

POLITICAL PROPAGANDA POSTERS IN RUSSIA AND GERMANY
AFTER 1917: THE STRUGGLE AGAINST
DISINTEGRATION AND FOR UNITY

by

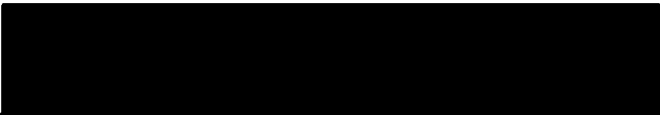
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A THESIS

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Title: POLITICAL PROPAGANDA POSTERS IN RUSSIA AND GERMANY
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Approved: _____

Professor Alan Kimball

The political propaganda poster is an effective method to communicate with the masses. It was born out of revolution and the fight against disintegration. The zenith of the political poster spanned the time when the desire to eliminate any internal and external threat was high. And thus it flourished until unity was established, when the necessity to be constantly in touch with the masses came to be of secondary importance. This model fits the history of Russian and Germany after 1917. When analyzed, these countries possess more commonalities than differences in regard to the political propaganda poster.

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PREFACE

I would like to describe briefly how I became interested in this topic as well as a few other details pertinent to this work.

My interest in this topic stems from a visit to Zürich, Switzerland in June, 1989. On this one day trip I was able to squeeze in a tour of the Museum für Gestaltung where a fascinating exhibit entitled "Kunst und Propaganda - Sowjetische Plakatkunst bis 1953" was being held. Although I only had about 30 minutes to tour the exhibit, I was impressed by the power that posters can have on an individual.

My original interest was to research what the effect of these posters was on the individual; however, this became obviously impossible due to lack of pertinent psychological studies on the topic. But I kept political posters in mind and began to snoop around and do some research while I was studying at the Universität Freiburg. There I received assistance from a history instructor and another man associated with the history department at Universität Heidelberg, who put me on to Klaus Staeck. Although my attempt to visit Klaus Staeck did not produce a meeting, I was nevertheless allowed into his library. And this is where my bibliography began; the rest is history.

Translation Note: All translations which appear in this work are my own except the ones corresponding to the Russian quotations from the article by Н. Бабурина entitled "СОВЕТСКИЙ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЙ ПЛАКАТ". These translations stem from the English translation of this article in the same book as the Russian version.

CHAPTER I

"As for political posters, the walls sometimes speak. . . Especially in times of turmoil, one can find both posters that express dissenting viewpoints and those that reflect the dominant ideologies. These posters too must be read, because they document some of the issues that divide and unite society."¹

INTRODUCTION: PROPAGANDA AND THE POSTER

The Word Propaganda

The meaning of the word propaganda has changed over the ages. The current understanding of the word propaganda carries a negative tone. This tone, however, has evolved over time. Originally, the word propaganda had rather a positive meaning.

The word propaganda comes from the modern Latin title *Congregatio de propagande fide* (congregation for propagating the faith). This congregation, which was founded in 1622 under Pope Gregory XV, was a committee of Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church whose duty it was to care for and oversee foreign missions.

Towards the end of the 18th century and throughout the 19th century the word propaganda was defined as: "Any association, systematic scheme, or concerted movement for the

1 Gallo, Max. The Poster in History, trans. by Alfred and Bruni Mayor -- Abridged ed. -- (Feltham: Hamlyn, 1975), 12.

propagation of a particular doctrine or practice." With the 20th century the definition changed a little more: "The systematic propagation of information or ideas by an interested party, esp. in a tendentious way in order to encourage or instill a particular attitude or response. Also, the ideas, doctrines, etc., disseminated thus; the vehicle of such propagation"² (see Appendix A for the complete English definition).

Not only has time changed the meaning of the word, but in Russian and in German the meaning of the word propaganda in modern times has different nuances to it (see Appendix A for German and Russian definitions). These differences result primarily from the form of government in each country, and thus the means by which propaganda was to be used and understood by the people. Adolf Hitler defines the duty of propaganda as follows: "Die Aufgabe der Propaganda liegt nicht in einer wissenschaftlichen Ausbildung des einzelnen, sondern in einem Hinweisen der Masse. . ." (The purpose of propaganda lies not in a scientific education of the individual, but rather in the directing of the masses. . .)³ And further, the art of propaganda is, according to Hitler:

Gerade darin liegt die Kunst der Propaganda, dass sie, die gefühlsmässige Vorstellungswelt der grossen Masse begreifend, in psychologisch richtiger Form den Weg zur Aufmerksamkeit und weiter zum Herzen der breiten Masse findet.

² The Oxford English Dictionary, second edition, volume XII, (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1989), 632.

³ Hitler, Adolf, Mein Kampf, 4. Auflage, (München: Frz Eher Nachf., 1939), 197.

(The point of the art of propaganda is that by grasping the emotional world of perception of the masses, it attracts, in a psychologically right form, the attention and, further, opens the hearts of the broad masses.)⁴

Propaganda should not, however, be confused with agitation. The difference between propaganda and agitation must then be made clear. Agitation is "negativ angreifend und soll die Massen aufpeitschen, ihre Leidenschaften auf den Siedepunkt bringen. . . . Agitation ist Vernichtungspropaganda" (negatively aggressive, and should stimulate the masses to bring their passions to the boiling-point. . . . Agitation is destructive propaganda.)⁵ Nevertheless, agitation and propaganda are closely related, often interchanged in their usage.

In the Soviet Union propaganda and agitation are understood in the following manner:

Agitation und Propaganda - unter diesen beiden Begriffen fassen die kommunistischen Theoretiker die Bemühungen der Partei um die systematische Beeinflussung des Bewusstseins der Bevölkerung einerseits und die politische Schulung des Parteinachwuchses und der Parteimitgliederschaft anderseits zusammen.

(Agitation and propaganda - with these two these concepts the communist theoreticians summarize the efforts of the party to influence systematically the consciousness of the people on the one hand, and on the other to advance the political schooling of existing and new party members.)⁶

4 Ibid., 198.

5 Medebach, Friedrich, Das Kampfplakat: Aufgabe, Wesen und Gesetzmässigkeit des politischen Plakats nachgewiesen an der Plakaten der Kampffahre von 1918-1933, (Frankfurt/M: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, 1941), 11.

6 Richert, Ernst, Agitation und Propaganda: Das System der publizistischen Massenführung in der Sowjetzone, (Berlin: Verlag Franz Vahlen, GmbH, 1958), 2.

Although this definition stems from the 1940s and 1950s, it nevertheless conveys the idea behind agitation and propaganda in the eyes of the communist international. Establishing itself with the October Revolution, the communist international was the major propagating body after 1917. The goal of the communist international in producing posters was to convince the masses of the rightness of the state's programs, whether they be political, economic, social, or cultural. By propagating such programs the state fought against unrest from internal as well as external forces while working toward unity within the state.

The extreme importance of propaganda and agitation must be made clear in order to understand just why governments devote so much time and money to creating and conveying it to the peoples of any particular country:

[Both are] "wichtige Strukturelemente. . . Mittel in der Hand zu haben. . . nicht nur Meinungen zu bilden und Gegenmeinungen zu unterdrücken, sondern mit Hilfe von Partei- und Massenorganisationen schliesslich zu einer Umformung des Menschen und der Gesellschaft zu gelangen"

([Both are] important structural elements. . . means to have at hand. . . not only to form opinions and repress opposing opinions, but rather finally, with help of party and mass organizations, to attain a transformation of man and society.)⁷

The potential power of propaganda to convince people of a certain idea, campaign, or opinion makes propaganda a useful political tool. "Massengewinnung. . . ist ohne Massenpropaganda oder Massenagitation nicht möglich" (Winning

⁷ Ibid., IX.

over of the masses. . . is not possible without mass propaganda or mass agitation.)⁸

Propaganda and agitation, in their different natures, correspond to different forms of conveyance which allows them to be successful each in their own way. "Der Propagandist wirke daher 'hauptsächlich durch das gedruckte, der Agitator durch das gesprochene Wort'" (The propagandist works therefore "mainly through the printed word, the agitator through the spoken word".)⁹

Thus, the state or government, wanting to convey its propaganda to its people, chooses a printed method. The most effective means by which this can be successfully accomplished is via the poster. Propaganda and/or agitation and the poster compliment each other: "Propaganda und Agitation sind die publizistischen Kampfmethoden, denen das Plakat am stärksten seinem Wesen nach dienen kann" (Propaganda and agitation are the journalistic methods of battle, to which the poster, in essence, can make the most powerful contribution.)¹⁰ The poster is most definitely an inseparable component of propaganda (attrib. Schockel).¹¹

8 Münzenberg, Willi, Propaganda als Waffe, (Paris: Editions du Carrefour, 1937), 10.

9 Richert, 3.

10 Medebach, 11.

11 Kämpfer, Frank, Der rote Keil, (Berlin: Mann Verlag, 1985), 32.

The Political Poster

"Als eines der Instrumente zur Lenkung der Öffentlichkeit entstand eine neue Gattung von Monumentalmalerei, das politische Plakat."

(The political poster, a new sort of monumental painting, arose as one of the instruments to control the public.)¹²

The political poster--a means of propagandizing, a means of informing. The characteristics of the poster made it the ideal means by which to carry out the duty of propaganda. Posters could be produced rapidly and without much trouble. The poster could then be put into use very quickly and successfully. And the poster's large size allowed it to be seen from a distance.

The simplicity of the poster allowed it, in principle, to be easily understood by the masses. Adolf Hitler understood the importance of simplicity in the following way:

Wirkung auf die breite Masse, Konzentration auf wenige Punkte, immerwährende Wiederholung derselben, selbstsichere und selbstbewusste Fassung des Textes in den Formen einer apodiktischen Behauptung, grösste Beharrlichkeit in der Verbreitung und Geduld im Erwarten der Wirkung.

(The effect on the masses, concentration on a few points, constant repetition of the same, self-assured and self-confident wording of the text, in the form of an apodictic assertion, much perseverance in the dissemination and patience in waiting for the effect.)¹³

Combining picture and/or a symbol with clever text, political parties produced effective posters which commun-

¹² Ibid., 247.

¹³ Hitler, 402.

icated their central messages. "Der Stil des Plakates. . . ist überzeugender visueller Ausdruck der Haltung der Partei" (The style of the poster. . . is a convincing visual expression of the stance of the party.)¹⁴ Thus, the picture or image was often the key to the poster because:

Die Wirkung des Bildplakats besteht darin, dass man es mit einem Blick übersieht, und im Augenblick des Betrachtens bereits eine seelische Einstellung zum Inhalt des Plakates hat. . . . Das Bild muss, einmal erhascht, alles das sagen was ein langes Schriftplakat klarmachen will. Und hierin liegt die Schwierigkeit.

