

**Copyright**  
**by**  
**Vera Middelkamp**  
**2005**

**The Dissertation Committee for Vera Middelkamp certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:**

**“Wir haben die Firma gewechselt, aber der Laden ist der alte geblieben:” Kurt Tucholsky and the Medialized Public Sphere of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933)**

**Committee:**

---

**Kirsten Belgum, Supervisor**

---

**Katherine Arens**

---

**Janet Swaffar**

---

**Neil Nehring**

---

**Peter Jelavich**

**“Wir haben die Firma gewechselt, aber der Laden ist der alte geblieben:” Kurt  
Tucholsky and the Medialized Public Sphere of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933)**

by

**Vera Middelkamp, M.A.**

**Dissertation**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2005

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the professors who served on my doctoral committee. My supervisor, Prof. K. Belgum, has contributed immeasurably to this project. I admire her friendly guidance and her critical insight, and I am grateful for the encouragement she gave me. I regard her as a model professional.

Other members of my committee, especially Prof. K. Arens and Prof. J. Swaffar, have greatly contributed to this study with their constructive criticism and helpful guidance. Thanks also to Prof. N. Nehring and Prof. P. Jelavich for their willingness to serve on the dissertation defense committee and for their constructive suggestions. I would like to thank Jennifer van Hyning, Anika Webb, and Steve Putman for proofreading my drafts.

I also wish to thank the people at The University of Utah Marriott Library Interlibrary Loan Department for their prompt assistance in providing me with the materials I needed for this dissertation.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for my loving and supportive family and friends during this stressful time. My husband Scott and our daughter Lucy deserve special recognition for their patience.

**“Wir haben die Firma gewechselt, aber der Laden ist der alte geblieben:” Kurt  
Tucholsky and the Medialized Public Sphere of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933)**

Publication No. \_\_\_\_\_

Vera Middelkamp, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2005

Supervisor: Kirsten Belgum

This dissertation investigates Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935) as a public intellectual who used resources of language within the growing media landscape of the Weimar Republic productively. It focuses in particular on his attempt to develop an alternative to politically polarized public discourses around notions of German-ness. This study argues that Tucholsky’s work signaled the crisis of meaning and representation in interwar Germany, when a fundamental transformation of the way the world was perceived took place. Tucholsky’s work responded to this shift in that it demanded that its audience unveil the workings of a discourse of ambiguity and deception. By means of humor, satire, word play, and language parody, his texts undermined the authority of the word, the authority of the press, and they thus promoted public mass communication as a subversive power.

To contribute to a better understanding of Tucholsky in this context this dissertation draws on different methodological paradigms of literary, cultural, and communications studies. Thus this dissertation not only acknowledges the aesthetic dimension of Tucholsky's work, but also contextualizes it within the construction of what it meant to be German during the Weimar Republic. The inherent paradoxes of nationalism and the mass press, particularly the mechanisms of how national identities are mass communicated, how unifying ideologies exist in diverse public spheres, are at the core of this dissertation's investigation of Tucholsky's work. Tucholsky's satirizing of traditional ways of conceptualization is a central part of this study's discussion of his analysis of the public negotiation of national identity.

Each chapter of this dissertation analyzes a cluster of Tucholsky's journalistic texts with respect to how they emerge from and operate within different contexts: the contexts of the press landscape at a particular period of Tucholsky's work, of Tucholsky's political activism besides writing, his publishing strategies, and his discussions of language and identity formation in each historical phase of the Weimar Republic. During the Republic's politically and culturally polarized times, Tucholsky's innovative use of language, particularly his use of satire, negotiated between social classes and political camps through his conscious selection of public channels.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Definitions of Central Concepts.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Approach and Methodology.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Chapter Overview.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Chapter I: “Ich habe Erfolg, aber keinerlei Wirkung” – an Overview of Tucholsky Scholarship.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>Contemporary Reactions to Tucholsky’s Work .....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Post-WWII History Scholarship on Tucholsky.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Tucholsky Biographies.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Tucholsky Biographies in the FRG.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Tucholsky Biographies in the GDR.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Post-Unification Biographies of Tucholsky.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Scholarship on Tucholsky Outside of Germany.....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Europe.....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>USA .....</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Scholarship on Tucholsky in Germany.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Publizistik and Political Science.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Literary Scholarship.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Recent Developments in German Tucholsky scholarship.....</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Post-Structuralist readings: Language, Ideology, Publishing strategies,         Authorship.....</i>	<i>58</i>



<i>Tucholsky on the Web</i> .....	62
<i>Tucholsky in Popular Culture</i> .....	63
<b>Chapter II: “Die Republik wider Willen” – Political Crisis, the Public Intellectual, and Public Communication between 1918 and 1923</b> .....	65
Scholarship on Tucholsky’s Work of the Weimar Republic’s First Phase....	68
1918-1923: The Press Landscape During the Republic’s First Phase.....	71
<i>Ullstein and Mosse</i> .....	72
<i>Political Polarization as a Cause of the “Republikschutzgesetz”</i> .....	75
Tucholsky’s Berlin Years: a Response to Crisis.....	79
Confronting Crisis: Tucholsky’s Publishing Strategies during his Berlin Years.....	86
In Defense of the Republic: Themes and Style of Tucholsky’s writings in the Context of Political Crisis 1918-1923.....	90
<i>1919: The Public Intellectual, Satire, and Political Crisis</i> .....	91
<i>1920 to 1922: Republican Propaganda at the Center of a Republican Public Sphere</i> .....	98
<i>1922: The Medialized Public Sphere and the Concept of the “German Nation”</i> .....	107
Tucholsky’s Pragmatic Concept of a Republican Public Sphere.....	112
Tucholsky’s Public Sphere as a Third Way in a Politically Polarized Weimar Republic.....	116
<b>Chapter III: “Unser Vaterland ist ein geeintes Europa” – Pacifism and Internationalism during the “stable years” of the Weimar Republic</b>	

(1924-1928).....	119
<b>Scholarship’s Disregard of Pacifism and Europeanism in Tucholsky’s work.....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Germany’s Press Landscape during the Years of Relative Stability (1924-1928).....</b>	<b>125</b>
<i>The “Republikenschutzgesetz” and the “Schmutz- und Schundgesetz” during Weimar’s Middle Years.....</i>	<i>127</i>
<b>Tucholsky’s Paris Years: The Road to Europeanism .....</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>From Pacifist Papers to Münzenberg: Tucholsky’s Publishing Strategies During his Paris Years.....</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Contesting Nationalism: Pacifism and Europeanism in Tucholsky’s Writings between 1924 and 1928.....</b>	<b>145</b>
<i>The Public Intellectual as Satirist and Propagandist.....</i>	<i>146</i>
<i>Tucholsky’s Critique of Republican Politics and Middle Class Culture.....</i>	<i>151</i>
<i>Critique of Nationalism in Public Language and German Alltagskultur.....</i>	<i>154</i>
<i>Europeanism as the Ultimate Pacifist Goal.....</i>	<i>158</i>
<i>Expanding Critical Communication in 1928: Tempo and AIZ.....</i>	<i>162</i>
<b>Tucholsky and Ossietzky on Republicanism.....</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>Europeanized National Memories: the Basis for Pacifism.....</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Chapter IV: “Der Staat schere sich fort, wenn wir unsere Heimat lieben” - Deutschland, Deutschland über alles and the Discourse on German-ness during the Final Phase of the Weimar Republic (1929-1933).....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Tucholsky moves to Sweden .....</b>	<b>176</b>

<b>1929: Tucholsky's Year of Polemical Agitation.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Reception of <i>Deutschland Deutschland über alles</i>.....</b>	<b>181</b>
<i>Contemporary Reactions to "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles".....</i>	<i>182</i>
<i>Post WWII Reception.....</i>	<i>187</i>
<i>Translations of "Deutschland Deutschland über alles".....</i>	<i>189</i>
<b>"Eine bös-geniale literarische Eintagsfliege" – Recent Scholarship on <i>Deutschland, Deutschland über alles</i>.....</b>	<b>190</b>
<i>Scholarly Comparisons of other Deutschland books with "Deutschland Deutschland über alles".....</i>	<i>194</i>
<b>Contesting Notions of German-ness: <i>Deutschland, Deutschland über alles</i> in the Weimar Republic's <i>Öffentlichkeit</i>.....</b>	<b>198</b>
<i>"Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" in the Legacy of Germany's Liberal Literary Tradition.....</i>	<i>199</i>
<b>Formal Aspects of <i>Deutschland Deutschland über alles</i>.....</b>	<b>201</b>
<i>Graphic Satire .....</i>	<i>205</i>
<i>Parody of Nationalist Language .....</i>	<i>207</i>
<i>Montage.....</i>	<i>211</i>
<b>Theme and Content of <i>Deutschland Deutschland über alles</i>: Authoritarianism in the Weimar Republic and its Alternatives.....</b>	<b>214</b>
<i>"Die gute alte Zeit hat's nie gegeben. Die schlechte Neue? Allemaal" – Cultural Politics in the Weimar Republic.....</i>	<i>216</i>
<i>"Die Komik der irrealen Potentialsätze, die monströse Zerlegung des Satzes"– German Folk Culture and its Subversive Potential.....</i>	<i>223</i>
<b>"- ausserdem hat jeder sein Privat-Deutschland": Tucholsky's Concept of German-ness.....</b>	<b>224</b>
<b><i>Deutschland Deutschland über alles</i> generated a New Form of Discourse around German-ness.....</b>	<b>228</b>

Alfons Goldschmidt: <i>Deutschland heute</i> (1928).....	231
Reinforcing National Symbolic: Edmund Schultz's <i>Das Gesicht der Demokratie</i> (1930).....	236
National Socialist Concepts of German-ness: J. von Leers' <i>Juden sehen Dich an</i> (1933).....	240
Successful or Effective? <i>Deutschland Deutschland über alles</i> as a Model of Critical Public Communication .....	244
<b>Chapter V: “Ein Abfalleimer gebrauchter Ideen” – Tucholsky’s Nazi Satire (1930-1932).....</b>	<b>247</b>
Scholarship on Tucholsky’s Final Years.....	250
The End of Free Speech: the Press in Germany between 1930 and 1932....	252
<i>Ullstein, Mosse, and Sonnemann</i> .....	253
<i>The SPD Press</i> .....	256
<i>Hugenberg Press</i> .....	257
<i>The Nazi Press</i> .....	260
<i>KPD Press</i> .....	262
The Abolition of the Public Sphere.....	263
Tucholsky’s Gradual Silencing .....	264
<i>Tucholsky and Socialism</i> .....	270
<i>Nationalism in the Weimar Republic’s Last Years</i> .....	273
Tucholsky Reacts Productively toward a Decreasingly Diverse Public Sphere.....	274
<i>Nazism Demystified: Tucholsky’s writings of 1930 before the September 14 Elections</i> .....	275

<i>Teuschland vs. Deutschland: Medial Constructs of German-ness after 1930</i> .....	281
<i>“Irrenhaus Europa”</i> : Fascism and Europeanism in 1932.....	286
<i>The end of a Critical Public Sphere 1933-1935</i> .....	289
<b>A Satirical Counter-Tradition</b> .....	293
<b>The Failure of Satirical Mass Communication at the End of the Weimar Republic</b> .....	295
<b>Conclusion: “Wir können nicht zu einem Land Ja sagen, das von Kollektivitäten besessen ist”</b> .....	298
<b>Works Cited</b> .....	317
<b>Vita</b> .....	331

## Introduction

This dissertation investigates Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935) as a public intellectual who used resources of language within the growing media landscape of the Weimar Republic productively. It focuses in particular on his attempt to develop an alternative to politically polarized public discourses around notions of German-ness. Tucholsky's work provides insights into how constructs of German-ness operate in everyday cultures of the Weimar Republic, as opposed to traditional historical and literary studies of his contemporaries, which emphasize official or "high" culture that reinforces a dominant ideology.<sup>1</sup> It critically demonstrates how anti-republican concepts of the German nation are communicated in practices of the Republic's everyday life, thus obstructing the establishment of a republican culture in interwar Germany.

Central to this project is the issue of inherent paradoxes in both nationalism and the press of the twentieth century. On the one hand, nationhood had become a complex concept that could not be presented in a unified fashion anymore, which produced a multiplicity of press products that spoke to different audiences. On the other hand, however, German nationalism created a false sense of unity, constancy, and exclusion, and the material-economic reality of the press developed toward monopolization.

Tucholsky's work was located within these paradoxes: it incorporated contradiction and

---

<sup>1</sup> Everyday culture, *Alltagskultur*, has become valid for socio-historical approaches to forms of knowledge. However, it has only recently become part of scholarly studies in the humanities. While traditional scholarship, especially in literature, emphasized philosophical, religious, or other institutionalized forms of knowledge, recent approaches regard cultural habits such as fashion, nutrition, and leisure culture as valid contexts for an understanding of texts (Winko 478).

conflict as responses to the mass and often adversarial communicative situation in the Weimar Republic, in which concepts of German-ness competed for domination.<sup>2</sup>

The degree of diversity with which Tucholsky practiced public communication has been underestimated by Tucholsky scholarship. With around 2,900 published pieces in over 100 different magazines, daily newspapers, and weekly press organs, and also as the author of three novels, four anthologies, numerous cabaret pieces, a drama, many radio scripts, and even a film script, Tucholsky was present on a variety of public levels, in multiple public personae under his various pseudonyms Peter Panter, Theobald Tiger, Kaspar Hauser, Ignaz Wrobel, and Kurt Tucholsky. This heterogeneity in his work suggests Tucholsky's awareness of how public communication is transformed in a mass society, whether through traditionally high culture media or those of mass entertainment and information. Tucholsky's continuous concern with the function of language in the mass media, particularly with respect to its role in identity formation throughout the Weimar Republic was evident in his sophisticated use of multiple genres and media venues.

I first began thinking about this topic when I read Jürgen Habermas's study on the *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and the press as in the Enlightenment tradition. Habermas's critique assessed an end of critical public communication in the context of the emergence of the mass media during the nineteenth century. My previous reading of and fascination with the work of Kurt Tucholsky occurred to me in this context and I noted that many of Tucholsky's texts addressed this transformation later

---

<sup>2</sup> In his study on the prevalence of nationalism and anti-democratic ideology in the Weimar Republic, Kurt Sontheimer defines the term "national" as one signifying most fundamental right-wing political goals, which were the replacement of the republican system with a dictatorship, the regaining of military might, and the rejection of the Versailles Treaty (321).

analyzed by Habermas. The more I examined Tucholsky's prolific journalistic work in terms of its theme of public communication and the new media in the Weimar Republic, the more I realized that Tucholsky also often discussed the topic of public communication in the context of discourses around nationalism and national identity. Jürgen Habermas defined public communication as a form of communication in which "there is a chance immediately and effectively to answer back any opinion expressed in public." (249) In contrast to this public exchange of opinions in public communication he defines mass communication as a phenomenon of the capitalist media market beginning in the second half of nineteenth century, which, according to Habermas, resulted in the end of critical communication: "opinions cease to be public opinions in the proportion to which they are enmeshed in the communicative interchanges that characterize a 'mass.'" (249). My less discriminate use of the terms "public-" or "mass communication" does not correspond with Habermas's use, because, by taking writers like Tucholsky into account, it disagrees with Habermas's verdict that the public sphere of the twentieth century had become a realm of passive, uncritical consumption. My use of the terms denotes politically, socially, or culturally critical journalism or other forms of public speaking, directed at a mass readership or audience, with the purpose of critical reflection on contemporary developments in politics and culture. Although Tucholsky often expressed concerns regarding mass culture that were similar to the Frankfurt School's later critique of a "Culture Industry" and Habermas's critique of the decline of a critical public sphere in the age of mass consumption, his very practice as a multi-genre writer, the diversity of his work, and the fact that his work was at the core of the Weimar Republic's discourse on national identity, demonstrates that, in contrast to Frankfurt



School thinkers such as Habermas, Tucholsky recognized the politically critical potential of mass communication.

My contention is that in his work on nationalism, National Socialism, and public mass communication, it is useful to understand Tucholsky's work in the context of works developed in sociological, historical, anthropological, and literary studies in an amazingly rich and diverse way. In this study, these concepts are not understood as a methodology for approaching Tucholsky's work but as a tool for understanding the Weimar Republic and for understanding critical communication, ideology in the public sphere, the workings of propaganda, and, most importantly, how national identities are shaped and formed through public discourse.

These concepts existed in Tucholsky's writings not in the form of a systematic theory but in a variety of themes among his writings on public communication in the Weimar Republic's diverse public sphere. In order to fully understand Tucholsky's work, one has to consider Tucholsky's engagement in these concepts in the context of *Öffentlichkeit*.<sup>3</sup> To look at Tucholsky's work when studying the public sphere of the Weimar Republic is compelling, because as a public intellectual he attempted to democratize public communication, and he did so by critically examining forces that establish, reinforce, and maintain anti-republicanism in Germany. His work demonstrates how the discourse on German-ness was constructed and contested in the public sphere. Therefore, terminology such as the medialized public sphere and the counter public sphere, the public intellectual in conjunction with the press and everyday

---

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Burgher, translator of Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated the term *Öffentlichkeit* as "public sphere" or "publicity" (Habermas xv).

culture as reinforcing (or subverting) hegemony, the media as sites of ideological struggle, and the concept of nationalism as an invented tradition and nationalism as an imagined community are central to an understanding of Tucholsky's work. This dissertation explores how these principles operated and merged in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic, as addressed in Tucholsky's work. In my examination of how Tucholsky conceived of the nature of nationalism in modern civilized societies and the function of the (mass) media in nationalist discourse, I contend that these concepts are interrelated and that they point to the function of public communication in mass societies, to its ideologically oppressive role as well as to its politically subversive potential.

### **Definitions of Central Concepts**

The central concept around which this study revolves is the "public sphere." By public sphere I do not mean a particular location but rather a site of public discourse, whether it be the media, public events such as political demonstrations, or other realms of the public domain (monuments, streets, buildings, for instance), on which ideological systems were simultaneously constructed and contested. The Frankfurt School, namely Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer in their 1940s study *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, developed a "Critical Theory" of the decline of democracy in the Western World due to capitalism and consumer culture. Adorno and Horkheimer contended that the public sphere, through the culture industries, was transformed from an instrument of individual enlightenment to one of hegemonic manipulation and domination. In his book *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere* (1962), Jürgen Habermas developed the Frankfurt School's theory further into an account of the bourgeois public

sphere that had turned from a forum of rational-critical debate as the foundation of democracy into a fragmented one of passive, private consumption. By analyzing the social structures, political functions, and ideologies of the public sphere, critical public communication, that is, communication aimed at questioning existing power structures in order to uphold a democratic system, was seen by Habermas as virtually nonexistent in the public sphere of the twentieth century. Habermas argued that a commercialization of the public sphere in form of the mass press made the public sphere accessible to the masses, which resulted in a deterioration of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century critical public sphere into a mass public sphere of passive consumption during the early twentieth century (249).

Habermas, like Adorno and Horkheimer, opposes the Enlightenment ideal and its realization in the public sphere but it does not address how the public sphere maintains its structures of ideological domination. In *Public Sphere and Experience* (1972), a critical response to Habermas' work, Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge discern the exclusionary mechanisms of the liberal-bourgeois public sphere and reconceptualize the notion of the public from the perspective of a set of public spheres constituted through technological mass media.<sup>4</sup> Negt and Kluge understand the public sphere as a process rather than a location, and within this very character of process and its instability and accidental opportunities alternative formations in form of counter publics may emerge. It

---

<sup>4</sup> As Miriam Hansen notes in her foreword to the English translation of Negt and Kluge's *Public Sphere and Experience*, "this perspective allows them to conceive of the public sphere as 1) an unstable mixture of different types of publicity, corresponding to different stages of economic, technical, and political organization; 2) a site of discursive contestation for and among multiple, diverse, and unequal constituencies; 3) a potentially unpredictable process due to overlaps and conjunctures between different types of publicity and diverse publics; and 4) a category containing a more comprehensive dimension for translating among diverse publics that is grounded in material structures, rather than abstract ideals, of universality" (Hansen xxiv).

is this concept of instability and fluctuation inherent in Negt and Kluge's understandings of a counter public that Tucholsky had already anticipated in his writings of the Weimar Republic. Like Negt and Kluge, Tucholsky understood the public sphere as consisting of multiple spheres, and he distinguished between different types of public life, which overlap, contradict, and complement each other. Tucholsky's work also predated their notion that cultural politics of counter publicity must be founded on the understanding of the complex dynamics of public spheres, and that it is this dynamic that can be used for agency.

Tucholsky's work does not directly allude to the theories on the public sphere and on the political function of public (mass) communication by Habermas, Negt, and Kluge, and there is no particular phase in the Weimar Republic in which Tucholsky was more or less engaged in these concepts. It was the entirety of his work that thematized the issue of agency, political competence, and the political responsibility of mass communication in the context of a multi-media mass market. Thus, Tucholsky's work must be interpreted within the paradigms of a medialized public sphere. The term "medialized" is my translation of the German term "Medialisierung," which denotes the impact of mass information, communication, and entertainment industry on writing and publishing practices of writers, artists, and intellectuals in the Weimar Republic. The concept of a medialized public sphere denotes the new, technologically enhanced and transformed conditions of production, distribution, and reception of mass communication. New marketing and advertising strategies in mass communication, intended to reach an increasingly differentiated and specialized target audience in an increasingly competitive media market, necessitated new publishing and writing strategies from writers in the

Weimar Republic. Not only did writers have to compete with the new, popular media film and broadcast, but the reading public of the Weimar Republic also had to become increasingly visual and decreasingly elitist, which meant that writers had to establish close communicative contact to an audience. I argue that Tucholsky found a niche in this medialized public sphere, and that his innovativeness in adapting to these transformed conditions of mass communication have not yet received sufficient recognition.

Tucholsky focused on everyday cultural phenomena such as the press, literary bestseller, the popular theater, and film and how these media are sites of ideological struggle, and he did not develop any aesthetic theories of the mass media. Tucholsky emphasized the positive and negative aspects of the political functions of mass communication, particularly in the context of increasing anti-republicanism in the Weimar Republic.

To counter hegemonic, anti-republican discourses, Tucholsky practiced micro history, i.e. the history from “below.” Studying such micro history necessitates an analysis of a variety of cultural materials, and this approach acknowledges both popular and low culture as valid sites. Assuming that culture and history emerge out of complex negotiations, out of the exchange and circulation between different discourse practices, such a socio-historical approach, combined with a detailed close reading of the individual texts, reconstructs the determining factors of a text (Hohendahl 78). What makes such an approach particularly interesting regarding Tucholsky’s work is that his texts are artifacts of micro history: his work speaks of processes in public communication that constitute and reinforce power relations. It points to the Weimar Republic’s mass media market as a site on which ideological systems were simultaneously constructed and contested, and

raises questions of politicized mass communication processes in today's media market as well.

Thus, although Tucholsky never developed any consistent theories and never stated theses about either mass communicative or political processes, what makes Tucholsky a writer of a medialized public sphere is that he attempted to popularize republicanism and criticize nationalism and National Socialism within the confines of mass communication.<sup>5</sup> In other words, I argue that he attempted to establish a counter public sphere (in the Negt-Klugian sense), and he acknowledged the political, revolutionary potential of mass communication in the context of a highly politicized and commercialized market. He took each different communicative, publicistic context as an opportunity to help his readers become political subjects, and he did so without subscribing to party ideology and without functionalizing his writing. In fact, it was the very act of trying to dismantle hegemony in the public sphere, by means of satire and language parody, which denotes the particular "Tucholskian," humorous but critical way of maintaining politically critical discourse in the Weimar Republic.

It is not by accident that most of the concepts used in this study on Tucholsky originated primarily in the leftist-Marxist camp of literary, historical, anthropological, and sociological studies. Since Tucholsky's work responds to the function of the mass media in either subverting or reinforcing nationalism, it also denotes the role of the media in subverting or reinforcing political power structures and addresses the material conditions of mass communication in a capitalist media market. Precisely this issue of

---

<sup>5</sup> For a sampling of discussions on "medialization" and how it changed cultural production and reception see Kaes, 38-64; and Wessels, 65-98.

how critical communication can be maintained in a commercialized and highly politicized context in the Weimar Republic that is at the crux of Tucholsky's work. This stance characterizes his concept of the role of the intellectual as a public mass communicator.

Tucholsky as a "public intellectual" understood writing as an act of engaging in a multifaceted process of mass communication on political, social, and cultural issues. In a non-scholarly and unsystematic, but nevertheless insightful way, his journalistic work increasingly found connections between the rise of National Socialism and its use of mass propaganda through the media. Since a writer's practice always depends on his or her self-concept as a writer, Tucholsky as a public intellectual thematized the way nationalist identities were delineated through forms of mass communication in the Weimar Republic. He understood his function in these mass communicative processes to reveal and destroy homogenizing and hegemonial tendencies within the mass media market. In order to maintain critical diversity as the basis for a functioning democracy, Tucholsky multiplied his public persona into five distinct pseudonyms which he used discriminately in different publicistic and communicative contexts.

His language and style in these media reexamined preconceived notions of the German nation. He used playful satire to dismantle the language of primarily nineteenth-century authoritarian ideology. Tucholsky's goal was to establish a counter public among the working class.<sup>6</sup> Tucholsky's awareness of ideological occupation of language motivated his development of a public discourse that was liberated from authoritarian,

---

<sup>6</sup> Continuities of nineteenth-century *Kaiserreich* ideology in the new nationalisms of the Weimar Republic were most importantly its aggressively anti-democratic stance, its militarism, its belief in authoritarianism, its racism, and its sexism. For an overview of new forms of anti-democratic nationalisms in the Weimar Republic, see Hermand, 122-155.

nineteenth-century concepts - an alternative public space situated between an ideologically occupied, functionalist culture of the politically polarized Weimar Republic. Tucholsky's satirizing of traditional ways of thinking leads to this study's discussion of Tucholsky's analysis of the public negotiation of national identity. Tucholsky's strategies for maintaining an audience in a medialized Weimar Republic illustrate a new kind of a public intellectual. Therefore, post WWII studies of the connection between the mass media, the exertion of ideology, and the nature of nationalism provide central concepts in understanding Tucholsky.

Tucholsky understood the public sphere as a site of an ideological struggle for hegemony. The notion of exerting power through cultural institutions such as the press brings us to a concept to which Tucholsky's work on the press and national identity alludes: Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Gramsci was a contemporary of Tucholsky, and he observed the role of the media in fascist Italy and saw them as the space in which the struggle for hegemony took place. For Gramsci, the struggle for hegemony inhabited the primary factor for social change, and the media had a pivotal role in developing public compliance. However, Gramsci sees the media not simply as a channel for the dominant ideology, but rather as a site of competition between different social forces.

While Gramsci notes the role of the press in reinforcing oppressive ideology, unlike Adorno and Habermas he also points out the subversive potential of the press: "What resources can an innovative class set against this formidable complex of trenches and fortifications of the dominant class? The spirit of scission, in other words the progressive acquisition of the consciousness of its own historical personality, a spirit of



scission that must aim to spread itself from the protagonist class to the classes that are its potential allies...” (Forgacs 381). Thus, Gramsci’s concept of the media and public communication comes close to Tucholsky’s, who, until the very end of the Weimar Republic, had always recognized the subversive potential not only of the mass media, but also of popular culture (and leisure culture or *Alltagskultur*) in general. Gramsci, like Tucholsky, understood intellectualism and public communication in the context of the new realities of an industrialized mass society (Forgacs 321). Again, it is not a particular article or work by Tucholsky that reflects Gramsci’s theories, but it is Tucholsky’s very practice as a public intellectual that is comparable with Gramsci’s notion of the media as a site of ideological struggle for hegemony.

In Tucholsky’s work, the struggle for hegemony by anti-republican groups in the Weimar Republic denoted competing concepts of national identity. The role of the media in nationalist discourse has been assessed in many influential post-WWII works in historical, political and sociological scholarship, particularly in regards to the Weimar Republic’s public sphere and its role in facilitating or attempting to subvert National Socialism. In the 1980s, the understanding of the concept of a “nation” progressed from assumptions of geographical designations to spaces within a public sphere where the nation can be communicated and created by communication. Ernest Gellner contended that nationalism “engenders nations, and not the other way round” (55), thus, nationalism rests on the principle of standardization, on “the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically” (55). Gellner points here to his theory that in order to be effective, nationalism needs to perpetuate cultural homogeneity through institutions

(46). One of these institutions that communicate nationalisms is the press, which supplies “frequent and precise communication between strangers involving a sharing of explicit meaning, transmitted in a standard idiom and in writing when required” (34) – the press contributes to Gellner’s notion of homogeneity as a prerequisite for nationalism.

Benedict Anderson’s theory of “imagined communities” identifies the press as a form of print language. It is one of the most important vehicles in the emergence of “a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation” (46). The press as one expression of what Anderson called print capitalism connected its readers and made them participate in a simultaneous act of reading, thus creating a homogenous group, and thus creating national identity.

Anderson contends that the nation is imagined “because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear from them, yet in the minds of each lives an image of their community” (6).

