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COLLAGE-PHOTOMONTAGE : JOHN HEARTFIELD

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about photomontage. It discusses the origins of photomontage and the work of one of its greatest exponents, John Heartfield.

Following on from Picasso's first collages in 1912, artists such as Hans Arp and Kurt Schwitters continued to add a variety of materials to the surfaces of their art works. Additionally, other artists associated with the Dada Movement, such as Hannah Höch and Raoul Hausmann, began to include photographic materials into their collage work as well. The use of photographs exclusively comprising a work of art came to be termed "photomontage".

John Heartfield, in developing his approach from Dadaist's photomontage, explored what could be achieved from using photographs. Originally the first photomontages were not that different from collages until the photographs were used in a way to portray something quite different to the photographs themselves. John Heartfield's work exemplified this new style of photomontage.

This thesis discusses John Heartfield's approach to photomontage and in particular how he used it to give expression to events in Germany during the period leading up to the rise of Nazism and Hitler's rise to power. Those were very powerful historical developments which greatly influenced John Heartfield, not only on a personal level but also as an artist. His photomontages challenged the messages of the Nazi

propaganda machine. He used his artistry to turn their messages back on those who propagated them.

Chapter One discusses the origins of collage beginning with Picasso's original experiments. It traces its developments, focusing on the influences of the Dadaist movement and in particular the addition to collage by Hans Arp and Kurt Schwitters.

Chapter Two discusses the work of the Berlin Dadaist Group and the discovery of photomontage. The works of Hannah Höch and Raoul Hausmann will be discussed to show how they used photomontage as a means of expressing their disapproval of political events in Germany at the time.

Chapter Three discusses the life and work of John Heartfield, especially those after his Dada experience. It explores how he developed photomontage into a powerful and coherent, easily-read image, to challenge and document with satire, the political events in the Weimar Republic and the rise of Nazism.

In the conclusion, collage as an art form will be reviewed, highlighting significant events in its development. I will discuss the development of collage into photomontage and conclude with the view that John Heartfield's photomontages are the first examples of this type of artistic expression.

CHAPTER ONE

EARLY DADAIST APPROACHES TO COLLAGE

Collage was first invented during the Cubist movement. Cubism was a very sophisticated modern art form derived from a combination of the late works of Paul Cezanne and African art (especially African primitive tribal mask). During the period known as Synthetic Cubism (1912-1914) collage was first seen. It began in 1912 with Picasso's work "Still Life with Chair Caning, May 1912" (see Illustration 1). This work consists of an oval picture bordered with a piece of string and with a piece of oilcloth, printed to resemble a chair's caning which is pasted to one of his paintings. This idea of pasting objects onto a flat surface became known as *collage*, derived from the French word *coller* "to stick".

Materials had been adhered to a picture's surfaces before Picasso's 1912 collages. As far back as the twelfth century, Japanese calligraphy was written over a background of coloured papers. In eighteenth century European art, paper cut-outs, such as Jean Huber's silhouettes, (Illustration 2) were fashionable. But these predecessors have little to do with collage as an art form because, according to Rodari, they never call the art of painting into question (Rodari, 1988, p.21). The artists were only working with purely technical devices to create intriguing images.

Picasso referred to his collages as "Constructions." Frenchman Georges Braque, another Cubist artist of the time, described his collages as *papiers collés*, introducing pieces of imitation wood engraving, marbled surfaces, etc. stuck onto a canvas. The works of these two artists were sometimes nearly identical in style and it was hard to distinguish one from the other. In one of these collages, "Violin and Pipe",(1913-14) by Braque (see Illustration 3), we see the revolutionary idea of combining an

everyday item such as a newspaper cutting with wallpaper and drawing. This was a challenge for the viewer with a traditional view of fine art. By using scraps of newspaper, old cigarette packets and the flimsy detritus of modern life, they widened the definition of art to include these new pieces which traditionalists found uncomfortable. "The public that had learned to admire the obscurity of Analytical Cubism had to reverse its values to like this crude pasting together of rubbish." (Nash, 1974, p.23). As Alvarez Lopera has noted:

> The invention of the collage shattered the notion of the work of art as a precious object, the fruit of technical skill, and incorporated materials of all types into the realm of painting, giving rise to the concept of the picture as a construction (Alvarez Lopera, 1992, p.233).

The invention of collage changed art forever. This is evident in succeeding movements. The Futurists, for example, used collage in a more dynamic fashion, to add force and movement to their works (see Illustration 4). Collage also affected the Russian Constructivists. They used lettering and advertising in their works to portray their view of a new society. Collage had now become recognised as a modern way of artistic expression. The early Dadaists used this type of collage.

During World War I, while most of Europe was busy killing each other, artists fled from their individual countries across Europe and gathered in neutral Zurich. These artists from all of the arts, and of several different European backgrounds shared their experiences at Hugo Ball's Cabaret Voltaire. Hugo Ball was a writer who had come to Switzerland after the outbreak of World War I. He made an arrangement with the owner of the hotel Meirei that he would increase the sales of beer and food if he was permitted to open a fashionable night club. As a result, the Cabaret Voltaire opened in February 1916.

Hugo Ball's Cabaret Voltaire brought together the elements out of which Dada was born. Here one could find modern poetry readings in French, German, Russian and

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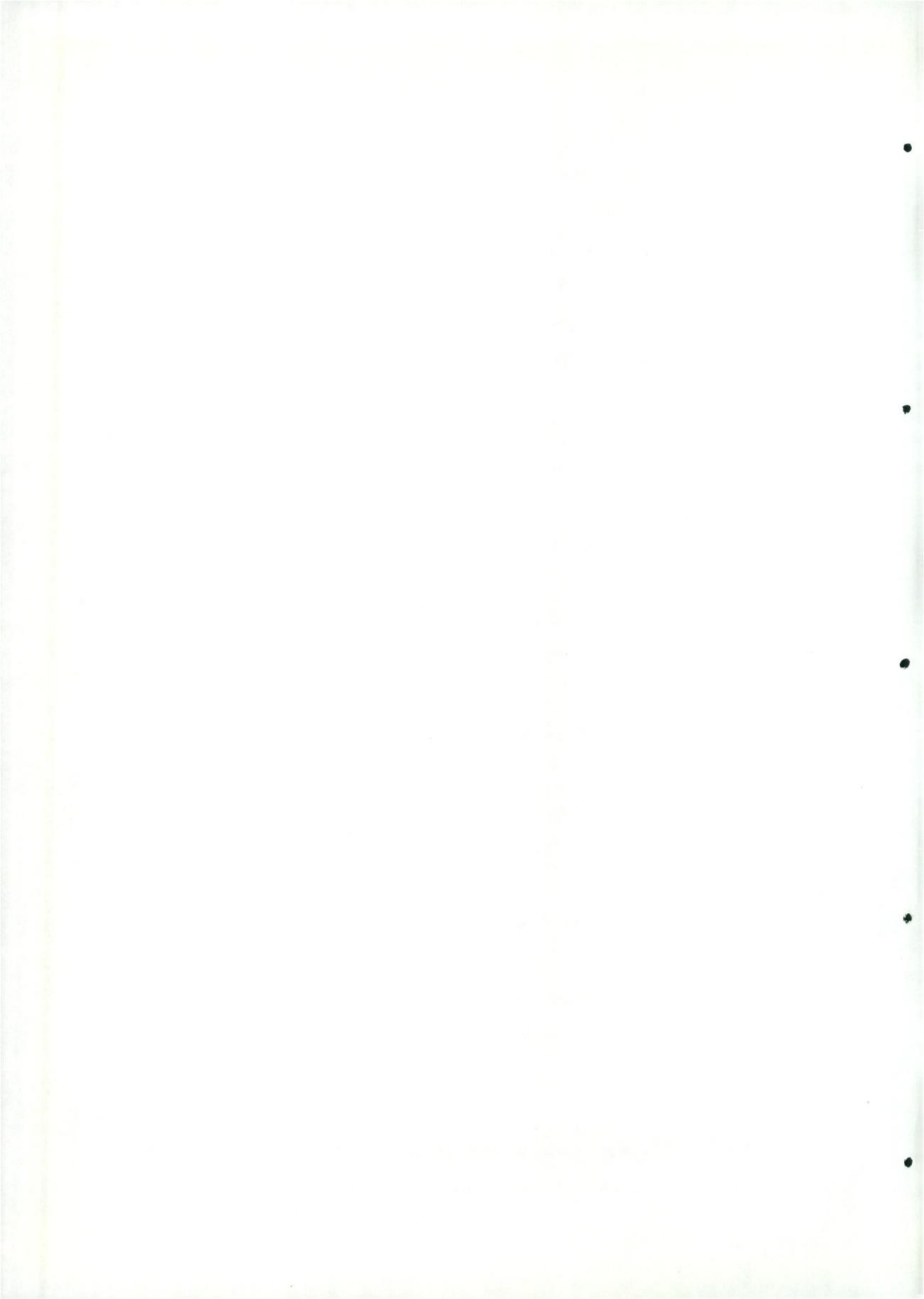
Romanian, along with international jazz music. One could also see pictures by Picasso alongside the works of Arp and other well-known modern artists, posters of Italian Futurists, and other innovative works of art. Among the painters, writers and poets who read, sang, exhibited or merely socialised there were the founders of Dadaism.

