartfield-Archiv (1968-1983), she earned a reputation as an energetic, enthusiastic promoter of Heartfield's work, generous with her time and suggestions. To judge by her notes to family members (shared with me by Tom and John Heartfield, son and grandson, respectively), she was an observant and conscientious person, devoted to serving her husband's needs, but making no claims to any special critical or intellectual insight into his work.

[60] Richard Carline, John Heartfield, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1969.

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background of Heartfield's former life--emerged in Wieland's absence, in the absence, in fact, of all the factors that had held John Heartfield's identity in place. To just the extent Heartfield was undermined, that is, Helmut began to manifest a complementary identity.

After six years of separation from his brother, nearly five of which had passed in silence--he had not replied to Wieland's letters from New York between July, 1940 and March, 1945--Helmut reestablished contact with his brother. The letter is written in good English, although with none of the rhetorical polish that marks Wieland's writing in either language. By way of explanation for the long silence between them, it refers, haltingly and somewhat vaguely, to an emotional struggle in the recent past, something that is very difficult to describe, and probably not worth the trouble now in any case, since the war is over, and everything is different. The content of this struggle must remain sheer conjecture; it is tempting to speculate that Helmut had begun to recognize certain advantages in the separation. Nevertheless, the train of thought in this passage concludes with the sentence "To be parted from you is to be just one half of an apple."[61]

Another five years would pass, however, before the two were

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[61] London, March 11, 1945, 4. Heartfield-Archiv, Berlin. English was presumably required as a condition of wartime security regulations.

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actually reunited on an ongoing basis. Like all of the exiles, they faced the decision of whether or not to return to Germany, if so to which Germany, and at what time. Part of this consideration was clearly the liklihood of being remembered, positively, from before the war, of being able to build on one's previous skills, accomplishments, reputation.

Heartfield's application for membership in the SED (East German Communist Party) in 1950 was rejected, officially because his work was "formalist," i.e., part of the interwar avant-garde to which proponents of Socialist Realism were opposed. Those exiles returning from the East, from Moscow, were also consistently welcomed more warmly than those coming from the West. No doubt more importantly, Heartfield had been associated with Willi Münzenberg, the flamboyant Comintern reprentative who had been so decisively rejected by the Party in 1938. But there are, finally, still more persuasive reasons for the governing party's being wary of Heartfield. A figure of demonstrated critical gifts, at ease with mass media, endowed with a capacity to communicate with a diverse audience and an apparently fearless, uncorruptible belief in the <u>possibility</u> of a peaceful, equitable Germany--all these presented real threats to a government struggling to establish its power and legitimacy. Heartfield appeared quite capable of making such a government's shortcomings apparent to the general public. He had done it before.

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As the DDR sought to establish its difference from the West, in any case, it became particularly important to document a continuous anti-fascist, anti-capitalist tradition, i.e. a smooth link with the Communists of the Weimar Republic. Heartfield was ideal for the purpose. This, possibly coupled with certain agreements on Heartfield's part that sufficiently allayed the government's fears, may have catalyzed the East German government's abrupt about-face in 1956. For in that year Heartfield was readmitted to the Communist Party and made of member of the Academy of Arts. The following year the Academy mounted a large travelling exhibition of his work. Heartfield was back.

Only instead of an actual, working, Heartfield-in-the-present, this was a kind of 1930s Heartfield figuratively "embalmed," enshrined, honored, but effectively silenced. At this point always in open collaboration with Wieland, he designed theater sets for "safe" productions--Shakespeare in Vienna, Brecht at the Kammerspiele. Sometimes he designed book jackets. He used photographs. Above all, he accompanied exhibitions of his work from the 1930s, speaking to visitors, on the radio, in classes, arguing that it was "unfortunately still current" ("leider noch aktuell"). In effect he was pleading--without being able to quite say it explicitly--that some younger person might do, in the present, what he no longer could. For

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as if by tacit agreement with the government in power, he did not snip texts and photographs from current newspapers, did not expose the cracks, the contradictions in official rhetoric. He made no more "dialectical photomontage."

Allegedly with Helmut's support, Wieland went so far as to "update" a number of the 1930s montages for republication in the biography, John Heartfield: Leben und Werk, presumably in order to make their relevance to current events more apparent. The logical contradiction inherent in the move--work that already is current need not be updated--apparently escaped both of them; perhaps, on the other hand, it escaped only Wieland. After 1950 Heartfield and Herzfelde began to sign their new work jointly, "Gebrüder Heartfield-Herzfelde,"[62] clearly an effort to acknowledge Wieland's participation. This acknowledgement was not retroactively extended to all of Heartfield's work of the 1920s and 1930s. But in 1966, when Wieland prepared the catalogue of the exhibition "Der Malik-Verlag 1917-1947,"[63] he did designate a number of the book designs as joint productions, and claimed at least one as his own. After Heartfield's death, attribution became a point of bitter contention between the widow, Gertrud, and Wieland: Wieland maintained that he had always been an integral part of

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[62] Brothers Heartfield-Herzfelde. However the German "Gebrüder" functions as a singular noun, much as a corporate name might.

[63] Berlin (DDR): Akademie der Künste, 1967.

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Heartfield's work, even during the 1930s; Gertrud acknowledged collaboration only during the postwar years.[64]

By the time Eckhard Siepmann interviewed Gertrud Heartfield in 1977, Wieland was living in a nursing home, his memory seriously impaired. Probably not coincidentally, it is at this point that the idea of tension or conflict between the brothers first appears in the literature:

> The collaboration between the brothers John and Wieland stretches from childhood to Heartfield's death in 1968--interrupted only by the emigration period, 1939-1950. Wieland Herzfelde had a significant part in Heartfield's development. Many ideas and very many texts are his; it may be equally important, however, that Wieland's pragmatism--as much in matters of publication strategy as in human relations--cleared away many difficulties that arose as a result of John's spontaneity and impulsiveness. This productive aspect appears to have had a flip side, however. Wieland's interventions sometimes did more than alleviate problems for John; he seems sometimes to have felt helpless against the force with which his brother asserted his own personality. Heartfield's consent to the "updating" of his work for the Herzfelde book [Leben und Werk--N.R.] should also be viewed in this context.[65]

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[64] Evans, John Heartfield, 20, 40, n.40.

[65] Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield, 1977, 9, n. 5. Die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Brüdern John und Wieland reicht von den Kindertagen bis zum Tod von Heartfield 1968--unterbrochen nur durch die Zeit der Emigration 1939-1950. Wieland Herzfelde hat an der künstlerischen Entwicklung von Heartfield bedeutenden Anteil. Viele Ideen und sehr viele Texte der Fotomontagen stammen von ihm; ebenso wichtig mag aber sein, dass Wielands Pragmatismus--sowohl in der Publikationsstrategie als auch im Umgang mit Menschen--manche Schwierigkeiten aus dem Wege räumte, die durch die Spontanität und Unbedingheit von John entstanden. Dieser produktive Aspekt scheint jedoch auch eine Kehrseite gehabt zu haben. Es hat den Anschein, als habe John die Eingriffe von Wieland nicht immer nur als

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Siepmann's entirely reasonable and convincing outline of a political relationship between the brothers may well have been shaped in conversation with Gertrud Heartfield. Siepmann acknowledged her generous cooperation in providing first-hand information for the book as well as access to the artist's work and sources; further, this statement represents a fresh voice and a crisp contrast to Wieland's relentless insistence, in all his writings, on perfect fraternal harmony. Gertrud Heartfield knew and presumably loved Helmut Herzfeld, even and perhaps especially those aspects that were not part of John Heartfield. Since she was one of very few who were ever in a position to distinguish between the flesh-and-blood Helmut and constructed Heartfield, she may well have been the only one who could see that there were disadvantages, as well as advantages, to being Heartfield. She clearly was, as Wieland knew well enough, on Helmut's "side," and would take his part, if necessary even against Wieland. She wrote letters, talked to researchers, "represented" Heartfield to the public--the very things Wieland had done alone in earlier years. Gertrud brought change, in short, to a fraternal relationship that had functioned for well over half a century in the same way. Perhaps not surprisingly, Wieland--the reports here are

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Erleichterung empfunden; als habe er dem Gewicht, mit dem der Bruder seine eigene Persönlichkeit zur Geltung brachte, manchmal hilflos gegenübergestanden. In diesem Kontext muss auch die Information von Herzfelde gesehen werden, dass Heartfield der "Aktualisierung" seines Werks für das Herzfelde-Buch zugestimmt hat.

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numerous and unanimous--disliked her intensely.[66]

John Heartfield flourished, then, in roughly inverse proportion to Helmut. "Heartfield" might be loosely considered a kind of stage name, an identity designed for public consumption, if allowance is also made for the unusually public nature of the persona it represented,[67] and for the extreme thoroughness with which it absorbed and erased--for over two decades--all marks of a meaningful private life. Family systems theory offers a more precise and flexible way to describe the relationship between Helmut and Heartfield, however, namely in terms of a "true" and "false" self. Since these strongly judgemental designations may be misleading here, it is useful to restate the idea as simply distinguishing between two possible mechanisms of satisfying emotional needs. One of them--the "true" in Bowen's theory--is directed toward the articulation of an independent, autonomous self, the kind of personality that seemed to manifest itself most clearly during Helmut's years in England; the other is constantly dependent, continually redefined in conjunction with people, ideas, institutions outside itself. This was John Heartfield.

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[66] These reports are exclusively verbal--from Eckhard Siepmann, David Evans, Heartfield-Archiv personnel, even Yvonne Kapp, Helmut's first English landlady when he arrived from Prague.

[67] As "public" as the consumable personae of stage or screen actors and actresses are, they usually represent "private" people, sometimes--as Garbo, for example--exaggeratedly so.

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IV. The Photomonteur and his "Family"

Wieland's 1971 autobiographical memoir, "George Grosz, John Heartfield, Erwin Piscator, Dada und die Folgen--oder die Macht der Freundschaft"[1] framed the relationships among a small group of friends as instrumental in shaping their respective lives. The author was quick to point out that the four named in the title were those who together joined the newly-formed German Communist Party on the last day of 1918--Wieland may well have been calling attention to this early show of loyalty for political reasons. But the names in the title designate only the central core of a group which was, in its full scope, neither exclusively Communist nor uniformly associated with Berlin Dada. Their relationships, in any case, hardly resembled narrowly "professional" or "political" connections at all. They were attachments that extended over decades, functioning on multiple levels, surviving deeply-felt disagreements and long separations. Wieland calls them friendships. But it is possible to see them as even more. The correspondence between Wieland and Grosz, for example, which continued until Grosz's death in 1959, revolved, particularly in its final decade, around Wieland's tireless

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[1] "George Grosz, John Heartfield, Erwin Piscator, Dada und die Folgen--oder Die Macht der Freundschaft," Sinn und Form 23:6,(1971), 1224-1251. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit, 72-100.

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efforts to rekindle Grosz's faith in Communism.[2] More than a colleague or friend, that is, Wieland was acting in those later years like someone trying to coax a disenchanted brother back into the good graces of a family.

Wieland, who was generally not a writer to use distinctive metaphors casually, did refer to the Party as a "family" in his writing.[3] In Immergrün[4], the book of autobiographical essays he published in 1949, he further made an explicit link between his political perspective and his own personal experience of a family. The book's subtitle refers to its author as a "fröhlicher Waisenknaben," or "happy orphan boy." In the text, Wieland explains the seeming oxymoron: he attributes his own self-confidence and diplomacy in dealing with diverse sorts of people to having lost his parents at a very early age. For instead of the sort of intractable authority that so many of his peers had experienced at home, he had been forced to adapt to many different sets of foster parents, each with its particular way of establishing order among its members. As a result, Wieland suggested, he had

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[2] A generous selection from Grosz's side of the correspondence is included in George Grosz: Briefe 1913-1959, Herbert Knust, ed., Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1979.

[3] Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 18.

[4] Wieland Herzfelde, Immergrün: Merwürdige Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen eines fröhlichen Waisenknaben (Evergreen: Remarkable Adventures and Experiences of a Happy Orphan Boy), Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1949.

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learned neither to respect nor to fear authority, a perspective which had served him well in the classroom, as well as later in press office, courtroom, and the street. He did not explicitly add that such a "happy orphan boy" would also have been free to choose a congenial "father," "brother" figure, or even an entire extended family from the spectrum of his acquaintances. Yet this would follow readily from Wieland's reasoning.

The process recalls Freud's concept of the "family romance," the tendency for a subject to invent a family more exalted or exciting than his or her own.[5]

> Such phantasies are related to the Oedipal situation--they originate from the pressure exerted by the Oedipus complex [...]. The precise motives for them are many and mixed; the desire to denigrate the parents from one angle while exalting them from another, notions of grandeur, attempts to circumvent the incest barrier, an expression of fraternal rivalry, etc.[6]

In the case of the Herzfeld brothers, the radical absence or incomprehensibility of the actual parents would surely have put unusual pressure on the children to develop some explanatory story about the family. In the Herzfelds' case,

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[5] Sigmund Freud, "Family Romances" (1909) The Complete Psychological Works 1953-1974, Standard Edition, Trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth, IX, 237-241.

[6] Jean LaPlanche and Jean-Baptiste Pontalis, The Language of Psycho-Analysis, Trans. Donald Nicholson-smith, London: Hogarth, 1973, 161.

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the matter was further complicated by the mother's own fantasies, delusions about being an imprisoned princess or Christ crucified which Wieland, in his first letter to Lasker-Schüler in 1913, claims to have occasionally shared while in her presence.[7] Under such circumstances, the term "family romance" seems slightly awkward, for the narrative antidote to these unsatisfactory family conditions would have been exactly not fanciful or exalted; these children would more probably have relished a construction rich in concrete, verifiable details--however banal--and clear, logical motivations.

Many of Wieland's most substantial publications, are, in fact, autobiographical stories which seem to almost forcibly contain even the most bizarre and macabre events with a smooth, logical narrative line. The work which includes the most complete articulation of the family's story, Leben und Werk, for example, Wieland revealed those things about his parents'--and only those things--to which he could claim a positive relationship in the present: the father's experience as a politically dissident writer, and the blamelessness of the parents for having abandoned their childres. In this way, the parental abandonment itself, the moves from one foster family to the next, the anger, pain and doubt that must inevitably have been part of the orphan's experience, even the tensions

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[7] Wieland Herzfelde, "Kürzlich vor 60 Jahren," Zur Sache: Geschrieben und Gesprochen zwischen 18 und 80, Berlin und Weimar (DDR): Aufbau Verlag, 1976, 12-13.

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in the primary relationship between Wieland and Helmut itself could all be subordinated to the continuity of political conviction. Nor is there any reason to think that Wieland was being anything less than candid in recording his own understanding of his family's history. In such a framework, it seems entirely appropriate to figuratively "adopt" the men closest to him, specifically the men listed in the title of "Dada und die Folgen," cited above--Grosz, Heartfield, Piscator--as his immediate siblings, related in turn to the extended "family" of the Communist Party.

The group Wieland identified in "Dada und die Folgen" differed from many artists' associations in that each member of the group characteristically used, or "stood for" a different medium: Wieland's area was literature; Grosz was primarily a painter and draughtsman, but also a mimic--a performer; Piscator was a playwright and theatrical producer; Helmut was, eventually, the photomonteur, an identity less easily named and more slowly achieved than any of the others. And it is here that the concept of a "family" in Bowen's sense, an interrelated system of pressures and balances, positions and alliances among individuals, becomes helpful. For with this idea in mind Helmut's distinctive medium can be directly related to his position in this highly unusual "family," a group in which artistic medium registered as a key element of each member's identity.

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Had Helmut ever written one, his list of close "relatives" would presumably have been identical to Wieland's, although some--Piscator in particular--would surely have figured more prominently in his version than they did in Wieland's. Wieland understandably saw his own collaborations--with Grosz and Helmut--far more clearly than he saw any of the other relationships in the group. As a writer and publisher, the production of durable, salable objects such as books, print portfolios, and journals, undoubtedly seemed more present, more palpable to him than the relatively ephemeral theatrical and performative collaborations which linked Helmut to Grosz, and both to Piscator. Piscator, being the one of the four whose work was primarily theater, and rarely print, was the least visible of all from Wieland's standpoint, and accordingly is mentioned only briefly. Wieland was no doubt aware that Piscator played a central role in shaping Heartfield's identity, and that he therefore belongs in the immediate "family." Piscator's later account of his experience in meeting Helmut after many years' separation substantiates the strength of the bond:

> I was moved, as he waited for me in the Brechttheater [Theater am Schiffbauerdamm--N.R.] (he came, not Brecht) and there was a brother, a real live brother, for whom one can't change at all, just because one is a brother and will remain so, to the end.[8]

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[8] Ich war gerührt, wie er mich im Brechttheater erwartete [Kammerspiele--N.R.] (er kam, nicht Brecht) und da war ein Bruder, ein natürlicher, lebendiger Bruder, für den man sich auch gar nicht

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There was a fifth figure, too, woven into Wieland's story. Kurt Tucholsky, critic and humorist associated primarily with the newspaper Die Weltbühne, does not appear in the memoir's title, perhaps because he never was a member of the Communist Party. Nor was Tucholsky part of Berlin Dada. In fact his inclusion in this memoir at first seems odd, for his contact with the group was apparently sporadic at best. But Tucholsky, in his book collaboration with Helmut at the end of the 1920s, presented a crucial new model for an artist-writer collaboration, one which shortly proved decisive for the brothers themselves. Again, as in Piscator's case, that is, Wieland seems to sense Tucholsky's importance without quite being fully articulate about it.

Helmut never gave his own, alternative "version" of these relationships in words; rather his experience is registered in the forms his work took, in its fielding and adapting and integrating of the various media associated with these various "siblings." The construction of the photomonteur Heartfield, in other words, can be traced through a series of collaborative relationships, each of which employed media in a characteristic way. Heartfield first appeared at the point that the brothers' identity as artist and writer, respectively, became untenable, a direct result of their

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verändern kann, weil man eben der Bruder ist und bleiben wird--bis ans Ende. From a letter to Wieland Herzfelde, Dillenburg, December 12, 1955. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 441.

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encounter with Grosz. From that point on, Heartfield's path led through a series of more or less provisional "negotiations" between writing and type, painting and photography, drawing and film, film and theater. All of these involved members of his core "family"; a few were directly affiliated with his extended "family," namely the Party, as well. Heartfield responded with a specific combination of writing, type, photographs, film, projections, etc.--a new medium, one might say--for each new set of relationships.

The Herzfelds: Painter and Writer

According to Wieland, literature was a central feature of both brothers' experience from earliest memory. It came as a shock when Helmut announced that he wanted to become a painter (This would probably have been about 1907, after the move from Salzburg to Wiesbaden. Helmut would have been about 16 years old).

> One day, as we were hiking, he confided to me that he wanted to become a painter, not a bookseller. This surprised me. Because he loved books above all else. For hours he would read aloud, with enormous pleasure, to me and to many a girl who was prepared to listen, from Novalis and Jean Paul, or poems from books like "Eight Centuries of German Lyrik Poetry" or "Des Knaben Wunderhorn," or "German Songs." Often his own verses, too. And I liked them better than the printed ones. From time to time I helped him compose them. We even entered a contest sponsored by Maggi's Soup Seasoning, and won a prize of 50 marks. That was a lot, for us at the time really a lot of money.

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> I implored my brother not to become a painter. There was a photographer on every corner, after all. He answered that it was not a question of ressemblance, but of art. And that he had talent.[9]

Having presented an idyllic picture of fraternal harmony, hours of reading, writing, and listening together which culminated in a promising artistic collaboration, Wieland can only find Helmut's decision to become a painter--effectively to bring it all to an end--utterly incomprehensible. Nor does Wieland ever forthrightly retreat from this position. He does not, for example, acknowledge that Helmut was right, or even only that he, Wieland, later came to understand the decision. On this issue Wieland rather represented his brother as differing from himself in an unaccountable way.

Under the circumstances, Helmut's embrace of painting and drawing must have registered--as Wieland's text confirms--as

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[9] Leben und Werk, 12. Eines Tages, während einer Wanderung, vertraute er mir an, er wolle Maler werden, nicht Buchhändler. Das überraschte mich. Denn er liebte Bücher über alles...Leidenschaftlich gern und stundenlang pflegte er mir und manchem Mädchen, das bereit war zuzuhören, Prosa von Novalis und Jean Paul oder Gedichte aus Büchern wie "Die Ernte aus acht Jahrhunderten deutscher Lyrik," "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" und "Deutsche Chansons" vozulesen. Oft auch eigene Verse. Und die gefielen mir noch besser als die gedruckte. Zuweilen half ich beim Dichten. Wir beteiligten uns sogar an einem Wettbewerb, den die Fabrikanten von Maggis Suppenwürze ausgeschrieben hatten, und gewannen einen Preis von 50 Mark. Das war damals viel, für uns sehr viel Geld.

Ich riet meinem Bruder inständig davon ab, Maler zu werden. Es gebe doch an jeder Ecke Fotografen, Er erwiderte, nicht auf die Ähnlichkeit komme es an, sondern auf die Kunst. Und er habe Talent.

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some diminishing of literature's central importance, some doubt about its "natural" position at the center of both their lives. And this is how Wieland still positioned literature as he was writing Leben und Werk, even though nearly half a century had passed, and his brother had won some considerable distinction as an artist. It was Wieland himself, of course, for whom literature always remained central. And it is in relation to this centrality that for him Helmut's move to painting read--as much in 1962 as in 1907--as the first firm, and troubling, assertion of difference between them.

Curiously in keeping with his anxiety about its beginning, Wieland records the end of his brother's engagement with painting, the deliberate destruction of all evidence that there had ever been such an engagement, with regret. Again here, the feelings of the two brothers are at odds:

> I found it hard to accept that John destroyed all, absolutely all the art work he had made up to that time [early 1917 -- N.R.]. For him there was only one living artist that was still permitted to go on working with a brush and pen, and that was our friend George.[10]

The act of radical destruction itself, a deliberate erasure of earlier identity, appears in retrospect as another "first

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[10] Leben und Werk, 22. "Schwer fand ich mich damit ab, daß John damals [early 1917--N.R.] alles, radikal alles vernichtete, was er bis dahin als Künstler geschaffen hatte. Es gab für ihn nur mehr einen lebenden Künstler, der mit Pinsel und Feder weiterarbeiten durfte, und das war unser Freund George."

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appearance" in a pattern of difference between the brothers. For Wieland, from the time he was a teenager, thought about his own decisions and accomplishments as figuring into a life work, and was accordingly fastidious in preserving and ordering the supporting documents.

One example of Helmut's painting has survived, nevertheless. "Die Hütte im Walde," probably dates from about 1907 (fig. 3)[11] and is perhaps most noteworthy for its sheer conformity to painting conventions of a much earlier date, roughly the mid-to late nineteenth century: it's medium, oil on canvas, registers as "art" more clearly than any other; its Romantic subject matter--a simple, rough dwelling surrounded by forest and stream, addresses the time-honored theme of man in nature; its loose, yet even, craftsmanly handling of paint, projects its maker as a skilled, sensitive, "original" individual. The painting is difficult to characterize stylistically exactly because it does not challenge the norms of "conventional"--salable--painting of its time.

"Die Hütte im Walde," is also the title of the first story in Wieland's autobiographical collection, Immergrün, a first-person narrative of the Herzfeld family:

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[11] The work is reproduced in Eckhard Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield, Berlin: Elephanten Press Verlag, 1977, 14, with a caption indicating that is was made for the artist's sister, Hertha. It now appears to be in the possession of Eva Heartfield, daughter of Tom Heartfield (1918-1991), of Elmhurst, New York.

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> But how did my parents manage to hold out, for three years, in this hut, which was buried over the windows in snow in the winter. They probably just couldn't think of anything else to do. After all, heroism often is nothing more than a dearth of options which is not fatal.[12]

Wieland admits that he remembers very little of his parents from this time, that his foster parents' effort to make him forget was, in his case, completely successful. It is therefore as his own project, an openly confessed construction of memory that the hut takes on specific meaning in this story, associated with the mountain landscape and parents who are, if not quite intentionally, heroic. The hut then emerges in contrast to the complexities of life in the village--dealing with foster parents, school, and siblings, including the perpetually troubled Helmut. The hut gradually binds the mountains with the "fröhlichen Knaben" ("joyous youth"), the name that refers to himself in a state of blissful connection to nature, a time before life's pain, trauma, worry had become conscious.

The hut may suggest itself as a shared image of the family

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[12] Immergrün, 12. Wie aber brachten es meine Eltern fertig, in dieser Hütte, die im Winter bis über die Fenster eingeschneit war, drei Jahre lang auszuhalten? Wahrscheinlich wußten sie sich einfach nicht zu helfen. Oft is ja Heldentum nichts anderes als Ausweglosigkeit, an der man nicht zugrunde geht [This is one of the few instances in which Wieland's judgement seems in open contradiction with the facts, for it is exceedingly difficult to grasp the Herzfeld parents' life in the hut as "heroic," and the situation did, in fact, prove disastrous.].

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past: one brother grasps and represents this image visually, the other in words. Something of their respective strengths, their mode of interaction could then be read in terms of a larger relationship between painting and literature. But the story was published in 1949, presumably written shortly before. By that time, Wieland had made fairly sweeping renunciations of painting on more than one occasion; Helmut had not painted since 1915; his own, painted "Hütte" was in the class of objects long since marked for destruction.[13] Further, when Helmut wrote to congratulate his brother on the new book, he added that he himself had long wanted to write such a story. There seemed even then to be no doubt for either of them, that is, that the story of the family needed to be written.[14]

The idea that painting and literature might be comparably rich and valid modes of expression seems to have structured the brothers' relationship for six or seven years around the time Helmut painted Die Hütte im Walde. The division was apparently adequate to code the fraternal relationship itself, in which Wieland was already established as the stronger and more fortunate. But it was exactly this "division of labor,"

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[13] This work may have survived because it belonged to their sister, Hertha, and so was not available at the moment of wholesale destruction.

[14] Correspondence, Wieland-Herzfelde-Archiv, Akademie der Künste zu Berlin.

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this way of articulating both the differences and the bond between them, that became untenable in the presence of George Grosz. Grosz was painter and writer, not to mention performer. On this basis alone, he might well have fascinated a frateral pair that had for years ordered their relationship in terms of painter or writer.

But Grosz had many other attractions as well. These included his elegant, fastidious dress, his knowledge and appreciation of assorted sensual pleasures--food, wine, and sex as well as art and music, the casual self-confidence with which he characterized and judged individuals, classes, political figures, even Germany as a whole. He was, in a word, exciting. Wieland's description of Grosz's initial effect on them, "...a cold shower: shocking, sobering, tingling and animating."[15] leaves little doubt that the erotic dimension of the encounter was not insignificant. Many of Grosz's most fascinating features from the Herzfelds' standpoint, in fact, could be summarized in terms of an assured, urbane masculinity and its effects on two much less confident young men new to the metropolis Berlin. This was the basis, in turn, for Grosz's most profound effect on the Herzfelds: he turned what had been a static, nearly exclusive dyad into a dynamic, erotically- charged "family."

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[15] "...eine Kalte Dusche: schockartig, ernüchternd, prickelnd und belebend." Herzfelde, "Dada und die Folgen," 1231.

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Read against Grosz's strong "masculine" presence, the responses of both Herzfeld brothers may appear "feminine" in the general sense of adaptive or self-sacrificing:

> ...for the entire duration of our friendship with Grosz I, like John, considered it our most important task to distribute his work in good reproductions and to preserve it for posterity. From the beginning, he and his art transported us into a state of delirious happiness.[16]

The responses register as "feminine," too, in their open expression of admiration, their ready acknowledgement of Grosz's impact; except for the most tangible kind of assistance ("Wieland was my publisher"), by contrast, no comparable recognition of the Herzfelds' influence was ever forthcoming from Grosz. Within the interchange as a whole, in any case, the "masculine" or "feminine" quality of any given response was always relative. In fact, the brothers' respective adaptations to Grosz preserve much of the older asymmetry in the Herzfelds' relationship: Helmut stopped painting instantly and permanently, having been approximately "outdone," or "superceded" in this position by Grosz; Wieland never stopped writing at all, and only gradually shifted from lyric poetry to theoretical and critical essays.

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[16] Herzfelde, "Dada und die Folgen," 1971. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 78. ...gleich John hielt ich es während der ganzen Zeit unserer Freundschaft mit Grosz für unsere wichtigste Aufgabe, seine Arbeiten in guten Reproduktionen zu verbreiten und der Nachwelt zu erhalten. Von Anfang an haben er und seine Kunst uns in eine rauschhaften Glückzustand versetzt.

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In Grosz's presence, however, the monolithic alternatives of "painting" and "literature" of the Herzfelds' early youth were fragmented: drawing, speaking, and publishing--which in turn introduced reportage, criticism, typography and photography--entered into the picture, radically expanding a field that was both shared and at points contested. In the new, post-Grosz equilibrium, there was, still, a "painter," and a "writer". Only the "painter"--Grosz--had become primarily a draftsman whose primary contact with his audience was through print; the "writer" was primarily a publisher, who conceived of his work in terms of persuasion, argumentation in the service of a larger cause.[17] The model of three independent, parallel quests for unique, authentic vision, that is, had been replaced by a clear functional dependence on one other. Through the fragmentation and realignment of these positions, further, a new space had opened, a third position which was neither precisely the manipulation of words nor the making of images, but the combining and reproducing of both--the space of the monteur.

Neue Jugend

The relationship between Wieland and Grosz had a competitive

[17] At this point the "larger cause" was not called "Communist." Between 1915 and 1919--about 3 1/2 years--it was a rather broad opposition to war and, perhaps, a sharing of the "delirious joy" that accompanied the brothers' engagement with Grosz's work itself.

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edge from the beginning: Grosz had told Wieland in 1915, for example, that starting a press was absurd, impossible; Wieland had started Neue Jugend within the year, successfully publishing not only dozens of Grosz's own drawings, but a monthly anti-war journal of the same name to which all three contributed (figs. 1 and 2). The testing, contesting of this relationship would persist through some four decades. In terms of this ongoing, informal, background-level competition, the appearance of Heartfield--surely an odd, awkward construct at the beginning--probably registered as a credit on Grosz's "side," for it clearly marked a success in what had formerly been Wieland's exclusive area, namely Helmut. In any case the story about the press being "impossible"--an instance of Grosz's being wrong--appears in Wieland's later writing; the story of John Heartfield's first distinctive, characteristic work, on the other hand, was narrated first and most fully by Grosz:

> One day when Wieland had to go back in the Army again, a new man joined the editorial staff, the poet and powerhouse Franz Jung. Die Neue Jugend suddenly got a new face. It became very aggressive. The new format was adapted from American newspapers, and Heartfield developed a completely new, really amusing style using collage and a clever typographic technique. Black index fingers stood between arbitrarily mixed upper and lower case letters, along with two large crossbones, a small coffin, a woman's coquettishly smiling face behind a mask, part of an accordion, a toy soldier. All this produced a meaning that frightened the unfamiliar eye and that went beyond simple collage. There was something of our time in it: our world was that dismembered!
>
> We laughed very little, and cried only secretly.

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> Our expression was a defiant grin...Affected by strong drink, our editorial conferences were usually stormy. From time to time Jung's revolver would explode over someone's head, into the wall or bookcase.[18]

This passage, from the text Grosz marketed as an "autobiography," sketches out an inherently dramatic situation, a shared experience of "dismemberment" in the environment they inhabited, and a tacit agreement not to let the pain of this experience show, even to one another. Grosz does imply, through his ordering of information, that Wieland's absence is related to Jung's presence, and that the journal's "new face" would not have arisen under other conditions. He does not, however, seem to notice any relationship between Wieland's absence and Helmut's sudden

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[18] George Grosz, Ein kleines Ja und ein großes Nein, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1974, 183. (The text was first published in English, as A little Yes and a Big No, in 1946. Since neither the English-speaking context nor the time of that publication is at issue here, however, Grosz's own, German words seem more appropriate.) Als Wieland eines Tages wieder ins Feld mußte, trat ein neuer Mann der Redaktion bei: der Dichter und Gewaltmensch Franz Jung. Die Neue Jugend bekam gleich ein anderes Gesicht. Sie wurde sehr aggressiv. Ihr neues Format was amerikanischen Zeitungen entnommen, und Heartfield entwickelte, aus Collagetechnik und einer kühnen Typographie einen ganz neuen, äußerst amüsanten Stil. Schwarze Zeigefinger standed zwischen willkürlich verrückten großen und kleinen Buchstabe, daneben zwei gekreuzte Riesenknochen, ein kleiner Sarg, eine schelmisch lächelnde Frau hinter einer Maske, ein Stück Ziehharmonika, ein Bleisoldat. All das ergab einen Sinn, der das ungewohnte Auge schreckte und über einfache Klebekunststücken hinausging. Es lag ein Stück Zeitgeist darin: so zerstückelt war unsere Welt!

Wir lachten sehr wenig, und weinten nur geheim. Unser Ausdruck war ein herausforderndes grinsen...Unter dem Einfluß starker Getränke verliefen unsere Redaktionssitzungen meist stürmisch. Ab und zu knallte Jungs Revolver über jemand hinweg in die Wand oder ins Bücherregal...

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burst of initiative and inventive energy, which first erupted in the Kleine Grosz-Mappe Grosz describes in this passage (fig. 4), and culminated in the celebrated June, 1917 issue (fig. 1) of Neue Jugend. Nor does he go on to note that it was actually Helmut who, in Wieland's absence, obtained an independent license for the fledgling press under the name "Malik."[19] Technically, that is, Helmut was the founder of the Malik-Verlag.

In retrospect, however, both the timing of Helmut's sudden blossoming as a designer and Grosz's failure to connect it to Wieland are consistent with the operations of a relational triangle. Wieland's absence from Berlin in early 1917 brought Grosz and Helmut together, and at the same time put pressure on each of their relationships to Wieland, particularly in the context of their shared undertaking, Neue Jugend. The conditions were right, one might say, for a performance, or assertion of their difference from Wieland, and conversely of their connection to one another. Although their reasons were surely very different, that is, Helmut and Grosz clearly shared the goal of somehow surprising and impressing Wieland. In collaboration with Grosz, Helmut was able to articulate his difference from Wieland more effectively and more productively

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[19] At that point, the publishing license for Neue Jugend was still held by Hans Barger, who had, in violation of his agreement with Wieland, been interfering in editorial decisions. See p. 121, n. 45 above.

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than ever before in his life, to make himself more "useful," ultimately closer to his brother; in collaboration with Helmut, Grosz was "taking" something from Wieland, namely a share of control over, of admiration from a gifted and much-loved, if decidedly unusual brother.

To put it another way, the competitive character of the relationship between Wieland and Grosz--the group soon came to include Jung--was absent from any of their relationships to Helmut. Wieland's and Grosz's conscious understanding of the events, manifest in the way each later represented them in memoirs, letters, catalogue essays, etc., confirm Helmut's position: when they mention him at all, he is seen supporting, expediting, reproducing the ideas of other men, but not exactly joining in as one of them.[20] In the passage cited

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[20] Helmut's role was presented somewhat differently in the 1960s, when Wieland was constructing a more traditionally "artistic" identity for his brother. In narrating the press's founding events for the catalogue of the 1966 exhibition Der Malik-Verlag: 1916-1947 (Deutsche Akademie der Künste zu Berlin (Ost), 1966), for example, he placed himself in the role of "off-site" observer:

> So kam das nächste Heft (11/12) erst nach drei Monaten--immer noch auf Kredit--als Doppelnummer Februar-März 1917 heraus. Auf dem Titelblatt war ich nicht mehr als Schriftleiter, dafür erstmalig als Herausgeber genannt. Der Name Barger war verschwunden. Im Impressum stand nach wie vor "Verantwortlich für den gesamten Inhalt: Helmut Herzfeld". Aber statt "Verlag: Neue Jugend" hieß es nun "Der Malik-Verlag". (17)

Later in the same text Wieland notes that Helmut had written the licensing application text in which arguments for the appropriateness of the name "Malik" were set forth. (21)

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above, for example, Helmut's new design serves to reproduce or represent the new ambiance; the ambiance was actually created, however, between Grosz and another man--Jung. Through the ordering of his information, further, Grosz introduced Jung as a stand-in for, perhaps in some respects an improvement over, Wieland (The relationship between Wieland and Jung reportedly was, as might be expected, cool.[21]). At this point the pattern of Helmut's relationships with his closest collaborators becomes readily recognizable as "feminization". For rather than entering into the competitive negotiations for prestige and position that are underway among the three men, he functions as a kind of "object of exchange," whose "possession" becomes a marker of their value with respect to one another.

The new design for the June issue of Neue Jugend appears to have had lasting reverberations for the whole group. Wieland professed his admiration. But he never positioned it as such a decisive moment in Heartfield's career as Grosz did. More importantly, perhaps, the Malik-Verlag never published anything again that was not directly chosen, supervised and approved by Wieland. The press was strictly unavailable, in other words, for any more of Helmut's experimental

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[21] Hanne Bergius, Das Lachen Dadas: Die Berliner Dadaisten und ihre Aktionen, Giessen, Anabas, 1986, 156.

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collaborations with other men.

If the June, 1917 Neue Jugend issue marks a shift in the relationship between the brothers, it also, and much more obviously, marks a division within Heartfield's work. For Neue Jugend embodied two kinds of collaboration, one based on print and centered on Wieland, the other performance, and centered on Grosz. Wieland's response to the issue, governed by the dynamics of his own relationship to Grosz, preciptated a fairly clean and consistent separation between the two: from this point on, the work of the Malik-Verlag remained recognizably separate from the projects and performances of Berlin Dada and range of more formalized theatrical projects extending through almost the whole period. Through the 1920s, that is, the form of Heartfield's work becomes legible as a tension between the desire to be close to Wieland, and the equally strong desire to establish and maintain a distance.

Dada Triangles

From the start, Neue Jugend had functioned as a space in which the respective identities, the relationships among its principal participants could be represented. In Else Lasker-Schüler's novel Der Malik, for example, the book whose final installments had been serialized in Neue Jugend,[22] Wieland,

[22] The novel had also furnished the name of the new press.

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Helmut, and Grosz become characters in a fantastic, exotic adventure story: Wieland was "Roland of Berlin," Helmut was "Wetterscheid," and Grosz was "Lederstrumpf," respectively. The story reflected, that is, the particular identities or functional positions among Neue Jugend staff members. The model of a dynamic emotional "economy" among individuals, introduced above as a way of grasping how this group functioned, remains helpful in tracing the transition from these earliest publications to those of the Dada phase. For rather than presenting any sharp disjunction, Dada absorbed and extended a project already underway.

Within the network, or economy of Dada identities, Heartfield was not prominent. Other Dadas took on more flamboyant, arguably more memorable personae: Baader, the "Welt-Dada" dealt in sweeping religious visions, and regularly provoked worries about his emotional balance; Grosz, the "Dada-Marschall" or "Propagandadada," seemed generally associated with skills in mimicry and imitation, the public projection of an idea or character; Hausmann, the "Dadasoph," theorized about it all; Huelsenbeck, the "Oberdada" registered as executive producer or impresario. Heartfield's role as the "Monteur-Dada"--joiner or technician--appears modest by comparison, conspicuously lacking in great political or intellectual ambition. Well grounded in the more durable identity of "Heartfield" as a whole, however, it seems in

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retrospect the most serious, internally consistent and durable construction of all: unique among the Berlin Dadaists, Helmut continued to perform Heartfield, the "Monteur," to one extent or another for the rest of his life.

Participants in Berlin Dada apparently adopted their respective "personae" in the spring of 1919, about a year after the first public Dada events took place.[23] Hans Richter later asserted that the identities were assigned by Grosz.[24] Something of the way these identities actually functioned for the participants, in any case, is suggested in "Ein Besuch in Cabaret Dada," by "Alexis" (Richard Huelsenbeck), which narrates an imaginary story involving several of the characters:

> The Propagandamarschall Grosz came with the kettle drum, the mark of Dadaist world domination. Close behind him was the famous Dadaist Transport Minister and Monteurdada John Heartfield. It was an event.[25]

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[23] Raoul Hausmann, letter to Jan Tschichold, April 9, 1930 (Bollinger Collection, Zurich.) Reprinted in Benson, Raoul Hausmann, 237-8, n. 65.