It is the notion of the centrality of the (mass) press in communicating national identity, a concept of German-ness, that is central to Gellner’s and Anderson’s theories, and that is also central to the entirety of Tucholsky’s work. From the shaky beginnings of republican Germany in 1918 to its end in 1933, Tucholsky repeatedly called for a popularization of a republican concept of German-ness in the mass media, particularly in the press. His own writings reflect this concern: by using heterogeneity of public voices, and by communicating in a variety of public channels, Tucholsky attempted to speak of the multiplicity of possible concepts of German-ness, thereby dismantling the authority of nationalism, and thereby democratizing public communication.

As National Socialism became increasingly popular, particularly during the last years of the Weimar Republic, Tucholsky intensified his concern with the role of the press in communicating and propagating national identities. He noted that National Socialism was an amplified form of a former nationalist discourse that glorified the non-republican past of the nineteenth century. But in the case of National Socialism, Tucholsky noted, it was the new element of mass spectacle and of simultaneous mass reception in the mass media that gave National Socialism its particular new appeal. He examined the propagandistic practices of the National Socialist and came to conclusions similar to a later theory by historian Eric Hobsbawm. Hobsbawm had supplemented and extended Anderson's notion of the media's role in imagining a nation, and he published his work on "invented traditions" in 1983, during in the same year Anderson had published his work on "imagined communities." Hobsbawm argued that national identities are created by repeated reference in the public sphere to elements from the past. His theory of "invented traditions" suggests that in periods of fundamental social change, national identities are generated through historical myths and therefore fabricate national origins and national continuity (4). According to Hobsbawm, invented traditions show the contrast between constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant.<sup>7</sup> Hobsbawm describes the process of inventing tradition as one of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, and by imposing repetition.

---

<sup>7</sup> Hobsbawm states: "There is probably no time and place with which historians are concerned which has not seen the 'invention' of tradition in this sense. However, we should expect it to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible, or are otherwise eliminated: in short, when there are sufficiently large and rapid changes on the demand or on the supply side" (Hobsbawm 4-5).

Tucholsky observed these mechanisms later systematically analyzed by Hobsbawm in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic. His work sought to point to the fictitious character of a nationalist and National Socialist tradition, which was meant to suggest authority, and which was meant to dismantle republicanism. Tucholsky also lamented the fact that such mechanisms, which were nothing but propaganda, were not utilized by republicans, which he regarded as the most crucial disadvantage for republicanism. From early on in the Weimar Republic, Tucholsky had reiterated the necessity for an effective republican propaganda for countering nationalism and National Socialism. But it was the paradox of the very concept of a “republican propaganda” that made it increasingly difficult to form an effective counter public.

Tucholsky also recognized the connection between capitalism, its paradoxical tendency of standardization of public life, and a corresponding increase of nationalist discourse. It was the tendency of disciplining and authoritarianism in public life and in everyday life that Tucholsky observed, while he also recognized its revolutionary and politically critical potential.

It is useful to understand Tucholsky’s work of the last years of the Weimar Republic in terms of the notion of the “Nationalization of the Masses” by George L. Mosse (1975). Mosse showed the importance of monuments, memory, and festivals to the mass nationalization of national identities. Tucholsky pointed to the connection between the dysfunction of republicanism in the Weimar Republic, and its refusal to establish sites of symbolic reference to republicanism in its public sphere. His work attempted to not only criticize this lack of republican symbolic reference in the Weimar Republic’s public sphere and to take apart the authority of the many anti-republican sites

of reference in Germany, but he also tried to point out that a republican tradition existed and needed to be popularized.

This project intends to demonstrate that non-canonical and non-fictional texts of the Weimar Republic, particularly texts of the press as integral parts of people's everyday lives, can contribute to an understanding of the politicized culture of the time. Tucholsky redefined the meaning and function of a socially and politically engaged public persona in the context of a mass public of information technology – or, in Tucholsky's words, how a writer can maintain critical communication around the issue of what a German nation is within the ideological and economic dimension of the "Deutscher Literatur-Betrieb G.m.b.H."<sup>8</sup> This study analyzes Tucholsky's socially and politically engaged texts by focusing on their satire, language parody, address, and identification. Reading his texts this way will demonstrate that Tucholsky was conscious not only of writing as reality and ideology construction, but also of the ways in which ideologies communicated in these constructs can be critically dismantled.

### **Approach and Methodology**

The methodology used in this dissertation draws from two interpretive paradigms of contemporary literary-cultural studies and from communication studies. One involves larger contextual issues and acknowledges material contexts as well as the social and political significance of texts. I view, borrowing from cultural studies at large, the institution of press as one institution of social discursive practices, and I analyze the press as a discursive field. I look at texts as constituting and reinforcing discursive practices,

---

<sup>8</sup> Peter Panter, "Die Zeit schreit nach Satire," *Vossische Zeitung*, June 9, 1929.

as ones that grow out of a determinate mode of production and participate in complex social activity. This approach understands knowledge as socially constructed. Therefore, in order to examine the interrelation between discourses on national identity and the function of the public intellectual in the Weimar Republic's fragmented networks of cultural production and consumption, this study uses one methodology by drawing from interdisciplinary practices of journalism/communication studies (*Publizistikwissenschaft*).<sup>9</sup>

The methods used in *Publizistikwissenschaft*, with which this dissertation approaches Tucholsky's work, analyze various processes of public communication. In order to interpret texts published in periodicals, the publishing context of such texts must be determined. Formal aspects are important for the meaning of such texts. It is important to know which genre of publicistic texts it represents, and/or if it is a mixture of various genres, or if it cannot be categorized at all. It is vital for the meaning of the text where in the periodical it is positioned (first page, middle, or last), if there are pictures accompanying the text, and if there are other texts in its vicinity that contribute or comment on its content. Whether the text plays with norms and forms of publishing genres or whether it follows these norms is also important for determining its meaning and function in the communicative process. Its technical and organizational aspects such as printing techniques and distribution practices of the mass press are a central aspect of

---

<sup>9</sup> *Publizistikwissenschaft* or short *Publizistik* is the German term for scholarly studies in communications science, journalism, publishing, and media studies. As Emil Dovifat, pioneer in German *Publizistikwissenschaft*, mentioned, *Publizistik* is the study of processes in the public sphere that are intended to have public impact on political, social, economic, and cultural life: "Die Publizistikwissenschaft ist nur auf den Vorgang ausgerichtet, der für das öffentliche Leben entscheidend ist, eben den publizistischen Prozess, der 'aktuelle Bewusstseinsinhalte' übermitteln, die 'öffentlich bedingt und öffentlich bewirkt mit Kräften der Gesinnung durch Überzeugung zu Tun und Handeln führen'" (Dovifat, *Publizistische Persönlichkeit* 24).

understanding mass communicative processes, especially in politicized discourses of the Weimar Republic. Therefore, political and economic considerations such as political leaning of the medium's owners and its advertising practices must be considered for an accurate assessment of mass communication (Dovifat, *Handbuch* 11). Because it analyzes the publishing context of Tucholsky's journalistic texts, this dissertation follows recent premises in *Publizistik*, which interpret the media and mass communications as social systems in which realities are constructed by means of several factors: its producers (the journalist), the construct itself (the text), the carrier of this message (the medium) the role of the target group of the message (the audience) and its reactions to these messages (reception) (Weischenberg 430). The method borrowed from communication studies is that of a content analysis of media messages, which determines the medium in which the text is communicated, how it is communicated (i.e. relevance for the audience, political tendency of the message/text, and stylistic choice), who speaks (i.e. what possible interest could the author pursue with the text), and when is it spoken (timing of the message) – and if it responds to a particular event or broader political-historical trends (Merten 306). In order to assess these factors of media messages, the greater context of where these messages appear must be determined. Therefore, each chapter begins with an analysis of the landscape of the media during the different historical phases of the Weimar Republic.

This study follows the assumption of communication studies that public mass communication it is a complex interchange of different communicative factors (Maurer 405), determined by content analyses (most broadly in terms of who is speaking, where, when, and to whom). Thus, an assessment of political trends within the press landscape

is necessary to setting up the communicative and political context of Tucholsky's publicistic texts. It is necessary to know at what point in time, as a response to which political event, did Tucholsky communicate his messages to what audience (in terms of quantity, socio-economic background, level of education, age, and political-ideological leaning), placed in what particular publicistic context (i.e. what political "camp" dominated the press landscape at the time, and against what political discourse did Tucholsky's messages compete), in order to determine Tucholsky's place and significance within mass communicative processes of the Weimar Republic.

The circulation numbers of the different papers and magazines in which Tucholsky published, their political leaning, economic success, advertising and distribution practices as indicators for target audiences will be analyzed with such methods used in *Publizistikwissenschaft*. All these factors are understood as contributing to the message constructed in the text, which will be approached by methods of literary analysis. By looking at Tucholsky's satirical techniques in its socio-historical context, I will demonstrate how the public intellectual challenged hegemonic concepts by revealing how they were constructed and reinforced. My choice of the textual sample in this study was motivated by my interest in the extent to which mass culture is politically functionalized, and to what extent it can serve as an emancipatory instrument. My interest lies in how specific disciplinary discourses such as nationalism are produced, how social practices constitute such discourse, and how power and knowledge are exercised in such social practices in order to perpetuate national identities among individuals. Furthermore, I look at how individuals such as public intellectuals and their works can aid us in understanding such mechanisms. Tucholsky's texts point to the



process of how German-ness is produced through public discourse, and how culture and politics is interpenetrated when in a mass context.

Precisely because I think Tucholsky is misunderstood in the field of *Publizistik* alone, the whole variety of sources will be used to place his work into the publishing market of the Weimar Republic. Secondly, it is very important to understand Tucholsky's publishing strategy, the political leaning of each journal, and the different audiences Tucholsky aimed to reach. But to fully understand Tucholsky's work, one cannot look at its external factors alone. This dissertation also explores the aesthetic merits of Tucholsky's texts. The other paradigm of textual analysis used in this dissertation is a formalist one: it looks the text's structure, style, specific images used, variation of themes and images, and their transformations displayed in the text. In this dissertation, an analysis of Tucholsky's language in the text is embedded in a contextual reading of the press. It follows the assumption that the choice of language and its stylistic and formal organization constitutes meaning. The presence, intensity, and occasional absence of satire as Tucholsky's most prevalent style, as well as its different adaptations and variations in the diverse publicistic contexts in which Tucholsky communicated will be determined. The stylistic and rhetorical devices used are understood as strategies of representing the text's message. Therefore, the text analysis, contextualized in a broader context of the individual texts' political, social, economic, cultural, and communicative background, suggest how Tucholsky's work may change approaches to the literature and culture of the Weimar Republic.

Because this dissertation aims to demonstrate that Tucholsky's texts must be approached by recognizing their publishing contexts, the general organizational approach

to the interpretive part of the dissertation situates a detailed reading of specific passages of Tucholsky's texts into a broad contextual, text-extrinsic framework. Each chapter begins with an overview of Tucholsky scholarship of each particular phase of his work, and it is followed by an overview of the press landscape of each particular phase. Then, each chapter looks at Tucholsky's republican and pacifist activism, and his different publicistic strategies, before it launches into the detailed text analysis. This contextualization of the reading of Tucholsky is necessary because this dissertation recognizes the interdependence of text-external and text-internal aspects that constitutes meaning. The chapters conclude with comparisons of Tucholsky's writings with those of other selected contemporaries who have written on the relationship between public communication, nationalism, and the dysfunction of republicanism in the Weimar Republic. The logic behind such comparisons is to point out Tucholsky's innovativeness in communicating these issues in the context of the Weimar Republic's discourse on what "German-ness" entailed, and how it was communicated in a mass public sphere.

### **Chapter Overview**

Major historical events of the Weimar Republic categorize the periodization on which the chapters of this study are based, including the November Revolution of 1918, the Kapp Putsch and political murders of 1922-23, the phase of relative stabilization between 1924 and 1928, the devastating elections of 1930, and the subsequent disappearance of a public sphere from 1933 on. Each chapter will analyze a small cluster of Tucholsky's journalistic work on how the text communicates with its audience, as seen from the four anchors of its meaning: the context of the press landscape at a particular

period of Tucholsky's work, the context of Tucholsky's political activism besides writing, his publishing strategies, and his discussions of language and identity formation in each historical phase of the Weimar Republic.

An introductory first chapter provides a literature review on the history and the present state of Tucholsky scholarship. Such a survey is necessary for setting up the project and to show its indebtedness to and departure from existing studies on Tucholsky's journalistic work. The subsequent four main chapters move chronologically in time and correspond with historiography's division of the Weimar Republic in three distinct phases. The division also complements various phases of Tucholsky's work. The last two chapters, however, deviate from the Weimar Republic's historical phases in that they correspond more with different phases in Tucholsky's work during the last few years of his career.

Chapter II focuses on the Weimar Republic's first phase (1918-1923), when Tucholsky lived in Berlin and advocated a reformed concept of the public intellectual in order to popularize the Republic in an increasingly polarized political landscape.

Chapter III looks at the Republic's stable years (1924-1928) as the background for Tucholsky's expansion of public channels of communication. As a cultural correspondent in Paris, Tucholsky was active in establishing international exchange between France and Germany. He pursued peacekeeping measures in the context of a less politically polarized public and staged concepts of Europeanism that are compatible with models of international identities of today.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Recent research on European identity suggests that institutional integration of the EU determines the strengthening of European identities: "Building and imagining Europe are flip sides of the same coin" (Bellier 2).

Chapter IV deviates in form and representation from the other chapters, partly because it focuses on a different genre than the other chapters, and partly because it highlights only one year of Tucholsky's career: his work of the year 1929. This chapter analyzes Tucholsky's sensational publication *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* in terms of its stylistic and thematic exploration and its language satire in criticizing Nazi ideology. Because of its notoriety in discussions around the role of the intellectuals in preventing or supporting National Socialism, this text demonstrates Tucholsky's publicly effective negotiation of ideology in language and in everyday practices through satire. In this chapter, I compare and contrast styles and themes of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* with other *Deutschland* books that responded to Tucholsky's publication from different ideological camps, and I conclude that *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* was innovative in creating a new genre for communicating German-ness. By looking at the book's critical dissection of nationalisms, National Socialism, and the reconfirmation of authoritarianisms in Germany's press, literature, and in its leisure- and everyday culture, I argue that Tucholsky's observations foreshadow later concepts of ideology critique in post-WWII cultural studies.

The book's criticism of public displays of nationalist might in the Weimar Republic also alludes to Hobsbawm's theory of "invented traditions." It corresponds with Tucholsky's assertion that because of the failure of popularizing such traditions in form of republican traditions in the Weimar Republic's public sphere, nationalist and National Socialist movements became increasingly dominant. Tucholsky extends and radicalizes this theme of National Socialist "occupation" of the public sphere and national memory in the last two years of his career as a public intellectual, which will be

investigated in Chapter V. This chapter traces the question why Tucholsky's Nazi satire during these last two years of his career became most acerbic, when at the same time he gradually narrowed his of public channels after 1930. It discusses whether Tucholsky's eventual public silence after 1932 demonstrated his understanding of and consequent reaction to the loss of the intellectual's public under a totalitarian ideology.

The conclusion returns to the question of Tucholsky as a representative of the public intellectual in the Weimar Republic, who, despite of his diverse public voices, always came back to his basic continuous concern of the public function of language, propaganda, and ideology in a mass public sphere. His perceptiveness about the ideological role of language in public discourse has been overlooked and has led to indiscriminate evaluations particularly of the final years of Tucholsky's activity as a writer. My conclusion will argue that Tucholsky developed a model of cultural communication that reacted productively to a fragmented public sphere and that found forms and concepts that negotiated between the duality of art and politics. The platform of such a model of communication was the Weimar Republic's diverse publishing market in which new forms of literary as well as socio-politically critical expression in cultural and popular magazines and newspapers were embraced. During politically and culturally polarized times, Tucholsky's innovative use of language, particularly his use of satire, negotiated between social classes and political camps through his conscious selection of public channels. I hope to demonstrate the main contribution of my dissertation, which states that Tucholsky's work can not be understood without acknowledging the complex and innovative journalistic landscape of the Weimar Republic in which his work

appeared, that it is necessary to embed a detailed analysis of Tucholsky's texts within their publishing contexts for a more profound understanding of his work.

My approach of understanding Tucholsky in the context of his publishing strategies and the journalistic landscape of the Weimar Republic aims to grasp the complexity of his work. The breadth of his work was attractive to readers, but it posed a challenge to scholarship, which thought of his work as insignificant in terms of aesthetic innovation (Müller 338). Alleged inconsistencies in Tucholsky's work and publishing practices (Deák 38) will consequently be reinterpreted as a careful and conscious staging of language in the context of a modern mass information media public. Thus, this dissertation presents a new way of looking at Tucholsky as a public intellectual who was using and analyzing the resources of language inside a "medialized" Weimar Republic in very particular and perceptive way.

The critical reception Tucholsky received from many of his contemporary intellectuals, who felt discomfort with his addressing low cultural themes and forms, as well as a general helplessness regarding categorization in post WWII Tucholsky scholarship, indicates the necessity to approach Tucholsky's work as one that demystified notions of literary autonomy without subscribing to mere functionalism within the context of the cultural institution of *Publizistik*, in order to establish a new form of community. As the following chapter will emphasize, this study is deeply indebted to existing Tucholsky scholarship, which has been trying to decipher the high degree of contradiction and conflict in his work. But instead of echoing recent assessments of Tucholsky's work as demonstrating the ruptures, contradictions, and conflicts inherent in

a diverse modern society, the dissertation seeks to resituate Tucholsky's discourse around German-ness in the Weimar Republic's public sphere in the critical canon.

## Chapter I:

### “Ich habe Erfolg, aber keinerlei Wirkung:”

#### An Overview of Tucholsky-Scholarship

This frequently quoted complaint, voiced by Tucholsky in 1923 regarding the political impact of his work on his readers, highlights two crucial criteria in the reception of Tucholsky’s work: the one of popularity and the one of (political) effect among his diverse audience. For a long time, both criteria had been a hindrance for thorough scholarly exploration of Tucholsky’s work, precisely because of the irrelevance of popular and political literature to *Germanistik*.<sup>11</sup> Tucholsky was not taken seriously, and he at best surfaced in discussions on the role of the pre-war cultural scene in preventing or facilitating the rise of Nazism in Germany. This neglect of Tucholsky’s work occurred despite, or, considering post-war academia’s elitist stance, because of his popular status as a Weimar intellectual. During the time of scholarly re-orientation after the student movement of the 1960s and 1970s, however, literary scholarship began reevaluating Tucholsky’s work.

The first systematic assessment of Tucholsky scholarship came from Irmgard Ackermann, Dieter Hess, and Katrin Lindner in 1981. Ackermann et al. claim a “depressing” state of Tucholsky research in terms of methodology and scholarly standard (7). This overview of previous research on Tucholsky’s work pointed to the dismal state

---

<sup>11</sup> *Germanistik* denotes the scholarship of German philology in its broadest sense and the study of its literature in particular (Wilpert 338).



of scholarly works on Tucholsky prior to the 1980s, before Tucholsky was regarded as worthy for literary studies. But even in the last years of the 1990s, the state of Tucholsky scholarship was still regarded as dissatisfactory. In 1997, Tucholsky scholar Ian King provided the next comprehensive and most up-to-date summary of research on Tucholsky. While King acknowledged recent studies that have tried to fill the “gap in scholarship [that] still relates to intellectual influences and stylistic techniques,” he concluded that “no Germanist ... has yet demonstrated just why Tucholsky was such a brilliant satirist: it remains as mysterious as where the holes in cheese come from” (King, *Analysis 2*).

Indeed, scholarly attention from *Germanists* has been sparse, particularly in Germany, while other disciplines, in particular history and journalism studies (*Publizistik*) discovered Tucholsky’s work as a useful source in non-literary scholarship. Discrepancies between Tucholsky’s popularity among readers on the one hand and serious scholarly neglect concerning his work on the other are found largely in the diversity of Tucholsky’s work, which poses great difficulty for coherent categorization among traditional literary critics.<sup>12</sup> More recently, critics have recognized that the stigma of entertainment literature surrounding his work, combined with an alleged lack of aesthetic innovation has been the source of fundamental shortcomings and wrong assessments in Tucholsky scholarship (Müller 338). However, it is precisely the combination of its challenging aesthetic quality and its relevance for concrete political,

---

<sup>12</sup> For a sampling of materials that reflect the range of comments on the state of Tucholsky scholarship see Ackermann, Hess, Lindner, 7; Hess, *Aufklärungsstrategien* 1; Mörchen, 304; Lipp, 4; King, *Analysis* 35-52; Becker and Maack, 8.

social, and cultural issues that constitutes Tucholsky's work as a third way between the polarity of functionalism and elitism.

The predominance of this kind of polarity in literary criticism has to date prevented an accurate assessment not only Tucholsky's work, but also of the function of the public intellectual in the Weimar Republic. Therefore, the difficulties Tucholsky's work poses for traditional literary criticism require a fundamental reassessment of what it means to be an author and what the definition of a literary public is. In order to determine a launching point for such a definition, the following sections will trace reactions and scholarly approaches to Tucholsky's work from contemporary criticism to latest trends in Tucholsky scholarship, in Germany and elsewhere.

The chapter begins with an overview of contemporary reactions to Tucholsky's work. These reactions reflected the polarized political and cultural landscape of the Weimar Republic: on the one side, leftist voices blamed Tucholsky for an alleged commercialization of a critical culture, and on the other side, Nazis regarded Tucholsky as the personification of a Jewish conspiracy. To the Nazis, Tucholsky personified the "evil Jew" bent on Germany's destruction. Ironically, immediately after WWII, he embodied the desperate intellectual martyr who failed in preventing the historical catastrophe of the Third Reich.

This chapter will read such contradictory views and the void of Tucholsky criticism after WWII concerning his work as symptomatic of postwar insecurities, particularly in a (divided) Germany. Postwar scholarship analyzed prewar culture by seeking blame for the rise of Nazism or by glorifying prewar Jewish writers into martyrdom. Also, the division between text-intrinsic and text-external approaches in

postwar scholarship contributed to unsatisfactory accounts of Tucholsky's work, as particularly apparent in a variety of largely inaccurate Tucholsky biographies.

Scholars outside of Germany, however, found access to the diversity of Tucholsky's work by using socio-historical, structuralist, and post-structuralist approaches. Such approaches were not embraced by German *Germanistik* until the 1980s, when Tucholsky was rediscovered in the context of a scholarly revival of the Weimar Republic's culture, partly due to increased interest in cultural studies. These studies set the stage for recent developments in Tucholsky scholarship, as the last section of this chapter will examine. Only recently, when German scholarship took up methodologies and approaches used internationally, have crucial uses of ideology, Tucholsky's use of language, and his publishing strategies become new and useful emphases in approaching Tucholsky's work.

This new emphasis of approaching Tucholsky's work through a combination of text-intrinsic and –extrinsic readings inspired this dissertation. The following overview of Tucholsky scholarship and its developments is intended to highlight the indebtedness of my dissertation to a relatively small number of previous assessments of Tucholsky's work. It is particularly indebted to studies of the last twenty-five years, during which Tucholsky has been taken seriously as a crucial contributor to German literary and political history.

### *Contemporary Reactions to Tucholsky's Work*

As noted above, Tucholsky's contemporary intellectuals have generally regarded his work as problematic, but timely and relevant in the Weimar Republic's cultural and political scene. From avant-gardists like George Grosz to modernists like Kafka, the progressive cultural scene of the 1920s regarded Tucholsky positively as an "Erbe ... des vormärzlichen Humors" (Grosz 180) and his personality as one which reflected disparities of his times, as Kafka noted:

Gestern abend auf dem Nachhauseweg hätte ich mich als Zuschauer mit Tucholski verwechseln können. Das fremde Wesen muss dann in mir so deutlich und unsichtbar sein, wie das Versteckte in einem Vexierbild, in dem man auch niemals etwas finden würde, wenn man nicht wüsste, dass es drin steckt (46).

Kafka captures here an essential aspect not only of Tucholsky's personality but also of his work: the notion of fluctuation, contradiction, conflict, and elusiveness. These aspects have confused, intrigued, and even angered scholars as they are imminent features of the Weimar Republic's versatile culture. Writer Axel Eggebrecht said about Tucholsky that his work and all its different aspects had a long lasting impact on Germany's cultural life.<sup>13</sup> Hermann Hesse was an early admirer of Tucholsky's writing style, although stylistic aspects of his work have not been widely recognized until the 1980s.<sup>14</sup> Another contemporary, Carl von Ossietzky, chief editor of the *Weltbühne*, Tucholsky's employer and his substitute in suffering under the harsh legal consequences of many trials against the *Weltbühne* prompted by (an absent) Tucholsky, always encouraged him to keep up his critical public voice. He recognized Tucholsky's

---

<sup>13</sup> Eggebrecht made this comment in regards to Kurt Hiller's artistic legacy: "Hiller war ein unerbittlicher, wichtiger, interessanter, und prägender Geist, der allerdings, im Gegensatz zu Tucholsky, kaum Spuren hinterlassen hat" (<http://www.hiller-gesellschaft.de/urteile.htm>).

<sup>14</sup> Hesse noted Tucholsky's use of "gewissenhaften, klaren und guten Sätze" ([www.hesse.de](http://www.hesse.de)).

importance for the *Weltbühne* by a special mention of Tucholsky's name on the front page of each *Weltbühne* issue. However, he was also critical of Tucholsky's permanent absence in Germany, particularly as the Republic approached its end. Ossietzky pointed out that an emigrated critic had less of an impact:

Der Oppositionelle, der über die Grenzen gegangen ist, spricht bald hohl ins Land hinein. Der ausschliesslich politische Publizist namentlich kann auf die Dauer nicht den Zusammenhang mit dem Ganzen entbehren, gegen das er kämpft, für das er kämpft, ohne in Exaltationen und Schiefheiten zu verfallen. Wenn man den verseuchten Geist eines Landes wirkungsvoll bekämpfen will, muss man dessen allgemeines Schicksal teilen. (qtd. in Hepp 319)

Ossietzky's general criticism against emigrated critics applied also to Tucholsky, and the fact that Tucholsky spent most of his time as a writer abroad, criticizing German politics without standing up for the consequences of this criticism, was often used as a reproach against him. His friend, writer Walter Hasenclever, tried to correct this picture of Tucholsky as a runaway critic by pointing out his personal integrity and the courageousness of his work – he described him as being “true to words” (qtd. in Hepp 373).

Most contemporary reactions to his work did not address Tucholsky's personality but indicated Tucholsky's proximity to the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) and to the leftist-intellectual circle of the *Weltbühne*, the magazine for which Tucholsky wrote most of his articles. Interestingly, he was primarily criticized by leftist intellectuals for an allegedly populist style that reflected an increasingly uncritical consumer culture of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*.

Walter Benjamin was the most prominent representative of these critics. He accused *Neue Sachlichkeit* and its authors of turning revolutionary impulses into products of consumer culture (461) - an evaluation that launched a critical discussion of the

political and aesthetic role of Tucholsky's work among his leftist contemporaries. Herbert Ihering had a similar assessment regarding *Tucholsky's Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* (1929), which he saw as a phenomenon of the preoccupation of *Neue Sachlichkeit* with an alleged objectivity and its exploitation in a capitalist public: "Eine Verwilderung der kritischen Sitten ist eingerissen, die ohnegleichen ist. ... Die Amerikanisierung hat den Geist vertrieben."<sup>15</sup> Bertolt Brecht in his essay "Neue Sachlichkeit" of 1930 and Joseph Roth in his essay "Schluss mit der Neuen Sachlichkeit" of 1930 also criticized the *Neue Sachlichkeit's* documentary-style methods of representation for its alleged market-oriented and non-critical character.

In the final years of the Weimar Republic, this negative assessment of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and its representatives by Benjamin, Ihering, Brecht, and Roth was revisited after WWII in scholarly preoccupation with the Weimar intellectuals' responsibility for the rise of Nazism because of their critical stance towards the practice of republicanism during the Weimar Republic. These discussions of Tucholsky's work do not address any literary merits of his work but only revolve around the question of Tucholsky as a Weimar intellectual and his role in facilitating and not preventing National Socialism.

For nationalists and particularly for National Socialists, Tucholsky personified everything that their anti-Semitic propaganda repetitively used.<sup>16</sup> To them, his writings were an expression of an alleged Jewish "hatred" against Germans, and to right extremist publicist Franz von Lilienthal, Tucholsky had even provoked the Kapp-Putsch with his

---

<sup>15</sup> Herbert Ihering, "Polemik," published in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, "Anhang."