> Revolted by the butchery of the 1914 World War, we in Zurich devoted ourselves to the arts. While the guns rumbled in the distance, we sang, painted, made collages and wrote poems with all our might. We were seeking an art based on fundamentals, to cure the madness of the age, and a new order of things that would restore the balance between heaven and hell. We had a dim premonition that power-mad gangsters would one day use art itself as a way of deadening men's minds. (Richter, 1965, p.25).

There were six known figures behind the Zurich Dada movement in 1916. Like a "six piece band each played his instrument, i.e. himself, passionately and with all his soul" (Richter, 1965, p.27). These were Tristan Tzara, a Romanian poet full of humour and intellectual vigour; Hans Arp, a painter and sculptor born in Strasbourg under German rule and of French descent; Marcel Janco from Bucharest who had studied architecture although he made abstract reliefs; Dr Richard Huelsenbeck, a poet and physician who loved jazz rhythms; Emmy Hennings, the only female member and Hugo Ball's mistress, a performer and singer; and lastly, Hans Richter, painter and film maker, who after eighteen months of war service for the German army had a rendezvous with old friends in Zurich and met up with the other "Dadaists" (Ibid., pp.27-28).

Many claims are made about who invented the name Dada. Some believe it was Ball who thought of it and others say it was Tzara. It is suggested that the name Dada came straight out of the mouth of Tristan Traza, from his Romanian affirmative "da,da"(yes, yes); to the Germans, it means idiot, in Italy it is a wet nurse; the most accepted view, however, is that the name was selected by opening a dictionary at random with a pen knife at the word "dada" - French for hobby horse.

The problems facing the world had never been more serious, but the advanced art of the time seemed further than ever from being able to act, even indirectly, upon them (Rubin, 1969, p.64).

"Dadaism was an anarchist artistic revolt, itself bred from a disillusionment engendered by the First World War" (Chilvers, Osborne and Farr, 1997, p.147). Dada made war on art itself. Although Dada included a literary movement running alongside the visual one, the visual movement was far more radical. It considered all older art as useless for modern appreciation. It rejected modern art deriving from Cezanne and looked at art as another part of a corrupt culture.

In speaking of this time, Janco states: "we had lost confidence in our 'culture' and asserted the need to 'demolish' everything" (Fer, Batchelor, Woods, 1993, p.31). Dada grew, from its Zurich beginnings, into an international movement with centres in Berlin under Richard Huelsenbeck and Raoul Hausmann; Hannover under Kurt Schwitters; Cologne under Max Ernst; Paris under Andre Breton; Barcelona under Francis Picabia; and New York under Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray. Each Dada group preached a slightly different Dada, some more radical than others.

Although Dada did not have a particular style, collage and montage were characteristic forms and are thus the focus of this thesis. I will examine the work of Kurt Schwitters, Hans Arp and John Heartfield to illustrate how their work was carried forward into a Dadaist dimension.

Kurt Schwitters, born in Hanover in 1887, was a painter and poet who started his own type of Dada in Hanover. Schwitters was of the opinion that he could not use his academic knowledge to express his fermenting feelings about the end of the war. He wanted to express his jubilation to the world and because Germany was now a poor country, he used refuse. He nailed and glued it together. He called this "Merz"

(Schmalenbach, and Werner, 1970, p.32). When meeting the Berlin Dadaists, Schwitters introduced himself as "I am a painter and I nail my pictures together."

Merz was named in a typically Dadaist way. Like the story behind the naming of Dada, it had resonances of aggression, meaninglessness and randomness. The name derived from one of Schwitter's collages when he inadvertently tore an advertisement with the word 'Kommerz bank', and what was left was Merz. He applied this name 'Merz' to all his collages and came to use it for all his activities. In the same way he named, the "Und Picture" (Illustration 5) of 1919. He obviously chopped another word and the remaining letters "Und" gave him the title for this collage.

The beauty of his collages his in the materials he uses: cardboard, wire, tram and bus tickets, cigarette packets, cheese wrappers, feathers, broken bits and pieces, even old shoe-soles. He used an extensive array of original material, such as in "Merzbild" (see Illustration 6). This assemblage of 1919 shows his wonderful exuberance for found objects: he uses playing cards, consumer wrappers, pieces of cloth, wood, glass, a coin along with numerous scraps of modern living and oil paint. In one of his works, he used envelopes with his personal address on them. As a result of this, he got nasty letters, some filled with rubbish. His use of typographical material in "Untitled", 1921 (see Illustration 7) was not purely pictorial, it also had associations with post war Germany. These were not so much to be read, but to be left to the subconscious, indicative of the lowered morale of a Germany heading towards mass unemployment (Schmalenbach and Werner, 1970, p.116).

Although Schwitters was generally liked by the Dadaists and was very Dadaist in his juxtaposition of humour and discarded objects, he was not interested in "non-art and anti-art" like the Berlin Dadaists. He was very PRO-art. He used these materials to restore a sense of honour in his life and to pick up the pieces of life after the war (Richter, 1965, p.138).

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But if we confine ourselves to his collages, we discover works in many ways closer to Cubism. They are considered Dada because of the use of 'anti-materials.' However, many of these materials had already figured in Cubist *papier coller*. His collages remained plastically within the framework of the Cubist grid and the radiating patterns of the Futurists. (Rubin, 1969, p.67).

"Merz Picture Thirty-One", 1920 (see Illustration 8), for example, combines Cubist elements while its dynamic sensation is almost Futurist.