(The effect of the pictorial poster exists in that one surveys it with one glance, and in that moment of observation, has an emotional attitude toward the contents of the poster. . . . The picture must, once grasped, say everything that a long written poster would want to clarify in words. And therein lies the difficulty.)¹⁵

The poster's political message could be changed rather easily and thus could always be appropriated to a new situation.

The poster could always be born anew and therewith the methods by which it influenced the masses. This type of persuasion demanded something of its public. The political poster should thus accomplish two goals: first, it should present its political message convincingly, and second, it should unmask the opposition in order to show that its message is better.¹⁶

14 Rademacher, Hellmut, 1924/1932. 24 politische Plakate der Weimarer Republik, (Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1974), 11.

15 Stark-Berlin, Georg, Moderne politische Propaganda, 3. Auflage, (München: Verlag Frz Eher Nachf., 1930), 14.

16 Rademacher, Hellmut, Masters of German Poster Art, (New York: October House, 1966), 25-26.

Posters accomplished such demands because of the fact that:

Plakate hatten bei dieser Propaganda die Aufgabe, auch den Medienflüchtling noch zu erreichen, jenen, der zu Versammlungen nicht ging, der die Presse nicht las und das Radio nicht anschaltete. Ihm sollte auch gegen seinen Willen das Plakat mit Bild, Symbol und Parole in die Augen springen.

(In this propaganda, posters had the purpose to reach also those who avoided the media, those who did not go to meetings, those who did not read the press, and those who did not turn on the radio. The poster with its picture, symbol, and caption should also pop into people's eyes against their will.)¹⁷

No matter how hard one tried to avoid the poster, one failed, unless blind. The poster shouted out to everyone on the street, whether hurrying by or out for a pleasant walk; the individual could not be oblivious to the poster. And moreover, the responsible citizen, wanting to be informed of current affairs, noticed the poster because the poster reflected the situations of the time.¹⁸

Finally, the poster is to be treated as a historical document:

Das Plakat wird so zu einem historischen Dokument gesellschaftlicher Entwicklung in weitestem Sinne, der sozialen Struktur der Bevölkerung, des wirtschaftlichen, des technischen Standes einer Zeit, ihrer kulturellen Bestrebungen und Leistungen, des Höhenfluges oder des Tiefstandes der Gedankenwelt der Menschen, der treibenden politischen Kräfte, aber auch menschlicher Eitelkeit und Torheit, menschlichen Strebens und Kämpfens um alle nur möglichen erreichbaren irdischen Güter materieller oder ideeller Art. Das ganze Panorama einer Zeit in ihrer vielgestaltigen Problematik erscheint uns im Plakat.

17 Kämpfer, 10.

18 Rademacher, Hellmut, Das deutsche Plakat - Von den Anfängen bis z. Gegenwart, (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1965), 9.

The poster becomes a historical document of social development in the widest sense, of the social structure of the people, of the economic, the technical level of a time, of the people's cultural efforts and accomplishments. The poster documents the most lofty or the most profound levels in the world of human thought. It documents the driving, political forces, but also human vanity and foolishness, human drive and the struggle to achieve all possible forms of earthly goods, whether material or ideal. The whole panorama of a time, with its multiple problems, appears to us in the poster.)¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL PROPAGANDA POSTER IN RUSSIA

Introduction

The production of political propaganda posters in Russia began in 1917: "Советский политический плакат – это искусство, рожденное Октябрем" (The soviet political poster is an art born of the October Revolution).¹ The beginnings of the political propaganda poster developed hand in hand with the internal unrest in Russia which led to the October Revolution. This disunity continued until the Soviet Union was finally established. During these years, 1917–1922, the political situation was intensified by revolution and civil war. The time of the civil war also saw an external threat. During those years Russia fought not only on its home front, but also on the western one in the Russo-Polish War.

Throughout these struggles it was imperative that the government communicate with the masses, and the poster was the means by which this could be done most effectively:

Рядом с первыми плакатами – первые памятники,
установленные по ленинскому плану монументальной

¹ Бабурина, Н, "Советский политический плакат." Советский политический плакат: из коллекции Государственной библиотеки СССР имени В.И. Ленина, Часть первая, (Москва: Советский художник, 1984), 3.

пропаганды: революционный плакат – неотъемлемая часть оформления городов и демонстраций....

(The first posters made their appearance side by side with the first monuments erected according to the plan of monumental propaganda advanced by V.I. Lenin; the revolutionary poster was an integral part of the decor of towns and demonstrations. . . .)²

Posters were soon to be seen everywhere. They were prominent in urban as well as rural settings.³

The posters reflect the historical events and the actions and intentions of the government. For example, during the time of the revolution: ". . . entwickelt das Plakat ein Repertoire von Miranda, das zur ständigen Veranschaulichung des Fortschritts der Revolution diene" (. . . the poster develops a repertoire of visuals that served as a constant demonstration of the advancement of the revolution).⁴

The years from 1918 to 1921 marked the real zenith in the production of the Soviet political propaganda poster. "Over the early post-revolutionary years and beyond them the issues that were treated in Soviet political posters broadly paralleled the major developments in the country's political, economic and social life."⁵ The production of these posters

² Ibid.

³ White, Stephen, The Bolshevik Poster, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 108.

⁴ Kämpfer, 244.

⁵ White, 91.

was increased or decreased according to the political situation of the day:

Плакат – искусство партийное, политически–тенденциозное, и его развитие, его идейные и творческие задачи определяются узловыми проблемами исторического развития нашей страны.

(Poster design is art imbued with the Party spirit, it is politically tendencious, and its progress, its ideological objectives and creative pursuits are determined by the key problems as they present themselves in the course of the development of our country.)⁶

When political, or even economic or cultural matters were threatening the stability of the country, posters were rapidly and numerously produced. Likewise when these opposing forces were overcome, time was devoted anew to the creation of the Soviet Union, a unified nation under one leader, V.I. Lenin, and one system, communism.

The Early Years

The birth of the political propaganda poster in Russia occurred with the October Revolution. The spirit of the revolution breathed the first life into the production of the political poster. "Das politische Plakat verdankt seine Existenz dem politischen Kampf. . . . Sozialistische Oktoberrevolution von 1917. . ." (The political poster owes its existence to the political battle. . . . the socialist October Revolution of 1917).⁷ The extreme threat of opposing

⁶ Бабурина, 3.

⁷ Rademacher, Das deutsche Plakat, 169.

forces within the country led to the production and use of political propaganda posters to reach the masses. This method of communication, at this early stage, was to convey the message of its producers, whether for or against the revolution. The goal was the same--to destroy any internal opposition (see Appendix B, Plate 1).

Although World War I no longer plagued the eastern front, the internal unrest between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks threatened the stability of the country. However, the Bolsheviks under the leadership of V.I. Lenin took the forefront and established themselves as the ruling party. The Bolsheviks were inclined to use the political poster because:

. . . the new Soviet regime was intended to represent a qualitative change from all previous forms of state power in that it was to be constituted through the informed participation of all citizens, particularly ordinary workers and peasants.⁸

In order to accomodate all "ordinary workers and peasants" when many were analphabetics, especially in the villages or Central Asian republics, for example, the Bolsheviks used the political poster as their main method of communication. The apparent simplicity of an intriguing picture or image was enough to grab the attention of the masses, and cause them to stop and ponder the message being conveyed. Although the workers and peasants may not have understood the more complicated realms of the messages, the

⁸ White, 18.

poster, nevertheless, fulfilled its duty; it caught the attention of the individual and impressed an opinion upon him/her.

In such a country as vast and populated as Russia, there were, of course, other means of mass communication besides the poster: film, agitational trains, and processions were some of the more common methods. But none of these possessed the convenience of the poster. They all involved much more effort and work hours, not to mention that active individual involvement was essential for success. The poster was a passive method by which to influence the masses and thus highly preferred to other methods. "The prominence of posters in early post-revolutionary Russia was related in turn to the enormous numbers that were produced."⁹

There were, however, some problems with the poster production and "[t]his was not to suggest that Bolshevik poster work was perfectly conceived or faultlessly executed."¹⁰ Poster production was often delayed or halted due to lack of paper or other problems; however, this did not take away from its importance: "В издательствах и типографиях, несмотря на нехватку оборудования, материалов, кадров, плакаты печатались в первую очередь." (In spite of an acute shortage of capital equipment, skilled labour, and printing materials,

⁹ Ibid., 109.

¹⁰ Ibid., 115.

posters were given first priority in printshops and publishing houses.)¹¹

Another such problem with the political propaganda poster was its clarity: "In many cases, clearly, it provoked hostility and even incomprehension."¹² The poster texts, because they often contained new and unfamiliar political wordings, created an additional difficulty for the public. And worse yet, as viewed by the Bolsheviks, were those posters that contained occasional errors of political judgement. These early poster works "often showed a mistaken understanding of the nature of the new regime".¹³

The early days of the Soviet political poster are characterized by the works of a Latvian named Alexander Apsit, among others. At an early stage Apsit became involved in the poster and propaganda work of the new Soviet regime. He produced posters of an allegorical sort that spoke to the proletariat. His posters typically glorified the victory of the proletariat in the October Revolution or called on the proletariat to defend the ideals of the Red Army (see Appendix B, Plates 2,3).

11 Бабурина, 3.

12 White, 112.

13 Ibid., 115.

The Civil War

История советского плаката неотделима от истории Советского государства. Но история плаката, того плаката, который мы полным правом можем назвать советским, начинается не с первых дней Октября, а с середины 1918 года.

(The history of the Soviet poster cannot be separated from the history of the Soviet government. And the history of the posters, those posters which we in all honesty can call Soviet, began not in the first days of October, but in the middle of 1918.)¹⁴

Although the history of the political propaganda poster in Russia has a longer history, the "first distinctively Soviet political posters" were put up in Petrograd in August 1918, just as the civil war was beginning.¹⁵ With the Soviet government trying to obtain power, the struggle for unity was added to the struggle against disintegration.

These first two specifically Soviet posters were printed by the publishing house ВЦИК (VTSIK). In October 1919, an official decree confirmed the existence of the Litizdat--the new state publishing house established in the previous June. This publishing house was to play a major role in the production of posters during the civil war (and thereafter).

The civil war period can be divided up into smaller increments of time in which each section can be typified by its specific poster themes. "The latter part of 1919 saw these early poster themes largely superseded by subjects of a more military or revolutionary character. . . ."¹⁶ This

¹⁴ Бутник-Сиверский, 43.

¹⁵ White, 18.

¹⁶ Ibid., 93.

corresponded to the most decisive military actions taken within the civil war years but also shows views against external threat (see Appendix B, Plate 4).