<sup>16</sup> For an in-depth discussion of Nazi criticism see Michael Hepp, 274-278.

anti-militarist writings.<sup>17</sup> Referring to Tucholsky's essays about national identity, nationalist writer Ludwig Thoma called Tucholsky a "hebräischer Schmutzfink" and "jüdische[r] Paralytiker" (qtd. in Hepp 275). The nationalist *Deutsche Zeitung* named Tucholsky as the representative Jew whose writings had caused the *Deutsche Zeitung* to take an anti-Semitic course (Hepp 479). After 1933, when Goebbels declared the end of intellectualism by a symbolic burning of important German writers (Hepp 351), Tucholsky lost his German citizenship and any source of income – he was not recognized as a "German" anymore. Nazi *Germanist* Josef Nadler vilified Tucholsky as a Jewish "devil" (qtd. in Hepp 275) whose goal it was to destroy "German culture": "Diese allgemeine Perversion eines ganzen Volkes durch eine ihm fremde Literatur war das berechnete Unternehmen des Judentums, die deutsche Seele in seine Hörigkeit zu zwingen und das deutsche Volk zum Träger der Weltrevolution, zum Werkzeug und Vollstrecker des jüdischen Messiasgedankens zu machen" (qtd. in Hepp 276). Particularly after Tucholsky's publishing of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* in 1929, many Nazis called for aggressive physical action against Tucholsky.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, as Tucholsky biographer Michael Hepp speculates while acknowledging the lack of evidence, it is possible that he was murdered by Nazis, who had declared Tucholsky one of their most important enemies since the 1920s.<sup>19</sup>

While right extremists degraded Tucholsky because of his Jewish heritage, the Jewish community vilified him by holding him responsible for growing anti-Semitism in the Weimar Republic. For example, Max Naumann, chair of the conservative Jewish

---

<sup>17</sup> Franz von Lilienthal even thought that Tucholsky's pacifism could be the cause of a future war, as he wrote in his article "Das Zerrbild der Mona Lisa," *Berliner Börsen Zeitung*, April 21, 1929 (qtd. in Hepp 478).

<sup>18</sup> See more about reactions to *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* in Chapter 4.

<sup>19</sup> For more information on this topic see Michael Hepp (1993) 527-530.

organization *Verband nationaldeutscher Juden*, blamed Tucholsky for providing anti-Semites with reasons for their hatred against Jews: “Dieser Kurt Tucholsky ist eine unerschöpfliche Quelle der deutschen Judenfeindschaft; er züchtet sie in einer Ergiebigkeit, die kein gewerbsmässiger Antisemit jemals erreichen könnte.” (qtd. in Hepp 276).

Perhaps for these reasons, Tucholsky’s Jewishness or his proximity to the *Neue Sachlichkeit* were extensively addressed in popular and scholarly accounts during his lifetime. As noted earlier, literary critics failed to take into the diversity of Tucholsky’s work and its relevancy for evaluating and analyzing the Weimar Republic’s culture. It was judged primarily from the perspective of whether it prevented Nazism or not, or whether it was inadvertently part of an inherently fascist aspect of bourgeois culture. The next section will show the notable feature of postwar scholarship, that, immediately after WWII, it was historians and not literary scholars who assessed Tucholsky’s position and role in the culture of the Weimar Republic. The fact that Tucholsky was ignored in literary studies for so long demonstrates not only reluctance in *Germanistik* scholarship to acknowledge multi-media writers like Tucholsky as relevant for scholarly attention, but it also indicates the fact that immediately after WWII, postwar literary studies held on to a (fundamentally apolitical) ideal of “high” art. Furthermore, this still prevalent division indicated the fact that democratization was a process in its beginning stages, and that writers on the margins of the literary canon were not yet valued for their central role in understanding culture.



### *Post-WWII History Scholarship on Tucholsky*

Immediately after WWII, in an anthology of Tucholsky's articles, Erich Kästner created a lasting image of Tucholsky. He described him as a "kleiner dicker Berliner, der eine Katastrophe mit seiner Schreibmaschine aufhalten wollte."<sup>20</sup> This image of an almost ridiculously ambitious but inconsequentially harmless political intellectual, surrounded by an air of pity, also epitomized the role ascribed to him by literary scholarship. It implied that Tucholsky's concern with socio-political issues was hopeless, pretentious, and ostentatious, and that scholarly attention for Tucholsky was unworthy. On a more subtle level, however, this categorization of Tucholsky as not being worthy of scholarly analysis indicated postwar *Germanistik's* struggle to come to terms with its Nazi past and with German history predating Nazism.

This view of Tucholsky's completely inconsequential political engagement was replaced by intense discussions among historians on the role of Weimar Republic's left-liberal intellectuals in preparing or preventing National Socialism. Here, the various historians' political background influenced their different assessments of the Weimar Republic intellectuals' role in facilitating Nazism. In the 1950s, Golo Mann set the tone for West German discussions by asserting that the Weimar Republic's intellectuals supported Nazism in their critical assessment of Weimar Republic politics. He singled out Tucholsky for the destruction of the republic, and his polemic argument reminds the reader of the fierce criticism Tucholsky received during the Weimar Republic from his right-wing enemies:

Die hellsichtige Bosheit, mit der Kurt Tucholsky die Republik verspottete, alle ihre Lahmheiten und Falschheiten, erinnerte von Ferne an Heinrich Heine. Von

---

<sup>20</sup> Erich Kästner, "Afterword."

Witz und Hass des grossen Dichters war ein Stück in ihm, nur leider wenig von seiner Liebe ... Und so grimmig diese ungebundene Linke die Republik verhöhnte und so wenig sie mit der Sozialdemokratie zu tun hatte, so wurde sie auf der Rechten doch als ein typischer Ausdruck des Systems empfunden: Asphaltliteratur, jüdisch-zersetzende Intelligenz, oder was die gängigen Ausdrücke waren. Die radikale Literatur gehörte nicht zur Republik, wohl aber zur republikanischen Zeit, in der allein sie in den Zeitschriften und auf dem Theater so laut zu Worte kommen konnte. Sie tat der Republik doppelt weh; indem sie unbarmherzig ihre Schwächen aufdeckte und indem sie trotzdem als gültiger Ausdruck republikanischen Geistes empfunden wurde. (707-708)

Mann ascribes political incompetence to Tucholsky's critical writings, and sees them as symptomatic of the Republic's dysfunctional republicanism, particularly during its last years. This view reflects a trend in Germany's historiography of the 1950s to seek responsibility for the historical disaster of National Socialism among prominent Germans instead of looking for fascist trends among ordinary Germans who voted for the Nazis, as is done in today's historical evaluations, especially since Daniel Goldhagen's study on ordinary Germans and their anti-Semitic practices.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, in the 1950s, Georg Lukács, representing the East German perspective of German history, criticizes the *Weltbühne*-authors' disregard of the economic dimension in their understanding of politics, and he states that they implicitly supported anti-democratic forces by their enthusiasm for the western political tradition:

Die Traditionslosigkeit vieler subjektiv überzeugter Demokraten zeigt sich darin, dass sie ihrerseits diesen angeblich ausschliesslich 'westlichen' Charakter der Demokratie zur Grundlage ihrer Propaganda machten, ihr Anti-deutschtum, ihre Begeisterung für die westliche Demokratie taktlos und untaktisch in den Vordergrund stellten und damit der Reaktion in ihrer anti-demokratischen Legendenbildung ungewollt eine Hilfe leisteten. Am deutlichsten ist diese Ideologie im Kreis der damaligen 'Weltbühne' sichtbar. (70)

---

<sup>21</sup> See Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996).

This text displays postwar Germany's insecurities regarding an explanation of National Socialism. Although coming from two fundamentally different ideological camps in the two post-war Germanys, both critics blame the Weimar Republic intellectuals as facilitators for Nazism. Lukács, like Mann, still argues from the perspective of a scholarship that was unable to acknowledge other factors shaping political trends than political or cultural authorities.

After WWII, this tendency among German historians of all stripes scholarship to regard Tucholsky as an inadvertent Nazi supporter lasted well into the 1960s. In 1962, for example, historian Kurt Sontheimer put the liberal-leftist Weimar intellectuals in the proximity of nationalist writers for their "inhumanen Sarkasmus und Zynismus, der zu Ungerechtigkeiten verleitet" (389) and its role in undermining republicanism. The academic propensity for blaming the only critical voices of the Weimar Republic for this failure exhibits postwar insecurities of German historiography in its attempts to come to terms with its own past.

Outside of Germany, particularly in the U.S., historians moved from initial castigation to rehabilitating the role of the Weimar intellectuals, namely Tucholsky, as a positive one - particularly in light of the pacifist movement that gained new momentum during Vietnam War. To be sure, in the early 1960s, historian Gordon Craig still accused the Weimar Republic's intellectuals for not understanding the complexity of political challenges with which the Weimar Republic's politicians were confronted, thus unknowingly contributing to the Republic's destruction (49-64). In a similar vein, George L. Mosse criticized the Weimar Republic intellectuals for their counter-productive criticism against the Republic. He asserted that "they were interested in

absolutes, not in possibilities” (204). Mosse saw a link between the non-effectiveness of the Weimar intellectual’s republicanism and rising anti-Semitism, which would legally have granted the intellectuals unprecedented rights of expression and political participation.<sup>22</sup>

A first comprehensive study to refute such views of these intellectuals’ destructive role of the Weimar Republic’s intellectuals, in particular the role of the *Weltbühne* writers, appeared in 1968. István Deák, historian at Columbia University, proposed that the Weimar intellectuals were not destructive but instead engaged in the democratic process: “they dreamed of a socialist society with democratic instrumental forms; this was and still is everywhere an intellectual utopia. But these writers acted on behalf of their utopia; they were participants, not bystanders in the political arena” (228). Deák not only rebutted historiography’s verdict that the Weimar intellectuals were somehow to blame for the rise of Nazism, he also reevaluated their political role as relevant for the political process and as important in their function as critical voices – regardless of the eventual political outcome. The most important aspects analyzed by Deák were the political background of the *Weltbühne* contributors, the magazine’s involvement in legal battles, its circulation number and readership, and how the most important political issues discussed in the *Weltbühne* mutated over time. Thus, Deák’s socio-historical approach was the first important contribution for scholarly contextualizing of the *Weltbühne* and its circle. Deák did not, however, include any text analysis, which led to his rather negative assessment of Tucholsky’s literary ability, and

---

<sup>22</sup>Mosse writes, “The failures of the German left-wing intellectuals can be attributed primarily to their attitudes toward man and society and to their lack of a political base and an effective mechanism of social change. But the predominance of Jews within the group served, in Germany at least, to separate them not only from the population at large but also from the working classes they wanted to reach” (207).

which also represented the existing duality of the understanding of aesthetics and politics in the 1960s. Deák mentions Hermann Kesten's assessment of Tucholsky's "limited literary talent" and his role of a "bad prophet" (48) in the magazine *Der Monat* (1958), and agrees: "A lot of bad stuff issued with the good from Tucholsky's typewriter: cheap jokes, revolutionary songs full of pathos (the workers loved them), sentimental idylls, abject Francophilism. His great talent was to prod, to sneer, to applaud, and to satirize. His only attempt at a small, center role was a failure: Tucholsky's editorship of the *Weltbühne* had lasted eleven months" (48).

However ambivalent Deák's ultimate assessment of Tucholsky as a writer, his approach to Tucholsky's work set a precedent for literary, cultural, and historical studies to come decades later. In the meantime, German *Germanistik* still struggled with accepting non-canonical writers such as Tucholsky despite their popularity. It exhibited an essentially conservative stance of post-war *Germanistik*, which refused to acknowledge the role of literature, particularly literature that was concerned with political and every-day issues, in historical-political and even cultural processes. Instead, a wealth of biographies attempted to position Tucholsky within German popular culture. The majority of these Tucholsky biographies, however, simplified the complexity of Tucholsky's life and work.

### ***Tucholsky Biographies***

There is not one single biography about Tucholsky written by a literary scholar. Biographies about Tucholsky tend to exclude his literary work and instead emphasize psychological and political aspects of his life. Particularly in divided postwar Germany, interpretations of Tucholsky reflected the ideological background of the authors: in West Germany, Tucholsky became an apolitical, amusing entertainer whose increasing despair led to his suicide as an act of passive martyrdom in the face of National Socialism. In East Germany, on the other hand, he was regarded as a communist martyr. The following section provides an overview of these divided interpretations of Tucholsky's life. It will first look at West German biographies of Tucholsky, then of East German biographies, before the section concludes with post-unification biographies, which showed a much higher degree of scholarly interest than the previous political readings of his life.

#### ***Tucholsky Biographies in the FRG***

In West German biographies, Tucholsky became stylized as a republican or a Jewish martyr, or his work was seen as the product of a resigned and depressed intellectual. Hans Prescher's 1959 biography on Tucholsky, for example, detected a gradual development towards resignation in 1932, and an eventual despair and hopelessness, resulting in suicide in 1935 (93). Prescher looks for psychological explanations of Tucholsky's motivation in political involvement:

Hass war und blieb eine Antriebskraft seines Schaffens. ... Doch hinter dem Hass gegen den einen, den lauten und trotz Republik mächtigen Teil unseres Volkes stand, wenn nicht die Liebe, so ein tief empfundenens Mit-Leiden mit dem anderen, im Schatten lebenden Teil unseres Volkes. (Prescher 23)

This unfounded assessment of the subject of Tucholsky's work is summarized in the book's cover-text, where Tucholsky is described as a dramatic fighter who suffered under humanity's imperfections. The absence of any text documentation in Prescher's biography attested the irrelevance ascribed to Tucholsky's biography and work for scholarly studies. Another biography on Tucholsky, written in the same year (1959) by Klaus-Peter Schulz, displayed similar inaccuracies to Prescher's biography. Not only did this one lack source documentation, but it also depicted Tucholsky as dramatically and tragically suffering from psychological tensions:

Bis zu seinem Verstummen wird er immer wieder versuchen, Macht und Geist praktisch zu versöhnen, den vom Machtmissbrauch unterdrückten zuliebe und den Feinden des Geistes zuleide, des Geistes, der sich aus literarisch-philosophischen Höhen auf die Erde niedersenken soll, um dort Wirklichkeit zu werden. (75)

These speculations about some kind of secularized spiritualism in Tucholsky's work, and guesswork about Tucholsky's psyche established inaccuracies about Tucholsky's life and work in the early stages of Tucholsky scholarship. This led to conjectures by Schulz that attempted to explain Tucholsky's public silence as a consequence of a psychological shock he suffered as a reaction to National Socialism (160).

Yet another psychological approach to Tucholsky's life and work came from Gerhard Zwerenz in his biography of 1979 entitled *Kurt Tucholsky. Biographie eines guten Deutschen*. He argues that Tucholsky's conflict with his mother was at the root for his problematic relationship with women, which Zwerenz sees as the dominating force in Tucholsky's work (Zwerenz 30). Psychological speculations like these only obscure the fact that German scholarship was shying away from in-depth analyses of Tucholsky's intricate public persona and work. They obscure the fact that Tucholsky displayed a high degree of complexity in his medializing practices as an author and in the diversity of his

work. It was this complexity with which scholarship could not yet come to terms, particularly in Germany, because of the difficulty right after WWII to speak of prewar culture without immediately trying to find a scapegoat for the rise of Nazism.

Thus, all Tucholsky biographies of this time excluded critical assessments of Tucholsky's multiple levels as an author and activist. Prescher (24), Raddatz (*Bildbiographie* 104), Poor (5-6), and Zwerenz (55-57) interpret Tucholsky's political position as one that was always in heroic opposition but eventually broke from despair, which caused his suicide, as Raddatz summarizes: "Tucholskys Grundton ist der der Trauer, ein Moll, durchdrungen und getragen von der wachsenden Erkenntnis: vergebens" (*Erfolg oder Wirkung* 34). Such apolitical interpretations in West Germany of Tucholsky's work through his biography were opposed in East Germany by emphasis on Tucholsky's alleged socialist-communist stance. This politicized reception of Tucholsky in postwar Germany, East or West, signified his relevancy for political discourse. It is even more telling that his work received such politicized reception despite the absence of scholarly approaches to it. This polarity at best attests the use of Tucholsky and political writing for a particular ideology's stance without paying tribute to his work's aesthetic merits. It also indicates the rigid division of "high" and "low" literature (and political writing regarded as "low" literary forms) still intact until well into the 1980s in the FRG.



### ***Tucholsky Biographies in the GDR***

In Eastern Germany, Tucholsky reception was dominated by communist party ideology.<sup>23</sup> Either Tucholsky was shunned because of his bourgeois background, or he was transfigured into a working class hero. Rudolf Leschnitzer regarded Tucholsky's ideological orientation as unstable (184-5). Karl Kleinschmidt's GDR biography of Tucholsky detects a continuous devotion to communism in Tucholsky's life and work – presumably because many of his pieces addressed working class readers. However, Kleinschmidt does not support this assertion with any text evidence.<sup>24</sup>

The tendency of postwar biographies, in East or West Germany, to categorize Tucholsky as either a liberal martyr, a communist martyr, or as a writer whose confusions were a consequence of maternal abuse, demonstrated a profound lack of critical synthesis of all facets of Tucholsky's work in a medialized society. It was not until the 1990s that the contextual aspects of his work were recognized by Tucholsky researchers.

### ***Post-Unification Biographies of Tucholsky***

The first and still the only Tucholsky biography that did recognize these contextual aspects was written in 1993 by Michael Hepp. For the first time, readers were provided detailed documentation of social and political issues in Tucholsky's life and his literary responses to those issues. It was also the first biography that indicated Tucholsky's financial situation, his publishing practices, and his social habits. Hepp's biography is not only illuminating for background information on Tucholsky's life and

---

<sup>23</sup> For an in-depth discussion of GDR Tucholsky scholarship see Christoph J. Geissler's dissertation *Die Tucholsky-Rezeption in der DDR*, diss., U of Florida, 1998.

<sup>24</sup> See Ackermann et al.'s discussion of Kleinschmidt's Tucholsky biography (Ackermann 30).

work, but it also blends text interpretations with historical and biographical background information, which overall provides a sensitive and differentiated picture of Tucholsky's life and work, and which displayed crucial information on Tucholsky for scholarship. Hepp states that Tucholsky's life defies any categorization either in a biographical, psychological, or literary sense:

Je mehr Dokumente ich fand, desto Widersprüchlicher wurde das Bild, Wie in einem Zerrspiegel bildeten sich die unterschiedlichsten Formen: verschwommen, verzerrt, zerrissen. Vexierbilder eines Lebens. (13)

Hepp's description of the diverse, complicated, and contradictory nature of Tucholsky as a person and as a writer is reminiscent of Kafka's above noted contemporary comment about Tucholsky the enigmatic individual. To Hepp's credit, Tucholsky scholarship has had easy access to a vast pool of factual information after the publication of his Tucholsky biography, which has facilitated scholarly acknowledgement of complexities and contradictions in Tucholsky's work. These crucial aspects of his work were not taken into account by German scholarship. Scholars abroad, however, have shown great interest in Tucholsky's work, particularly as one accessible through socio-historical and post-structural readings.

### *Scholarship on Tucholsky Outside of Germany*

#### *Europe*

Approaches that tried to engage in primarily text-external issues are only found in post-WWII Tucholsky scholarship outside of Germany. Hans Joachim Becker (University of Massachusetts) was the first scholar to combine a literary, a socio-

historical, and a communications-theory related approach, which proved enlightening for subsequent post-structuralist readings of Tucholsky in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>25</sup>

In France, Eva Philippoff (1978) assessed *Kurt Tucholskys Frankreichbild*. Philippoff combines text analyses of poems and short prose in the press with an examination of Tucholsky's relation to France, how this relation changed during his life, and what ramifications this change had in his publicistic career. Philippoff's combination of text-intrinsic analysis with a socio-political contextualization was fruitful in her pursuit of discussing Tucholsky's political stances through his (political and social) concept of France, particularly in relation to his critique of the German political situation during the Weimar Republic.

Less useful for assessing Tucholsky were readings that excluded text-external issues. Hans-Werner am Zehnhoff, a *Germanist* at Brussels University, analyzed in his dissertation *Die Parodie in der satirischen Schreibweise Kurt Tucholskys*, published in 1983, the relationship of satire and parody to the effectiveness of aesthetic and social issues of Tucholsky's text. He did not, however, take into account the publishing context of these texts, which makes his text-intrinsic approach interesting for a study on satire and parody but less relevant for a comprehensive understanding of Tucholsky's work and its role in the media landscape of the Weimar Republic.<sup>26</sup> Zehnhoff also provided a comparative analysis of Tucholsky's and Walt Whitman's parodies in "Walt Whitman und Kurt Tucholsky. Ein parodistisches Dienstverhältnis."<sup>27</sup> This analysis also excluded

---

<sup>25</sup> See more on Becker's criticism in Chapter 4.

<sup>26</sup> Zehnhoff's dissertation was published in a condensed version in the article "Parodistische Schreibtechniken in den Satiren von Kurt Tucholsky" in *Der Deutschunterricht* 37.6 (1985): 39-57.

<sup>27</sup> This analysis was published in *Arcadia. Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft* 22 (1987): 29-38.

text-extrinsic issues such as publication venues and audience that are important for a comprehensive understanding of Tucholsky's work.

Readings that limit themselves to text-external issues of Tucholsky's work have also led to inaccurate assessments of Tucholsky. In Britain, Bryan P. Grenville (University of Kent) touches on subjects such as Tucholsky's practice of satire in his publicistic articles, his "ironic sentimentalism" (63) in his novels, and his work as a literary critic, in his book *Kurt Tucholsky. The Ironic Sentimentalist* (1980). Grenville's socio-historical approach mentions the different publishing contexts and their circulation numbers, but the analysis does not synthesize its different findings. Thus, although he points to crucial issues such as Tucholsky's visions of a united Europe (46) and Tucholsky's "role and function of the twentieth-century satirist" (28), Grenville's analysis does not go beyond a listing of these issues, and leads him to the conclusion that "his obsessive preoccupation with politics – clearly vital, yet at the same time unfortunately ineffective – denied him the peace of mind to write novels" (93). This conclusion suggests that firstly, Tucholsky was a failed novelist, and secondly, that the novel is an apolitical form of prose.

The first structuralist reading of Tucholsky's work came also from Britain. Tony Phelan's article "Mythologie und Allegorie: Selbstverständnis und satirische Strategie bei Kurt Tucholsky" examines Tucholsky's poetry in terms of allegory and mythology and their function in Tucholsky's satire. This explicitly text-intrinsic reading does not distinguish between Tucholsky's public personae (his pseudonyms) or the different publishing venues he chose. Instead, Phelan detects a profound pessimism in Tucholsky's understanding of history, which he regards as the source of an alleged

theological turn that he sees apparent in Tucholsky's *Q-Tagebücher* (a collection of letters written between 1932 and 1935). Phelan also highlights a mythical form of writing in Tucholsky's last texts, in the sense of Barthes's model of *mythologie*, which he regards as an inherently bourgeois style (140). As Ackermann et al. note, Phelan's important contribution on the relation of style and publishing strategy, as well as Tucholsky's self-understanding as an artist and writer has not exhausted this particular "weites, noch kaum beackertes Feld" (43) within Tucholsky scholarship.

### *USA*

In the US, socio-historical and post-structuralist analyses dominated in studies on Tucholsky. A dissertation by Thomas Lipp (1995) tried to remedy shortcomings of Hess's 1982 study on Tucholsky's "Aufklärungsstrategien." Although Lipp employed a socio-historical approach to examine Tucholsky's different publicistic contexts between 1918 and 1923, he did not provide any new insights beyond the fact that it emphasized the necessity of approaching Tucholsky's work under consideration of its publicistic context (212).

A much more theory-oriented, post-structuralist approach to Tucholsky (and Brecht, Kracauer, Benjamin, Canetti) and their writings on mass culture was executed in Theodore Rippey's dissertation *Massography and Weimar Culture* (2001). It partly analyzed Tucholsky's view on the concept of mass culture and its potential of either political activation or political subversion, and found that it was ambivalent (335). Rippey's approach to Tucholsky's work represents a trend in most recent scholarship to accept ambivalence and contradiction as inherent parts not only of the creative process,

but also as part of conceptualization of the world in general. Such approaches have enjoyed very reluctant acceptance in German scholarship.

### ***Scholarship on Tucholsky in Germany***

In German postwar *Germanistik*, which was influenced largely by the text immanent approach of the New Critics, thorough analyses of Tucholsky's work were absent. This absence is plausible through the relevance of Tucholsky's work to political issues, which were deemed as irrelevant for such a text-intrinsic approach. Implicit in this absence of work on Tucholsky in serious *Germanistik*-scholarship is also the notion that his work was in proximity of popular literature (*Unterhaltungskultur*), which remained excluded from the literary canon until later during the twentieth century. Furthermore, scholarly attention to politically ambivalent writers such as Tucholsky would have necessitated a critical assessment of the political aspect of literature and the arts in pre-war Germany. In an emotionalized post-WWII discourse on the origins of Nazism, however, such assessments were avoided.

### ***“Publizistikwissenschaft” and Political Science***

The division between art and life in German *Germanistik* was continued after WWII and prevented an accurate understanding of Tucholsky. German *Publizistik* (journalism, newspaper-publishing research) and studies of Germany's political culture did not take into account the central aesthetic dimension of his oeuvre. In West Germany, Marianne Doerfel approached his work only in terms of its political stance and asserted in her 1971 dissertation *Kurt Tucholsky als Politiker* that Tucholsky's “arrogance” (88)

failed to grasp the necessities of the Weimar Republic's political reality (75). Contrary to Doerfel's assessment, Journalist Anton Austermann regarded Tucholsky's journalistic work as worthy for analyses in terms of its publicistic or political relevance. Austermann touched on interesting subjects such as the hermetic character of the Weimar Republic system of public communication (46), but he did not investigate just how Tucholsky broke out of this system in order to create a new public language for a new Germany. Austermann also emphasized that Tucholsky was concerned with social, political, and ideological repercussions of language and its styles: "Denn nie steht ausschliesslich der 'Schaden an der Sache,' die stilistisch verbogen, verwischt, verfälscht wird, im Mittelpunkt der Kritik, sondern stets der Zusammenhang von Sache, Vermittlungsform und Publikum"(63). The relevant connection between content, form, and reception in Tucholsky's work, to which Austermann refers here, was not subject of his investigation, even though he mentions Tucholsky's criticism of the Weimar Republic democrats of their failure to find crucial "arguments" (179) in public debate. Arguing from an exclusively text-extrinsic point of view, Austermann does not take into account how Tucholsky employed literary style in the Weimar Republic's mass media market, how he understood and used the medium language in a variety of public channels.

### ***Literary Scholarship***

The first study in Germany that approached Tucholsky's work considering both text-intrinsic and –extrinsic aspects was Helmut Mörchen's dissertation *Schriftsteller in der Massengesellschaft. Zur politischen Essayistik und Publizistik Heinrich und Thomas Manns, Kurt Tucholskys und Ernst Jüngers während der Zwanziger Jahre*, published in

1972. However promising his approach, Mörchen devotes only sixteen pages to Tucholsky's publicistic work in which he shortly touches upon central issues such as Tucholsky's understanding of culture, his position towards his audience, and his political-publicist texts. This brief overview leads Mörchen to attest to a negative aesthetics to Tucholsky's work (61). He also places Tucholsky in the theoretical and aesthetic proximity of Heinrich Mann, without further analysis of Tucholsky's publishing contexts. Mörchen only mentions the *Weltbühne* as Tucholsky's publishing venue, which causes him to state generalizations about Tucholsky that were typical of scholarship of the time – generalizations that tried to categorize Tucholsky into specific conventional frames. Thus, Mörchen saw Tucholsky's "affirmative pathos" misplaced in his texts because of Tucholsky's alleged "skeptizistische(n) Grundhaltung" (65).

It was not until the 1980s in Germany when scholarship took into account fundamental issues to an adequate understanding of Tucholsky's work. Such issues considered relevant for approaching Tucholsky were his publishing strategies, the relation between satirical style and political message, as well as Tucholsky's understanding of language, and his awareness of public national identity formation in the context of a medialized society. A collection of critical articles in a 1981 *edition text + kritik*, edited by Irmgard Ackermann, demonstrates German Tucholsky scholarship took a turn by incorporating new approaches of socio-historical and post-structuralist readings of Tucholsky texts. In this collection, seven articles analyze shortcomings in Tucholsky scholarship (7-45), the role-play of the satirist Tucholsky (46-89), Tucholsky's



personalization-strategies,<sup>28</sup> Tucholsky as a political “Aufklärer” (109-130), satirical dialogue in contributions to the *Weltbühne* from Tucholsky’s pseudonym Kaspar Hauser (131-161), language and style (162-179), and Tucholsky reception in West German textbooks (180-204). For the first time in German Tucholsky-scholarship, text analysis was placed into its historical and political context. As the following paragraphs will show, some of the articles succeeded in demonstrating this interrelationship between text and context, whereas some still lacked in-depth interpretation of Tucholsky’s work. Although Tucholsky’s work was now understood as a product of its time, assessments of Tucholsky’s role in the culture of the Weimar Republic still demonstrated the tendency to rigid categorizations in *Germanistik*.

Jörg Schönert’s article “‘Wir Negativen’ – Das Rollenbewusstsein des Satirikers Kurt Tucholsky” belongs to the latter category. It claims Tucholsky was not effective in popularizing his ideas because he operated with means of the enlightenment’s literary tradition, which understood itself as moral and political educator (87). Schönert thinks that Tucholsky remains in an enlightenment-realm of self-understanding of the role of the writer (88), which he also sees as an explanation for Tucholsky’s decision to remain silent after 1933.

