

# Heartfield in Context

Neglected by formalist critics, John Heartfield is attracting renewed attention, in part due to his relevance to contemporary art. Now, rather than estheticize his photomontages, the author argues, we must focus on the policies of the Berlin publishing house and communist newspaper for which they were made.

BY MAUD LAVIN

In the galleries of the Museum of Modern Art, there are no photomontages by John Heartfield, and the few Berlin Dada works that are exhibited are interspersed with Surrealist objects and other assemblages. Visual connections are established between Dada and Surrealism, but all other historical context is erased. Through its estheticized history, MoMA has effectively eliminated the possibility of recognizing Berlin Dada as an independent critical and political entity,<sup>1</sup> a policy that contributes to a repression not only of Heartfield's work but of the political roles of avant-garde artists in the '20s in general.

Outside the confines of MoMA, however, scholarly discussion of Heartfield and Berlin Dada has been lively, engendered by a series of exhibitions: the 1977 Berlin "Tendenzen der Zwanziger Jahre" ("Tendencies of the Twenties"); the 1978 London exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, "Dada and Surrealism Reviewed," curated by Dawn Ades; and the Centre Pompidou's "Paris-Berlin" of 1978. Universe Books also issued *Photomontages of the Nazi Period: John Heartfield* in 1977, and this year Tarnam Press will be publishing a monograph on Heartfield. In spite of MoMA's oversight, then, Heartfield is being inserted into the canon of modern masters, given equal footing with his colleague George Grosz.

Certainly much of the current interest in Berlin Dada—its politicizing of art, its critical montage of mass-media images—stems from its relevance to contemporary art practice—the work of Barbara Kruger, Dara Birnbaum, Martha Rosler, etc.<sup>2</sup> However, any such comparison raises questions about presentation and dissemination; in the late '20s, Heartfield regularly contributed his photomontages—both as covers and as elements in photo-journalistic narratives—to a wide-circulation newspaper, a mode of distribution not usually enjoyed by such artists as Kruger.

Though Heartfield also showed his work in art contexts—most importantly, in the Berlin Dada exhibitions in 1919–20—his photomontages were presented primarily through newspapers, book jackets and posters. Yet there is little discussion of how his photomontages functioned within these contexts. Exhibitions tend to spotlight single Heartfield works without including the photo layouts and news stories of which they were an integral part.

Rather than fetishizing his individual iconic images, then, one must focus on the Malik publishing house in Berlin where he designed book jackets, layout and typography from 1916 to 1932, and on the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (*AIZ: Workers' Illustrated Newspaper*), Berlin's popular communist newspaper to which he

contributed covers and photomontages from 1929 to 1933. (Heartfield continued to work for both institutions from 1933 to 1938 when they operated in exile in Prague due to their opposition to the Nazis.)

Though by the time Heartfield began to contribute to *AIZ* in 1929 he was beyond his Dada period, he was included in the Berlin Dada group during the early Malik years; from about 1918 to 1922 he was a cosignatory of the Dada manifestoes and an associate of Grosz, Richard Huelsenbeck, Hannah Höch and Raoul Hausmann. The continuity between Heartfield's early Dada production, his Malik work and his later *AIZ* photomontages is his commitment to disseminating cultural and political criticism through periodicals and other formats. Indeed, one legacy of Berlin Dada is that it provides a model, albeit one specific to the socioeconomic conditions of the '20s, of an avant garde actively presenting its work to a mass audience. Yet if this legacy is to develop beyond hero-worship and/or facile analogies between the '20s avant garde and our own contemporary art practice, then the historical and material conditions of the period must be better understood.

This fall saw two shows featuring Heartfield's work: an exhibition at SUNY Old Westbury of his photomon-



“Goering: The Executioner of the Third Reich,” photomontage by John Heartfield, Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, XII, 36, Sept. 14, 1933. At bottom, “Special Number: Reichstag’s inflammatory law procedures/counter procedures.”

IM  
JUNI  
1917

# NEUE JUGEND

PROSPEKT

der kleinen Grosz Mappe.

Der Malik-Verlag, Berlin-Schöneberg

PREIS  
20  
PF.

Prospekt der kleinen Grosz Mappe.

## CHRONIK

Friedrich Adler ist zum Tode verurteilt, Stockholm-Götöne gegen internationale Teuerung - das Leben weiterhin billiger, Lebensmittel bleiben in Coronerschiff. Nach Reuter Verhungern in Ovamboland die Ovambos, keine Kaffern - in den European Dominions niemand! Verhungert doch - Steigerung! Spinoza ist eingestampft für Bedarf diplomatischer Sendachreihen - Liberia, Pseudoliberalismus - Molieres verurteilt in Sternheim (Zukunft vom 28. 5. 1917), Umfassungsmanöver gegen Walther in Wien, Durst - das Aktionsbuch ist erschienen, Frühlingserwachen Robert Szalay, Haufleben. Liebelich laßt sich hinzusammensetzen! Lichtnord! - unsere Seelen sind so wund. Amokläufer

Die Messer raus!!!