In 1920 a variety of themes were to be found on the posters. This year saw many posters with themes devoted to civilian assistance for the Red Army¹⁷ (see Appendix B, Plate 5). Another theme well represented in 1920 was the unexpected danger of the advancing Wrangel, the last commander of the White Army in its struggle against Bolshevik power, which numerous, often mass produced posters focussed on¹⁸ (see Appendix B, plate 6). Two additional themes that were prominent in the poster work of 1920 were represented in posters that were either dedicated to the communist international or those that commemorated the third year of Soviet power and other such anniversaries.¹⁹ The following year, 1921, brought to the Soviet poster work a movement from military to economic themes:

. . .military matters lost their previous priority and military-related posters quickly dropped to a very small proportion of the total output. . . .In contrast, the needs of economic development and social change became much greater, and approaching three-quarters of all posters issued in 1921 were devoted to such purposes"²⁰ (see Appendix B, Plate 7).

"Одной из замечательных и характерных черт плаката периода гражданской войны было его необычайно быстрое развитие" (One of

17 Ibid., 96.

18 Ibid., 100.

19 Ibid., 101.

20 Ibid.

the wonderful and characteristic traits of the posters of the civil war period was their unusually quick growth).²¹ The number of posters produced increased tremendously after the revolutionary years and continued until it reached a peak in 1920. In this year, 1920, although external threat from the Russo-Polish War was at hand, the last battles were being fought against domestic oppositionists. The themes of the posters in 1920 reflected the nature of the situation, and thus military posters were on the rise until 1920, when nearly half of the posters produced were war-related (see Appendix B, Plate 8). These posters declined at first slightly but then rather quickly as the more peaceful situations of 1921 came to the forefront.²²

During these civil war years, the Soviet political propaganda poster

. . . developed in two main directions. . . : the heroic and the satirical. These were in turn associated with the two leading practitioners of the early Soviet poster, Dmitri Moor and Viktor Deni, respectively.²³

Dmitri Moor's work (see Appendix B, Plates 5,6,9) was described in 1926 by V. Okhochinsky in the following manner: "Товарищи Красноармейцы помнят его революционные плакаты, подымавшие боевой дух и освещавшие пути борьбы. (The ranks of the Red Army remember his revolutionary posters, that raised their combat morale and threw light upon the path of their

²¹ Нурок, 9.

²² White, 91.

²³ Ibid., 41.

struggle.)²⁴ And Pravda wrote the following about Viktor Deni in 1923: (see Appendix B, Plate 10)

...Дени, не зная устали, наносил нашим врагам меткие и сильные удары. Сделать врага смешным – наполовину убить его. Совлечь с него величавую личину, обнажить его отвратительное естество и притом так, чтобы понял без всяких объяснений буквально каждый имеющий глаза, – это труднейшая задача, которая по плечу лишь немногим художникам, вроде Дени.

(. . .Deni indefatigably meted out well-aimed and smashing blows upon our enemies. To make an enemy look ridiculous is to half-kill him. To rip a mask of grandeur off his face, to expose his repulsive nature so that everybody without exception with eyes to see may understand it at first sight is a tremendous challenge to be copied with only a few artists of Deni's calibre.)²⁵

Another well-known posterist of this time worth mentioning is Nikolai Kochergin. His works were typically devoted to the economic reconstruction of the nation; however, he also produced several significant military posters. (see Appendix B, Plate 5)

During this time the development of some important state symbols occurred in connection with poster production. The hammer and sickle motif first appeared in 1917, but it was in later years that it became a prominent symbol of the new Soviet regime. The time of the civil war also brought forth the form of a worker and peasant to represent the new Soviet

²⁴ Бабурина, 4.

²⁵ Ibid., 4-5.

regime. And another symbol

. . . was the sun, which had traditionally represented knowledge and new life. The sun was widely used to illuminate distinctively Soviet scenes, such as education and female emancipation, in contrast to the misery and oppression of the old regime.²⁶ (see Appendix B, Plate 3)

These beginning Soviet years become well-known for the creation and popularization of symbols and imagery which "had a significant influence upon the graphic art of other countries as well as upon Soviet political art up to the present day."²⁷

Another important factor with the production of political propaganda posters at this time in Soviet history was the production of *Okna ROSTA* (ROSTA windows). The ROSTA windows were first publicized in autumn of 1919 and were present until January 1922. These windows did not fit the typical description of the poster. The most common type consisted of many scenes which were put together to form a story, much like a comic strip, all on one piece of poster size paper (see Appendix B, Plate 11). The windows were originally thought up by Mikhail Cheremnykh; however, Vladimir Mayakovsky is most closely associated with these works.

ROSTA (name from the Russian Telegraph Agency) was established on September 7, 1918, by ВЦК (VTSIK). ROSTA contributed to the telegraph agency by "collecting and

²⁶ White, 36.

²⁷ Ibid., 34.

distributing any other informational material that the Soviet press might find necessary".²⁸ The three main areas Rosta worked on were information, agitation, and supervision of the Soviet press. Important to note, though, is that the ROSTA windows also reflected the same thematic shifts that were apparent in the poster; namely, they moved from military-revolutionary themes to economic ones over the course of time.

The civil war period is defined as the period that began in the summer of 1918, with the first interventionist forces arriving in Russia, and continued until the autumn of 1920, the year in which the last serious domestic opposition had been defeated. In these years the Soviet political poster attained the peak of its achievement. The posters of this period were seen as

. . . often simple, even crude, by comparison with the elaborately produced posters that had appeared in the first months following the revolution, still more so the work that was to appear in later years.²⁹

But the poster artists, wanting to appeal to as many people as possible, were guided by the maxims of "simplicity and directness in their compositions".³⁰ These were the guidelines for success.

This production of the Soviet political propaganda poster followed the developments in Soviet life rather closely in the time period 1918-1922:

28 Ibid., 65.

29 White, 61, 64.

30 Ibid., 64.

The regime first of all establishes itself (political and economic posters receive priority), is then challenged from within and without (military posters become predominant), and then, having secured its own position, turns to problems of peaceful social and economic development (economic and cultural themes move rapidly to the fore). The importance of posters, as a means of mass communication and persuasion, first rises and then falls over the same period.³¹

Looking over the Soviet poster movement, many similarities become apparent between Soviet and German works. The Bolshevik example provided a "vorbildgebenden Einfluss" (formative influence) on the German political poster.³² Although the poster movement in Russia began a little earlier than in Germany, and spanned a shorter time period, the age of the political propaganda poster in Russia, as well as in Germany, began with revolution and ended with the establishment of a unified state. Thus in both nations the political propaganda poster followed a common course: it was born out of unrest and the fear against disintegration and ended with the achievement of unity.

31 Ibid., 92.

32 Rademacher, Das deutsche Plakat, 170.

CHAPTER III

THE POLITICAL PROPAGANDA POSTER IN GERMANY

Introduction

With the influence of Soviet poster work, German political propaganda posters began to make their mark in 1918, one year later than in Russia. As in Russia, the political propaganda poster began with revolution and ended with the establishment of a unified state. Political propaganda posters were produced during the Weimar Republic in connection with fear of disintegration and desire for unity. At the beginning and in specific years during the Weimar Republic there was a increase in the production of political posters. This occurred concurrently with the battle against disintegration fought so fervently in the beginning years of the Weimar Republic:

With the end of World War I, legitimate authority was supplanted by elected authority in Germany. Political appeals to the masses were launched on an unprecedented scale and with a hitherto unknown intensity. A new art came into being: the art of propaganda. Billboards became battlegrounds for party struggles. Posters became weapons. Today they are a vivid record of those turbulent years.

They tell us about the dreams of the creators of the Weimar Republic: democracy, freedom, peace. We see

their appeal to the humaneness and common sense of the people.¹

And throughout the course of the Weimar Republic, although their production may have fluctuated, posters played a central role in connection with internal unrest and attempt to unify.

The Weimar Republic was a time that brought many new troublesome situations with it: "In Weimar traten *Spannungen und Belastungen der Sozialstruktur* auf, die ungeheuerer desorganisierende Wirkungen hervorriefen" (Tensions and stresses on the social structure occurred in Weimar that brought forth huge disorganized effects).² In these turbulent times, the poster was the ideal means to inform the masses:

Im deutschen Plakat ist die Weimarer Republik mit ihrer sich ständig verschiebenden Parteilandschaft prägend geworden; die Wahlkampagnen zu Reichstags- und Reichspräsidentenwahlen dominieren das Verständnis von politischem Plakat und Plakat-Kampagne.

(The constantly changing party landscapes of the Weimar Republic are fixed in the German poster. The election campaigns and the elections to the national convention and for the president of the national convention shaped the meaning of the political poster and the poster campaign.)³

But it was not only the many elections that contributed to the popularity of the political propaganda poster. Adolf Hitler understood all too well the powerful influence that propaganda could hold. He also chose the poster as the means

1 New York. New School for Social Research. Art Center, Weimar-Nürnberg-Bonn: an exhibition of German posters, (New York: New School for Social Research, 1963).

2 Grieswelle, Detlef, Propaganda der Friedlosigkeit, (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1972), 9.

3 Kämpfer, 213.

by which to reach the masses to convince them of the national socialistic ideologies. Thus, through the end of the Weimar Republic, the poster remained the dominant form of propaganda.

The Beginning Years

The birth of the modern political propaganda poster in Germany occurred in 1918 with the end of World War I and the November Revolution's dissolution of the censorship laws. The November Revolution resulted mainly from discontent with the war, especially as the hope for victory declined.⁴ Together World War I and the November Revolution, with the economic troubles that followed, were decisive events which created a situation of internal unrest. Although the desire to eliminate any remnants of Kaiser William's Germany and work for a new democratic republic was strong, the revolution divided the people into many different groups based on their ideological beliefs.

It was then first through the November Revolution that the political poster found its actual meaning.⁵ And a flood of text-picture posters resulted from the abolishing of the censorship laws as people tried to come to terms with the troubles of disintegration. This new, modern poster with its

4 Willett, John, Art & Politics in the Weimar Period: The New Sobriety, 1917-1933, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 44.

5 Gehrig, Oscar, "Plakatkunst und Revolution", Wasmuths Kunstheft, Heft 5, (Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth A.G., 1939), 1.

prominent pictorial depiction evolved from the earlier written poster. With this new type of poster came a new purpose. It was to advertise an idea (note: not an ideology!). The intended recipients of these posters were no longer a particular group, but now rather every group; these posters were directed to the masses. The new posters "sollten aber grosse Menschenmengen aufrühren, wachrufen, zwingen, ja sie sollten geistige Umstellungen, Beeinflussungen tiefgehender Art zeitigen - im Dienste der Revolution!" (should arouse, awaken, force, indeed they should bring about transformations of consciousness, influences of a profound kind to large masses of people--in the service of the revolution).⁶

The political propaganda poster at this early stage projected varying images. Every idea waiting to be born had its chance now. The streets were covered with posters of all sorts (see Appendix B, Plate 12):

Agitation und Propaganda, Gewinnung der Millionenmassen auf den Strassen, Popularisierung und Erläuterung von politischen Programmen und Manifesten, Aufrufe zum Kampf gegen den politischen Gegner oder zu den verschiedensten Aktionen - alles das spiegelt sich wider im Plakat der Revolutionszeit 1918/19.