Another article that remained rather descriptive of Tucholsky’s work was Theodor Ickler’s discussion on Tucholsky’s language and writing style in “Die Überwindung des Pathos. Zu Sprache und Stil bei Tucholsky.” Ickler mentions Tucholsky’s ironic use of linguistic conventions (168), and although Ickler notes that Tucholsky tries to distance himself from tradition by use of irony (169), he does not mention what Tucholsky’s

---

<sup>28</sup> This article is an excerpt of Hess’ dissertation *Aufklärungsstrategien Kurt Tucholskys*, which was published in 1982.

motivation for such a reflection on language would be. Ickler speculates that Tucholsky used dialect to avoid the charge of sentimentality. He does not see the political dimension behind Tucholsky's use of dialect when he says that "Der Dialekt ist als Literatursprache vergleichsweise unverbraucht. Ausserdem ist er regional und sozial von begrenzter Reichweite, 'provinziell' aber deshalb auch intim und oft innig" (170). Ickler claims that Tucholsky began in the early Weimar Republic to regard "old means" of literary expression as outdated, and he sees the lack of "new means" of expression as the reason for Tucholsky's decision to terminate public writing in 1933 (179). Ickler does not mention a reason for such a loss of expressiveness. It is this dissertation's goal to do so.

Dieter Hess' study on *Aufklärungsstrategien Kurt Tucholskys* of 1982 attempted to revise monolithic concepts of Tucholsky by a "funktional-analytischen Ansatz ..., der a priori textwissenschaftliche, sozialgeschichtliche und kommunikationswissenschaftliche Analyseverfahren und -kriterien einschliesst und dabei ausdrücklich den Anspruch ablehnt, ein wie auch immer akzentuiertes 'vollständiges' Tucholsky-Bild zeichnen zu wollen" (3). While Hess developed an approach that set a standard in the attempt to embrace Tucholsky's diversity, his investigation of Tucholsky's "Aufklärungsstrategien" focused exclusively on Tucholsky's *Weltbühne* texts published until 1925. Hess' analysis thus did not explore the interesting issue of Tucholsky's publishing strategies in other papers and magazines, and, more importantly, it excluded the majority of his work, which was published after 1924. Moreover, as Ian King mentions, Hess writes in a "turgid and pretentious style" (*Analysis* 43), which seemed to be fashionable in 1980s *Germanistik* in Germany but did not contribute to a better understanding of Tucholsky. An outstandingly

productive interpretation, and one that was particularly useful for this dissertation, came from Willi Zimmermann in his article “Kurt Tucholsky als politischer Aufklärer. Versuch einer Systematisierung seiner Aussagen zu Staat und Gesellschaft.” Zimmermann, using a Marxist/Freudian approach, looked at the issue of identity in Tucholsky’s work: he argued that Tucholsky found reality as alienation in institutionalized capitalism, a hegemony that perpetuated an imaginary concept of reality.

Zimmermann claimed that one of those concepts that Tucholsky tried to battle was the collective, which, in Tucholsky’s opinion, had deprived the individual of the ability to form a conscious identity. Thus nationalism became the functional equivalent of religion: in Zimmermann’s words, the concept of nation had the function of a “teleologischen Residualkategorie” that inhibited critical questioning and eventually, as Zimmermann interpreted Tucholsky’s concern, deprived the public of its capability of critique – and the status quo became legitimate (117). Zimmermann analyzed nationalism through Tucholsky’s work in that he argued that nationalism for Tucholsky was seen as an expression of an underlying polarization of a nation – a nation is not fundamentally unified if it needs unifying concepts anchored in hegemonic discourses about ideological concepts such as nationalism (117). Zimmermann pointed out Tucholsky’s proximity to some of present day theories of social sciences such as a Gramscian concept of cultural hegemonies (127) and located his analyses of the political situation of the Weimar Republic in the context of normative concepts of “Öffentlichkeit” and democracy (121). That stance also introduced a new central aspect of Tucholsky’s work to scholarship: the connection between a mass media public and national identity formation. It is particularly this connection pointed out in Zimmermann’s article to

which this dissertation is indebted. Zimmermann's post-structuralist approach to Tucholsky's work reinterpreted Tucholsky's work as relevant for historical and social sciences and prepared the ground for further such analyses in the 1990s. This study departs from Zimmermann's, however, in its analysis of Tucholsky's understanding of democracy. While Zimmermann criticizes Tucholsky's concept of democracy as "pure" (130) and therefore prone to ideological abuse, I contend that Tucholsky sought to dismantle such immaterial concepts, particularly in public language.

### ***Recent Developments in German Tucholsky Scholarship***

This section highlights developments in Tucholsky scholarship of the last fifteen years in Germany. Reasons for a revitalization of Tucholsky scholarship in the 1990s were the Tucholsky centenary in 1990, as well as a new identity crisis in *Germanistik* in the context of Germany's re-unification. Also, developments in cultural studies and increasingly frequent interdisciplinary approaches to literature and particularly to the diverse culture of the Weimar Republic contributed to a revival of Tucholsky. Now, German Tucholsky scholarship continued Willi Zimmermann's impulse from 1981 to examine Tucholsky's work in terms of its theme of nationalism and national identity formation and its relation to mass culture.

Tucholsky's work of the final years of the Weimar Republic was reevaluated not as a failure or a sign of Tucholsky's resignation, but rather as a consequent product of the socio-historical and cultural circumstances of rising Nazism, and its repercussions for the public intellectual. Thus, scholarship focused on the issues of ideology and language in Tucholsky's work, and it paid more attention to his publishing strategies.

Helmut Mörchen's previous attempt to determine Tucholsky's "negative" aesthetics was reinterpreted by Beate Porombka in 1990, who found in his aesthetics a "Synthese der beiden Sphären 'Kunst' und 'Politik'" (117).<sup>29</sup> Porombka focused in her study exclusively on a content analysis of the text in its social, political, and ideological context, while the literary character of Tucholsky's texts was decidedly missing (11). Porombka challenged not only the established notion that Tucholsky was a "verspäteter Aufklärer"(9), i.e. that he tried to reconstitute outdated concepts of the Enlightenment in a modern world, but she also refuted the assertion that his exile years were marked by resignation.<sup>30</sup> Porombka's argument that Tucholsky emphasized individualism as a socio-political category (230), supports the premise of my study and its argument that Tucholsky's popularizing of an alternative, personal national identity is the foundation for an eventual development of Europeanism.

Freudian analyses<sup>31</sup> were replaced by socio-historical and post-structuralist ones, as represented by Bernhard Weyergraf's article entitled "Erneuerungshoffnung und republikanischer Alltag." Weyergraf mentions Tucholsky as the most important contributor to the *Weltbühne* (145), primarily because his language undermines the determinism of this historical period (152). He claims Tucholsky's work as a "Kunst der angreifenden Sprache" (154). Examining Tucholsky's language for its use of satire, Weyergraf concludes:

---

<sup>29</sup> Mörchen argues that "bei Tucholsky (kann man) von einer Kunstauffassung eigentlich nur als Negation sprechen" (65).

<sup>30</sup> See Marianne Doerfel's 1971 study *Kurt Tucholsky als Politiker*, in which she compares Tucholsky to Schopenhauer as an "antihistorischen, antipolitischen, pessimistischen, metaphysischen Denker" (32), who, contradicting her statement of Tucholsky as 'apolitical', only promoted "Kampf und Haß" (75).

<sup>31</sup> See for example Kirsten Erwentraut's article "Auch hier: es geht nicht ohne Freud. Tucholskys Schloss Gripsholm," 149-180.

Satire beobachtet, sie hat den Blick für das Detail, aber sie kann für die Welt, die sie verbessern möchte, weder Programme noch Richtlinien entwerfen. ... Satire bietet die Möglichkeit, sich über eine als zerrissen und bedrohlich empfundene Wirklichkeit schreibend, also produktiv, zu erheben. (157)

To Weyergraf, Tucholsky's work represents a particular form of satire as more than a solely negative critique of society. Weyergraf's interpretation of the subversive potential of Tucholsky's satire serves as a backdrop for this dissertation's interpretation of Tucholsky's satire. It combines a text intrinsic analysis of Tucholsky's satirical style with its socio-political ramifications.

The only other study on Tucholsky's satire came from Hermann Haarmann, Professor of *Publizistik* in Berlin in 1999. It represents a rare attempt to analyze satire in short, non-fictional forms. *Germanistik* has only recognized satire in traditional, literary genres such as prose, poetry, and drama, as Haarmann mentioned: "Die Satire in der Publizistik, ganz zu schweigen von der Satire in der Publizistik der Weimarer Republik, ist ein blinder Fleck" (21). However, Haarmann is more concerned with a listing of the great variety of satirical magazines and newspapers in the Weimar Republic than with an analysis of Tucholsky's satirical style. He is also more prone to a listing of the press' most prominent authors (including Tucholsky), than with an in-depth text analysis of a specific organ or a specific writer. Thus, Haarmann expresses his conventional understanding of the function of satire in his comment that it failed to prevent National Socialism: "Wie mehrstimmig die Satire sich publizistisch auch immer an die Öffentlichkeit wendet, es scheint, dass sie der Realität, zumal mit Blick auf den siegreichen Nationalsozialismus, letztendlich nicht beikommen kann." (27)

A more fruitful approach that examined the Weimar Republic's *Publizistik* and its role in politically critical discourse from a *Germanistik* point of view was made by

Gunther Nickel. Nickel analyzed the *Weltbühne* exclusively and under some consideration of Tucholsky's work. He looked at particularly Tucholsky's early *Weltbühne* texts for their allegorical content, and concluded that Tucholsky was a writer who sought literary solutions for modernity. Thus, Nickel argued, Tucholsky found new concepts and forms that oscillated between the dualism of art and politics (39).

***Post-Structuralist Readings: Language, Ideology, Publishing Strategies, Authorship***

In light of Nickel's study, recent post-structuralist approaches to Tucholsky's work, particularly to his use of language, represent inclusive and sensitive assessments. Renke Siems's article *Distinktion und Engagement. Kurt Tucholsky im Licht der 'Feinen Unterschiede'* from 1995 argues that the reason for Tucholsky's public silence as a consequence of the impossibility of the solution to the problem of intellectual engagement and economic pressure in the publicist market (215). This argument comes close to my dissertation's observation that Tucholsky's silence anticipated the absence of a critical public in a dictatorship. Siems's 2001 dissertation entitled *Die Autorschaft des Publizisten. Schreib- und Schweigeprozesse in den Texten Kurt Tucholskys* was published in Germany in the Fall of 2004 and is the most recent published scholarly work on Tucholsky. Siems's post-structuralist reading of Tucholsky focuses on questions of authorship and genre of Tucholsky's work. He interprets Tucholsky's authorship as a form of "Paradoxienmanagement," and concludes:

In der nachrealistischen Moderne versucht der Medienarbeiter Tucholsky gesicherte Autorschaft und authentisches Erzählen, die er für die gesellschaftliche Wirksamkeit von 'Literatur' als konstitutiv ansieht, noch einmal technisch zu

restituieren – ein spannungsreiches Unternehmen, an dem er immer wieder und im Exil schliesslich final scheitern musste. (*Autorschaft* back cover)

Although Siems touches on central issues of *Germanistik*-scholarship such as Tucholsky's use of pseudonyms and his publishing practices, although he makes ample use of literary theories by Adorno, Bakhtin, and Derrida in connection with Tucholsky's texts, and although he declares that his study seeks to emphasize the "literarische Charakter und die Medialität" (7) of Tucholsky's work, he does not contextualize it into a larger framework of the Weimar Republic's culture and its political discourses, particularly the discourse of national identity. Thus, Siems's study is a relevant contribution for *Germanistik*'s analyses of authorship, but it does not draw larger connections for a broad range of cultural studies.

A similar focus on exclusively literary issues in Tucholsky's work is apparent in the latest collection of Tucholsky criticism published in 2002. As editors Sabina Becker and Ute Maack note in the introduction, this collection pursues a specifically literary approach of text analysis, which then intends to place this analysis in its historical context. It tries to give new impulses to Tucholsky scholarship in *Germanistik*:

Damit versucht der Band den germanistischen Bemühungen um Kurt Tucholsky neue Impulse zu geben und – zumal in den letzten Jahren wenig nennenswerte literaturwissenschaftliche Arbeiten zu Tucholsky erschienen sind – diesen Autor für die germanistische Wissenschaft und Fachwelt neu in Erinnerung zu rufen. (14)

Although Becker and Maack emphasize the cultural context in which the literary analyses are supposed to be interpreted, only three out of the ten critical analyses in this collection include extra-textual analyses. These exceptions are Dieter Mayer's article on *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*' "aktiver Pessimismus" (67), Gerhard Kraiker's article on "vertikaler Journalismus" in Tucholsky's political *Publizistik* (277-310), and



Renke Siems's article on Tucholsky's language discuss his publicistic work.

Predominant in this collection of essays are discussions on Tucholsky's publishing strategies, ideology and language use in Tucholsky's work. The following paragraphs will discuss Kraiker's and Siems's findings for their relevant analyses of Tucholsky's language and publishing strategies; Dieter Mayer's article on *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* will be discussed in depth in Chapter IV.

Gerhard Kraiker focuses on issues of ideology by looking at Tucholsky's concept of "vertikaler Journalismus," and he argues that Tucholsky's political diagnoses were meant to maintain a collective memory (281). Kraiker contends that for Tucholsky, daily political events are symptomatic of overall social and political trends and tendencies (281), and he defines Tucholsky's understanding of socialism as a mixture between an "ethical socialism" of neo-Kantians and an almost anarchic reservation towards governmental administration (290). Kraiker touches on the subject of Tucholsky's concern with the issue of ideology and mentality, and he notes that Tucholsky's quest to change people's political consciousness took a different direction during 1925 and 1927, when he focused more on the working class as his audience (296). This observation, however, is cut short by his assessment that Tucholsky was "impatiently" (296) expecting a sudden reform in the minds and habits of all Germans.

In an analysis of Tucholsky's prose style, Renke Siems situates Tucholsky's texts into the trend of a more oral style in the context of mass media. Siems reads Tucholsky's style in the sense of the Bachtinian concept of dialogue (220) and argues that Tucholsky's writings demonstrated "wie die Krise der Literarizität sich in die neuen Kunstmittel hereinschleppt, indem diese durch den zeitgenössischen Stand des Mediendispositivs

kontextualisiert werden” (237). Siems draws a connection between modernism’s revisiting of oral structures, often observed in Virginia Woolf’s or Alfred Döblin’s literature (215), and the oral style of many of Tucholsky’s prose texts. Tucholsky’s use of dialect, Siems notes, has the function to reveal the “hollowness” of political phrases (224). Siems’s observation will be countered in this dissertation. I argue that the phrases Tucholsky revealed were not “hollow,” as Siems asserts, but that they were occupied by nationalist and National Socialist ideologies, which Tucholsky sought to invalidate.

Another recent issue relevant for Tucholsky scholarship is that of his publishing strategies, although many observations of this important aspect of Tucholsky’s work remain descriptive. Sascha Kiefer briefly commented on Tucholsky’s publishing strategies in his article on Tucholsky’s early novel *Rheinsberg*. He mentioned that in connection with publishing *Rheinsberg*, Tucholsky built a “communicative network” (22) in which he rapidly established his name as a young writer. Sabina Becker and Ute Maack also touch upon this subject in the introduction to the collection by mentioning that Tucholsky made “skilled” moves on the literary market (12). Neither Kiefer nor Becker/Maack indicate any implications about the political objectives of Tucholsky’s publishing strategies. The lack of in-depth assessments of the implications of Tucholsky’s publishing strategies or deeper contextualizations of Tucholsky’s language and style point to the still prevalent struggle in *Germanistik*, particularly in Germany, to combine literary with cultural studies and to work interdisciplinarily.

The trend in Tucholsky scholarship to either emphasize literary analysis or to focus on his work’s socio-historical context, instead of combining both aspects, is apparent in another recent article. Ian King’s article of 2001, “Kurt Tucholsky as a

prophet of European Unity,”<sup>32</sup> systematically analyzed Tucholsky’s statements about Europeanism. King’s article lacks any text analysis and does not provide information beyond the mere fact that Tucholsky favored the idea of a European Union. It does not contextualize these findings of Tucholsky’s concern with national identity into the larger picture of recent scholarship’s focus on language and publishing strategies, as this dissertation seeks to do.

### ***Tucholsky on the Web***

A recently established Tucholsky society and its web-based publication *Tucholsky-Blätter* continually reexamines Tucholsky’s texts and most recently has made public new, unpublished texts by Tucholsky. Interestingly, these most recent discussions in Tucholsky scholarship have been revolving around Tucholsky’s language and his publishing strategies – two central issues in his work which seem to prove particularly enlightening for an understanding of the diversity that his work poses. By discussing a 1912 article by Tucholsky (“Aus den Tagen von Sedan,” *Prager Tageblatt*), Nickel and Siems demonstrate Tucholsky’s strategy of re-inventing the content of his articles in the context of its relative publicistic situation. Nickel and Siems conclude that this constant re-invention is typical for Tucholsky’s “Überspringen von Diskursschranken” and his concepts of political engagement.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> This article is published in *German Life and Letters* 54:2 (April 2001)164-172.

<sup>33</sup> Gunther Nickel, Renke Siems, “Tucholskys publizistische Strategie in einer fragmentierten Öffentlichkeit. Zum Neufund eines frühen Tucholsky-Textes” *Tucholsky Blätter* ([www.Tucholsky-blaetter.de/Text-Archiv/](http://www.Tucholsky-blaetter.de/Text-Archiv/)).

### *Tucholsky in Popular Culture*

Tucholsky has also been part of non-scholarly discourse. Not only has his infamous statement “Soldaten sind Mörder” of 1931 been subject of the German Supreme Court’s decision on the freedom of speech, but Tucholsky has also become the personification of the witty and progressive culture of 1920s Berlin. In 2000, Oscar-winning film director Xavier Koller created a new film-version of *Gripsholm* - a movie that combined aspects of the novel with elements of Tucholsky’s biography. The movie focused on the dramatic role of a liberal, Jewish intellectual in the context of rising Nazism in Germany.

Despite Tucholsky’s frequent presence in non-scholarly aspects of German culture, his personality and work still create controversy and misjudgment. A recent article by Volker Weidemann in the *FAZ*,<sup>34</sup> who comments on the newly published eighth volume (the year 1926) of Tucholsky’s collected works, gives a rather undifferentiated picture of Tucholsky’s language critique:

Tucholsky ist für alles zuständig. Muß gegen alles anschreiben, gegen jeden Mißstand, den Lauf der Welt. Er muß sich um alles kümmern. "Macht ja sonst keiner," wird er sich gedacht haben. Er muß die Sprache bewachen - oh, und niemand bewacht die Sprache so schön wie Kurt Tucholsky. ...Und manchmal geht er einem natürlich auch schrecklich auf die Nerven. Mit seinem ständigen Warnen und seiner Ängstlichkeit.

Categorizing assessments like this indicate the continuing need for a revised picture of Tucholsky, particularly in popular discourse. Needed are revisions that explore Tucholsky as a writer whose texts and publishing practices reflect attempts to establish politically critical communication in a diverse mass culture.

---

<sup>34</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 24 March 2004 (No.71) F4.

As shown in this chapter, only recently has Tucholsky scholarship changed directions from monolithic, categorizing approaches to Tucholsky's work. This dissertation is indebted to these new approaches, which have begun to take into account Tucholsky's use of language, his use of satire, and his publishing strategies in a medialized context. This study seeks to illuminate how this particular use of language and satire, as well as his publishing strategies, indicated Tucholsky's pursuit in popularizing a public alternative to right-wing concepts of the German nation. It argues that the issue of adequacy of expression in public speech is central to Tucholsky's work, and that it was a driving force behind his publishing strategies. Tucholsky's search for an influential public platform, his exploration of the public sphere, was driven by his fundamental interest in the function of language in political identity formation. At the end of the Weimar Republic, however, he realized that such platforms in form of the mass media and its use of language were occupied by nationalist and national socialist concepts of national identity. By considering Tucholsky's understanding of the function of language in a mass media society, his decision to retire from his publicistic career becomes understandable.

## Chapter II:

### “Die Republik wider Willen:”

#### Political Crisis, the Public Intellectual, and Public Communication During the First Phase of the Weimar Republic (1918-1923)

In March of 1920, Tucholsky received a letter from Hans Erich Blaich, better known under his pseudonyms Dr. Owlglass or Ratatöskr, writer for the well established and popular satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*. In this letter, Blaich asked Tucholsky to terminate the correspondence between the two, which had always been rather one-sided, initiated by Tucholsky, and only hesitantly engaged in by Blaich. Prior to this letter, Tucholsky had been attacking the satirical weekly *Simplicissimus* after its chief editor Ludwig Thoma had joined the nationalist *Bayrische Volkspartei* and in the wake of the magazine's subsequent reactionary course and outdated satirical style. During this period, Tucholsky had sought Blaich's friendship and regarded him as a mentor, despite the fact that he was one of *Simplicissimus'* principal writers. It was this sense of ambiguity, contradiction, and uncertainty that surrounded Tucholsky's personality and work which led Blaich to his decision:

Gestern bekam ich zufällig Ihre Glosse über Thomas' "Erinnerungen," nur missfiel mir der etwas überhebliche Ton. Dann aber sprechen Sie vom "Simplicissimus" u. das in einer Weise, die mich zu meinem aufrichtigen Bedauern nötigt, unsere Korrespondenz abubrechen. Über Ihre Auffassung will ich nicht mit Ihnen streiten; aber Sie wissen, dass ich Redakteur an dieser Zeitschrift bin, u. Sie sollten wissen, dass ich es keinen Augenblick länger bliebe, wenn ich meine persönliche Überzeugung beugen müsste. Da geht es nicht an, dass wir privatim miteinander kosen, während Sie öffentlich in schärfster Form

dem “Simplicissimus” die weitere Existenzberechtigung absprechen. Das wäre eine zweideutige Sache – u. ich liebe klare Verhältnisse.<sup>35</sup>

Although Tucholsky often longed for such “klare Verhältnisse” himself, he was aware of the fragmented nature of the Weimar Republic’s public sphere, in which harmonious conditions were illusionary and at best a symptom of a bygone era, and his public voice was a shifting response to rapidly changing conditions in public communication.<sup>36</sup>

Tucholsky’s refusal to inhabit a single subject position is reflected in his practice as a public intellectual. The constant movement of his public voice distinguished him from writers like Blaich, who felt their writings had to always be congruent with their personal political orientation. Tucholsky openly acknowledged his pragmatism: in a letter to Blaich from February 1, 1919, he wrote: “Hätt ich Geld, ich kehrte – ein alter, aber verzeihlicher deutscher Erbfehler – den Leuten die Seite, wo (bei dem Esel) der Wedel sitzt” (Tucholsky 11211). He did not feel he had to identify with the publishing venue he contributed to, as long as it served as a vehicle for popularizing an alternative to nationalist notions of German-ness.<sup>37</sup>

This chapter looks at Tucholsky’s texts published during the Weimar Republic’s first phase by asking the question of how Tucholsky came to terms with the transformed role of the public intellectual in the early Weimar Republic. It also asks how he

---

<sup>35</sup> Qtd. in Kurt Tucholsky, *Werke – Briefe – Materialien. Gesammelte Werke im Volltext*, ed. Matthias Bertram, Michael Hepp. CD-ROM (Berlin: Directmedia, 1999) 12258. This source will be referred to in the following as “Tucholsky” with page number.

<sup>36</sup> Tucholsky wrote to Blaich in a letter from December 14, 1919: “... ich sehne mich so nach Harmonie. Sie wissen schon, wie das gemeint ist: nicht gleich Weimar: aber es muss doch eine Geschlossenheit und Einheit zwischen Wollen und Auswirkenkönnen da sein. Und die habe ich hier nicht” (Tucholsky 11199-11200).

<sup>37</sup> In a letter to Blaich from May 25, 1919, he mentioned that his employment with Mosse was temporary and that his affiliation with the *Weltbühne* was permanent because of the unreserved freedom of expression he enjoyed there (Tucholsky 11217).

reconciled his awareness of fluctuating public communication in a commercialized, medialized context with his political agenda of presenting alternatives to nationalism, since these alternatives, in order to have some kind of public impact, had to be consistent in their public presentation.

In order to answer these questions, the chapter traces Tucholsky's work and life in the context of significant political events of the first phase of the Weimar Republic. A close reading of clusters of published texts focuses on Tucholsky's satirical techniques, which embrace the diversity of the publishing market, deconstruct outdated notions of wholeness in terms of artistic representation and in terms of concepts of what it means to be German, and which attempt to establish a counter public through encouragement of the audience to question those concepts created through the media and other forms of public communication. The first cluster of these texts thematizes the role of the public intellectual and represents texts primarily published in the year 1919. The second cluster on the role of propaganda in the public sphere was texts published primarily in 1920. The third topic of the existence of multiple concepts of Germany in its public sphere is represented by texts published mostly in 1922.

The analysis follows the assumption that during the first phase of the Weimar Republic Tucholsky argued for an adaptation of public communication to its democratic and medialized context in the Weimar Republic. Although in 1919 he still believed the public intellectual as an educator could communicate political reform, his discussions on propaganda of 1920 witness Tucholsky's growing awareness of the importance of conscious public staging of political messages. His focus on various constructs of the



German nation in the public sphere in 1922 marks the beginning of Tucholsky's attempt to reinterpret and reassess critical communication in a mass media environment.

The chapter's conclusive part compares Tucholsky's texts with texts on republicanism by other prominent intellectuals such as Heinrich Mann and Thomas Mann. This comparison of stylistic differences in communicating about the republic demonstrates Tucholsky's awareness of the transformed role of the public intellectual with all its contradictions and inconsistencies, and his inclusion of the realities of the mass media market and the role of language in the process of a mass medialized, public formation of national identity.

### **Scholarship on Tucholsky's Work of the Weimar Republic's First Phase**

A brief overview of Tucholsky scholarship on his work in the first phase of the Weimar Republic and its transformed situation of public communication will highlight this chapter's contribution of assessing Tucholsky's role in this process of reevaluating the function of the public intellectual. Tucholsky's work in the context of the Weimar Republic's diverse public communication has become a recent focus in Tucholsky scholarship. While previous scholarship primarily emphasized non-literary issues such as Tucholsky's employment at the *Weltbühne* and his work as a publicist during the Weimar Republic, recent scholarship has discovered the important aspect of Tucholsky's publishing strategies and writing strategies for his work and for his role as a public intellectual in the diverse public sphere of the Weimar Republic.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Representatives of the former group are Harold Poor, *Tucholsky and the Ordeal of Germany* (New York: Scribner's, 1968), István Deák, *Weimar Germany's Left-Wing Intellectuals. A Political History of the Weltbühne and its Circle* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1968), William John King, *Kurt Tucholsky als politischer Publizist* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1982), and Hans-J. Becker, *Mit geballter Faust. Kurt Tucholskys Deutschland Deutschland über alles* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1978); representatives of the latter group

Jörg Schönert's article of 1981 continued and specified this trend that had started in the late 1970s with his assumption that the multiplicity of Tucholsky's public voice is "bestimmt durch Vorgaben der literarischen und publizistischen Tradition, durch die Wahl des Mediums, durch Orientierung an bestimmten Zielgruppen, durch den Gegenstand der Rede und seiner aktuellen Bedeutung – kurzum: durch die individuelle Einschätzung der Kommunikationssituation für die öffentliche kritische Aktion im zeitgeschichtlichen Kontext" (Schönert 49). Thomas Lipp's dissertation of 1995 continued Schönert's thesis in that it stated that Tucholsky "developed a differentiable apparatus of public-related literary strategies in order to make visible and to achieve his objective vis-à-vis his varying readerships" (Lipp 7). This study is indebted to Schönert's and Lipp's findings and their presumption that Tucholsky consciously chose different public channels in the context of shifting political conditions, and it agrees with Gerhard Kraiker's recent observation that Tucholsky's writings reacted to political events in that they evaluated these events in the light of larger political developments such as antagonistic positions of political extremism (Kraiker 281). The most recent study by Renke Siems (2004) thematizes Tucholsky's authorship as a publicist within the tensions of literature and journalism, and interprets Tucholsky as a writer of literary *Publizistik* with its inherent paradoxes (7), without evaluating ostensive thematic consistencies or inconsistencies in his work. While this study and particularly this chapter shares Siems's approach to understanding Tucholsky as an author who was switching between different discursive realms in order to come to terms with a medialized communicative context, it

---

are Dieter Hess, *Aufklärungsstrategien Kurt Tucholskys* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1983), Beate Porombka, *Verspäteter Aufklärer oder Pionier einer neuen Aufklärung? – Kurt Tucholsky, 1928-1932* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1990), Tony Phelan, "Mythologie und Allegorie: Selbstverständnis und Satirische Strategie bei Kurt Tucholsky," *Das Literarische Leben in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Keith Bullivant (Königstein: Scriptor, 1978) 114-145.

departs from existing Tucholsky scholarship, however, in that it delivers a specific analysis on how Tucholsky developed a concept of public discourse as a counter public to nationalism during the first phase of the Weimar Republic within the breadth of his publicistic presence. The following overview on the main political events during the first phase of the Weimar Republic, to which Tucholsky responded in his work, sets the stage for an analysis of selected writings by Tucholsky in terms of their critical thematization of public communication in the context of contesting national identities in the Weimar Republic. This chapter will discuss Tucholsky's choices of public channels in light of his transforming concept of the public intellectual from one indebted to the idealist notion of the intellectual as educator right after WWI to one which responded to political events by increasingly including the working class as a target audience, and one which began regarding public communication as an act of pragmatically choosing between available channels in particular political situations, regardless of personal preference or political leaning. These choices, those he rejected, political issues to which he responded, and about which he was silent, will highlight Tucholsky in the first phase of the Weimar Republic as a writer who tried to establish a powerful alternative to prevailing nationalist discourse in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic. They will also illuminate the ambiguities, difficulties, and contradictions involved in public communication after WWI, when the public intellectual was confronted with situating communication in the context of a contested democracy and a medialized public sphere. In order to better understand Tucholsky's search for a new form of public communication during the first phase of the Weimar Republic, the following part will highlight the most crucial historical events and trends that shaped the publishing landscape of the Weimar

Republic's first phase, and to which Tucholsky's work responded within the context of a medialized public and its transformed form of public communication.