One of Schwitters' close friends, and one of the founders of Zurich Dada, Hans Arp, made collages in an altogether different manner of symmetrical coloured constructions. Arp made his first collages in Paris in 1914 before moving to Zurich. Having been born in Strasbourg, he was legally German and due to the war his position in Paris was becoming intolerable and so he moved to Zurich. Arp's collage work, under the beating pulse of Dada, looked at first like Cubist collage. It was not so much like Picasso's or Braque's works, but closer to collages done by another Cubist, Juan Gris. In Arp's early work, he used a bit of broken mirror or printed paper because they represented those objects (Read, 1968, pp. 107-8) (see Illustration 9, "United", 1915). Arp also made "Duo-collages" with Sophie Taeuber (whom he married in 1922). These works were very precise and demonstrated geometrical regularity (see for example Illustration 10, "Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Jean Arp Duo-collage", 1918). He also did some geometric collages where coloured pieces of paper were cut with a guillotine as in "Geometric Collage", 1916 (see Illustration 11).

According to Richter, Arp's most famous collages were those done under the law of chance where he tears up his drawing and throws the pieces to the wind as in his "By The Laws Of Chance", 1916 (see Illustration 12)

Dissatisfied with a drawing he had been working on for some time Arp finally tore it up and let the pieces flutter to the floor of his studio. Some time later he happened to notice these same scraps of paper as they lay on the floor, and

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was struck by the pattern they formed. It had all the expressive power that he had tried in vain to achieve. How meaningful! How telling! Chance movements in his hand and of the fluttering scraps of paper had achieved what all his efforts had failed to achieve, namely expression. He accepted this challenge from chance as a decision of fate and carefully pasted the scraps down in the pattern which chance had determined (Richter, 1965, p.51).

These types of experiments with chance began a new consciousness in Dada, that of the 'unknown' and the 'unconscious'. Works such as: *Freedom From Rules, Absence of Ulterior Motive* and *Insulting Behaviour* became known as distinctive signs of Dada (Richter, 1965, p.50-51). But for Arp, *Chance* is influenced by his knowledge of Eastern philosophy, especially The Chinese Book of Changes which had influenced China for three thousand years.

> Read maintains that "To consult the Book of Changes, the consultant throws a bundle of Yarrow-sticks of varying lengths or three coins at random, and is directed to a particular part and section of the book by the position into which the sticks or the coins fall. The procedure is somewhat complicated and does not concern us here; what is significant as the philosophy behind the procedure, for Arp assumed in his *papiers dechires* that a work of art could be made in exactly the same way" (Read, 1968, p.113).

This, along with his Buddhist knowledge of balance, influenced his collages greatly. Arp always consciously determined the shape of the works so that he could call them his own as he sought to maintain the balance of the conscious and the unconscious (Richter, p.60).

> Arp was always guided by his aesthetic feelings, by what he did not hesitate to call a sense of beauty. We can say of him as we can of Kurt Schwitters that he was always an artist in spite of his intentions to be 'more and more removed from aesthetics' (Read, 1968, p.40).

In this chapter I have tried to trace early collage from Picasso's Cubist origins. I have focused on the works of two leading early Dada artists, Kurt Schwitters and Hans Arp. They both added their own individual elements to their collage work. Although

they were distinctly different, they both embraced true Dadaist qualities such as Arp's idea of chance and Schwitter's unique materials. But still their work remained a minor development compared to the work of Picasso.

In Chapter Two I discuss later Dadaist approaches to collage, including the development of photomontage.

CHAPTER TWO

DADA PHOTOMONTAGE: A NEW COLLAGE

The poet Richard Huelsenbeck arrived in Berlin from the Zurich Dadaists in 1917 to continue his medical studies. He found a city torn by war and riddled with corruption and exploitation. He thought that his neutral colleagues in Zurich seemed very smug and had turned Dada into a "manicure salon for the fine arts " (Richter, 1965, p.118). He felt that Dada had to be made of sterner stuff and needed to become a weapon to fight the bourgeois Republic.

Huelsenbeck was joined by other artists and intellectuals. These included Franz Jung, an established writer and poet; Raoul Hausmann who was a poet and now a painter, Georges Grosz, a painter; Johannes Baader, who made a great reputation through Dadaism claming to be "Super-Dada," and the Herzfelde brothers, Wieland and Helmut. Helmut anglicised his name to John Heartfield during the war due to a hate of German militarism as well as a personal romanticism for Americanism. With Grosz he would speak English regularly walking through war time Berlin. So, on the 12 of April in 1918,the Club Dada was founded by Huelenbeck and the others. Hannah Höch did not join at this point due to a major falling out with Hausmann, but officially became a member later that year.

The Club Dada was the most political Dada group as they engaged with the ruling class (the military and the bourgeoisie). To fight everyday social injustices, extreme poverty and hunger, the Berlin Dadaists took up a new weapon against their enemy-photomontage.

The inventors of this new form of collage were Raoul Hausmann and Hannah Höch. When on holidays in Heidebrink (on the Baltic sea) in August 1918, they encountered a large commemorative military picture. In this picture, amongst the Kaiser, other ancestors and soldiers, was one grenadier whose head was pasted over with the face

of the hotel landlord. Hausmann recognised how this technique had created "a visually and conceptually new image of the chaos of an age of war and revolution". So, on their return to Berlin they began to juxtapose photographic materials together, creating the first photomontages According to Hausmann:

> We called this process photomontage because it embodied our refusal to play the part of the artist. We regarded our selves as engineers, and our work as construction: we *assembled* (in French: *monter*) our work, like a fitter (Makholm, 1997, p.118).

Heartfield and Grosz also lay claim on the invention of photomontage. Grosz claims that in May 1916 he discovered photomontage in his studio. At that time he and Heartfield were making collage with all sorts of materials: wallpaper, cardboard, song booklets and cut up photographs to make new pictures as pretend postcards which were supposed to have been sent to or from the Front. Initially they did not understand the full possibilities of their creation which were intended as a practical joke.

The idea of chance was developed in Zurich by Arp. It gave Dadaism a new dimension, by releasing themselves from the boundaries of logic. The Berlin Dadaists replaced the collage used by the Zurich Dadaists (that of sticking objects and everything else around them on their surfaces) with photographs, themselves representation of objects. Chopped photographs, reassembled and stuck back down with cuttings from newspapers arranged from different viewpoints and perspective, along with odd lettering of different sizes, created an image which reflected the crazy world around them. These shocking images fought a world whose eyes seemed to be shut by propaganda. These images tried to open eyes to show the truth behind the fraud of the new Republic.

Richter maintains:

> The Dadaists, who had 'invented' static, simultaneous and phonetic poetry, applied the same principles to visual representation. They were the first to use photography to create, from often totally disparate spatial and material elements, a new unity in which was revealed a visually and conceptually *new* image of the chaos of an age of war and revolution. And they were aware that their method possessed a power for propaganda purposes which their contemporaries had not the courage to exploit... (Richter, 1965, p.116)

Hannah Höch was the only female member of the Berlin Dada Group and was also credited as an inventor of photomontage. She had a intense relationship with Hausmann although he was married. Her work, like that of her counterparts (mainly Hausmann and Heartfield), was done in the same militarist fashion using a combination of different images taken from magazines, catalogues, newspapers etc. She gives us images, less political and sometimes more documentary, but still reviles the corruption and lies of the Bourgeois.

If we now look at one of her works, "Da-dandy", of 1919 (see Illustration 13), we see many of these true photomontage attributes, like texts chopped out of magazines and re-assembled to create new words. Here we see "Da-dandy" with a significantly bigger "D" in dandy. There is a jumble of young women cut out from magazines overlapping each other, whose faces have been altered by the adding of eyes and mouths which are bigger and from different perspectives. This gives an unusual effect. Then we see these combined images of women giving a profile of a man's face. But there is less of a clear political message here than in her other photomontage collages. Overall her approach to collage is less aggressive than some other Berlin Dadaist photomontage artists.