[24] Kunst und Anti-Kunst, der Beitrag Dadas zur Kunst des 20. Jahrhundert, Cologne: DuMont Schauberg, 1974, 133.

[25] Alexis [Richard Huelsenbeck], "Ein Besuch in cabaret Dada," Der Dada 3, 1920, p. 6; reprinted in Dada-Almanach, Berlin: E.Reiss, 1920, 135ff. Der Propagandamarschall Grosz kam mit der Kesselpauke, dem Zeichen der dadaistischen Weltherrschaft. Dicht hinter ihm folgte der bekannte dadaistischen Berkehrsminister und Monteurdada John Heartfield. Es war eine Gesellschaft [The word "Gesellschaft" can mean "society," "company," "club," or "party." The English "event" was chosen to convey the sense of an occasion of great significance--N.R.].

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Raoul Hausmann's "Der Geist im Handumdrehen oder eine Dadalogie," too, narrates an antagonistic encounter between the "Dadasoph" (Hausmann) and "Monteurdada" (Heartfield).[26]

In adopting and systematically maintaining the title "Monteur" for Heartfield's funtion, the Herzfelds, the Dadaists and all subsequent associates, including fellow-Communists, set up a relationship between his work and a particular conception--specific to the German language--of a mechanic's function: the physical joining of disparate fragments--useless in isolation--into a coherent, functioning whole. From the moment the Neue Jugend publishing operation began, Helmut had made it his business to know printers, processes, prices, and legal niceties and when a quick change of address was required to avoid censorship and confiscation. He was reportedly fastidious to the point of obsession about details, and generally tireless in getting a print job physically accomplished in record time and at minimum cost. As Franz Jung later put it, he was...

> the soul of the whole thing...incredible, even in retrospect, what all he accomplished. We always had to have the manuscript typeset in pieces, and printed in various places.[27]

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[26] Der Dada 3, 1920, 75% [8].

[27] Franz Jung, Der Topedokäfer. Unveränderte Neuausgabe von "Der Weg nch Unten," Berlin/Neuwied, 1972, 88ff. Reprinted in Bergius, Das Lachen Dadas, 93, 390 "Franz Jung," n. 8. ...die Seele des Ganzen...Unvorstellbar, noch in der Erinnerung, was er alles geleistet hat. Wir konnten das Manuskript immer nur stückweise

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Since it was as producers of Neue Jugend that the Grosz-Helmut-Wieland triangle was absorbed whole into the larger Berlin Dada group, the title "Monteur" was a suitable label for a performance that was already underway.

This framing of a "joiner"--loosely, the "connective tissue"--in such a group, however, opens a somewhat unfamiliar perspective on the movement as whole. Much of the existing literature is focussed on the delineation of distinct personalities and specific events[28]; because a "joiner's" function operates in the "space between" such entities, however, it can not ordinarily be grasped in quite the same way. Occasionally an incident is recorded, such as this one by Hausmann, illustrating the function of the "monteur" directly:

> Grosz invented the title "Monteur-dada" only after the reconciliation [there had been a falling-out in connection with Huelsenbeck's absence from Berlin in early 1919] between the groups Baader-Hausmann and Huelsenbeck, who had turned up again in the

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setzen lassen und bei verschiedenene Druckereien abziehen.

[28] In Timothy O. Benson's study, (Raoul Hausmann and Berlin Dada, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987), for example, Hausmann--his work, his writings and readings, his personal history during the time in question, serves as a kind of guiding thread, a fixed point to which other artists, ideas, and work can then be compared and contrasted. The accounts given by participants--Richard Hülsenbeck, Hausmann, Hans Richter--are all rich sources of information organized from the authors' respective points of view. Of the available secondary literature, Hanne Bergius's Das Lachen Dadas is most concerned with the movement as a dynamic interchange, a performance, or "action." Her book is, accordingly, rich in details of the attractions and repulsions among participants.

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> meantime, and Grosz-Heartfield and Mehring on the other. At that time, in July of 1919 we all received printed business cards from John Heartfield, with our titles...[29]

A more characteristic gesture could hardly have been invented to illustrate Heartfield's function, marking a moment of reconciliation in the group, giving it a tangible, explicit form. But such occasions are rare. The "joiner's" identity is more likely to emerge "between the lines" of accounts, in offhand comments, anecdotes, patterns of association--anything that sheds light on the attractions and repulsions, the dynamics of the group. A systematic investigation of these dynamics is beyond the scope of this study. But it is clear that in this context Helmut's first and firmest loyalty was to Grosz. As the bond that in turn anchored his relationship to Wieland--who was only very peripherally part of Dada--this relationship may have been the ground on which his participation in Dada was possible at all.

Family systems theory offers a way of grasping one individual's function within the complex dynamics of such a group. The group as a whole is understood as a system of interlocking triangles, each operating in a distinctive

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[29] Raoul Hausmann, letter to Jan Tschichold (see note 22 above). Den Title "Monteur-dada" erfand Grosz erst nach der Aussöhnung der Gruppen Baader-Hausmann mit dem inzwischen wieder aufgetauchten Huelsenbeck einerseits und Grosz-Heartfield und Mehring andrerseits. Damals, im Juli 1919 erhielten wir alle von John Heartfield gestezte Visitenkarten mit unseren titeln...

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pattern, and each more or less sensitive to the operation of the others. When Richard Hülsenbeck returned to Berlin from Zurich in 1917, for example, his new associations with Jung, Hausmann, and Grosz would have generated three such triangles. With the addition of each new participant, of course, the possibilities would multiply geometrically; but there were also certain limiting factors among these relationships. Both Baader and Höch, for example, related to the group primarily through Hausmann; the Herzfelds, similarly, primarily through Grosz (the dynamics of a Grosz-Wieland-Jung triangle, which seems to have put Wieland briefly in the position of competeting with Jung. There seem also to have been restrictions or focusses based on medium: some of the participants--Grosz, above all--participated as performer, writer, and visual artist; others focussed more narrowly.

Within the various relationships, the Monteur's function was fairly consistent, and in fact largely reproduced the role established for him in his relationships with Wieland and Grosz: he constantly adjusted to, defended, facilitated the positions of other men, but did not actively assert an independent position among them. Hülsenbeck's admiration for Helmut's graphic designs, for example, was not shared by Hausmann, who later insisted on designing the catalogue Dadaco himself (it was never published)[30]; Helmut's position in the

[30] Bergius, Das Lachen Dadas, 109.

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matter, if he voiced one at all, was unrecorded. And it was finally just this adaptability, or malleability of character, in fact, that came to be regularly associated with Heartfield in the context of Berlin Dada, in a sense to constitute his identity.

To those most closely associated with him--Grosz above all, Hausmann, and, if perhaps negatively, Höch--"Heartfield" seems to have marked a site where artistic identity itself could become the subject of commentary. The article "Unser John," possibly a collaborative venture of the Hausmann-Grosz-Helmut triangle, for example, constructs "John Heartfield," impossibly, as the offspring of an American Indian chief and aristocratic English lady who found and operate a traveling circus. It takes aim particularly at the idea that an artist's parents, early experience and innate gifts might somehow "explain" his subsequent work.

Perhaps most explicit in its association of Heartfield with naive, childlike--or childish--character is Hannah Höch's well-known photomontage Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser of 1918 (fig. 5), in which Heartfield is represented as an infant being given his bath.[31] Höch's infantilizing treatment of

[31] Maud Lavin, Cut with the Kitchen Knife: the Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, 22. Lavin identified the figure bathing the Heartfield-baby as the prominent Weimar actress, Niddy Impekoven.

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Heartfield may further represent a response to Helmut's behavior toward her. According to Hanne Bergius it was he, with his closest and arguably most determinedly homosocial ally, Grosz, who tried to exclude Höch from the International Dada Fair of 1920.[32] Helmut's interest in the matter would tend to confirm his identity as a "feminized" man with respect to his immediate, homosocial colleagues, for it would have been especially important to someone in this position to make sure that actual women were excluded from the group. The matter was resolved, predictably, by another man--Hausmann--who threatened to withdraw his own work if Höch could not participate, an option unacceptable within the context of what was appears to have been the group's "core"--Grosz, Hausmann, and Hülsenbeck.

Of all the Dadaists, in any case, it was clearly Grosz who worked most closely with Helmut. Among the best-known works of Berlin Dada are a number of collages, attributed to either Heartfield or to the collaborative team of "Grosz/Heartfield mont[iert]," whose similarity to one another suggest how closely the two were working together at the time. Wieland remarked, in the context of a much later discussion of the development from collage to montage in his brother's work, on the uniformity of various Dada collages:

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[32] Bergius, Das Lachen Dadas, 130.

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> The possibilities of collages such as those of Grosz/Heartfield "montaged" on the covers for Dada 3, for Huelsenbeck's Dada siegt! (Dada Conquers!) and for the catalogue of the Erste Internationale Dada-Messe (First International Dada Fair), were simply exhausted. You could hardly tell one from another.[33]

Of the three works Wieland mentioned here, two--Dada 3 (fig. 7) and Dada siegt! are conventionally attributed to Heartfield alone.[34] Wieland suggests in this passage, however, that they were both collaborative projects of Helmut and Grosz. Any resolution of such discrepancies in "authorship," seems not only extremely difficult, but ultimately beside the point. Individually and jointly attributed works are, as Wieland emphasized, very much alike. Further, many such fragile collage works, including some of those most often reproduced, such as Grosz/Heartfield mont., Leben und Treiben in Universal-City, 12 Uhr 5 mittags, were destroyed, and exist today only in reproduction; many more may have been lost altogether. Even if it were possible to establish some consistent stylistic difference among those collages that are marked Heartfield's alone (figs. 7, 8), in comparison to those designated collaborations with Grosz (fig. 9), there could be

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[33] Herzfelde, "Dada und die Folgen," 1247. Auch hatten sich die Möglichkeiten von Collagen, wie die von Grosz/Heartfield "montieren" auf den Umschlagen für Dada 3, für Huelsenbecks Dada siegt! und für den Katalog der Ersten internationalen Dada-Messe einfach erschöpft. Mann konnte sie kaum noch voneinander entscheiden.

[34] The cover of Dada siegt! is signed "John Heartfield montiert" on the reverse side.

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no real assurance that these differences matched up to any physical connection to one or the other artist. There seems never to have been any "contest" about the attribution of these works, no "claims" made on either side, and it seems very unlikely that either man would have worked this way at all independently of the other. In recasting "Heartfield" himself as a collaborative project, in any case, all of Helmut's and Grosz's Dada collage works become collaborative productions.

Grosz participated in the construction of Heartfield in quite a different way as well, namely by representing this figure--by name--in a number of his own works. Grosz's painting John, der Frauenmörder (fig. 10) of 1918, closely related to another painting entitled Der kleine Frauenmörder (fig. 11) of the same month, [35] are among three well-known works of the years 1918-1920 that include either "John" or "Heartfield" in the title.[36] In the case of the John, der Frauenmörder, the

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[35] Grosz made many drawings as well as a number of watercolors treating the same theme (Uwe M. Schneede, ed., Im Blickfeld George Grosz, "John, der Frauenmörder," exh. cat., Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1993, 7.) The title of one of these watercolors is "John Heartfield, der Frauenmörder," (Katharin Hoffmann-Curtius, "'Wenn Blicke töten könnten' oder: Der Künstler als Lustmörder," Blick-Wechsel: Konstruktionen von Männlichkeit und Weiblichkeit in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1989, 392, n. 22.

[36] In her recent article on Grosz's Lustmord images, Katharin Hoffmann-Curtius also mentions a watercolor bearing the title John Heartfield, der kleine Frauenmörder of 1916.

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association with Heartfield[37] has been made recently by Katharin Hoffmann-Curtius in a discussion of Grosz's treatment of the Lustmord, or sex murder theme.[38] Hoffmann-Curtius argues, drawing on many kinds of evidence from Grosz's work, commentary, and collections, that these pictures present a connection between social order and vision itself--the corrupt social order of the present being linked to the apprehension of a whole, seductive female body. The dismembered body in these images, then, refers to a destruction, fragmentation of this central connection, along with the social fabric that supports it. The sex murderer becomes a kind of self-portrait, a statement of his own, or more generally of an artist's practice of undermining, fragmenting, the visual practice of an inequitable, cruel and warlike society. From this perspective, the connection between John Heartfield and the figure of the murderer becomes not only far more plausible, but also more illuminating with respect to the relationship between the two men and, in turn, to Heartfield's position within the larger Dada group.

Grosz later made two collage works whose titles link them

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[37] It was also made by at least one contemporary, Wolfgang Willrich, (Die Säuberung des Kunsttempels, Munich, 1937, 16). The intent was clearly defamatory. In a polemical tract intended to prepare its audience for the Nazi-sponsored exhibition Entartete Kunst in 1937, Wolfgang Willrich referred to Heartfield as a "klassenbewußter bolschewist," and further identified him as the subject of Grosz's painting.

[38] Hoffmann-Curtius, "'Wenn Blicke töten könnten'" 380.

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specifically to "Heartfield," "Der Sträfling". Monteur John Heartfield nach Franz Jungs Versuch ihn auf die Beine zu stellen, 1920 ("The Convict." Monteur John Heartfield after Franz Jung's Attempt to Set Him on his Feet,) (fig. 12) of 1919 and Daum marries her pedantic automaton "George" in May, 1920. John Heartfield is very glad oft [sic] it (Meta-Mech constr. nach Prof. R. Hausmann) of 1920 (fig.13). These are regularly included in discussion of Grosz's brief "metaphysical" period, in which his painting exhibits close parallels to de Chirico's.[39] Both are unusual for Grosz in that they use techniques that are new to him--in a sense, experimental--to represent specific individuals. And both, finally, clearly engage the questions of art's relationship to technology which figured prominently in Dada's self-representation as a whole.

The figure in Monteur John Heartfield bears no direct ressemblance to Helmut's actual facial features, although its compact proportions, clenched jaw, its rigidly-held arms may have some bearing on Helmut; if anything, the figure's high forehead and heavy and prominent jaw are recognizable as Grosz's own. It is standing in an absolutely stark room--

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[39] Hans Hess, for example, describes Daum marries... as marking the end of this period, its two figures--one mechanical, one fleshy--as evidence of Grosz's return, or "falling back" from the austere, mechanical style of 1920 to a more gestural and richly descriptive--and characteristic--pattern (Hess, George Grosz, 105.).

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apparently a prison room--rendered in very short perspective. Some clock-like mechanism is mounted on the figure's chest, as if to replace its heart, possibly an oblique nod to Helmut's legendary hot temper. Seen through a window at the back of the "prison" room, apparently far away, is a row of storefronts with the words "Viel Glück im neuen Heim." Franz Jung's attempt to set Heartfield on his feet, mentioned in the title, is probably a veiled reference, as Bergius suggests,[40] to Jung's having introduced Helmut to cocain.[41] The whole collage may have been intended to function as a kind of greeting card, marking some event in Helmut's life--perhaps a new apartment, or the birth of a child.[42] If so, Grosz set

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[40] Bergius, Das Lachen Dadas, 76.

[41] This happened, like the celebrated new design for Neue Jugend, while Wieland was away in military service. Later, in "Dada und die Folgen," Wieland remarked somewhat cryptically that when he came back from the front in early 1917, he found that "Franz Jung was having an influence on Grosz and particularly on Helmut, intervention into which I felt was urgently needed." ["Franz Jung übte in meiner Abwesenheit Einfluß auf Grosz und vor allem auf John aus, dem energisch entgegenzutreten ich für geboten hielt." (Herzfelde, "Dada und die Folgen," reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 82.) It seems likely that Jung's immoderate use of alchohol and drugs was the issue.

[42] Helmut was married in 1917 to Helene Balzer, a teacher whose family had rented him an appartment for the year (1912-1913) he spent in Mannheim, working as a packaging designer. According to records held at the John-Heartfield-Archiv, Berlin, both Helmut's childen--Tom and Eva--were born in 1920, in May and October, respectively. These dates do not seem reliable, not only because they are only six months apart, but because Wieland--at least twice in his writing--alludes to a moment in early 1917 when Helmut was deciding on a name for the child he and Lena were then expecting. In Leben und Werk (24), too, Wieland wrote that at the time Jedermann sein eigener Fußball was published--January, 1919--Tom Heartfield was not quite two years old. Wieland's chronology would suggest, that is, that Tom's birthdate not 1920, but late 1917.

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the event obscurely in the background; it is the tension in the artist's identity, embodied in "Heartfield," that is "center stage."

In his 1986 monograph on Grosz, the art historian Hans Hess suggested such a similar "greeting card" function for Daum marries... This work, Hess observed, marks Grosz's own marriage to Eva Peters, which took place in May, 1920, the same date noted on the collage itself. The work's connection to the actual event is further confirmed in the title: "Daum" is the reverse of "Maud," Grosz's nickname for his wife. In the text he provided for the catalogue of the International Dada Fair, in fact, Wieland used the work as a springboard for a rather extended discussion of Grosz's views on marriage:

> The caption is written in English, because it deals with intimate matters that are not for just anyone. Grosz is getting married! For him, however, marriage is not solely a personal, but primarily a social event. To some extent it confirms society, which, like a machine, inevitably turns a man into a part, a small machine within a great mesh of gears, so that marriage actually means a rejection of the bride in favor of the public sphere. At the same time [it is] a rejection of the erotic and sexual. [It is] different for a woman. Marriage turns everything upside down for women. If the symbol for a young girl is a naked form covering her sex with her hand or the tip of something, then in marriage sexual needs are suddenly no longer denied, they [may] even be emphasized. Like a shadow, however, it falls between the man and woman from the first moment they are engaged, that at the moment the woman's secret desire comes out in the open, that she can expose her body, --the man turns his attention to other, sober and calculating tasks. She is almost shocked and touches her husband's head as though it were a dangerous

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> machine. In this picture Grosz also represents the way marriage insulates people, so that the external world really continues to exist only through the window, and the image of the woman, once the center of the man's perception, is pushed into the most distant corner of his consciousness.[43]

In a remarkably detailed analysis, which takes even single words in the title into consideration, Wieland never mentioned either "John Heartfield" or "Prof. Haussmann". His statement seems rather to emerge from the author's privileged, direct contact with the artist.

As later commentators have also done,[44] Wieland assumed that

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[43] Erste Internationale Dada-Messe. Catalogue., 1920, 2. Die Unterschrift is englisch abgefaßt, weil es sich um intime Dinge handelt, die nicht jeder verstehen soll. Grosz heiratet! Für ihn ist aber die Heirat nicht etwa nur ein persönliches, sondern in erster Linie ein soziales Geschehen. Gewissermaßen ein Zugeständnis an die Gesellschaft, die einem Maschinismus gleicht, der unfehlbar den Mann zu ihrem Bestandteil, zu einer kleinen Maschine im großen Räderwerk macht, so daß die Ehe eigentlich ein Abrücken von der Braut zu Gunsten der Allgemeinheit bedeutet. Gleichzeitig in Abrücken von Erotik und Sexualität. Anders bei der Frau. Für sie stellt die Ehe alles auf den Kopf. Ist das Symbol des jungen Mädchens eine nackte Gestalt, die mit der Hand oder mit irgendeinem Zipfel die Scham verhüllt, so ist in der Ehe diese Verleugnung des sexuellen Bedürfnisses nun aufgehoben, ja sie wird sogar betont. Doch wie ein Schatten fällt es zwischen Mann und Weib von der ersten Stunde ihres Getrautseins an, das im Augenblick, da die Frau all ihre geheime Lust laut werden, ihren Körper lüften darf,--der Mann sich andern nüchtern-pedantisch rechnerischne Aufgaben zuwendet. Sie ist fast bestürzt und betastet nur scheu den Kopf des Gatten wie einen gefährlichen Apparat. Gleichzeitig stellt Grosz auf diesem Bilde dar, wie die Ehe die Menschen einkapselt, so daß die Mitwelt eigentlich nur noch durchs Fenster weiterbesteht und das Bild des Weibes, das der Mann, ursprünglich im Mittelpunkt seiner Vorstellung, bis in die letzten Winkel des Bewußtweins verdrängt wird.

[44] Hess, George Grosz, 1986, 92; M. Kay Flavell, "Über alles die Liebe: Food, Sex and Money in the Work of George Grosz," J. European Studies xiii (1983) 268-288.

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the mechanical figure shown standing to the right of the woman "Daum" in this collage was "George." Since "John Heartfield" does figure as prominently as "Daum" or "George" in the title, however, it seems reasonable to ask whether he is represented in the picture. In fact the figure standing where one would expect the groom in a standard wedding portrait does exhibit some of the same features as Monteur John Heartfield discussed above: he is compact, diminutive; he is mechanized--in contrast to the figure of "Daum," markedly so. In his bearing and even perhaps facial expression, further, he appears quite pleased with the proceedings, or "glad of it," as the title has it. If this figure does represent John Heartfield, then the amply proportioned, scantily-clad bride would seem to be reaching out for a "groom" who isn't actually in the picture. The fleshy, sensuous woman, in any case, seems isolated. For as Wieland, too, made clear in his discussion, the two figures are utterly different orders of being, made of different stuff and occupied with different matters. This "masculine construction" is constitutionally unfit to interact with a woman at all, to say nothing of becoming her husband.

If "Heartfield" marked some position such as "identity in formation," as is suggested by other representations produced in the context of Berlin Dada, the mechanical figure could in both cases be read as an aspect of Grosz which he has in common with Helmut, the common enterprise of becoming and

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being artists. Such a common ground is represented as mechanical and masculine--unlike fleshy femininity--and categorically incompatible with marriage, home, fatherhood. Incapable of embracing a real, flesh-and-blood woman--registered here through Grosz's own, hand-made marks--this being "sees" or imagines woman in a photograph, and keeps that representation, as Wieland put it, "in the most distant corner of consciousness." Further cast as a collaborative project between Grosz and Hausmann, (a "meta-mechanical construction after Prof. Hausmann"), this "Heartfield" is once again cast as the third, objectified point in a triangle.

At least unorthodox as a marriage document, "Daum marries..." seems rather to assert marriage's irrelevance, even antagonism to art; the collage-as-greeting-card functions, in keeping with the idea of Dada as a dynamic economy of personal relationships outlined above, to assure the other Dadaists as well as Grosz himself, that his new marital status will not affect his work, nor the relationships among his close collaborators. But more significantly in this context, it would cast "Heartfield" as actually <u>being</u> a mechanism, embodying technical possibilites, and further suggest that these qualities render him a threat, possibly a competitor to an actual woman.

In her discussion of associations between technology and the

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feminine in the context of the Ring neuer Werbegestalter (Circle of New Advertising Designers) of which Heartfield was a member, Maud Lavin has suggested that technology was reliably embodied by women, but employed by men.[45] On the basis of the figure in Grosz's collage, in conjunction with other kinds of evidence, these designations might be adapted to the homosocial context of Berlin Dada: Heartfield's embodiment of technology within that group, that is, would mark a very specific form of feminization; from the standpoint of observers outside this immediate group, of course, Heartfield employed technology, an identifiably masculine role.

Heartfield's own work of these years in no way contradicts the identity thus established for him. His productions did always involve technologies--photography, type, the machinery of sizing, aligning, and reproducing images--as opposed to hand marks, or any direct link with his own body such as speech, or physical movement in performance. Conversely, they rarely if ever represent sex as a significant fact of social life, a feature of his work that persisted throughout his career. It was as if, in the context of the Grosz-Wieland-Helmut triangle, Grosz had a kind of proprietary hold on issues

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[45] Maud Lavin, "Photomontage, Mass Culture, and Modernity: Utopianism in the Circle of New Advertising Designers," Montage and Modern Life 1919-1942, Matthew Teitelbaum, ed., Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992, 56.

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related to sexuality, which were than no longer the province of either of the Herzfelds.[46]

One final comparison, between Wieland's and Helmut's relationship to Grosz as evidenced in these documents, may serve as a summary. Wieland commented on the painting Daum marries... in the context of a printed text, a form which by this point was established as his "own" medium within his adopted family. In it, he presented himself as Grosz's equal, in a sense a spokesman who articulates, in another form, the artist's intimate meditation on society, sensuality, sex, and family. "Heartfield," on the other hand, appeared not as speaker, but as "spoken" or better, "seen," an object pictured in a complicated, conflicted, and technically-mediated relation to Grosz's bride as well as to Grosz himself.

UFA (Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft)

In the summer of 1917, just after the founding of the Malik-Verlag and before the start of Dada, Helmut became a film

[46] This is not strictly the case for Wieland. Yet the general absence of sex as a theme in the literature published by the Malik-Verlag, as well as his own writing, is striking. Wieland largely restricts his discussion of the topic to simply condemning anyone's interest in sex as "indulgent."

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producer,[47] perhaps in the interests of earning a steady income to support his wife.[48] The position had been arranged by Harry Graf Kessler, an influential writer, diplomat and patron of the arts known to the group for several years at this point. Helmut's new employer, the "Militärische Bildstelle" had become BUFA (Bild und Film Amt) early in 1917; by the end of the year, it was known by the more familiar UFA (Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft). Helmut allegedly made nature documentaries there.[49] Of these, however, no further word exists. In November of 1917, in any case, Helmut and Grosz approached Kessler again with another idea for a film, this time for a collaboratively-produced, animated war-propaganda film. Kessler was apparently suitably enthusiastic about the possibilities they discussed, and reported a financial agreement the following day in his diary:

> For 20 marks per day and an honorarium of 10,000

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[47] Detailed archival studies of the film work of Grosz and Hertfield has been published in recent years by Jeanpaul Goergen, for example "Propaganda sollte den Gegner lächerlich machen," Der Tagesspiegel (Berlin) 13, 739, 2 December 1990; "Marke Herzfeld-Filme. Dokumente zu John Heartfield Filmarbeit 1917-1920," John Heartfield: Dokumentation; Reaktionen auf eine ungewöhnlich Ausstellung, Klaus Honnef, Petra Albrecht, eds, Stiftung Archiv, Berlin, Cologne: DuMont, 1994, 23-66; "Filmisch sei der Strich...": George Grosz und der Film," George Grosz: Berlin-New York, exh. cat., Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, 21 December 1994 17 April, 1995, 211-218.

[48] Accepting Wieland's indications of Tom Heartfield's birthdate (see note 35, above), namely 1917, Helmut's new employment as a filmmaker coincided with a need to support not only a new wife, but a new baby as well.

[49] Leben und Werk, 22.

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> marks, Hellmut [sic] Herzfeld will work on two films: Songs of Soldiers; Humorous animated film about the military in Italy.[50]

Wieland confirmed the completion of the animated film, entitled Pierre in St. Nazaire,[51] in 1918, as well as the company's refusal to accept it. The commission had been for a film that would make American intentions of landing in France look absurd, and to celebrate German military power. Grosz and Helmut took their time--the work was pleasant and the money was good. After Wieland deserted from the army in the summer of 1918, the group expanded to include all three. By the time thay had finished, the Americans had long since landed; Grosz's drawings, in any case, were far from flattering to the German army. With Kessler's protection, nevertheless, all three men kept their positions, if briefly. When they tried to instigate a strike at the UFA in protest against the murders of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg January, 1919, however, the arrangement came to a definitive end.[52] According to Wieland, Helmut already had another

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[50] Hans Traub, Aktenzüge über Filmpropaganda während des Weltkrieges unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Filmpropaganda und der Organisation von Bufa und UFA. Aus dem Reichsarchiv und Heeresarchiv in Potsdam, o.J., 170ff (typescript) Reprinted in Bergius, Das Lachen Dadas, 394, "John Heartfield," n.9. Hellmut [sic] Herzfeld arbeitet für 20 Mark täglich und 10,000 Mark Honorar an zwei Filmen: Soldaten-Lieder; Komischer Puppenfilm über Feldgrau in Italien.

[51] The film no longer exists.

[52] Leben und Werk, 22-23.

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position at the time, with the film company Gebrüder Grünbaum.[53]

On the whole, the film work seems to have been neither satisfying nor particularly successful; it is difficult to reconstruct what either the artists or their patron had in mind by putting two, then three confirmed enemies of the war to work making propaganda films. The simplest explanation would be a shared interest in the possibilities of the film medium as a whole, and of animation in particular. War propaganda would have presented itself as the most workable pretext to gain access to the UFA studios. Helmut in any case quickly tried to assemble his "family" around him in his new role as film producer.

Of all the Grosz-Heartfield collaborations, the production of an animated film was undoubtedly the most laborious. Helmut constructed a set of jointed puppets based on Grosz's drawings, then photographed them again and again, in positions usually varying by no more than a fraction of an inch. In keeping with the relational pattern already established between them, that is, Helmut took responsibility for the technical aspects, literally the transposition of Grosz's

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[53] According to Helmut's later report to the East German government, he worked for Grünbaum in 1918, and for UFA until 1920. Wieland's order of events--UFA, then Grünbaum--fits other facts better.

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ideas into reproducible form. There were several aspects of the arrangement that appear unworkable in the long term, however. For one thing, when Wieland later joined the group, he had no distinctive role to play, and was left with the task of adjusting the puppets. To put it another way, the technical aspects of animation were so central to the whole project as to give Helmut too much authority for the group's established relational structure to be maintained. Further, and again by virtue of the highly technical basis of animated filmmaking, the project was wholly dependent on the UFA studio equipment. This organization had quickly and very recently shifted from military to quasi-commercial status. Even had it not been for their Communist-inspired agitational effort, it seems unlikely that such an organizational structure could have accomodated the comparatively anarchic working modes of three Dadaists--the film work spanned almost exactly the same months as the performances and publications of Berlin Dada itself--for any great length of time.

Reinhardt and Piscator Theaters

The most immediate fallout from the film collaboration was the first more properly theatrical collaboration, again involving Helmut, Grosz, and the puppets, as well as the comic writer Walter Mehring. All three men were concurrently active in the Berlin Dada group, which by this time had made its presence

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felt through various attention-getting "Aktionen" (actions, happenings) and brought Grosz, at least, a degree of notoriety.

The cabaret Schall und Rauch was located in the cellar of the ambitious mainstream Großes Schauspielhaus, directed by the innovative and enormously popular theater entrepreneur Max Reinhart.[54] From the outset the cabaret, like the larger theater operation that supported it, was intended for the entertainment of a prosperous bourgeois clientele. In December, 1919, the opening of Schall und Rauch, the Großes Schauspielhaus was presenting a production of Aeschylus's Oresteia; the first act in the newly-opened cabaret, entitled "Einfach Klassisch! Eine Orestie mit glücklichem Ausgang,"[55] parodied the play that was in progress, literally upstairs.

Mehring prepared the text and songs; Grosz and Heartfield a cast of puppets, Grosz again acting as designer, Heartfield as

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[54] This Schall und Rauch was actually Reinhart's second attempt to found a cabaret in Berlin. The first, occurring exactly at the turn of the century, had, according to Jelavich, provided a "springboard for a rejuvenation of the stage," a move away from naturalist stagecraft and into the dramatic lighting, sets and gestures for which Reinhardt soon was celebrated; Reinhardt was never particularly concerned with any direct address to contemporary political issues in his productions. [Peter Jelavich, Berlin Cabaret, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1993, 62-84.]

[55] "Really Classy! an Oresteia with a Happy Ending."["Einfach klassisch!" is a word play between "Klasse!" a slang expression for "good!" of "great! (American), and "classical"].

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technician, or "reproducer: of ideas into material form. The production consisted of three short skits. The first, "Agamemnon im Bade" ("Agamemnon in the Bath") had the characters of classical Greek drama communicating by telephone, and one of them finally disappearing into a giant WC. The second, "Die Morgenröte der Demokratie" ("The Dawn of Democracy") involved three characters, each of whom represented a different press perspective--"conservative," "socialist," and "bourgeois"; together, these constituted a "chorus" of the media as a whole. In the last segment, "Die klassische Steuerflucht," ("Classical Tax Evasion") the main character Woodrow Apollon is readily recognizable as the American president Woodrow Wilson. He respresents embattled ideals of an enlightened democracy, and interacts with a chorus of "Steuereumenides," or "tax harpies," which sings to the audience on the gramophone.

By all accounts, the production was not a success. When the critic for BZ am Mittag referred to it as "A sanitized Dadaism [to suit the bourgeois audience--N.R.]," [56] Mehring, Grosz and Heartfield (by late 1918, it was always Heartfield) themselves published a protest. In the Berliner Börsen-Courier two days later, they argued that Dadaism had been invoked in the cabaret's publicity without their consent, and

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[56] P.W., "Schall und Rauch. Das Reinhardt-Kabarett, BZ am Mittag December 9, 1919. Reprinted in Bergius, Das Lachen Dadas, 400, n. 127. "bürgerlich gemäßigter... Dadaismus,"

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that the production was a "A travesty of Dadaist principles."[57] As Didier Plassard pointed on in an afterword to the recently-published script, however, there were identifiable elements in the production--particularly the play with mechanical devices, such as the telephone--that tie it convincingly to Dada.[58] The relational patterns among members of the production team, in any case, are entirely consistent with the emerging figure of Heartfield.

By 1920, Grosz was married, Helmut and Lena had become parents, and Berlin Dada's performances came to an end. It was also the year Max Reinhardt effectively retired, turning over the direction of three major Berlin stages, Das Deutsche Theater, Die Kammerspiele, and Das Große Schauspielhaus, to Felix Hollaender. Ernst Stern, who had been Reinhardt's principal set designer for nearly fifteen years, left at nearly the same moment. Among the designers hired to replace Stern were John Heartfield and George Grosz. By this time, Heartfield and Grosz had been collaborating on performance projects of varying scope and formality for roughly four

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[57] "Konflikt zwischen Dada und 'Schall und Rauch!' Berliner Börsen-Courier, December 10, 1919. "Verunglimpfung von dadaistischer Prinzipien" Such a rejection of too-conventional theater in the name of "Dadaist principles," confirms not only the Berlin Dadaists' wish to be known as ruthless, implacable social critics, but also their sense of solidarity with respect to one another.

[58] Walter Mehring, "Einfach Klassisch," Vergessene Authoren der Moderne XVI, Franz-Josef Weber and Karl Riha, eds., Siegen: Universität-Gesamthochschule Siegen, (2nd ed.), 1987, 25.

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years, establishing a mode of collaboration and of accessing an audience quite independent of Wieland's. The position with the Reinhardt theaters can therefore be read as, among other things, a formalization and extension of this independence.

In his summary of Heartfield's work with the Reinhardt theaters,[59] Hugo Fetting speculated that in hiring Heartfield, Hollaender was following a pattern established by Reinhardt, who periodically engaged painters, architects and sculptors as a means of experimenting and "refreshing" stage design.[60] He estimated Heartfield's own hopes for the position as a sincere intention to cooperate with like-minded artists in using the theater to effect social change. But Hollaender, according to Fetting, was never able to establish a clear direction for the whole operation, and so was never able to generate a sense of continuity or stability in artistic staff. In fact his term as director was nearly as short as Heartfield's as designer, only about two years, from 1920 to 1922. During this time, Heartfield worked on eighteen different productions, distributed among all three theaters. As a rule, he worked with any one director just once. Director Bernhard Reich, however, was a significant exception. He and Heartfield worked together on Rabindranath Tagore's

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[59] Hugo Fetting, "Heartfield an den Reinhardt-Bühnen," (1977), März, Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit, 208-220.

[60] ibid, 212.

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fable, "Der König der dunklen Kammer" (premiered at the Kammerspiele, March 4, 1921), Bernard Shaw's play "Misalliances," (Kammerpiele, May 2, 1921), Denys Amiel and André Obey's comedy, "Der ewig lachende Frau" (Kammerspiele, August 1, 1922) and Armin Friedmann and Alfred Polgar's one-act satire, "Talmas Tod" (Kammerspiele, August 1, 1922). The number and timing of these productions suggest a particularly close rapport between Heartfield and Reich, and Fetting regrets Reich's failure to mention this collaboration in his memoirs of German theater in the 1920s.[61] Given the far more pronounced pattern of working with any given director just once, in any case, it was impossible to develop working relationships or public visibility, and Heartfield left toward the end of 1922.

Acknowledging the scarcity of documentation, for hardly any notes, sketches, or models of Heartfield's stage designs remain,[62] and even critical commentary is very sparse, Fetting nevertheless allows himself to generalize a little about Heartfield's theater work from the 1920s:

> Heartfield's sense and understanding for the

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[61] Bernard Reich, Im Wettlauf mit der Zeit: Erinnerungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten deutscher Theatergeschichte, Berlin: Henschel-Verlag, 1970.

[62] Several models of set designs are preserved in the theater division of the Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, but date from the 1950s and 1960s.

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> theater never let him forget that the figure on stage is the focus of every theatrical event. For this reason we search his decorations in vain for anything remarkable, anything self-consciously original. The message was always more important to him than the appearance. The content and structure of the work was to him the essential thing. His priority was to translate these into the language of the stage set, to make it visible and palpable. To do this he exploited all the possibilities, the effects the stage had to offer, technology in all its manifestations including the revolving stage, light, for example when people and things dig themselves out of the darkness in Reinhardt's production of "Wozzeck," or color, which served him not as a means of attracting attention, but as a dramaturgical tool, as in the production of Tagore's fairy tale, "Der König der dunklen Kammer." Heartfield's stage designs were austere where abundance would not be missed, and lavish where austerity would have detracted...The sense of the whole remained dominant...As a set designer, Heartfield was and remained a partner of the author, the director and the actor...[63]

Fetting's observations were born out in Heartfield's continuing theater work, particularly in a much longer engagement with the producer-director Erwin Piscator. In his

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[63] Fetting, 218-219. Heartfields Sinn und Verständnis für das Theater ließen ihn nie vergessen, daß der Mensch auf der Bühne der Mittelpunkt aller theatralischen Vorgänge ist. Deschalb suchen wir in seinen Dekorationen das Auffallende, bewußt Originelle vergeblich. Die Aussage war ihm immer wichtiger als der Effekt. Der Inhalt und Gehalt des Werkes blieben ihm stets das Wesentliche. Es in der Sprache des Bühnenbildes umzusetzen, es sichtbar und spürbar zu machen hatte Vorrang. Dabei nutzte er alle Möglichkeiten und Wirkungen der Bühne, die Technik in al ihren Spielarten bis zur Drehbühne ebenso wie das Licht, das zum Beispiel "in der "Wozzeck"-Aufführung Reinhardts Menschen und Dinge aus der Finsternis herausgrub, oder die Farbe, die ihm nicht als koloristisches Reizmittel diente, sondern dramaturgishes Mittel war, wie bei der Aufführung von Tagores Märchenspiel "Der König der dunklen Kammer." Heartfield war in seinen Bühnenbildern karg, dort wo man Reichtum nicht vermißte, und reich dann, wo Kargheit beeinträchtigt hätte...Das Gefühl fur das Ganze blieb herrschend...Heartfield war und blieb als Bühnenbildner Partner des Autors, des Regisseurs und des Schauspielers...