## Man muß Ratschläger sein!

## Die Sekte 1917

Ja, Konzentrationslager sind - müssen wir auf zweiten Weltkrieg und darüber hinwegsehen und die Luft reinatmen und von Feuerzeugen? Doch nein, eine Affäre, ein Phänomen...

...gen an Schlingen - deutscher ausgetragen - Springer von Füßen, der Schwinden, der Pferdeherum der Flitter ...)

Innert wichtig ist, das Schicksal, das bestimmt! Wir werden die gesuchte Kirche, meistet sich heute der Heilige heit. - ... Die Pfeile sind ... - Geschichtsschreiber...

...que durchsetzt der Rücken Zillenpreis, doch gibt es auch Beobachtung und Erinnerungsmedien.

Wie gesagt, Konzentrationslager sind beweglich in allen Kreisen nicht biss im Dichter-Sessel ohne oder vor der Stoffel sind gestalt Blätter plaudern.

Den Regenwurm gibt es zu seilen und zu schaden, den pfeiligen Preys zu künden, kommt explodiert explodiert - oder bringt mich zur Fortsetzung.

...zum kleinen Kaiser in die Brustwehrgegen beworfen. Ist Widerstand werden, nach allen Seiten blicker Inward - sich verlegen - annehmen! Ein oder Hörgericht!

...als ich aufgabem! jeder hat Sattelliebe

Nur höheren! ... allzeit! Schon wie die Wuchschnellen ein, Novets rutscht das weiche Gesäß hin und her!

Ja! Wenn nicht lärmende Pille an Schlingen liegen!

Dieses Blatt ist der

PROSPEKT  
ZUR  
KLEINEN  
GROSZ-MAPPE

Die Sekte Neunzehn Siebzehn wächst aus dem Intellekt der umstehenden Zuhörer empor und zwängt ihre Mitglieder gegen den Block der Überzeugten. Die ohnmächtige Wut unserer Leser verpflichtet einen bereits in Schwung umgesetzten Glauben wieder zu fixieren, um mit den Gläubigen von neuem dagegen loszugehen. Die Leute wollen halt nichts alleine tun.

Sekten. Mehr Sekten. Noch mehr Sekten.

Das Wunder der Christian Science ist über unseren kürzlich veranstalteten Werbe Abend gerauscht und schüttet Glück aus über diejenigen, die uns lieben, um uns hinterrückt zu erdochen.

Darum muss Einer seine Stimme erheben: Nicht mehr glauben, überhaupt nicht glauben. Sich selbst. (Sich und selbst) Einsamkeit.

Wenngleich jeder schuldig ist an der Unfähigkeit der andern, Feind zu sein, sondern schlotternder Neidhammel, soll keiner an dieser Schuld sich selber berührt genug sein lassen. Nicht das Peinliche dieser Schuld schmatzt zu fressen, soll es ankommen, sondern Genuss auch noch auszukosten - und wiederum zu fressen und wiederum!

Es ist in jeder Sekunde, die ein hundertmal verfluchtes Lebensabschnitt (unzählige) Wonne durstet das geizische Petroleumgebiet zu durchfahren, die Gestänge der Bohrtürme verrusst! so unendlich vielen zu tun. Betet mit dem Schädel gegen die Wand!

Wir - shal - wir treten gegen die Menschen nicht auf. Wir treten geduldig noch mit den Menschen auf. Die Sekte Neunzehn Siebzehn schlägt gegeneinander, Sturmflut aus unseren Gebeten, die aus der Ohnmacht der Gläubigen emporgewachsen sind. Unsere Mitglieder verrecken, weil die Sekte sie nicht mehr locker lässt. Betet aus



Neue Jugend, June 1917 issue designed by John Heartfield and published by Malik Verlag. Malik served communist goals but was not an official organ of the party.

tages made for the newspaper *AIZ*, presented in both published and poster form; and a show at Goethe House in New York of books, periodicals and portfolios produced by the publishing house Malik Verlag, in which both Heartfield and Grosz were well represented. This was the first exhibition of Malik Verlag in the U.S.