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The true genius of early Berlin Dadaist Photomontage was captured by the energy of Raoul Hausmann. His unique talent for this technique produced some of the greatest political photomontages showing the chaotic Berlin he lived in. His collages were 'wild and explosive' (Rodari, 1988, p.72). Hausmann's "The Art Critic" of 1919-1920 is one of these strong images (see Illustration 9). There is no sense of real proportion or perspective here. Hausmann shows us an art critic or possibly the artist George Grosz who has been beaten and bullied by the bourgeoisie. This is represented by the shoe stamped on his forehead, the numerous punched holes in his face and body, along with the red "x" over his name (perhaps to erase him as an artist). The background to this image is a Berlin polluted with war, suggested by the smoky photograph; sex, as represented by the woman and fashion clippings; and finance, as represented by the chopped bank note pointing upward, with the background lettering, all reflect how images were being manipulated by the German propaganda machine.

All of Hausmann's work was of this strong political nature. Again in "Tatlin at Home", 1920 (see Illustration 15) we see a continuation of the theme of The Art Critic. Although the title suggests solidarity with the leading Russian artist, Tatlin, Hausmann later revealed that he was primarily "interested in showing the image of a man who only had machines in his head." This man was taken from a photograph in an American magazine who reminded Hausmann of Tatlin (Short, 1980, p.11). The man openly shows us his empty pockets, suggesting the immense poverty of pre-World War I Berlin. A large propeller on what could be an aeroplane gives an eerie feeling of war. The Tatlin look-alike could well be Hausmann's embodiment of the

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Bourgeoisie, whose minds are made from machines. The collage, with its other images of a map (perhaps of a part of Germany), a medical illustration on a stand beside what seems like another medical or mechanical apparatus, gives us, again, a feeling of the bedlam of bourgeois society.

The Berlin Dada climax was the First International Dada Fair held at the gallery of Dr. Otto Burchard in Berlin from June 30 to August 25, 1920. The show contained 174 Dada works including paintings, prints, sculptures and posters by more than twenty five artists, including such non-Berlin artists as Max Ernst, Francis Picadia, and Hans Arp (Makholm, 1997). In Illustration 16, we see Raoul Hausmann with Hannah Höch at the First International Dada Fair surrounded by numerous Dadaist photomontages. After this fair, the fighting among the Berlin Dadaists began. They lost their common loyalty and went back to their separate personalities, and by 1923 they had reverted to individual painters, poets, doctors.

The Berlin Dadaists put into action the ideas developed in Zurich. Due to the political climate, Berlin Dadaists developed a superior type of collage which better enabled them to portray and attack the bourgeois ruling society. The greatest promoters of this were Raoul Hausmann with his self-styled, aggressive, non-limited works with the use of viciously strong images revealing the truth of the Berlin of the time. Hannah Höch, also had immense abilities which she used in her photomontage work although she did not make as strong a political comment as Hausmann.

CHAPTER THREE

JOHN HEARTFIELD (1891-1968)

John Heartfield was an extraordinarily creative artist by any standards. In order to understand his work, it must be viewed in the context of the circumstances of his life including the rise of Nazism in pre-World War II Germany. In this chapter the focus will be on some of the significant events in his life which were the driving force behind his work. John Heartfield had an unusual childhood. He was born in 1891 as Helmut Herzfeld, son of Franz and Alice Herzfeld. Franz Herzfeld was a socialist writer (whose pseudonym was Franz Held). Alice, his mother, was a textile worker and political activist.

After the trauma of being abandoned by his parents, as a young boy of eight he was briefly looked after by "Uncle Ignaz." Uncle Ignaz, ultimately decided to disperse Helmut, their brother Wieland, and his sister, Hertha, among various guardians. Helmut was sent to a Catholic monastery (Pachnicke and Honnef, 1985, p.300).

While these facts yield no definitive evidence as to the nature of his formative years, reports by his brother indicate that Helmut was a victim of physical abuse, especially when in institutional care. While accepting this abuse because he could not change it, nevertheless, it influenced his subsequent abhorrence of the abuses of Nazism, which found expression in his artistic work. According to Wieland:

> Our dear Johnny was prompted by only one thing – a bruised heart that reacted very strongly to any kind of adverse, unjust, ominous, or undeserved utterance affecting our common society. That tortured, crushed heart of his, and that alone, showed him the way. (Pachnicke and Honnef, 1992)

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Still using his family name of Helmut Herzfeld, John Heartfield arrived in Berlin with his brother Wieland Herzfeld in 1913. Disillusioned with his art studies in Munich where he was trained in advertising and in graphic design, he came to Berlin to study at the Kunst- und Handwerkerschule [The Arts and Crafts School]. While in Berlin he was briefly conscripted for military service. During that time he saw the twisted, mangled bodies returning from the front during the Great War: "I saw them lying on beds of stinking straw, breathing their last in blood and fifth. And my eyes began to open. I began to get more and more difficult, contradicted my superiors, I felt I was an 'accessory to murder" (Kahn, 1985, p.21).

On arriving in Berlin Heartfield and his brother socialised with the Expressionist circles. He was probably attracted by the Expressionists because they were protecting emotion by abandoning traditional ideas of naturalism.

Heartfield's first encounter with Georg Grosz in 1915 was a turning point in Heartfield's career. He was fascinated with the images Grosz created Like "Germany, a Winter's Fairytale" from 1918 (see Illustration 17). Here Grosz shows contemporary life in Germany, riddled with corruption. Heartfield at this point had what could be described as a naïve opinion of art, in which art was seen as only creating beautiful images. Grosz's work had such an impact on Heartfield that it compelled him to destroy all his artistic works done previously. In a characteristically dramatic fashion, he wanted to abandon all his previous work to embrace the new ideas of art that he found with Grosz.

The following is Wieland Herzfeld's account of their first meeting with George Grosz:

> Grosz suddenly made us stop seeing the everyday world as dry, dull, and boring, and start seeing it as a drama in which stupidity, crudity, and sloth played the staring roles. He awakened in both of us a new highly critical attitude toward our previous efforts of the artistic sort: Helmut burned everything he made in charcoal, pencil, chalk, ink, tempera, and oil up to that time (Kahn, 1985, p.19).

Heartfield's meeting Grosz was to be the start of a new realization of the function of art, as well as the start of a valued friendship. Georg Grosz and John Heartfield shared many views including their abhorrence of war, and especially the rise of Nazism in Germany. For example, both of them had their names anglicised in protest against Germany's militarism and political ideology. Georg Grosz became George Grosz. John Heartfield adopted this name in place of his former German name of Helmut Herzfeld. Heartfield's change was the more severe but his name change was also a way of publicly disconnecting himself from family as well as his country.

Heartfield put all his efforts into publishing Grosz' works. It was through this that Heartfield recognized that publishing was in itself a medium for his new ambition to create political satire (Kahn). Wieland Herzfeld opened a publishing house on March 1, 1917 called the Malik – Verlag. Through this publishing house they continued to print Neue Jugend (new youth) despite a ban on it by the German censors. The Neue Jugend was banned because of its opposition to war. The contributors included many German Expressionists, the future ranks of Berlin Dada, the romantic socialist Gustav Landauer, and artists from outside Germany, such as Jouve, Seurat, Ensor and

Chagal, as it claimed "All European artists and intellectuals who are not senile, sober and submissive are invited to contribute and help" (Kahn, 1985, p.22). This publishing house also printed book jackets, posters, small fliers and other similar materials.