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1929 memoir Das politische Theater, Piscator somewhat ironically credited Heartfield with having introduced the concept of "epic" theater during a 1919 production of Karl August Wittfogel's Der Krüppel (The Cripple)

> One can see how these productions went from the following case: John Heartfield, who had taken over the production of the sets for "Krüppel," delivered his work late, as usual, and appeared at the door of the theater, with the rolled screens under his arm, in the middle of the first act.
>
> What then followed might have appeared to be a flash of directorial inspiration, but in fact was completely unplanned. Heartfield: "Stop, Erwin, stop! I'm here!" All heads turned, amazed, to the little man with the bright red head who had just burst in. It was impossible to continue with the play, so I stood up, leaving my role as the cripple aside for a moment, and called down: "Where have you been? We waited almost half an hour for you (murmur of agreement in the audience) and finally started without your backdrop." Heartfield: "You didn't send the car! It's your fault! I've been running through the streets--none of the streetcars would take me because the screens were too big. I finally caught one, but had to stand back on the ledge. I nearly fell! (Growing amusement in the audience.) I interrupted him: "Calm down, Johnny, we have to go on with the play now." --Heartfield (extremely exited): "No, first we have to hang the screens!" And since he would not calm down, I turned to the audience with the question, what should be done: whether we should go on with the play or hang the screens first. The overwhelming majority were in favor of hanging them. So we dropped the curtain, hung the screens, and started again, amid general satisfaction. (Today I call John Heartfield the founder of "epic theater.")[64]

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[64] Erwin Piscator, Das politische Theater, Berlin, 1929, 48-49, note 1. Wie es bei diesen Aufführungen [Piscator's Proletarisches Theater, 1919-1920.--N.R.] zuging, kann man aus folgendem Vorfall ersehen: John Heartfield, der die Herstellung des Prospektes zum "Krüppel" übernommen hatte, lieferte, wie üblich, seine Arbeit zu spät und erschien, den zusammengerollten Prospekt unter dem Arm, an der Eingangstür des Salles, als wir bereits mitten im 1. Akt waren.

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Piscator seems to be joking about Heartfield's significance in the development of a concepts of "concrete," or "participatory" theater.[65] And yet there is no reason to doubt that such an incident occurred, nor that Piscator took careful note of the audience's engagement and delight in it.[66] In constrast to a "founder," however, Heartfield behaves in this depiction like an excited child, so intent on

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Was nun folgte, hätte als ein Regie-Einfall von mir erscheinen können, war aber durchaus ungewollt. Heartfield: "Halt, Erwin, halt! Ich bin da!" Erstaunt drehten sich alle nach dem kleinen Mann um, der da mit hochrotem Kopf hereingeplatzt war. Weiterzuspielen war nicht möglich, und so stand ich auf, meine Rolle als Krüppel einen Augenblick beiseite lassend, und rief herunter; "Wo hast du denn gesteckt?" Wir haben beinahe eine halbe Stunde auf dich gewartet (zustimmended Gemurmel im Publikum) und schließlich ohne deinen Prospekt angefangen." Heartfield: "Du hast den Wagen nicht geschickt! Es ist deine Schuld! Ich bin durch die Straßen gerannt--keine Elektrische wollte mich mitnehmen, weil die Kulisse so groß war. Schließlich erwischte ich doch noch eine und mußte mich hinten auf den Perron stellen, wo ich beinahe heruntergefallen wäre!" (Zunehmende Heiterkeit im Publikum.) Ich unterbrach ihn: "Sei ruhig, Johnny, wir müssen jetzt weiterspielen." --Heartfield (in äußerster Erregung): "Nein, erst muß die Kulisse aufgehängt werden!" Und da er keine Ruhe gab, wandte ich mich ans Publikum mit der Frage, was geschehen soll: ob wir weiterspielen oder erst den Prospekt aufhängen sollen. Die überwältigended Mehrheit entschied sich für das Aughängen. Darauf ließen wir den Vorhang fallen, hängten den Prospekt auf und begannen zur allgemeinene Zufriedenheit das Stück von neuem. (Heute bezeichne ich John Heartfield als den Begründer des "Epischen Theaters.)

[65] März, for example, refers to a "scherzhaften Unterton" (joking undertone) in the writing (Der Schnitt, 1981, 202).

[66] Wieland related almost exactly the same incident but in relation to Rußlands Tag ("Russia's Day) ("Rußlands Tag," Neue deutsche Literatur, 1957, no. 11, 11ff. Reprinted in Ludwig Hoffmann and Daniel Hoffmann-Ostwald, Deutsches Arbeitertheater, 1918-1933: eine Dokumentation, Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 1961.). Given Piscator's actual participation in the event, his memory of it would seem the more reliable. Piscator also noted that the backdrop for Rußlands Tage was a projection, not a physical screen, as required for the story.

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his own piece of the production as to actually commit the grave transgression of breaking into a theatrical production in progress. To the audience, which probably assumed all this was "in the script," he appeared charming. But in assuring us that this was in fact a completely unplanned outburst, Piscator narrates a moment of potential embarrassment. By simply blundering in, Heartfield at most catalyzed--hardly "founded"--audience-interactive theater. It was Piscator himself who suddenly saw how the audience might be engaged in the larger theatrical situation.

The account, in any case, is among the few from the period that provide a glimpse of Helmut's very intense, excitable personality and the ways his colleagues accommodated it. And it bears out the premise that Heartfield brought the energy of the graphic "monteur," the joiner, to his theater work as well. He could readily acquiesce to the demands of script, director and actors; the one thing he could not tolerate was to be left out.

In the course of Heartfield's theatrical collaboration with Piscator, there were two productions in particular in which Heartfield's contributions drew pointed praise, including some from the KPD. Among the first productions of Piscator's Proletarian Theater (1920-21), at a point when the cast travelled from neighborhood to neighborhood in Berlin in an

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effort to address workers in their own environment, was a play by Lajos Barta called Rußlands Tag. Operating on a shoestring budget, Heartfield resolved the problem of the stage design by projecting an image of a map on the back screen. The idea was to frame the dramatic action against a geographical and historical backdrop. Piscator later wrote about Heartfield's solution:

> One can imagine how primitive the sets were. But with the changed ambitions of the theater even these simple, quickly-painted canvases changed their meaning. In "Rußlands Tag" it was a map that made the political meaning of the stage clear at a stroke, from the geographical situation alone. This was no longer simple "decoration," but an outline of the social, political, geographical or economic circumstances. It took part [in the dramatic action].[67]

Some scholars of twentieth-century German theater history suggest that Piscator's reputation as an innovator in twentieth-century theater has been inappropriately overshadowed by the more celebrated figure of Brecht. Attempts to reassess the record have focussed on the

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[67] Piscator, Das politische Theater. Faksimiledruck der Erstausgabe 1929. Berlin, 1968, 40-41. Die Dekorationen waren denkbar primitiv. Aber entsprechend den veränderten Aufgaben des Theaters verwandelten sich auch diese enfachen, hastig bemalten Leinenwände in ihrer bedeutung. In "Rußlands Tag" war es eine Landkarte, die mit einem Schlage, schon aus der geographischen Situation heraus, die politische Bedeutung des Schauplatzes Klarstellte. Das war nicht mehr einfache "Dekoration," sondern zugleich sozialer, politisch-geographischer oder wirtschaftlicher Aufriß. sie spielte mit.

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significance of a literary text to any actual performance:[68] For from the standpoint of literary texts themselves--durable, material objects to which reference can readily be made after the performance is over--Brecht clearly left the more impressive record; Piscator's field of innovation was the far less handily documentable area of "stagecraft"--stage architecture, lighting, recorded sound, film and projection. Piscator, further, never consolidated the results of his experiments into a polished, recognizable "style," but continued to experiment--inevitably with uneven success--into the 1950s and 1960s.[69] These efforts to incorporate technology into theatrical performances tended, among other things, to reduce the role of the "author" from "imaginative creator" to an "organizer of given material"[70]

John Willett makes a very similar point about Piscator's revising the role of the author with specific reference to Rußlands Tag:

> Admittedly the main play of the opening programm [of the Proletarian Theater--N.R.], the one-act Rußlands Tag by Lajos Barta, makes feeble reading today...But there was a prophetically documentary

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[68] C.D. Innes, Erwin's Piscator's Political Theater: the Development of Modern German Drama, Cambrdige: Cambridge University Press, 1972, 2.

[69] Michael Patterson, the Revolution in German Theatre, 1900-1933, Boston, London and Henly: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, 152-3.

[70] Innes, Piscator's Political Theater, 2.

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> flavor to John Heartfield's use of a map for scenery, and the collective, anonymous adaptation of the original play...allowed Piscator to start formulating his ideas about the subordination of the author and his personality.[71]

This passage suggests that the particular rapport between Piscator and Heartfield lay not only in their shared enthusiasm for technical innovation in stagecraft, but more broadly in their understanding of theater as a thoroughly collaborative enterprise, from which any effort to showcase a given individual, specifically the author of a play, could only detract.

In 1925, the KPD commissioned Piscator to produce a review in honor of those who died in the November Revolution. Entitled "Trotz Alledem! Historische Revue aus den Jahren 1914-1919," ("In spite of Everything! A Historical Review of the Years 1914-1919"), the highly successful production consisted of 25 short scenes, given in quick succession. It made use of a revolving stage, half with a flat surface and the other half equipped with various configurations of ramps, steps and dividers, which solved the problem of so many quick scene changes. But the innovation that made the most impact was the use of documentary film--of actual combat, of parades, ceremonial pomp, and vast destruction.

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[71] John Willett, The Theater of Erwin Piscator, London: Methuen, 1986, 49-50.

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Piscator wrote of this production in the first person, "I had a platform built..," "I distributed film clips throughout the performance, and filled in the gaps with slide projections..." On the program, however, John Heartfield is credited with the stage design.[72] Reviewers, too, associated his name directly with the production's unusual and by all reports highly effective use of film.[73] Perhaps more to the point, however, is Piscator's acknowledgement that

> The play was produced collectively: Engaged in their respective work processes, author, director, musician, stage designer and actor constantly responded to one another. The scene constructions and music appeared at the same moment as the manuscript, and the manuscript, in turn, coincided with the direction. Scenes were organized in several places in the theater at once, even before the text was established. For the first time, film was organically integrated with the staged events.[74]

This description suggests a kind of ecstatic moment, an

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[72] The program is reproduced in Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield, 190.

[73] Otto Steinecke, "Proletarisches Kampftheater: Die Auffuhrung im 'Großen Schauspielhaus,'" Die rote Fahne: Kritik, Theorie, Feuilleton 1918-1933, Munich, 1973, 206f. Reprinted in Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield, 141.

[74] Erwin Piscator, Das Politische Theater, Berlin: Adalbert Schultz, 1929, 64. Die Aufführung entstand kollektiv: Die einzelnen Arbeitsprozesse von Verfasser, Regisseur, Musiker, Bühnenmaler und Schauspieler, griffen unaufhörlich ineinander. Mit dem Manuskript zugleich enstanden die szenischen Aufbauten und die Musik, mit der Regie gemeinsam entstand wiederum das Manuskript. Szenen wurden arrangiert, an vielen Stellen des Theaters gleichzeitig, noch ehe der Text dazu feststand. Zum erstenmal sollte der Film organisch mit den Bühenenvorgängen verbunden werden.

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abandonment of disciplinary distinctions and egotistical concerns among the participants in favor of a common goal. Given Helmut's history up to this point, it would seem a highly significant experience, very like the situation in which the Monteur had first appeared. Yet the Heartfield literature uniformly suggests that the theater work was quite peripheral to a career centered on print.

Given that virtually all insights into Helmut's interior experience have been somehow mediated through Wieland, the marginalization of the theater work may correspond to a difference between the brothers that deepened as the 1920s progressed. Wieland may have envied Helmut's capacity to abandon himself, to participate in projects that demanded not only multiple sensory engagement--music, voice, space, physical movement all needed to be taken into account--but also some considerable dismantling of personal defenses, a willingness to make a fool of oneself. These were capacities that Wieland himself possessed in far smaller measure. And if, as seems likely, he was largely unaware of his own feelings in the matter, he would logically deemphasize the aspects of his brother's career that demonstrated the difference most clearly. There seems little doubt, in any case, that Helmut's theatrical work, particularly in collaboration with Piscator, marks the point of greatest independence from Wieland.

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The Malik-Verlag and Graphic Design

Wieland was never able to fully embrace Dada. His designation "Progress-Dada" derived from his tendency to excuse the whole project as a passing phase, a manifestation of youthful exuberance which would "progress" in due time into more productive activities, specifically in the service of Communism.[75] This remained his position later, as he defended Dada's rejection of social hierarchy--that is, it's true, socialist core--while acknowledging its many childish excesses.

Dada seems not to have substantially affected Wieland's values or the direction of his work. Grosz remained the object of his intense admiration and loyalty, before and after. If anything, Dada was the ground of an intensified rivalry between the two, an exchange in which Wieland steadily resisted, objected, tried to blunt the edge of Grosz's assault on the standards of socially acceptable behavior, his angry contempt for the "masses" of his countrymen; the effect of Wieland's resistance was, predictably, to spur Grosz on to new extravagances, more sweeping condemnations of his fellow men. And although these exchanges became more nuanced over the

[75] This attitude must have developed during the course of Berlin Dada--roughly 1918-1920, since the Herzfelds', Grosz's and Piscator's entry into the Party--January, 1919--occurred almost a full year after the first Dada events of February, 1918.

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ensuing decades, the pattern remained recognizable.

Wieland's friendship with Piscator, too, predated and outlived Dada. They had met as fellow communications specialists (radio technicians) during military service in 1917; there is no evidence of any direct collaboration between them. His contact with the satirical writers Walter Mehring and Kurt Tucholsky dates from the Dada period, although no collaborative projects were undertaken in its context. The "Dada Department" ("Dada-Abteilung") of the Malik-Verlag published Jedermann sein eigener Fußball, die Pleite and one issue of Der Dada, among other Dada productions. But this was always carefully distinguished from the Malik-Verlag proper, which Wieland already envisioned as a publisher of substantial, durable books.

After the practical jokes, improvised "happenings," costumes, drugs--the general high spirits and sensual abandon of Dada--the atmosphere at the Malik-Verlag must have seemed austere. There was a distinctly ascetic and moralizing dimension to Wieland's personality that always set the press apart from Dada activities. But more importantly, after deserting the army and spending a few awkward months at UFA manipulating puppets (see p. 193-197 above), Wieland quite deliberately set out to make a profit from his work, a thing that had never been remotely part of the Dada enterprise. Wieland's business

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acumen came as a surprise to virtually everyone who knew him. He steered the Malik-Verlag through numerous financial crises, providing himself and his brother with at least an adequate, and at points apparently quite comfortable living during the 1920s.[76] At the same time he sustained a supportive, yet finally independent position with respect to the Communist Party.[77]

Helmut's work at the Malik-Verlag was, accordingly, very much more sustained and tightly focussed than anything he did in connection with Dada or the theater. And yet what singled Heartfield's designs out from that of his contemporaries, what in fact reliably identified Malik books and so quite probably contributed substantially to their high sales, was exactly what he was able to carry over from the experience of performing. In describing the desired effect of the books' appearance, in fact, even Wieland alluded to, without quite naming, a theatrical situation:

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[76] Leben und Werk, 38.

[77] Wieland Herzefelde's most extensive memoire of the Malik-Verlag appeared in the catalogue of the exhibition Der Malik-Verlag 1916-1947 (Berlin: Deutsche Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, 1969). A fuller discussion, particularly of the press's finances and relationship to its competition, appears in Ulrich Faure, Im Knotenpunkt des Weltverkehrs: Herzfelde, Heartfield, Grosz und de4r Malik-Verlag 1916-1947, Berlin und Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1992.

The best information in English appears in the catalogue published for the exhibition The Malik-Verlag 1916-1947: Berlin, Prague, New York (Goethe House, New York, in Association with the Madison Campus Library, Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1984), organized by James Fraser and Steven Heller.

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> When our press began to publish novels after 1921, however, it required especially assertive covers and jackets. They had to convince not only a few left-oriented booksellers, but also those with other convictions to put our new releases and our reissues in their display windows. So the books had to attract attention at first glance--and at the same time provoke. For we told ourselves, even those who don't buy should feel, through its appearance alone, the book's effect.[78]

Heartfield's most notable innovations in book and dust cover design can be ordered around this understanding of a dramatic moment, and so the need for a complex narrative to be "staged" as a single, readily-graspable tension. The introduction of photography itself into dust cover design, for example, can be understood in these terms, as a means of making the depicted events seems more immediate, more directly present to the prospective buyer. The various features of his work for the Malik-Verlag, too, can be read as various experiments in projecting a dramatic action, occurring in time, onto the surfaces of a book, and engaging the viewer in it. These include, for example, the full staging of photographs (Upton Sinclair, So macht man Dollars, 1931, and Ilya Ehrenburg, Die heiligsten Güter, 1931, figs. 20, 21); the use of two

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[78] Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 47. Unser Verlag benötigte jedoch, als er 1921 Romane herauszubringen begann, besonders aussagekräftige Umschläge und Buchbezüge. Sie sollten nicht nur die wenigen linken, sondern auch andersgesinnte Buchhändler veranlassen, unsere Neuerscheinungen ins Schaufenster zu stellen, und auch die Nachauflagen. Die Bücher mußten also auf den ersten Blick anziehend sein--zugleich agitatorisch wirksam. Denn wir sagten uns, auch wer nicht kauft, soll allein durch den Anblick im Sinne des Buches beeinflußt werden.

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different images, on the front and back covers of one book, to recreate something of the dramatic tension in the book (Upton Sinclair, Boston, 1929 (fig. 17), John Dos Passos, Drei Soldaten, 1928, fig. 18); the juxtaposing of several related photographs on a page to suggest a narrative, as in film (Platz dem Arbeiter, 1925, fig. 17) and the assembling of quanitities of very like images, as for an inventory or catalogue (Alfred Polgar, Gestern und Heute, 1922, fig. 16). There is, however, no obvious linear development in the book designs, no gradual movement, say, from the Dada collage style toward the photomontage "style" of the 1930s. Heartfield himself tried to cooperate in tracing such a development, pointing out the juxtaposition of two photographs in the Malik-Verlag yearbook for 1925, Platz dem Arbeiter (fig. 16) as a significant interaction, an effort to lead the viewer to a new meaning. And yet there are earlier examples of formally effective photomontage (Franz Jung, Die Eroberung der Maschinen 1922, fig. 14). Those dust covers that seem to fully employ the photomontage style, on the other hand, such as the covers for Ilya Ehrenburg's Die heiligste Güter, 1931 (fig. 21), were in fact produced after the series for the A.-I.-Z. was already underway. Wieland, significantly, completely dismissed any idea of a gradual development:

> The widespread assumption that there was a gradual or even a sudden transition from collage or type collage to photomontage is completely erroneous. That would be as impossible as a transition from

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confetti to a map.[79]

And in fact Heartfield's work does not conform to the model of steadily accumulating skills and insights over the years with the Malik-Verlag; rather he seems to have renegotiated each design problem freshly, always searching for the greatest possible dramatic impact.

Heartfield's innovations in book design were not formally recognized in the critical literature of the period until 1927, with the publication of H. K. Frenzel's article in Gebrauchsgraphik.[80] This was followed by Hans Reimann's measured praise for Heartfield's skills as an advertiser,[81] and Jan Tschichold's unequivocal designation, the following year, of Heartfield as the inventer of the photomontage dust cover.[82] Given this relatively modest critical acclaim, Heartfield's expansive presence at Film und Foto in 1929,[83]

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[79] "Dada und die Folgen," 1247. Ganz irrig ist die verbreitete Annahme, es habe einen Übergang von der Collage oder Typocollage zur Fotomontage gegeben, einen allmählichen oder gar sprunghaften. Das war so unmöglich wie ein Übergang von Konfetti zu einer Landkarte...

[80] H.K. Frenzel, "John Heartfield und seine photographisch-graphischen Arbeiten, Gebrauchsgraphik (Berlin), July, 1927, 17-32.

[81] Hans Reimann, "John Heartfield," Das Stachelschwein (Berlin), June, 1927, 38-40.

[82] Jan Tschichold, Die neue Typographie. Ein Handbuch für zeitgemäß Schaffende, Berlin, 1928, 228.

[83] The exhibition has been documented and discussed quite extensively, for example in Ute Eskildsen and J.Chr. Horak, eds., Film und Foto der zwanziger Jahre. Eine Betrachtung der

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the German Werkbund's vast and prestigious photography exhibition, seems somewhat puzzling. One possible explanation lies in the unusual goals of the exhibition itself. In the exhibition catalogue, curator Gustav Stolz clearly described his ambitious purpose in mounting the exhibition as

> ...to show that which can be characterized as photography's real task; that which can be given form only through the medium of photography, which is essential to it, and belongs to it alone. Form this standpoint, the question of so-called "artistic" photography moved into the background.[84]

It was not so much as the outstanding practitioner of either photographic art or of book design, then, but as the acknowledged pioneer and most innovative practitioner at the intersection between the two that Heartfield's work came tc occupy such a prominent place at "Fifo".

Another possible explanation, however, lies in Heartfield's pattern of actually engaging colleagues and at times his

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Internationalen Werkbundausstellung "Film und Foto," Suttgart, 1979, and Inka Graeve, "Internationale Ausstellung des deutschen Werbunds," Stationenen der Moderne, exh. cat., Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, 1988, 236-275. Details of the reconstruction of the "Heartfield Room" at Film und Foto are given in Elizabeth Patzwall, "Zur Rekonstruktion des Heartfield-Raums der Werkbundausstellung von 1929," John Heartfield, Klaus Honnef and Peter Pachniche, eds., exh. cat., Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, 1992, 294-297.

[84] Film und Foto: Internationale Ausstellung des Deutschen Werkbunds, exh cat., Stuttgart: der deutsche Werkbund, 1929, 12. ...das herauszustellen, was als eigentliches Arbeitsgebiet der Fotografie anzusprechen war; das, was nur mit den Mitteln der Fotografie gestaltet werden konnte, die für sie wesentlich sind und nur ihr zugehören. Die Frage der sogenannten "künstlerischen" Fotografie trat dabei in den Hintergrund.

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audience in production-related decisions, for this may have generated alternative, "word-of-mouth" publicity through the 1920s that supplemented his formal critical acclaim. One particularly striking example was the 1928 election poster, "Fünf Finger hat die Hand" (fig. 22), a commission from the KPD. Alexander Abusch, at the time editor-in-chief of the Party newspaper, Die rote Fahne, later recalled this poster in response to a question regarding Heartfield's relationship to the Party.

> The thing with the hand sticks in my memory in particular, because I recall the difficulty of getting an idea that corresponded with "5". We said, "Five, the five, the five" and so on, what can you say? "Vote for list 5, Communist Party... What can you say that's new?" And then one of us said: "A hand has five fingers". Jonny Heartfield immediately jumped up and said: "Right. A hand has five fingers!" And in principle everything was already there. [85]

Walter Schulz, another Party member involved in the election campaign that year, noted that this poster was part of the Party's first full-scale publicity effort. The campaign was already underway, and already included several posters, before

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[85] Alexander Abusch, exerpts from an interview with Thomas Fecht, Helmut Herbst, Eckhard Siepmann and Irene Tietze-Lusk, 17 June 1976. IN: Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield, 1977, 97. Mir ist besonders die Sache mit der Hand im Gedächtnis haften geblieben, weil ich mich genau an die Schwierigkeit erinnere, eine Idee zu haben, die mit der 5 korrespondiert. Wir sagten, "Fünf, die Fünf, die Fünf" und so weiter, "was kann man da sagen" Wählt Liste 5, Kommunistische Partei...Was kann man da neues sagen?" Und dann sagte einer von uns: "Fünf Finger hat die Hand". Und da sprang der Jonny Heartfield sofort in die Höhe und sagte: "Ja, Fünf Finger hat die Hand!" Und da war schon im Grunde alles da.

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Heartfield agreed to participate.

> One day John Heartfield appeared in the Karl Liebknecht House and was looking around the promotion department, oblivious of the comrades, men and women, that were trying to get him to agree to design the poster for the election campaign. He was susceptible to persuasive arguments, especially since he was already disposed to to say yes. "Alright. When do you want it?"
>
> A few days later. Jonny showed up again. No roll under his arm. Nothing that looked like a poster design, but a briefcase full to bulging. "Where are those in charge, then?" We all stood around a table...Heartfield shook the contents his briefcase onto the table and demanded, "Pick out the best one!"
>
> Before us, in several layers, lay photographs of hands! It seems as though there were more than a hundred. Workers' hands. Rough, firm, grasping, wide, narrow, smooth, furrowed, gnarly hands. "So. Now you choose the best hand. But hurry, I don't have much time." "Yes, but why...?" --"You'll see."
>
> We searched, sorted, voted and decided. From a hundred there were 25, from 25, 10--and then one. The hand. It was rare for us to come to agreement without any great discussion; but in this case, if I am not mistaken, the artist approved our decision without argument. "You'll have your poster the day after tomorrow."
>
> One morning, as the campaign was reaching its peak, the posting columns were covered with giant, spread hands, and soon there was no free space left among the other posters that the comrades had not somehow managed to use for yet another of these imposing incitements to vote for List 5. Of course we wanted to know where all the hand-photographs had come from. John gave his secret away to Lene Radó: for several days he had stood at the gates of large factories, and as the crowd rushed by at the shift changes, he had asked to photograph hands.[86]

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[86] Walter Schulz, from a report, Berlin, June, 1961. Reprinted in Wieland Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 355. Als John Heartfield eines Tages im Karl-Liebknecht-Haus erschien, sah er sich in der Agitprop-Abteilung unversehens von Genossen und Genossinnen, die

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Both descriptions record not only Heartfield's extraordinary openness to the suggestions of others, but more, his capacity to actually engage a group of people in his decision-making process-- both accounts clearly convey the sense that the witnesses themselves had some small part in the creation of

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auf ihn eindrangen, um von ihm das Plakat für den Wahlkampf zugesagt zu bekommen. Gut zureden hilft, vor allem dann, wenn die innere Bereitschaft sowieso verhanden ist. "Also schön. Wann wollt ihr's haben?"

Wenige Tage später. Wieder tauchte Jonny auf. Keine Rolle unterm Arm. Nichts, was nach einem Plakatentwurf aussah, aber eine prall gefüllte Aktentasche. "Wo sind denn nun die Sachverständigen?" Dann standen wir alle um einen Tisch herum...Heartfield schüttelte den Inhalt seiner Aktentasche auf den Tisch und forderte: "Sucht euch die beste aus!"

Vor uns lagen in meheren Schichten die Fotographien von Händen! Mir is als wären es mehr als hundert gewesen. Arbeiterhände. Derbe, feste, greifende, breite, schmale, schwielige, rissige, knotige Hände. "So, nun sucht die beste Hand aus. Aber schnell, ich hab' wenig Zeit." --"Ja, aber wozu...?" --"Das werdet ihr schon sehen."

Wir suchten, sortierte, wählten, schieden aus. Von hundert blieben fündundzwanzig, von fünfundzwanzig zehn, von zehn fünf --und dann eine. Die Hand. Es war selten, daß wir und ohne große Diskussion über ein Motiv einigten; aber in diesem Falle billigte der Künstler, wenn ich mich nicht täusche, ohne Widerrede unsere Wahl. "Übermorgen habt ihr das Plakat."

Als der Wahlkampf seinen Höhepunkt erreicht hatte, waren einen Morgens die Litfaßsäulen mit riesengroßen gespreizten Händen beklebt, und bald gab es keinen freien Platz, den die Genossen nicht zu nutzen verstanden, um neben anderen Plakaten auch diese einprägsame Aufforderung zur Wahl der Liste 5 anzubringen. Wir interessierten uns selbstverständlich fur die Frage, woher die Unmenge von Hände-Fotografien stammte. John gab Lene Radó sein Geheimnis preis: er hatte sich mehere Tage vor die Ausgänge großer Betriebe gestellt und bei Schichtwechsel die nach Hause eilenden Kumpel gebeten, ihre Hände fotografieren zu dürfen.

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this celebrated poster.[87] The very phrase "Fünf Finger hat die Hand," came, Abusch says, not from Heartfield, nor unequivocally from any one, identifiable source, but from "one of us." As the story circulated, the many workers whose hands were photographed undoubtedly formed a new relationship to the poster. Nor was this exceptional in Heartfield's practice. Helmut constantly, openly solicited ideas from others.

The NDV

Whether as a direct consequence of Heartfield's success in the Film und Foto exhibition or in admiration of Heartfield's less well publicized, yet highly successful and innovative means of engaging readers, it was about this time that Willi Münzenberg, then near the height of his influence as a shaper of public opinion on behalf of the Comintern, conceived the idea for a collaboration between Heartfield and the humorist Kurt Tucholsky. Tucholsky needed some persuading before agreeing to participate.[88] In the end, however, instead of simply allowing his extant texts to be reprinted with

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[87] Abusch's account suggests that Heartfield's design encountered no resistance. In fact the design occasioned grave doubts among those Party officials responsible for the expenditure of campaign funds; in the end, however, even representatives of the opposition acknowledged it the most effective poster of the campaign (Gertrud Heartfield, "Aktennotiz über das KPD-Wahlplakat '5 Finger hat die Hand,'" 1968. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 151.).

[88] Babette Gross, Willi Münzenberg, 212.

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Heartfield's illustrations, as was first planned, he furnished a largely new text, much of it a direct response to the photographs Heartfield presented.[89]

The book proved extremely popular in terms of sales; critical commentary, however, was mixed at best.

> Most of the reviews were unfavorable. Herbert Ihering's Tagebuch review was one of the best. He accused Tucholsky of writing the same old familiar material and upbraided him for not living in Germany [Tucholsky had been living in France since 1924--N.R.] and taking a personal part in the struggle.[90]

Tucholsky himself, in a letter to his fellow Weltbühne contributor Jakob Wasserman, was concerned to dissociate himself from Heartfield's montage, "Tiere sehen Dich an." (fig. 23). Heartfield had appropriated the phrase and image from a popular contemporary book about animals, replacing the animals with prominent German statesmen and military figures. Tucholsky explained that the montage had been added at the very last minute, too late to even ask for his, Tucholsky's consent. It was not his kind of humor, he continued, and was, in any case, an insult to animals.[91] In another, later

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[89] Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 1986, 50.

[90] Poor, Harold L., Kurt Tucholsky and the Ordeal of Germany, 1914-1935, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968, 183.

[91] Kurt Tucholsky, Ausgewählte Briefe1913-1935 , Mary Gerold-Tucholsky and Fritz J. Raddatz, eds., Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1962, 212.

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letter to the same correspondent, Tucholsky commented more generally that the book was weak and "much too mild."[92] Harold Poor, in his book on Tucholsky, concluded that

> ...for all its shock effect, the dominant quality of the book seemed to be a lack of timeliness. Ostensibly the critique was of Weimar culture, yet the book appeared to be far more a catalogue of Tucholsky's dislikes of the old imperial regime."[93]

Whatever the book's shortcomings as a precise or provocative reflection of contemporary German society, however, Deutschland, Deutschland clearly had a substantial effect on Heartfield and his subsequent work. For although he was by then a veteran collaborator--book designs, magazine layouts, posters, stage sets--he had routinely subordinated his own presence to the needs of an existing text, usually a play or a book. Each time he had "appeared" in public as the artist, that is, he had appeared just once, and always in a differently-defined context. In Deutschland, Deutschland for the first time, Heartfield appears not only on the cover, but "stays" throughout the time of reading, emerging as a recognizable figure, a distinctive "voice." The book enacts a remarkably well-balanced dialogue between text and image, presumably reflecting a balanced participation between the two authors. The movement of a reader's eye down one page, across

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[92] "...viel zu mild." ibid, 266.

[93] Kurt Tucholsky and the Ordeal of Germany, 181.

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to the next, turning to the next introduced a time element into the physical experience of reading (fig. 24). Suddenly, Heartfield had the opportunity to incorporate elements he had absorbed from film and theater work--juxtaposition of voices, timing, blocking--into print. Deutschland, Deutschland was, further, Heartfield's first opportunity to work for an extended period with one theme, namely German society.[94]

The very significantly different working methods, tastes and political positions Tucholsky and Heartfield brought to the collaboration has been outlined by Hans Becker.[95] According to Becker, for example, Babette Gross, Münzenberg's wife and director of the NDV at the time, remembered Tucholsky's being sickened by the NDV's primitive methods of producing propaganda, and that many of Heartfield's photographs and montage ideas had been rejected. There was no exchange of letters between the two, she added, because everything had been discussed verbally, in editorial meetings.[96] Becker

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[94] There are some striking parallels, too between Heartfield's and Tucholsky's "stage" personae. It was an open secret, for example, that Tucholsky wrote under 4 different pseudonyms, as well as his own name, ordering the different tones and contents of the writing attributed to each so as to construct distinct authorial personalities (Istvan Deak, Weimar Germany's Left-Wing Intellecturals: a Political History of the Weltbüne and its Circle, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968, 39-40.).

[95] Becker, Hans J., Mit geballter Faust: Kurt Tucholsky's Deutschland, Deutschland über alles," Bonn, Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1978, 50-51.

[96] Becker, 37, 110 n. 5.

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also included a persuasive speculation regarding George Grosz's indirect role in the book, based partly on the history of collaboration between Grosz and Helmut and evidence that there were still exchanges between the two,[97] and partly on Grosz's role in shaping Tucholsky's view of photography.

> [...] almost all satire misses its mark today, because the attacker doesn't know his object well enough, and so shoots all over the place, where the other isn't standing at all...George Grosz alone knows that the enemies are much too dangerous to be made into straw targets. In reality they are much more hideous than their caricatures--but completely different. Photographs remain the most effective.[98]

Deutschland, Deutschland, then, appears to have been a particularly complex collaboration, engaging the participants in issues and relationships that stretched back more than a decade. It was, further a project that would have a direct impact on the Herzfeld brothers.

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[97] ibid, 43. Wieland Herzfelde erinnert sich, Grosz sei gegen die Aufnahme der Montage 'Tieresehen dich an' gewesen; Heartfield habe sich aber bedauerlicherweise nicht beeinflussen lassen. [Wieland Herzfelde im Gezpräch mit Mary Gerold-Tucholsky. Ost-Berlin, Oktober, 1973. Bestätigt von M. G.-T. in einem Brief an den Verfasser. 14.11.1973.)

[98] Kurt Tucholsky, Gesammelte Werke II, Mary Gerold-Tucholsky and Fritz J. Raddatz, eds., Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1962, 17. [...] fast alle Satire [geht] dieser Tage so daneben, weil der Angreifer seine Objekte nicht ordentlich kennt und im Himmelsrichtungen schießt, wo der andre gar nicht steht... der einzige George Grosz weiß, daß Gegner viel zu gefährlich sind, als daß man Schießbundenfiguren aus ihnen machen darf. Sie sind in Wahrheit scheusslicher als ihre Karikaturen--aber ganz anders. Am wirksamsten bleiben Fotografien.

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Wieland specifically acknowledged the responsive nature of the interaction between the two main participant:

> A unique and unusual combined effect of picture and text was the result of Heartfield's effort to provide suitable photographs for Kurt Tucholsky's book Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles. When the author saw the illustration material, he decided to change and expand the text significantly, which in turn incited Heartfield to contribute more photographs and photomontages. The whole book is...montaged; and in such a way, that the text is made more explicit through photographs, as well as vice versa.[99]

Deutschland, Deutschland, finally, brought Heartfield into close contact with the Arbeiterfotografen, or Labor Photographers, the network of mainly skilled laborers--turned amateur photographers--which Münzenberg had organized in 1926 (see pp. 6-8 above). Drawing on their first-hand experience, the Labor Photographers were supposed to supply the A.-I.-Z. with usable, affordable press photographs. The discipline of taking such photographs, mediated through sustained contact with the newspaper staff, was intended to further catalyze these workers' political enlightenment. The Labor Photographers' headquarters opened off the same hallway as other offices at the NDV, and in the course of his

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[99] Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 50. Ein ungewöhnliches, einmaliges Zusammenwirken von Bild und Text ergab sich, als Heartfield es übernahm, für das Buch Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles von Kurt Tucholsky Fotos zu beschaffen die zum Text paßten. Als der Autor das Illustrationsmaterial sah, entschloß er sich, den Text wesentlich zu ändern und zu erweitern, was wiederum Heartfield anregte, weitere Fotos und Fotomontages beizutragen. Das ganze Buch ist...montiert; und zwar derart, daß die Aussage des Textes durch Fotos eindringlicher wird, zuweilen auch umgekehrt.

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collaboration with Tucholsky, Heartfield came in frequent contact with them.

In addition to his photo-editing and layout work, Heartfield made some fifteen new photomontages expressly for Deutschland, Deutschland (Two examples are reproduced as figs. 25, 26 here), some of which were reprinted in the A.-I.-Z. soon after, perhaps in the interests of making them available to those who could not buy the book. Early in 1930, when the A.-I.-Z. published a questionnaire regarding its own performance,[100] readers answered that they would like to see more of Heartfield's work. In February, 1930, the announcement appeared that Heartfield had become a regular contributor, along with the first of the series of photomontages made expressly for the A.-I.-Z..[101]

Both as a collaborator and as a point of entry into the inner circles of the NDV, then, Tucholsky appears to have facilitated a far wider range of possibilities for Heartfield, a more articulate "voice" than he had ever had before, and, no doubt inadvertently, a closer link to the Communist Party. Just months after Deutschland, Deutschland was completed, Tucholsky's "role" would be apportioned to others: members of

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[100] It was a long questionnaire--27 questions--and no reward incentive was offered; neverthess, over 2,000 were returned (Willmann, Geschichte der A.-I.-Z., 124.).

[101] "Mitteilung an die AIZ-Leser," A-I.-Z. 6, 1930, 115.

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the A.-I.-Z. editorial staff, various photographers, and no doubt most crucially, to Wieland. With his regular installation at the A.-I.-Z., in any case, Heartfield no longer divided his time between theater and press work, to the extent he had through the 1920s. The moment of the Herzfeld brothers' most sustained engagement with their extended Communist "family," that is, reproduced a key feature in the first heady experiments with Grosz and the design of Neue Jugend: print and performance had again become one.

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V. Comrades and Cabbageheads: The Fiction of the A.-I.-Z. Photomontages

The photomontages Heartfield made for Deutschland, Deutschland that were later reprinted in the A.-I.-Z. (figs. 25, 26) have many features in common with the A.-I.-Z. photomontages proper, the series which began in February, 1930. Both combined photographs smoothly into a single "picture"; both series were broadly ordered as critiques of German society. There are nevertheless substantial differences, both within the separate montages and in the way these relate to the book and newspaper, respectively. These differences are, further, traceable to conditions defining the respective media for which they were made. In producing a book with Tucholsky, Heartfield had been responding to one highly articulate partner with a defined message and an established pattern of articulating that message in words. At the A.-I.-Z., the collaborative framework was very different. Rather than a defined endpoint for the project, for one thing, the newspaper ordered the work around a rhythm or flow, an implication that the project might stretch on indefinately. Up to this point, too, Heartfield had, with the arguable exception of his Dada work, used a specific text as a starting point: a book to be published at the Malik-Verlag, a play script, a campaign slogan, or Tucholsky's comic writing. At the A.-I.-Z., however, the "text" to be illustrated was no longer confinable

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to the effort of any one person; it was roughly as rigid or as lax, as clear or as vague as the newspaper's official position, itself closely bound to the official position of the Comintern.

The relationship of the A.-I.-Z. to the Comintern remains unclear in many details, owing less to any differing judgements of how the connection worked than to Comintern's--and later the SED's--deliberate policy of obscuring the role of A.-I.-Z. director Willi Münzenberg. In the most complete account of the A.-I.-Z.'s history, Heinz Willmann's Geschichte der A.-I.-Z. 1921-1938, for example, Münzenberg is relegated to a long footnote.[1] The note describes him as a "functionary," ("functionär"), never hinting that beyond the A.-I.-Z. or even the NDV's varied projects, Münzenberg's interests extended to a film company, a travel agency, child care center, and much more. In the much more recent Double Lives,[2] on the other hand, the American scholar Stephen Koch set Münzenberg at the exact center of a vast information network designed to expand and consolidate Stalinist power on a global scale--an enterprise so large that the A.-I.-Z. is only one very modest piece of it. The book begins, in fact,

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[1] Berlin (West): VEB, 1974, 20.

[2] Stephen Koch, Double Lives: Spies and Writers in the Secret Soviet War of Ideas against the West, New York: The Free Press, 1994.

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with the discovery of Münzenberg's body in a forest outside Paris in 1940, the story then unfolding--not unlike a murder mystery--as the enormous complexity of the victim's international connections is revealed.