Malik was an educational and propagandistic organization begun in 1916 by Heartfield, his brother Wieland Herzfelde and their friend Grosz. Heartfield, then a painter, and his

poet brother turned away from traditional art practices and founded Malik in order to establish their pacifist stance against the war. As government censorship disallowed founding new periodicals, Herzfelde took over the almost-defunct *Neue Jugend*, then a student periodical, and began to publish Grosz's satirical antiwar portfolios. In 1918, the November Revolution swept the Socialist Party into power with massive popular support, but leftist artists and intellectuals were alienated by its earlier support of

the war as well as by its hiring of the right-wing vigilante Free Corps to bloodily suppress opponents. Herzfelde, Heartfield and Grosz joined the German Communist Party (KPD) in late 1918; thereafter the Malik publishing house served communist goals but was not an official organ of the party.

As Malik's graphic designer, Heartfield assaulted polite taste with his disruptive design for its periodicals and bold, emblematic images for its book jackets. During his early Malik years (1918–22), Dada esthetics informed his work, as in his almost

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anarchic typography for *Neue Jugend*. Heartfield's book jackets were composed in a no less direct way, with posterlike montages of simple photographs and symbols—a design practice which reflected Herzfelde's policy of accessibility (a policy that even influenced the large typeface of Malik's book series).

*Neue Jugend* (1916–17), a pacifist literary periodical with an initial circulation of about 30,000, included contributions from Grosz, writer Else Lasker-Schüler, literary critic and activist Gustav Landauer and others, and was the first of a series of proto-Dada and Dada political periodicals published by Malik. As each periodical was banned for its criticisms of the government, it would be replaced by another with a new name but essentially the same contributors. Unlike Dada movements in other cities, Berlin Dada was a politically engaged movement,<sup>3</sup> and clearly, Heartfield and Grosz did not differentiate their Dada work from their Malik production. As one of their contributions to the 1920 International Dada Fair, for example, they submitted the weekly issues of *Neue Jugend* from May and June 1917.

Two years after *Neue Jugend* was banned in 1919, Malik published an issue of 7,600 copies of an antimilitar-

ry Dadaist periodical entitled *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball* (*Every Man His Own Football*). Heartfield's cover photomontage—of an array of Weimar government leaders, including General Hindenburg and President Ebert posed for a beauty contest—is a satire on the layout of conservative periodicals;<sup>4</sup> it is of historical importance as the first published political use of photomontage. The issue also contained a Grosz drawing critical of the German Protestant church, an antimilitary article by Mynona and an antipatriotic poem by Walter Mehring. (Mynona—Salomon Friedlander—was primarily a fiction writer, and Mehring primarily a poet, in the Berlin Dada group). Anticipating the government's confiscation of the issue, the editorial staff marched on Feb. 15, 1919, through Berlin neighborhoods accompanied by a frock-coated musical band. The entire issue was sold out in a few hours.<sup>5</sup>

**O**ther marketing strategies, though less sensational, were equally effective. Of primary importance to Herzfelde was to offer leftist material to the working class at a low price while still producing attractive enough books to compete with mainstream publications. Malik sold Grosz portfolios in signed and unsigned editions, inviting the bourgeoisie, the target of Grosz's satire, to finance its dissemination to the working class.<sup>6</sup>

From 1920 to 1926 Herzfelde also published seven series of more populist books: "Little Revolutionary Library," "Collection of Revolutionary Works for the Stage," "Red Novel Series," "Below and Above," "The Fairy Tales of the Poor" (children's books), "Science and Society" and the "Malik Library Series." This last included translations of Upton Sinclair and Maxim Gorky; a book of essays by Grosz and Herzfelde, *Art is in Danger*, and a journalistic account by Fritz Slang of the 1905 sailor's uprising in Odessa, illustrated by stills from Eisenstein's *Potemkin*—a range designed to appeal to a wide audience. In 1922, introducing the "Kleine Revolutionäre Bibliothek" of 11 titles (including Zinoviev's biography of Lenin, theoretical tracts by Georg Lukács and Kurt Wittfogel and Grosz's *History of the Ruling Class* graphics portfolio), Herzfelde explained his rationale for producing such series:



[Anzeigenpreise: 30 Pf. Zusatzbeitr. 40 Pf.  
Abbildung: 10 Pf. pro Zeile, 100 Pf.  
Zustellung: 2 Mark. Verteilung: Ausgabe  
100 numm. Exemplare 1.-20 eigen. auf seit  
Zahlerei Blätter à 10 M. 21-100 à 2 M.]

Preis 30 Pf.  
Durch Post und Buchhandel  
40 Pf.