### **1918-1923: The Press Landscape During the Republic's First Phase**

The press landscape of the Weimar Republic's first phase was marked by the profound political, social, and economic crises of this time. These crises resulted from a lack of political consensus and a failure to gain popular support for an establishment of a republican identity. Two dominant tendencies of the early Weimar Republic's political landscape characterized this crisis, and these tendencies also shaped the landscape of the press: the growingly aggressive anti-republican propaganda by right-extremist organizations, which constructed the propagandistically effective *stab in the back* legend (a Bolshevik and Jewish conspiracy had weakened German troops during WWI and was still intending to destroy the "German nation"), and the increasing fragmentation of the political middle and left. The large extent to which politics and publishing practices perturbed each other in the Weimar Republic became apparent in the "law for the protection of the republic" (*Republikenschutzgesetz*) in the context of the political extremism of the Weimar Republic's early years.

Besides the omnipresent right-extremist, anti-republican propaganda in the press of the Republic's first years, which culminated in the censorship regulations of the *Republikenschutzgesetz*, the dismal economic situation of the Weimar Republic profoundly shaped the press landscape of these years. The inflation of 1922 and 1923 not only caused the sudden end of more than 300 papers, but also led to the end of editorial independence of many papers, particularly in the provinces, which resulted in heavy reliance on syndicated columns from press agencies. These press agencies and news

services were financed by the heavy industries, which pursued a strictly conservative to right extremist political line (Eksteins 75). Therefore, only the large publishing houses, which carried primarily popular press, could constitute an alternative to the mostly right-biased provincial press. The following section will illustrate the economic situation of the politically moderate, popular publishing houses of the Weimar Republic's first phase. It will be followed by an overview of the political developments that caused the *Republikschutzgesetz*, which mostly affected the extremist party press, but which was also used to politically censor the party independent press.

### *Ullstein and Mosse*

The firms of Mosse and Ullstein were the most prominent of the above mentioned popular publishing houses. While the Mosse firm had its highest newspaper circulations and political influence immediately before and during WWI, the Ullstein House climaxed in the middle years of the Weimar Republic. During the 1920s, Ullstein became the largest publishing house in Europe, and one of the most diversified in the world (Eksteins 112). Ullstein not only published one of the few weekly papers with circulations of almost two million (*Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*), but it also housed book publishing (Propyläen Verlag), which was a respected publisher of non-fiction literature. Ullstein's four daily papers, *Vossische Zeitung*, *Berliner Morgenpost*, *BZ am Mittag*, and *Berliner Allgemeine Zeitung* had high circulations as well, reaching almost a million people in 1928 on a weekday alone (Eksteins 112).

Mosse's papers reached not quite as large of an audience despite their high popularity. The *Berliner Volks-Zeitung* with a circulation of 265,000 in 1917, which

declined to 70,000 in 1928.<sup>39</sup> Mosse's largest paper, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, reached 300,000 readers on Sundays in 1920 (Eksteins 109), which declined to 250,000 in 1923.<sup>40</sup> Besides the general trend toward conservatism and a growing bias to the political right among the press of the Weimar Republic, a reason for the decline of the once highly popular Mosse publishing house was its refusal to try changing its editorial direction or overall changes in the presentation of its papers (Eksteins 107). Another factor was the advertising business on which the Mosse firm had grounded its success in the nineteenth century. In growing competition with the ultra-conservative advertising firm ALA, owned by right extremist DNVP politician and media tycoon Alfred Hugenberg, Mosse could not keep up with Hugenberg's broad business connections (Koszyk 250).

Ullstein, on the other hand, constantly renewed its profile, and survived the inflation without irreparable damage (Eksteins 121). Although both publishing houses were not affiliated with the party press of the Weimar Republic, their political line was located between democratic and liberal-democratic.<sup>41</sup> Their papers criticized anti-republicanism and tried to contribute to a general democratization of its readers. However, the papers were subject to market competition and thus refrained from the kind of critical, oppositional reporting that Tucholsky so often missed in these papers, particularly during the time of political polarization in the Republic's first phase.

---

<sup>39</sup> For a complete portrait of the *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*'s circulation and profile see the website of the German-Austrian commission of historical press documentation, named "hypress" (<http://www.oeaw.ac.at/cgi-bin/pdok/bz/auf/0270>).

<sup>40</sup> See more numbers about the *Berliner Tageblatt* at the "hypress"- databank (<http://www.oeaw.ac.at/cgi-bin/pdok/bz/auf/0250>).

<sup>41</sup> The "hypress" databank indicates the political orientation of the different press organs (<http://www.oeaw.ac.at/cgi-bin/pdok/bz/tnd/0250>).

### *Political Polarization as a Cause of the “Republikschutzgesetz”*

The press landscape of these years designated this ideological polarization: by failing to liberate itself from pre-WWI language and Wilhelminian ideology, the right-wing and conservative press of this phase indirectly sustained the crisis of republicanism,<sup>42</sup> while the German communist press increasingly adapted the harsh press regulations from the International Communist World Congress in Moscow from 1921. These regulations entailed the popularization and communication of the communist doctrine in the communist organs not only thematically, but also on the level of style and language, as documented in a 1925 *Kommunistische Partei Deutschland* (KPD)-resolution on the new line of its party press (Koszyk 324). This increasing trend away from the democratic idea of the free press as a voice of opposition towards the press as a representative of party ideologies reflected the polarized political landscape of the Weimar Republic, and its two tendencies of aggressive right-wing propaganda and an increasing fragmentation of the left.

To a large extent, the political climate of the Republic’s first years was established by the press as the carrier of public opinion.<sup>43</sup> Unlike in other western-European countries or the US, where the press had had a long tradition of representing an oppositional voice to political discourse, the German press was highly politicized: less

---

<sup>42</sup> In 1917, 16.6% of the total number of newspapers in Germany were decidedly right-wing, 13.8% were moderate (BVP and Center), 16.9 % were left-liberal, 2.7% were SPD and KPD- papers, and 49% were non-partisan (Eksteins 312). Although the number of right-wing papers was considerably small in 1917 compared to its number in 1932 of 26.7% with a small 2.9% of left liberal papers in 1932 (Eksteins 312), its propaganda against the Versailles Treaty, the Weimar Constitution, and Republicanism radicalized the public and complicated the consolidation of the republic (Kolb 92).

<sup>43</sup> Political views articulated in the press represent public opinion because of the impossibility of other methods of public opinion analysis. However, a simple model of stimulus and response in public communication, in which the message is received the same way the sender intended it to be received, has to be replaced by a more complex model of communication processes, as recent communications studies suggest (Asmuss 17).

than 50% of German newspapers were party independent.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, public communication was symptomatic of the early Republic's polarized political discourse. Tucholsky participated in this discourse primarily in response to a few crucial political events: the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty, which fueled anti-republican sentiment leading to numerous political murders, the Kapp Putsch of 1920 and the refusal of the Army to intervene, and the subsequent *Republikschutzgesetz* which symbolized the lack of broad support of the Republic, particularly amongst the judiciary.

The calamitous practice of justice in the Weimar Republic prompted Tucholsky's call for a radical replacement of anti-republican personnel in the legal profession: the judiciary's anti-republicanism was openly executed during a spell of political murders following the Kapp Putsch. Although the *Freikorps* had been officially disbanded in the aftermath of the Kapp Putsch, right-wing radicals formed patriotic leagues and other illegal organizations which increasingly acted out what the legal right-wing "vaterländische" and "völkische"<sup>45</sup> parties were preaching.

This lack of support for republicanism was fueled by right-wing propaganda of large segments of the press, in which republicanism was portrayed as something foreign (Asmuss 133). The anti-republican sentiment propagated by the right-wing press resulted in a series of political murders and assassinations.<sup>46</sup> In 1919, socialists Karl Liebknecht

---

<sup>44</sup> See note 9.

<sup>45</sup> Kurt Sontheimer's study *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik* states that the idea of the *Volk* bore intense political meaning during the Weimar Republic due to the fragmentation of the middle class and due to the middle class' loss of social dominance after 1900 (308).

<sup>46</sup> These nationalist truisms about the German nation united all anti-republican and anti-Semitic sentiments against the new democracy, and gained new momentum in the mass public when Freiherr von Forstner, secretary of the nationalist DNVP, published the article "Ebert, Noske, Bauer und der Streit der Rüstungsindustrie im Krieg" in the nationalist *Deutsche Zeitung*, in which he accused president Friedrich Ebert (SPD) and other Social Democratic politicians of treason during WWI, and which triggered a wave of anti-republican propaganda in the right-wing press (Albrecht 163).



and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered by right extremists while in the custody of Freikorps soldiers who had captured them after their involvement in a violent communist uprising. Matthias Erzberger, politician of the moderate Center-party (*Zentrumspartei*), was murdered in 1921, and, most importantly, Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau was shot on June 24, 1922. Erzberger's and Rathenau's deaths were planned out and thus assassinations. Rathenau was a public figure of republicanism, and he was Jewish. His death symbolized the fundamental anti-republican, anti-Semitic stance of the militant right. The judiciary's right bias in its punishment of political crimes became apparent during this time: 354 murders were committed by right extremists, of which only one faced considerable legal consequences. Of the 22 assassinations by left-wing activists, 17 received legal convictions; ten of them faced the death penalty (Gay 20). The right bias of the judiciary was increasingly paralleled by a growing dominance of anti-republican sentiment within the legislative body. While the republican government tried to remedy the situation in the wake of the assassination of Erzberger and Rathenau by enabling a *Republikenschutzgesetz* – a Law for the Protection of the Republic that provided a means of prohibiting extremist organizations and extremist propaganda in the press. Some parties such as the nationalist *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* (DNVP), the conservative *Bayerische Volkspartei* (BVP), and the communist KPD voted against the bill, which indicated their inherently anti-republican position.

The right extremist press found a way around the *Republikenschutzgesetz*. In Bavaria this law was not recognized because this state had swung decidedly to the right, which prompted the national socialist party *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) to gain strength (Kolb 45). Thus, the NSDAP's main press

organ, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, could still be distributed all over Germany even though it was extremely anti-republican, since the law only prohibited the publication in its state of origin (Koszyk 339). Political extremism in the public sphere reflected tendencies in the Weimar Republic's political developments: while in 1922, 52 politically radical papers were prohibited in the context of the protection law, this number declined to 40 in 1924, to 20 in 1926, and to four in 1927, but it increased again in 1928 to seven in the context of a returning crisis; it increased to 224 in 1931, and to 294 in 1932 (Koszyk, 340). Compared to the right-extremist press, the left extremist press was censored much more rigidly through the *Republikschutzgesetz* (Petersen, *Zensur* 134). In 1922, the *Rote Fahne* had publishing sanctions for 26 days and in 1923 for 130 days (Petersen, *Zensur* 137). The Nazi organ *Völkischer Beobachter*, on the other hand, had publishing sanctions for ten days in 1920, for eight days in 1922, and it was declared illegal after the Hitler-Putsch in November of 1923. A year later, however, on February 25, 1925, the *Völkischer Beobachter* was legalized again (Petersen, *Zensur* 123). These numbers, and the fact that the press of the political right could often avoid legal penalties or sanctions, illustrate the conservative to right-extremist bias in the Weimar Republic's courts concerning the freedom of speech. To what high extent political violence on the streets was fueled by anti-republican propaganda of the extremist press became apparent in the trial following the murder of politician Matthias Erzberger (Zentrum), when his murderers admitted to have been enticed by the propaganda of the right extremist press (Koszyk 339).

As Tucholsky repeatedly pointed out, the *Republikschutzgesetz* was often not able to “protect” the republic from its own anti-republican functionaries. It was much more

to the credit of liberal and pacifist writers such as Tucholsky, that anti-republican acts and tendencies within the Republic's institutions were uncovered and criticized, and not the existence of such a law itself.<sup>47</sup> Tucholsky maintained that it was critical to strengthen republicanism in a contested public sphere with symbolic references, whether in language or in other forms of propaganda. While Rathenau's death symbolized the hatred and aggression against republicanism (and against Jews), his funeral was turned into a publicly effective representation of republicanism – a kind of public act that Tucholsky increasingly called for, and which he helped initiating by organizing a public “production” of the republic at the anniversary of its republican constitution (Hepp 233). This first republican commemoration day on August 8, 1922 took place in the *Lustgarten* of Berlin and hosted speeches by President Ebert, Chancellor Wirth, and entertainment by musicians and prominent actors such as Heinrich George after a parade of torches around Berlin, in front of an audience of over 500,000 (Hepp 235). Although Tucholsky had envisioned this kind of “republican propaganda”, and although the liberal press reacted positively to the celebration, republican symbolism could not challenge nationalist discourses, and Tucholsky repeatedly criticized republican politicians, namely Social Democrats, for their lack of assertion – a lack which he considered as a symptom of an absent republican identity, even within the government.<sup>48</sup>

The reason for the surprising survival of republicanism despite the profound crisis of 1923 and its postponed collapse ten years later has been subject of many studies. In

---

<sup>47</sup> In his study on literature and the justice system of the Weimar Republic, Klaus Petersen points out that when liberal and pacifist publicists such as Tucholsky, Emil Julius Gumbel, Hellmut von Gerlach, Ludwig Quidde, or Berthold Jacob publicized discoveries of illegal acts of right extremists, these publicists were often charged of treason (Petersen, *Literatur und Justiz* 74).

<sup>48</sup> The difficulty of finding public symbolism for the republic that “worked” with the masses is analyzed in Bernd Buchner's study *Um Nationale und Republikanische Identität. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und der Kampf um die politischen Symbole in der Weimarer Republik*. (Bonn: Dietz, 2001).

contrast to most historians,<sup>49</sup> who interpret the end of the Weimar Republic as the result of an accumulation of crises such as this first one, Detlev Peukert states that it was the intensity of this crisis in the Weimar Republic's domestic and foreign politics that indicated a lack of convincing alternatives from the left or right (Peukert 76). The depth of this first crisis, as mentioned by Peukert, corresponded with a divided political right and left, and with international aid for the rising inflation, temporarily preventing a departure from republicanism.

### **Tucholsky's Berlin Years: a Response to Crisis**

During this first phase of the Weimar Republic Tucholsky resided in Berlin and was involved in numerous public activities. He responded to the crisis of the Republic and its acute political developments by carefully selected affiliation with and consciously chosen activism in organizations which were decidedly pacifist, most importantly in the human rights organization *Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte* and the pacifist veteran organization *Friedensbund der Kriegsteilnehmer*. He regarded republicanism as a governmental form which would most likely secure this goal. Tucholsky's increasing interest in working-class concerns resulted in his eventual but reluctant membership in the left wing of the SPD, the USPD, between 1920 and the party's dissolution in 1922,

---

<sup>49</sup> Eberhard Kolb states that although the republic succeeded in weathering its postwar crises by the end of 1923, it was still uncertain if lasting consolidation of the parliamentary democratic system would happen (50). Burkhard Asmuss sees a continuation, despite the apparent recovery from acute crisis, of political crisis throughout the Weimar Republic (10). Hans Mommsen notes: "The parliamentary system emerged from its successful struggle with the German Right with severe wounds that were not immediately apparent" (170). Mary Fulbrook states that "under the façade of apparent stabilization there were many cracks, both political and economic. In the period of renewed crisis after 1929, these cracks were to turn into an earthquake, bringing the shaky edifice of Weimar democracy tumbling down in ruins" (38).

and indicates Tucholsky's sensitivity towards the political significance of this social class. Another important reason why Tucholsky, who did not believe in party politics, decided to join the USPD, was its radically anti-militarist stance (Hepp 195). Instead of the rigid socialist party doctrine of class struggle, Tucholsky believed in social ethics and education - a political-philosophical view that George L. Mosse describes as typical for the Jewish intelligentsia of the Weimar Republic. Mosse labels this a "kantian Socialism" in its legacy of the Enlightenment and its emphasis of ethical individualism, racial and religious tolerance, and an international political orientation.<sup>50</sup> Throughout his life and career as a writer, Tucholsky repeatedly emphasized that he disassociated himself with party politics despite his affiliations with parties and organizations.<sup>51</sup>

The steady and continuous devotion to the pacifist cause in Tucholsky's life and work represents a constant priority despite his fluctuating affiliations in politics.

Tucholsky co-founded the pacifist organization *Friedensbund der Kriegsteilnehmer* with Carl von Ossietzky, Emil Julius Gumbel, and Karl Vetter in October of 1919.<sup>52</sup> The *Friedensbund* organized annual anti-war demonstrations in Berlin, with 50,000 participants in 1920, and 200,000 in 1921 and subsequent peace-demonstrations held annually until the end of the Republic. The annual demonstrations organized by the *Friedensbund* were held under the motto "Nie wieder Krieg", where Tucholsky often

---

<sup>50</sup> Mosse, *Jüdische Intellektuelle* 104.

<sup>51</sup> In a letter to Ernst Ringelmann from October 11, 1920, Tucholsky emphasizes that despite his involvement with the USPD and its organs, he would like to be disassociated with party politics (Tucholsky 11259). In a letter to Heinz Pol from April 20, 1933, Tucholsky distances himself radically from the socialist and communist parties in Germany (Tucholsky 11680).

<sup>52</sup> For an in-depth portrait of the *Friedensbund der Kriegsteilnehmer*- organization see Karl Holl, Wolfram Wette, eds. *Pazifismus in der Weimarer Republik*. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1981).

gave speeches or recited his pacifist poems.<sup>53</sup> As Tucholsky's friend and fellow pacifist, Arthur Holitscher, mentioned, it was Tucholsky's humor which made his public speeches effective and which reflected Tucholsky's sensitivity towards his audience.<sup>54</sup>

In 1920, he joined another pacifist organization, the *Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte*, which had prominent members such as Carl von Ossietzky and Albert Einstein, and which organized demonstrations for peace and political cooperation in Europe (Hepp 550). The *Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte* was a human rights-organization which was founded in 1914 under the name *Bund Neues Vaterland*, and which propagated for an immediate ending of WWI. In 1922, the *Bund* changed its name to *Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte* in order to emphasize its international cooperation, particularly with its French counterpart, the *Ligue des Droits de l'homme*. Until its forced end in 1933 under the Nazis, the *Liga* was active in promoting human rights as guaranteed in the Weimar constitution. Besides its general pacifist activism, the *Liga* was also involved in concrete political action such as its continued concern with the reactionary bias of Weimar Germany's judiciary. Together with other organizations such as the *Republikanische Beschwerdestelle* and the *Deutsches Friedenskartell* the *Liga* publicly protested against the often unjust sentencing in political trials, it suggested a

---

<sup>53</sup> At the 1922 anti-war-demonstration Tucholsky read his pacifist poem "Drei Minuten Gehör!" in which he pled for his audience's active participation in the pacifist movement by addressing their political power. This poem was recited at numerous anti-war demonstrations throughout Germany on this day:

Ihr seid die Zukunft!  
Euer das Land!  
Schüttelt es ab, das Knechtschaftsband!  
Wenn ihr nur wollt, seid ihr alle frei!  
Euer Wille geschehe! Seid nicht mehr dabei!  
Wenn ihr nur wollt: bei euch steht der Sieg!  
-*Nie wieder Krieg!* (Tucholsky 2706).

<sup>54</sup> In regards to Tucholsky's speeches at pacifist demonstrations, Holitscher mentioned: "Redner wie er sind spärlich gesät. Er wirkt auf die Massen, weil er ein guter und gerader Mensch ist, weil sein Witz (der die Klassen durchdringt) ein gerade abgeschossener Pfeil ist ... . Er kennt sein Publikum und schont es nicht" (qtd. in Bemann 243).

reform in criminal law and the penitentiary system and sought amnesty for political prisoners. In its organ *Die Menschenrechte*, the *Liga* continuously criticized the anti-republican stance of the justice system in documentations, polls, and articles (Petersen 110).<sup>55</sup>

During the year 1920 and its many political crises, Tucholsky radicalized his political activism. A month after the Kapp Putsch, he decided to significantly reduce his workload for the big publishing house Mosse, at which he had been employed since the end of the War, and instead he joined the USPD and published in the party's papers *Freiheit* and *Freie Welt* (Hepp 551). He tried to combine his activities in the USPD with his overall goal of pacifism by informing his working-class readership of the objectives and advantages of pacifism, which resulted in increasing numbers of participants in pacifist demonstration in the early 1920s. When late in 1920 the USPD split up into a leftist camp that joined the communist KPD and a moderate camp which joined the SPD, Tucholsky submitted his last contributions to its party papers and concentrated more on writing for political cabaret. He became secretary in the writer's union *Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller*, and was one of the founders of the pacifist-republican organization *Republikanischer Reichsbund* (Hepp 551).<sup>56</sup>

Tucholsky's anti-nationalist activism and his engagement for a reform of the German judiciary resulted in the military's series of legal actions held throughout the Weimar Republic against Tucholsky, beginning in 1921. This first lawsuit, which

---

<sup>55</sup> After WWII, the *Deutsche Liga* was re-founded as the non-governmental organization "Internationale Liga für Menschenrechte im Geiste von Carl von Ossietzky," a human-rights organization accredited at the UNO, the council of Europe, and the UNESCO ([www.ilmr.de](http://www.ilmr.de)).

<sup>56</sup> The *Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller* (SDS) was founded in 1908 and was Germany's largest professional writers' organization. During the Weimar Republic, it repeatedly expressed its concern with the justice system's bias against authors and literary works (Petersen, *Literatur und Justiz* 120).

referred to Tucholsky's article *Offiziere*, ended in Tucholsky's acquittal, but a few months later, another lawsuit against him for his confusion of two officer's names in his anti-militarist article *Die Erdolchten* resulted in Tucholsky's public apology and correction. Although shortly earlier Tucholsky had criticized this kind of public apology by George Grosz, who had also been sued by the *Reichswehr* (Hepp 450), he resorted to the same strategy – a contradictory act that in its inconsistency to his formerly expressed opinion indicates Tucholsky's search for a public profile particularly in the first phase of the Weimar Republic.

This public profile radicalized towards the end of the first phase of the Weimar Republic, when Tucholsky's political activism for pacifism and republicanism intensified. As the Republic's stability digressed and political violence increased in 1922, Tucholsky gave a speech at a pacifist demonstration of the *Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte* on the anti-republican bias of the Weimar Republic's judiciary (Hepp 551). He not only reminded the public of the lacking devotion to republicanism of the Republic's institutions such as the judiciary, but he also appealed to them to refrain from political extremism in this time of political and economic instability, as he mentioned in another speech at the assembly of the pacifist organization *Deutsches Friedenskartell* in June of 1922, a month after the murder of foreign minister Walther Rathenau (DDP).<sup>57</sup> At the Republic's anniversary in August of 1922, Tucholsky was involved in organizing a mass celebration for the Republic's anniversary – a form of republican propaganda that

---

<sup>57</sup> The *Deutsches Friedenskartell* was a pacifist organization, founded by Ludwig Quidde, a professor of history at Berlin University, parliamentary representative of the DDP, and recipient of the 1927 Nobel Peace Prize. The *Friedenskartell* organized public demonstrations for peace and republicanism, and it was represented by numerous prominent figures such as Albert Einstein, Helene Stöcker, Hellmut von Gerlach, and Käthe Kollwitz. For an in-depth portrait of the *Friedenskartell* see Reinold Lutgemeier-Davin, *Pazifismus zwischen Kooperation und Konfrontation: das Deutsche Friedenskartell in der Weimarer Republik* (Köln: Paul Rugenstein Verlag, 1982).



he had increasingly envisioned during the first phase of the Weimar Republic (Hepp 552).<sup>58</sup> His intense pacifist and republican activism in 1922 represents his increasing efforts to integrate the working class into the process of democracy, thus to unify it, and consequently to form a strong counterforce to nationalist tendencies of the year's political and economic crisis. His swift moves from one position to another in the public sphere and even his temporary retirement from writing show his high devotion to the establishment of a new, pacifist, republican German identity.

A closer look on Tucholsky's activities, however, also shows the difficulties Tucholsky faced in developing a public profile as an intellectual. He often contradicted himself in personal opinion and public practice, not only concerning ethical questions as in his public apology when he was sued by the *Reichswehr*, but also when confronted with following a cohesive political line. The early years of the Weimar Republic's first phase were marked by his ambivalence toward the bourgeois and its culture, although his liberalism was rooted in its legacy. After the Kapp Putsch, he increasingly moved toward Socialism, even became a member of the USPD, published in its organs, but always remained highly skeptical of the socialist party doctrine and even of some of its political goals. He was, as he called himself, "ein immer Suchender ohne festes Weltbild" (qtd. in Hepp 174). This self-proclaimed refusal to represent a single, consistent political and ethical position, combined with his constant search for venues for public expression marks the beginning of Tucholsky's emerging concept of a public intellectual in a medialized public sphere. His open pragmatism and noncommittal, indifferent stance

---

<sup>58</sup> In his *Weltbühne* article "Die Republik wider Willen" of August 21, 1922, Tucholsky as Ignatz Wrobel reiterates the necessity of a powerful republican propaganda in order to counter anti-republican propaganda from the political right (Tucholsky 10682).

baffled and even sometimes angered his readers who weren't used to such a novel approach.

Lack of commitment to the public battle for republicanism could also be ascribed to Tucholsky in 1923, when he suddenly left the *Weltbühne* and all other venues in order to begin a career in the banking business. This random move to a completely different realm of occupation, however, had concrete financial reasons: in 1923, the occupation of the Ruhr Valley by French and Belgian troops expedited the inflationary process, and many pacifist and republican organizations were, like most Germans, in great financial trouble. Tucholsky knew the wealthy, liberal Banker Hugo Simon from his activities in the *Deutsche Liga* and became his personal secretary at the *Bankhaus Bett, Simon & Co.* This temporary abandonment of his writing career allowed him to not only secure personal financial stability, but also to secure financial support for republican and pacifist organizations (Bemmann 255). By involving financiers such as Simon in pacifist and republican organizations, Tucholsky found financial support for public activism in the form of a sponsor, which proved to be a much more logical explanation for his motivation to work for the world of business than speculations about Tucholsky's need to finance his rather immodest private lifestyle.<sup>59</sup> After a few months of writing abstinence, however, Tucholsky co-founded the cabaret *Die Gondel*, wrote for Trude Hesterberg's cabaret *Wilde Bühne*, and published articles in Siegfried Jacobsohn's *Weltbühne*, where he signed a contract for permanent employment in February of 1924 and thus returned to a full-time writing career (Hepp 552).

---

<sup>59</sup>This view is suggested by Michael Hepp (238).

Tucholsky's political activities as well as his publishing strategies during the first phase of the Weimar Republic indicate the constant movement of his public voice as responses to political developments. They also, however, indicate Tucholsky's search for an appropriate form of public communication in a fundamentally transformed public sphere after WWI. This search involved many contradicting public statements and acts, which ultimately weakened Tucholsky's credibility as a public intellectual, at least among his contemporaries, who were not used to searching, inconsistent public figures, but rather longed for a public voice that aided in orientation to a consistent set of objectives during confusing times.

### **Confronting Crisis: Tucholsky's Publishing Strategies during his Berlin Years**

Inconsistency and contradiction characterize Tucholsky's publishing strategies of this phase as well. At the very beginning of the Weimar Republic in 1918 and 1919, before left- and right-wing extremism led to political murders and Putsch attempts, Tucholsky wrote for Mosse's moderate, democratic mass papers such as *Berliner Tageblatt* and *Berliner Volkszeitung*, which reached approximately 300,000 readers each (Koszyk 23). In a letter to his wife Mary Gerold, Tucholsky explained his motivation to write for Mosse: it offered a secure source of income and could be used as a springboard for his journalistic career (Tucholsky 11220). In 1918, Tucholsky became chief editor of the satirical magazine *Ulk*, which was a weekly supplement to both the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Berliner Volkszeitung* – and which assured him a readership of around half a million, ranging from a slightly more conservative, educated, but democratic readership of the *Berliner Tageblatt* to a less educated and perhaps more radical

readership of the *Berliner Volkszeitung*, which was preferred by the working class and lower middle class. *Ulk* was designed to comment satirically on social, cultural and political events of the week – a large part of the magazine was devoted to caricatures and commenting glossaries.