All sources agree on Münzenberg's beginnings: In 1921, on direct assignment of Lenin himself, he founded the Internationale Arbeiter Hilfe (IAH)--a relief organization for victims of a flood and famine in Russia. Through the 1920s, his enterprises expanded. Koch describes how, beginning about 1927, Münzenberg's media network served to deflect public attention from the common ground and cooperative patterns that Hitler and Stalin were establishing between their organizations. This account explains, among other things, the German Communist Party's (KPD's) policy, from about 1928 on, of spending its best energies attacking so-called "social fascists," or Social Democrats (SPD), rather than Nazis. As the larger party--older, less radical, but still left in orientation, the SPD in fact seemed the KPD's natural ally in straited circumstances, and in late 1927, several strategies involving a rapprochement between the two were proposed.[3] The Communists' ultimate refusal to compromise on this issue had the effect, as many authors agree, of dividing the political left, effectively eliminating the possibility of forming a

[3] Ben Fowkes, Communism in Germany under the Weimar Republic, London: Macmillan, 1984, 145.

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strong enough opposition to defeat the Nazis in an election. By fragmenting socialists and diverting anti-fascist energies toward the ultimately irrelevant goal of undermining Social Democrats, Koch suggests, this policy served the respective goals of both Stalin and Hitler.

As a trusted figure in the Comintern's international information network, in any case, Münzenberg could mediate between the Party and the week-to-week activities of the A.-I.-Z. in a fairly straightforward way: the newspaper staff took its direction from its top administrator, who was himself minutely informed with repect to current Comintern policy. In this way, various decisions could be made quickly and consistently, so that many different aspects of a weekly issue--including Heartfield's contribution--could be coordinated. This arrangement may even have persisted--in secret--after 1933, when Münzenberg began living in France and the A.-I.-Z. moved to Prague.

It is also through Münzenberg, as the central link to the Comintern, that the Party's and A.-I.-Z.'s interest in Heartfield can, at least provisionally, be explained. For with the support of the Party, along with his considerable wealth at the end of the 1920s, Münzenberg enjoyed considerable independence. He had the opportunity to pursue his belief, not widely shared within the Party hierarchy at

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most points, that intellectuals and artists could be important, even indispensable allies in achieving radical political change. Münzenberg's wife, Babette Gross, later articulated this belief in a biography of her husband:

> Münzenberg's later activities, which were of extreme importance to the Communist Party, were wholly directed at bringing under Communist influence a group that was always regarded as politically unstable, the intellectuals...The poet, the painter, the musician can be as sure of an attentive audience when pronouncing on politics as when he speaks about his art. The more extreme his utterances the more likely this is to be true.[4]

Münzenberg agreed with his Comintern colleagues that intellectuals were politically unreliable.[5] Gross, who handled the day-to-day direction of the NDV, later even gave a disappointed estimate of Heartfield specifically in this respect, calling him "laconic," a "bohemian":

> Not without bitterness she said of him: Heartfield oscillated [politically] between things. He was only interested in seeing his beautiful pictures distributed.[6]

But Münzenberg argued that artists and intellectuals were nevertheless needed to win hearts and minds--as Koch put it,

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[4] Babette Gross, Willi Münzenberg: a Political Biography, Michigan State University Press, 1974, 6.

[5] Koch, Double Lives, 18-19.

[6] Hans Becker, Mit geballter Faust, 49. Nicht ohne Bitterkeit sagt sie von ihm: "Heartfield schwebte [politisch] zwischen den Sachen. Er war nur daran interessiert, seine schönen Bilder verbreitet zu sehen [from the author's personal conversation with Babette Gross.]

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to "make Stalinism feel indispensable to an enlightened life."[7] This would seem the framework within which Heartfield became a regular contributor, in which the entire A.-I.-Z. and even the Comintern became collaborators. It was less the conveying of specific messages (a task which, as the political professionals repeatedly claimed, could not be entrusted to "unreliable" intellectuals anyway), than the public projection of a humane, enlightened Stalinist.

It was within such a structure--very different from the interaction with Tucholsky--that Heartfield began, in 1930, to produce the A.-I.-Z. photomontages. At this point, the Comintern was resolved in its antagonism toward "social fascism"--the SPD--above all else, and Heartfield's work, particularly in the first months as regular contributor, reflects this policy very clearly, a point to be examined in specific examples below. His role at the A.-I.-Z.--in some ways ressembling that of other journalists--was generally to present the Party's position using current, "newsworthy" texts and photographs. But Heartfield's practice was also distinctive in that it effectively condensed the operations of the whole newspaper: news reports, editorial commentary, photoreporting, as well as type specifications, layout, proofing. Helmut was clearly experienced in the formal and technical aspects of such a project. But he had always

[7] Koch, Double Lives, 21.

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depended on his collaborators--Wieland, in particular--for the specific focus of his work, its impetus and "address" within a larger intellectual framework. The opportunity to become a regular contributor to the A.-I.-Z. really demanded both. It demanded, that is, another collaborator.

Wieland later specified a difference between the montages made in collaboration with Tucholsky and Heartfield's "essential" montage style. Rather than a dialogue between image and text, he wrote, a truly characteristic Heartfield montage was a "philosophical-esthetic collaboration of picture and word" ("weltanschaulich-äesthetisches Zusammenwirken von Bild und Wort").[8] When Heartfield began contributing photomontages regularly to the A.-I.-Z., just a few months after the completion of Deutschland, Deutschland, it was not Tucholsky, but Wieland himself--now acting not as a publisher, but as a writer--who supplied texts, presumably within the framework of just such a "philosophical-esthetic collboration."

In 1930, Wieland probably regarded the NDV as a competitor of the Malik-Verlag. Further, despite his financial independence of the Party,[9] Wieland was, as Beth Irwin Lewis has pointed

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[8] Leben und Werk, 50.

[9] Wieland discusses the press's finances in the exhibition catalogue, Der Malik-Verlag 1916-1947, Berlin (East): Akademie der Künste, 1967; further details are available in Ulrich Faure, Im Knotenpunkt des Weltverkehrs: Herzfelde, Heartfield, Grosz und der Malik-Verlag 1916-1947, Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1992.

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out, technically Münzenberg's subordinate within its structure.[10] Wieland may have regarded Münzenberg as an enemy even then. Later, in any case, he quite deliberately wrote Münzenberg out of both his own and his brother's represented lives. In answer to a 1973 newspaper inquiry regarding Münzenberg, among many other matters, Wieland wrote:

> Willi Münzenberg was no "Press Czar", he was rather a functionary of the Communist International who organized the International Workers' Aid (IAH). Some [people] suppose that he was "liquidated by Stalin" in France.
>
> My brother John Heartfield never fought "at Münzenberg's side," for he was never a functionary, never knew him personally and until 1930 only occasionally produced work for several organs of the "concern" [Münzenberg's diverse media interests--N.R.].[11]

This sounds harsher, but otherwise resembles Willmann's assessment of Münzenberg as a functionary, noted above, quite closely. Both were written in an East German context in the mid-1970s. In both, the term "functionary" signals despicable intellectual subservience.

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[10] Lewis, George Grosz, 103.

[11] typescript letter to the Nürnberger Nachtrichten, 7 January 1973. Correspondence, Wieland-Herzfelde-Archiv. Willi Münzenberg was kein "Presse-Zar", er hat vielmehr als Funktionär der Kommunistischen Internationale die Internationale Arbeiterhilfe (IAH) organiziert. Dass er in Frankreich "von Stalin liquidiert" wurde, ist eine von verschiedenen Annahmen [italics in original].

Mein Bruder John Heartfield hat nicht "an der Seite Münzenbergs" gekämpft, denn er war kein Funktionär, hat ihn nicht persönlich gekannt und vor 1930 nur fallweise Arbeiten für einige Organe des "Konzerns" geschaffen.

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Whatever tensions developed later, however, in 1930 the NDV offered access not only to the most technially innovative, publicly prominent mass media, but a new kind of connection to the Party as well. And almost everyone who writes about Münzenberg mentions his stylish presence, charm, and the comraderie that developed among his employees:

> They all felt his magnetism, from the firm's manager to the most junior newspaper seller, and this probably explains why the few surviving members of the old "Münzenberg shop" thirty years later still retain a feeling of kinship, why they see themselves as the last members of a family scattered all over the globe.[12]

And whether with misgivings or not, Wieland did collaborate with Helmut and both collaborated with Münzenberg's press in producing the photomontages, John Heartfield's most articulate and complete performance.

The Cabbagehead

Heartfield opened the A.-I.-Z. photomontages, a series of 237 separate works published over eight years, with an image that now reads as an introduction, an intriguing synopsis of the main principles and aims of what was to follow.[13] "He who

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[12] Gross, Willi Münzenberg, 166.

[13] There has been no extended analysis of this photomontage, perhaps in part because its status as the first in the series was somewhat obscured by the publication of selections from Deutschland, Deutschland. In the catalogue raisonne of the photomontages, Evans mentions it as an example of Heartfield's

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reads bourgeois newspapers will go blind and dumb/Get rid of the gags!" (fig. 27)[14] is a visual play on the word "Kohlkopf"--literally, "Cabbagehead"--a slang term something like a "vegetable," meaning someone who is sluggish and stupid. Like most of the other photomontages, "The Cabbagehead" focusses on a single central figure and includes two texts held distinct from one another visually. In this case, the figure is posed as if for a formal portrait. The

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combining unlike species, as animal and human, or in this case vegetable and human, one of four common techniques identified in Heartfield's work (John Heartfield: AIZ/VI 1930-1938, 17).

[14] "Wer Bürgerblätter liest wird blind und taub/Weg mit den Verdummungsbandagen!" A.-I.-Z. 9, number 6 (1930),103. This montage was published with a solicitation to readers to comment on it. Three issues later (A.-I-.Z. 9, number 9, 172), a letter from a worker, Hans Woile, of Bremen, appeared, which began with the following remarks about the montage:

> There isn't really much to say about it, because it's exactly a photomontage that gives us readers a clearer picture of current issues than pages of articles. I myself find that when you come home from work and read your AIZ, that the most gripping items are pictures and short reports that amaze through their simplicity. And a good photomontage is, above all, one that has a lot of currency without a lot of fuss. [Da ist wohl nicht viel darüber zu sagen, denn gerade eine Fotomontage gibt uns Lesern ein klareres Bild über aktuelle Themen, als es seitenlange Artikel vermögen. Ich persönlich empfinde, wenn man von der Arbeit kommt und man liest da seine AIZ, so fesseln einen die Bilder und kurzen Reportagen am meisten, die durch ihre Einfachheit verblüffen. Und da ist es eben eine gute Fotomontge in erster Linie, die mit wenig Aufwand viel Aktualität gibt (Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 183.).

These comments conform so exactly to the positions that workers were supposed to have toward photomontage--to judge by the concurrent observations in Der Arbeiterfotograf, as to appear "planted."

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head is swathed in "bandages" made from strips of newspapers, the names of which--Vorwärts, Tempo--are legible, and would have been readily recognized by readers of the A.-I.-Z. as organs of the Social Democratic Party.[15] The texts are distinguished in this case by both printing in reverse contrast and setting in contrasting type sizes and column widths. Although most of the photomontages carry a headline at the top of the page, "The Cabbagehead" does not; the first text the reader encounters is probably Vorwärts, the banner on one of the newspapers with which the Cabbagehead's head is bandaged. The "quotation" from the Cabbagehead himself appears in the lower right-hand corner:

> I am a cabbagehead. Do you know my leaves?*
> I am beside myself with worries
> But I'll just keep still and hope for the best.
> I want to be a red-black-gold cabbagehead.**
> I don't want to see or hear anything, or to interfere with state business.
> And no matter what happens
> I'll not have any Communist news in my house![16]
>
> *a pun on the German "Blätter," meaning both "leaves" and "pages." The whole line parodies the opening of a Prussian nationalist song, "Ich bin ein Preuße, kennt ihr meine Farben? (I am a

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[15] Heartfield's designation of these newspapers as "bourgeois" reflects the official position of the Communist Party; the SPD's political positions were left of center, only not so far left as the A.-I.-Z.

[16] Ich bin ein Kohlkopf/ Kennt ihr meine Blätter?/ Ich weiss vor Sorgen zwar micht aus noch ein, doch halt' ich still und hoff' auf einen Retter/ ich will ein schwarz-rot-goldner-Kohlkopf sein! Ich will nights seh'n und hören, das Staatsgeschäft nicht stören./ Und zieht man mich auch bis auf's Hemde aus/ die rote Presse kommt mir nicht ins Haus!

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Prussian, do you know my colors?)

**colors of the Weimar Republic flag.

The tone of this silly, self-incriminating rhyme contrasts sharply with that of the lower caption: the rhythm and causal logic of the title phrase, "If you read bourgeois newpapers, you'll go blind," oddly recalls the old folk wisdom that warns of the dangers of masturbating. The identity of the voice that speaks this authoritative warning is also less clear. It is in any case not the Cabbagehead.

With this first montage, Heartfield established the format, a mode of referencing between image and text, and the central signifying oppositions, particularly perceptual failure and (in)sight, that would function consistently through the entire work. At an absolutely literal level, the image--like all the others--presents itself as a news photograph, with a quotation from the person depicted and an authoritative caption supplied by the trustworthy editorial staff. Integrated as one page of a mass-circulation newspaper, it was printed using exactly the same kind and quality of photograph, the same typefaces and fonts, paper, and reproduction technology as the rest of the news. Heartfield went to enormous lengths to preserve this visual relationship: often he reused exactly the same photographs that had recently appeared in the A.-I.-Z itself or other newspapers; when he joined two or more photographs together, he airbrushed carefully over cut edges and evened

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out jarring differences in tones and contrasts between constituent images. The finished montage was clearly intended to function, formally, as convincing and coherent reportage. High-speed rotogravure printing, a technology which made the reproduction of photographs in quantity economically feasible, had only been commercially available since 1925. The A.I.Z. had been among the first newspapers to adopt it. Thus Heartfield's photomontages were embedded in a picture-rich layout that was recognizable to readers as the most technologically advanced communications medium available.

At this level, Heartfield's image is news, and asserts the same authority, claims the same privileged relationship to reality--its "true" representation--as the photographs, captions, quotations, and descriptions in the rest of the newspaper. In this first, most literal reading, "The Cabbagehead" announces a medical discovery. The caption summarizes the findings--namely that reading bourgeois newspapers causes blindness and deafness, a radical loss of perception. The news is supported by two pieces of evidence, a photograph and a quotation from one of the unfortunate victims. Both furnish direct "proof" of the physical and intellectual devastation wrought by bad reading habits. It then goes on to explain the appropriate measure for those wishing to restore such a tragic loss of faculties, or avoid it in the first place: the offending newspapers must be

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removed, and sight will be restored.

The regrettable Cabbagehead has a host of handicaps: it is blind, deaf, dumb, and utterly lacking in personal distinction: it has no "face," is not recogizable in term of race, gender, or age, although we could, on the basis of language and nationalist enthusiasms, assume that it is German, and further suppose, on the basis of its militaristic sentiments,[17] that it is male. Its single utterance is pure defensive reaction, an uninflected recital of received ideas. We, on the other hand, at this very moment reading a copy of the A.-I.-Z., can see the Cabbagehead, can hear it speak. Not only that, but we can recognize, as it can not, the cause of its trouble, read the names, the headlines, and texts of the newspapers that render its eyes, ears and mouth useless, and know that those newspapers differ from the one we currently have in hand: the A.-I.-Z. reader is not alone, not blind and deaf. He can speak. The Cabbagehead, then, is an opposite number, a kind of shadow of a "real," alert, conscious self. It sits alone, in darkness and silence, its head bandaged as if for burial. Like the masturbator to whom the text alludes, it is completely self-absorbed.

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[17] In the entry for this photomontage in his catalogue raisonne, Evans notes that "The figure wears the uniform of the Reichsbanner Scharz-Rot-Gold, a paramilitary group of Social Democratic ex-servicemen." (Evans, John Heartfield: AIZ/VI, 44.)

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The opposition between the depicted Vorwärts- or Tempo-reading subject and the reader of the A.-I.-Z. may have been, to some readers of 1930, a subtle shading between left and more left on the political spectrum, that is, between a Social Democrat and a Communist; Heartfield imposed on this difference an opposition between classes--bourgeois and proletarian. But here, as Heartfield begins the photomontage series, he restricts the terms of his opposition to reading practices--it is the newspaper, not the person, which is clearly labelled "bourgeois". According to the terms set forth here, either identity--sighted A.-I.-Z.-reader or blind Cabbagehead--is in principle available regardless of class or party affiliation; all depends on what kind of reader is involved, more precisely on whether he or she is looking, listening and speaking--or not.

The opposition between a free, active subject and a bound, helpless one has the larger implication of an opposition between hope and despair. This is not identical to the hope or despair of individual readers: it would presumably be possible for a Cabbagehead to perceive the world optimistically from his own, extremely narrow perspective, and for a more enlightened A.-I.-Z. reader to feel quite pessimistic, at least at times. Within the montage's construction of reality, however, active readers (of the A.-I.-Z.) embody hope, whether they actually feel it or not;

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readers who passively allow themselves to be constructed by newspapers (bourgeois Cabbageheads), on the other hand, embody despair. The categories are not personal, that is, but rather issue from a more authoritative point beyond, outside individual hoping and despairing, a point from which the opposition between the two conditions becomes visible and representable. This point "beyond," the source from which the image issues, initially appears to be the newspaper.

We know, however, that "The Cabbagehead" is not really news: strips of newspaper do not "naturally" tear themselves loose and bind themselves around people's heads; "real" news is not delivered, as this announcement is, in the language of an archaic folk wisdom. Full-page photographic portraits in political weeklies would, in any case, represent prominent, articulate individuals, people who deliver concise and highly significant statements about issues of broad concern; they would <u>not</u> feature bandaged, anonymous heads who speak in childish rhymes and whine about about wanting to be left alone. To persist in accepting the newspaper's operations as consistent and legitimate reportage of reality in this case, a reader would have to accept "The Cabbagehead"--and the body of photomontages it introduces--as a kind of collective dream in which the rules of time and space, the sense-giving order of things has been suspended. In other words, we can recognize "The Cabbagehead" as as not-news--as art--by the

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difference between its operations and those we expect from newspapers.

Upon identifying the image as art, of course, a reader instantly understands that its source is not the newspaper, but rather an artist--the owner of the signature in the corner. And yet the montage's "voice" isn't singular, as one might expect a visual artist's to be. It sets out several interrelated roles--e.g. the Cabbagehead, his preferred newspapers, the warning voice of Folk Wisdom, the virtuous A.-I.-Z., the threat of danger, the terms of a dynamic conflict. In place of the newspaper's representation of current events as occurring within a steady flow of time, "The Cabbagehead" constructs a moment of dramatic interaction, a command performance for the benefit--the political enlightenment--of this particular reader.

"The Cabbagehead," in short, is a reader of newspapers whose sense perception is dulled, who is absorbed in his own private life, who is a loyal subject of the German nation. This Cabbagehead, the fictional subject, is the enemy, the opposite of the viewer of the photomontages, who is able to see and hear. With a few significant exceptions to be discussed below, the terms of this opposition between the viewer and the depicted events remain in place throughout the series: with each new montage, Heartfield reconfirms a perception

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unavailable to newspaper-reading Cabbageheads, but shared among comrades, namely the audience and the producer himself.

Projecting Heartfield

Others who have undertaken comprehensive analyses of the A.-I.-Z. photomontages[18] have stressed the series's oppositional relationship to the language and imagery of the contemporary media, particularly of Weimar's innovative illustrated newspapers. Such contentions are invariably supported with one or more convincing examples of how Heartfield's work "deconstructs," or takes apart the meshed concepts that made up some specific fascist message. But if the photomontages can be more broadly grasped in terms of a technical, as well as thematic opposition to newspapers as a whole, then the "enemy" can not be confined to fascist or Social Democratic newspapers; at some level it necessarily involved opposition to the A.-I.-Z. itself, a point which has not so far been raised in the literature. In fact it is precisely in an analysis concerned with delineating the producer of the photomontages that the issue first arises. For "Heartfield," the producer or producing structure, is not identical to an

[18] The most detailed analyses of the photomontages are: Evans, "Introduction," John Heartfield: AIZ/VI, 12-20; Jürgens-Kirchhoff, Technik und Tendenz, and Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield, 240-251.

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abstract "anti-fascist" or "anti-capitalist" conviction; he is rather the ordering force behind a comprehesive set of actions. Some of these were explicitly anti-fascist; all of them operated against the conventions of print journalism.

"The Cabbagehead" finally projects its maker as embodying a subtle but significant contradiction: on the one hand, the montage dutifully reproduces the Comintern's message--"the SPD is our primary enemy," and does this by the newspaper's own conventional means--texts and images. At the same time, however, it effectively forces the reader to suspend the conventional operations of reading and engage in a dramatic moment, a situation engaging the senses of touch and hearing. For this one moment, he or she figuratively steps beyond the range of the newspaper's authority, enters into a "reality" of Heartfield's own making. As the producer of "The Cabbagehead," then, Heartfield appears simultaneously as a loyal Communist and as a law unto himself, operating quite independently of the formal constraints of even the very newspaper that published his work.

This tension was the basis for Heartfield's ongoing collaboration with the A.-I.-Z.: from Münzenberg's and the Comintern's standpoint, the photomontages were projecting the image of a cultivated, witty, sensitive and enlightened Stalinist. For Helmut, the arrangement represented an

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opportunity to vastly extend his intimate "family," to draw new collaborators as well as an audience of hundreds of thousands into its relational structure. The tension between the two can be observed in all of the photomontages. Yet some examples seem to achieve a more effective balance than others. Specifically, although most of the photomontages--notably "The Cabbagehead"--project their maker as a clever, irreverent, inventive, and critical person, others come closer to projecting him as a skilled follower of directions--to put the worst possible face on it, a functionary.

The montage that opened the new year, 1931, for example, has none of "The Cabbagehead's" irreverent wit. "A New Year!" (fig. 28),[19] shows a dramatic image of a blacksmith's hands bringing his hammer down on a piece of molten iron. Against the image, the following lines appear in handwriting:

> The new year's here!
> One more like every other year?
> No!
> It can't be so!
> That from our misery
> The new world comes to be:
> Strike heartily! [Get going!])[20]

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[19] "Ein Neues Jahr," A.-I.-Z. 9, number 52 1930, 1023.

[20] Ein neues Jahr
Ein Jahr wie jedes andre war?
Nein!!
Das darf nicht sein!
Damit aus Not und Qual
die neue Welt ensteht
Schlag zu, Prolet!

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"A New Year" does retain a distance from standard newspaper practice. A blacksmith at his anvil is, for one thing, not news. By 1931, the technology was already long obsolete. The represented action is, in any case, simply the normative practice of that craft--not news. The poetry, presented in such a way as to suggest its being spoken, constructs another difference from standard journalistic practice. Still, the blacksmith--unlike the Cabbagehead--is not the object of our contempt or anger; he is rather "one of us." The montage functions substantially as promotion.

"Ein neues Jahr" is the first of a sizable body of such "transparent," or "promotional" montages.[21] The line between these and the far more numerous "critical" ones is in some cases difficult to draw, but they may be roughly estimated at 15% of the entire series, or about 30 works. All appear to have been produced for specific, Party-designated purposes, usually a special issue of the

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[21] Rather than telling us something "new" in this body of work, Heartfield typically frames, excises one particular fragment from an undifferented "flow" of events, making that fragment stand for a more complex set of relationships or ongoing processes: in "Ein neues Jahr," the blacksmith becomes a visible--and imaginatively audible--emblem of the strength, skill, tenacity of the proletariat. Hardly a standard journalistic technique, this is rather recognizable as the stock-in-trade of a filmmaker. In fact many of Heartfield's "promotional" photomontages do ressemble stills from a silent--subtitled--movie, their overlaid texts functioning much like "voiceover" against a predominantly visual field.

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A.-I.-Z.[22] More significantly, all address some aspect of the need for unity among various factions, either within the Party itself, or between Communists and other groups with parallel interests. Other examples include "Fight as One," (fig. 29)[23] and "Look to Spain and France!" (fig. 30)[24] This correspondence between the theme of unity and the seeming weakness or lack of character in these montages is not coincidence. Rather the "promotional" montages, in failing to ground an opposition between audience and the depicted, fictional events, also largely fail to "produce" Heartfield. His presence is most faint, that is, in those works which lack a clear dramatic tension, an palpable opposition between "us" and "them."[25]

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[22] In the introductory essay to his catalogue raisonne of the photomontages, Evans provided a number of examples of how specific montages were integrated into the larger framework of special issues. (John Heartfield:AIZ/VI).

[23] "Vereint kämpfen," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 8, 19 February 1933, 169. Because it contains two interacting subjects, is meets the requirements for a standard shot-reverse-shot sequence in film: we are seeing one man's face; we want, and by now expect to "switch cameras," and see the other.

[24] "Seht nach Spanien und Frankreich!" A.-I.-Z. 15 number 20, 13 May 1936, 320.

[25] In her book on montage, Technik und Tendenz der Montage in der Bildenden Kunst des 20.Jahrhunderts, Gissen: Anabas-Verlag, 1984 (1st ed., 1974), 132, Annagret Jürgens-Kirchhoff raises the issue of the weakness in some of Heartfield's A.-I.-Z. montages. She notes that Heartfield "employment" by the Comintern is often held responsible. She rather locates the problem in the inherent weakness of the political orientation from which these commissions issued. This does not precisely contradict the explanation offered here, namely that Heartfield needed an overtly polemical situation

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The promotional montages mark an important division in Heartfield's practice, then, one that can further serve as the foundation of an esthetic ordering. Briefly, when the commission was for a statement of internal unity, Heartfield had difficulty establishing the characteristic difference--the opposition--between the audience and the fiction that was his hallmark. But when the Party's needs involved a statement of opposition between Communists and others, as was most often the case, Heartfield was able to cooperate fully, to project himself as wise and witty, as well as politically loyal. It was the oppositional character rather than the specific political content of any given message, that is, that determined its adequacy to producing Heartfield. For it was a gesture of opposition that lay at the core of Heartfield's artistic practice. This gesture was, further, articulated in terms of a straining, undermining, redirecting of the communicative means of print itself.

Heartfield's first assigned enemy at the A.-I.-Z. was, as mentioned above, the SPD. "On the SPD's Crisis Meeting,"

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in order to exercize his most distinctive skills. It does, however, locate the source of the weakness in the Comintern or the A.-I.-Z., rather than in Heartfield himself.

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(fig. 31)[26] among the best-known[27] of the photomontages, transmits the message through a direct quotation from one of the Party's delegates, the trade unionist Fritz Tarnow (1880-1951). As in "The Cabbagehead," that is, the message is "staged" as a direct encounter, a text spoken over an image. Referring to capitalism, Tarnow had said, "Of course we'll break the tiger's [capitalism's--N.R.] teeth away, but first we have to nurse him back to health and fatten him up." ("Selbstverständlich werden wir dem Tiger die Zähne ausbrechen, aber zunächst einmal müssen wir ihn gesundpflegen und herausfüttern."). Read as the text of a news report, the sentence might well be passed over as no more than an awkward figure of speech; in pressing the linguistic metaphor into visibility, however, Heartfield projected his own capacity to "see" more deeply into the speech than the ordinary reader--or writer--of newspapers, to actually "hear" the speech, to actually visualize a "capitalist tiger," and to notice that the beast is actually quite capable of finding its own food, namely us.

As in "The Cabbagehead," then, Heartfield appears here as the one who, by constantly challenging the conventional

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[26] "Zum Krisen-Parteitag der SPD," A.-I.-Z. 10 (1931) number 24, 477.

[27] The most detailed analysis is given in Douglas Kahn, Heartfield and Mass Media, New York: Tanam, 1985.

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limitations of print, constantly challenges the "reality" that print claims to represent. For rather than conforming to a reader's expectation of wholly visual stimulus, Heartfield's montages almost always simulate--as in "On the SPD's Crisis Meeting,"--a speaking voice[28]; rather than simply reading through the Tarnow quotation, accepting the metaphor of a "capitalist tiger," as an ordinary reader would, Heartfield and his audience fix on the single phrase, excising it from its context, expanding it into a full dramatic situation, interrupting the smooth flow of a written text. And it is steadily through such disruptions of the ordinary operations in print that Heartfield at once states his politically oppositional message and projects his own distinctive character.

In addition to speaking voices, the photomontages feature singing, broadcast voices, and other "sound effects". In perhaps the noisiest montage of the entire series, "Dr. Goebbels, the Faith Healer," (fig. 32)[29] for example, the Reich's propaganda minister is addressing his audience over a loudspeaker. In this montage, Heartfield

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[28] Heartfield's projection of a speaking "voice" in the photomontages was noted by Siepmann, specifically with respect to the well-known montage, "Der Sinn des Hitlergrußes," (Montage: John Heartfield, 247.

[29] "Dr. Goebbels, der Gesundbeter," A.-I.-Z. 13, number 20, 17 May 1934, 320.

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was casting Goebbels as a latter day incarnation of a French pharmacist and therapist Emile Coué (1857-1926). Coué's program of repeating statements, such as "I feel good," in order to bring the desired condition about, Heartfield suggests, rested on the same premises as did Goebbels' campaign of over 2000 public propaganda meetings, designed to discourage or more exactly "drown out" the voices of political and social discontent, over a two month period in 1934. Another example, "If this be madness, yet there is method in it," (fig. 33)[30] uses a direct citation of the line from Shakespeare's Hamlet. Goebbels is shown as an embodied megaphone, which mechanically broadcasts disinformation about the existence of Soviet airfields in Czechoslovakia, a Nazi invention designed to justify an increasing military presence there.

The perception required by the photomontages may be very generally categorized, perhaps, as vision integrated with hearing. In the thematic content of the works, however, even taste enters into the picture. The most celebrated example may be "Hooray, the butter's gone," (fig. 34)[31] in which a petit-bourgeois family, having heard a recent

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[30] "Ist es auch Wahnsinn, hat es doch Methode," VI 1937, number 5, 3 February, 77.

[31] "Hurrah, die Butter ist alle," A.-I.-Z. 14 number 51, December 19, 1935, 816.

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speech of Göring's comparing the glories of iron to the dangers of butter, exhibit their sensual dysfunction by trying to consume chains, an axe, a set of handlebars for dinner. In a particularly insightful analysis of this montage, Annagret Jürgens-Kirchhoff has pointed out that the people represented here constituted an important aspect of Heartfield's "target" audience, a group that he very rarely criticized as he did here, but more usually tried to engage on "his" side of an given opposition.[32] In casting their shortcomings as the outcome of sensual dysfunction, rather than any inherent biological or class failing, however, the montage does open the possibility of change. Here, as elsewhere, that is, the designation of "comrade" or "Cabbagehead" is not fixed or absolute; it rather corresponds to the kind of reader/viewer a given individual may be, to his or her mode of perception, which is regularly figured, as it is here, in terms of esthetic judgement.

Against the background of Hitler's expanding power in the early 1930s, Münzenberg's operations--whether with the explicit approval of the Comintern or not--turned its attention from the failings of the SPD long enough to establish its opposition to National Socialism. Intially the plan was to show Hitler as the dupe of financial

[32] Jürgens-Kirchhoff, Technik und Tendenz, 150.

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interests, specifically by the steel and armaments industries. Heartfield's work, particularly around the time of Hitler's coming to power in the spring of 1933, is frequently addressed to this theme. In sometimes shifting his focus from the SPD to this different enemy, Heartfield neither softened his stance nor changed his tactics. In terms of his suitability as Heartfield's opponent, however, Hitler, with his "signature" gestures, his bombastic speech, his constant presence in the news, arguably surpassed the SPD--he was, in a sense, already a dramatized media "character." His inflated rhetoric and harsh oppositions in any case furnished the photomonteur with abundant material on which to demonstrate his unique capacities.

"Adolf, the Superman, swallows gold and talks trash" (fig. 35)[33], for example, is among those montages that are most often employed as exemplary of Heartfield's technique generally: it uses an actual news photograph of Hitler's face[34]; it plays on the two meanings of the German word "Blech"--"tin" and "trash"; it situates the figure in empty space--implying that we meet this figure

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[33] "Adolf, der Übermensch: Schluckt Gold and redet Blech," A.-I.-Z. 11, number 29, 17 July 1932, 675.

[34] The news photograph that was Heartfield's source for Hitler's face is reproduced in Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield, 268.

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out of context, under wholly abstract conditions. But further, this is one of the montages in which Heartfield made one of his appearances as "author," a device to be discussed more fully below. Departing from his usual modest "Montage: John Heartfield," the credit for this montage reads "X-ray by John Heartfield" ("Röntgenaufnahme von John Heartfield,"), confirming and expanding the photomonteur's identity as the possessor of a miraculously heightened perception.

Pertinent here is Jürgens-Kirchhoff's valuable general observation about Heartfield's treatment of fascists, namely that his montages intervened specifically against the "overkill" (Übermacht) of "mass events and star appearances" ("Massenszenen und Starauftritten") in fascist media representation itself.[35] For in some respects Heartfield may be said to be projecting himself as a "counterfigure" to the fascist media "stars": unlike the fascists, who keep their tricks of media manipulation to themselves, Heartfield is willing to allow his audience to know, to share the techniques that "create" him.

In August of the same year, Heartfield published "I will

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[35] Jürgens-Kirchhoff, Technik und Tendenz, 137.

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lead you to splendid bankruptcies!" (fig. 36)[36]. Casting Hitler as Kaiser Wilhelm, it demonstrates yet another of the photomonteur's extraordinary capacities, also discussed more fully below: with Heartfield's guidance, we come to see and hear specific fragments of the past as significant in the present. Just a few months later, in October, the now well-known "The Meaning of the Hitler Salute: Small Man asks for Big Gifts," (fig. 37)[37] again took up the theme of Hitler's dependence on business interests. In this thoroughly calculated mise-en-scène, Hitler's "voice" is heard over the visual perception of his "salute,"[38] reciting a motto, "Millions stand behind me!" ("Millionen stehen hinter mir!"). These words confirm the sheaf of 1000-Mark notes being placed in his upturned hand by an anonymous donor whose portly, besuited, oversized form nevertheless identifies him as the "body" of big business.

Jürgens-Kirchhoff has pointed out how the montage, by

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[36] "Ich führe Euch herrlichen Pleiten entgegen!" A.-I.-Z. 11 number 34, 21 August 1932, 795. The title plays on a phrase of Kaiser Wilhelm's, "Ich führe Euch herrlichen Zeiten (times) entgegen."

[37] "Der Sinn des Hitlergrusses: Kleiner Mann bittet um große Gaben" A.-I.-Z. 11 number42, 16 October 1932, 985.

[38] In his perceptive analysis of this montage, Siepmann identified the "voice" which speaks the title, "Small Man asks for Big Gifts," as Heartfield's own.

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framing the ambiguity, the possibility of more than one meaning in the Hitler-salute, moves specifically against the operation of fascist rhetoric itself, which insists on just one meaning.[39] She has emphasized, too, how the representation of capitalism as a huge, anonymous "body" renders Hitler's figure small, even fragile by comparison. Inasmuch as the montage projects an image of its own "author," or producer, further, it draws a sharp contrast between the rigid, self-absorbed Hitler, and the perceptive, flexible Heartfield. A parallel contrast can be drawn from "Tool in the Hand of God? Toy in the Hand of Thyssen!" (fig. 38),[40] which similarly shows Hitler controlled by large business interests. For Heartfield is projected here as someone free to publish his unique insights into political and economic relationships in contrast to Hitler, who can move only if and when the steel magnate Fritz Thyssen "pulls his strings."

As the A.-I.-Z. series progressed, Heartfield's character developed a momentum of its own, generating new messages which seem not to have been commissioned directly by the Party. The meaning of the Hitler-salute, in particular, continued to occupy the photomonteur even in the apparent

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[39] Jürgens-Kirchhoff, Technik und Tendenz, 142.

[40] "Werkzeug in Gottes Hand? Spielzeug in Thyssens Hand," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 31, 10 August 1933, 529.

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absence of direct Party commissions. In "The Gallows Greeting," (fig. 39)[41] for example, a pudgy, effeminate Göring echoes, with his arm, the horizontal bar of a gallows. In "30 June 1934: Heil Hitler!" (fig. 40),[42] a montage marking the SA purge known as the "night of long knives," shows a bloody, uniformed corpse with its arm raised in greeting. In "Diagnosis" (fig. 41)[43], Heartfield employed his x-ray vision--introduced earlier in "Adolph der Übermensch"--to the Hitler salute. The main image presents two trustworthy- and knowledgeable-looking physicians discussing an x-ray picture of a patient's spine. The patient himself, shown from the back, has his hand raised in a Hitler salute; the screen, a stark rectangle of technically enhanced vision, shows a crippling and disfiguring lateral curve in the spinal column.[44] The lower caption allows us to hear a conversation between the two doctors:

> [question:] "How did this man come to contract scoliosis (curvature of the spine)?" [answer:] "It is the body's natural response to constantly giving

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[41] "Der Galgengruss," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 38, 28 September 1933, 643.

[42] "Heil Hitler," A.-I.-Z. 13 number 29, 19 July 1934, 464.

[43] "Diagnose," A.-I.-Z. 14 number 12, 21 March 1935, 192.

[44] The x-ray technology makes it possible to "translate" the patient's experience of pain into a visual field, and so to make it "real," or adequately known. This knowledge is available only to the doctors, and to us, however; the patient himself at this point can not see, but only feel it.

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the 'Heil-Hitler' salute."[45]

Not only does the photomonteur have x-ray vision, he can also hear the spoken interaction of the doctors, an essential factor in the overall meaning of the montage.

The Substance of Words

The perception Heartfield shares with his readers, an integrated, heightened perception recognizable by its difference from the narrowly "readerly" sort employed by Cabbageheads, was often demonstrated through a visualization--in a sense, materialization--of a single word or phrase. The device actually reverses the newspaper's conventional priorities: rather than keeping the photographs and texts separate in order to expedite reading, Heartfield used the photograph to stop the smooth, swift "flow" of words past the reader's eye, to dam up the reader's attention around a single word. Excising that word from a rule-governed, "naturalized" placement within a chain of meanings--a sentence--which normally requires that just one meaning be selected, the montage requires the reader to attend to what might be called the "depth" or "shape" or distinctive character of a word, the variety and yet often the telling convergence of its meanings.

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[45] "Wodurch zog sich der Mann denn die Rückgratsverkrümmung zu?" [answer:] "Das sind die organischen Folgen des ewigen 'Heil Hitler!'"

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Heartfield made use of this device often, although with varying degrees of success. A relatively weak, early example, "Macdonald--Socialism," (fig. 42))[46] shows the British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, representing the Labour Party, genially doffing his hat in greeting to us. Before him, a mass of airplanes, bombs, gasmasked soldiers and a line of tanks marked with a sign, "To India," appear to be headed out of the picture frme and about to overrun us. "I really cannot remain inactive," he says, "while capitalism is being threatened with the loss of another sixth of the world." Quoted from one of Macdonald's own speeches, this was intended to justify Britain's military response to India's bid for independence (Gandhi led the well-known civil disobedience campaign in 1930). Macdonald's actual colonialist sentiments and capitalist interests, that is, are shown at odds with the "socialist" position he supposedly represents as a Labour Party minister.

In this montage, in any case, the photographic field works almost entirely as illustration, confined in all its details by the limitations of the text. The same procedure might, in principle, be duplicated for any word at all. Those photomontages that really cross the boundaries of linguistic convention, on the other hand, allow the photograph to

[46] "Macdonald--Sozialismus," A.-I.-Z. 9 (1930) number 28, 543.