Anzeigenpreise: 1 Quadratzent.  
Post: 0,50 Pf. pro Quadratzent.  
Rekl. Textur: 10 Pf. pro Quadratzent.  
Exemplarer Satz: 1 Quadratzent kosten  
1,00 Mark, bei gleichen Rechteckstaben

# "Jedermann sein eigner Fussball"

Illustrierte Halbmonatsschrift

1. Jahrgang

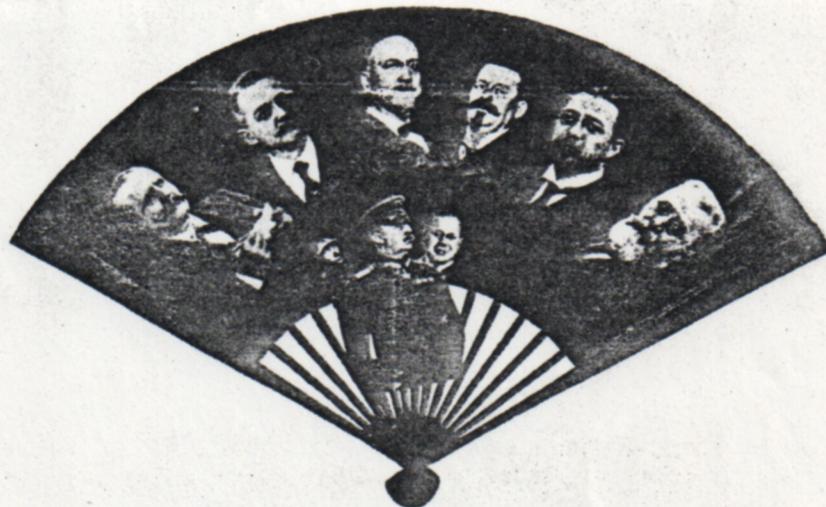
Der Malik-Verlag, Berlin-Leipzig

Nr. 1, 15. Februar 1919

Sämtliche Zuschriften betr. Red. u. Verl. an: Wieland Herzfelde, Berlin-Halensee, Karlstr. 76. Sprechst.: Sonntags 12-2 Uhr

Preisausschreiben!

Wer ist der Schönste??



Deutsche Mannes Schönheit 1

(Werkt. Seite 1)

## Die Sozialisierung der Parteidänen

Eine Forderung zum Schutze vor allgemein üblichem Wahlbetrug

Diese Ausführungen sollen den Umgang unserer Nationalversammlung selbst vom Gesichtspunkt der Demokratie als illustrieren, jenseits Leute die moment ein Vier starken Konkurrenz schaffen, deren Novum dem reichen eigenen Durchdrifts überlegen ist.

Man mag Demokratien, deutsch-nationalistischer Untertanen oder Kommunisten, man mag mit Schiller sagen: Verstand ist stets bei wenigen, nur gewissen oder begabten auf jede Stimme kommt es bisweilen mit Recht zu, die Tasche wird man nicht bestreiten. Wahlen gehören zu den ge-

Every Man His Own Football, Feb. 15, 1919, designed by Heartfield and published by Malik Verlag. Photomontage of Weimar government leaders: "Open Competition! Who is the most beautiful?"

This collection publishes documents, biographies, theoretical materials, all of which are designed to stimulate and develop revolutionary awareness and zeal. It should give the individual lacking time for extensive study the opportunity to increase his knowledge of the class struggle and to enlarge his revolutionary horizon.<sup>7</sup>

A 1923 Malik prospectus advertised four editions of Grosz's *Ecce Homo* ranging in price from 16 to 700 marks. The same ad announced paperback and hardcover editions of Lukács's *Political Essays* at 3.30 and

7 marks and four differently priced bindings of Sinclair's *Man nennt mich Zimmerman* (*I Am Called Zimmerman*). By 1927 Malik could attract 100,000 buyers of Sinclair's *Petroleum* and 120,000 of Domela's *Der falsche Prinz* (*The False Prince*).

The principal designer of Malik book jackets, Heartfield created emblematic compositions and wrap-around images, as in the cover for Sinclair's *Der Sumpf*, 1924 (translated as *The Swamp* apparently because *The Jungle* suggested a boy's book).



*Heartfield's book cover for Franz Jung's *Die Eroberung der Maschinen* (The Conquest of the Machines), 1923, published by Malik Verlag, Berlin.*

Though some of his designs incorporated Grosz drawings, most relied on contemporary photographs—news photos, publicity images, staged photos—possibly to underline the topical relevance of the books; and most of the designs were black and white with red accents. Heartfield's cover for the 1924 Malik yearbook *Platz! dem Arbeiter* (*Place of the Workers*), a collection of political statements by Kurt Tucholsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Wittfogel and others, consisted of four rows of news photographs of revolutionary scenes. In its imitation of newsreel film footage, this format suggested both contemporaneity and political activism, as did the Marxian headlinelike banners that appear above and below the photos: "Philosophers have always interpreted the world differently. What matters is to change it." And: "The dominant ideas of an era are always the ideas of the dominant class."