Despite the broad readership secured to him through *Ulk*, Tucholsky retired from his position as chief editor in early 1920 when differences about stylistic questions arose between him and the *Berliner Tageblatt* chief editor Theodor Wolff, as Tucholsky described in his letter to Wolff from Feb 26, 1920: “Es ist viel weniger die Divergenz zwischen Ihnen und mir in politischer als in rein literarischer und satirisch-strategischer, die mir meine Stellung als unhaltbar aufzeigte” (Tucholsky 11250). Interestingly, Tucholsky mentions here as a reason for ending his work as chief editor at *Ulk* the fact that he could no longer identify with the paper’s stylistic line (Tucholsky 11251), although he expressed hope to be able to keep contributing to the paper’s *feuilleton*-section (Tucholsky 11252). While he increasingly distanced himself from the Mosse publishing house from 1920 on, which resulted in an eventual break with most of its papers in 1923,<sup>60</sup> Tucholsky however also worked for the satirical paper *Pieron* which was financed by the government and which propagated for Germany’s keeping of upper Silesia, as questioned in the Versailles Treaty. Thus he found himself in proximity of nationalist rhetoric, which he condemned on the one hand,<sup>61</sup> but which on the other hand

---

<sup>60</sup> Tucholsky infrequently published in the highly popular (Bemmann, *Lebensbild* 256), liberal-democratic Berlin evening paper *8Uhr Abendblatt*. Mosse had named the paper that way to suggest its proximity to the boulevard press (Eksteins 19). The *8-Uhr Abendblatt* kept a steady circulation during the Weimar Republic of 80,000-100,000 (<http://www.oeaw.ac.at/cgi-bin/pdok/bz/auf/0030>). These articles, as Thomas J. Lipp observes, did not discuss political issues (34).

<sup>61</sup> He later sharply criticized writers like Arnolt Bronnen, who began their career as writers in progressive circles of Expressionists but later became fierce nationalists because of the upper Silesia – question in articles like “Ein besserer Herr,” published in the *Weltbühne* on June 25, 1929 (Tucholsky 6717).

expressed his partial attachment to a pre-democratic ideological order – an attachment that was still existent during the beginning of the Weimar Republic’s first years.

Despite his involvement in the nationalist upper Silesia- movement in *Pieron*, Tucholsky also wrote for the USPD-papers *Die Freiheit* and *Freie Welt* at the same time in 1920. Here he criticized the nationalist activism that would fuel Germany’s increasing belligerence, and instead he advocated a popularization of pacifism and republicanism among the working class, which he tried to win over through satirical depictions of the anti-republican bias and through his criticism of the discrimination of the working class by most of the Weimar Republic’s public institutions.<sup>62</sup> The most important motivation for Tucholsky’s involvement in the USPD must have been its anti-militarist stance, because Tucholsky repeatedly expressed his reservation toward party politics. Also, the experience of political potential of the working class with its powerful political act of a General Strike during the Kapp Putsch. After he was pressured to discontinue his involvement with *Pieron* by the political left, however, particularly by the USPD-papers, which denied him further employment unless he would quit *Pieron*, Tucholsky broke off his employment at *Pieron*, although hesitantly.<sup>63</sup> At the same time, he partially broke with the Mosse papers and also published only one last article in the USPD-paper *Freiheit* in 1921. During 1921, he instead wrote primarily for the *Weltbühne* and the

---

<sup>62</sup> The USPD’s most important paper was the twice daily published *Die Freiheit* with a circulation of 200,000 in 1920, when it was joined with the SPD-organ *Vorwärts* after the USPD dissolved (Koszyk 307).

<sup>63</sup> In his letter dated December 18, 1920, to Hans Lukaschek, member of the initiative for upper Silesia, Tucholsky wrote: “Man hat mir in massgeblichen politischen Kreisen Berlins meine Mitarbeit an der Schlesischen Propaganda derart verübelt, dass schwerwiegende Angriffe auf die gesamte Propaganda sowie auf meine Person nicht ausgeblieben wären” (Tucholsky 11263).

*Welt am Montag*, a trend which he continued in 1922, when the USPD dissolved, and the 26 USPD organs either stopped publishing or were combined with organs of the SPD.<sup>64</sup>

It was after 1922 that Tucholsky's public activities, including his publishing practices, became increasingly devoted to pacifism. Besides his permanent presence in the *Weltbühne*, he began publishing in an independent weekly paper, the *Welt am Montag*,<sup>65</sup> which, in its democratic and pacifistic bias, was connected to the pacifist movement through its chief editor, Helmut von Gerlach, who was also the chairperson of the pacifist-democratic organization *Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte*, which Tucholsky had joined in early 1920. Tucholsky published in the *Welt am Montag* between 1920 and 1922 on issues of militarism and republicanism. At the end of the first phase of the Weimar Republic, Tucholsky had found his target audience of intellectuals and a broader spectrum of the working- and lower-middle class, which he regarded as most perceptive for political and social change under pacifist and republican premises. His theme on how public language functioned ideologically in the discourse on German-ness in the young Weimar Republic remained consistent in the different publishing contexts, while he appropriated the language and style of presentation to his audience and its values. By linking the goals of the working class with the goals of republicanism and pacifism through literary means of satire and its deconstruction of authoritarian values, Tucholsky, as a public communicator, made innovative use of the Weimar Republic's *Öffentlichkeit* in times of acute political crisis.

---

<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, after 1920, former *Freiheit* publicists began working for the SPD organ *Vorwärts* (Koszyk 307).

<sup>65</sup> The *Welt am Montag*, a liberal political magazine, was with a circulation of 75,000 one of the largest political magazines in the Weimar Republic (Koszyk 285).

Nevertheless, his simultaneous involvement in pacifism, party politics of the USPD, and the nationalist Silesia movement in his publishing practice indicated Tucholsky's contradictory stance as a public intellectual during the first phase of the Weimar Republic. It also pointed to the difficulty of operating in a consistent fashion within a highly politicized *Öffentlichkeit* right after the end of WWI. Moreover, it highlights Tucholsky's difficulty as a public intellectual to grasp political reality in its complexity at the time, since his stance as a writer was still influenced by traditional notions of literary autonomy on the one hand and a pragmatic motivation of finding sources of income in unstable times on the other hand. An analysis of Tucholsky's publicist work of the Weimar Republic's first phase will illustrate this ambivalence surrounding Tucholsky's role as a public intellectual operating within a politically polarized public sphere.

### **In Defense of the Republic: Themes and Style of Tucholsky's Writings in the Context of Political Crisis 1918-1923**

The overarching issue at stake in Tucholsky's work of the Weimar Republic's first phase was the establishment of republicanism and ultimately of a pacifist society and the political role and ideological function of language in *Öffentlichkeit* and the way it composes national identities. Tucholsky's increasing involvement in the pacifist movement and his temporary association with the independent social democratic party USPD, his publishing strategies of increasing orientation to a working class audience, and the dominant themes of his texts written in this phase display this concern.

The following sections discuss texts written between 1918 and 1923 that thematize Tucholsky's problematic search for a new concept of authorship as a public intellectual.

It begins with an analysis of texts concerned with the role of the public intellectual within a transformed public sphere immediately after WWI in 1919 and proceeds with texts discussing and reinterpreting propaganda in the context of an acute crisis of republicanism in 1920. It concludes with Tucholsky's assessment of the concept of the "German nation" in the context of a medialized public sphere.

### ***1919: The Public Intellectual, Satire, and Political Crisis***

Trying to come to terms with the republic's crisis during its first phase and to find an appropriate public language to capture the idea of republicanism, Tucholsky developed a concept of the public intellectual in 1919 that evolved from the intellectual as idealist to the intellectual as polemical satirist, one who dismantles familiar concepts. Implicit in this evolution is his increasing understanding of the writer as part of political culture, and of public communication as an integral, essential part of that political culture.

In early 1919, in a poem entitled "Olle Kamellen," which he published on February 6 in the *Weltbühne* under the pseudonym Kaspar Hauser, Tucholsky calls for a reform of the German *Kaiserreich*-mentality.<sup>66</sup> The use of the pseudonym Kaspar Hauser is appropriate in this context, since here the call for a new way of public communication corresponds with a high degree of alienation, which is expressed through

---

<sup>66</sup> Tucholsky's pseudonym Kaspar Hauser was the one he used the least, it only appeared 195 times (compared to the most frequent one, Peter Panter, who appeared 1031 times). Tucholsky introduced his pseudonyms and their different roles in "Start," the introductory article to his compilation *Mit 5 PS*, published in December of 1927 at Rowohlt. He introduces his pseudonyms as five aspects of his authorship - "und was als Spiel begonnen, endete als heitere Schizophrenie" (Tucholsky 5675), with Peter Panter as the cultural critic, Theobald Tiger as the poet and chanson-writer, Ignaz Wrobel as the political writer, "krazbürstig und ganz und gar abscheulich, ... ein[en] Bezirk meines Wesens" (Tucholsky 5677), and the "youngest" persona Kaspar Hauser as the alienated one, "und nach dem Kriege schlug noch Kaspar Hauser die Augen auf, sah die Welt und verstand sie nicht" (Tucholsky 5676). Renke Siems sees in the pseudonym Kaspar Hauser a facet of Tucholsky's authorship which had trouble finding its place after a transformed public in 1918, and which was symptomatic for a felt loss of control after WWI (Siems 79).



the signature of Kaspar Hauser. It criticizes the authoritarian way of conceptualization that prevents the Weimar Republic from becoming what it is supposed to be: a democracy with politically proficient citizens and a diverse public sphere in which critical mass communication is possible. Easy rhymes (aa, bb, cc, etc), rhetorical questions, repetitive words and exclamatory remarks concerning the necessity of conceptual reform in the minds of Germans underline the political purpose of this poem and reflect Tucholsky's early concern with the continuation of authoritarianism of the former *Kaiserreich* in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic:

... Eingedrillter Kadaverrespekt-  
wie tief der noch heut in den Köpfen steckt!  
Er riss uns in jenen Krieg hinein-  
Und das soll alles vergessen sein?

Nicht vergessen. Wir wollen das ändern.  
Ein freies Land unter freien Ländern  
Sei Deutschland – mit freien Bewohnern drin,  
Ohne den knechtischen Dienersinn.  
Wir wollen nicht Rache an Offizieren.

Wir wollen den deutschen Sinn reformieren.  
(Tucholsky 1202)

Tucholsky repetitively uses the first person plural to emphasize to his primarily intellectual readership of the *Weltbühne* their common goal, or what their common goal should be: a constructive participation of the intellectual in reforming the German mentality from authoritarian to republican. As Kaspar Hauser, the most distant of Tucholsky's voices, always questioning and searching for a new beginnings, he does not yet specify the methods for this reform.

A more concrete and instructive voice came from his persona Ignatz Wrobel. This "uncomfortable" and politically radical public persona reminds his readers in his

*Weltbühne* article “Vaterländischer Unterricht” from February 13, 1919, of the realities of an authoritarian public sphere in its extreme during WWI. Here, an unchecked propaganda in the front press and the civilian press had constructed a militarist-chauvinist version of German-ness through authoritarian language and concepts, which, according to Tucholsky, were still predominant in public discourse of the early Weimar Republic. In order to demonstrate this authoritarian use of language, he parodies it by imitating war propaganda and its racist, discriminatory, and defamatory language:

Was ist das für eine Sprachmelodie:

“Was uns auch das vierte Kriegsjahr bringen möge, eins steht bombenfest: wir lassen die Hunde von Negern, Englishmens, Franzosen, Zulukaffern und Kosaken nicht in die deutschen Gauen rein, solange wir noch eine schwere Artillerie und Flieger haben” ...

Im schlechten Sinne deutsch war das Ganze, der vaterländische Unterricht und der uralte verderbliche Aberglaube, man könne mit Verfügungen, (die immer einer dem andern weitergab und die keiner ausführte), irgend etwas, die Gesinnung betreffend, erreichen. (Tucholsky 11447-48)

Tucholsky criticizes here this “education” of nationalism in the press, which promotes authoritarianism and obstructs the democratization of the masses. Nationalist education through the press and its authoritarian language become Tucholsky’s negative blueprint for his model of an alternative, republican public sphere, in which the intellectual critically observes and reforms.

Tucholsky’s concept of the intellectual as public communicator advanced during the year 1919 from an idealist notion of the intellectual as a transmitter of ideas to one that began acknowledging the public intellectuals’ context of a mass publishing market in which public language had to effectively counter long ingrained anti-republican concepts that had been dominant in the public sphere. Representative of his early, idealist concept of the role of the public intellectual is his programmatic *Weltbühne* article, “Wir

Negativen,” published on March 13, 1919. The article opens with a quote from Schopenhauer, the nineteenth-century philosopher who contended that the world was not a rational place. The quote describes the traditional roles of the writer as either devoted to mere entertainment, as the ancient Greek writer Anacreon, or to humanitarian issues, as Aeschylus. The quote introduces the theme of the programmatic article, which calls for a reform of German authoritarian mentality through the didactics of the intellectual: the theme of Aeschylus. Tucholsky sees the intellectuals’ pivotal role in motivating the public for social and political change according to their ideals (Tucholsky 1223).

This article focuses on the German mentality, the German “Gesinnung” as Tucholsky calls it (Tucholsky 1222), and how to democratize it. Tucholsky sees the role of the intellectual in reforming the German mind as in the tradition of Aeschylus, and he does not yet take into account the realities of public communication in the context of a mass media market, although he calls for a solidarity of intellectuals as a counter-public to a dominating authoritarianism amongst politicians, the military, and the middle class: “Der unbedingten Solidarität aller Geldverdiener muss die ebenso unbedingte Solidarität der Geistigen gegenüberstehen” (Tucholsky 1220). While he regards the task of the intellectual as one to become politically involved and to use art as a medium for social and political change (“Nur das wird gehört, und keine metaphysische Wahrheit und kein kritizistischer Irrtum” [Tucholsky 1220]), he remains stylistically devoted to an almost biblical pathos, and to metaphors of light as ideas in the Enlightenment tradition:

... wir glauben nicht, dass die Flamme des Ideals nur dekorativ am Sternenhimmel zu leuchten hat, sondern sie muss hienieden brennen: brennen in den Kellerwinkeln, wo die Asseln hausen, und brennen auf den Palastdächern der Reichen, brennen in den Kirchen, wo man die alten Wunder rationalistisch verrät, und brennen bei den Wechslern, die aus ihrer Bude einen Tempel gemacht haben. (Tucholsky 1223)

Although Tucholsky intended to secularize idealism in that he wanted to reinterpret the Enlightenment ideals of tolerance and rationalism within the new post-WWI-context of democracy, he finds himself here in rhetorical proximity of the Expressionists, whose intensity and passion in public speaking was picked up and developed further by the Nazis. The metaphor of light, originally a symbol of the enlightenment to signify independent knowledge and rationalist thinking, had also been often used by the Nazis in referring to Germany and its alleged supremacy.<sup>67</sup> Thus, Tucholsky's texts of 1919, particularly "Wir Negativen" as a programmatic text, can be understood as representing Tucholsky's search of a public voice in its earliest stage, and it also represents Tucholsky's stylistic struggle when producing non-satirical texts.

Although remaining in its rhetorical paradigms, Tucholsky steers away from the Enlightenment literary tradition of idealism and reminds his readers through Schopenhauer that in order to facilitate social and political change, the intellectual will have to leave his ivory tower and participate in the struggle for a new humanity:

Wir kämpfen allerdings mit Hass. Aber wir kämpfen aus Liebe für die Unterdrückten, die nicht immer notwendigerweise Proletarier sein müssen, und wir lieben in den Menschen den Gedanken an die Menschheit. (Tucholsky 1225)

Tucholsky's early concept of a struggle of the intellectual for an egalitarian, humanitarian society assigned a general oppositional role of the intellectual as a "Negativer." All of his programmatic articles written in the *Weltbühne* under his fifth literary persona, Kurt Tucholsky, are non-satirical for their constructive models of political and social

---

<sup>67</sup> National socialist ideology was propagated in a strictly dichotomous fashion. By reusing the familiar symbol of light as revelation, Nazi semiotics and its nationalist, racist, and anti-Semitic implication deifies its own ideology and simultaneously desecrates anything that is not German (or "Aryan").

alternatives. Tucholsky's alternative, republican model of a public sphere and public communication in this programmatic article bears the idea of the intellectual as an educator in the traditional, high literary tradition.

Perhaps it was the programmatic nature of "Wir Negativen" that encouraged the absence of satire in the text and therefore its stylistic proximity to mostly anti-democratic writings of the time, or it was the fact that Tucholsky wrote under his real name, which, however, he saw as one of the five literary personae. It was not until later that year that he set the stage for discussions to follow on public communication and political propaganda with his definition of political satire as a kind of propaganda always in opposition, as one that must be blunt and generalizing in order to be effective, in his article "Politische Satire." This article, published under Ignaz Wrobel in the *Weltbühne* of October 9, 1919, demonstrates Tucholsky's beginning apperception of the necessity of a deconstruction of linguistic and literary traditions which reinforce authoritarian ideologies. This deconstruction through literary means, which corresponds with Tucholsky's concept of the public intellectual as in political opposition, constitutes a low-culture satire which becomes politically relevant:

Die Satire ist heute – 1919 – gefährlich geworden, weil auf die spasshaften Worte leicht ernste Taten folgen können, und dies umso eher, je volkstümlicher der Satiriker spricht. (Tucholsky 1495)

Tucholsky expresses here his conviction that satire has the potential for political change in the early Weimar Republic. Satire, then, becomes oppositional propaganda. This oppositional propaganda would eventually constitute a counter-public sphere which had the function to challenge authoritarianism in order to establish a republican identity:

Politische Satire steht immer in der Opposition. Es ist der Grund, weshalb es bis auf den heutigen Tag kein konservatives Witzblatt von Rang gibt und kein

regierungstreues. Nicht etwa, weil die Herren keinen Humor hätten oder keinen Witz. Den hat keine Klasse gepachtet. Aber die kann ihn am wenigsten haben, die auf die Erhaltung des Bestehenden aus ist, die Autorität und den Respekt mit hehrem Räuspern und hochgezogenen Augenbrauen zu schützen bestrebt ist. Der politische Witz ist ein respektloser Lausejunge. (Tucholsky 1496)

As Tucholsky mentions here, the function of satire and humor in public communication was to subvert existing power structures. He assigns this role of disrespecting authority to the press, and indirectly to the public intellectual. By speaking to his intellectual audience of the *Weltbühne*, Tucholsky indirectly promotes oppositional satire as a prime literary device among Germany's leftist-liberal intelligentsia. The role of the public intellectual, as Tucholsky saw it in the early phase of the Weimar Republic, was to generate an alternative public in order to support the establishment of democracy in the young Republic. While in early 1919 he still argued within idealist paradigms of the intellectual as educator, he soon turned completely to satire and "low" cultural forms as a key method for the public intellectual in dismantling existing ideologies in order to facilitate change and acknowledged a satire within the sphere of low culture as the most effective way to contest authoritarian culture and ideology.

By leaving these idealist paradigms, Tucholsky also abandoned the stylistic adjacency to potentially totalitarian rhetoric of the Weimar Republic's early years. That way, his texts acted as a counter-public to lingering authoritarianism, and to embrace the diversity and multifacetedness of social, cultural, and political life in a Republic. Furthermore, they could address multiple factors that contribute to a polarized political landscape in the Weimar Republic - as a first step in motivating change.

### ***1920 to 1922: Republican Propaganda at the Center of a Republican Public Sphere***

In 1920, Tucholsky's criticism of the misinterpretation of the republic in the public sphere turned to a discussion of the role of public language in anti-republican opinion formation during the Weimar Republic's acute crisis in 1922. His texts on propaganda concern a variety of public channels: political opinion formation via public institutions such as schools, voting and elections, public monuments or mass celebrations, literature and the press. His texts were profoundly influenced in theme and style by the political events of the Kapp Putsch and the subsequent political murders, particularly the one of Walther Rathenau in 1922. Interestingly, Tucholsky only showed acute concern for the political murders in 1922, after Rathenau was assassinated, although political murders had been committed since 1920. More interestingly, however, he did not, for example, seem as outraged with the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg on January 15, 1919 in 1920 – he merely devoted one poem to their death – as with Rathenau's death, which points at Tucholsky's fundamentally moderate-liberal political stance rather than his alleged socialist position.<sup>68</sup>

This moderate political stance was more pronounced before the Kapp Putsch of 1920. It was not until then that Tucholsky had discovered the political potential of the working class. The *Ulk* poem "Rechts und Links", published on Feb 27, 1920, under the pseudonym Theobald Tiger, demonstrates Tucholsky's pre-Kapp Putsch concern with the

---

<sup>68</sup> The only text mentioning Luxemburg's and Liebknecht's assassination is the poem "Zwei Erschlagene", published as Kaspar Hauser in the *Weltbühne* on Jan 23, 1929, more than a week after their deaths. In the poem he describes Liebknecht as a "armer Kerl" (Tucholsky 1189) and Luxemburg as someone with "Manneskraft" (Tucholsky 1190), which indicates his ambivalence towards these martyrs of the communist Spartakus-movement. Instead of praising them for their heroic deaths, Tucholsky's poem conveys an air of irony and pity, which indicates Tucholsky's distance to these figures of communist struggle. He seemed much more at ease identifying with Rathenau, who not only was also Jewish, but who also represented liberal-democratic ideals instead of communist doctrines.

political polarization of the public, while after the Putsch he turned increasingly to addressing working-class issues in the context of republicanism, and it points to Tucholsky's moderate political stance of this time. The poem's simple, often false rhyme indicates its adherence to low culture and is reminiscent of a play-poem in its repetitiveness and its dual structure. This form underlines Tucholsky's satirical message of uncovering ideological infiltration in seemingly familiar territory, and it suggests Tucholsky's frequent use of traditionally "low" culture forms for political activism as a form bearing politically subversive potential. By drawing a connection between a nationalist press and industrialists, the poem playfully refers to an increasing domination of the public sphere by few nationalist conglomerates:

...  
Rechts hat man die Industriellen,  
Welche eine Presse wellen,  
Eine, die den Abonnenten  
Nationale fette Enten  
Täglich aufzubinden hat.  
Und so fällt denn Blatt auf Blatt  
In die Hände von Kartellen  
Unsrer Grossindustriellen.  
Und man schiebt sich dies und jenes,  
Weil's bequem ist und gemeen ist.  
... (Tucholsky 1762)

The same attributes of corruption and manipulation are assigned to extremists on the left of the political spectrum:

...  
Links hat man die neuen Helden  
Die sich schon seit 18 melden  
Wenns was zu vermitteln gibt  
(dies Geschäft ist so beliebt.)  
...(Tucholsky 1763)



This poem responds to the moderate middle- and lower-middle class *Ulk* readers' fear of political extremism. It draws a connection between this growing extremism and the pivotal role of the mass press and its profit-oriented character in this process on the right and on the left. Implicit in this representation of the extremist political camps of the Weimar Republic is Tucholsky's appeal to his readers to remain moderate and to refrain from involvement in either camp, to realize nationalist infiltration by the biased media, and to realize economic interests on both ends of the spectrum. This poem was published directly before the Kapp Putsch of March 1920, when the workers in a general strike were the force that overpowered the putsch instead of the army, whose political orientation lay in the spectrum of the extreme right. The experience of the Kapp Putsch increasingly caused Tucholsky to incorporate the interests of the working class into his work. He regarded this audience as bearing great potential for becoming a counter-public to the existing anti-republican dominance.<sup>69</sup>

The issue of anti-republican propaganda in the public sphere also dominates Tucholsky's writings in the aftermath of the putsch, which implies his assumption of a connection between the media's output and political action. As Ignaz Wrobel in his *Weltbühne* article "Kapp Lüttwitz" of March 25, 1920, he stresses the importance of publicizing the participation of right-wing parties and reactionary administrators in the Putsch and he emphasizes the importance of reforming educational institutions for democratic education in order to ensure democratization of Germany's next generation: "Pensioniert lieber nationale Lehrkräfte mit vollem Gehalt, als dass ihr die Kinder noch

---

<sup>69</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this study, Tucholsky's overestimation of the working class's republican potential damaged his overall goal to attract readers and to popularize republicanism. While he alienated his middle-class readers through his turn to the working class, the working class, who despised Tucholsky as a "bourgeois," expressed its political polarization by increased voting for the extreme right and the extreme left.

einmal zu einer Generation werden lasst, die, wie die von 1914, ein Blutbad bejubelt” (Tucholsky 1797). Tucholsky implies here that instituting a democratic education in the Weimar Republic would in the long term help establish republican identities which would indirectly support a pacifist Europe and prevent the continuation of anti-republican, reactionary propaganda in the schools and universities.

Besides a democratic education, another integral part of establishing a republican identity is the awareness and conscious reception of the political process and use of the right to vote. Tucholsky became increasingly concerned with the public representation of republicanism as the national elections of June 1920 approached. By recalling the traumatic experience of WWI, he pleads to his large *Berliner Volkszeitung (BVZ)*-audience “Erinnerung für die Wahl” as Ignaz Wrobel on June 5, 1920, not to vote for the nationalist, pro-war parties DNVP or DVP by his repetitive appeal to remember the trauma of war, “ .... diese Suppe aus Roheit, Mannschaftsfresserei und Dünkel – das war die alte kaiserliche deutsche Armee. erinnert euch! erinnert euch!” (Tucholsky 9392), and to prevent the future possibility of war by voting for a political alternative to nationalism, “ ... Wählt. Und seid ihr deutsche Soldaten gewesen: erinnert euch!”(Tucholsky 9330). Another article pleads to remember the trauma of war, “Vier Jahre und ein Tag,” published on Election Day, June 6, 1920, in the USPD-paper *Die Freiheit*, under Tucholsky’s pseudonym Ignaz Wrobel. A comparison of this article with the *BVZ*-article “Erinnerung für die Wahl” demonstrates the way Tucholsky adapted style and content of his writings to its publishing context. The *BVZ*-article, for example, which was most likely read by the middle- to lower-middle class, refers to the trauma of war in its argument against voting for nationalist parties, while this *Freiheit* article appeals to a

working-class identity by extending the traumatic experience of war to a general plea of political empowerment of the working class:

Ich weiss, dass viele von uns im grimmigen Herzen die Abrechnung mit manchen ihrer bunten Peiniger noch anders vorgestellt haben als so – mit diesem einen Briefumschlag. Aber dieser eine Briefumschlag kann genügen, um euren Willen, der in der grossen Zeit gebändigt und gefesselt am Boden lag und nun aufflammt, Geltung zu verschaffen. (Tucholsky 9330)

This article's appeal to the working class to become politically active through voting repeatedly refers to the possibility of an increased social and political status of this class, although this was not a new right (as the right for women to vote was), he envisioned a more informed, democratized working class as a counter-force to increasing nationalism in the Weimar Republic.

In this *Freiheit* article, Tucholsky makes fewer references to militarism and the danger of voting for nationalist parties than he does in the *BVZ* article. Instead, he tried to involve this working class readership emotionally by referring to their personal experience. He drew a connection between the physical and emotional pains suffered during WWI under militarism and a general disadvantage and exploitation of the working class in civilian life. The difference of representation on the same subject demonstrates Tucholsky's strategic use of the sociological and historical background of his readership for his political messages.

Because of his sensitivity toward the propagandistic and ideological use of public communication in the media, Tucholsky's work began emphasizing the continuation of authoritarianism and militarism in civilian life of the Weimar Republic, namely in its public sphere and its lack of republican representation. He criticized the dominance of anti-republican discourse in public life as a symptom of a lack of a public system of

reference to a republican tradition in the Weimar Republic, and ultimately as a symptom of the inherent anti-republicanism of its functionaries. As in the articles on the importance of voting, Tucholsky also discusses the issue of the need of republican propaganda in the public sphere with great comprehension of his audience and its interests and values. His *Weltbühne* articles, which were read mostly by left-leaning intellectuals, discussed the issue of republican propaganda and political opinion-formation through literary representations of the German nation. In the *Weltbühne* article “Leerlauf” of September 30, 1920, Tucholsky as Ignatz Wrobel criticizes the majority of literary productions for their ignorance of the reality of republicanism and for their references to outdated nationalisms:

Krampfhaft produziert die Provinz ein Deutschtum, dessen Basis längst dahin ist; krampfhaft faseln sie von der Wiedergeburt eines deutschen Geistes, den die deutschen Gründerjahre nach siebzig schon zertrampelt hatten; sie aalen sich noch in den alten Formen, in den alten Liedern, in den alten Wegen. Und es ist doch aus, aus, aus. (Tucholsky 2067)

The outdated continuation of a nationalist concept of the “German nation” in literature, as criticized here, is also thematized in another *Weltbühne* article, which tackles the problem of nationalism in the press. Tucholsky as Ignatz Wrobel in the *Weltbühne* article “Parlamentsberichterstattung” of October 28, 1920, criticizes the failure of the German press to fulfill its role in a republican system of informing and including its readership in the political process: “Diese stumpfsinnige Art der Parlamentsberichterstattung verkleinert das politische Horizontchen des Lesers noch mehr. Resultat: Deutschland” (Tucholsky 10551), and he refers to the realities of economic and political partisanship within the publishing market as reasons for such biased, anti-republican practice of the German press (Tucholsky 10549).