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function independently enough to concretize the specific linguistic irony or deception at hand. "The nation closes ranks/is locked up behind me," (fig. 43),[47] for example, draws on a montaged representation of Hitler laboriously dragging a nation in chains behind him. A subscript, in the contrasting "voice" of Hitler himself, reads: "I recognize no more parties, only prisoners!" ("Ich kenne keine Parteien mehr, ich kenne nur noch Gefangene!"). This text tropes a phrase of Kaiser Wilhelm's, spoken on the outbreak of W.W. I, which had grown familiar, not to say infamous in Germany by 1930: "I no longer recognize parties, only Germans" ("Ich kenne keine Parteien mehr, ich kenne nur noch Deutschen."). The phrase had come, for Communists in particular, to signify the Reich's intention at that moment to abandon all pretense of representational democracy, and resort to a raw exercise of force. In Heartfield's revision of the Kaiser's text, here resituated as Hitler's speech, the word "Deutschen," ("Germans") is replaced by "Gefangene," ("Prisoners"). Using the photograph, that is, Heartfield is able to stage the identity of the two meanings of "geschlossen" ("joined together" and "locked up") as the identity of Kaiser Wilhelm with Hitler, of the Wilhelmine Reich with the Weimar Republic, and of Germans with prisoners, all in a single illuminating moment.

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[47] "Die Nation steht geschlossen hinter mir" A.-I.-Z. 12 number 27, 13 July 1937, 467.

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"German Natural History," (fig. 44.)[48] of 1934 is among the richest examples of this, Heartfield's characteristic way of lending a word a depth, a nearly physical substance. The image identifies the relationship among three German leaders since the beginning of the Weimar Republic--Ebert (the republic's first chancellor), Hindenburg (its last president), and Hitler (the instrument of its demise)--as stages in the development of a single organism. Photographic portrait heads of the three leaders, appropriately scaled, are montaged to the photographs of caterpillar, pupa and butterfly, respectively, of a Death's Head moth, and set against another picture of a dead oak twig. The montage represents about fifteen years of historical time, the entire Weimar period. Yet it denies real change, recognizing instead a kind of intensification of a single characteristic. Ebert is already a caterpillar at the point the montage's fictional time begins. He--or it, for the organism in question is neither a man nor a moth, but a monstrous hybrid of the two--does not really change; rather it reveals more of what it is and always

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[48] "Deutsche Naturgeschichte," A.-I.-Z. 13, August 16, 1934, 536. Subscript: "Metamorphose. 'Metamorphose', (griechisch - Gestalt) bedeutet: 1. In der Mythologie: die Verwandlung von Menschen in Bäume, Tiere, Steine u.s. w. 2. In der Zoologie: die Entwicklung mancher Tiere über Larvenformen und Puppen, beispielsweise Raupe, Puppe, Schmetterling. 3. In der Geschichte der weimarer Republik: die geradlinige Folge EBERT - HINDENBURG - HITLER." ("Metamorphosis. (greek -form) means: 1. In mythology: the transformation of human beings into trees, animals, stones, etc. 2. In zoology: the development of some animals through larvae and chrysalis, for example caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly. 3. In the history of the Weimar Republic: the straight succession of EBERT-- HINDENBURG--HITLER.

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was, which is not precisely named, but which is emphatically German, and which achieves its developmental destiny in the form of the Hitler-butterfly.[49]

Even in the title, "German Natural History" Heartfield had begun to undermine the categorical difference between "nature" and "history," by suggesting that German nature was different from other kinds of nature.[50] The subtitle, "Metamorphosis,"

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[49] In her book about Walter Benjamin's Passagenwerk [The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project, Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1989, 62.] Susan Buck-Morss uses Heartfield's "Metamorphosis" to elucidate Benjamin's idea of natural history, supporting what might at first seem a somewhat arbitrary connection by citing Benjamin's own use of Heartfield's metaphor--the Death's Head moth--in his correspondence: "The revolutionary spirit of the German bourgeoisie has been transforming itself into the chrysalis from which the Death's Head Moth of National Socialism later crawled."-- Benjamin, letter to Kitty Steinschneider, reprinted in Gershom Scholem, Walter Benjamin: the Story of a Friendship, Karen Ready and Gary Smith, eds., London: Faber and Faber, Ltds., 1982, 64.].

In Benjamin's construction, then, the subject of Heartfield's photomontage, the organism undergoing the metamorphosis, would be "the revolutionary spirit of the German bourgeoisie"--the true identity of the awkward, ungainly bug-man turns out to be a "spirit."

As Buck-Morss points out, the letter was written within a year of Benjamin's having seen the exhibition of Heartfield's work at the Maison de la Culture in Paris (1935). The two men did meet at the time, as confirmed in Benjamin's correspondence: "Seldom is there among my new acquaintances one as delightful as John Heartfield [whom I met] not long ago, with whom I had a really excellent converstion about photography." [Buck-Morss, Dialectics of Seeing, 394, n.9.].

[50] The concept of German history as constituting a "Sonderweg," or unique path is among those most strenuously contested by Detlev J.K. Peukert in The Weimar Republic: the Crisis of Classical Modernity. Translated by Richard Deveson. London: Penguin, 1993 [First published as Die Weimarer Republik, Frankfurt a/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1987.]

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expands this idea, again treating the word as a concrete fact, whose multiple meanings are tangible and directly relevant to the sitation at hand. Heartfield offered three definitions of "metamorphosis," drawn from mythology, zoology and the Weimar Republic, respectively. Both the first, mythological meaning--the transformation of humans into plants, animals, stones, etc. and the second meaning--the progressive passage of an organism through several distinctly different physical forms in course of its development, play in different ways against the third, namely the succession of Ebert, Hindenburg and Hitler as heads of the German state. The first tends, at one level, to demean these leaders to the status of insects; but perhaps more importantly, it identifies them, attributes their power, their historical position to the operation of myth. Myth, that is, takes its place in the larger scheme beside alchemy and faith-healing as a mode of mystification and so of political control.

The second definition of "metamorphosis" in this photomontage addresses the issue of steady, "progressive" historical change--only to rather sweepingly deny the possibility: like the caterpillar, the Republic does change external appearance; but this is not progress, for it remains the same organism. By imposing a model of change embodied in zoological "metamorphosis" on events of political history, that is, Heartfield loosens each construct--political and organic--from

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its "natural" or original intellectual environment, allowing each to be read through the other: we "read" the leadership of the Weimar Republic, that is, through an understanding of a change--the metamorphosis of butterflies--that does not represent an historical advance; conversely, we read the butterfly's life as history. In staging the whole event under the sign of myth--the first meaning given for "metamorphosis"--Heartfield again recognizes us, his viewers, as capable of seeing through mythical construction. For it is precisely this capacity to penetrate myth, to loosen an image from its "natural"--read, mythical--intellectual continuum, that makes it possible to see the Ebert's identity as a caterpillar in the first place.

Such manipulations of verbal categories against one another and again against images is consistent in the photomontages, and has been casually attributed to a kind of cleverness, an unusual verbal facility. But there is evidence--particularly in the difference outlined above between more and less successful plays between word and photograph, that Heartfield's distinctive treatment of words rather stems from a deeply-held conviction about language. For however complex the relationships established in the photomontages between words and things may become, they are never arbitrary. The act of disguising or twisting linguistic meaning, in fact, is repeatedly identified as the act of criminals. Heartfield

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treated words, that is, as names--durable, historically specific fragments. To put it another way, the photomontages treat words and things in the same way: the manner in which a word's true meaning is laid bare does not differ, that is, and often is not even separate from the revelation of meanings for other kinds of tangible signs. Emblematic articles of clothing (particularly hats or helmets), coins, buildings (the parliament, prisons, churches, courtrooms, etc.), and physical gestures are all effectively "legible" in the same way. It becomes possible, that is, to literally read the world. And it was in the play between a physical record of a tangible thing--a photograph--and a word that this distinctive understanding of language became most explicit.

As with many other formal and functional aspects of the photomontages, the significance of this use of language is most readily grasped in terms of its difference from the newspaper's own. In a 1983 study that located the newpaper's history within a history of nationalism,[51] Benedict Anderson identified two fundamentally different understandings of language, one characteristic of communities bound together primarily by religious belief, and the other characteristic of modern communities--nations. Medieval Christendom, the Umah Islam, even the so-called "Middle Kingdom" in China, he points

[51] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London: Verso, 1983.

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out,

> were imaginable largely through the medium of a sacred language and written script...All the great classical communities conceived of themselves as cosmically central, through the medium of a sacred language linked to a superterrestrial order of power. Accordingly, the stretch of written Latin, Pali, Arabic, or Chinese was, in theory, unlimited (In fact, the deader the written language--the farther it was from speech--the better: in principle everyone has access to a pure world of signs.)..the reality of such apparitions depended on an idea largely foreign to the contemporary Western mind: the non-arbitrariness of the sign. The ideograms of Chinese, Latin, or Arabic were emanations of reality, not randomly fabricated representations of it...In effect, ontological reality is apprehensible only through a single, privileged system of re-presentation: the truth-language of Church Latin, Qu'anic Arabic, or Examination Chinese. And as truth-languages, imbued with an impulse largely foreign to nationalism, the impulse towards conversion. By conversion, I mean not so much the acceptance of particular religious tenets, but alchemic absorption...The whole nature of man's being is sacrally malleable.[52]

Anderson goes on to identify the newspaper itself as the institution that registered, and that in large part effected the fragmentation and ultimate liquidation of such communities. It accomplished this, he proposes, by enacting and steadily reinforcing a different concept of language, which assumed and required a different kind of relationship among its speakers and readers. From the remnants of older, religiously-based communities, that is, newspapers participated in a shifting configuration of text, authority,

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[52] ibid, 20-22.

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individual and community within which the idea of a nation arose, an entity powerful enough to reshape the older basis for loyalty, discipline and self-sacrifice among whole populations. He identified the newspaper, that is, as the instrument that mediated between the binding figure of a truth-language, with its implication of religiously-based community, and the formation of modern national identity, with its conception of multiple, interchangeable languages and meanings.

By the time of the Weimar Republic, the link between the newspaper and a national perspective was taken for granted: political positions might vary widely; a newspaper, nevertheless--as opposed to a newsletter or journal--was identified with a particular, namable nationality. Even the Communist-oriented A.-I.-Z., although it constructed most nations negatively, as destructive, brutal, and inherently corrupt forms of human organization, nevertheless defined its own editorial purview in national terms, reporting those issues and events affecting the German working class--its primary readership, and ordering the importance of these issues according to how many such readers might be affected.

By the 1930s, too, the concept of an archaic truth-language was presumably utterly alien, at least at a conscious level, to most of Heartfield's audience. Some remnant of this

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function nevertheless persisted, as the contemporary literary critic Walter Benjamin observed, in the use of proper names.[53] Such words are distinguished from the rest of language, or rather from our modern understanding of language, by their abiding link to their referents: proper names are not "translatable" into other languages, not amenable to substitutions of any kind. They are attached, as if physically bound, to the historically specific person, place, event to which they refer. By welding specific words with specific photographic images, images which registered--perhaps more readily in the 1930s than today--as traces, imprints of actual people and things, Heartfield effectively reactivated this function of words as names, presented the relationship between selected words as and their referents as exactly not arbitrary, but rather a form of historical evidence.[54]

It is in any case against Heartfield's consistent grasp of

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[53] This is, further, the understanding of language Benjamin attributed to the contemporary Viennese writer and philosopher, Karl Kraus, whose journal, Die Fackel, had been known to the Herzfelds and their circle from at least the time of Berlin Dada. (Walter Benjamin, "Karl Kraus," Illuminationen, Frankfut a/Main: Suhrkamp, 1955.).

[54] Clearly this use of language resented no difficulties to popular understanding. Arguably the most satisfying insights that occur among Heartfield's stagings, in fact, are those in which this highly distinctive feature of his thought is most clearly in evidence. Nor was Heartfield quite alone in associating such an archaic understanding of language with revolutionary consciousness. Benjamin's project of "redemptive criticism," too, depended on a concept of language as a kind of tangible repository, from which fragments of a future community might be excised and reactivated.

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linguistic meaning as enduring, inviolable--in a sense, sacred--that the twisting of meanings he experienced in contemporary language, and above all the Nazis' wholesale engineering of a semantically destabilizing "newspeak," appeared not as simply error, but as deeply destructive transgression. Heartfield could therefore regularly stage the core antagonisms of the photomontages within a single word. Telling, too, are the specific words and idiomatic phrases in which he found such tension: "anschmieren" ("daub"/"besmear")[55]; "Arbeitsschlacht" ("labor battle"/"labor massacre")[56]; "Blut und Ehre" ("blood and honor")[57]; "frei" ("free")[58]; "Heil" ("healing"/"hail"--greeting/"salvation")[59]; "Platz an der Sonne" ("a place in the sun")[60]

Given a sense of words as tangible facts, embodiments of history, the very idea of a deliberately coining a word becomes an impudent absurdity, something like "inventing" a mountain, or gravity. "'Nationists'" without Nationals,"

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[55] A.-I.-Z. 12 number 19, May 18, 1933, 339 [Evans, 6/33].

[56] A.-I.-Z. 13, number 50 December 13, 1934, 816 [Evans, 51/34].

[57] A.-I.-Z. 14, number 44, October 31, 1935, 704 [Evans, 20/35].

[58] A.-I.-Z. 14 number 4, January 24, 1935 [Evans 4/35].

[59] VI 1936, number 26, June 29 [Evans, 8/38].

[60] A.-I.-Z. 14, number 41, October 10, 1935 [Evans, 18/35].

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(fig. 45)[61] pictures Franco's men recruiting a gorilla for the conquest of Madrid. The title sets the word "völkisch," a National Socialist neologism which attempted to merge the idea of "popular" with the idea of "national[ist]" against an established word for an established concept, namely "Volk" ("People"). The gorilla here serves as the near-human referent of the word "völkisch." But mainly because the particle "volk" also carries the sense of "humanity," the connection becomes ridiculous.

Arguably the most complex of the montages that rely primarily on such a concretization of language, "The Thousand-year Reich," (fig. 46)[62] condenses the judgements of dozens of other montages that deal with the relationships among the military, the Church, industrialists and the German government. Lacking a formal headline, its main photograph shows a "house of cards" exactly at the point of collapse. Over the image, the reader hears Hitler's "voice" saying:

> "The German way of life has been conclusively established for the next millenium" --"In the next thousand years no further revolution will occur in Germany."--Adolf Hitler at the Nürnberg party rally.[63]

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[61] "Völkische" ohne Volk," VI 1, number 2, August 26, 1936, 32.

[62] "Das tausendjährige Reich," A.-I.-Z. 13 number 38, 20 September 1934, 616.

[63] "Das deutsche Lebensform ist für das nächste Jahrtausend endgültig bestimmt. -- "In den nächsten tausend Jahren findet in Deutschland keine Revolution mehr statt." Adolph Hitler auf dem

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The montage incorporates skat cards (the game uses a deck of 32) that are both recognizably old and distinctively German. For by the early fifteenth century, cardmakers in German-speaking countries had adopted the distinctive suit designations--Hearts, Bells, Leaves and Acorns--shown in this deck, rather than the Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs and Spades that became the convention in English-speaking nations[64] In Germany as elsewhere, in any case, the suits are assumed to stand for the social estates: Hearts stand for the clergy, Bells for the aristocracy, Leaves for the merchant or middle classes, and Acorns for peasantry or working classes.[65] Further, cards produced since about 1830 are almost all bidirection design, to facilitate quick recognition; Heartfield's deck is unidirectional. In fact it closely ressembles one thought to date from the later eighteenth century (fig. 47).

The cards, then, refer to both a hierarchical social order and a historical moment, certainly before the emergence of the current standards for playing cards, but arguably even before the emergence of modern nation-states, to a time when the

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nürnberger Parteitag.

[64] Hoffmann, Detlef, the Playing Card: an Illustrated History, Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1973 [first published as Die Welt der Speilkarte, Editions Leipzig, 1972], 22.

[65] Roger Tilly, A History of Playing Cards, New York: Crown Publisher, Inc., 1973, 57.

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classical pantheon still ordered the prevailing sense of social functioning:

> Antiquity's mythological cosmology anthropomorphized the forces of (old) nature as gods in human form, signifying a continuity between natural, human, and divine realms. The pagan pantheon was destroyed by later history in the very material sense: The great sculpted figures of the gods, the pillars of their temples, survived physically only in fragments...Connected as they were with paganism generally, and the corporality and sexuality in particular, these ancient deities endured within the religiously charged atmosphere of the Baroque only in debased form.[...] They survived as demons, as astrological signs, as the faces of Tarot cards, and they were applied to a moral purpose as personifications of the passions.[...] Venus/Aphrodite, for example, once the natural symbol that raised human eros to the level of divine love, lived on as "Dame World," the profane, allegorical emblem of earthly passion.[66]

Such a reading of card images as the debased ruins of a once-vital and comprehensive system of meaning does illuminate certain aspects of "The Thousand-Year Reich" as the product of a distinctive kind of perception. Heartfield has here found his material among twice-discredited ruins, first, the recycled fragments of a already-lost pagan nature sytematized--in Tarot cards--to represent the functions of a worldly, Christian kingdom, and then drained of even this meaning, to create a system of sheer interrelated functions, devoid of reference, and employable for diverse entertainments, including games of chance. These are objects which have further been, throughout their history, associated with

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[66] Buck-Morss, Dialectics of Seeing, 1989, 165.

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something vaguely disreputable--mysterious divination, superstitious beliefs, or merely the squandering of time and resources in frivolous passtimes.[67]

This montage's missing headline, the word that belongs in that top, center space is no less apparent for its physical absence. For the delicately poised cards embody, in German as clearly as in English, the idea of the unstable and hence ephemeral, of intricacy without substance. In staging it as a photograph, Heartfield credited the absent word--"Kartenhaus" ("house of cards")--with physical substance. In the drama before us, then, the phrase "The Thousand-Year Reich" is poised on the brink of collapse into its true meaning, "house of cards."

Time and Meaning

In treating words as names, linked as if physically to their referents, Heartfield undermined another of the central principles through which printed language in general, and the newspaper in particular, ordinarily constructs time. For the reading of sentences, paragraphs, pages of text requires a reader to choose just one meaning for each word, and to link those meanings together in exactly one way, his or her eyes

[67] Hoffmann, The Playing Card, 12.

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moving smoothly and quickly along in a line that typically mimics a represented, linear "flow" of time. Heartfield's focus on the multiple meanings of one word or phrase coincided with a break in such a flow, allowing for his "staging" of encounters between figures, as outlined above. Sometimes, too, he developed this effect further by using archaic words or set phrases to collapse time, projecting the meaning of the present into the future, or lending a past moment new meaning in the present. Elements of language or visual symbols that tend to remain fixed in form over time, fragments of religious litany, stock phrases from fairy tales, for example, proved eminently suitable for this purpose.

In "Mirror, mirror, on the Wall," of 1933 (fig. 48),[68] Hitler is primping before a mirror. The voice in this setting recites, slightly altered, the phrase from the fairy tale Snow White--"Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the strongest of them all," ultimately announcing that the economic crisis in Germany is stronger than Hitler. Having absorbed its literary setting, both in English and German, this fixed phrase implies, usually to comic purpose, the authority of a voice detached in time. Against the idle and ephemeral vanity of Hitler's primping, the phrase registers the authority, the durability of the language Heartfield and his readers have in

[68] "Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand," A.-I.-Z. 12, number 33, August 1933, 561.

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common.

Heartfield incorporated emblems of Christian faith to similar purpose, incorporating them as signs for stability itself, in contrast to the ephemerality of contemporary political assaults on the faith. In "On the Founding of the State Church," (fig. 49)[69] of 1933, for example, Heartfield staged a photographic encounter between Christ himself, bearing the burden of the cross, and the Gestapo founder, Rudolf Diehls. The montage marks the occasion of Hitler's attempt to merge the Catholic and Evangelical (Protestant) Churches in Germany into one State Church. Four wooden pieces have been sturdily mounted on the ends of the cross, turning it into a swastika. In the montage, Diehls is shown tightening the last screw, as Christ looks meekly down, accepting His fate. The lower text "The cross wasn't heavy enough before" ("Das Kreuz war noch nicht schwer genug") relies on the reader's acceptance of Christ as an emblem of suffering humanity, for only against such acceptance does Hitler's decree read as the infliction of yet more suffering. This meaning appears to both preceed and supercede administrative action. Christ, His image carried in the singlarly unnewsworthy form of a painting,[70] is <u>outside</u> time; Diehls, on the other hand, is <u>in</u> time, his action is

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[69] "Zur Gründung der Staatskirche," <u>A.-I.-Z.</u> 12 number 23, June 15, 1933, 403.

[70] The photograph is of a very popular Thorwaldsen painting (Evans).

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news. "Timeless" painting and up-to-the-minute news, then, collide in a comical moment. Seen together, neither can maintain its dignity--neither the painting itself nor the suffering it depicts can remain timeless; the broad, temporal sweep they do recall, however, effectively diminishes, trivializes Diehls's action. The viewer, in any case, suddenly freed from the obligation to think "painting" in one context and "political discourse" in another, can abruptly grasp the meaning of the historical figure of Christ in a contemporary historical context.

By such means, Heartfield gained a kind of "random access" to history, or better, the possibility of organizing the past in terms of its meaning for the present, rather than according to a linear chronology. In any given montage, or from one montage to the next, that is, events are juxtaposed not in terms of simultaneity in time or by causal links--implying linear order--but by an identity of meaning. The viewer therefore searches in vain for recognizable "characters" who develop within a "story" unfolding in time. Rather he or she experiences an expanding structure of definitions, identities, names. Hitler appears with considerable frequency, but never as a fully articulated person with strengths and weaknesses, habits, preferences, eccentricities. Nor does he have a "story." His meaning may be associated variously with vanity, greed or brutality; he is always and above all a liar. A

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figure who conversely stands for "peace," such as the Communist Party leader Ernst Thälmann[71] is rendered in equally flat perspective; his entire possibility is exhausted by the single idea. The photomontages mark passing time, one might say, not in measurable units like minutes or days, but in terms of deepening insights into the true order of things. And not only specific people, but words--as, for example "Socialism," gestures--as in the Hitler salute, or events accumulate meaning in in this way.

The single event that figured over a longer period than any other in the photomontages was the fire that burned the Reichstag--the German parliament building--to the ground on February 27, 1933. Many assumed from the outset that the Nazis had deliberately started the fire in order to blame the Communists for it, and so to justify wholesale arrests and repression of Communist activities.[72] Münzenberg himself narrowly escaped arrest in the hours after the fire broke out, taking refuge in France. Within the Münzenberg organization, in any case, the fire began to serve as a reference point, a

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[71] "Wenn Hitler vom Frieden spricht, denkt daran" ("When Hitler speaks of peace, think about this...") A.-I.-Z. 15 number 16, April 12, 1936, 256 [Evans, 15/36]. Thälmann was in fact among the staunchest supporters of the Communists' disastrous policy of antagonism toward the SPD in the last years of the Weimar Republic (Fowkes, Communism in Germany, 145-171.).

[72] A detailed report of Münzenberg's and the Comintern's interest in the fire as a focus for Communist propaganda efforts is given in Stephen Koch, Double Lives, 45-74.

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textbook example of how the Nazis staged events and manipulated news coverage in order to expand their own power.

The Reichstag Fire figured in more than a dozen photomontages over several years. The first, "Through Light to Darkness," (fig. 50)[73] was published about ten days after the fire itelf. Overtly, it announced the Nazis' book-burning, scheduled to occur the evening the paper was published; in its reversal of the phrase, "through darkness to light," along with many other details, it states the Communists' belief that Göring and associates had started fire themselves. Heartfield was already using the Reichstag fire, that is--a past event--to amplify and contextualize the book-burning event in the present. Linking fire to fire, Reichstag to books, he establishes not change, but identity of character, intention, and behavior over time. Göring is marked, labelled, identified as the "Brandstifter," or arsonist; the fire means the criminal abuse of power.

Heartfield's next mention of the fire, in "Göring, the Butcher of the Third Reich," (fig. 51)[74] reports that four innocent

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[73] "Durch Licht zur Nacht," A.-I.-Z. 12, number 18, 10 May 1933, 321. This was the cover of a special issue on the trial. Evans gives the following list of subsequent photomontages that addressed the subject: 17/33; 25/33; 30/33; 31/33; 4/34; 8/35; 14/35; 28/36; 34/36 (Evans, John Heartfield, 1992, 154). Additional examples are 27/33, 23/33 and 26/33.

[74] "Göring, der Henker des dritten Reichs," A.-I.-Z. 12, number 36, 14 September 1933, 609.

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men are to be tried for the crime Göring in fact committed--again the burning building occupies the background. Goering appears as even more of "himself" than ever, a crude, bloodthirsty thug. The trial became the occasion for several more photomontages in the course of the year, including "The Judge/the Judged," (fig. 52)[75], in which Heartfield used a photograph of Göring taken from the rear.[76] The subject's feet and arms are planted in a pose suggesting stubbornness, but the image is reproduced on such a radically reduced scale as to imply the ultimate triviality of his effort. He shouts accusations at Dimitroff, one of the accused, who looms over the scene in a gesture of attentive forbearance, clearly a man of overwhelmingly superior stature (This is, further, one of the clearer demonstrations of Heartfield's skill in dramatic staging--lighting, scale, gesture--quite possibly acquired through his theater experience in the 1920s.).

The following month the A.-I.-Z. published yet another photomontage on the same subject, entitled "The World's

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[75] "Der Richter/Der Gerichtete," A.-I.-Z. 12, number 45, 16 November 1933, 755.

[76] Evans points out that the same photograph appeared on the cover of the same issue, except that Goering was shouting the terms of judgement at the defendants. When the reader, turing the page, encountered Heartfield's montage, then, the relative stature of Goering and his target had been neatly reversed. (Evans, John Heartfield, 15.)

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Judgement," (fig. 53)[77] The front-view photograph of Göring's face is reproduced nearly full-frame, but has been screened down to blur the features--especially the eyes, which look crossed or demented, and to blend with the paint strokes Heartfield added at the sides, signifying flames. The lower caption reads: "In his features stand written what the court did not say," ("In seinem Zügen steht geschrieben, was das Gericht verschwiegen hat,") the unsaid thing being, of course, Göring's guilt.[78]

The meaning Heartfield initially read and reported in the Reichstag fire, then--treachery in the highest echelons of government--does not change in the course of time. Rather it coalesces into a sort of shorthand, or logo for criminal betrayal of public trust. The narrative, in other words, is not one of deepening complexity, of a person or event acquiring richer, more diverse meanings, but rather precisely the opposite: Heartfield attaches his labels, marks his characters permanently. As Günther Anders put it, concluding a talk given at an exhibition of the photomontages in New York in 1938,

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[77] "Das Urteil der Welt," A.-I.-Z. 12, number 51, 28 December 1933, 851.

[78] This is, as Evans points out, another case in which Heartfield's montage was integrated into the design of the issue as a whole. The cover carried a photograph of people waiting outside the courtroom for a verdict; the montage, carried on the first inside page, then appeared to present a staged "verdict." (Evans, John Heartfield, 15.).

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> One must be able to mark, with scissors, glue and word. And one must be able to mark one's victims as God marked Cain, so that they stay marked for all time. Jonny Heartfield can do this...[79]

Two years after the fire, in "The Latest: the Reichstag Burns in Moscow!" (fig. 54),[80] Heartfield airbrushed a photograph of the burning Reichstag into another photograph, this time of the Kremlin. In the upper left of the montage is a quotation from Hermann Goebbels:

> "A political movement based on subordinating an entire country to madness, destroying all moral and political bonds, frighting people with fire and terror in order to take control in the general confusion, deserves to be destroyed."[81]

The montaged photograph, a peaceful Russian city except for the burning--German--building, plays to an audience that by now accepts the Nazis' burning of the Reichstag as established fact; it is therefore possible to use the burning building as

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[79] Günther Anders, "Moderne Hieroglyphen. Eine neue Kunst: Photomontage," lecture given on the occasion of a Heartfield exhibition at the ACA gallery, New York, in October and November, 1938. The exhibition, mounted at the instigation of George Grosz and Tom Heartfield, was sponsored by the Photo League. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit, 407. Man muß mit Schere, Leim und Wort zeichnen können. Und man muß sein Opfer so zeichnen können, wie Gott Kain zeichnete: daß sie ein für allemal Gezeichnete bleiben. Jonny Heartfield kann das...

[80] "Das Neuste: der Reichstag brennt in Moskau," A.-I.-Z. 14, number 37, 12 September 1935.

[81] "Eine politische Bewegung, die darauf ausgeht, ein ganzes Land dem Wahnsinn unterzuordnen, alle Bindungen moralischer und politischer Art zu zerstören, mit Brand und Terror die Menschen in Schrecken zu versetzen, um dann in der allgemeinen Verwirrung die Dinge an sich zu reißen, verdient die Vernichtung"

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an emblem of the Nazis' characteristic manner of governing. In the context of the montage, then, Goebbels's words no longer refer to Communists, as he intended (Goebbels was addressing to a Criminal Law Congress in Berlin), but serve to identify the speaker's own terrorist mode of "statemanship."

Still later, in August, 1936, Heartfield used the Reichstag fire once more, again to mark Göring as an arsonist. This time, in fact, it is Göring himself who is thinking back on the fire as he and his fellow general contemplate a map of Spain and North Africa. The caption of "The Troubles of Brown Generals," (fig. 55)[82] of 1936 reads: "Damn, it doesn't seem to be working quite right -- and we planned this little fire just as well as we did the Reichstag fire, too."[83] On July 18, 1936, General Franco had staged a revolt of army commanders against the Republican government in Spanish Morocco, justifying the action as necessary to prevent a Communist takeover of Spain. Heartfield draws the parallel with the staging of the Reichstag fire three years earlier, and further implies that Franco is learning such criminal "tricks" from the Nazis. Heartfield clearly means, among other things, to make sure that Göring, whom he "marked" as an arsonist in 1933, stays so marked for all time.

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[82] "Sorgen brauner Generale," A.-I -Z. 15, number 33, 12 August 1936, 528.

[83] "Verdammt, es scheint schief zu gehen--dabei haben wir das Feuerchen doch ebenso gut vorbereitet wie beim Reichstagsbrand"

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Such acts of marking or naming, the judgement of objects and practices in connection with either "Cabbageheads" or "comrades," play a substantial part in effecting the underlying, unifying oppositional gesture of Heartfield's project. Not only is each individual photomontage staged as a specific moment of revelation, the sudden appearance of person, speech, or word in its true meaning, but these separate "episodes," or units of dramatic recognition are linked to one another on the basis of identities as well. Within the fictional construct of the photomontages, in any case, time ceases to flow; instead, past and future are welded into a single moment, an all-encompassing meaning that is always to be grasped now.

The Heroic Heartfield

To his audience, then, Heartfield of the photomontages appeared as his own kind of Communist; he was above all the possessor of a heightened, integrated perception, a capacity to see through conventional appearances, to hear what is ordinarily only seen, to see what is usually only heard, to leap back and forth in time, to penetrate through institutionalized patterns of thought, habits of writing and speech. In most cases Heartfield simply showed his audience what he saw and heard, without comment. But occasionally, as noted above with regard to "Adolph, the Superman," he made

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"personal appearances".

The first of these was in the Christmas photomontage for 1930, "Hooray, Hooray! the Brüning-Santa's here Today!" (fig. 56).[84] It presented a tree festively ornamented with emblems of greed, self-interest, hatred, callousness, brutality and tastlessness, this last exemplified specifically in swastikaed Christmas-tree bulbs. In a text printed just below the montage's own picture field, Heartfield tells his audience that

> The Hitler Christmas tree ornaments are no malicious invention. The Nazis actually trade in such things.[85]

Such short comments, in which the photomonteur addresses his readers directly, overtly set him apart from the newspaper staff, as though he were engaged in a parallel, yet not the same project. These comments confirm, that is, Heartfield's identity as a kind of alternative producer of "news." As in this instance, too, they always bolster the comraderie between artist and viewer, emphasizing their mutual antipathy to the depicted events.

Heartfield's most extended such appearance occurred in "Great

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[84] "Hurra, Hurra! Der Brüning-Weinachtsmann ist da!" A.-I.-Z. 9 number 51, 1930, 1003.

[85] Der Hitler-Christbaumschmuck ist keine böswillige Erfindung. Die Nationalsozialisten handeln tatsächlich damit.

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Show of Monster Lies," (fig. 57) of 1936.[86] Here, six years after "The Cabbagehead," he returned to the theme of newspapers and their readers. The montage represents a carnival event, an international competition between newspapers to determine which has misrepresented recent events in Spain most horribly--in other words, which has told the biggest lie. The photograph shows a barker beckoning the audience into the tent festooned with examples of particularly remarkable lies told recently by some of the contestants, which include the Daily Mail, the Völkischer Beobachter, Angriff Bohemia, Die Zeit, Figaro, and Action Française. The levels of reportage, figuration, viewer address, and levels of insight in this montage remain much the same as for "The Cabbagehead": Heartfield's own presence, however is far more palpable, for in tiny print, at the very lowest line available, he dedicates the work, in mock "humble admiration," to "a certain great press, after having read its reports from Spain."[87] The implication is that Heartfield systematically reads and judges the news published in this daunting

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[86] "Grosses Monstre-Lügenkabinett," VI 1 number 5, 16 September 1936, 80.

[87] The German text appears in the photomontage itself: "Hereinspaziert, meine Herrschaften! Hier sehen Sie spanien mit den augen des unparteiischen Beobachters. Die letzten Sensationen! Nervenaufpeitschendende Aufklärung! Hier können Sie das Gruseln lernen! Alles für nur einen Groschen" ("Walk right in, Ladies and Gentlemen! Here you see Spain through the eyes of an impartial observer. The latest sensations! Shocking revelations! Here you can really get the shivers! And all for only a penny.--Dedicated by John Heartfield to a certain "great press" after reading its reports from Spain, in humble admiration.).

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international assortment of papers, in four languages, representing a mix of right-wing and center political positions. Of course Heartfield's "reading" is also hearing and remembering and comparing, a reframing of the news, one might say, in such a way as to avoid its crippling effects, to turn it instead into an object of shared derision.

It seems unlikely that Helmut Herzfeld, acting alone, could have read and absorbed reports in a dozen major newspapers in four different languages. More probably, his information was processed through many members of the newspaper's staff. In tacitly attributing such capacities to one man, in any case, the A.-I.-Z. editorial staff assisted in constructing the vigilant and tireless Heartfield, an artist of literally superhuman capacities, able to read vast quantities of news through the text of utopian Communism, and so to reliably distinguish lies from truth. This construction of the artist is not new with this montage; it was introduced with the opening gesture of "The Cabbagehead," and persisted to the last of the series in 1938. But "Great Show of Monster Lies" makes the conditions of this special skill particularly clear: for Heartfield never presented himself as an "inventor" of information. He appeared in the Christmas tree scene, in fact, explicitly in order to deny that he had made anything up. Through a technical and inherently collaborative medium, he is able to see and hear everything from parliamentary

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debates to struggles of individual conscience, and to process the information faster than anyone else. This is the heroic dimension of the photomonteur. But the distinguishing gift or skill, the penetrating perception of events, is wholly shared, wholly available. The task, finally, is no more or less than to report what Everyreader would see, hear or judge, if he or she were in the same position. What binds Heartfield to his audience, and what distinguishes them both from Cabbageheads can be most readily described as a form of perception: comrades "see"--and also hear, taste and smell--what Cabbageheads can not.

Having opened the series with an address to all the senses, Heartfield closed it, with perhaps unintentional symmetry, by "turning" one sense against another: the entire frame of the final photomontage, "The Most Stupendous Liar of All Time," (fig. 58)[88] of 1938, is filled with a photograph of Hitler's mouth, an unworkable figure of seeing actual speech. Further, in an effort to conform with the Nazi's formal ban on Heartfield's work just before the issue was published, the whole cover is printed over with black ink, making the mouth discernable only with great effort. Here, the figure of seeing confronts, rather than complementing, that of hearing. What follows is both darkness and silence.

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[88] "Das gigantischeste Lügenmaul aller Zeiten," VI 1938, number 40, 5 October.

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VI. From Helmut to John

In contrast to collaboratively projected figure Heartfield, who always appeared confident and self-assured, Helmut Herzfeld was a chronically anxious individual, struggling with recalcitrant materials, limited time and resources, colleagues who sometimes did, but often did not quite understand what he wanted to do. If Heartfield projected a kind of quiet self-sufficiency, an effortless mastery of his materials and project, Helmut appeared constantly in a hurry, always needing someone's help with an idea, a technical problem, a looming deadline. And even as Heartfield was inviting his readers to stop reading, finally, the flesh-and-blood Helmut was reportedly always struggling to keep all his newspapers under his arm, constantly monitoring not only periodicals, but books, advertisements, posters, searching through archives, photo agencies, and libraries in a ceaseless quest for fragments he might use, immediately or at some point in the future. Wieland, who rarely dwelled on personal idiosyncracies, did mention Helmut's "diligence bordering on mania for collecting material for his montages." ("an Manie grenzenden Eifer beim Sammeln von Material für seine Montagen")[1]

The transition between Helmut and John, from isolated, anxious

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[1] Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 31.

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individual to heroic fighter for international socialism, in other words, was not a single event, completed in the past, but something continually, even obsessively repeated. It involved many levels of change simultaneously: a movement from private individual--a narrow, isolated, newspaper-reading "Cabbagehead"--to alert, astute, internationally-connected Communist, from an obsessed rummager among obscure, banal fragments of type and photography to the fabricator of clear, coherent, forceful political statements about contemporary events, from Wieland's odd, awkward brother to the commanding figure of John Heartfield, whom Wieland admired and willingly served. The broad terms of this transformation, in fact, effectively link the thematic oppositions within Heartfield's work to the actual collaborative process of producing it, and these in turn to the remarkably durable structure of the Herzfeld brothers' relationship.

Private and Political

Within the repertoire of unflattering qualities Heartfield repeatedly attributed to his enemies in the photomontages, self-absorption, in various forms, may well have been the most common. The photomontages steadily devalue all things "private"--possessions, relationships, thoughts, perceptions--and valorize events and issues which might be termed "public" or "political." It is in fact a central characteristic of

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Cabbageheads--the main characters of the fiction--which distinguishes them from "comrades"-- Heartfield and his audience. The pattern is established with "The Cabbagehead" itself, the first of the series, a figure whose extreme self-concern is made to look childish. But a rejection of the personal or private is integrated into the series in a much more subtle and systematic way beginning with the second montage of the series, "Forced Supplier of Human Materiel,"(fig. 59).[2]

In the "Forced Supplier," the figure of a proletarian woman--poor, pregnant, exhausted[3]--looks directly out at us. She says nothing. Appearing behind her--ostensibly in her future--is a photograph of a dead soldier, presumably her son, who is still unborn in the present. The montage's "voice"--not hers--speaks with authority, admonishing her, "Take heart! The state needs unemployed and soldiers"[4]. This image has been widely understood to embody a clear and sympathetic grasp, on Heartfield's part, of a politics of gender, and a progressive,

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[2] "Zwangslieferantin von Menschenmaterial" A.-I.-Z. 9 (1930), number 10, 183.

[3] The stereotype of the victimized proletarian woman is discussed at some length in Patrice Petro's, Joyless Streets (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), particularly as represented in the A.-I.-Z. (p. 98, 103ff.).

[4] "Nur Mut! Der Staat braucht Arbeitslosen und Soldaten."

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enlightened view of women.[5] Yet a closer look suggests that "the political," as Heartfield starts to contruct it here, is already legible as "masculine," and this quite clearly in opposition to a separate "feminine" experience that is personal or private. What begins here, further, remains consistent throughout the photomontages: "internal," or "emotional" experience is consistently associated with women or with the feminine, and set in opposition to a "public" or "political" life led exclusively by men.

"The Forced Supplier" does not represent an actual individual with a name and history. It rather singles out precisely the stereotype of the proletarian woman as newsworthy. It identifies her in terms of a function within the larger apparatus of the state, of Germany: against the spoken rhetoric of national loyalty, it presents the visual evidence of an icy official indifference to this woman's health, comfort, security or self-esteem, aspects of what might be termed her private well-being. The salient features of her "private" life turn out in any case not to be "private" at all, but rather effects of her social position. Her value to

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[5] In her discussion of Hannah Höch's photomontage, Aus dem Ethnologischen Museum of 1930, for example, Maud Lavin used this image (in its "updated"--1962, rather than 1930--version) to draw a contrast between the presumably unassailably "political" cast of Heartfield's work and the quite different politics that inform Höch's work. Heartfield's "politics," that is, are not at issue. (Maud Lavin, Cut with the Kitchen Knife: the Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979, 159).