Just as an understanding of Malik Verlag as a propaganda system is essential to a reading of Heartfield's Malik designs, so too it is



*Heartfield's cover for the 1924 Malik Verlag yearbook, *Platz! dem Arbeiter* (*Place of the Workers*); Marxian banners top and bottom.*

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*Though some of Heartfield's book designs incorporated Grosz drawings, most relied on contemporary photographs—to underline the topical relevance of the books but also to suggest political activism.*

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crucial to see his photomontages for *AIZ*, a communist photonewspaper, in context. Though the exhibition at Westbury was small—limited to some 40 photomontages, most produced for *AIZ*, with a few additional posters and book jackets—it managed to relate the images well to contemporaneous political events. However, the show lacked any display of whole issues of *AIZ* or of a Heartfield montage in the context of its customary two-page spread. Unlike the Goethe House show, which focused on Malik as a disseminating institution, the

Westbury show did not provide enough information about *AIZ*—or about Heartfield's role in selling the newspaper.

*AIZ* was in existence, in one form or another, from 1921 to 1938, and was issued weekly after 1926. Although not the official press of the party, it was the leading communist newspaper in the Weimar Socialist Republic, an era when disillusionment with the corrupt judicial system and police brutality of the Weimar government as well as enthusiasm for the Soviet revolution caused the German Communist Party to function as a viable minority party in Germany. However, *AIZ* differed from the Russian party line in its vehement opposition to the Nazis when they began to rise to power in the late '20s.

*AIZ*'s contents and coverage were aimed at the working class (a 1929 survey showed that its readership consisted of 42 percent skilled laborers and 33 percent unskilled). Heartfield produced photomontages for *AIZ* at roughly a monthly rate beginning in 1929. During that time the paper's circulation grew from 350,000 readers

to 500,000 in 1931. Even at its peak, most readers bought copies on the newsstand, so there was great pressure on the cover image to sell the paper. This is one reason why many of Heartfield's *AIZ* covers—such as *The Meaning of the Hitler Salute: Motto: Millions stand behind me!* (*AIZ*, Oct. 16, 1932), the famous photomontage of a saluting Hitler being paid off by the colossal figure of a capitalist—have a direct, posterlike character.

Heartfield's post-1924 "contemporary history photomontages" (as he termed them) were most often based on photojournalism taken from his own archive, one built from newspaper clippings and material found at picture agencies. At other times Heartfield staged his own photographs but remained within photojournalistic formats.

To open up an issue of *AIZ* is to realize how embedded the meaning of Heartfield's work is in its mass-media framework. For example, *Adolf, the Superman: Swallows Gold and Spouts Junk* (*AIZ*, July 17, 1932), another well-known image which superimposes a news photo of Hitler speaking at a rally with photos of a skeletal rib cage, a belt, a pile of coins and a swastika, does indeed, as the exhibition notes, "portray Hitler as the spokesman of German capitalism." But it is precisely this alliance that is spelled out in the narrative, photographic layout of the newspaper as a whole. The cover of the July 17, 1932 *AIZ* presents two half-page portraits of men: one in Nazi uniform is identified as the wealthy Prince August Wilhelm of Prussia; the other, an unknown worker named Paul Michel whose leg was lost in an accident, is labeled "a civilian cripple since 1910." The reader is told that this worker's welfare payments were reduced by Nazi legislation, and the headline asks if two members of such different social classes can support the same Nazi regime: "Prince and Worker in one Party?"

On page one of the same issue runs a half-page news photo of a workers' demonstration in Detroit being brutally dispersed by police, with a caption that alludes to the contradiction posed by the cover image: "Never can the party of princes and millionaires interest the workers." Nazism is here aligned textually with capitalism and police brutality to workers. The connection is pushed further; below the photograph of the demonstration are