Heartfield joined the Berlin Dada group in 1918. He, along with his brother Wieland and George Grosz, joined the German Communist Party (KPD). During their membership of the Berlin Dada group, Heartfield and Grosz laid claim to the invention of photomontage. Two other Berlin Dadaist, Raoul Hausmann and Hanna Höch also claimed its invention as discussed in Chapter Two.

The images that Heartfield used to express his animosity and hatred of bourgeois Germany during his years of involvement with the Berlin Dada group were varied. They contained what could be described as an explosion of Dada philosophic imagery. In "Life and Activity in Universal City at 12.05 Midday"1919 (Illustration 18) by George Grosz and John Heartfield, we see a typical example of Berlin Dadaist photomontage. Although from a modern viewpoint this would be considered more like photo-collage than photomontage. This example expresses true Dadaist tendencies, incorporating mass-imagery juxtaposed to reflect the society in which they lived. Here we can see the familiar traits of his Dadaist work—a scramble of newspaper cuttings and segmented photographs including drawings of other found ephemera. Although Grosz also worked on this composition, it is more typical of Heartfield's work. The inclusion of drawings would seem to be the work of Grosz while the rest of the work is undoubtedly Heartfield's. We can see traces of the various images and texts of Cubism, although here used more aggressively.

This work also has curious resemblances to Futurism. The title and the images inside the created metropolis, telephone, clocks, buildings and the cinema references (the girl with gun and a portion of actual film) all suggest Futurist influences in glorifying the modern world (Chilvers, Osborne and Farr, 1997). "Heartfield mentioned seeing Futurist paintings in Berlin in 1912 and said it had a lasting impression on him" (Pachnicke and Honnef, 1986, p.9).

Although I think the works of Raoul Hausmann during this period were superior to those of Heartfield, his best was yet to come.

Illustration 18, "Leben und Treiben in Universal City, 12 Uhr 5 mittage" was also used for the First International Dada Fair as the cover of the catalogue where it acquired the new title, simply "Dada photomontage" (Ades, 1986, p.24). It is apt that Heartfield's and Grosz's work gained that title "Dada photomontage" because that is precisely what it is. The First International Dada Fair was the climax and indeed the virtual end of the Berlin Dada group, as well as being also the end of this type of photomontage by Heartfield. With the ending of this exciting and challenging time, John Heartfield and the rest of the group went their separate ways.

Heartfield now tamed his violent, visual outbursts which were the hallmark of his Dada photomontages. His work changed to project clearer stronger, more coherent images. The first example of his new powerful satirical photomontage, "After Ten Years: Fathers and Sons" (1924) Illustration 19 shows him combining two or more contrasting elements to make a clear image (Pachnicke and Honnef, 1994, p.21).

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Heartfield felt imprisoned by the lies of the propaganda posters which were a dominant feature of Germany at that time. He utilised the format of these propaganda posters to turn the message back on the propagandists, thus developing his political photomontage.

Always the photomonteur, he used photographs, texts and colour – the very tools with which the mass media of his time constructed "reality" – to represent the incompetence, greed and hypocrisy behind appearance (Pachnicke and Honnef, 1994, p.18). Heartfield now used his photomontages as a weapon to fight the Weimar Republic. He wanted to show the terrible hypocrisy of the propaganda poster. According to Heartfield, "I found out how you can fool people with photos, really fool them. You can lie and tell the truth by putting the wrong title or wrong captions under them, and that's roughly what was being done" (Pachnicke and Honnef, 1994, p.14). He documented the Weimar Republic, the rise of fascism and the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler with his ingenious satirical photomontages.

Heartfield was obsessed with what he saw as the evils and disastrous consequences for mankind of the rise of Nazism, which arose out of the incompetence of the Weimar Republic. His works during this period were highly political and targeted political leaders and particular events that occurred during the period of the Weimar Republic. In this section some of the main events of the period are identified, as Heartfield's works can only be understood by reference to this political context.

Out of the last smouldering ashes of defeat in the First World War, the Weimar Republic was set up "with a view to impressing the Allies and thus improving Germany's negotiating position at the future peace conference" (Tierney, 1988, p.167). The Weimar Republic constituted the introduction of political Democracy in Germany. The power of German politics was now truly put to rest in the Reichstag (the German parliament) including foreign and military affairs which were previously left in the hands of the Kaiser.

The Republic was officially proclaimed on 9 November 1918 from the balcony of the Reichstag building in front of a noisy crowd of revolutionaries. Friedrich Ebert (the leader of the Social Democratic Party) was elected by the National Assembly to become the first president of the Weimar Republic. From its inception the Weimar Republic was faced with numerous *putsch* (political risings), of which the communist ones were dealt with most severely. Heartfield, who was a member of the communist party himself, would have been affected by this.

One such coup, that of Wolfgang Kapp in 1920 was executed with the support of two army generals resulting in the occupation of key buildings in Berlin. Kapp's military met no resistance from the regular army who considered them fellow-soldiers who had been comrades in the war. Ebert and his Government fled to Stuttgart and called on the working class to defend the Republic. They responded by calling a general strike. Kapp found himself isolated and soon fled, fearing a full-scale civil war. "While the army could be relied upon to crush any leftist or communist subversion, it was most reluctant to act against right-wing movements" (Tierney, 1988, p.172).
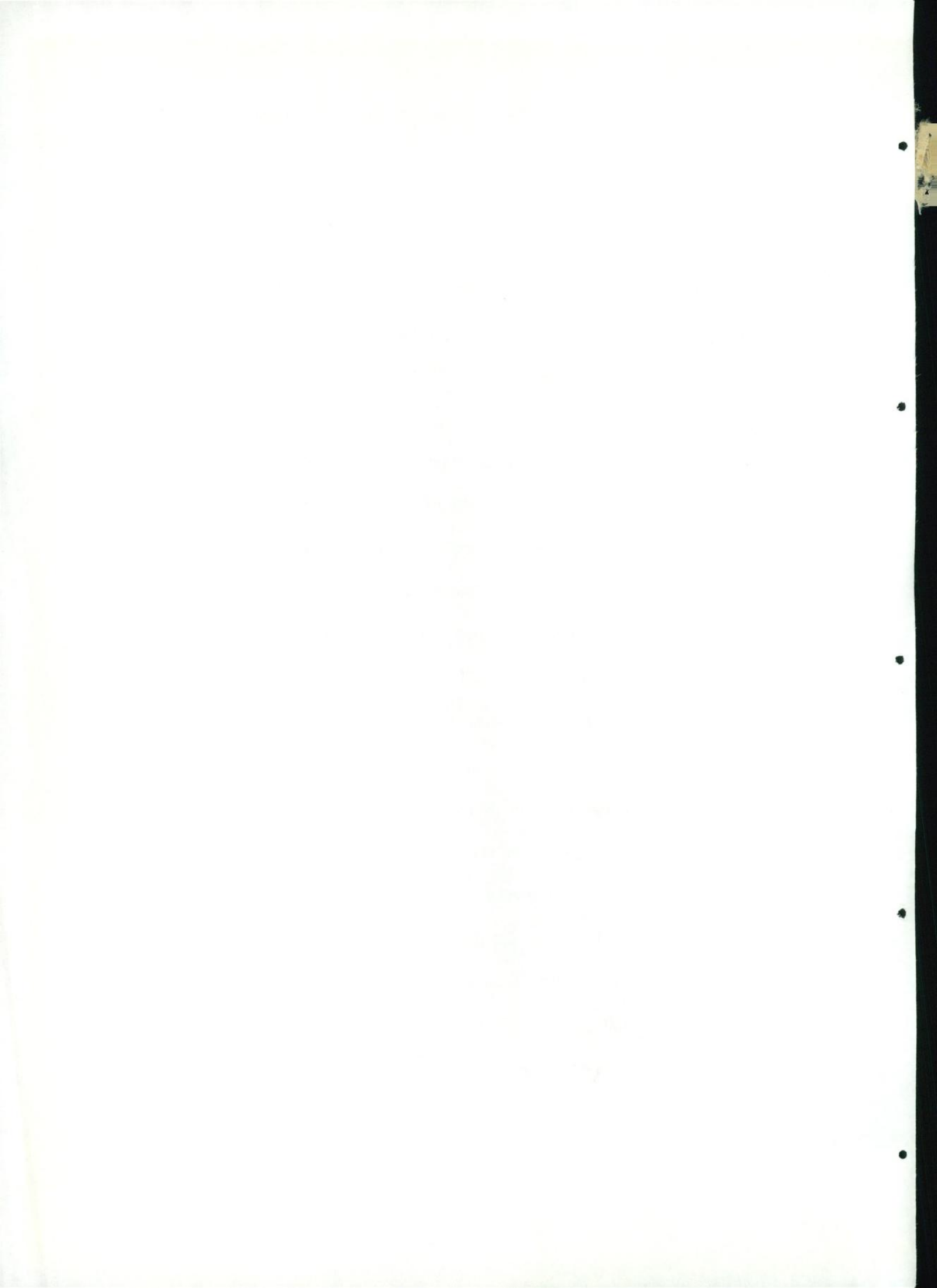
Observers had noticed that some of Kapp's troops had a swastika symbol on their helmets (Tierney, 1988, 171).