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the state, in particular, rests entirely on the fact of her pregnancy, the possibility that the child will be male, and the subsequent availability of that child for future military service.

"The Forced Supplier" introduces another pattern that remained consistent throughout the series: men "speak"; women do not. The one instance in which a woman appears to speak turns out to be disingenuous, for "she" is actually--and obviously--Wieland Herzfelde: "Mothers to their Sons serving under Franco" of 1936 (fig. 60)[6] consists of photographs of Moroccan, German and Italian soldiers, the three main nationalities represented in Franco's army. The text is a poem, over Wieland's signature, in the voice of a supranational composite-mother. She delivers the same rather predictable admonition to all three young men, namely that military courage and obedience are false values: torture and murder are crimes not against an enemy--defined by his nationality--but against humanity, and they should all stop it at once. The authority behind these lines clearly derives from the idea of a mother who loves her child completely and selflessly, with a love unsullied by any involvement affairs of state and therefore available in any country at any time. The voice that actually registers these sentiments, representing "her" interests in the photomontages, in any

[6] See note 19 above.

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case, is actually male. Her relevance to the issues the series constructs as "important," or "current," her very existence in this field, that is, here rests, just as it did for the "Forced Supplier," on men--figuratively, on her soldier-sons, and literally on Wieland. The mothers represented in "Peace reigns again in Barcelona" (fig. 61)[7], "The fate of German Mothers" (fig. 62)[8] or "Basque Country," (fig. 63)[9] similarly represent abstractions who "speak" only through men.

As suggested in these examples, representations of women define the boundaries between those relationships that are of concern in the photomontages and those that are not. For the photomontages broadly construct an active, political field. In denying women direct speech, Heartfield figuratively bracketed them out of direct participation in this field; at the same time, he assigned each woman to some politically responsible male figure. The Forced Supplier enters the political field, becomes literally visible to us exactly because in her case the "responsible" male figure can not speak: he is at once unborn and already dead. By positioning her image against the "voice" of the state, Heartfield--

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[7] "Ruhe herrscht wider in Barcelona," A.-I -Z. 13, number 42, 18 October 1934, 680.

[8] "Deutsche Mütter Los," VI 1937, number 10, 10 March, 157.

[9] "Baskenland" VI 1937, number 22, 2 June, 345.

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another male--enables us to literally see her, and so, metaphorically, to grasp her political significance.

Heartfield treated another aspect of the family, namely a marital relationship, in "Gestapo letters to German women" [Subscript] "Adding insult to Murder" (the text mimics the pattern of the phrase "adding insult to injury".) of 1934 (fig. 64).[10] The main image is a photograph of an elegant, emotionally distraught woman. Just below the title is a paragraph of miniscule print which reads:

> Again and again in the Third Reich, the wives of innocent men shot by the Secret State Police used to receive, unannounced, the ashes of the murdered person in a letter or package in the mail. This happened, for example to the wife of the Catholic leader Dr. Klausener.[11]

Erich Klausener (1885-1934), the leader of the Catholic Action from 1928-1933, served as Hitler's first Director of Communications. Ostensibly for his criticism of the government, however, he was summarily murdered by the SS in his office in 1934.[12] Klausener's martyrdom at the hands of the Nazis, that is, won him a measure of sympathy in

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[10] "Gestapo-Briefe an deutsche Frauen/ Zum Mord der Hohn!" A.-I.-Z. 13, number 48, November 29, 1934, 784.

[11] Wiederholt erhielten im Dritten Reich die Frauen unschuldig Erschossener von der Geheimen Staatspolizei ohne vorherige Mitteilung die Asche der Ermordeten im Postpaket oder Brief zugestellt. So erging es z. B. der Frau des katholischen Führers Dr. Klausener.

[12] Evans, John Heartfield, 272.

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Heartfield's cosmos, despite his connection to both Church and Nazi bureaucracies (Heartfield distinguished consistently between Church actions and ethical conduct). In this case Heartfield marks the Nazis as inhuman much less on the basis of their having murdered another innocent man than on the grounds of their callous neglect, having broken the sacred bond between man and wife, to afford the widow even the most minimal dignities appropriate to mourning. Here, as in the "Forced Supplier," that is, the relationship between man and woman itself is outside the discussion. It is "political" relationships that are at issue, and these are recognized here only between men.

Women are not always identified positively in the photomontages. In "The champagne is tax-free! And that is: German Socialism," (fig. 65)[13] for example, a young woman sits at a banqueting table, with Göring and Goebbels on either side, companionably sipping tax-free champagne while a haggard pair of proletarians struggle for survival on the street outside. In the well-known "Hurrah, the butter's gone!" (fig. 34)[14] too, the patriotic petit-bourgeois housewife, at table

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[13] "Der Sekt is steuerfrei! Und das is: deutscher Sozialismus!" A.-I.-Z. 15, number 8, February 20, 1936.

[14] "Hurrah, die Butter is Alle," A.-I.-Z. 14 number 51, December 19, 1935, 816. The montage makes a play on the text of a recent speech by Hermann Göring: "Erz hat stets ein Reich stark gemacht, Butter und Schmalz haben höchstens ein Volk fett gemacht" ("Iron has always made an empire strong, butter and lard have only made a people fat.").

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with her family, eagerly--and idiotically--bites a pair of handlebars, her portion of the bicycle that is the family's evening meal. But every woman pictured in the photomontages becomes significant through a relationship to a man. Further, these relationships always function in the same way--there are no "good" or "bad," "deluded" or "enlightened" positions among them--they are literally and figuratively beyond discussion.

Relationships among men, on the other hand, are always represented within a system of moral judgement. And again in contrast to women, who are uniformly relegated to the realm of "private" life--social affairs, marriage, motherhood, and silence--men are positioned in the public, or political sphere. When they appear outside this sphere--that is, when they become concerned with private affairs or personal problems--they are represented either as duplicitous or as politically ineffective. Particularly in the case of prominent individuals, men's personal loss or inner emotional turmoil appears false, empty and consequently laughable. In "And so the Hugen-mountain became the Hugen-dwarf," (fig. 66)[15] the press magnate Alfred Hugenberg bemoans the loss of his position as Hitler's first minister for economics and agriculture. There is no question of empathy among the readers, however; male, speaking, politically potent,

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[15] "So ward aus Hugenberg der Hugenzwerg," A.-I.-Z. 12, number 26, 6 July 1933, p. 451.

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Hugenberg is rather understood wholly as an effect of his wealth, power and position. From the readers' standpoint, he is not a three-dimensional person, his personal pain can not be grasped as real, and his fall becomes a source of enjoyment, a moment in which the inhuman mechanisms of power have turned against one another. In "Even a Propaganda Minister" of 1935 (fig. 67)[16] similarly, Goebbels is shown shedding highly visible crocodile tears as Hitler confronts him with the news that eight members of his ministry have been arrested for embezzlement. Neither Hitler's anger nor Goebbels's regret reads as "real" emotion, but as melodramatic gesture masking calculated acts of greed and duplicity.

Heartfield's most extended treatments of this theme of mens' "inner" life occur, perhaps not surprisingly, in connection with artists. "Brown Artist's Dream" of 1938 (fig. 68),[17] for example, dramatizes an internal moral conflict, a "crisis of conscience." The subject of the montage is Georg Kolbe (1877-1947), a sculptor whose monumental statuary had won regular Nazi patronage. He is shown asleep, dreaming the dilemma presented by two recent commissions. One is to honor General Franco, the other Ludwig van Beethoven. Heartfield positions himself as dream interpreter, showing us, in the

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[16] "Auch ein Propagandaminister," A.-I.-Z. 14, number 34, 22 August 1935, 544.

[17] "Brauner Künstlertraum," VI 1938, Number 29, 20 July.

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public space of the A.-I.-Z., what the sculptor can not see, namely the moral impossibility of accepting both commissions--i.e. honoring both figures. Only here, in a space radically separate from the artist's waking, conscious perception, are Kolbe himself and the esthetic he represents revealed as morally empty and functionally complicit with fascism.

Heartfield's further judgements of artists in the photomotages follow this pattern of "introspective" versus "publicly accessible," the former being associated with fascism, the latter with Communism. Heartfield drew exactly such a contrast, for example, between "War" of 1933 (fig. 69)[18]--a montaged "update" of Franz von Stuck's 1894 painting of that name--and "Liberty herself fights in their Ranks" of 1936 (fig. 70)[19]--an analagous "update" of Eugène Delacroix's Liberty Leading the People of 1830. As Günther Anders pointed out in his 1938 discussion of the photomontages, Heartfield's jarring addition of a contemporary photograph of Hitler "reveals how empty von Stuck's allegory of war is...sent by no one, going nowhere."[20] No doubt because Delacroix's image of revolution provided explicit historical details--markers of class and occupation that suggest the historical basis for

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[18] "Der Krieg," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 29, 27 July 1933, 499.

[19] "Die Freiheit selbst kämpft in ihren Reihen," VI 1, number 1, 19 August 1936, 16.

[20] Anders, reprinted in Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 337.

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conflict, Heartfield treated this image far more kindly. Heartfield's judgement of the two paintings is thus seen to coincide with the figuration and structure of the photomontages as a whole, in which inner, "subjective" emotions, personal conflicts, private fantasies--are associated with the negative realm of sleeping and dreaming and silence. In Heartfield's order of things, von Stuck's painting becomes the enemy, a carrier of fascist ideology; Delacroix's, on the other hand, is aligned with himself, his readers, justice and Communism.

In summary, then, Heartfield registered womens' meaning in terms of a personal, emotional experience which becomes meaningful only <u>through</u> a husband, or--even if only potentially--male child; conversely, he attributed political power exclusively to males whose "private" emotions are uniformly false. Taken together, the two patterns do not displace, but rather confirm a familiar, essentialist formulation of gender difference, woman left with emotional experience irrelevant to political action or even speech, man absorbed in representations, isolated from direct emotional experience. Private or inner life, then becomes broadly associated with the "feminine" and politically impotent.

Given that actual women are excluded altogether from the political field defined by the photomontages, the pattern of

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difference between men--"private" and "political" men--takes the position of the work's central tension, incorporating many of the same oppositions that distinguished men from women, including the presence and absence of speech. The Cabbagehead may prattle, for example, but he doesn't actually speak in a way that is politically effective; from the visual evidence, in any case, he couldn't speak, since his mouth is bandaged. Although the Cabbagehead is male, then, his distinguishing features--self-concern, perceptual dysfunction, manipulability--align him with women and a condition of political subjugation. Within the fiction of the photomontages, The Cabbagehead becomes recognizable as a "feminized" man. Inasmuch as we identify ourselves in contrast to this figure, we can be assured of our own functional "masculinity," or political potency, within this structure as well.

The figures that Heartfield relegated to a position outside the political field--The Cabbagehead, the dreaming sculptor, the silent women--all share, in addition to their attachment to a private or emotional sphere, a loyalty as German subjects (in the case of the women, it is their loyalty to men who are loyal German subjects): The Cabbagehead wants to be a "red-gold-black," nationalist Cabbagehead; the sculptor abandons moral principle in the interests of a national service which coincides, predictably, with self-interest; The Forced

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Supplier can accept losing a son--ostensibly her sole hope of "speaking," in the political picture, for the greater good of Germany. All represent casualties of the same delusion: namely that "the nation" in general, and Germany in particular, could constitute a viable ideal, a legitimate means of identifying individuals, structuring relationships and redeeming personal loss. They embody, on the one hand the emptiness, on the other the political subjugation entailed in "private" experience.

With the concept of a "political subject", an individual whose innermost thoughts reproduce the values that hold him "subject" to the exercise of political power, the fictional center of the photomontages comes into view. For as widely as the work ranges in terms of its thematic content, it always links these themes to the oppressive nature of an "inner" or "private" reality.

The Production of Ruins

Helmut acquired the material for the photomontages, as described above, by excising it on an ongoing basis from the "flow" of representations that issued from Weimar's presses. He apparently maintained his files in his mind, rather than in any physical location, for visitors reported that his work area was utterly chaotic. No one, on the other had, reported

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his having had any difficulty locating an image once he had decided to use it. This pattern of appropriation of extant, printed sources constitutes Heartfield's "normal" process, and accounts for most of the materials he used. It is in the exceptions to this pattern, however, specifically in the production of new images, that the most distinctive features of the whole working process come into view. For in these exceptional circumstances Heartfield was forced to actually demonstrate, in the presence of witnesses, his own rejection of private, or "inner" experience.

As Wieland wrote in Leben und Werk, there were certain photographs "that could not have been in an archive" ("die es in Archiven nicht geben konnte").[21] These had to be staged. On such occasions, Helmut always hired a professional photographer. The photographers were not such intimate collaborators as Wieland or Grosz; yet they were sympathetic, flexible, cooperative colleagues on whom Helmut depended to accomplish his work, arguably to the same degree and for much the same reason that he depended on his brother or, more often, on the continual "flow" of text and images that issued from the presses and photo agencies of Weimar Germany. To several of these photographers, in any case, Helmut's manner of engagement in his work seemed remarkable enough to record.

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[21] Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 32.

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The photographers' reports are remarkably consistent. Helmut would typically arrive at the session with a detailed pencil sketch of the photograph he wanted, then torment the photographer by obsessively insisting that the photograph match the sketch, the preconceived idea. More often than not, he would get another idea at some point, and the whole procedure would begin again. The work continued, in utter disregard of time, conflicting commitments, hunger, exhaustion, etc., until he believed that what he wanted was "in the can," whereupon he would become impatient to see negatives and prints. When the photographer's work was finished, Helmut would focus as intently on those responsible for enlarging or reducing, screening or retouching an image.

> Johnny jumped from one idea to another. I can't tell you--a bundle of nerves. It was really not so easy. Afternoons, after everyone else in the office had left, he'd come with a montage, and on the way he would have already had another idea. And he asked me to go to the dark room and enlarge the negative he'd brought with him, exactly to the millimeter. He paced around outside. He thought it took too long. Then I had it finished. Then he said to me, "Move that so-and-so many millimeters to the side." I did it, came out, and already he wanted something different. And I have to admit that I said, "Look, you have to know what you want." But of course he knew what he wanted. We just clashed. There was a fight. But later everything was all right. Basically he was always right. But when he was trying to materialize his idea, he was so extraordinarily tenacious that one would simply suffer over why just this and exactly so.[22]

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[22]Erich Rinka, Interview, 1977, reproduced in März, Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit, 1981, 170. Johnny sprang von Idee zu Idee. Ich möchte nicht sagen--ein Nervenbündel. Aber es war nicht ganz

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The author of this passage, Erich Rinka, was the national secretary of the Labor Photographers (see pages 6-8, 207-8 above), an organization whose membership represented a quite diverse range of industrial skills and experience--especially in the areas of chemical and print technologies--in addition to considerable experience and skill in shooting photographs.[23] In the passage, Rinka openly admits how exasperating working with the photomonteur could sometimes be, but also how positive a memory invariably remained from the shared experience. For having acknowledged their differences, Rinka ends by assuring us that "of course he knew what he wanted," and then "basically, he was always right."

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leicht. Nachmittags, als schon keiner mehr in der Redaktion war, kam er an mit einer Montage, und auf dem Wege hat er schon wieder eine neue Idee. Und er bat mich, in die Dunkelkammer zu gehen und das Negativ, das er bei sich hatte, genau auf den Millimater zu vergrößern. Ich war in der Dunkelkammer, habe das gemacht. Er zappelte draußen herum. Das dauerte ihm alles zu lange. Da hatte ich's fertig. Da rief er mir zu: "Mach das soundso viel Millimeter nach der Seite anders" Ich hab's anders gemacht, kam raus, da hatte er schon wieder 'ne neue Idee. Und da muß ich sagen, daß ich sagte, "Mensch, du mußt doch wissen, was du willst." Aber er wußte natürlich, was er wollte. Und wir sind da einfach zusammengerasselt. Es gab einen Krach. Aber hinterher was alles wider gut. Im Grunde hat er immer recht gehabt. Aber diese Zähigkeit, mit der er seine Idee versuchte zu materialisieren, die war bei ihm so ausgeprägt, daß man einfach darunter litt, warum denn so und eben so.

[23] Although Heartfield never technically joined the Labor Photographers organization, his contact with this group was critical. It served as a pool of reliable resources, people who could help him with exactly this pictorial of his work that was <u>not</u> shared with Wieland. Further, such a pool of potential collaborators substantially embodied Heartfield's idea of an audience. The Labor Photographers therefore presented him with an ongoing opportunity to "collaborate" with his viewers.

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Bruno Hess, another of the Labor Photographers who was active at the A.-I.-Z. at that point, recalled the afternoon in late 1930 when Helmut had come to Rinka's office looking for help with a photomontage idea. Hess just happened to walk in on the discussion, and it occurred to Rinka that Hess might be able to help. Helmut was looking for a blacksmith. Hess knew of one in a Berlin suburb. They found him, and set up the picture. Hess began shooting, anxious about how many plates he was using up. He was unemployed, and no one was paying him for this work. Helmut's concern, in the meantime, had narrowed to how well the sparks would show up on the finished print.

> "Can't we get more sparks?" --"Yes," said the smith, "but I'll have to let the iron burn." Luckily he had some old piece of wagonwheel, a tire rim lying there. Und Johnny was right behind him. He was always right in his work, and his eyes always as if he was curious, watching everying. His eyebrows went way up, and he just stared straight ahead. When the iron was streaming [sparks] he [the smith] came up and began to strike it.
>
> Yes, yes, yes, yes, three more shots taken of it. And I said, "Johnny, my plates are almost gone." Another one, and one from the side. At least he was satisfied. "But I need 'em right away." "Yes, Johnny, so come on home with me." I developed them right away. Then, when all the plates were finished, he left, beaming with joy.[24]

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[24] Bruno Hess, "Wie der Photomontage "Schlag zu, Prolet" zustande kam," Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit, 1981, . "Kann das denn nicht mehr funken?"--"Ja" sagte der Schmied, "da muß ich aber das Eisen verbrennen lassen" Jedenfalls hat der nun so'n Stück altes Wagenrad, so'n Reifen geholt. Und Johnny stand immer dabei. Der war immer bei der Arbeit, und seine Augen, die waren immer wie neugierig, guckten immer so zu.

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Hess confirms the same intensity or anxiety in Helmut that Rinka had observed. Like Rinka, too, he goes on to narrate, within the space of the collaboration, a happy resolution to that anxiety. In order to get exactly the photograph Helmut had in mind, the hired (or in this case volunteer) photographer had to literally see exactly as Helmut did, had to share Helmut's perception and register that sharing, materially, on film. Once this has been accomplished, Helmut departs, "beaming with joy" ("freudestrahlend").

From the photographs that Hess took that day with the blacksmith, Heartfield chose the one that appears in the montage marking the beginning of 1931, "Ein neues Jahr!" (fig. 28).[25] As discussed in the previous chapter, this is one of the cases in which the reader is led to identify with, rather than against the represented event. Nevertheless, we recognize that what we are seeing is not "news" and, accordingly, we sense Heartfield's own presence behind it,

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Augenbrauen hat er so hoch gehabt, Und er starrte immer so hin. Und jetzt sprühte das Eisen, und da kam er so an und schlägt so drauf.

Ja, ja, ja, ja, wieder drei Aufnahmen davon gemacht. Und ich hab'gesagt" "Johnny, jetzt gehen meine Platten zu Ende" Wieder eine und eine von der anderen Seite. Jedenfalls war er dann zufrieden gewesen. "Aber ich brauch'se gleich" "Ja, Johnny, da komm mal mit nach Hause." Ich entwickelte sie gleich. Dann, als alle Platten fertig waren, ist er freudestrahlend losgezogen.

[25] "A New Year!" A.-I.-Z. 9, number 52, 1930, 1023.

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orchestrating a common understanding of this image as an emblem of the proletariat. To the extent the montage effects this identification between artist and audience, it shares its function with all the other photomontages, namely the forging a united "front," literally a shared point of view with its readers. With Hess's description of Helmut's working process in mind, we can also begin to see how even in this example, probably not among the most effective from the viewer's standpoint, nevertheless reproduced the same kind of interaction as that between Heartfield and his collaborators. For Hess describes his own role as the work of literally materializing, externalizing, and thereby confirming one of Helmut's perceptions.

The report on Heartfield's working process that has been reproduced most often[26] came from János Reissmann, a Czech photographer who worked in Germany under the name Wolf Reiss:

> It is rather a long time ago and a lot has happened in the meantime, but I still remember exactly how Heartfield, the confirmed "bane of photographers," called me at 2:00 a.m.: "Hey, R., it's gotten very cold. There's sure to be frost in the morning--we should meet at 8:00 at the zoo. Don't forget your camera." Frost. That was now the third variation on the dust cover for Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney. For this caper we had already been jumping around in the Breitenbachplatz area blowing bubbles, the purpose being to photograph a soap bubble, shimmering in rainbow color in the sunlight, so that it would reflect a "grate" into which

[26] Even Wieland reprinted some of it in Leben und Werk, 1962, 1986, 49.

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rainwater was streaming, with a few yellow autumn leaves thrown in.

We'd been butterfly hunting, climbing over barbed wire fences and tearing our pants. I [had] stood with the camera ready, while Heartfield hypnotized a crab, so that it would pull back its "beard" and open its claws (This did not appeal to the crab at all, but when I suggested that killing it would make it easier to handle, Heartfield argued vehemently that a dead crab could never appear so lively as a live one, and so a photograph that was supposed to represent a live crab would be more authentic if it was of a live crab than of a dead one. I was with Heartfield one sunny morning when he had four respectable gentlemen in top hats and tuxedos climbing on construction scaffolding in Nürnberger Street (for the dust cover of So macht man Dollars [fig. 20]. Photomontage seems like a profession with a lot of variety, one might say even excitement and suspense.[27]

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[27] Wolf Reiss, "Als ich mit John Heartfield zusammenarbeitete," Internationale Literatur (Moskau) 1935, 5, 186/188 (German edition). Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit, 189-90. Es liegt ziemlich weit zurück und ziemlich viel dazwischen, trotzdem erinnere ich mich genau, wie Heartfield, der entschlossene "Photographengegner" um zwei Uhr nachts bei mir anrief: "Du, R., es ist sehr kalt geworden, morgen früh gibt es sicher Eisblumen--wir wollen uns um acht Uhr früh im Zoo treffen, vergiß Deinen Apparat nicht." Eisblumen, das war schon die dritten Variante zum Buchumschlag für "Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney."

In dieser Affäre waren wir schon einmal an einem sonnigen Herbsttag--Seifenblasen pustend--in der Gegend des Breitenbachplatzes herumgehüpft, mit dem Zweck, eine schöne, große im Sonnenlicht regenbogenfarbig schimmernde Seifenblase so zu photographieren, daß sie einen "Gully" widerspiegele, in den das Regenwasser strömend reinfließt, ein paar gelbe Herbstblätter mitreißend [...] Wir waren zusammen auf Schmetterlingsjagd, kletterten über Stacheldrahtzäune und zerrissen dabei unsere Hosen. Ich stand mit einem Photoapparat schußbereit, als Heartfield einen Krebs hypnotisierte, der seinen "Schnurrbart" zurückziehen und seine Scheren öffnen sollte. (Als der Krebs das durchaus nicht wollte und ich vorschlug, das Tier zu leichterer Behandlung erst zu töten, widersprach Heartfield auf das entschiedenste, ein toter Krebs könne nie so lebendig aussehen wie ein lebendiger, also wirke eine Aufnahme, die einen lebendigen Krebs darstellen soll, von einem lebendigen Krebs zweifellos echter als das Photo eines toten Krebses.) Ich war mit Heartfield, als er an einem hellichten Vormittag vier würdige Herren im Frack und Zylinder auf ein

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Not least among the many revealing aspects of this description is the gentle humor with which Reiss represents these bizarre, exhausting and uncomfortable adventures, his patience with Heartfield's convoluted and clearly obsessive justifications for them. Any advertising photographer would undoubtedly have analogous stories--strange situations, obsessive directors, long hours spent in an effort to make "reality" conform to a preconceived idea. Probably very few would exhibit Reiss's sympathy, and ultimately his understanding and admiration for the project. At least in retrospect, Reiss seems to have thoroughly enjoyed his engagement with the "bane of photographers." Clearly they had some plain good fun doing some fairly odd things together; Reiss also conveys a certain pride in having contributed to to an ambitious project whose goals he shared. He takes up the matter in a later passage in the same article:

> Heartfield's practice is a bitter struggle, day in and day out, to realize his ideas and intentions. "People have no idea," he once said," how hard it is to be a photomonteur." That is correct, with one restriction: it is hard to be a photomonteur like Heartfield. Why he in particular makes it so hard for himself, why he never takes the path of least resistance...becomes clear on reflection that he, in particular, invented photomontage, that is, conscious, graphic construction by means of photography, as he defined it. The painter Heartfield threw [his] brush away and reached for the scissors, not on an artistic whim, not out of

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Baugerüst in der Nürnberger Straße klettern ließ (Zu dem Buchumschlag "So macht man Dollars" [fig. 20].) Photomontage scheint eine äußerst abwechslungsvolle, man könnte sagen, spannende und aufregende Tätigkeit zu sein.

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> playful snobbery, in order to make something new at any price. No, he wanted to make the persuasive power of photography useful to the revolutionary working class...It was the searching and finding with all its tensions and agonies of experimentation, the way of an awakening artist, needing a strong new weapon for the struggle of the awakening proletariat.
>
> The photographs I made for Heartfield, from a absolutely exact pencil sketch and always under his personal direction, often took hours, many hours. He was after nuances that I could no longer perceive.[28]

The text does dutifully reiterate the metaphor of a weapon--very little writing about Heartfield has ever been quite free of it--as well as the model of the self-sufficient artist. Accordingly, it leaves out the central issue of the collaboration between the two men, upon which the whole project rested. But Reiss also helpfully set the image of the

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[28] ibid., 188. Heartfields Wirken ist ein tagtäglich sich widerholender, erbitterter Kampf um die Verwirklichung seiner Ideen und Absichten. "Die Leute haben ja keine Ahnung,"sagte er einmal, "wie schwer es its, Photomonteur zu sein." Das ist richtig, mit der Einschränkung: Es ist schwer, Photomonteur wie Heartfield zu sein. Warum gerade er es sich so schwer macht, warum gerade er nie den Weg des geringeren Widerstandes wählt...wird begreiflich wenn man bedenkt, daß er--gerade er--die Photomontage, d.h. das bewußte graphische Gestalten mittels der Photographie, wie er es definiert, entdeckt hat! Der Maler Heartfield warf den Pinsel weg und griff zur Schere, nicht aus einer künstlerischen Laune, nicht aus spielerischem Snobismus, um jeden Preis etwas Neues zu machen. Nein, er wollte die Überzeugungskraft der Photographie für die revolutionäre Arbeiterklasse nutzbar machen...Es war das Suchen und Finden mit allen Spannungen und Qualen des Experimentierens, der Weg eines zum Bewußtwein kommenden Künstlers, der für den Kampf des zum Bewußtwein kommenden Proletariats eine neue starke Waffe brauchte.

Die Aufnahmen, die ich für Heartfield nach einer haargenau festgelegten Bleistiftskizze und immer unter seiner persönlichen Leitung machte, dauerte oft Stunden, viele Stunden lang. Er kämpfte um Nuancen, die ich gar nicht mehr wahrnehmen konnte.

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weapon in a context where it looks extremely--and appropriately--awkward: a "weapon" hardly seems a suitable implement to employ in what he himself describes as a struggle to gain consciousness. For Heartfield, Reiss reports, could literally see what others--even others with long and exacting visual training and experience, such as this professional photographer--could not.

What Reiss could hardly have sensed at the time, but which does becomes noticeable in a retrospective analysis of the photomontages, is that Heartfield's "seeing" and Reiss's "seeing" were not quite the same thing. One would expect Reiss, as a professional photographer, to understand the concept fairly narrowly, as bearing on optical perception only; Heartfield's "vision," as evidenced by the "voices" and "sound effects" that appear in the finished photomontages, was not strictly optical, but often linked to sounds as well. What Heartfield wanted to share, then, first with his collaborators and then with his audience, might well be called his vision in an older, broader sense, a "heightened" or, more precisely, integrated perception rather than strictly a perception of light. Given such differing understandings of the task at hand, it is hardly surprising that the photographers regularly failed to perceive the "nuances" Heartfield said he was seeing, but may well have been imaginatively hearing or touching as well. Nor is it

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incomprehensible that in his perennial need for photographers to share his perception, his acute frustration with them when they did not, Heartfield appeared, as Reissmann reported, to "hate them all."

Particularly in light of the chronic tension between Helmut and his photographers, later observers have often wondered why he did not simply take the photographs himself. Helmut had mastered a wide range of technical skills in the course of his career, including film production. From a purely technical standpoint, still photography could hardly have presented any great problem.[29] In response to this question, the Herzfeld brothers always cited the artist's respect for the specialized professional expertise of others. But in repositioning the project as a production of Heartfield, the requirement that the photographer be someone else, not Helmut, takes on a quite different significance.

When Heartfield appropriated material from a news organization, photo agency or archive--his "ordinary" sources--someone else had already generated the idea, gathered the materials and equipment, framed the shot, taken and developed and printed and often also sold the picture. Such images

[29] Both Helmut's son, Tom Heartfield (1920-1991) and grandson, John Heartfield, remember him as an enthusiastic amateur photographer, avidly documenting family events, outings, travel, etc. [various personal conversations with the author, 1987-1992--N.R.]

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already have a kind of "address," an established meaning based on the circumstances in which they were produced. Staged photographs and made-to-order texts, on the other hand, presented an opportunity to produce something "original," having no such prior frame or established meaning.

And yet there is no appreciable difference between Heartfield's use of such potentially "original" photographs and his use of appropriated photographs. A staged image such as the one in "The Cabbagehead," that is, functions as a "ruin" of the newspaper in just the same way as an appropriated photograph of Hitler or Göring does. In staging photographs, that is, Heartfield was actually creating "ruins," or "found" elements. Under these conditions, the possibility of producing something new in fact represented a danger. For Heartfield's process moved <u>from</u> extant, banally "meaningful" materials <u>to</u> a new, collaboratively performed meaning, <u>from</u> an isolating, predictable, "boring" form of perception <u>to</u> a new, shared, exciting one. In order to maintain these categories and this direction, then, the "raw" material could <u>not</u> be original. To suit Heartfield's purposes, in other words, the staged photograph required the same "currency" or banality, the same established, collective "address" or meaning that could be assumed among his appropriated images. Heartfield needed a photographer on these occasions because another person had to be there to bear

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witness, to establish--and to produce "documentary" evidence--that the image "under construction" did qualify as a ruin, that it embodied not a singular, not an "original," but a collective, or shared perception. When the photographers couldn't "see" the nuances, the danger of producing something original became acute. Helmut's anxiety, accordingly, became acute as well, for to produce something original would represent a failure to meet the terms of his own practice--a failure to become Heartfield.

In the course of his sketch of the Herzfeld brothers, quoted at some length in Chapter III., Elias Canetti supposed that Helmut's distinctive response--anger--to learning something new was tied to the impassioned antagonism that informed the photomontages. To specify this observation somewhat more closely, the making of photomontages may have actually been Helmut's response to specified pieces of new information. If this is the case, the work would have represented a way to absorb new data collaboratively, in the company of others, and so a way of circumventing the obligation to integrate new information quietly in one's own mind. As long as the sharing was done exclusively with Wieland, the peculiarity would not become apparent, for Wieland accomodated his brother's unusual behavior, as Canetti also observed, without comment--perhaps without even becoming aware of it. Grosz, too, seems to have accommodated readily, and largely without comment. It was

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finally the photographers--and Canetti--close, but not extremely close collaborators, who provided the best insights.

Rinka, Hess, Reiss explicitly confirmed the intensity with which Helmut insisted that they see as he did. They served as the means, that is, through which Helmut could be "relieved" of his odd, singular, and isolating perception by sharing it with a large and widespread audience. And although the photographer's role was perhaps exceptionally clear, it was finally just one among many different roles played by many kinds of collaborators--and viewers--in producing Heartfield: all were materially equipped, in one capacity or another, to confirm Helmut's perception in physical, reproducible form. If even one such person could "see" as Helmut did, then in principle anyone could. The possibility of such a transformation, from isolated, anxious individual to confident, socially "connected" photomonteur was once again demonstrated. If the man who arrived at the photo shoot was the anxious and obsessed Helmut Herzfeld, one might say, the one whom Hess described as "freudestrahlend" ("beaming with joy") as he walked away was John Heartfield.

Brother as Collaborator

Wieland's writing includes a few comments on Helmut's collaborations with photographers. These stress,

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significantly, the position of authority, the control Helmut exerted in these situations. The following passage from Leben und Werk, for example, appears somewhat awkwardly appended to a description of the design "department" at the Malik-Verlag, noting particularly the supervisory role Helmut played in it.

> Among his colleagues were photographers; for certain photographs, which could not exist in archives, had to be staged. In such cases the photographer was the operator, Heartfield the producer.[30]

The word "Regisseur"--director or producer--appeared again in this same connection when Wieland described Heartfield's innovations in dust cover design:

> The photographs for the covers mentioned here and many others were 'staged'. How complicated it got and how urgently Heartfield was needed to direct the operation--he never took the photographs for his montages himself--can be judged from Plate 67. [Plate 67, as well as the finished dust cover montage, is reproduced here as figure 20]. Reiss described the event briefly in the passage cited above.--N.R.][31]

The German word for "staging" a photograph ("stellen" means to

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[30] Leben und Werk, 32. Zu seinen Mitarbeitern gehörten auch Fotografen; denn gewisse Fotos, die es in Archiven nicht geben konnte, mußten gestellt werden. Dabei war der Fotograf der Operateur, Heartfield der Regisseur.

[31] Leben und Werk, 48. Die Fotos für die genannten Umschläge und viele andere waren "gestellt" Wie kompliziert es dabei zuging und wie sehr Heartfield dabei als Regisseur benötigt wurde --er hat die Fotos für seine Montagen nie selbst aufgenommen--ist aus Tafel 67 ersichtlich [Plate 67 is a series of shots of men in tuxedos climbing on scaffolding for the cover of Upton Sinclair's So macht man Dollars (1931).

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"place" or "set") is not so suggestive as the English; but Wieland's selection of "Regisseur" (director) leaves no doubt at all of a theatrical analogy. The wording of the statements further implies something surprising about the dynamics of the situtation, as though the tables had turned: Heartfield, who is expected to be the "Operateur," was suddenly, surprisingly, in the other role. He had become the director, the man in charge.

Wieland seems to tacitly assume that what had long been the case would remain the case for all collaborations, namely that Helmut would function as "Operateur," the one who responded, expedited, followed the direction of the "Regisseur," who might be Grosz, Piscator, or often Wieland himself. The reversal of roles in Helmut's photographic operations was something noteworthy. When subsumed within the larger framework of the press, it probably left the relationship between the brothers themselves untouched: it was always Wieland who was "in charge" at the Malik-Verlag. The A.-I.-Z. was another matter. These circumstances required, to an extent unprecedented in Heartfield's work, that texts be "staged" or produced in the same way photographs had been produced under his direction for years. A literary "Operateur" was needed, in other words, a subordinate who would follow the directions of Heartfield, "Regisseur". This task fell, without recorded discussion, to Wieland.

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Unlike the photographers' contributions to the photomontages, which never appeared over the photographer's signature, Wieland's poems are often signed. In "Mothers to their Sons in Franco's Service," (fig. 60)[32] for example, the long, signed poem occupies over half the space of the montage. The words feature so prominently in the work, that is, as to shift Heartfield's characteristic interplay between text and image decidedly in favor of text--to the very limits, one might say, of being Heartfield at all. The photographs do not actually interact with it, either, for the poem's "voice" is that of a composite mother; the photographs--of the German, Italian and Moroccan "sons," rather serve wholly as illustration. In "Song of the Heil/Salvation Army," (fig. 71)[33], on the other hand, Wieland's "song" is actually being "sung" by the soldiers in the photograph, creating an interaction between the two elements. Text again dominates the montage "Meck (grouser) and Mies (grumbler) in the Third Reich," of 1934 (fig. 72).[34] But because the text is a conversation between the two birds in the photograph, the montage again generates some sense of a performance, of words being spoken. Wieland's texts, in any case, are always sharply distinguished in tone

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[32] "Die Mütter an ihre Söhne in Francos Diensten" VI 1 number 19, December, 1936, 301.

[33] "Lied der Heil-Armee" A.-I.-Z. 14 number 46, 14 November 1935, 736.

[34] "Meck und Mies im Dritten Reich" A.-I.-Z. 27, 5 July 1934, 432. The montage is signed "Fotomontage: John Heartfield Fabel: Wieland Herzfelde.

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and form from any newspaper text. They tend to draw on stock characters and situations from literature, and more specifically fairy tales,[35] as the newspaper typically does not; they also invariably represent speech or song, and so effect something of the performed, theatrical quality that always distinguishes the montages from the rest of the newspaper. Wieland's contributions, that is, do technically fulfill the critera for a "Heartfield" work. And yet there is a qualitative difference between such montages in which Wieland's text dominates and those in which Helmut's directorial instincts hold sway. In "The Cabbagehead" (fig. 27), for example, the little poem spoken by the depicted figure--presumably Wieland's composition--is so tightly integrated with the other texts and the image as to make any designation of "Wieland's" or "Helmut's" contribution highly

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[35] Other examples of Wieland's engagement with the fairy tale include "Illustration zu Grimms Märchen von der Katze und der Maus" ("Illustration of Grimm's fairy tale about the cat and the mouse") VI 1938 number 9., 2 March, and ""Der Fuchs und der Igel: ein Tierfabel nach Lafontaine," ("The fox and the hedgehog: an animal fable after La Fontaine"), VI 1938 number 24, 15 June.

The Herzfeld brothers'--perhaps particularly Wieland's-- affinity for fairy tales, folk sayings, etc., meshes with a broader interest in this aspect of literature during the Weimar period, particularly for its value in the social and political education of children. In his "Introduction," to Utopian Tales from Weimar, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990, 14-16.), Jack Zipes places the Malik Verlag's series "Märchen der Armen" among the most significant examples of a more widespread attempt to replace "bourgeois" or traditional tales with new, proletarian versions. Among the most influencial writers of such stories, Hermynia Zur Mühlen was one of the Malik-Verlag's "own" writers. (Helmut actually drew the covers--highly unusual in the photomonteur's practice--for two of her titles, Was Peterchens Freunde erzählen, 1920, and Ali der Teppichweber, 1923).

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speculative.

It seems unlikely that either of the brothers was conscious of whose contribution was most prominent in any given collaboration; but conscious or not, the photomontages presented a situation in which a long-standing pattern between the two--Wieland as "Regisseur," Helmut as "Operateur"--could at least sometimes be reversed, if always through the intervening construction of "Heartfield." The co-produced Heartfield grasped the world as drama, as sight and sound together. This "signature" trait of the photomontages drew most heavily on Helmut's years of engagement in stage performance and film, experience of which Wieland had never been part. Becoming the photomonteur, in a word, entailed the possibility of becoming, if intermittently and temporarily, the "Regisseur" with respect to even his own brother. In this framework, Wieland became the "feminized" figure--not precisely with respect to Helmut, but with respect to the heroic, larger-than-life Heartfield. It was from this position, too, that Wieland largely "produced" the reconstructed Heartfield of the 1960s in the DDR, most notably by way of the biography Leben und Werk.