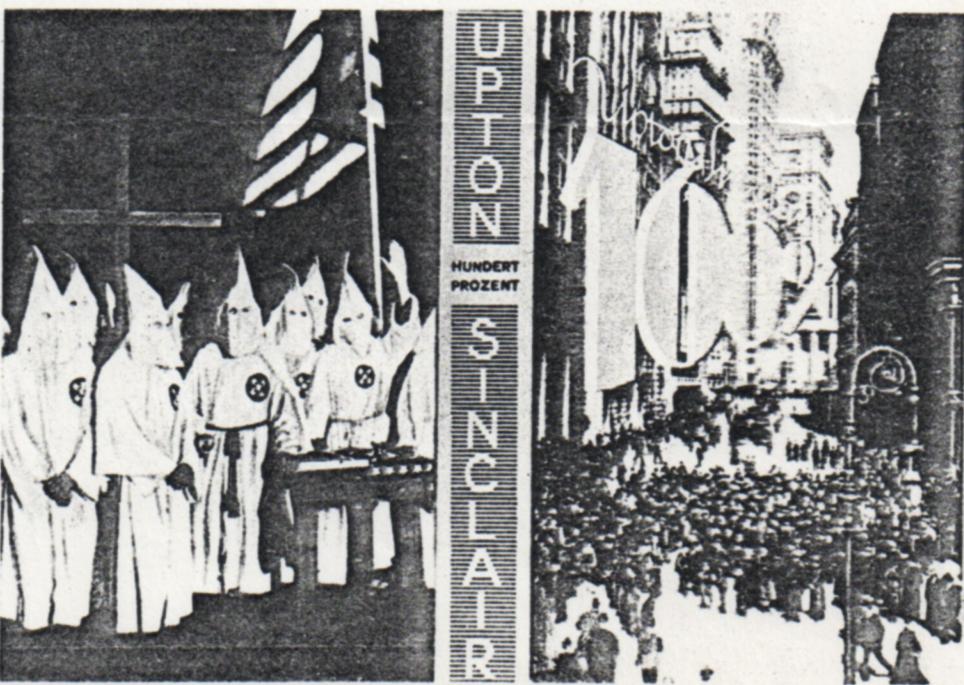
three smaller photos documenting confrontations between Nazi members and workers. Opposite this is the full-page Heartfield photomontage of Hitler "swallowing gold and spouting junk."

Though famous as an independent iconic image, this photomontage depends on its position within the photojournalistic narrative fully to convey its import—that Hitler and the Nazis are fed by specifically capitalist funding. (In the same issue of *AIZ* is a story on the financiers behind Hitler such as Fritz Thyssen.) In its similarities to the straight photograph of a "news event," the Heartfield photomontage assumes a documentary truth-value; yet in its differences, it suggests a political reality that is obscured by conventional media representations and party rhetoric. The Heartfield image thus exists in a dialogue with the photojournalism that surrounds it, raising questions of verism, manipulation and belief.

**H**eatfield's contribution to political photomontage—some would say his creation of that practice—is that his images direct a rereading of commercial mass media as well as function as strong political polemics.<sup>8</sup> A good example of this critique is Heartfield's photograph of a head swathed in newspapers, *Those Who Read Bourgeois Newspapers Will Become Blind and Deaf* (*AIZ*, Feb. 9,

1930), which *AIZ* used to illustrate a story on the deceptive practices of the Catholic and bourgeois press. Page one shows two almost identical photographs—one straight, the other retouched—of a German woman painter, Keimer-Dinkelbühler, sitting in front of her easel at the Vatican where she has been commissioned to paint the Pope's portrait. In the manipulated image, the *AIZ* caption explains, her skirt has been lengthened by the bourgeois press to cover her legs. The suggestion is that if such an image is falsified, no photograph, no truth, is safe from manipulation. Opposite the two photos, on page two, is the full-page Heartfield photograph of the anonymous head smothered in newspapers. The newspapers are mainstream socialist ones; the object of Heartfield's ridicule is the opposition and its manipulation of reality. Though it retains a degree of photographic verism, Heartfield's photograph is obviously staged. Here, then, he uses artifice to expose the false appearances of conventional photojournalism.

At times, Heartfield goes to great lengths to remind his viewers that his photomontages are mostly constructed of bits of unaltered photojournalism. In *Goering: The Executioner of the Third Reich* (*AIZ*, Sept. 14, 1933), Heartfield identifies Nazi minister Hermann Goering with the Reichstag fire, an act of arson which the Nazis laid on a communist con-



Heartfield's book jacket for Upton Sinclair's 100% published by Malik Verlag, Berlin, 1923.



Motto:  
**MILLIONEN  
STEHEN  
HINTER MIR!**

## Kleiner Mann bittet um große Gaben

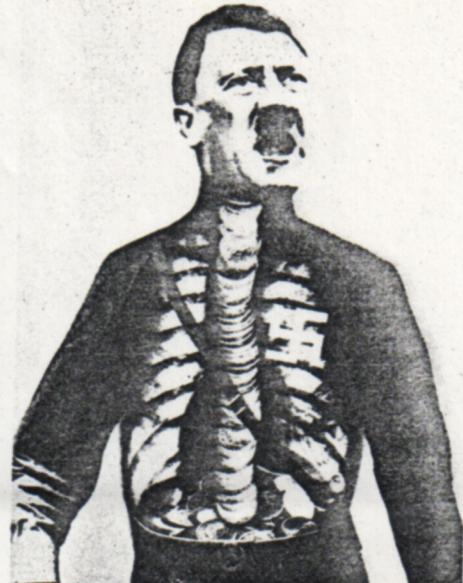
"The meaning of the Hitler salute: Motto: Millions stand behind me! A little man asks for large gifts,"  
photomontage by Heartfield, Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, XI, 42, Oct. 16, 1932.