While Tucholsky focuses on the question of nationalism and anti-republicanism in the public sphere of literature and journalism for his intellectual readership of the *Weltbühne*, his USPD-paper articles sensitize his mostly non-intellectual, working-class readership to the lack of republican representation in other aspects of public life, namely in symbols of militarism and authoritarianism in everyday life and in symbols of nationalist devotion. As Ignaz Wrobel he mentions in the *Freie Welt* article “Strasse der Republik” from October 24, 1920:

Es scheint Leute zu geben, die den Weltkrieg vergessen würden, wenn nicht der grösste Mann dieses Jahrhunderts, der Graf Zeppelin, vom Klosettdeckel herübergrüsst. Und gemahnt nicht jenes Eiserne Kreuz aus Blech mit der Inschrift “Gold gab ich für Eisen 1914” an die deutsche Politik? ... Ein Blick in diese Republik – und man hat sie erkannt bis ins Gekröse. Denn es steht geschrieben: an ihren Strassen sollt ihr sie erkennen ... Und was erkennt ihr? Es hat sich nichts gewandelt! (Tucholsky 10547-48)

The criticism expressed here of the omnipresence of anti-republican rhetoric in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic and its reinforcement of militarism and authoritarianism due to lack of republican public representation derived a new impetus in 1922, after 354 political murders committed by right-wing extremists received neither appropriate legal consequence nor sufficient criticism through the press (Gay 20). Tucholsky revisited the issue of propaganda and increasing anti-republicanism in the public sphere, now with increased awareness of ideological occupation of public language and political consequences of propaganda. He moved from a focus on the style of republican propaganda and the necessity of finding a new form for deconstructing the old to the prime task of a counter public of presenting time-appropriate alternatives to outdated concepts of the dominant, right-leaning press.

Thus, he repeatedly called for a republican form of public communication, which he saw as crucial for the republic's survival. In his *Weltbühne* article entitled "Monarchie und Republik" from June 15, 1922, Tucholsky's pseudonym Ignaz Wrobel points out the failure of the republicans in office to create a personal connection between the people and the political system through appropriate public discourse:

Aber die Republik vergisst, dass das Leben der Menschen aus dem Alltag schöpft, und dass die meisten Ideen durch kleine, fast kaum wahrnehmbare Sinneseindrücke suggeriert werden. ... Mit pathetischen Masslosigkeiten ist da nichts getan – und mit langweiligen Zahlenreihen auch nichts. Wer auf andere Leute wirken will, der muss erst einmal in ihrer Sprache mit ihnen reden. (Tucholsky 2603)

Tucholsky's comment on the necessity to find a public language that "speaks" to the audience in order to influence its political opinion formation is echoed in his programmatic *Weltbühne* article "Dämmerung" of March 11, 1922, where he highlights the necessity of finding a new form of critical public communication in order to contest dominant anti-republican ideologies: "Wir versuchen, dem gänzlich Neuen mit den alten Mitteln, den alten Witzchen beizukommen. Und werden seiner nicht Herr" (Tucholsky 1769). Tucholsky describes here the inadequacy of a public discourse that operates within an outdated framework of meaning, as he observes growing political polarization and increased political violence in reaction to and supported by anti-republican propaganda of the right- and left-wing press.

Political violence of this kind reached its peak in the murder of foreign minister Walther Rathenau on June 24, 1922, by nationalist anti-Semites. In his *Welt am Montag* article "Das Opfer einer Republik" from June 29, 1922, Tucholsky as Ignaz Wrobel reiterates the necessity of countering the existing nationalist propaganda of the press, which results in brutal actions like these. Tucholsky points out the need of a fundamental

reassessment of public communication in combating nationalism, and he contends that mere legal consequences for those who actually murdered Rathenau were not sufficient:

Nicht der allein mordet, der die Handgranate wirft. Auch der, der die Atmosphäre schafft, in der so etwas möglich ist. ... so sind die beiden Rechtsparteien schuld an der Verbreitung der faustdicken Lügen und Verdrehungen, die Rathenau das Leben gekostet haben. Die Provinzpresse rast seit Monaten gegen den Republikaner, den Steuererfasser, den Juden Rathenau. (Tucholsky 2633)

As Tucholsky indicates here, the anti-republican, anti-Semitic sentiment of the majority of the press in the Weimar Republic had created an atmosphere that enabled such brutal actions to occur with little legal consequence.

Tucholsky took the murder of Rathenau and its political circumstances as an opportunity to publish an in-depth assessment of the role of nationalist propaganda in the radicalized public sphere of the Weimar Republic in his *Weltbühne* article “Die zufällige Republik” of July 13, 1922. Tucholsky as Ignaz Wrobel responds to the murder of Walther Rathenau by urging his readers, who are mostly writers and intellectuals themselves, to help support the destruction of anti-republican traditions that were still dominant in the public in order to establish an alternative (Tucholsky 2661):

Vor allem aber: Aufklärung und Propagierung der neuen Ideen einer neuen Republik: Die Zerstörung der Preussen-Legende ist da an erster Stelle zu nennen. Abgesehen von der moralischen Vertiertheit vieler Vertreter dieses Systems muss eben das System in seinen Wurzeln angegriffen werden: klar und deutlich ist an Beispielen zu zeigen, wie da gearbeitet worden ist. Aus diesem Negativen entwickelt sich das Positive: aus Untertanen werden Bürger, aus Hände-an-die-Hosennaht-Maschinen Menschen, aus Kerls Männer. (Tucholsky 2665)

In its reference to “destruction of the Preussen legend” and “attacking the old system at its roots” this text exemplifies Tucholsky’s increasing awareness of the “roots” of nationalism as in anti-republican traditions from the *Kaiserreich* and its still dominant public language. Here he begins to synthesize his earlier observations on ideological

function of language with national identity formation in mass media context, which sets the stage for the focus of his articles published in 1922 that discuss the fabrication of German-ness in the mass media.

### **1922: The Medialized Public Sphere and the Concept of the “German Nation”**

During 1922, Tucholsky increasingly differentiated between public channels, for example in reaching the democratic middle class and the mostly leftist working class audience, through which concepts of the German nation were propagated. He pointed out three distinct reasons that contribute to the existence of multiple constructs of the German nation: public language, the polarization of political life, and the failure of republicanism to make use of mass communication and its possibilities and political potential in representing the republic. After the murder of Walther Rathenau by two young officers of the right extremist paramilitary organization “Organisation Consul” on June 24, 1922, Germany’s political landscape sharply polarized, and a law for the “Protection of the Republic” (*Republikenschutzgesetz*) was issued on June 26, 1922, in order to prevent such acts of terror and those which encourage it, particularly in the media. Tucholsky drew attention to the representation of the German nation in the public sphere as a symptom of this brutal act against one of the politically most distinctive figures of the early Weimar Republic, and pointed out that the media’s anti-republican rhetoric was perhaps a factor of such political polarization of the masses. His texts concerning this issue represent his first attempts at assessing public communication and its role in creating national identities in the context of a mass public sphere.



As with his articles on political propaganda, Tucholsky modulates his discussion on public constructs of German-ness according to the conjectured audience. In the USPD paper *Freiheit* he develops his arguments in the article “Die beiden Deutschland” in a dialectical fashion. The article’s political message is strengthened through the synthesis of the dialectical opposites in its message. In his *Welt am Abend* article “Die Republik wider Willen” he intends to reach a mixed audience of workers, lower middle class, and middle class, and discusses the issue not just for uniting the interests of the fragmented left, but also because he saw a necessity of establishing a republican propaganda such as a *Verfassungstag*, an annual celebration which publicly demonstrates an alternative version of the “German nation” in general. Tucholsky’s programmatic *Weltbühne*- article “Wir alle Fünf” is adapted to its intellectual audience in that it declares Tucholsky’s literary battle against nationalism through different personae as representing the diversity of a republican public sphere. The following sections will analyze these three articles in terms of how they discuss the media’s contribution to anti-republican constructs of German-ness, how they respond to Rathenau’s murder, the celebration of the anniversary of the Weimar constitution on August 8, 1922 in Berlin, and particularly how Tucholsky varies each issue in different publicistic contexts.

The unity of the working class as a counter public to anti-republicanism and the necessity of public representation of this counter public becomes Tucholsky’s focus in 1922. In papers primarily read by the working class, such as *Freiheit*, *Freie Welt*, and to a large extent *Welt am Abend*,<sup>70</sup> he reiterates the necessity of uniting the working class

---

<sup>70</sup> The daily paper *Welt am Abend* existed from 1922 to 1932 and had a democratic to leftist orientation. Its circulation was 17,000 in 1925 and around 200,000 in 1930 (<http://www.oeaw.ac.at/cgi-bin/pdok/bz/auf/1280>).

under the goal of establishing republicanism. In a *Freiheit* article of August 6, 1922, entitled “Die beiden Deutschland,” Tucholsky as Ignaz Wrobel stylistically develops his argument by distinguishing two existing tendencies in the German public: a progressive and a regressive one (Tucholsky 2733). He delineates the regressive one as the authoritarian, anti-republican dominance in public life, and the progressive one as the proletariat, which is, however, fragmented because of its tendency to identify with anti-republican sentiment of the lower middle class (Tucholsky 2736). Tucholsky appeals to the unity of the working class by popularizing an alternative, republican version of German-ness from the worker’s perspective: “Unser Deutschland hat in der Hauptsache nur einen Freund, unsere Republik hat fast nur den einen: den Arbeiter” (Tucholsky 2737). This unity of the working class under the goal of republicanism would prevent a weakening and fragmentation of the working class through ideological migration towards lower middle class- authoritarianism, and it would powerfully counter dominant, reactionary concepts of German-ness. Such concepts that counter anti-republicanism are of vital importance to be popularized, according to Tucholsky. He refers to the republican constitution’s commemoration-day of August 11, which he takes as an incentive to inform the working-class readership of the *Freiheit* about the stark discrepancies between the republic’s constitution and its practice - a message which implies the plea for working-class, pro-republican activism, published in the article entitled “Verfassungstag” of August 13, 1922, under Ignaz Wrobel. Here, he clearly distinguishes republicanism as a working-class goal and not as that of the bourgeoisie. By doing so, he tries to empower, unite, and encourage his working class readership to devote themselves to the Republic:

Verfassungsfeiertag? – Treibt es die Republik so weiter, wird sie nicht oft mehr in die Verlegenheit kommen, ihn feiern zu müssen. Und so, wie es im ganzen Bürgertum einhellig heisst, wenn vom Rechtsputsch gesprochen wird, so ist es auch: ‘Das werden sich die Arbeiter nicht gefallen lassen!’ – Sie werden es auch nicht. Geht dieser Winter gut vorüber: es wird *ihr* Verdienst sein. (Tucholsky 2751)

Besides making republicanism the cause of the working class, Tucholsky also stresses the permanent necessity of a public representation of the republic. He felt that such a republican propaganda, as it existed, was not aggressive enough in order to counter existing nationalist propaganda. Keeping his working-class readership in mind, he uses graphic colloquialisms to underline his point: “Es gibt schon ganz weite Schichten, die unbedingt hinter der republikanischen Staatsform stehen – man hat sie nur nicht recht zu erfassen verstanden. Wie man ja überhaupt eine Propaganda macht, die keinen Hund hinter dem Ofen hervorzulocken imstande ist” (Tucholsky 2750).

Tucholsky uses a less graphic tone in his discussion of republicanism and its public representation in the *Welt am Abend* article “Die Republik wider Willen”, published on August 11, 1922. Here, he expands as Ignaz Wrobel the USPD-papers’ working-class related discussion of republicanism to a general criticism of the failure of republican public representation, which he sees of vital importance for the survival of the republic within the context of contesting national identities in the public sphere.

Tucholsky acknowledges public display of republicanism and its public celebrations as the foundation of a republican culture, which promotes an alternative to authoritarian concepts of the German nation:

Ich weiss auch sehr genau, dass es auf solchen Feiertag allein gar nicht ankommt. Aber er ist doch schliesslich der sinnlich wahrnehmbare Ausdruck einer politischen Tatsache – und es gibt ja genug Mitbürger, die etwas sehen wollen, bevor sie an etwas glauben. Man unterschätze das nicht: der selige Wilhelm hat

das fast so gut verstanden wie Manoli – und beider Reklame hat sich gelohnt.  
Davon weiss die Republik noch nichts. (Tucholsky 10683)

This text indicates Tucholsky's opinion that national identities are constructed through repetitive public representation. He contextualizes his discussion of republican propaganda into the realm of familiar experience of his readership: he alludes to the past experience of Wilhelminian chauvinism and its aggressive propaganda, and he alludes to the present experience in the Weimar Republic of aggressive advertisement in a consumer-oriented market by mentioning the permanent exposure to products such as the then popular *Manoli* cigarettes. By illuminating similar mechanisms of propaganda in the realm of politics and in the realm of consumerism, Tucholsky exposes the interrelation of everyday culture and political culture.

Tucholsky discusses this issue from the perspective of the writer-intellectual in his programmatic *Weltbühne* article "Wir alle Fünf" from August 14, 1922, in which he reiterates the importance of a diverse public voice in a diverse public sphere in order to reach diverse audiences in representing republicanism. He writes that all five pseudonyms, including his name, have a particular function for the same goal; they are "fünf Finger an einer Hand" that love democracy and demand equality of all before the law (Tucholsky 2768). These "fingers," representing his public personae, create and reflect different levels in public communication, as the public sphere hosts a variety of discourses on the German nation. He repeatedly refers to an "other" Germany, an understanding of German-ness that was rooted in an outdated *Kaiserreich*-ideology of militarism and anti-republicanism: "Wir hassen jenes Deutschland, das es wagt, sich als das allein echte Original-Deutschland auszugeben, und das doch nur eine schlechte Karikatur eines überlebten Preussentums ist" (Tucholsky 2766). The residue of pre-

Weimar ideologies manifested itself, according to Tucholsky, in public communication about the “genuine” Germany, which was a fundamental constituent of pre-Weimar national identities and political orientations.<sup>71</sup>

Tucholsky’s foremost goal as a publicist was his public battle against this anti-republican sentiment, and he hoped to popularize a democratic understanding of German-ness. By embracing the diversity of the Weimar Republic’s public sphere, his analyses and critiques of the socio-political situation of the Republic, and particularly his concern with and public battle against the established anti-democratic national identity, were presented through a multiplicity of public personas and through a diversity of channels.

Tucholsky’s differentiation between different public channels through which a German nation is propagated exhibited a unique position in contemporary discussions around the concept of German-ness in its different cultural traditions.

### **Tucholsky’s Pragmatic Concept of a Republican Public Sphere**

Testing Tucholsky’s model against those of other prominent intellectuals such as Heinrich Mann and Thomas Mann during the first phase of the Weimar Republic reveals Tucholsky’s pragmatic views on the role of the public intellectual and his/her ability to popularize republican discourse, and it shows how Tucholsky’s model of public

---

<sup>71</sup> Recent scholarship has challenged the established “*Sonderweg*-discussion” in historiography, which had asserted that a peculiar historical development in Germany, namely a belated industrialization and a general trend of conserving feudalist ideologies amongst the German middle class, led to the catastrophe of National Socialism. Historians such as David Blackbourn or Geoff Eley, however, maintain that class boundaries were less rigid than stated in the *Sonderweg*-theory, and that the reasons for the Nazi-phenomenon were far more complex. See Blackbourn, 409-33; Geoff Eley, 11. In the light of this reevaluation of the origins of National Socialism in Germany, historians have begun examining more complex issues of political practice such as the language of political discourse and the vocabulary of everyday politics, since it reveals systems of meaning and of ideological value. These studies found that language, “the terms and linguistic constructions used by individuals, interest organizations, and political parties – forms a critical interpretive link between social identity and the process of political mobilization” (Childers 358).

communication differs from prominent contemporary intellectuals' models in that he attempts to contextualize it into the realities of a mass media market.

Heinrich Mann's political stance changed from conservative to republican around the turn of the century (Görzel 378). He wrote "Kaiserreich und Republik," a "geschichts-philosophische Synthese aus Rousseau, Kant, und USPD-Sozialismus" in 1919 (Haupt 76), during a phase in which republicanism and moralism dominated his work (Görzel 379). In this essay Heinrich Mann argues for republicanism from an ethical perspective:

Nichts hindert, zu hoffen, dass in dem redlich und wahr sich mühenden Deutschland des kommenden Lehr- und Prüfungsalters aus gesammelter Volkskraft Helden des Geistes entkeimen, Beherrscher einer Zeit, die nicht mehr trennt, was eins sein sollte: Macht und Weisheit. (Mann 433)

This emphasis on republican ethos is Heinrich Mann's undertone in this essay, which also approaches the question of the German mentality as the foundation of the authoritarian *Kaiserreich*. The *Kaiserreich*, according to Mann, was ended by an "awakening" of humanitarianism in form of republicanism; a process which Mann describes with almost biblical pathos:

Das Gewissen der Menschheit erwachte: sieh, da erwachte in ihm auch das deutsche Gewissen. Deutschland war befreit; besiegt waren nur das Reich und seine Untertanen. (Mann 390)

Heinrich Mann's arguments for republicanism as an alternative to authoritarianism comes close to the essence of Tucholsky's concept, but differs sharply in its representation and in its neglect of contextualizing it into a medialized public sphere. Heinrich Mann shared Tucholsky's scepticism towards political extremism (Haupt 77), and he became also increasingly concerned with nationalism as a powerful force against the establishment of

republicanism during the Weimar Republic (Scheuer 127). Similar to Tucholsky's view, Heinrich Mann sees a connection between nationalism, capitalism, and militarism, and criticizes the corruptive effect of this connection, but explains this corruption as one of the German "soul" (Mann 405), and not as a product of concrete aspects of the early Weimar Republic's political culture, as Tucholsky's pragmatic criticism does.

Compared to Tucholsky's texts, Thomas Mann's argument for republicanism is equally, if not even more, removed from the realities of public mass communication and its role in national identity formation as Heinrich Mann's. Thomas Mann's devotion to the German literary tradition, whether democratic or not, becomes apparent in his speech for Gerhart Hauptmann's sixtieth birthday, entitled *Von deutscher Republik*. This speech was published on the front page of the *Berliner Tageblatt* (October 17, 1922) and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (October 15, 1922), and links the German cultural tradition with democracy and tries to make a case for Hauptmann as "König der Republik" (Thomas Mann 63), despite its contradiction in terms, and despite the fact that Hauptmann had often expressed his concept of the apolitical artist (Scheuer 133). Thomas Mann's view on republicanism differs from Heinrich Mann's and Tucholsky's discussions in that Thomas Mann argues entirely from a literary-philosophical perspective. He defines humanity in its legal form in republicanism, which he explains as something inherently "German:"

Humanität. Zwischen ästhetizistischer Vereinzelung und würdelosem Untergange des Individuums im Allgemeinen; zwischen Mystik und Ethik, Innerlichkeit und Staatlichkeit; zwischen todverbundener Verneinung des Ethischen, Bürgerlichen, des Wertes und einer nichts als wasserklar-ethischen Vernunftphilisterei ist sie in Wahrheit die deutsche Mitte, das Schön-Menschliche, wovon unsere Besten träumen. Und wir huldigen ihrer positiven Rechtsform, als deren Sinn und Ziel wir die Einheit des politischen und des nationalen Lebens begriffen haben, indem

wir unsere noch ungelenten Zungen zu dem Ruf schmeidigen: "Es lebe die Republik!" (Thomas Mann 64)

This text exemplifies Mann's argument for republicanism through his acknowledgement of its high-cultural tradition and declares it as the "true" German identity, and it was particularly this aesthetic dimension of republicanism which Mann emphasized during the early phase of the Weimar Republic (Mörchen 44). Thomas Mann had radically changed his political stance from conservative-nationalist during WWI to republican as a reaction to the political murders of the early Weimar Republic (Reed, *Mann and History* 1-21). In this essay he repeatedly points out the nationalists' exploitation of the early Weimar Republic's crisis for propagating the illusion of a glorious pre-Weimar past, which he describes as a perversion of Romanticism (Reed, *Uses of Tradition* 293). Thus, Thomas Mann's essay makes the case for republicanism entirely from a culturally and aesthetic point of view without taking into account the multifaceted aspects of public communication and its role in political opinion and identity formation, as Tucholsky's work does.

Thomas Mann argues for the republic from an aesthetic perspective, Heinrich Mann argues for the republic from an ethical perspective, and Tucholsky argues for the republic from a pragmatic perspective by embracing the diversity of modern social and political life. While still acknowledging Germany's cultural tradition, Tucholsky's pragmatic concept of a republican public sphere negotiates between high- and low-cultural traditions. It takes into account realities of public communication in the mass media without completely dismissing Weimar's high-cultural tradition. It seeks a model of public communication and national identity that acknowledges a liberal cultural tradition but contextualizes it into a new, medialized, democratic system.



## **Tucholsky's Public Sphere as a Third Way in a Politically Polarized Weimar**

### **Republic**

Tucholsky's negotiation between pre- and post-WWI public language, high- and low cultural traditions, and the political polarization of the Weimar Republic's public sphere during its first phase demonstrates the beginnings of Tucholsky's revolutionary concept of satirical *Publizistik* as a counter-public sphere. His writings of this phase represent a response to a transformed public sphere in the context of a mass market – a phenomenon which was later systematically analyzed by Jürgen Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere*. While his initial texts of 1919 reflect his traditional, Enlightenment-concept of the intellectual as educator, similar to Habermas' concept of the Enlightenment public sphere as the ideal of public communication, the experience of an increasingly polarized public and its growing political violence soon revised this concept to one of the public intellectual as operating in the context of mass communication in acute political crisis. The Kapp-Putsch of 1920 and its defeat through a general strike of the workers shaped politics profoundly and made Tucholsky realize the immense political potential of the working class. Thus, Tucholsky developed a concept of a counter-public sphere which anticipated later notions of the public by Negt and Kluge, who contextualized them into the fluctuating and unstable realities of the technological mass media. Tucholsky, like Negt and Kluge later, and unlike Habermas, recognized the revolutionary potential of the mass public sphere.

Consequently, he turned to the working-class press for publishing on the advantages of a republican system for the working class and to establish a strong counter-

public to the Weimar Republic's powerful anti-republican forces. While Tucholsky acknowledged the diversity of the public sphere, he realized the contradictory existence of a unifying ideology in public communication. He tried to come to terms with it by promoting republicanism not only on different public levels such as in pacifist-republican organizations and at their public antiwar and pro-republican demonstrations, but also through his diverse public voices in a wide spectrum of publishing venues and public personae. His critique of the role of language in national identity formation in a mass media context remained consistent, while he appropriated this message consciously to its publishing context and its projected audience. Increasingly he addressed the working class by drawing analogies between the goals of republicanism and the goals of the working class movement. Tucholsky repeatedly reminded his audience of the discrepancy between political concepts in public communication and a new public and political reality of democracy and a mass media market, which called for a new conceptualization of political and social life. His work in this early period reflects Tucholsky's beginning attempt to deconstruct semantics of *Kaiserreich*, which he saw as still dominant in the young Republic's public sphere, since a linguistic *Stunde Null*, as established right after WWII in order to terminate National Socialist public conceptualization and to symbolize a new political beginning, did not exist after WWI. The context of increased political and economic crisis, culminating in the political murders of 1922 and the beginning of inflation and the occupation of the Ruhr Valley, prompted Tucholsky to increasingly use satire to deconstruct anti-democratic forces which further destabilized the Weimar Republic.

While this phase marks the beginning of his satirical deconstruction of outdated authoritarianism, non-satirical, programmatic articles still dominate the tone of his writings, which indicate this phase's function of establishment of Tucholsky as a satirist in the Weimar Republic's public discourse on national identity. His pragmatic view on the role of the public intellectual in promoting republicanism within the Weimar Republic's publishing market distinguishes him from contemporary intellectuals such as Heinrich and Thomas Mann whose arguments for republicanism remain within the boundaries of idealist paradigms. Thus, Tucholsky's work during the first phase of the Weimar Republic shows an increased sensibility for the political potential of the mass public sphere, as it attempted to find a third way for the public intellectual in communicating politically critical messages by overcoming dichotomies of elitism and functionalism, as well as those of party politics and aloof intellectualism. It also, however, represents the difficulty of consistent public communication in a transformed public sphere, in which what is relevant for a communicative act is the public voice in a particular communicative context rather than the personality of its speaker. Thus, Tucholsky's role as a public intellectual during the first phase of the Weimar Republic may be regarded as one displaying the ambiguities of medialized communication in general.

### Chapter III

#### “Unser Vaterland ist ein geeintes Europa:”

#### **Pacifism and Internationalism during the “Stable Years” of the Weimar Republic (1924-1928)**

Man ist in Europa ein Mal Staatsbürger und zweiundzwanzig Mal Ausländer.  
Wer weise ist: dreiundzwanzig Mal.<sup>72</sup>

The double meaning of this humorous aphorism demonstrates Tucholsky’s multifaceted view of Europe’s political culture during the second phase of the Weimar Republic. It expresses the ambivalence Tucholsky felt towards being a German and being a European. On the one hand, he wished every European held just one citizenship and was a European “twenty three times,” which would prevent nationalism and secure peace. Considering the increasing tendency toward nationalism in Europe, on the other hand, however, Tucholsky thought it was better to be a foreigner in Europe altogether, to not be a European “twenty three times.”

The equivocality also displays the two political directions of the Weimar Republic’s middle years. After 1924, foreign minister Stresemann’s conciliatory politics contributed to a general trend in the political and economic stabilization of Germany and Europe in general. During this time, due to an increasingly fragmented political culture

---

<sup>72</sup> Peter Panter, “Nationales,” *Weltbühne*, November 25, 1925 (Tucholsky 3338).

in Germany, nationalism consolidated on the one hand, but also republicanism reached high popularity among voters.

The two aspects of being European or not being European, as mentioned by Tucholsky, also point to his role outside of Germany and his distance from it. He lived in Paris as a cultural correspondent between 1924 and 1928. Writing about German culture from the critical distance of an outsider, he saw the everyday culture (*Alltagskultur*) of the middle class as a fundamental source of Germany's nationalisms. His writings discussed how nationalism was promoted through the press, literature, theater, and films of the time. They express his growing concern with national and international identities, as Tucholsky turned from short-term activism of trying to reach a working-class audience to prevent more anti-republican extremism during the republic's first, crisis-ridden phase to the long-term political issue of pacifism and Europeanism during the Republic's second phase.<sup>73</sup>

This chapter seeks to answer the question of how, during the second phase of the Weimar Republic, Tucholsky tried to minimize national antagonisms through cultural communication between France and Germany. It traces how he refined his view on the function of the public intellectual as a satirist. He criticized the practice of republicanism in Germany's middle class and tried to find the reason why republicanism in Germany was so dysfunctional. In order to find this reason, he dissected the ideology of the middle class by means of a satirical depiction of its everyday culture and discovered specific anti-democratic tendencies perpetuated in this culture.

---

<sup>73</sup> Tucholsky's concept of Europeanism entailed a federal union of democratic countries. He explains the necessity of not only an economic, but also a political union in Europe for the sake of peace in his article "Aussen- und Innenpolitik," written in 1926 (Tucholsky 9860-63).

During the middle years of the Weimar Republic, European politics stood at its crossroads. It bore the potential to develop toward a united, peaceful union of nations, and it also had the potential to develop toward increased nationalism and an eventual war. This critique of the constituents of nationalisms that hindered the development of a peaceful, united Europe was at the crux of his work during the second phase of the Weimar Republic. Following an overview of political events that Tucholsky responded to in his activities as a public intellectual during the mid-1920s, the first section of this chapter analyzes Tucholsky's discussions on the redefinition of the role of the public intellectual in politically critical communication. Tucholsky discussed nationalism and its underlying base of middle-class mentality and his representation of a peaceful alternative to nationalist concepts of the German nation: a European Union.

During the last year of the middle phase, Tucholsky found himself caught up in ideological contradictions yet again. On the one hand, he tried to recruit working-class readers through communist papers, on the other hand he tried to appeal to a politically moderate audience in Ullstein publications. As the middle phase of the Weimar Republic approached its end, he saw a heightened importance in reaching a more and more diverse readership in order to counter increasing nationalism. In 1928, Tucholsky targeted a communist readership while employed at Willi Münzenberg's *AIZ*,<sup>74</sup> although he also pursued a moderate audience in Ullstein's *Uhu* and *Tempo*. In his private correspondence, he expressed an increasing distance from communist party politics, but

---

<sup>74</sup> With a circulation of around 400,000, Willi Münzenberg's *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (*AIZ*) was the largest communist periodical in the Weimar Republic. Its political line was identical with that of the communist party KPD. However, Münzenberg tried to attract a bourgeois readership as well by employing writers of non-communist background such as Tucholsky, or avantgardists like John Heartfield (Hepp 297).

yet his most sensational publications of this period were in the *AIZ*.<sup>75</sup> It was the increasingly blunt and graphic style he used in the *AIZ* when satirizing National Socialism and in articles of other papers, primarily the *Weltbühne*, which set the tone for Tucholsky's publications during the last phase of the Republic. It also suggests that Tucholsky turned to satire and its various applications in different venues with different audiences as the stable phase neared its end.

Tucholsky used a playful satirical style when mocking nationalist press language. It pointed out the social and political repercussions of such anti-republican discourse in the media. In order to demonstrate Tucholsky's unique use of satire and its adaptation to its publicistic context in his work's quest to maintain critical public communication, this chapter's conclusion will compare Tucholsky's model with writings on republicanism, nationalism, and the role of public communication by Carl von Ossietzky, Tucholsky's editor-in-chief at the *Weltbühne*. The comparison will investigate the ways Tucholsky's model distinguishes itself in the context of contemporary intellectual discourse on republicanism and public communication as an innovative, progressive way of negotiating between the dichotomies of high- and low-literary style, art and politics, and the consequence of establishing a republican counter-public sphere in an increasingly anti-republican political and cultural environment.