Germany also had economic problems. The treaty of Versailles forced Germany to pay heavy war indemnities. This resulted in severe taxing of the wage and salary earners while the wealthier classes escaped with far less than their fair share of the taxes. There was also an enormous inflation crisis.

The privileges available to the richer and more powerful elements in Germany offended Heartfield's sense of justice. He espoused the needs and rights of the working classes. These reflected the oppression that he had felt when abused as a child.

> Between 1919 and 1933 there were no less then 21 different cabinets. All of this gave the government an air of instability, while the over-frequent dissolution of the Reichstag, followed by new elections, reduced the respect of the people for parliamentary democracy. (Tierney, 1988, p.172)

When Gustav Stresemann became Foreign Minister, the Weimar Republic seemed to steady. Stresemann stemmed the phenomenal state of inflation and stabilised the German economy by issuing a new German currency, the Rentenmark, and by borrowing money, mostly from America.

Another *putsch* of the Weimar Republic was orchestrated by Hitler in 1923. Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party's paramilitaries tried to set up a new government in Bavaria. When a large force of armed police confronted the Nazis and firing started they fled. Hitler was arrested two days later and was sentenced to five years imprisonment (Tierney, 1988).
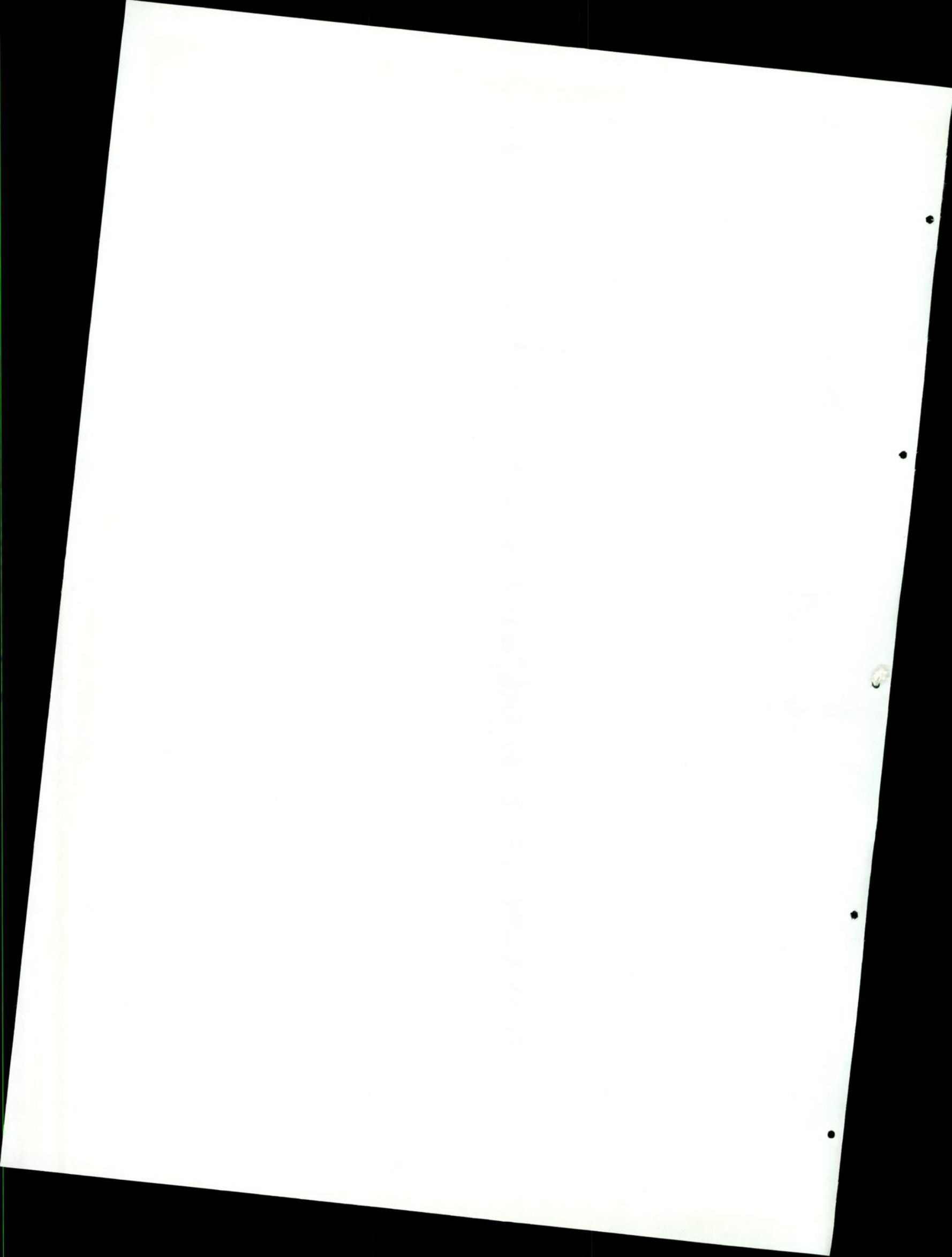
From 1923 until the sudden death of Stresemann in 1929 there was relative stability in Germany. Hindenburg who was Chancellor at the time was not, however, committed to upholding parliamentary democracy. There seemed to be a domino effect from Stresemann's death through an economic crisis in1929-33, followed by the general election of 1932 when the Nazis took 230 seats. Hitler was made chancellor by Hindenburg on the 30th of January 1933. He and his Nazis marched a torchlight parade on Berlin. Hitler, in the next two months, abolished basic democratic rights and passed his Enabling Act thus eliminating parliament as a political force. The Weimar Republic was now dead; a dictator, Adolph Hitler ruled Germany (Tierney, 1988). Heartfield was now faced with, what for him was, the worst possible situation-Hitler and the extreme right ruling Germany.