(Agitation and propaganda, winning over of mass millions on the streets, popularizing and explaining political programs and manifests, calling forth the struggle against political opposition or a wide variety of actions - all this is reflected in the poster of the revolutionary time of 1918/19.)⁷

6 Behne, Adolf, "Alte und neue Plakate", Das politische Plakat, (Berlin: Verlag "Das Plakat", 1919), 5-23: 10.

7 Rademacher, Das deutsche Plakat, 159, 162.

During these beginning years many different groups produced these posters. "Mit dem Ausbruch der Novemberrevolution 1918 suchten viele Künstler und Intellektuelle den Weg zu den Massen des Volkes" (With the outbreak of the November Revolution of 1918 many artists and intellectuals looked for a way to the masses of people).⁸ The different groups had a common goal, though; they wanted to bring back the old order. But the numerous small groups accomplished little, and thus only a few groups emerged from this time of starting anew. "Verschiedene miteinander rivalisierende Einzelorganisationen" (different rivalling individual organizations) were taken over in place of founding a new official office for advertising.⁹ However, a separate, involved anti-communist poster campaign was carried on by the <Verein zur Bekämpfung des Bolschewismus> (see Appendix B, Plates 13,14).

The Expressionists made up the most important group of these producers. These artists produced their posters for the Republic with a method "voller Liebe zum Ganzen und drängend zur Tat" (full of love for the whole work and an urge for action)¹⁰ (see Appendix B, Plate 15). They were especially important because they applied themselves emotionally to the masses:

⁸ Ibid., 169.

⁹ Schoch, Rainer, Politische Plakate der Weimarer Republik 1918-1933, (Darmstadt: Hessisches Landesmuseum, 1980), 7.

¹⁰ Behne, 14.

Der expressionistische Stil entsprach dem propagandistisch-agitatorischen Charakter und Zweck des politischen Plakats als geistigem Anruf, getragen von der Euphorie der Aufbruchsstimmung der Stunde.

(The expressionist style coincided with the propagandistic-agitational character and purpose of the political poster as an emotional call, carried by the euphoria of the disorderly mood of the time.)¹¹

These posters with their main themes (warning against strikes, the call to found a national convention, etc.) were important in that they served to end the revolution (see Appendix B, Plates 16,17).

There were, however, occasional difficulties with these new posters; namely, the messages conveyed by the Expressionists' posters were often too bizarre or confusing, so that they did not reach their public in the way that was intended. And the instability with the government, in addition to persistent strikes, produced severe setbacks to the desire to have unity in the government. The creation of the national convention in January of 1919 subdued some of the unrest. The old legitimate order had now been replaced by an elected one. This election and the ones to come helped to battle the pressing disintegration in the Republic. The posters reflected this "leidenschaftliches Ringen um den richtigen Weg aus der Krise" (passionate fight about the right way out of the crisis).¹²

11 Malhotra, Ruth, "Künstler und politische Plakat" in Bohrmann, Hans (Hrsg.), Politische Plakate, (Dortmund: Harrenberg Kommunikation, 1984), 11-48: 28.

12 Kämpfer, 17.

The difficulties of these early years were nevertheless enormous. Not all intentions were accomplished successfully:

Das politische Plakat dieser ersten Monate musste in einer Weise verflachen, wie die politische Bewegung und wie ihr revolutionärer Anreiz auf die Massen versagte. Politische Plakatkunst zieht ihre Kraft aus der politischen Bewegung, der sie dient.

(The political poster of these first months had to lose its edge in a way, as the political movement and its revolutionary drive lost its attraction to the masses. Political poster art draws its power from the political movement that it serves.)¹³

Despite this the political propaganda poster did make its mark during these years. "Der Aufschwung des politischen Plakates in den wenigen Monate der Revolution blieb zwar nur ein vorübergehendes Zwischenbeispiel, doch war es von grosser Bedeutung" (The rise of the political poster in the few months of the revolution remained only a passing, intermittent example; however, it was of great meaning).¹⁴

The Election Phase

The next phase in the development of the political poster in Germany occurred during the years of the numerous elections to the *Nationalversammlung*. With the elections to the national convention in January 1919 many political parties produced text-picture posters for the first time. "Wir treten ein in die politischen Auseinandersetzungen einer Zeit, werden Zeuge der Wahlkämpfe" (We enter into the

¹³ Rademacher, Das deutsche Plakat, 159.

¹⁴ Rademacher, 1924/1932 24 politische Plakat, 2.

political confrontations of a time; we become witnesses to the election campaigns).¹⁵ This tendency toward poster production was seriously undertaken on the side of the political parties:

Mit den Wahlen zur Nationalversammlung im Januar 1919 begann der Kampf um die innerpolitische Macht. Jede Partei versuchte mit allen Mittel mit recht zahlreichen Abgeordneten in dieser verfassungsgebenden Körperschaft vertreten zu sein. . . . Alle Parteien aber brachten in ihren Plakaten dem Volk ihre angeblichen Leistungen zu Gesicht, um es dadurch zu veranlassen sie wieder zu wählen.

(With the elections to the national convention in January 1919, the battle for domestic political power began. Every party tried, using every means possible, to be represented in this constituent assembly with a numerous amount of representatives. . . . Every party brought to light, to the population, their supposed achievements in these posters, in order to cause the population to vote for them again.)¹⁶

These first election posters set themselves apart through their individual abundance of visual motifs and formal means.¹⁷

After difficult times, such as the rabid inflation of the early 20s, had been brought under control, the amount of posters produced decreased: "Als das System der Weimarer Republik sich nach der Überwindung der Inflation 1924 zunehmend festigte, nahm die Flut von politischen Plakaten wieder ab" (As the system of the Weimar Republic increasily solidified after the overcoming of the inflation of 1924, the

15 Rademacher, Das deutsche Plakat, 9.

16 Schockel, Erwin, Das politische Plakat: Eine psychologische Betrachtung, (München: Zentral Verlag der NSDAP, 1939), 79-80.

17 Suckale-Redlefsen, Gude, Plakate in München 1840-1940, (München: Münchner Stadtmuseum, 1975), 142.

flood of political posters declined).¹⁸ This, however, did not last long. Already in October of 1927 did one see signs of the beginning of another economic crisis. Political ideas diversified and ideological differences grew. "Die rapide Zunahme an politischen Plakaten und die Radikalisierung ihrer Aussagen sind Gradmesser für die veränderte Lage und den Verfall der Weimarer Republik" (The rapid increase in political posters and the radicalization of their messages are the means to measure the changed situation and the fall of the Weimar Republic).¹⁹

In the election years beginning with 1928 one sees an explosion in the production of posters. The reason was the increase in political disturbances and more competitive elections (see Appendix D for election results). The parties, some more effectively than others, used the poster at the time of the elections to influence the masses. This was a time of trial when the individual parties tried to identify their own program as well as identify themselves with a particular body of voters.

The election period from 1920-1932 saw few noteworthy achievements or advancements in the posters with the exception of the development of the photo montage technique by John Heartfield (see Appendix B, Plate 18). The spectrum of posters produced presented a rather unified picture: political parties either put their best traits forward or

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

tried to slander the enemy, both in the attempt to gain votes for their election platforms. By 1932, though, the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) had mastered the political poster, its production, and its uses. (see Appendix B, plate 18)

Between the spring of 1921 and the middle of 1924 there was an attempt in Europe to overcome the disturbances, tensions, and unsolved anomalies of the previous years. A last revolutionary attempt on the side of the communists and a first, unsuccessful *Putzsch* (takeover) from the new national socialist party occurred at the same time as the "stabilization of the headlong currency inflation by Gustav Stresemann".²⁰ Such great political and economic changes were mirrored in the posters.

The political poster was the means to connect the masses with these changes. And every party tried to develop its own style of propaganda, as well as a program by which the party tried to conquer the problems of the time (see Appendix B, Plates 19,20,21):

Alle Parteien und viele gesellschaftliche Organisationen erkannten in ihm ein wirkungsvolles, variabel einsetzbares und schnell zu verbreitendes Medium zur Massenbeeinflussung und nutzten die in ihm angelegten publizistischen Möglichkeiten zur aktuellen Information und Agitation im politischen Kampf des Tages, aber auch zur perspektivisch langwirkenden Propagierung von politischen Programmen und Ideen.

(Every party and many social organizations recognized that it [the poster] was an effective, variable, easily deployed, fast circulating medium by which to influence

²⁰ Willett, 68.

the masses. They used the journalistic possibilities of the poster to provide up-to-date information and to mobilize for the political battle of the day, but also, in the long-term perspective to propagate political programs and ideas.)²¹

Each political party had its own style in regards to the political propaganda poster. For example, the propaganda style of the Sozialistische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) showed itself to be not too varied. Until 1928 the SPD produced posters with a more of a local emphasis. Afterwards came the more centralized posters that could be seen throughout the Republic. From the beginning the SPD tried to win the voices from broad parts of the people. But at the end of the Republic, as the competition with the NSDAP became severe, the SPD saw its downfall.

In the beginning the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD) worked little in the beginning with picture posters. But with the struggles in the beginning of 1919 and the wave of anti-bolshevistic posters, the KPD attempted to respond to this with posters. The first election posters of the KPD, though, appeared in 1920 (the party did not previously take part in the national convention). From 1924 on one could see a more unified image in the posters of the KPD, some of which even partially influenced tendencies in Soviet poster work (see Appendix B, Plate 19). Especially important in the poster work of the KPD was its development of the montage technique²² (see Appendix B, Plate 18).

21 Rademacher, 1924/1932 24 politische Plakate, 1.

22 Schoch, 10-12.

The difference between these new posters and the earlier ones from the time of the Revolution was a "Verzicht auf extreme inhaltliche oder formale Äusserungen. Ohne auf aktuelle politische Tagesfragen konkret einzugehen, betrieben die Parteien meist eine allgemeine Selbstdarstellung" (restraint from extreme contextual or formal expressions. Without going into current political questions of the day, the parties carried out mostly a general self-representation.)²³

The End of the Weimar Republic

Unlike the earlier election posters of the Weimar Republic, the election posters of the period 1928-1932 avoided "Experimente mit neuen Stilrichtungen" (experiments with new directions in style) and new artistic concepts were more the exception.²⁴ Political parties tended to stay with more secure compositions namely, proven, yet effective ones.

The elections towards the end of the Weimar Republic did, however, produce some agitational posters. These posters differed from those previously produced in that "Sie hatten. . . die Aufgabe, durch die Diffamierung des politischen Gegners eine zusätzliche Motivation zur Wahl der eigenen Partei zu schaffen. (They had. . . the duty to create, through the defacing of the political opposition, an

²³ Ibid., 10.