Cover, first and second pages, AIZ, XI, 29, July 17, 1932, photomontage by Heartfield. Cover reads "Prince and Worker in one Party?" First page carries photos of worker confrontations with police in Detroit and with Nazis in Germany. Text reads in part: "Never can the party of princes and millionaires interest the workers." Second page reads: "Adolf, the superman: Swallows gold and spouts junk."

### PRINZ UND ARBEITER IN EINER PARTEI?

Die Nazis versuchen im Wahlkampf erneut die Lüge zu verbreiten, daß sie die Interessen der Werktagen verteidigen. Niemals kann die Partei der Prinzen und Millionärs Arbeiterinteressen wahren. Kein Werktager fällt auf diesen Nazischwindel herein! Jeder kämpft mit der einzigen antikapitalistischen Partei, mit der KPD, wählt LISTE 3



ADOLF, DER UBERMENSCH: Schluckt Gold und redet Blech

spiracy and used as an excuse to outlaw the party and jail its leaders. In the photomontage Goering, wearing a bloodied Nazi uniform and holding an ax, looms in the foreground, with the burning Reichstag in the background. His face is contorted in an expression between a bellow and a snarl, and the accompanying text, which labels Goering as the real arsonist, concludes: "Photomontage by John Heartfield. The face of Goering is taken from an original photograph and was not retouched." In effect, a directive to read the photographic fragments as indexical, bearing a one-to-one relationship with reality.

Heartfield's brother Wieland often collaborated with him on the written text, and they frequently used direct statements from the mass media—or ones that sounded as if they were quotations. For example, in *Hurrah Die Butter ist alle!* (*Hurrah the Butter is Gone!*), AIZ, Dec. 19, 1935, Heartfield constructed an image of a family happily complying with the government slogan "Guns Instead of Butter" by eating iron. Under the caption is added this Goering statement justifying the government's rearmament program during a decline in the nation's standard of living: "Iron has always made a country strong; butter and lard have at most made the people fat." The quote, from a speech given by Goering in Hamburg, is typi-

*Though famous as an iconic image, "Adolf, the Superman" depends on its position within its photojournalistic narrative to fully convey its import—that Hitler was fed by capitalist funding.*

cal of a media excerpt appropriated and/or adapted by the Herzfelde brothers to expose the cruel reality under the rhetoric.

In fragmenting and recomposing media excerpts, Heartfield commented on media constructions of reality—a critique that began during his Dada period and continued afterwards. How, formally, are his photomontages to be read? Rosalind Krauss has differentiated between Dada and Surrealist photomontage in terms of their spacing of elements, noting that Dadaists such as Raoul Hausmann disrupted illusionism with disjunctive spacing (often with the intrusion of the white page), whereas Surrealists like Man Ray used combination photography precisely to create seamless illusions.<sup>9</sup> Heartfield's AIZ photomontages would thus be aligned

with Surrealism in that they present alternative, illusionistic realities. Heartfield invoked the verism connoted by photojournalistic fragments in creating his illusions, and thus his photomontages imply a more "truly" seen event; they seem to reveal the absurdities inherent in the real. Visually, this can amount to exposing the unseen aspects of a situation as in the montaged X-ray view of Hitler swallowing capitalist gold. What is significant is that the illusionism of Heartfield's AIZ work both depends on and refutes the so-called "truth" of photojournalism. Further, the meaning of Heartfield's AIZ pages is determined by the text and images that accompany them, and in a larger sense, by the ideology of AIZ as a disseminating institution. □

"John Heartfield: Photomontages 1919–1959" was curated by Viktoria Hertling for The Peace Museum, Chicago, and the Malik Verlag exhibition by James Fraser and Steven Heller. A catalogue was published for the Malik exhibition, *The Malik Verlag 1916–1947* (New York: Goethe House, 1984). The Heartfield exhibition opened at The Peace Museum, June–Aug. '83 and traveled to: Art of Peace, Fort Collins, Colorado, June 1–June 30, '84; The Library Arts Center, Newport, New Hampshire, August 3–31, '84; The SUNY College at Old Westbury, Sept. 15–Oct. 15, '84; and Pacific Union College, Angwin, Calif., Jan. 1–31, '85. It will also appear at the Ganser Art Gallery, Millersville, Pa., Mar. 1–31, '85; the Art Institute of Boston, May 1–31, '85; and the Pratt Graphics Center, New York City, July 8–26, '85.

Nanu! Zweimal dasselbe ???



Der unerträgliche Statthalter Gottes hat die Menschen mit Bannen verhext, was von der Kirche durch Verschränken über die bei Frauen stattfindende Rassengrenze mehrfach komponiert wird. Nun sollte Frau Dr. Klemmer-Dankberg aus dem Kreis der Väterinnen des Reichswehrministers und daneben mit ihrer Gemahlin fotografiert werden und diese beiden ihrer bilden den Platz für Schau — der Papst hat sie auf dem Titelblatt der Zeitung, die darüber offenbar keinen Anstoß bekommen. Andere die dichten Zungen haben.