Fraternity in Print

The identity Heartfield projected in the photomontages was, as

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outlined in the previous chapter, that of a man whose perception exceeded the strictly visual requirements for a "literate" individual; in fact it was exactly in contrast to print literature's characteristic use of language, construction of time, requirement for exclusively visual perception that Heartfield's most distinctive traits become apparent. Helmut's widely acknowledged obsession with print, at first glance a contradiction of this negative relationship, becomes on closer examination a confirmation of it. For just as the audience's grasp of the montage required a renunciation of reading, the process of producing a montage involved a renunciation, or more exactly a fragmenting, or pirating of printed and printable materials. The aggressive, or destructive cast of his approach to print is noticeable from the very first manifestation of his distinctive "style," namely in the "Kleine Grosz-Mappe" (fig. 4) and the May-June issue of Neue Jugend (fig. 1). It emerges with particular clarity, however, in contrast to Wieland's pattern. For although the general difference between Helmut's and Wieland's work is most often assumed to be a difference in medium--one is a visual artist, the other a writer--the Herzfeld brothers' work is far more adequately characterized as two different aspects or approaches to the same medium, namely print.

Through most of their careers, Helmut and Wieland acted as graphic designer and publisher, respectively. Wieland appears

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to have read very broadly, in any case, with a concentration in the area of his main publishing interest, namely contemporary German and Russian literature. His writing consisted of critical reviews of books, theoretical statements pertaining to the idea of a revolutionary literature, and autobiographical memoires. He both read and wrote and published, that is, in the elaboration of a positive ideal--of himself, the literature he published, and of his readers. The one exception to his positive engagement with print was, significantly, the newspaper. In the autobiographical collection Immergrün of 1949, Wieland set forth, in some detail, his views on the fundamental opposition between the newspaper and art:

> At what age do children start to read the newspaper? I don't know, but I think it's too early. That may be a superstition I absorbed from the world in which I grew up. There, in Salzburg, one read the newspaper in the cafe. The practice was probably based on the belief that news of the big bad world did not belong in the house, that it ought to be kept away from women and children. The Bible and a book of fairy tales, a volume of William Busch's poems, a picture book of "Castles on the Rhein," or "The Finest Architecture of Sunny Italy" bound in satin with decorative metal clasps, or a calendar ornamented with wise words and holy pictures, that was about all in the way of reading material to be found in a well-ordered family home about 1900...
>
> That changed from one day to the next, when war broke out in August, 1914. A Fatherland beset by enemies took the place of the evil world. Of course it could enter the house. And with it, the newspaper.
>
> I had discovered literature as a twelve year old. And since then artists and poets were the only

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> authorities in the world for me. Secretly I practiced writing. I loved nothing so much as books. But I despised newspapers, journalists and their readers. To me they were the essence of the profane, expedient and salable, --the inartistic.
>
> But suddenly, on that day in August I waited anxiously--like millions of others--for the latest special edition. The war, after all, was of concern to everyone, but especially to us, who considered ourselves to be, and who were also now regarded as young men.[36]

Written some three decades after the events in question, the passage shows Wieland still intimating at least ambivalence,

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[36] Herzfelde, Immergrün, 99-100. Mit welchem Alter beginnen Kinder die Zeitung zu lesen? Ich weiß es nicht, glaube aber, zu früh. Das mag ein Aberglaube sein, den mir die Welt, in der ich aufwuchs, mitgegeben hat. Dort, in Salzburg, las man die Zeitung im Café. Dem Brauch lag vermutlich die Überzeugung zugrunde, daß Berichte über die große und verderbte Welt nicht ins Haus gehören, daß sie von Kindern und Frauen fernzuhalten seien. Die Bibel und Märchenbücher, ein Gedichtband von Wilhelm Busch, ein in Samt gebundenes, mit Metallbeschlägen verziertes riesiges bilderbuch der "Schlösser am Rhein" oder der Ehrwürdigsten Bauten im sonnigen Italien", ein mit Sinnsprüchen und Heiligenbildern geschmückter Kalender, das war ungefähr alles, was sich um 1900 im Hause einer ordentlichen Familie an Lektüre vorfand...

Das änderte sich von einem Tag zum andern, als Angang August 1914 der Krieg ausbrach. An Stelle der bösen Welt war das von hinterlistigen Feinden überfallenen Vaterland getreten. Es hatte selbstverständlich Zugang in jeden Frauen- und Kinderherz. Und mit ihm die Zeitung.

Ich hatte schon als Zwölfjähriger die Literatur entdeckt. Und seitdem waren Künstler und Dichter für mich die einzigen Autoritäten auf der Welt. Ich übte mich heimlich im Schreiben. Nichts liebte ich so sehr wie Bücher. Zeitungen dagegen, die Journalisten und ihre leser, verachtete ich. Sie waren für mich der Inbegriff des Profanen, des Zweckhaften und Käuflichen, --des Unkünstlerischen.

Plötzlich aber, in jenen Augusttagen, wartete ich--wie Millionen anderer--mit Gier auf neuste Extra-Ausgaben. Denn der Krieg, das war einen jeden Sache, vor allem aber Sache der jungen Männer, als die wir Achtzehnjährigen uns nicht nur fühlten, sondern als die wir nun auch gewürdigt wurden.

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if not a lingering contempt for newspapers. Newspaper-reading registers here as a loss of innocence, on the one hand, part of a "rite of passage" into adulthood, retaining something of the tainted or dirty, to which only individuals of mature judgement should be exposed: newspapers are, or should be, "for adults only." The basis for his mistrust is not at all a petit bourgeois anxiety about the dangers of too much information, the dominant attitude in the Austria of his childhood, but almost the exact opposite: newspapers are dangerous because despite the impressive technical apparatus and institutional authority they command, they fail to inform. The passage contrasts this, the journalists' failure, with the artists' success: writers and artists represent the only legitimate authority; newspapers represent all that is inartistic--that is, trivial and untrustworthy.

Helmut, too, appears to have read voraciously, but to a purpose almost diametrically opposed to Wieland's. He read newspapers above all. And he did so in order to effectively undermine, often to literally dismember and discredit the object he was reading. There is no contemporary estimate of what criteria he applied in his incessant monitoring. But the evidence of the photomontages themselves suggest that he was attracted to conventionally "bad"--unflattering--photographs of public figures, such as that of Hitler with a childish, petulant expression in "With tongue unfurled he'll choke the

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world," (fig. 73)[37], or that of Goering snarling like a predatory animal in "Goering, the Hangman of the Third Reich" (fig. 51)[38] and later in "Regarding the Mansun-Ossietzky case," (fig. 74).[39] Similarly in monitoring texts he looked for awkward, or extreme imagery, as in Fritz Tarnow's speech about the "tiger" of capitalism, "On the SPD's Party Crisis Meeting," (fig. 31)[40], or von Papen's about getting rid of Bolshevism in Germany, "6 Million Communist Votes" (fig. 75)[41]. Heartfield did not so much "read" the newspaper, one might say, as he pirated it, treating it from the outset as a ruin, an object whose fragments no longer function as once intended, and so are freely available for other uses. Much as Freud described the "dreamwork" operating on conscious experience, he reassembled those fragments in ways that were often absurd, offensive, embarassing to the earlier, or "ruined" (reading, believing) form of consciousess.

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[37] "Mit seinen Phrasen will er die Welt vergasen" A.-I.-Z. 12 number 21, 1 June 1933, 371.

[38] "Goering, der Henker des Dritten Reichs," A.-I.-Z. 12 number 36, 14 September 1933, 609.

[39] "Zum Fall Hamsun-Ossietzky," A.-I.-Z. 15 number 6, 6 February 1936, 96. In this montage, in fact, Heartfield made one of his "personal appearances" in order to explicity assure the audience that "Zu Porträts von Hitler und Göring wurdern Originalaufnahmen unverändert verwendet" ("Original shots were used, unchanged, for the portraits of Hiter and Göring").

[40] "Zum Krisen-Parteitag der SPD," A.-I.-Z. 10 number 24, 1931, 477.

[41] "6 Millionen kommunistische Stimmen," A.-I.-Z. 11 number 47, 20 November 1932, 1113.

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This highly unusual tendency to see even newly-printed representations as "already-invalid," as objects of his own use, undoubtedly set Helmut apart from other contemporary readers of the same materials. His perception had, that is, a real, isolating effect on him. And in fact, Helmut seems to have accomplished most of the "gathering" or "monitoring" phase of his work alone. The various processes of sizing, toning, retouching photographs, of typesetting texts, of joining parts together, however, always involved others. Overlaid on the process of pirating and reassembling of print, that is, was the experience of a shift from working in isolation to working with an editorial "team," or moving into a "production" phase. Here again, the pattern of contrast to Wieland's work is instructive: as a writer, Wieland's work would have taken him in approximately the opposite direction, that is, from the experience of interacting with other people to the process of quiet reflection, distillation, formulation of that experience in words; as a publisher, the shift is less evident, but this work, too, finally resolves around a set of decisions reached internally--what to publish, how to market, how much to charge. Wieland, that is, turned his gregariousness, his skills in interpersonal diplomacy to the projection of a distinctive, individual persona; Helmut's working process, on the other hand, transformed his decidedly odd, isolating perception into a basis for gaining and maintaining contact with others.

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When Elias Canetti recalled his impressions of the Herzfeld brothers,[42] he referred to Helmut as the "least reflective of men." Helmut's bizarre tendency to become angry whenever he learned something new, in particular, appeared in sharp contrast to Wieland's measured, diplomatic behavior. And yet even this extraordinary volatility is ultimately represented as balanced or contained within the relationship to Wieland, who can reflect, can respond to new information in more socially acceptable ways, and so can "cover" for his brother when social situations require it. Other reports about the brothers' lives and personalities tend to confirm Helmut's dependence on Wieland; but Canetti goes on to suggest that Wieland depended on Helmut as well: "Wieland's real power was his bond to this brother."[43] It was the complementary form, the quiet dynamic of the relationship that made the deepest impression on this particularly astute contemporary observer.

Wieland's very earliest statement regarding his own and his brother's art, written when he was just 19, had formulated the difference between the two as, approximately, Helmut's inherent readiness to act, versus Wieland's need for participation with others in order to act. Cited in Chapter

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[42] Canetti, "Die Brüder," Die Fackel im Ohr, 1993 (1980), 251-254.

[43] "Wielands eigentliche Kraft war die Bindung an diesen Bruder." (Canetti, Die Fackel im Ohr, 255).

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III in connection with the articulation of the brothers' personal relationship, the letter now reads as a strangely prescient insight into the structural interdependence of their two bodies of work:

> When I come into contact with other people and their fates, I myself become independent. I can only live when another life touches mine. That's why I attached myself to you so early, you who carried life in you from the time you were small...[For me] Ideas only come alive through all the concepts that confront me from outside...Only then they are no longer ideas, but perceptions. One could draw the distinction: your art expresses feelings, mine makes perceptions conscious. You'll notice how the two words differ...
>
> the question to you is: to what extent are the parts of your being brought to bear on an impersonal, that is, an immortal form. You have better prospects of becoming immortal than I do, inasmuch as it depends, in your case, only on the development of a form of expression...[44]

Wieland here attributes to his brother an intrinsic

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[44] Wiesbaden, March 28, 1914. Wieland-Herzfelde-Archiv, Berlin. Reprinted in Leben und Werk, 320-1 [ommissions as in Herzfelde's text]. ...Wenn ich in Reibung gerate mit dem Sturm der übrigen Menschen und ihrer Schicksale, so werde ich selber selbständig. Ich kann erst leben, wenn fremdes Leben mich berührt. Darum habe ich mich schon so klein an dich geschlossen der Du Leben in dir trugst von klein auf...Du schreibst im Gegensatz zu mir so wenig Briefe...Alle Begriffe, die von aussen an mich herankommen, machen erst die Gedanken lebendig. Dann sind es aber keine Gedanken mehr, sondern Empfindungen. Man könnte den Unterschied machen: Deine Kunst ist die Äußerung von Gefühle, meine das Bewußtwerden von Empfindungen...Du wirst merken, worin sich die zwei Wörter unterscheiden...

Bei Dir muß man fragen: In welchem Maß sind die Stücke Deines eigenen Wesens auf eine unpersönliche, d.h. unsterbliche Form gebracht. Du hast mehr Aussicht, unsterblich zu werden als ich, insofern, als es bei Dir nur von der Entwicklung der Ausdrucksform abhängt.

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productivity called "life." This "life" needs only to be engaged with material, with form in order to become durable, immortal. He, the writer Wieland, does not possess this "life" on his own; in order to "live," in the sense of gaining a material presence, having an effect, he must attach himself to others. Somewhat remarkably, Wieland supports his contention with the observation that he himself writes many more letters than Helmut does. The need to write letters, that is, seems to signify an absence of inherent "life," and a consequent dependence on other people. A certain envy, finally, seems to underlie Wieland's observation that his brother stands the better chance at "immortality" exactly because of his direct engagement with "immortal form" ("unsterbliche Form").

The letter was written about a year before the Herzfeld brothers met George Grosz. As Wieland later wrote,

> Through Grosz's efforts we stopped seeing the everyday world as sober, banal and boring, and henceforth saw it as a drama in which stupidity, crudity and sloth played the starring roles.[45]

This passage, also cited in Chapter III in connection with the dynamics of the interpersonal triangle that bound the

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[45] Herzfelde, "Dada und die Folgen..." 1971, Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 1981, 78. Grosz aber bewirkte, daß wir fortan die alltägliche Welt nicht mehr als nüchtern, banal und langweilig empfanden, sondern als ein Drama, in dem Dummheit, Roheit und Fäulnis die Hauptrolle spielten.

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Herzfelds to Grosz, clearly represents a change in consciousness, a sudden new awareness that "the everyday world" itself constitutes a kind of theater, a collaborative performance. From this new standpoint, the kind of division that Wieland had outlined in his earlier letter was suspended. Abruptly, there was no more reason to agonize over who had the better prospect for immortality, for the point was to work together to immortalize Grosz's work. In the new configuration, both brothers cheerfully--one might even say ecstatically--abandoned their respective, reflective--and lonely--"artistic" personas. In Wieland's writing, the distinction between "my brother" and "I" dissolves: instead "we" respond to "him" and "his work" with apparently identical "love," "joy" and "excitement".

Among their responses to this pleasurable suspension of self was a desire to extend it as widely as possible. Both brothers immediately understood print as the means of doing so. The reasons for this are not immediately apparent, but may be recoverable, at least in Wieland's case, by reference to his construction of a family past. At the time the Herzfelds met George Grosz, the family story was almost certainly still in formation. There was the father's history of radical political engagement; there was also, and perhaps more prominent in the brother's consciousness at that point, the knowledge of the father's public identity, established in

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writing and publication under the pseudonym "Held," meaning "hero." This public identity was undoubtedly more attractive, more admissible into the developing narrative of their own past than the father's perhaps largely unknown, but evidently catastrophic private life. Writing and publishing, then, would have presented a route of positive connection to a long-absent father, a field in which to achieve identity with respect to him--in Freudian terms, to overcome him. In the context of this shadowy, distant father, in fact, a number of the Herzfeld brothers' distinctive traits become more readily legible: not only the steadfast engagement with print, but the devaluing of private experience, the adoption of pseudonyms, the construction, finally, of a bona fide hero.

The hero Heartfield, however, was identical with neither Helmut nor Wieland independently; this solution was rather available only on condition of more or less constant collaboration according to established "rules," among them a prohibition against either ever becoming truly independent of the other. Helmut "acted out" the prohibition quite explicity by always working in collaboration with others; Wieland's position was less clear-cut: while apparently acting quite independently, he published memoirs and criticism, theoretical arguments condemning the artistic concern with self. This is the subject, for example, of his early (1921)

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essay "Künstler, Gesellschaft, Kommunismus" [46] and of "Die Kunst ist in Gefahr," written jointly with Grosz.[47] But he did not engage in that aspect of literary work which has consistently signalled "creative writing" in the twentieth century, namely formal experimentation in language. More precisely, he did so only in his collaboration with Helmut. This exception, significantly, appeared prominently in the short list of writing he himself cast as his "own," in contrast to the essays, criticism, and promotional material that formed to bulk of his work after the encounter with Grosz in 1915.[48]

A Freudian analysis might suggest that in Helmut's case, in particular, the profound trauma of the parents' disappearance--inevitably the sense of guilt, however unfair and unfounded--simply, literally did not bear thinking about. Helmut's highly unusual, explosive temperament, then, would represent a vast compensation, a fierce defense against the pain of such reflection, extending to many other things in addition to the family trauma itself. An obvious liability in many ways, manifesting itself first in substantial difficulties with

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[46] Fähnders, W. and Rector, M., Literatur im Klassenkamp[sic]. Zur proletarisch-revolutionären Literaturtheorie 1919-1923. Eine Dokumentation. Munich, 1971, 124-149. Reprinted in Siepmann, Montage: John Heartfield, 1977, 57-61.

[47] Berlin: Malik Verlag, 1925.

[48] Herzfelde, "Dada und die Folgen," 1971, Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 79.

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authority in school, church, and home, Helmut was deeply at odds with conventions, social forms, and so in a position to invent new ones. Wieland's defense was different in character--it specifically involved the building of a continuous explanatory narrative, a story that masked the painful aspects and showcased a logical and reasonable continuity in the family's life. This was certainly a far more socially "acceptable" adaptation; it demanded, however, that meanings be cast in quite conventional forms.

In the absence, or complete inadequacy of the flesh-and-blood father, the Herzfeld brothers were left with a "Held," or hero, a pseudonym or stage-name. Heartfield, the "son" who actually succeeded in becoming a hero, was, like that father, the bearer of a pseudonym. "Heartfield" even reproduced the father's name. And like a deliberate, reasoned reproduction of the remembered "Held," "Heartfield" stood for a wholly public entity, a construction in print, a larger-than-life figure whose requirements exhausted his merely mortal constituents.

It was in the shared encounter with Grosz, significantly, that the Herzfelds first grasped the possibility of such a constructed heroic subject. Grosz, with his assurance, his confident masculinity presented the Herzfelds with a suitable "screen," on which the relationship to a "hero" father could

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at last be projected. At the same time, Grosz embodied another kind of revelation, namely of the manipulability of signs, the infinite malleability of words, gestures, names, and so the possibility of building such pieces into a new identity. Because of the brothers' unusual relationship to one another, and because the encounter with Grosz occurred under such polarized social and political circumstances, the moment took on an almost overwhelming significance. Political, artistic, and personal issues seemed suddenly to converge on this one figure.

Heartfield's repeated rejection of a reflective, introspective state of mind, his continual pursuit of conditions in which internal reflection could be suspended, dissolved in interaction with others, repeatedly rejected both Wieland's and Helmut's former--and recurrent--selves, personalities so emotionally tied to one another as to be functionally, even perceptually disabled. To become Heartfield was to reproduce, again and again, the moment when Grosz and his work once transformed Helmut and Wieland from anxious isolation "into a state of delirious happiness" ("in einen rauschhaften Glückszustand").[49]

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[49] Herzfelde, "Dada und die Folgen..." 1971. Reprinted in März, Der Schnitt, 1981, 79.

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VII. Media Artist

The preceding chapters examined John Heartfield from two quite different perspectives: the heroic photomonteur of the A.-I.-Z. (Chapter V.), and the process of production, the collaborative pattern through which the heroic figure was continually produced and reproduced (Chapter VI.) These two perspectives can be identified, roughly, as reception--the position of the audience, the "expected" or "anticipated" view--and production--the position of the artist. Such a break, or difference could arguably be established for any artist; but in Heartfield's case the contrast is unusually stark: an apparently unified, coherent figure from the audience's standpoint becomes, from "behind the scenes," an ongoing collaboration.

This same difference in perspective, between reception and production, lies behind the division in the Heartfield literature--the distinction between "participatory" and "critical" literature sketched in Chapter II. Wieland's biography, John Heartfield: Leben und Werk, a clear example of participatory literature, constructs its subject from the standpoint of the audience. Wieland actually stated this position quite clearly in the course of certain reflections on the absence of a Heartfield "school":

> Although a number of graphic artists call

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> themselves his students, Heartfield's photomontages hardly produced a school. We tried to explain it to ourselves from time to time. No doubt there are several reasons. Absorption and obsession were the conditions of his technique, as well as his handling of pictorial and textual ideas. But the most profound reason was no doubt this: in Heartfield political clarity and agitatorial will was seamlessly united with pictorial gifts and a revolutionary temperament. This unlearnable disposition turned the discoverer of a new technique into the creator of a new kind of picture which, in contrast to almost all of those who claim this status, also is new in its effect. Whoever looks at Heartfield's photomontages is affected, no matter what his conception of art might be.[1]

The description relies heavily on the passive voice: Heartfield doesn't so much possess pictorial gifts and revolutionary temperament, the qualities of "absorption" and "obssession," as he is possessed by them--they turn him from an inventor into a creator. Wieland went on to locate the innovation in Heartfield's work firmly at the point of reception, in the eye or mind of the audience, rather than in the eye or mind of the artist: it is the effect that counts.

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[1] Herzfelde, Leben und Werk, 52. Heartfields Fotomontagen haben--obgleich einige Graphiker sich seine Schüler nennen--kaum Schule gemacht. Wir haben öfter versucht, es uns zu erklären. Es hatte wohl mehere Gründe. Seine Technik setzte Besonnenheit und Besessenheit voraus, ebenso die Bemühungen um die Bild- und Textideen. Der tiefste Grund war aber wohl der: in Heartfield waren politische Klarheit und agitatorischer Wille mit bildnerischer Gabe und revolutionären Temperament nahrlos verschmolzen. Diese nicht erlernbare Voraussetzung machte den Entdecker einer neuen Technik zum Schöpfer neuartiger Bilder, die im Gegensatz zu fast allem, was sich so nennt, neu auch in ihrer Wirkung sind. Wer immer Heartfields Fotomontagen genenübersteht, wird davon ergriffen, was immer er sich unter Kunst vorstellen mag.

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Leben und Werk constructs Heartfield, as we have seen, as the vehicle for a set of overt political messages, the "voice" of the Communist Party. The Heartfield that lay behind such a reading, which virtually all subsequent commentary has confirmed, was a committed and compliant Communist, reproducing the Party's official position at any given moment in quickly graspable form, admonishing his readers to work together, step by step, within the Party's own channels to abolish opressive systems of power and create a new, more equitable society. This manifest Heartfield, the loyal, "lifelong" Communist, was a man whose every decision seems explainable on the basis of this loyalty, whose life was the very model of consistency, logic, and predictability embodied in the German adjective, konsequent. This was a figure available, fully perceptible only to his audience.

The preceding chapter in particular represented an effort to move out of this framework of reception--out of the audience, that is, and around to a point from which Heartfield's production process--the desperate press of time, the pooling of ideas, the constant response to circumstances and issues--comes into view. Only from this point does Heartfield actually become comparable to other modern artists, virtually all of whom have been studied for their choices, decisions, reflections, working process--their identity as producers of objects. It is from this standpoint that biographical

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information becomes relevant, and that the pervasive presence of collaborators becomes apparent. Under these circumstances, too, the question of Heartfield's accomplishment within a particular medium arises.

But exactly from the standpoint of production, in fact, the rigid konsequenz of the Communist artist gives way to another pattern, or better, another logic, with different founding moment. Heartfield's embrace of photographs, type, film, and theater precede his embrace of Communism by nearly four years. Perhaps more importantly, the movement from one situation to the next corresponds to a dynamic of personal relationships, rather than to a developing social or political perception. For Heartfield clearly became Heartfield in the wake of the encounter with Grosz, who showed him everyday life as drama, who treated clothing, gestures, accents, patterns of speech--even his own identity--as manipulable signs, not "natural" or inevitable, but constructed, controlled. One might restate this perception as a recognition that such signs are not mystical or in any way beyond understanding, but rigorously material.

For Helmut Herzfeld, in any case, this single perception opened a wide range of possibilities, including a wholesale reinvention of public persona. The condition for doing so was an abandonment of artistic and literary idealism, of any faint

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hope that an artist might somehow transmit a meaning that would transcend the human boundaries of time and space, the limits of everyday perception. Helmut did accept these conditions. In fact Heartfield--the collaborative, performing, producing structure, as opposed to the performed, konsequent Communist--is usefully framed as the logical consequences of exactly such acceptance.

In a recent collection of essays on postmodern culture, Marxist literary historian Frederic Jameson helpfully proposed that the loss of an idealized concept of culture--just the sort of loss experienced by the Herzfeld brothers in their encounter with Grosz--is historically preserved, embedded, in our contemporary use of the word media:

> Capitalism, and the modern age, is a period in which, with the extinction of the sacred and the "spiritual," the deep underlying materiality of all things has finally risen dripping and convulsive into the light of day; and it is clear that culture itself is one of those things whose fundamental materiality is now for us not merely evident but quite inescapable. This has, however, also been a historical lesson: it is because culture has become material that we are now in a position to understand that it always was material, or materialistic, in it structure and functions. We postcontemporary people have a word for that discovery--a word that has tended to displace the older language of genres and forms--and this is, of course, the word medium, and in particular its plural, media a word which now conjoins three relatively distinct signals: that of an artistic mode or specific form of aesthetic production, that of a specific technology, generally organized around a central apparatus or machine; and that, finally, of a social institution. These three areas of meaning do not define a medium, or the

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> media, but designate the distinct dimensions that must be addressed in order for such a definition to be completed or constructed. It should be evident that most traditional and modern aesthetic concepts--largely, but not exclusively designed for literary texts--do not require this simultaneous attention to the multiple dimensions of the material, the social and the aesthetic.[2]

If Helmut's encounter with Grosz can be identified as a firm, lasting acceptance of the materiality of culture, the pattern of his subsequent choices becomes legible as the articulation of a specific medium as Jameson describes it here, a practice with material, esthetic and social dimensions. The medium in question, further, becomes specificable as print.

The most direct, immediate consequence of Helmut's encounter with Grosz was technical, or material: the abandoning paint and pen in favor of photographs, type, and the technical apparatus mechanical reproduction--the technologies, in a word, of print. The esthetic dimension of Heartfield's medium, finally, can be described in terms of a dissatisfaction, a chafing against the sensory limitations of print. In Chapters IV. and V. in particular, Heartfield's various engagements with media--film, theater, graphic design--all ultimately related to print. More exactly, they related to a tension between the usual, rather narrowly visual demands of print and the possibilites of engaging the audience in

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[2] Frederic Jameson, "Video: Surrealism Without the Unconscious," Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991, 67.

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hearing, or even tactile perceptions, a performative situation. In Chapter IV., in particular, the theater work was identified as the point of greatest distance from the direct production of printed material simultaneously underway at the Malik Verlag; yet it too, invariably made use of photographs and type, the constituent materials of print. The analysis in Chapter V. showed how the photomontages projected Heartfield as a challenger, disturber, underminer of the conventional operations of print. Chapter VI. pursued this tension further, linking it specifically to the relationship between the Herzfeld brothers, Wieland ostensibly representing the positive values of print, Helmut conversely operating in the mode of an everlasting dissatisfaction, a desire to demonstrate the indequacies, the fallacies of printed representation (This is not at all to suggest that the two men were antagonistic to one another, rather that that the complex tensions between them were regularly stated and resolved in the spectrum of possible meanings associated with these two positions, roughly pro-print and anti-print.).

The social dimension of Heartfield's medium, at first a passionate but vague opposition to war, was cast a few years later into the recognizable "mold" of the Communist Party. His relationship to the organization was chronically troubled, perhaps exactly because his practice clearly embodied an effort--more radical in some respects than the contemporary

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goals of the Party itself--to join the audience, to break down the boundaries of distinct personalities, to effect a truly collaborative form of communication.

Writing with the benefit of roughly a decade of experience with widespread electronic communications, media historian Marshall McLuhan began his well-known 1962 study The Gutenberg Galaxy,[3] with a quite detailed reflection on the "culture of print." Drawing both on historical data and on "before-and-after" studies of contemporary people who had grown up in "oral" cultures and later learned to read printed texts, he attempted to specify the effects, the personal and social impact of literacy. As complex as it is, McLuhan contended, print culture[4] can be related to a particular form of perception, and more specifically to an characteristic ordering of the various senses readers use to apprehend the world. Readers, at least during the time they are actually reading, must subordinate their entire perceptual apparatus to the sense of sight. In fact the more completely any one individual can make and maintain this privileging of vision, this complete abandonment of any association with sound in the act of reading, the more efficient that reader will be.

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[3] Marshall McLuhan, The Gutenberg Galaxy, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962.

[4] He limits this to instances in which spoken language is transcribed in alphabetic form. Printing in China or Japan, for example, which did not involve an alphabet, did not produce the same effects.

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Once the privileging of vision is well learned, McLuhan continues, it leads readers to organize the data of all their sense perceptions according to the model of vision. This is highly significant, because whereas one hears sounds, for example, within a field of perceptibility--a model which potentially includes many, or at least more than one other listener--vision operates on the idea of a surface: visual perceptions, McLuhan suggests, are ordered hierarchically, the privileged position being a single point behind the eyes of the seer. In societies in which print serves as the primary mode of communication, that is, conditions are in place for the idea of a self-sufficient, centered self--the point from which the world becomes comprehensible--to flourish.

All this becomes noticable, of course, in retrospect, from a point outside, or beyond the edge of the object under consideration--in this case, print culture. In McLuhan's case, the requisite boundary is provided by the advent of electronic communications media. McLuhan's ecstatic embrace of the new media, especially television, his utopian predictions of a harmonious "global village," are well known, but arguably not the most admirable or valuable aspect of his work. It is in any case his more modest linking of these media with specific forms of perception--an "audio-tactile" or "field" of communication as opposed to the model of a surface characteristic of print culture--which bears more readily on

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the issue of Heartfield's historical significance.

The time of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933), Heartfield's "formative years," were marked by a rapid expansion of existing communications technologies--notably print. It was also the moment when new, "time-based" communications media became familiar features of everyday life throughout Europe and the United States. The reception of the new media in Germany, that is, represents one specific instance of a larger historical pattern, a shift--still underway at present--in the relative significance of print.

As described particularly in the analysis of the photomontages in Chapter V., Heartfield's engagement with print was marked by an almost constant challenge to the privileging of vision. Without ever fully abandoning type and photographs, it forced the the medium to its limits, asking readers to figuratively "hear," to estimate space, to extend their sense perceptions beyond the ordinary requirements of print, to enter more broadly into a perceptual field, the space of a dramatic encounter, rather than scanning, left to right, line to line. These contrasting forms of perception, in turn, figured the political distinction between "comrades" (Communists) and "Cabbageheads" (loosely, the enemies of Communists, who included less radical socialists, nationalists, capitalists and Nazis). Heartfield's practice simultaneously opposed,

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that is, the reading of print, the privileging of vision, and a social fabric linking autonomous, "private" individuals together in hierarchical structures--the same factors that McCluhan identified, some twenty years later, as characterizing the culture of print.

Heartfield coupled his work in print with experience in the performing arts, specifically cabaret and theater. Transposed into the newspaper, however, the "audio-tactile" perception of a stage performance comes to ressemble that required of a "broadcast" medium. Heartfield's work, that is, assumes a perceptual mode suited to--anticipatory of--the reception of electronic communications, particularly the sound-over-image now familiar from broadcast television.[5]

In his remarkably comprehensive scheme of things, McLuhan provided artists with a social role: an artist, in his estimation, is someone who is habitually observant of his or her own sense perception. Exactly for this reason, he or she is the only person in any given society who is in a position

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[5] The parallels between Heartfield's work and television seem stronger to me than those between his work and, for example, film. This is perhaps mainly because it is not film but television which today, as the illustrated newspaper of the 1930s, is the medium through which current news reports are distributed. But it also seems that from the viewer's standpoint, Heartfield's photomontages constituted "episodes" in an ongoing representation, more like installments of a serial drama or regular news bulletins--e.g., conventional television formats--than like the temporally bounded, and often "authored" construction of popular films.

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to accurately grasp the implications of a new medium, which become apparent by way of its specific demands on our sense perception. The artist's social task, then, is to show us the perceptual skills or tools we need to negotiate our present and future.[6] This framework, in any case, offers a convenient way of establishing Helmut's identity as an artist: he was constantly trying to show his collaborators how to see--and hear and taste--as Heartfield did (Chapter VI.), according to contemporary reports; the finished photomontages (Chapter V.), too, position their readers as seers, hearers, and tasters, as well as viewers of contemporary events. The performed Heartfield then becomes identifiable as one who anticipates the consequences of the new media, including a radical shift in the underpinnings, the functioning of a "self."

A highly unusual, complicated and short-lived convergence of circumstances, then--the singular background of the brothers' earlier life and work, the extraordinary bond between them, the unusually fluid interactions among media, institutions and individuals in Berlin of the Weimar era were the conditions of Heartfield's--the media artist's--possibility. Under these specific conditions, the personal, political, esthetic and technical dimensions of print became intensely significant, the substance of an entire career. And specifically as the result of such an intense critical engagement with print, the

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[6] Understanding Media, 1994 (1964), 65-66.

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structure of another kind of culture came into view, a culture with a different ordering of perception and another, attendant construct of the individual.

The consequences of "withdrawal" from print, the experience of a society in which commonly requires something ressembling McLuhan's "audio-tactile" perception has grown more familiar to us than it was to the Herzfelds and their contemporaries. Among the many effects of this increasing familiarity is a tendency to aproach at least some kinds of art quite exclusively from the standpoint of reception:

> ...assigning individual authorship to a TV series is, for a variety of historical, economic and technical reasons, nearly impossible. Who, for instance, is the real author of the Star Trek series? With rosters of individuals working on a program over its lifetime, it is difficult to assign to a single individual the title and status of authorship
>
> The "implied author" of a television show, like that of a novel, is not a flesh-and-blood person but rather a textual construct, the viewer's sense of the organizing force behind the world of the show.[7]

Heartfield's performance of a media artist, most fully apparent as the "implied author" of the A.-I.-Z. photomontages, overlapped just slightly with the advent of

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[7] Sarah Kozloff, "Narrative Theory and Television," Channels of Discourse, Reassembled, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992, 78.

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broadcast television.[8] He never actually worked in the medium, although the photomontages do bear some striking similarities to situation dramas and comedies, constituting as they do a theoretically unlimited number of self-contained dramatic episodes that depend on characterization and situation for their continuity. The tendency to study, describe, assess media productions from the standpoint of their effect, their reception rather than their production, in any case, appears "built in" to the structure of media production itself, which invariably involves a collaborative structure, an "implied author" in whose production many people necessarily collaborate.

At this point the Herzfelds' question regarding the absence of a "school," or "followers," quoted above, can itself be seen as the result of a kind of confusion between the performed and the producing Heartfield, the heroic, konsequent Communist and the collaborative project: for surely no younger aspirant could be expected to reproduce the critical links between biography and practice that characterized Heartfield's performance: a utopian Communism grasped just at the heady moment of the Russian Revolution of 1917, an engagement with print that coincided with a abruptly new, wartime role for the newspapers, as well as a whole contrasting field of new communication technologies that would never again appear quite

[8] The first television broadcast occurred in 1936.

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so full of promise. Just over a half a century after his best-known work was completed, its central themes--the dogmatic antagonism between Communist and capitalist, the intrinsic link between capitalism and fascism--are comprehensible only with considerable supplementary information and intellectual effort. And in a social and political environment shaped as decisively by television and computer as by print, the now-familiar, print-based technique of photomontage itself can no longer evoke the excitement of a new technology, its promise of imminent change.

But the construction of Heartfield's identity as a man, a brother, an artist, a German and a Communist, his identification of private, inner experience with the condition of a political subject, his performance of a collective, collaborative artist function, offer other grounds for his continuing significance. And as an early instance the sort of "organizing force" Kozloff described in the passage quoted above, Heartfield has many, many "followers" among makers of media productions, designers of interactive installations, collaborators in all manner of artistic projects.

With Heartfield, then, the identity of a media artist, the pattern now familiar from films, advertisements, television programs, presciently confronts the model of artist as individual creator, inherited from centuries of art history,

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itself arguably arising in conjunction with print. Drawing the logical consequences of one single insight--namely that culture is material--Helmut Herzfeld directed, under the name "Heartfield," a remarkably confident, consistent performance of a media artist, and in doing so began to lay bare the mechanisms of artistic identity itself.

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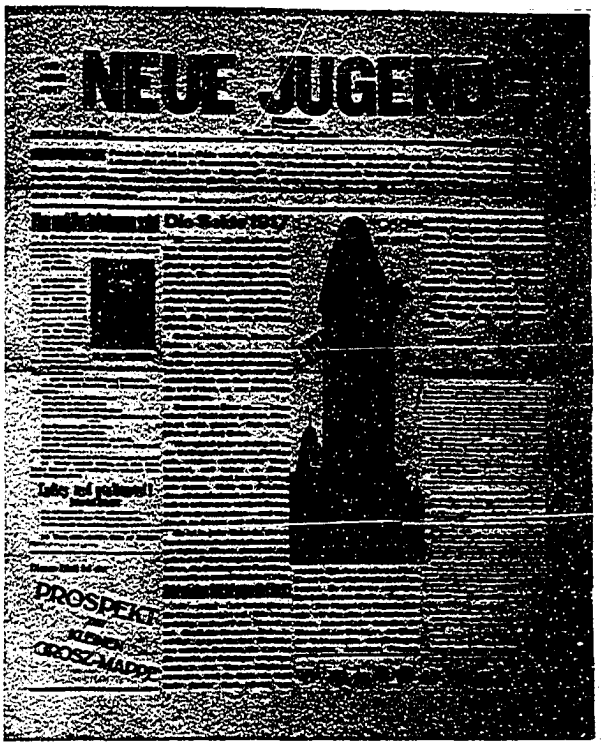

fig. 1

NEUE JUGEND
MONATSSCHRIFT
HERAUSGEBER HEINZ BARGER · SCHRIFTLEITER WIELAND HERZFELDE
SIEBTES HEFT JUNI ERSTES JAHR

AN DEN FRIEDEN.

O süßester Traum der streicht wie Sommer lind!
Doch bald mußt du wohl mehr sein als ein Ahnen.
Da blüht er auf wie kleinster Duft von Wind.
Ein Engel durch der Leichen Schlucht sich bahnend.

Dein Tag —: er wölbt! Die Stadt birst vor Geläut.
Der Sonne Fluß erbraust in jeder Straße.
Gemäuer hoch sprießt goldener Strahl-Efeu.
Fanfarenmünder Halleluja blasen.

Das Blutgefild verbaut zu weichem Beet,
Zu Wald und See mit Stern und Wolk darein.
Millionen Toter schwarze Fahne weht
Breit auf vom Grund. Zerpeitschte Lüfte schrein.

Wird sich ein Blitz zum Mord im Abend zücken!?
Nein. Menschen wallen Heilige im Chor.
Auf Promenaden mögt ihr Frauen pflücken.
Ein Bund von Freunden tritt im Platz hervor.

Ihr —: laßt uns gern vom ewigen Frieden reden!
Ja, wissend sehr, daß er Gestalt gewinnt
Noch süßester Traum nur. Unsere Hände jäten
Das Unkraut aus, das jenen Weg bespinnt.
Ertön o Wort, das gleich zur Tat gerinnt!
Das Wort muß wirken! Also laßt uns reden!!