²⁴ Suckale-Redlefsen, 142.

extra motivation to elect one's own party)²⁵ (see Appendix B, Plates 20,21,22,23).

The NSDAP alone worked so intensively on the composing of the poster and the psychology behind it that they then used the propaganda techniques of the opposition to their own means (see Appendix B, Plates 24,25,26). As Erwin Schockel said in 1939, the Nazis made their study of the poster "eine psychologische Betrachtung" (a psychological meditation):

Hitler versteht grundsätzlich etwas anderes unter Propaganda als die sozialistische Bewegung. Für ihn ist Propaganda nicht die geistige Uebertragung wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse, nicht ein Mittel, um durch Wissen und Ueberzeugung kleinere oder grössere Kreise von Menschen ideologisch für eine Weltanschauung zu gewinnen, Hitler teilt der Propaganda nur die Aufgabe zu, möglichst grosse Massen kritikloser 'Anhänger', Mitläufer, Beifallsrufer einzufangen. . . . auf die Masse der gewonnenen Mitläufer, und zwar nur auf die Masse, kommt es der Hitlerpropaganda an. . . . vielmehr versucht er nur, zustimmende Massen für bestimmte, meist getarnte politische Manöver durch politische Parolen und Schlagworte einzufangen.

(Hitler basically understands propaganda differently than the socialist movement did. For him propaganda is not the transmission of scientific discoveries, not a means to ideologically win over, by psychological means, with knowledge or convincing, smaller or larger circles of people for a particular *Weltanschauung*. Hitler assigns propaganda the task of capturing the largest possible masses of uncritical supporters, followers, or fans. . . . to the mass of followers won over, and indeed it is only the mass that Hitler's propaganda targets. . . . much more does he try to capture through political captions and headlines, supportive masses for certain, usually covert political maneuvers.)²⁶

No other party understood this way of using the poster for such complete instrumental means as did the NSDAP:

²⁵ Ibid., 147.

²⁶ Münzenberg, 12.

Die Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei hat die Propaganda in einem Umfang entwickelt wie bisher keine ander politische, wirtschaftliche oder religiöse Bewegung. . . . Die Hitlerbewegung machte die Propaganda. . . zu einem entscheidenden Faktor ihrer Politik.

(The Nazi Party developed propaganda to such a degree that no other political, economic, or religious movement had. . . . The Hitler movement made propaganda. . . a decisive factor of its politics.)²⁷

The successes of the NSDAP, thanks in part to their poster propaganda, increased steadily until it became a mass movement; in 1930 it was the second most powerful party, in 1932 the most powerful (see Appendix D for election results).

The clever campaigns of the NSDAP led to victory on January 30, 1933, as Adolf Hitler took his position as *Führer* of the Third Reich. With Hitler and the NSDAP in power decisive changes came as they concentrated themselves on what was to come:

Mit der Machtergreifung änderte sich schlagartig der Stil der nationalsozialistischen Propaganda. Die bis dahin meist brutalen Darstellungen wurden psychologisch geschickt abgelöst durch heroisierend-pathetische, realistisch oder neoklassizistische gestaltete, die sich jedermann einprägen sollten.

(With the takeover, the style of the Nazi propaganda changed dramatically. The representations, which up until this point had been mostly brutal, were psychologically refined through heroistic-pathetic representations and being structurally realistic or neoclassical, they should leave a lasting impression on everyone.)²⁸

In 1933 the absolute unity under the national socialist ideology and Adolf Hitler began. With the *Machtergreifung*

²⁷ Ibid., 9.

²⁸ Malhotra, 36.

(seizure of power) the political posters came under control of the NSDAP. Only one single ideology was allowed to be behind a poster--that of the national socialistic movement. From this time on there was only to be "ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Führer" ("one state, one people, one leader"; caption on a Hitler poster from 1938).

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

After the Golden Era

After Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party took over in January, 1933, political manipulation was the means by which the Nazi's were to remain in power for 12 years. The poster was used during these 12 years to convince the population of the unquestionable validity of the Nazi ideology. The Nazis not only used the poster to influence the day to day lives of the people, but they indeed used it to transform society to a "neuer Mensch" and "neue Gesellschaft" (new human and new society).¹ And thus the only posters seen were those that, for example, bore images of Hitler, similar to those bearing images of Lenin (or Stalin for a time) in the Soviet Union, those professing anti-Semitic slogans, or ones which called upon specific groups, such as women or youth, to support the Nazi ideology.

This all came to a screeching halt when World War II ended. The following years were spent rebuilding Germany and establishing the two German nations, each of which would use the political poster in varying ways. However, the

¹ Kämpfer, 302.

prominence and importance of the poster in the post-war period is in no way comparable with the time preceding this.

In the Soviet Union the story is rather different because the Soviet Union as a nation has the same systems and ruling party which it had at the time of its establishment in 1922. Although these systems and the party no longer have the foothold that they have had for the last 70 years, the basic ideology still prevails. The images and messages that decorate the posters and thus the streets are ones that support the communist ideals.

The Current Use of Political Propaganda Posters

The history of the political propaganda poster in Russia and Germany is long but obsolete. Although more modern means of communication, such as television and radio, now dominate the scene, the poster still makes its mark in today's street scene.

In Russia the political poster is used for a couple of different purposes. First, posters that bear Lenin's image in some form or another with a slogan about the strength of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) are to be seen in nearly every town and village. Many towns and villages have posters, even billboards, that project the faces of party members and their praiseworthy achievements. Posters also state the goals of the 5-year plans or the

accomplishments of local industries. In addition, posters that promote peace are a commonplace.

In Germany the scene is somewhat different. The German government does not resemble the Soviet government, so it has different uses for the poster. Posters are widely seen at election times on streets, but moreso on the *Litfasssäulen* (large circular pillars where posters are hung) found at intersections. Here posters about local entertainment, upcoming events, as well as political information are posted.

One prominent German posterist well worth mentioning is Klaus Staeck. His works were produced mainly in the 70s and early 80s; however, they are still seen and are well-known today. Staeck has chosen rather touchy subjects and his work has often been heavily criticized: "Die Ziele sind dabei: Denkanstösse, Unbequemes zur Sprache zu bringen, Vorurteile zu erschüttern, die Kritikfähigkeit möglichst vieler Menschen zu schärfen" (The goals are to force people to think, to bring the uncomfortable into words, to shake off prejudices, and to sharpen the critical ability of many people).² The subjects of his posters tend to deal with environmental questions, social problems, or political affairs. Staeck often uses the photomontage technique, developed so well by John Heartfield in the 30s, to illustrate his points.

² Staeck, Klaus, Staeck's Umwelt, (Göttingen: Steidl Verlag, 1984), 25.

Whatever the technique or whatever the topic, Staeck knows how to reach the public. His posters fit the mold necessary to make them most effective. An eye catching picture or image with clever text convey Staeck's messages. And the messages he wishes to profess attack current situations and problems in Germany which are the result of conflicting ideas about the solutions or lack of solutions to the most varying of issues. His works "stellen. . . oft hohe Anforderungen an den Betrachter" (place. . . often high demands on the observer).³ Staeck's attempt to provoke the public is a definite break from the earlier, simpler works which deemed mass appeal to be the important factor in poster production.

Thesis Summary

The political propaganda poster is the most effective means by which to reach the greatest amount of people in the quickest manner. This method of propagating, chosen by governments or political parties, is used to communicate their message and convince their audience that not only is this message valid but that it is worthy of complete support.

Thus the political propaganda poster served its purpose best in times when reaching the masses was of the essence. The first of these times was when a country was battling unrest, whether it be due to internal or external threat was

³ Ibid.

not essential. The other time when the political propaganda poster served its purpose best was when a country was struggling to unify itself under a common idea or ideology.

Supporting these criteria is the fact that the political propaganda poster was born out of world war and revolution:

Das politische Plakat hatte durch die Ereignisse von Weltkrieg und Revolution einen festen Platz in den analytischen Bemühungen um Propaganda und Massenwerbung eingenommen.

(The political poster, through the events of world war and revolution, took its place in the analytical efforts of propaganda and mass advertisement.)⁴

It then also remained the prominent method of mass communication until unity in the country was established. When this point is reached the political poster best serves the following purposes: soliciting consent, formulating opinions, and attempting to effect conformity.⁵

The two countries where the political propaganda poster existed in this framework are Russia and Germany. Only in these two countries does the poster play a significant role in the resolving of domestic political conflicts.⁶ Both of these countries follow the same pattern of the poster being born out of revolution and fading in prominence with the achievement of unity. In both countries similar tactics and approaches were used. The only real differences are the dates of the revolutions and thus when the posters were born, and the life span of the poster as the prominent means of

⁴ Kämpfer, 29.

⁵ Ibid., 186.

⁶ Ibid., 9.

communication. The "Manipulation der Öffentlichkeit" (manipulation of the public) began earlier in the Soviet Union, but nonetheless there are more similarities than differences in the development of the political propaganda poster in Russia and Germany after 1917.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS OF THE WORD PROPAGANDA

ENGLISH

1. A committee of Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church having the care and over-sight of foreign missions, founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV.

2. Any association, systematic scheme, or concerted movement for the propagation of a particular doctrine or practice.

3. The systematic propagation of information or ideas by an interested party, esp. in a tendentious way in order to encourage or instil a particular attitude or response. Also, the ideas, doctrines, etc. disseminated thus; the vehicle of such propagation.

4. attrib. and Comb. as (sense 3) *propaganda campaign, chief, film, fund, leaflet, meeting, play, poster, raid, technique, war, warfare, work*; *propaganda machine*, an organization responsible for the dissemination of propaganda.

Source: The Oxford English Dictionary, second edition, Volume XII. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989: 632

RUSSIAN

1. Распространение и углубленное разъяснение каких-л. идей, учения, знаний.

2. Политическое или идеологическое воздействие на широкие массы, а также органы и средства, с помощью которых осуществляется это воздействие.

Source: Словарь русского языка, том 3. Москва: Издательство "Русский Язык", 1983: 508.

GERMAN

1. *systematische Verbreitung politischer, weltanschaulicher o.ä. Ideen u. Meinungen [mit massiven (publizistischen) Mitteln] mit dem Ziel, das allgemeine [politische] Bewusstsein in bestimmter Weise zu beeinflussen*

Source: Duden: Das grosse Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache, Band 5: O-So. Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut AG, 1980: 2053

1. Werbung, bes. für bestimmte politische, religiöse, kulturelle, humanitäre Ziele u. Ideen
2. Werbung in der Wirtschaft
3. <Mil.> Massnahme der psychologischen Kriegführung zur Zersetzung der Kampfmoral des Feindes

Source: Brockhaus Wahrig Deutsches Wörterbuch, Fünfter Band: P-STD. Stuttgart: F.A. Brockhaus, Wiesbaden u. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt GmbH, 1983: 220

APPENDIX B

POSTER PLATES

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Plate 1

Миръ и Свобода въ Совдепiи.