In Australien, dem sogenannten „sozialen Entzug“ mit einer „Arbeitsvergebung“, wo angeblich die Arbeitssuchenden durch Familienvorlage vom geschichteten „Arbeitsmarkt“ abgeschnitten sind, ist die Regierung die Zechen mit Strafknechten bereit. Die Arbeiter antworten auf die Arbeitsvergabe mit gewaltsamen Protesten und blutigen Arbeitsmarktreisen. Unsere Brüder sind die ersten, die davon nach Europa fliegen, wo die Pausen unter das Dreißigstundengebot schützen, und fröhlich mit Gewissensbissen die Strandkörbe an den Händen austreiben verabschließen.



WER BÜRGERBLÄTTER LIEST WIRD BLIND UND TAUB.  
WEG MIT DEN VERDUMMUNGSBANDAGEN!

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*First and second pages, AIZ, IX, 6, Feb. 9, 1930, designed by Heartfield. First page demonstrates retouching of photographs by bourgeois press: "Well! Twice the same???" Page two: "Those who read bourgeois newspapers will become blind and deaf. Away with these debilitating bandages."*

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1. An exchange of letters between Hans Haacke and William Rubin concerning the Museum's exclusion of Heartfield and other policies was published in *Artforum* 20 (September 1981), 2.

2. This connection was elaborated by Benjamin Buchloh in his essay "Allegorical Procedures: Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art," *Artforum* 21 (September 1982), 43–56.

3. In one sense all Dada art can be considered political in that it addresses issues of language and representation. Berlin Dada, however, was the one Dada group overtly involved in political processes and class struggles, that is, the events during and after the Weimar revolution.

4. Dawn Ades, *Photomontage*, New York, Pantheon, 1976, p. 11.

5. On the basis of this *Jedermann* issue, charges were brought against Herzfelde as the editor and Mehring as a writer for "seeking to bring the Reichswehr into contempt and distributing indecent publications." Although they were not jailed at the time, Herzfelde was imprisoned without a hearing March 7–20, 1919, along with many other communists following a general strike in Berlin. Malik's history is marked by a series of major censorship trials instigated by the Weimar government, the most well known being George Grosz's 1928–30 trial for blasphemy. This case centered around Malik's publication of Grosz's drawing depicting Christ in a gas mask. Called *Shut Up and Do Your Duty*, the drawing protested forcing men into the military, particularly those who had been drafted

### Heartfield's contribution to photomontage is that his images direct a rereading of commercial mass media and also function as strong political polemics.

and died in WWI. The case went through several trials and retrials, creating judicial, theological and even legislative controversies. In the end, Grosz and Herzfelde as his publisher were acquitted, but the drawings were confiscated and printing blocks destroyed, reflecting the confused state of justice in the Weimar Republic. See Beth Irwin Lewis, *George Grosz: Art and Politics in the Weimar Republic*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1971, pp. 70–71, 74, 221–225.

6. Grosz portfolios of prints and/or drawings published by Malik include: *Kleine Grosz-Mappe* (Small Grosz-Portfolio), 1917; *Erste Grosz-Mappe*, 1917; *Gott mit uns*, 1920; *Ecce Homo*, 1923; and *Hintergrund* (Background), 1928.

7. Wieland Herzfelde as quoted in *The Malik Verlag 1916–1947*, New York, Goethe House, 1984, p. 36.

8. This involvement of the viewer as a participant in decoding mass media images recalls Walter Benjamin's admiration for Heartfield in his 1934 essay "The Author as Producer," in which Benjamin calls for a particular kind of political art: "The best political tendency is wrong if it does not demonstrate the attitude with which it is to be followed. . . . What matters, therefore, is the exemplary character of production, which is able first to induce other producers to produce, and second to put an improved apparatus at their disposal. And this apparatus is better the more consumers it is able to turn into producers—that is, readers or spectators into collaborators." Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Reflections*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1978, p. 233.

9. In this argument, Krauss uses the word "spacing" specifically with reference to Derrida's theories. For the complete development of this idea, see Rosalind Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," *October* 19 (Winter 1981), 21–26.

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# Hurrah, die Butter ist alle!

Goering in seiner Hamburger Rede: „Erz hat stets ein Reich stark gemacht,  
Butter und Schmalz haben höchstens ein Volk fett gemacht“

*“Hurrah, the butter is gone! Goering in Hamburg speech: ‘Iron has always made a country strong; butter and lard have at most made the people fat.’ ” Photomontage by Heartfield, AIZ, XIV, 50, Dec. 19, 1935.*