Johannes R. Becher

fig. 2

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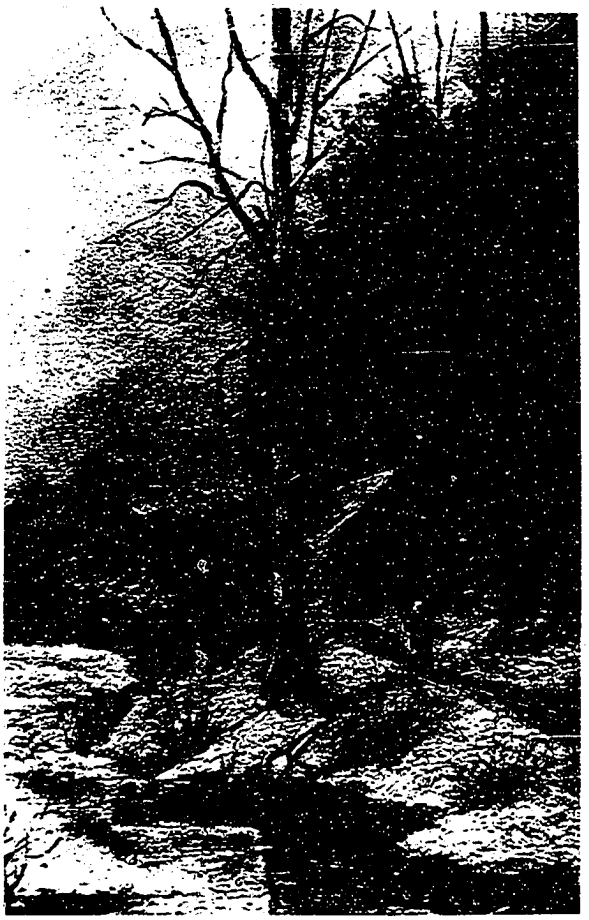

fig. 3

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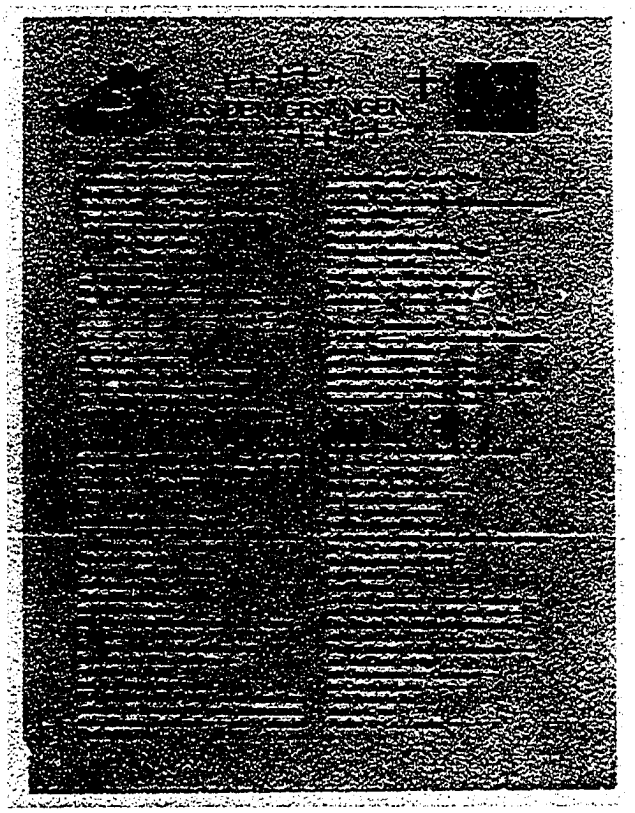

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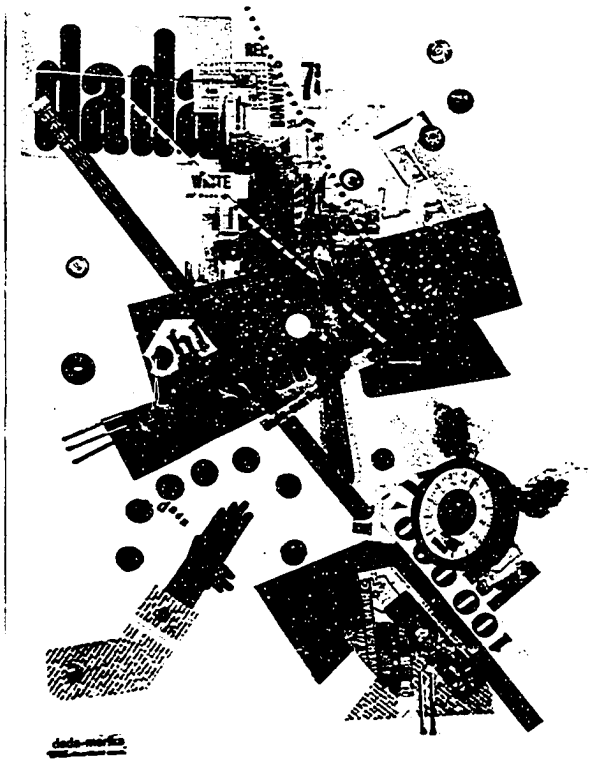

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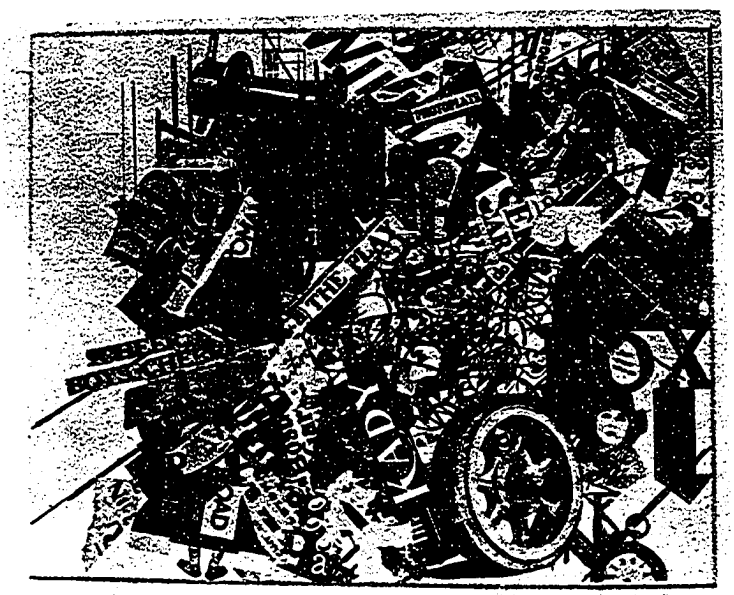

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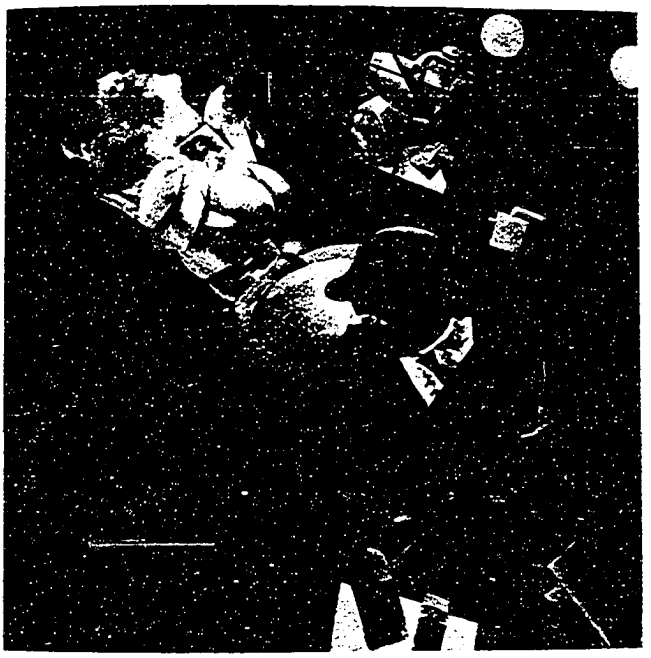

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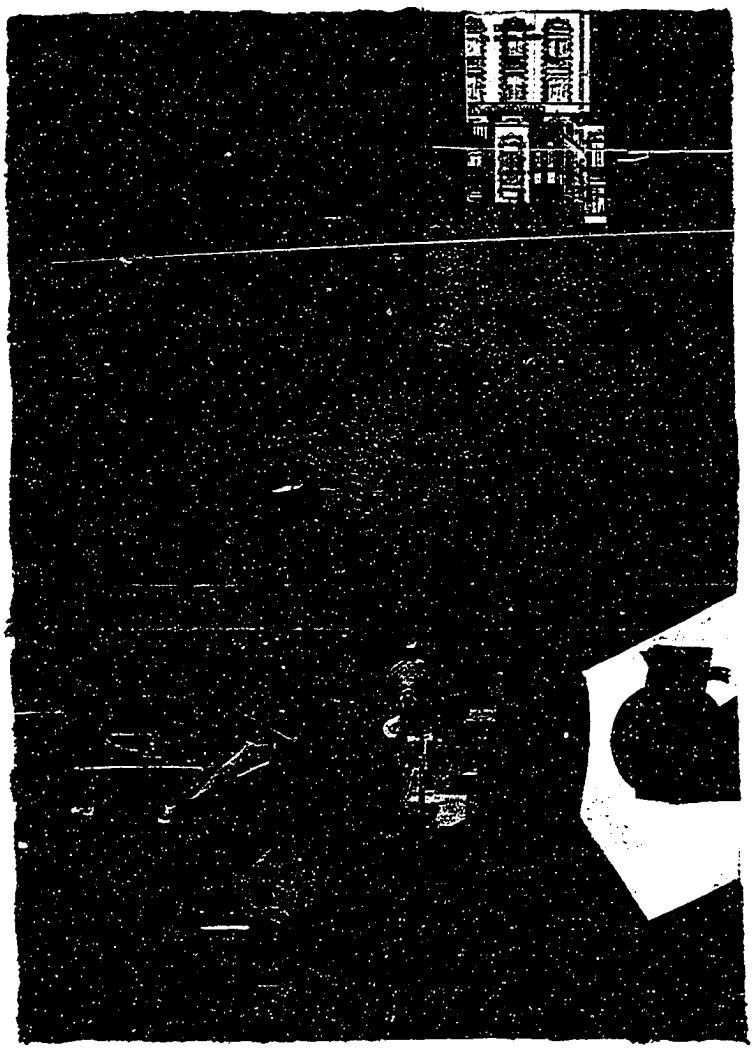

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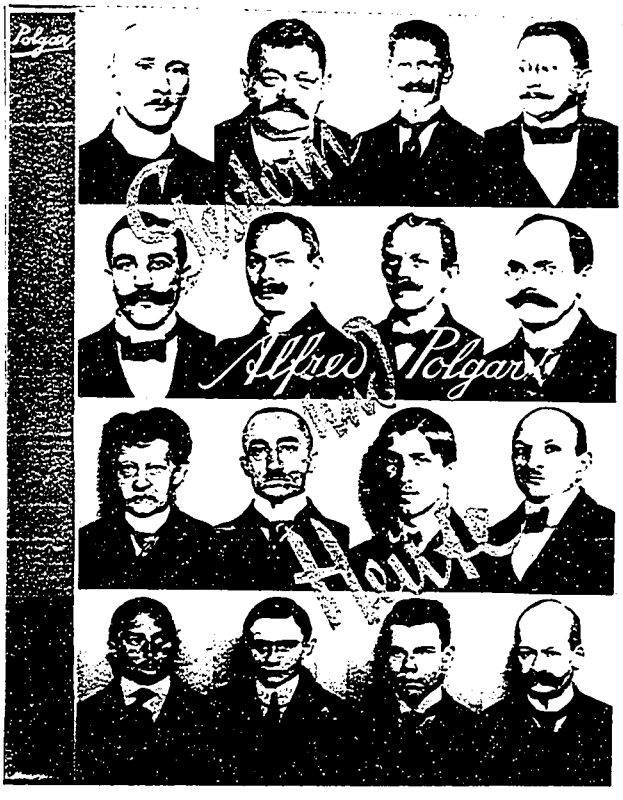

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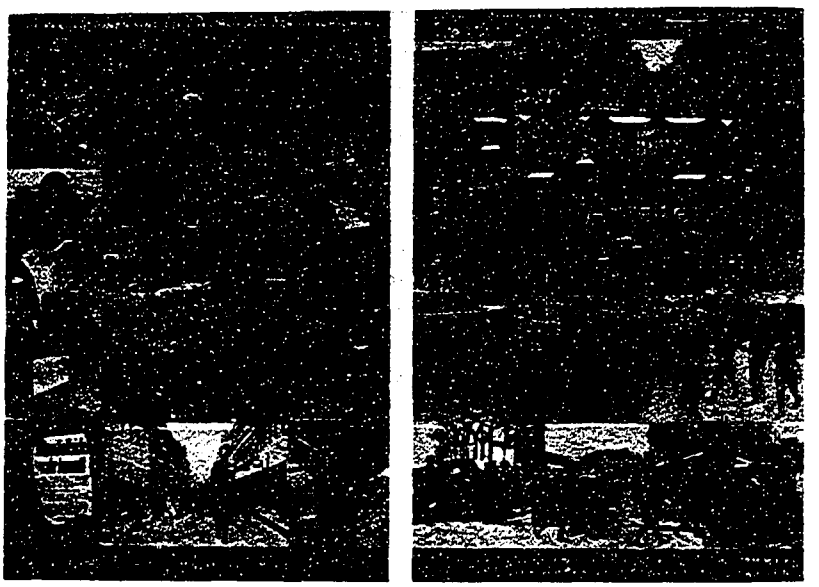

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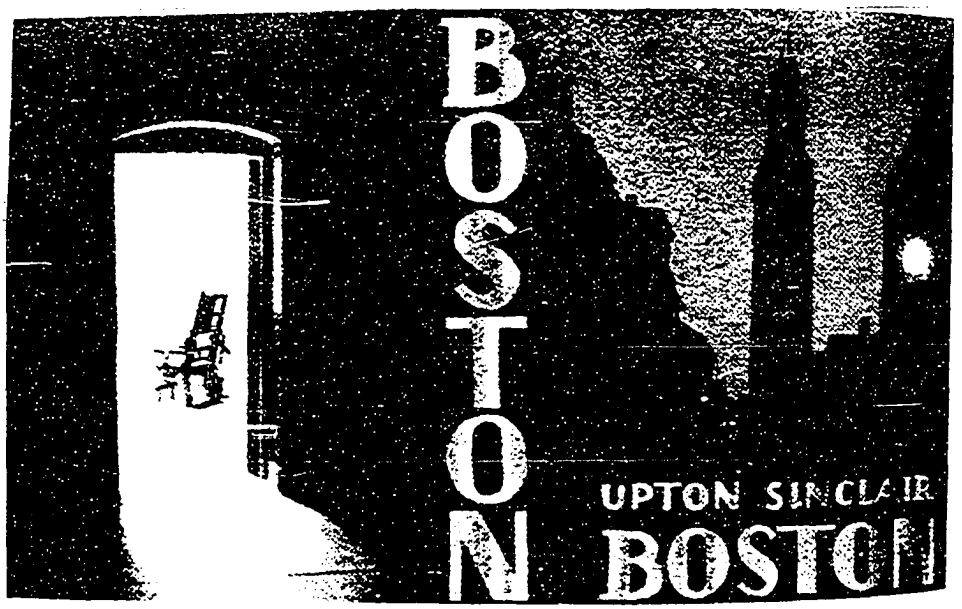
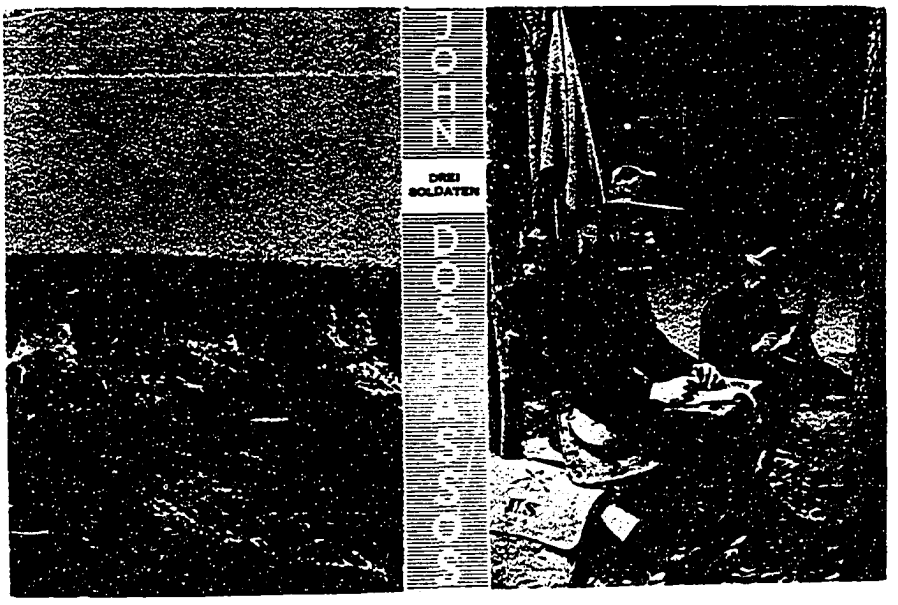


fig. 17



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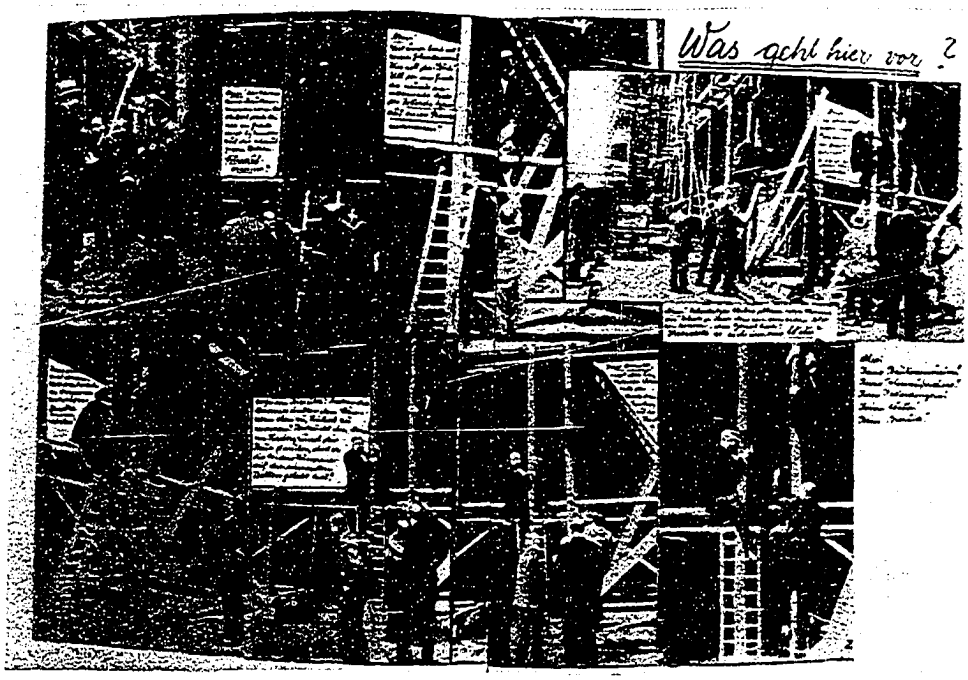

fig. 19

fig. 20

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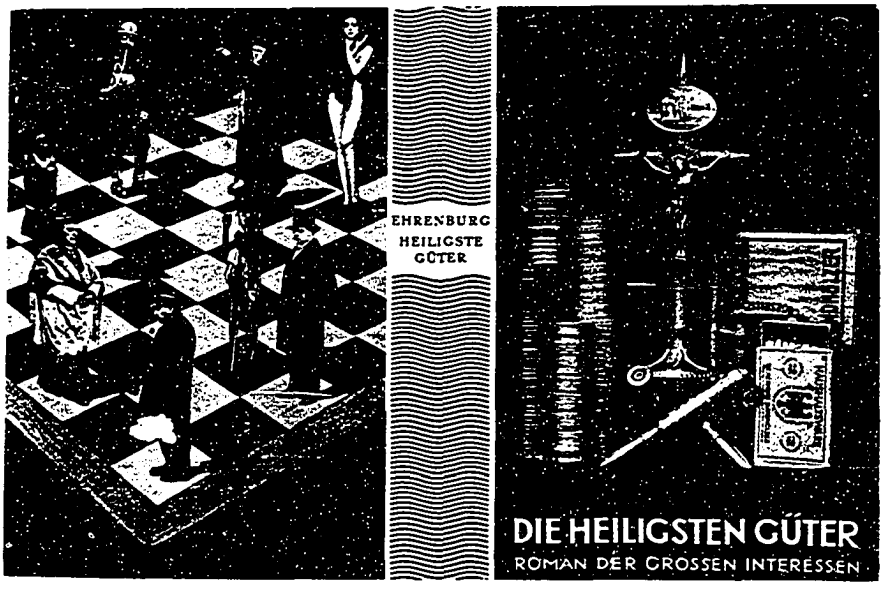

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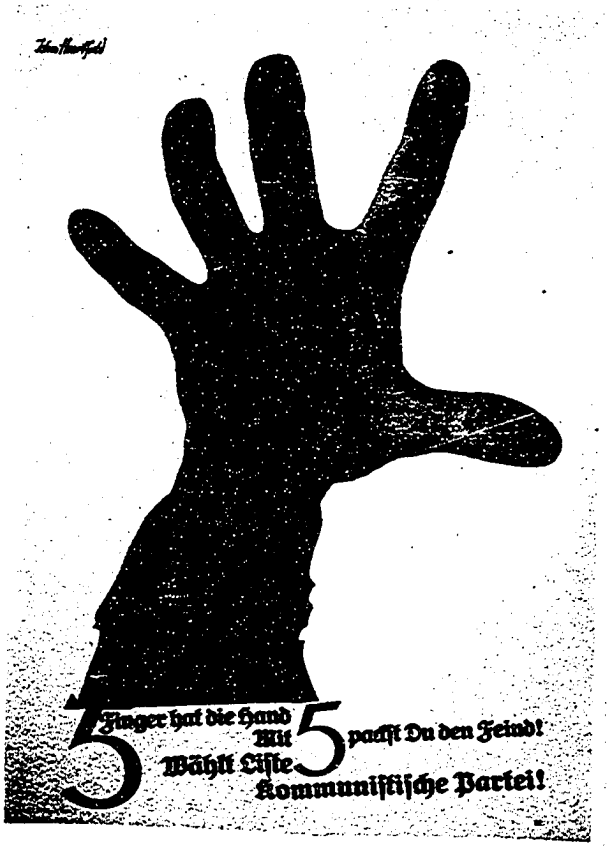

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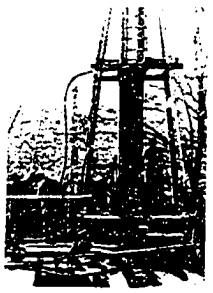
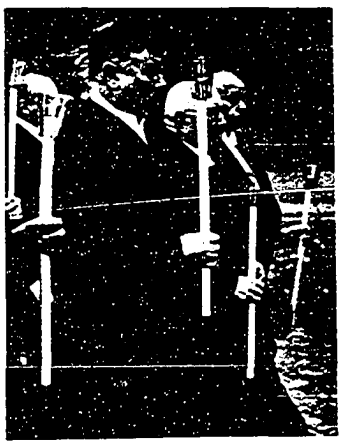


Statistik

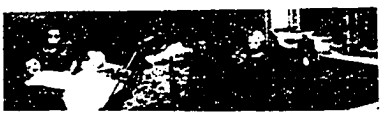
Wir sind ein armes Land
Ich, der gelernte Arbeiter
mit Frau und drei Kindern, arbeite 50 Tage im
Jahre nicht für mich –

oder 2 Tage arbeite
ich für die Reichs-
wehr und zwei
weitere Tage im
Jahre arbeite ich,
damit wir moderne
Polizei haben.



Einen halben Tag muß ich für die Kirche arbeiten, der
ich gar nicht mehr angehöre, und

eine Woche für die Beamten, für alle die vielen über-
flüssigen Beamten.
Dafür habe ich es dann mit der Kunst und Wissenschaft
leichter: das ist in 3 Stunden gemacht.
Wir sind ein armes Land!
Wir haben 2397933 Mark allein in Preußen für
Pferdezucht übrig und



wenig zu essen.

aber 23 980 Mark für die Seelsorge in der Reichswehr
und 21 600 Mark für die Umzüge unserer Botschafter
und Gesandten, denn wenn die nicht umzögen, was
hätten sie sonst zu tun? Und

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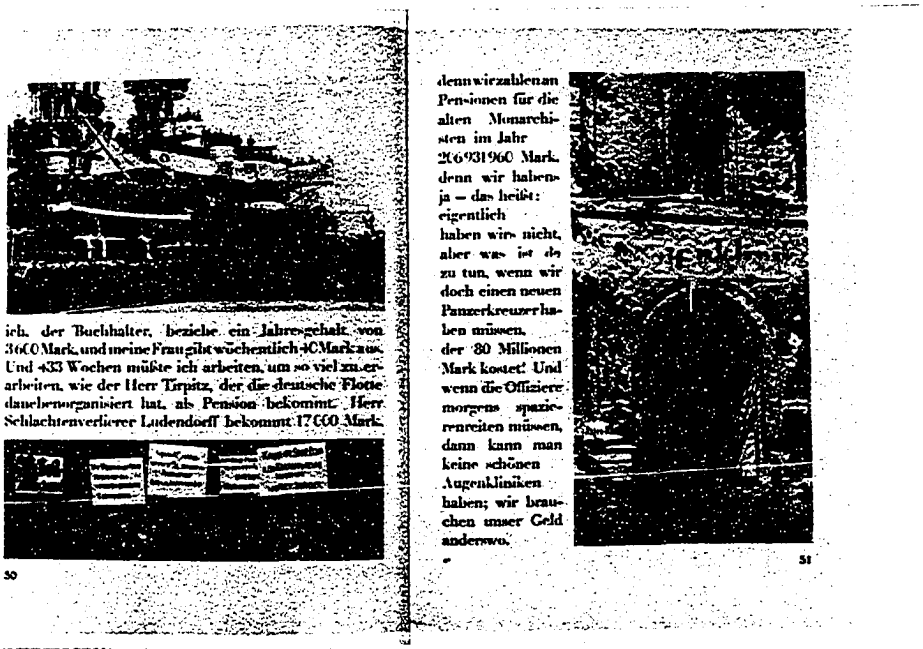

ich, der Buchhalter, beziehe ein Jahresgehalt von 3600 Mark und meine Frau gibt wöchentlich 3 Mark aus. Und 433 Wochen müßte ich arbeiten, um so viel zu erarbeiten, wie der Herr Tirpitz, der die deutsche Flotte dazuorganisiert hat, als Pension bekommt. Herr Schlachtenverlierer Ludendorff bekommt 17 000 Mark.

50

denn wir zahlen an Pensionen für die alten Monarchisten im Jahr 206 931 960 Mark, denn wir haben ja – das heißt: eigentlich haben wir nicht, aber was ist da zu tun, wenn wir doch einen neuen Panzerkreuzer haben müssen, der 80 Millionen Mark kostet! Und wenn die Offiziere morgens spazierenreiten müssen, dann kann man keine schönen Augenkliniken haben; wir brauchen unser Geld anderswo.

51

fig. 24 (c)

fig. 25

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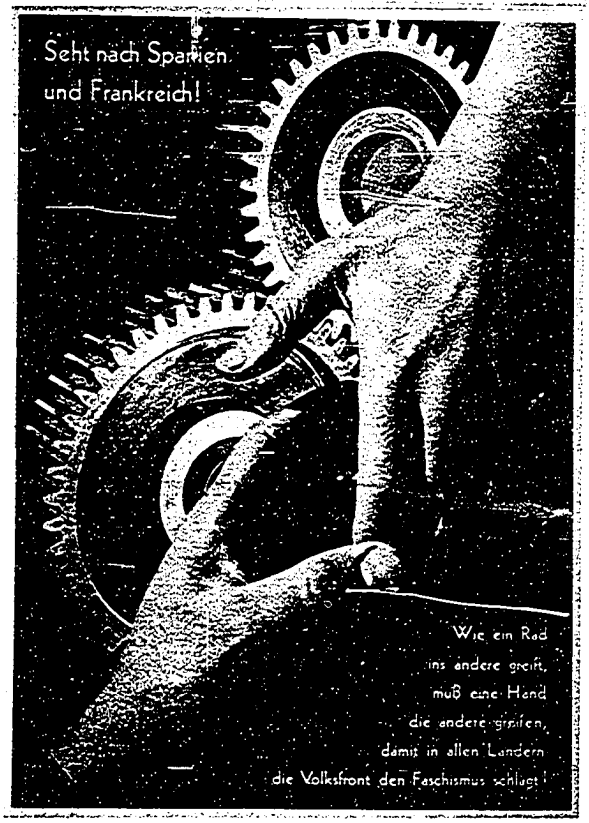

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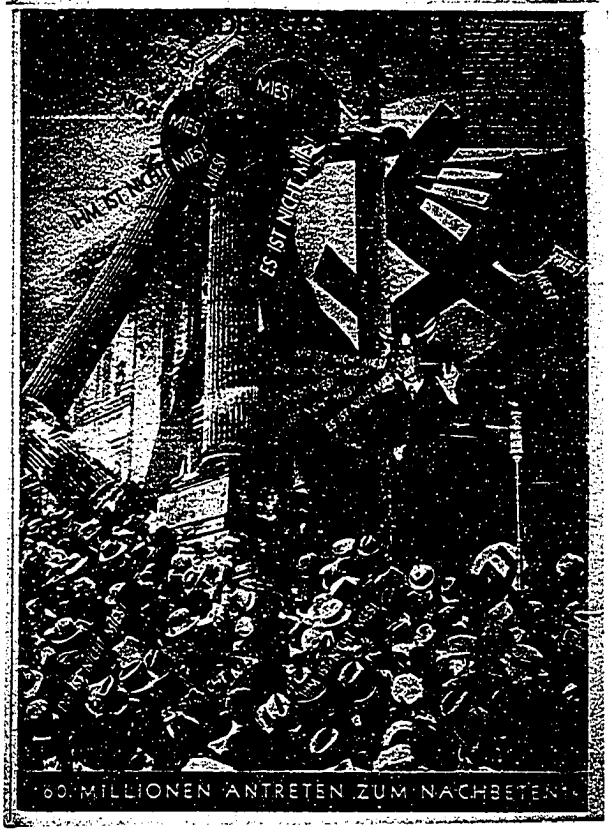

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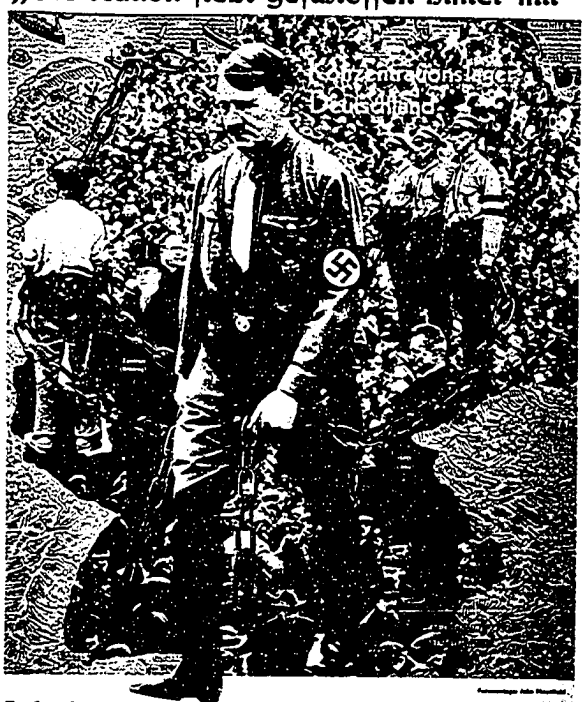
fig. 42

„Die Nation ſteht geſchloſſen hinter mir"



Ich kenne keine Parteien mehr,
Ich kenne nur noch Gefangene!

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fig. 44

fig. 45

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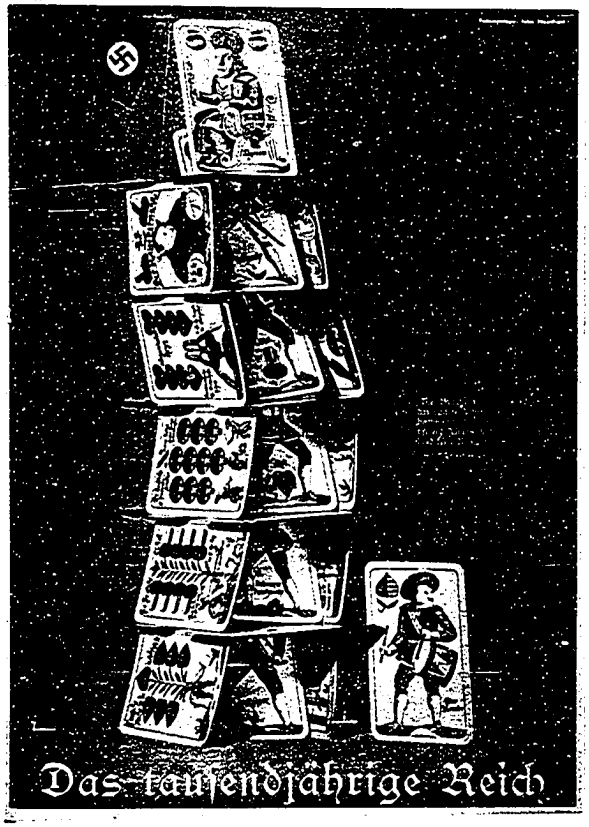

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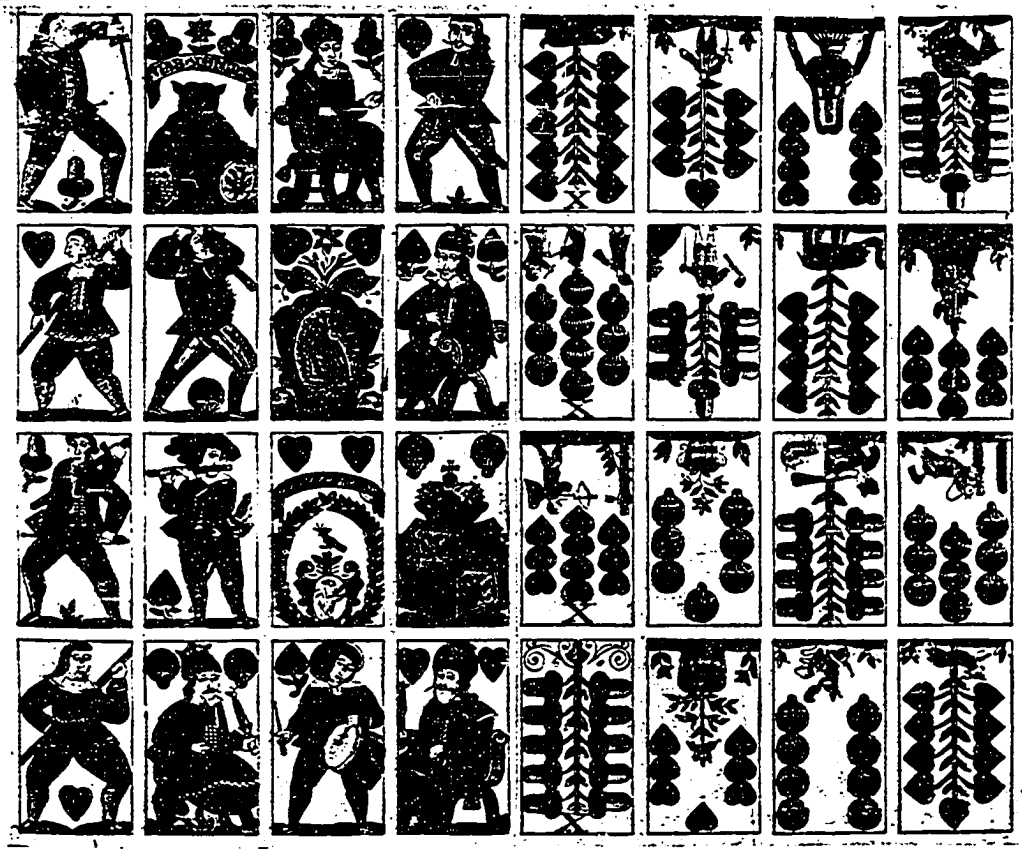

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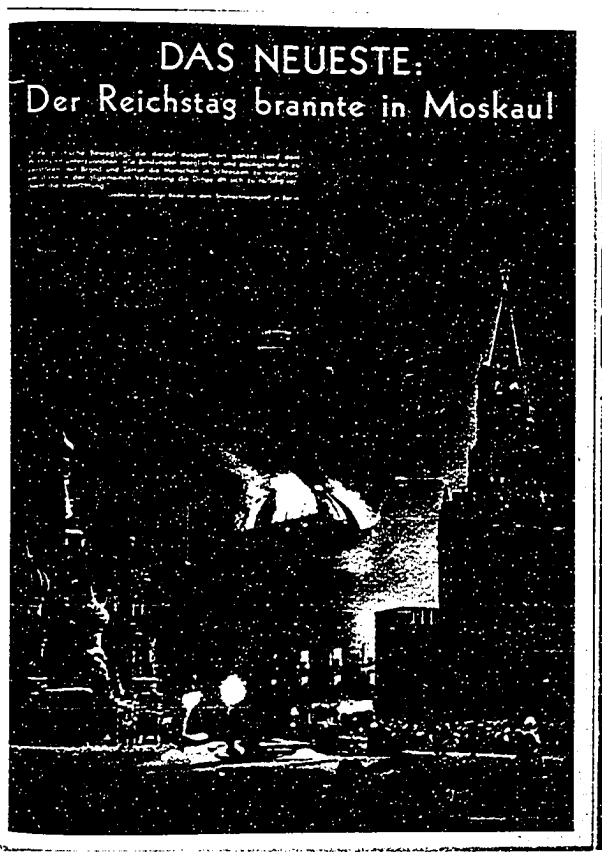

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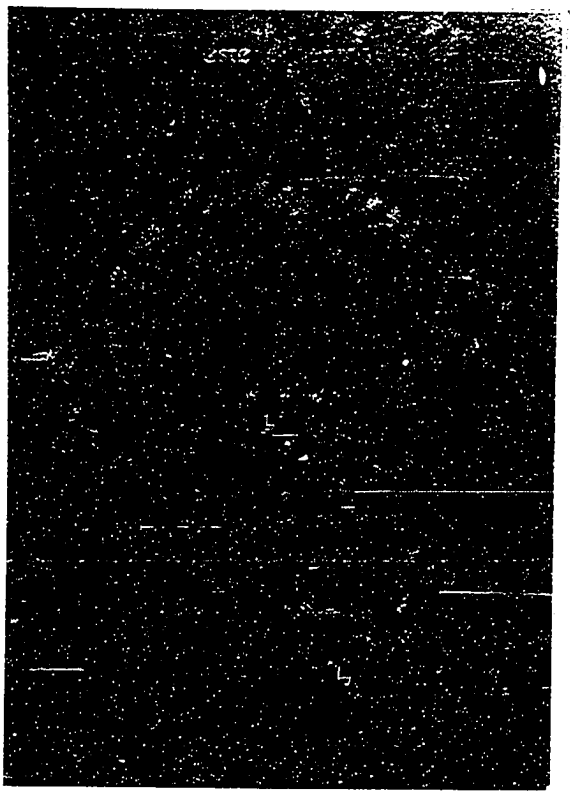

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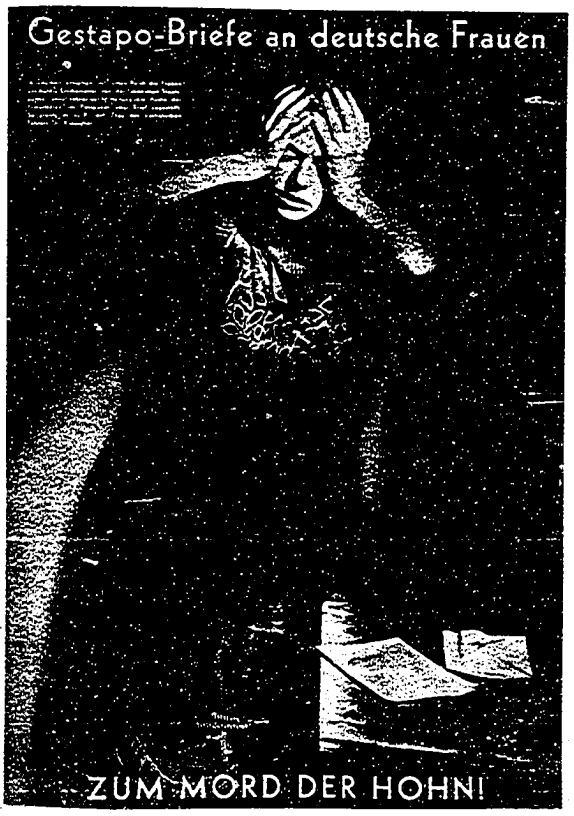

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