(Peace and freedom in the Soviet country)

Anonymous

1917

31 x 21 3/4 in.

Source: Hillier, Bevis. 100 years of POSTERS.
page 49

Plate 2

Год пролетарской диктатуры.
октябрь 1917 – октябрь 1918
(Year of the proletarian dictatorship)

A. Apsit
1918
105 71 cm

Source: White, Stephen. The Bolshevik Poster.
page 27, plate 2.12

Российская Социалистическая Федеративная Советская Республика.

**ПРОЛЕТАРИИ ВСЕХ СТРАН
СОЕДИНЯЙТЕСЬ!**



Издательство Государственного Центрального Комитета Советской Республики.
Смольный район, Ленинградская, Красноармейская, и другие улицы.

Plate 3

Интернационал
(International i.e. communist)

A. Apsit
1918/19
107 x 72 cm

Source: White, Stephen. The Bolshevik Poster.
page 33, plate 2.21



ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛ.

Встань, рабочий социальный,
Встань, рабочий и бедный!
Встань, рабочий и бедный!
Встань, рабочий и бедный!

Мы знаем, что труд наш дороже
Всякая вещь имеет цену.
Мы знаем, что труд наш дороже
Всякая вещь имеет цену.

Встань, рабочий социальный,
Встань, рабочий и бедный!
Встань, рабочий и бедный!
Встань, рабочий и бедный!

Встань, рабочий социальный,
Встань, рабочий и бедный!
Встань, рабочий и бедный!
Встань, рабочий и бедный!

Встань, рабочий социальный,
Встань, рабочий и бедный!
Встань, рабочий и бедный!
Встань, рабочий и бедный!

Встань, рабочий социальный,
Встань, рабочий и бедный!
Встань, рабочий и бедный!
Встань, рабочий и бедный!

Plate 4

Враг у ворот
(The enemy is at the gates)

N.M. Kochergin
1919
104 x 70 cm

Source: White, Stephen. The Bolshevik Poster.
page 62, plate 3.34



Всё, что вы видите, — это не просто картинка, а реальность, которая происходит прямо сейчас.

ВСЕ НА ЗАЩИТУ ПЕТРОПАДА



БРАТ У БОЮТ!!!

Российская Социалистическая Федеративная Советская Республика
— это страна, где каждый человек имеет право на жизнь и свободу.

Plate 5

Ты записался добровольцем?
(Have you enrolled as a volunteer?)

D.S. Moor
1920
106 x 71 cm
50,000 copies

Source: Совеский Политический Плакат: из коллекции
Государственной библиотеки СССР имени В.И. Ленина.
page 10

ЗАПИСАЛКИ ДОБРОБОЛЫЕМ?



ТЫ

Иллюстрация: А. М. Мухоморов

РСФСР

Plate 6

Врангель еще жив
добей его без пощады
(Wrangel still lives, destory him without mercy)

D.S. Moor
1920
69 x 50 cm
50,000 copies

Source: Совеский Политический Плакат: из коллекции
Государсвенной библиотеки СССР имени В.И. Ленина.
page 12

ВРАНГЕЛЬ ЕЩЕ ЖИВ



ДОБЕЙ ЕГО БЕЗ ПОЩАДЫ

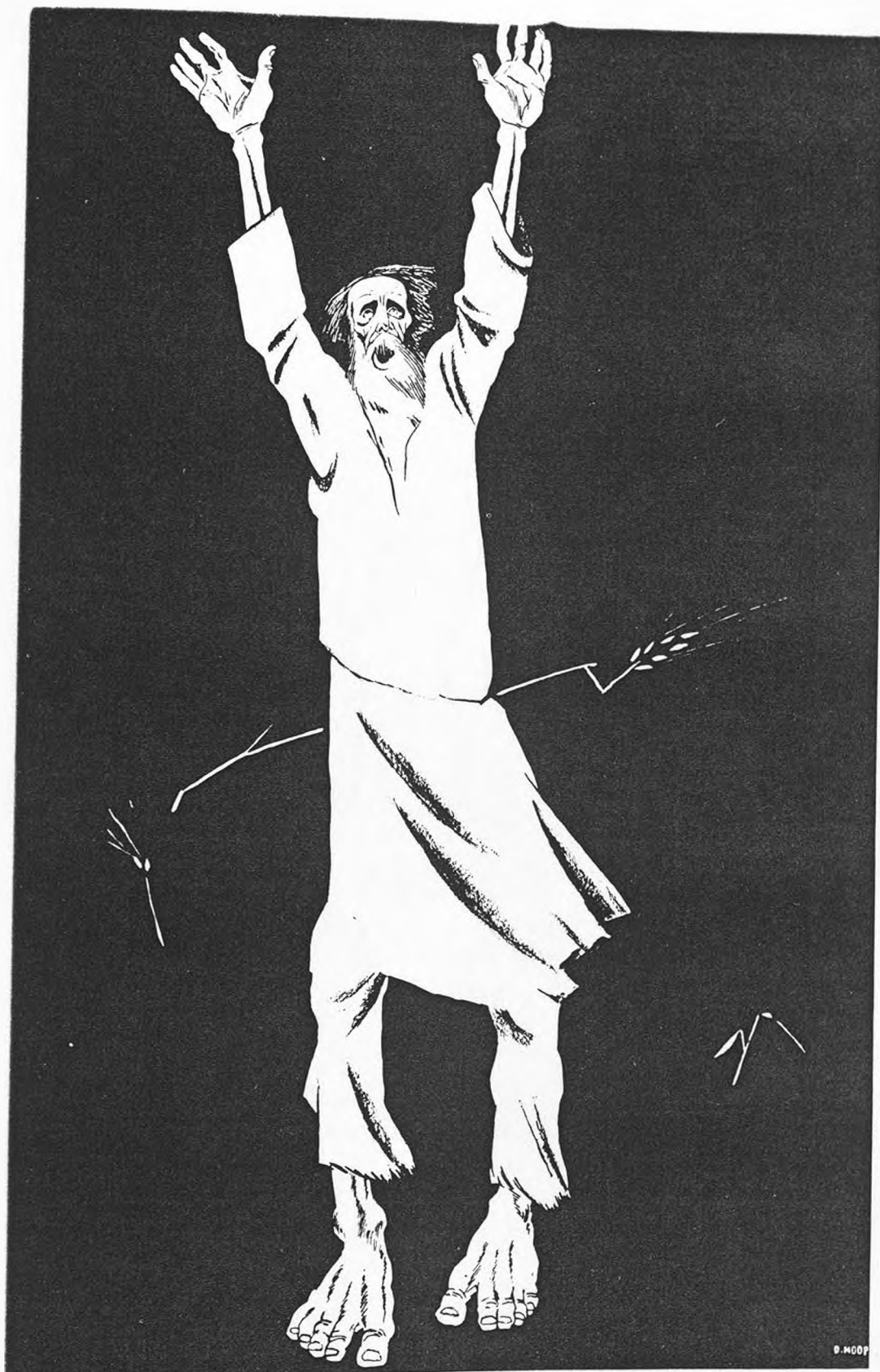


Plate 7

Помоги
(Help)

D.S. Moor
1921
107 x 72 cm
16,000 copies

Source: Совеский Политический Плакат: из коллекции
Государственной библиотеки СССР имени В.И. Ленина.
page 33



В. МОДР

ПОМОГИ

Plate 8

Крестьянин!
(Peasants!)

Unknown artist
1920

Source: Совеский Политический Плакат: из коллекции
Государсвенной библиотеки СССР имени В.И. Ленина.
page 23

ДЕРЖИШЬ В РУКАХ КРАСНУЮ ВИНТОВКУ
НИКТО НЕ ПОСМЕЕТ ДЕРЗНУТЬ
НА ТЕБЯ СВОБОДУ

ВІСЬМІ
ПОЛІ
АНТИКОМУНА



ТЫ

ПОКА

КРЕСТЬЯНИ!

1941-1945

Plate 9

Смерть мировому империализму
(Death to world imperialism)

D.S. Moor
1919
106 x 70 cm

Source: White, Stephen. The Bolshevik Poster.
page 45, plate 3.6



**СМЕРТЬ МИРОВОМУ
ИМПЕРИАЛИЗМУ**

Plate 10

Или смерть капиталу, или смерть под пятой капитала!
(Either death to capitalism or death under the heel of
capitalism)

V. Deni

1919

72 x 106 cm

30,000 copies

Source: Советский Политический Плакат: из коллекции
Государственной библиотеки СССР имени В.И. Ленина.
page 4



ИЛИ СМЕРТЬ КАПИТАЛУ,



ИЛИ СМЕРТЬ ПОД ПЯТОЙ КАПИТАЛА!

Plate 11

История про бублики
(The story of the bread rings)

М.М. Черемных
1920
148 x 76 cm

Source: White, Stephen. The Bolshevik Poster.
page 71, plate 4.7



1) СКАЗКА БЫЛА
В НЕЙСЯ РЕСПУБЛИКЕ -

БАБА НА БАЗАР ПЛЫЛА
А У БАБЫ БУБЯКИ.

Р.С.Ф.С.Р. ПРОЛЕТАРИИ ВСЕХ СТРАН СОЕДИНЯЙТЕСЬ!

ИСТОРИЯ ПРО БУБЛИКИ И
ПРО БАБУ НЕ ПРИЗНАЮЩУЮ
РЕСПУБЛИКИ



2) СЛЫШИТ ТЫЛОТ БЛЫЗКЕЕ.
МУЗЫКОМ ВЕЕТСЯ

БЫТЬ НА ФЛОТЕ ПАКОВЕ.
МЫНТ КРАСНОАРМЕЙЦЫ.



3) КНЯЗЬ ХОЦА ОДИНУ
ГОВОРИТЬ ЕЛ-ТЕТИ -

БУБЛИКИ ДАЙ ГОЛОДНОМУ!
ВЫЖ НА ФРОНТ НЕИДЕТЕ?



4) КОЛЬ БЕЗ ДЕЛА БУДЕТ РОТ -
"БУДУ СЛАБ КАК МЯЩИ"



5) ПАМ РЕСПУБЛИКУ СОХРЕТ -
ЕСЛИ БУДЕМ ТОЩИ



6) БАБА МОДЕЛИЛА МН В ЖИЗНЬ
НЕ ОТАМ Я БУБЯКИ!

ПРОЩЕ СЛУЖИВШИСЬ
ЧОРТА ЇМ МНЕ В РЕСПУБЛИКЕ?!



7) ШЕЛ НАД ПОЛИ И КИДАНЕ -
ПАВЫЖ ВСЕ СКАЖЕШЬ.

РАС СМЕГА ПАВОВА МОЩЕ
В ПЕРВОМ ЖЕ СРАЖЕННІИ.