Heartfield captures this chain of events in his easy to understand photomontage (Illustration 20) "German Natural History" of 1934. In this we see Ebert as a caterpillar, which transforms into the sleeping cocoon of Hindenburg, representing the Weimar Republic, which by metamorphosis became a totalitarian state under the dictatorship of Hitler, represented by a death moth. The span of wings, the beauty of its form, help to represent how well this death moth had been nurtured by the incompetence and failure of the Weimar Republic. All of the metamorphosis takes place in an oak tree, a symbol of strength but bare except for a few remaining decaying leaves representing the state of Germany at the time. The moth is no longer on the tree, but separate, which could represent the detachment of Hitler and Nazism from the ordinary German people. His detachment includes the abandonment of democratic ideals which the Weimar Republic attempted to achieve, and the creation of a dictatorship. The image created by Heartfield of Hitler is one of a moth that at

first sight appears like a beautiful butterfly, on closer examination, however, the skull identifies it as a death moth, and the swastika on its back reveals the deadly sting of Nazism in its tail. Ebert looks out from the picture as if pleading with the German people to continue their efforts to create a just and democratic Germany. Hindenburg on the other hand seems dejected, as if he has given up. Hitler, however, looks away and seems to be heading towards his own horizons. The simplicity of this photomontage conceals its complexity of subject matter. The message is delivered graphically and with a shocking forcefulness. At a glance, the horror of the message is easily read. This shows the genius of Heartfield in his use of photomontage.

Heartfield's subject matter was now clear. He used all his creative genius to combat the evils of Germany of that time, that is from the period of the Weimar Republic to the rise of Hitler. Heartfield wanted the widest circulation for his work, in newspapers and magazines, such as the German Communist Press, as well as on book covers and book illustrations published by the Malik-Verlag publishers founded by his brother Wieland Harzfeld, George Grosz and himself during the First World War. The great majority of his photomontages were published in newspapers and magazines such as Der Knuppel (1923-27), Satirical Weekly of the KPD (German Communist Party), Die Rote Fahne which he co-edited with George Grosz, and most importantly, AIZ (Arbeiter- Illustriesrte- Zeitung), the workers' illustrated newspaper) which had a communist background, but not that of the KPD of which John Heartfield was a member since 1918 when he joined with George Grosz. AIZ boasted to be the third biggest mass-circulation magazine in Germany.

In Communist Party circles the debate arose about how to visually "mobilize the masses". Photomontage was high on the agenda. Heartfield was invited to Moscow, and from April 1931 to January 1932 he conceptualized and exhibited with the assistance of his translator, Serga Tretyakov. The Communist Party praised his work, although there was a niggling suspicion of his Dada past; to the Communists, Dada represented bourgeois decadence, while others referred to him as a Formalist (used as a term of abuse when directed at the art of the west).

Previously in 1926, the AIZ, under Münzberg's direction, started what was known as 'workers photography'. In simple terms, this referred to readers of this working class magazine with an interest in photography. It became known as VdAFD, the organization of unions of workers' photography. From 1928 to 1932 the VdAFD published twelve short articles on art and photography in which they glorified John Heartfield. So in 1929, when Heartfield joined the AIZ, he was given permission to create monthly full-page photomontages.

In the 1930s, the Nazis rose to power with Adolf Hitler as the Dictator of Germany. Heartfield's situation in Berlin was getting dangerous. In April he left Berlin, slipping through the fingers of the Gestapo, for Prague. In Czechoslovakia he joined up with other exiled AIZ colleagues. Working in Prague was difficult as his photographic materials were all left behind in Germany. Although the conditions were difficult, he nonetheless produced some of the best work of his career. These works gained him international political notoriety.

While Heartfield was in Prague, he exhibited thirty six caricatures in the an exhibition in Mánes Verein in April 1934. Seven caricatures of Heartfield officially offended the German and Italian governments. There were formal complaints and protests by the German and Italian Fascist governments who asked for the removal of several of his works. In particular, "Adolf the Superman" of 1932 gave offence (see Illustration 21). Here we see Adolf Hitler in his characteristic stance during one of his powerful speeches which were an essential part of Nazi propaganda. The caption reads "Adolf, Der Übermensch: Schluckt Gold und redet Blech". Translated from German this reads "Adolf the Superman Swallows Gold And Spouts Junk". The purpose was to show these speeches for what they were-- no more than money-fed and representing the interests of capital, not the people.

These protests were made to the Czech government. It initially resisted, but with increasing pressure the government finally gave in and removed some of these pieces from public view. In protest about these removals, Heartfield responded with a full page photomontage in the AIZ "the more pictures they remove, the more visible reality becomes."

Heartfield received many letters of support for these caricatures including one from Paul Signac who asked Heartfield to come to France for an exhibition of his work. In April 1935 Heartfield exhibited 130 photomontages sponsored by Aear (Association of Revolutionary Writers. A number of interested people were in Paris at the time, as this exhibition was preceded by an International Congress of Writers in Defense of Culture organized by the French Communist Party. There was a public conference before the opening of the Heartfield exhibition in Paris where Louis Aragon, who

since 1933 formally excluded himself from surrealism, now supporting socialist realism, read a paper entitled "John Heartfield and Revolutionary Beauty".

Back in Prague, the situation deteriorated badly. The German fascist government demanded the extradition of Heartfield from Czechoslovakia. Again with the Nazi Gestapo hot on his heels, he flew to the protection of London, to the safety of Yvonne Kapp who was waiting for several weeks for her "very special refugee."

While in London Lilliput mounted an exhibition "A master of political Art: John Heartfield". Soon after Heartfield arrived in London he moved to Hampstead and lived with Fed Uhlmann, a painter, and the historian Klingender.

Heartfield got involved with the Arts Theatre and worked on "4 and 20 Black sheep" a satirical review about the Third Reich, July 1939. The review "4 and 20 Black sheep" was a project initiated by the free German League which (Freier Deutscher Kulturbund) aimed at demonstrating a united front of German nationals who were in opposition to the fascist regime in power, as well as being an outlet for German culture and identity aside from that of Hitler's Germany (Pachnicke and Honnef, 1988, p.26).

In December 1939 the Arcade Gallery, under the title "one man's war against Hitler" exhibited Heartfield's photomontages. This coincided with Britain's declaration of war on the German Nazis thereby initiating the outbreak of the Second World War. The British opened enemy national camps. Heartfield became a prisoner in one for a period of six weeks. Although he was given the "C" badge standing for political

refugee, he suffered from a long standing problem with severe headaches ever since. Refugees also were subject to work restrictions.

In 1943 Heartfield moved in with Gertrud Fietz, his future wife. Heartfield's life seemed to settle. He worked as a designer for Lindsay Drummond and later for Penguin books. The work he produced since his exile in England, for whatever reason, never seamed to have the same power of his former work.

The German Democratic Republic (East Germany) was formed after World War Two. So, in 1950 John Heartfield returned home. Once he was accepted into the Socialist party (after some suspicion), he received numerous honours. After this he exhibited his work widely the GDR and elsewhere in Europe. He died in East Berlin after an illness on the 26 of April 1968.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have discussed the development of photomontage with particular reference to its development by John Heartfield. In doing this I traced photomontage to its origin in collage and how experiments with collage led to the invention of photomontage. I focused primarily on John Heartfield's work because he was the person who perfected its use as an art medium. As we look back on the development of photomontage we can see with hindsight that the first photomontages were in effect photo-collages, i.e. photographs added to collages. John Heartfield took this process one step further by not simply adding photographs to collages but by manipulating the images in such a way as to create new images. His photomontages were not just collages. They were a new creation. He was, therefore, the inventor of photomontage.

In Chapter One the development of collage was traced starting with the work of Picasso who was the first to experiment with this new technique. Dadaists then took the use of collage and developed its possibilities further. The Dadaists, unlike movement such as Cubists, Futurists, and Constructivists, experimented with the whole possibility of collage including materials and ideas. The other movements in art only added collage to the work they were already doing. It did not alter their ideas. Of the Dadaists group, Kurt Schwitters was the most adventuresome in the use of collage in terms of art materials. Arp expanded the use of collage with new ideas and especially the role of chance in creating collages.

In Chapter Two I focused my attention on the first experiments with photomontage by the Berlin Dada Group. They used their collages to comment critically on political events in Germany at that time. In the discussion I focused mainly on the works of Hannah Hoch and Raoul Hausmann. They, in particular, used photomontage to express disapproval of the political events in Germany. John Heartfield was also part of the Berlin Dada Group.

Various attempts to deconstruct established art, such as Cubism, had been made prior to the invention of collage. Photomontage, however, succeeded in breaking not only from old traditions but in giving the world a new and powerful medium. Photomontage was radical and revolutionary in its approach to arts as were other modern art movements. It went a step further by using new techniques and by embracing the new technologies, especially the exciting advent of photography and incorporating it creatively into modern art. John Heartfield was the revolutionary *extraordinaire* of photomontage. He took up the challenge and like all great revolutionaries his success is measured by his achievements. I have attempted to demonstrate in this thesis that he was indeed not only the revolutionary *extraordinaire* by the *photomonteur extraordinaire*.

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Illustration 1 - Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Chair Caning*, 1912

Illustration 2 - Jean Huber, *Gymnasium* , 1721-86

Illustration 3 - Georges Braque, *Violin and Pipe*, 1913-14

Illustration 4 - Carlo Carrá, *Interventionist Demonstration*, 1914

Illustration 5 - Kurt Schwitters, *The Und Picture*, 1919

Illustration 6 - Kurt Schwitters, *Merzbild* (Merz Picture), 1919

Illustration 7 - Kurt Schwitters, *Untitled* , 1921

Illustration 8 - Kurt Schwitters, *Merzpicture Thirty-One*, 1920

Illustration 9 - Hans Arp, *United*, 1915

Illustration 10 -*Sophie Taeuder-Arp and Hans Arp Duo-collage*, 1918

Illustration 11 - Hans Arp, *Geometric Collage.*, 1916

Illustration 12 - Hans Arp, *By The Laws Of Chance* , 1916

Illustration 13 - Hannah Höch, *Da-dandy* ,1919

Illustration 14 - Raoul Hausmann, *The Art Critic*, 1919-1920

Illustration 15 - Raoul Hausmann, *Tatlin At Home*, 1920

Illustration 16 - Raoul Hausmann and Hannah Höch at the First

International Dada Fair

Illustration 17 – Geroge Grosz, Germany, a Winter's Fairytale, 1918

Illustration 18 – John Heartfield and George Grosz, Life and Activity in

Universal City at 12.05 Midday, 1919

Illustration 19 – John Heartfield, After Ten years: Fathers and sons, 1924

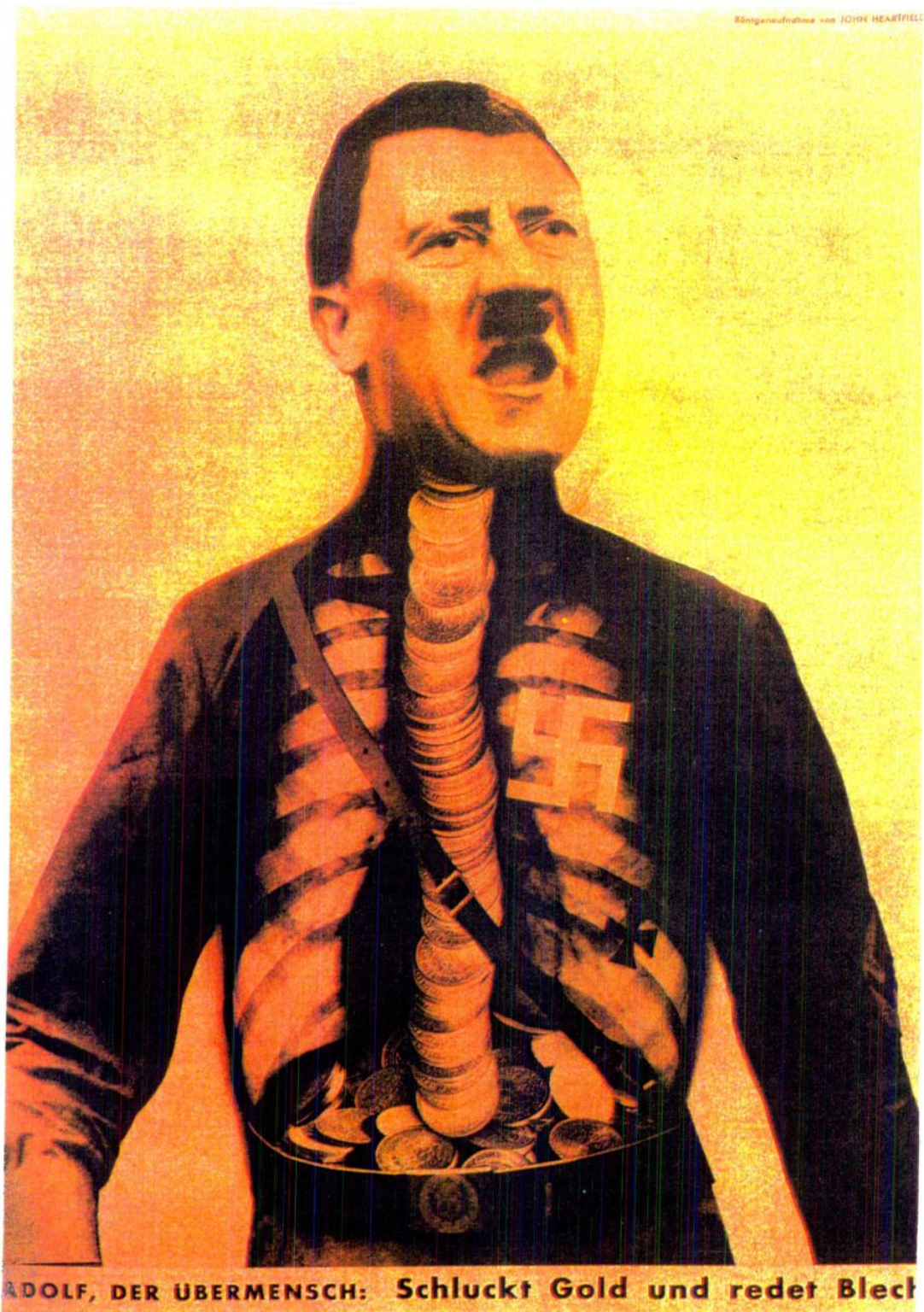Illustration 20 –John Heartfield, German Natural History, 1934

Illustration 21 - John Heartfield, Adolf, the Superman: swallows

Gold And Spouts Junk, 1932