8) МЫНТЕ ПАМН ЛЮДІЯР
СМЕРТЬ НЕСА РАБОЧИМ



К СЛЮПОН БЛЫС ПА БЫЗДРЕ
ВЛІЄС ОН МІЖДІ ПРОЧІНІИ.



9) ВІСІНТ ПАМ БЕЛ-ШІМІЛА
БЫЛА МІЖДІ ПІБЯКИИ.

МНЕ-ІС-ДЕНА ОНА.
И ОНА И БУБЯКИИ.



10) ПОСМОТРИ НА ГОРЮЩІИ ВОНО!
НИ КРЕСТЬЯНИ НИ СІТНИКИ

НАДО ВОВРЕМЯ КОРИТИ.
КРАСНОГО ЗАЩИТНИКА!



11) ТАК КОРИТИ-ЖЕ КРАСНЫХ РАТ -
ХІЗЕС НЕСІ БЕЗ ВОНО

УНІБІ ХІЗЕС НЕПІЛІТЬ
ВІКРЕТЕ С ПОЛОВОНО!

Plate 12

Anarchie ist Helfer der Reaktion und Hungersnot
(Anarchie is the helper of the reaction and starvation)

1918

Source: Arnold, Friedrich. Anschlage.
page 31

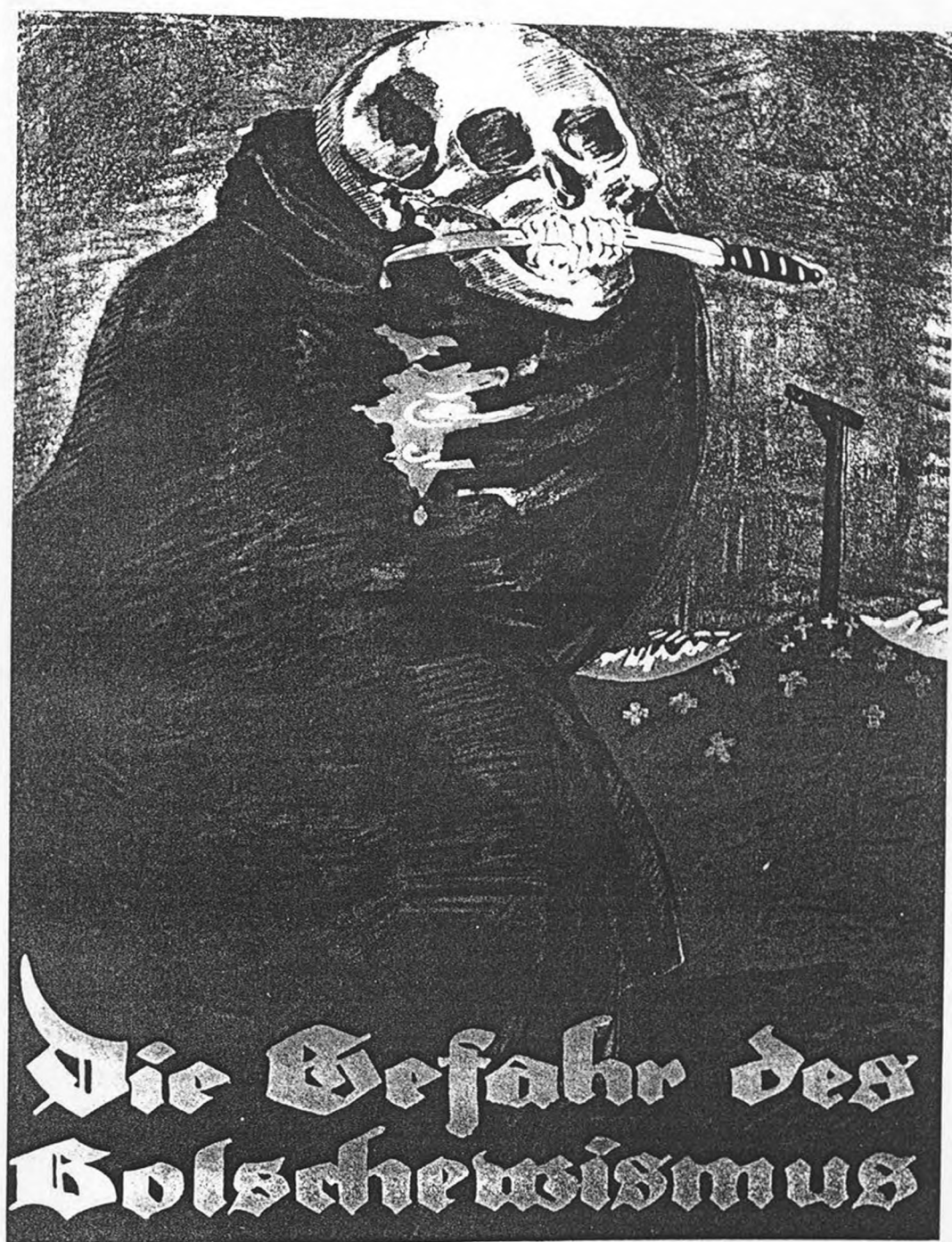


Plate 13

Die Gefahr des Bolschewismus
(The danger of Bolshevism)

Vereinigung zur Bekämpfung des Bolschewismus
Rudi Feld
1919

Source: Schoch, Rainer. Politische Plakate der Weimarer
Republik 1918-1933.
page 50, plate 19



Die Gefahr des
Bolschewismus

Plate 14

Bolschewismus heisst die Welt im Blut ersäufen
(Bolshevism means drowning the world in blood)

Vereinigung zur Bekämpfung des Bolschewismus
Johannes Safis
1919
45 x 35 1/2 in.

Source: Hillier, Bevis. 100 years of POSTERS.
page 48

Bolschewismus heisst



Plate 15

**Erwürgt nicht die junge Freiheit
durch Unordnung und Brudermord
sonst verhungern Eure Kinder**
(Don't strangle the new freedom
through disorder and murder
otherwise your children will starve)

Werbedienst der Deutschen Republik
Max Pechstein
1918

Source: Rademacher, Hellmut. Das deutsche Plakat.
page 170

**Erwürgt nicht die
junge Freiheit**



**durch
Unordnung
und
Brudermord**

**Sonst
verhungern Eure Kinder**

Plate 16

Arbeiter, Hunger Tod naht.

(Workers, hunger and death approach. Strikes destroy, work nourishes. Do your duty, work.)

Werbedienst der deutschen Republik
Heinz Fuchs
1919

Source: Schoch, Rainer. Politische Plakate der Weimarer Republik 1918-1933.
page 47, plate 13



Streik
Arbeits
ernannt
Zerstört

Tut eure
Pflicht
arbeitet

Hunger
Tod
Arbeit
Arbeit

Plate 17

**Die Nationalversammlung
der Grundstein der Deutschen Sozialistischen Republik**
(The National Convention
the foundation of the German Socialist Republic)

Werbedienst der Deutschen Republik
Max Pechstein
1918

Source: Schoch, Rainer. Politische Plakate der Weimarer
Republik 1918-1933.
page 41, plate 10

Die Nationale Versammlung



HP

43

Plate 18

**5 Finger hat die Hand
Mit 5 packst Du den Feind
Wahlt Liste 5
Kommunistische Partei**
(The hand has 5 fingers
With 5 you grab the enemy
Vote for list 5
Communist Party)

John Heartfield
1928

Source: Schockel, Erwin. Das politische Plakat.
page 167

John Hartfield



5 Finger hat die Hand
mit **5** packst Du den Feind!
Wählt Lüste
Kommunistische Partei!

DRUCK PEUVAG, BERLIN C25

Plate 19

Die Flamme der Revolution darf nicht erlöschen!
(The flame of the revolution cannot be extinguished)

S. Malz
1924

Source: Schoch, Rainer. Politische Plakate der Weimarer
Republik 1918-1933
page 51, plate 21

*Die Flamme
der Revolution
darf nicht verlöschen!*



*Darum wählt
Kommunisten!*

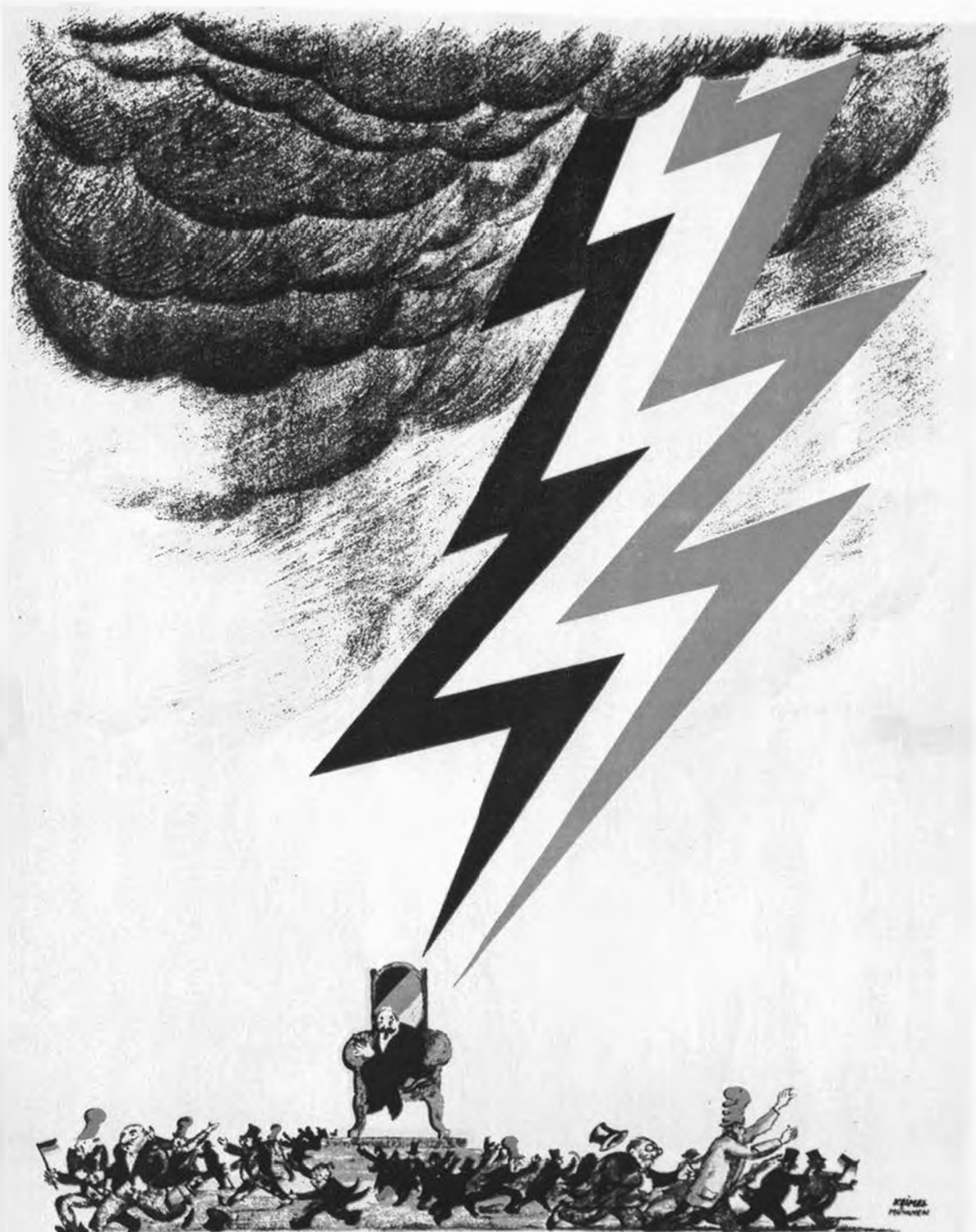
LISTE 4

Plate 20

Wie ein Blitz
(Like lightening)

1924
Hermann Keimel

Source: Schoch, Rainer. Politische Plakate der Weimarer
Republik 1918-1933
page 109, plate 122



WIE EIN BLITZ
MUSS DER SCHWARZ-WEISS-ROTE SIEG AM 7. DEZEMBER WIRKEN, WÄHLT
DEUTSCH NATIONAL

Plate 21

Der Drahtzieher
(The Rope Puller)

NSDAP M.E.
1924

Source: Arnold, Friedrich. Anschlage.
page 77



Kopf- u. Handarbeiter wählt:



Völkischen Block



Plate 22

Brüning
der Freiheit und Ordnung letztes Bollwerk
(Brüning
the last bulwark of freedom and order)

1932

Source: Arnold, Friedrich. Anschläge.
page 119



Plate 23

Das dritte Reich? NEIN!
(The Third Reich? NO!)

1932

Source: Schockel, Erwin. Das politische Plakat.
page 99



Plate 24

Der Arbeiter im Reich des Hakenkreuzes!
Darum wählt Liste 1 Sozialdemokraten!
(The worker in the reign of the swastika!
Therefore vote for list 1 Social Democrats!)

1932

Source: Arnold, Friedrich. Anschlage.
page 110

DER ARBEITER **IM REICH DES HAKENKREUZES!**



K. GEISS.



DARUM
WÄHLT
LISTE 1
SOZIALDEMOKRATEN!

Plate 25

Schluss mit diesem System
(End this system)

1932

Source: Arnold, Friedrich. Anschläge.
page 112

KPD LISTE 3



Plate 26

Ein Mann
(One man)

1932

Source: Schockel, Erwin. Das politische Plakat.
page 198

Ein Mann gegen Parteikadaver und Interessenhäufen!

Adolf Hitler



**N. S. D. A. P.
ALLEIN:**

11 MILLIONEN

**ZENTRUM BAYER. VOLKS-
CHRISTL. GEWERKSCHAFTEN**

**DTSCH. VOLKSPARTEI
VOLKSKONSERVATIVE**

**CHRISTL. SOZIALE
LANDVOLKSPARTEI
JUNGDTSCH. ORDEN**

**„EISERNE“ FRONT!
SOZIALDEMOKR.
REICHSBANNER**

FREIE GEWERKSCHAFTEN

**STAATSPARTEI
DEMOKRATEN
FREIDENKER**

**WIRTSCHAFTSPARTEI
U. S. W.**

**HINDENBURGWÄHLER
ZUSAMMEN:**

18 MILLIONEN

**Gib auch Du
deine Stimme
dem Manne
der Kraft =**

Hitler

Druck: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt A. G. & Co., Berlin SW 68
Vertriebsstelle für Druck- und Schriftwaren, München, Rosenau Str. 42

Plate 27

Gegen Hunger und Verzweiflung
(Against hunger and confusion)

1932

Source: Schockel, Erwin. Das politische Plakat.
page 205

Gegen Hunger
und Verzweiflung!



Wählt

Hitler!

Plate 28

Unsere letzte Hoffnung
(Our last hope)

1932

Source: Arnold, Friedrich. Anschläge.
page 113

**Unsere
letzte
Hoffnung:**



HITLER

APPENDIX C

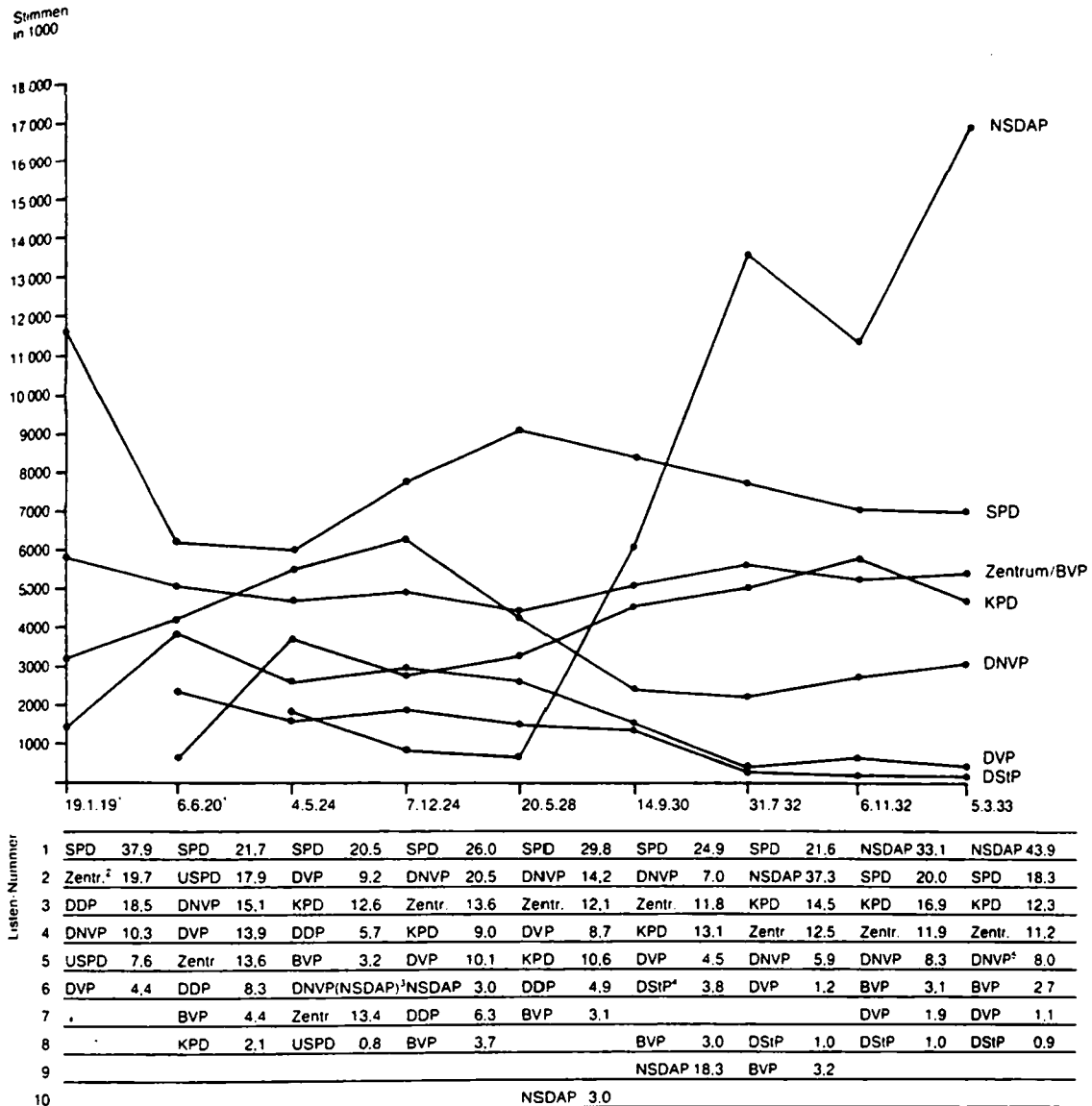
TABLE: DISTRIBUTION OF POSTERS BASED ON THEMATICAL GROUPS

Наименование групп плакатов:	1918 г.		1919 г.		1920 г.		1921 г.		Всего	
	Абс.	%	Абс.	%	Абс.	%	Абс.	%	Абс.	%
I. Политический										
— печатный	41	32,2	75	20,4	218	12,1	111	12,1	445	14,2
— ручной	1	0,6	11	3,0	314	18,4	64	7,0	390	12,5
Всего . . .	42	32,8	86	23,4	532	30,5	175	19,1	835	26,7
II. Военный										
— печатный	21	16,4	154	42,0	201	15,3	48	5,2	484	15,5
— ручной	—	—	16	4,4	457	26,7	58	6,4	531	16,9
Всего . . .	21	16,4	170	46,4	718	42,0	106	11,6	1,015	32,4
III. Хозяйственный										
— печатный	42	33,8	57	15,5	182	10,7	251	27,5	532	17,0
— ручной	1	0,6	1	0,3	131	7,6	207	22,7	340	10,9
Всего . . .	43	34,4	58	15,8	313	18,3	458	50,2	872	27,9
IV. Культурно-просветительный										
— печатный	21	16,4	50	13,6	109	6,4	156	17,1	336	10,8
— ручной	—	—	3	0,8	47	2,8	18	2,0	68	2,2
Всего . . .	21	16,4	53	14,4	156	9,2	174	19,1	404	13,0
Итого										
— печатный	125	98,8	336	91,5	770	44,5	566	62,9	1797	57,5
— ручной	2	1,2	31	8,5	949	55,5	347	37,1	1329	42,5
Всего . . .	127	100,0	367	100,0	1719	100,0	913	100,0	3126	100,0

Source: Бутник-Сибирский, Б.С. Советский плакат эпохи гражданской войны 1918-1921. page 23
 see White for an abbreviated version (page 91)

APPENDIX D

TABLE: ELECTION RESULTS IN GERMANY (1918-33)



Beiden Wahlen 1918 und 1920 gab es noch keine Wahllisten. Die Parteien sind nach den Ergebnissen der vorangegangenen Wahl geordnet. In der zweiten Spalte sind jeweils die Prozentsergebnisse der Parteien angegeben.

² 1919 nannte sich das Zentrum Christliche Volkspartei (CVP).

³ Nach dem Verbot der NSDAP wurden von Anhängern Hitlers verschiedene Nachfolgeorganisationen gegründet, die in einigen Ländern (z.B. in Hessen) mit der DNVP bei den Reichstagswahlen Listenverbindungen eingingen. Die DNVP allein erzielte 19,5% der Stimmen, die NSDAP 6,5%.

⁴ Die DDP nannte sich ab 1930 Deutsche Staatspartei.

⁵ Die DNVP nannte sich bei dieser Wahl Kampffront Schwarz-Weiß-Rot.

Source: Schoch, Rainer. Politische Plakate der Weimarer Republik 1918-1933. page 39

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