This chapter assesses the author's predominant themes of pacifism and Europeanism during this middle period most of which Tucholsky spent in Paris. That discussion will be preceded by an overview on studies concerning Tucholsky's work at this time. Such an overview is useful in positioning this chapter's interpretation of the

---

<sup>75</sup> His *AIZ*-poem "Gesang der englischen Chorknaben," published on September 6, 1928, caused legal action against Tucholsky (and Münzenberg) for blasphemy.

second phase in Tucholsky's work as one that, on the one hand, tried to capture the emotions of a mass audience, but which, on the other hand, tried to create distance through satire for a critical re-conceptualization of familiar ideologies.

### **Scholarship's disregard of Pacifism and Europeanism in Tucholsky's Work**

There are only a few scholarly studies on Tucholsky's publicistic work that was published after 1923. Exceptions are analyses of his books *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* (1929) and of his popular novel *Schloss Gripsholm* (1931). A reason for such scholarly neglect of his publicistic work after 1923 could be that he was not residing in Germany anymore, and that therefore his critical writings on the political, social, and cultural situation in Germany were not regarded as valid.

The few studies concerned with the publicistic work beyond his Berlin years have recently identified Europeanism and pacifism as central aspects of Tucholsky's work of the Weimar Republic's middle years. In 2001, Ian King published the first and to date the only article on Tucholsky's concept of Europeanism. King saw Tucholsky's motivation for supporting the cause of a united Europe as rooted in his pacifist orientation (King, *European* 172). Gerhard Kraiker's article on Tucholsky's "Vertikaler Journalismus" (2002) mentions Tucholsky's anti-militarism and anti-nationalism as the motivations for his pacifist activism and writings, but it does not make these issues its primary focus (Kraiker 286). This chapter supports and extends King's and Kraiker's recent discoveries by looking at Tucholsky's writing during the second phase of the Weimar Republic. It was during this phase, while Tucholsky resided in Paris, that he critiqued nationalist traits in the everyday culture (*Alltagskultur*) of the German middle



class, particularly in its press language and its difference from the culture of the French middle class. During his years in Paris as a cultural correspondent, Tucholsky developed an outsider's perspective on Germany and its anti-republican culture. He realized that only a profound reconceptualization of national identity in the form of a supranational political system would secure lasting peace in Europe. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this study (dealing with his writings during the Republic's first phase), Tucholsky regarded the mass media, its language, and the role of the public intellectual as pivotal in the process of democratizing Germany. These issues remain relevant for Tucholsky in the second phase of the Weimar Republic. They surface again in his writings on German nationalism and its alternative in an international form of identity.

In this chapter, the point of departure for an examination of Tucholsky's critique of nationalism in politics, public communication, and the culture of the middle class of the Weimar Republic is Theodor Ickler's article "Die Überwindung des Pathos. Zu Sprache und Stil bei Kurt Tucholsky," (1981) in which Ickler states that Tucholsky tried to overcome an outdated form of language for moral reasons (Ickler 177). While I agree with Ickler that Tucholsky was indeed concerned with trying to find a new way of public communication, I diverge from his thesis by assuming that Tucholsky's views about outdated language use was not based on moral concerns but on his concern regarding the continuity of nationalisms. He saw nationalism as perpetuated through unreformed public language, whether in the mass media, in literature, in public speeches, or even in public monuments with their own symbolic frames of reference.

Tucholsky's public voice became increasingly diverse and broad during the second phase of the Weimar Republic. An initial overview of the press landscape of the

Weimar Republic's middle years situates Tucholsky's work within this landscape and traces Tucholsky's political and cultural activities in Paris. It is followed by an overview of Tucholsky's publishing strategies during these years, which were the most diverse of his whole career. The interpretive part of this chapter will answer the question of how Tucholsky's texts are situated in public communication of the Weimar Republic, and how Tucholsky's satirical voice responded to shifting circumstances of political activism. It will address the fact that Tucholsky's concept of the public intellectual became less elitist during the middle years, and it will discuss Tucholsky's responses to political developments during these years, particularly to growing nationalism in Germany after 1925.

### **Germany's Press Landscape during the Years of Relative Stability (1924-1928)**

Despite temporary consolidation of Germany's economy, the political landscape of the Weimar Republic's middle years remained deeply divided. Germany's press landscape of this phase responded to this division. Regulations concerning press censorship and restrictions to publishing, particularly the *Republiksschutzgesetz* concerning politically extremist publications and the *Schmutz- und Schundgesetz* concerning allegedly immoral publications marked the press landscape of the Weimar Republic's middle years.

On the level of politics, which was heavily influential on developments on the press landscape, enormous rejection by nationalists of any foreign influence on German

policy, particularly the Dawes Plan of 1924,<sup>76</sup> indicated the difficulty domestic politics faced. While foreign affairs under Gustav Stresemann were generally labeled as highly successful during 1924 and 1928 (Kolb 65), the republic did not consolidate internally, and its relative stability rested on a fragile foundation of structural problems that “were carried over into the period of ‘stabilization,’ as were other unresolved problems in the economy and the welfare state, to say nothing of the challenges thrown up by the headlong rush into modernization” (Peukert 207). Although the economy appeared stable compared to its preceding and succeeding phases, the government itself never came up to the norms of its constitution.<sup>77</sup> Frequent changes of government led to an inconsistent political course, which led in turn back to frequent changes of government. Any given party, loyal to the government or not, could be part of a governing coalition, which made a consolidation of parliamentary politics even more difficult. The middle period of the Weimar Republic hosted three Reichstag elections, in which the republican parties (SPD, Center, to a certain degree DDP) steadily gained votes.<sup>78</sup> However, it was during this

---

<sup>76</sup> The Dawes Plan regulated and revised Germany’s war reparations payments. It was based on massive US credit, which helped Germany’s economic recovery. However, the controversy around passing the Dawes-Plan in the *Reichstag* reflected the division of the nationalist right in 1924. While Alfred Hugenberg’s press empire expressed radical and uncompromising opposition to the Plan, Hugenberg’s DNVP, at the time one of the strongest parties in the *Reichstag*, came under pressure from industrialist and agricultural associations which were in need of the US-credits, but which also harbored the interests of many nationalist voters (Leopold 25). In general, lack of acceptance for the republic in its press was strengthened by anti-republican propaganda on the basis of a missing economical perspective for many Germans, a lack of opportunities for an integrating identification with the republic, the fact that the republic was established as a consequence of a revolution and carried out by social democrats who in the Kaiserreich had been labeled as “enemies of the *Reich*,” and the inability of the coalition government to absorb or redirect this lack of acceptance played a significant role in the system’s deficit of legitimation (Asmuss 575).

<sup>77</sup> Eberhard Kolb lists the following factors that caused the failure to form a parliamentary form of central government in the Weimar Republic: the absence of a parliamentary majority which could establish a consistent political course, the intervention by the Reich President as the parliamentary system weakened, and the growing discontent with party and parliamentary government (Kolb 67).

<sup>78</sup> For an overview of Reichstag elections during the Weimar Republic see Peukert (209).

period of alleged stabilization that critical voices in the mass media were silenced by strict and conservative press regulations.

***The “Republikenschutzgesetz” and the “Schmutz- und Schundgesetz” during Weimar’s Middle Years***

The press landscape of the Weimar Republic’s middle years was shaped by rigorous censorship legislation. In 1925, the year Germany elected a president, press sanctions against the radical right were lifted, and particularly the NSDAP organ *Völkischer Beobachter* benefited from this leniency. Its circulation rose to 30,000 in the first two years of its existence (1921-1923) and in the wake of the ban had a circulation of 4,000 in 1925 (Koszyk 381). The *Völkische Beobachter* did not recover from the ban until the 1930s. In 1928, it had only about half (15,100) of the readership it had before the ban in 1923 (Anheier 10). However, during this stable period the NSDAP began decentralizing its provincial press and quickly re-gained a broad readership through other NS papers. While in 1926 there was only one National Socialist daily paper with a daily circulation of 10,700 (Koszyk 385), in 1929 there were already ten National Socialist daily papers with a circulation of 72,590 (Koszyk 385).

The press on the left end of the political spectrum, on the other hand, declined in circulation numbers during the Weimar Republic’s middle years. While in 1926 the percentage of SPD- and KPD-affiliated papers was 5.7% of the total number of newspapers, it declined to 5.1% in 1928 (Eksteins 312). The right-wing press, however, rose from 23.6% in 1926 to 27.3% in 1928 (Eksteins 312). While this dramatic rise of the right-wing press toward the end of the Weimar Republic was conducted by fortunate

economic strategies of DNVP leader and ultra-conservative media-tycoon Alfred Hugenberg (portrayed in detail in Chapter 5 of this dissertation), the political left also had an ambitious and influential media-baron: Willi Münzenberg. Münzenberg was the executive of the communist *Internationale Arbeiterhilfe (IAH)*, which had the *Kosmos-Verlag GmbH* and the *Neuer Deutscher Verlag* in Berlin. These publishing houses were not directly affiliated with the KPD and were not controlled by it, and Münzenberg, despite his communist aspirations, worked with capitalist marketing strategies (McMeekin 260). Thus, the above mentioned meager circulation numbers of the SPD- and KPD-affiliated papers do not include Münzenberg's leftist publications. In 1925, he began publishing the magazine *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung (AIZ)*, which became, with a circulation of 400,000, one of the largest communist periodicals in the Weimar Republic (deMendelssohn 328). Münzenberg's publishing strategies were unconventional for a communist, since he tried to recruit a variety of popular and not necessarily communist artists and writers to contribute to his papers (Koszyk 330). Münzenberg also published a variety of experimental papers, for example the magazine *Der Arbeiterfotograf* (with many contributions by John Heartfield and his avant-gardist photcollages), the satirical magazine *Der Eulenspiegel* (edited by Heinrich Zille, a friend of Tucholsky's and a fellow leftist intellectual), women's magazines such as *Der Weg der Frau*, which had a circulation of 100,000 in the early 1930s (Koszyk 333). Münzenberg also joined the film industry and published a magazine entitled *Film und Volk*, in which he advertised for film as the new medium of the working class. In 1925, Münzenberg took over the film distribution company *Prometheus*, originally owned by the KPD. It became famous through a communist film of 1926, *Panzerkreuzer Potemkin* by Sergei Eisenstein.

Münzenberg also published a number of successful urban daily newspapers. The most successful one was the *Welt am Abend*, which, when he bought it in 1926, had a circulation of around 30,000. Within two years, Münzenberg boosted its circulation to 174,000 (<http://www.oeaw.ac.at/cgi-bin/pdok/bz/auf/1280>). Münzenberg's success, which was particularly evident during the last years of the Republic's second phase and the first years of its third phase, was based on his unconventional marketing strategies (he was often called the "Der Rote Hugenberg" in reference to the equally successful but more influential because ultra-conservative Alfred Hugenberg), and, as his partner Babette Gross mentioned, his success responded to the political and economic circumstances of Weimar's middle years: "Der vorübergehende Rechtskurs der Komintern von 1926 bis Ende 1928, die ihren Parteien gestattete, sich an die breiten Massen zur Eroberung der Mehrheit der Arbeiterklasse zu wenden, ebenso wie der wirtschaftliche Aufschwung der Weimarer Republik in jenen Jahren, trug nicht wenig dazu bei, dass sich diese Betriebe so rasch und erfolgreich entwickeln konnten" (qtd. in Koszyk 335).

It was the left-radical press of Münzenberg and the right-extremist press (particularly the NSDAP party press) that was monitored most closely by the *Republikenschutzgesetz* of 1922. The *Republikenschutzgesetz* that had illegalized anti-republican press publications, was used less between 1924 and 1927, indicating a less radicalized press. Press sanctions fell from 52 in 1922 to 30 in 1925, and from 20 in 1926 to 4 in 1927. In 1928, the number rose slightly to 7 in the context of an approaching crisis. The intense crisis of republicanism in the last phase of the republic is

indicated in the sharp rise of press sanctions: while in 1928 there were 7, in 1931 there were 224 (Koszyk 340).

However infrequent the use of the *Republikschutzgesetz* was prior to 1929, it was not fairly invoked even during the relatively calm years between 1924 and 1928. A case of libel against the communist press of the year 1926 illustrates the anti-communist bias of the judiciary: the communist paper *Rote Fahne* published a poem entitled “Achtung Hunde! Eine Tierfabel aus dem Hundereich,” formerly published in the leftist satirical magazine *Knüppel* (which caused a three-month sanction against *Knüppel*), and which satirized President Hindenburg’s militarist past (Petersen, *Zensur* 140). The responsible editor of the *Rote Fahne*, Armin Hauswirth, was sent to prison for nine months. The Nazi paper *Völkischer Beobachter*, on the other hand, published the poem on its front page under the heading “Bolschewistische Roheit,” without any legal consequences (Petersen, *Zensur* 144).

The conservative-reactionary bias of the censorship practices in the Weimar Republic were also felt by the party’s independent but critical, satirical magazines of the liberal-leftist intellectuals. Such magazines, namely the intellectual organ *Weltbühne*, the satirical *Knüppel*, the left-liberal *Tage-Buch*, and the pacifist papers *Die Menschheit*, *Das Andere Deutschland*, and *Der Pazifist*, were often sued by extra-parliamentary organizations such as the church or the military (Petersen, *Zensur* 144). The satirical magazine *Knüppel*, published in the progressive-leftist-avantgardist *Malik-Verlag* (whose contributors were, among others, George Grosz, Rudolf Schlichter, Kurt Tucholsky, Walter Mehring), was confiscated for almost a year between 1924 and 1925 after complaints from church organizations (Petersen, *Zensur* 145). The *Weltbühne* in

particular became a target of complaints from the military, especially after 1926, when the paper had the outspoken pacifist Carl von Ossietzky as chief editor. Ossietzky had to serve a one-month prison term in 1927 for libel of the *Reichswehr* (Petersen, *Zensur* 147). The pacifist papers *Die Menschheit*, *Der Pazifist*, and *Das Andere Deutschland*, which, like the *Weltbühne*, reported illegal and secret rearmament of the *Reichswehr*, became constant targets of legal action initiated by the military, despite the objective illegality of the *Reichswehr*'s actions. The legal trials against these papers resulted mostly in prison sentences for treason (Petersen, *Zensur* 152). Besides disabling critical voices, the *Republikschutzgesetz* thus also categorized such papers as "anti-German" for their alleged treason. It was the paradox of the *Republikschutzgesetz*, that, although it was originally intended to shield the republic from extremist, anti-republican propaganda, it had actually become a tool against voices critical of reactionary and militarist tendencies in German politics. The often unfair application of the law, and the anti-republican bias of its execution, pointed to the general ultra-conservative stance of the German judiciary, which Tucholsky repeatedly criticized in his writings.

Another powerful tool in regulating and censoring liberal, democratic voices in the public sphere was a law issued in 1926 entitled *Schmutz- und Schundgesetz*. This law was originally intended to regulate pornographic publications, which had been flourishing since the legally granted freedom of the press in 1918. However, moral censorship was soon used for political censorship as well (Petersen, *Zensur* 179). Literature and the visual arts, theater, and film were affected by this law. The law was supported by ultra-conservative, mostly church-affiliated organizations, which through their frequent lawsuits against liberal or allegedly immoral publications, films, or



performances, indirectly supported the political right. Such organizations worked closely with ultra-conservative groups in the *Reichstag* in order to suppress pacifist, liberal, democratic, and progressive propaganda, and to promote nationalism based on church-affiliated, Christian moral values among Germans (Petersen, *Zensur* 280).

However, the *Reichstags*-elections of 1928 showed an increased potential for the Republic to survive. The NSDAP's vote fell from 3% in 1924 to 2.6% of votes, the DNVP received 14.20% (which was a significant loss since its 20.5% in 1924), and the KPD had 10.60%, a slight increase from 9% in 1924, and the SPD gained 29.8% from a former 26% (<http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html/1928/index.html>). Tucholsky's activities during this phase of the Weimar Republic resonated with his conviction that republicanism had a potential more than ever in Germany and in Europe, but this potential had to be channeled by the critical, diverse, oppositional voice of the public intellectual.

### **Tucholsky's Paris Years: The Road to Europeanism**

The year 1924 brought many new beginnings for Tucholsky. As the economy stabilized and political extremism decreased, Tucholsky expanded his activities as a public intellectual. This expansion took on international dimensions. Not only did he sign a contract with Siegfried Jacobsohn's *Weltbühne* for permanent employment, he also moved to Paris to work as a cultural correspondent for the *Weltbühne* and the *Vossische Zeitung*.

This new situation of permanent employment at the influential *Weltbühne* and at the prestigious *Vossische Zeitung* caused Tucholsky to deepen his concerns on issues of

nationalism, national identity, class mentality, and international political solutions to crises. The physical distance to Germany, and the fact that he resided in an established democracy, provided a critical perspective on German culture that allowed him to analyze long-term ideological and socio-political elements of German political culture, which he regarded as inherently authoritarian. During this phase, Tucholsky was intensely involved in indirect political activism, mainly in pacifist movements and in organizations that supported cross-cultural understanding, particularly between Germany and France. He became active in French pacifist movements, for which he gave around forty to fifty speeches, amongst others at the *Ligue des Droites de L'Hommes* (Hepp 259). Through the *Ligue*, the French branch of the *Liga für Menschenrechte*, he came into contact with many German intellectuals and pacifists who lived in Paris or visited there frequently, such as Harry Graf Kessler and Hellmut von Gerlach, George Grosz, and Arthur Holitscher (Bemmann, *Lebensbild* 275). During his time in Paris, Tucholsky played a central part in the international pacifist network in Europe.

Besides his engagement in the pacifist movement, his political activism took place on public levels beyond his writings. He was active in establishing cross-cultural communication in youth exchanges and even had a meeting with Stresemann's secretary, in which he criticized the German ambassador in Paris for not supporting German-French relations. He also tried to mediate a realistic picture of Germany to French politicians (Hepp 259). His political and inter-cultural activism served as a background for his essays on the pacifist goal of Europeanism and the critique of practiced republicanism in Germany between 1924 and 1928. This critique of practiced republicanism entailed Tucholsky's observation that Germany's allegedly republican politicians did not pursue a

thorough process of democratization of the masses but instead supported the (mostly anti-republican and anti-pacifist) interests of the powerful heavy industry and the military. Besides his involvement in France, Tucholsky gave speeches in Germany at republican and pacifist events, such as in 1924 at the *Liga Junge Republik*, in 1926 at the *Gruppe Revolutionärer Pazifisten*, and in 1927 at the *Liga für Menschenrechte*, about the German judiciary's anti-republicanism and its resistance to basic human rights. In 1925 the *Gruppe 1925* formed in Berlin, a group of prominent left-liberal writers such as Bertold Brecht, Alfred Döblin, Heinrich Mann, Joseph Roth, Robert Musil, and others. Tucholsky joined and became active in this group, although he often was not present at their meetings. This involvement in special interest groups, in this case a group of intellectuals interested in promoting democracy and free speech, was in accordance with his concept of political involvement of the public intellectual, despite his personal aversion to group activities.<sup>79</sup> The *Gruppe 1925* existed for roughly two years and held infrequent meetings at a café in Berlin's Motzstrasse. These meetings were important forums for critical reevaluation of the role of the public intellectual and the function of critical public communication. Not always were all members present - Tucholsky and Roth, for example, lived in Paris at this time and contributed to the discussions of the *Gruppe* in their articles in the *Literarische Welt*, *Weltbühne*, *Welt am Abend*, *Rote Fahne*, and in other venues. Despite its relatively short existence, the *Gruppe 1925* was an attempt to unite isolated and divergent intellectuals for constructive impact on political and cultural life (Hinze 338). Tucholsky's active involvement in the pacifist movement

---

<sup>79</sup> The *Gruppe 1925* hosted 39 intellectuals who were concerned with keeping up civil liberties by organizing events and legal procedures in order to prevent censorship and restrictions on free expression. The *Gruppe 1925* worked closely with the human rights organization *Liga für Menschenrechte* (Petersen, *Literatur und Justiz* 114), (Petersen, *Gruppe 1925* 10).

demonstrates his continuing concern with supporting and strengthening republicanism. Despite his involvement in a diversity of publishing organs, he kept working for the same cause: republicanism as a political form which most likely prevents war and permits the freedom of critical expression. His activism for writers' organizations and their commitment to republicanism demonstrates the importance he saw in maintaining critical mass communication as one of the most crucial pillars of democracy.

To Tucholsky, critical mass communication as the foundation of democracy must be kept diverse. The importance he ascribed to keeping a diverse public profile himself became apparent in his brief interval as chief editor of the *Weltbühne* in 1927. This occurred directly after Siegfried Jacobsohn, chief editor of the *Weltbühne* and Tucholsky's close friend, died unexpectedly in December of 1926, while Tucholsky lived in Paris. It was significant for Tucholsky's understanding of public communication that Tucholsky preferred the role of a public intellectual, whether as a writer with multiple personae, or as a public speaker at pacifist-republican events. He was not content with the role of an administrator and organizer, and although Tucholsky immediately went back to Berlin to take over Jacobsohn's position and to assure the continued existence of the *Weltbühne*, he was not happy with his new role as chief editor.<sup>80</sup> He preferred public activities to administrative ones: during his time in Berlin as chief editor of the *Weltbühne*, which lasted for about six months, Tucholsky gave numerous speeches about the political role of the public intellectual and the public function of literature, and about

---

<sup>80</sup> In a letter to Mary Gerold Tucholsky, dated January 18, 1927, he wrote: "Und das Allerschlimmste ist: ich will das ja gar nicht. Und ich habe nicht den Mut, nein zu sagen – alle, alle – Georg Bernhard, Morus und die es sonst gut meinen, sagen, ich sollt es tun. Und ich fühle, dass ich es nicht kann, - mich langweilt es – ich bin so müde, und Berlin ist mir widrig, so widerwärtig, wie ich gar nicht sagen kann. Geb ichs jetzt aber ab, dann ist es in ein paar Wochen kaputt, daran ist kein Zweifel" (Tucholsky 11427).

the political tasks of the pacifist movement.<sup>81</sup> The fact that Tucholsky gladly gave up the *Weltbühne*'s editorship, which would have secured him employment in Berlin and the direction of perhaps the most influential leftist-intellectual organ of the Weimar Republic, indicates the importance he ascribed to maintaining multiple public personae within the Weimar Republic's fragmented public sphere.

Tucholsky had a keen sense of public profile. He kept his profile diverse in order to be able to maintain critical distance to the mechanisms of publishing, as well as to the responsibilities of editorship. Furthermore, his choice to return to Paris in order to maintain physical distance to Germany, which in his writings he expressed stylistically in language or institutionally in the different positions within public communication.<sup>82</sup>

The versatility of his discursive profile in public communication was vital for his promotion of a counter-public to intensifying nationalism. As domination of the publishing market by right-wing conglomerates grew, Tucholsky took on a position on the board of directors at the communist aid organization *Rote Hilfe Deutschland* in May of 1927. Other intellectuals such as Erwin Piscator, Alfons Goldschmidt, Rudolf Leonhard, Egon Erwin Kisch, Johannes R. Becher, Albert Einstein, Käthe Kollwitz, and Heinrich Mann were members too, although Tucholsky only supported the *Rote Hilfe* indirectly by writing about its campaigns (Hepp 472).<sup>83</sup> When Carl von Ossietzky took

---

<sup>81</sup> Together with Ernst Toller, Artur Holitscher, and Erwin Piscator, Tucholsky spoke about the future of the "Volksbühne" in Berlin's Herrenhaus on March 30, 1927. On May 15, 1927, he spoke about "Die Arbeit der Zukunft" at an annual convention of the *Liga für Menschenrechte* (Hepp 472).

<sup>82</sup> Renke Siems detects a "Bewusstsein Tucholskys vom merkantilen Fundament individualjournalistischer Diskursprofile: Ohne dieses Profil, an dessen Entwicklung Tucholsky mitbeteiligt war und in dessen Diskurs sich sein eigener zum besten Teil miteinfügte, habe die *Weltbühne* wenig Aussicht, ihren eigenen Platz im Mediendispositiv zu behaupten – deshalb die wiederholt geäußerte Befürchtung, das Blatt könnte eingehen. Werfe er aber seine Kräfte auf die Stützung von Jacobsohns Herausgeberprofil, gehe damit eine Vernachlässigung des eigenen erschriebenen Namens einher" (Siems, *Autorschaft* 107).

<sup>83</sup> The *Rote Hilfe*'s activism was geared against the right-leaning judicial system in Germany, and it urged for amnesty of political prisoners.

over Tucholsky's much disliked position as chief editor of the *Weltbühne* in May of 1927, Tucholsky left Berlin again for Paris to write for intellectual and pacifist papers, and he became increasingly interested in working for leftist papers again, as the Weimar Republic approached its final crisis. His diverse political activities during the Paris years represent his concept of a public intellectual who operates on multiple public levels in order to create a counter public. His function as a critical voice and his goal to establish a powerful counter-public was also noticeable in his publishing activities during the second phase of the Weimar Republic.

### **From Pacifist Papers to Münzenberg: Tucholsky's Publishing Strategies during his Paris Years**

Tucholsky's publishing strategies during his Paris years represent the most diverse of his whole career as a public intellectual. During no other period did he write for a broader spectrum of periodicals at the same time. It was during his Paris years, Tucholsky focused on international communication and cultural understanding for the purpose of lasting peace in Europe. After Tucholsky had moved to Paris in 1924, during the beginning of the Republic's relatively stable years, he predominantly wrote for the *Weltbühne* and the *Vossische Zeitung* about cultural differences between Germany and France and emphasized the fundamentally democratic mentality of the French as a counterexample to Germany's backward authoritarianism.<sup>84</sup> Occasional articles for

---

<sup>84</sup> Tucholsky writes in his *Weltbühne*-article "Paris" from May 22, 1924: "Frankreich ist gesund. Für Deutschland aber ist es jetzt an der Zeit, mit der Welt wieder ins Reine zu kommen. Jetzt oder nie" (Tucholsky 3021). In the *Vossische* Tucholsky writes on June 19 as Peter Panter: "Worin besteht der Zauber von Paris? ... Das, was die einzige Atmosphäre dieser Stadt ausmacht, ist ihre Menschlichkeit. Wenn man aus Deutschland kommt, versteht man es erst gar nicht" (Tucholsky 3025).

moderate papers such as *Uhu*, *Die Republik*, and *Das blaue Heft* were only indirectly of political nature.<sup>85</sup>

Tucholsky combined his pacifist activism with his writings and increasingly sought a working class readership. As he became involved in the French pacifist movement and as he tried to establish positive relations between France and Germany, primarily through his writings that were meant to correct misconceptions of the French propagated through right-wing media, he began writing for the pacifist papers *Die Menschheit* and *Das Andere Deutschland* in 1925.<sup>86</sup> In 1926, Tucholsky widened his publishing spectrum even more. Not only did he add another pacifist paper, *Die Friedens-Warte*, to his papers, he also wrote for leftist papers such as *Die Volksstimme* and *Malik's* avant-gardist publication *Der Knüppel*.<sup>87</sup> On the other end of the spectrum of his publishing practices he wrote for moderate-popular *Ullstein* papers such as *Die Dame*, *Uhu*, and the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung (BIZ)* with contributions of an entertaining and only indirectly political nature.<sup>88</sup> Thus, Tucholsky's publishing strategy

---

<sup>85</sup> For example, his *Republik* article of December 12, 1924, "Was tun Frauen, bevor sie ausgehen?" – a humorous portrait of gender difference (Tucholsky 3377-80), and his satirical portrait of hierarchies and formal aspects of small business in his *Uhu* article of Nov 1, 1924, entitled "Bilder aus dem Geschäftsleben" (Tucholsky 3281-3293).

<sup>86</sup> The weekly paper *Das andere Deutschland*, organ of the prominent pacifist organization *Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft* (DFG), was edited by Fritz Küster and had an average circulation of 42,000 during the Weimar Republic ([www.dfg-vk.de](http://www.dfg-vk.de)).

<sup>87</sup> The pacifist *Die Friedens-Warte*, published by Hans Wehberg, had a small circulation of 2200 (Koszyk 285), the avantgardist *Der Knüppel* circulated even under 2000. Koszyk labels these venues as "Minderheitenpublizistik, deren Gewicht vorwiegend darin bestand, dass sie die Auffassungen einer politischen Elite zum Ausdruck brachte" (Koszyk 285). Tucholsky's presence in these papers suggests his stance for the existence of a great variety of public channels.

<sup>88</sup> In contrast to the small pacifist and avantgardist papers Tucholsky wrote for, the popular *BIZ* had an average circulation of around 1,6 million during the Weimar Republic (Eksteins 314). The *BIZ* had a very diverse audience, because of its extremely low price (10 pfennig) and its new profile with many visuals and its tendency towards entertainment. *Ullstein's BIZ* was a paper designed for spontaneous purchase on the streets, thus it frequently changed its appearance and it also sought to keep track of popular political opinion because of its lack of a stable, subscribing readership.

during the second phase of the Weimar Republic included an increasingly broad readership.

In 1928, he began writing for the moderate-popular *Ullstein* evening paper *Tempo*.<sup>89</sup> Tucholsky only used his pseudonym of the cultural critic Peter Panter in *Tempo*. The fact that Tucholsky did not use his politically critical and often sensational voice Ignaz Wrobel or even his political poet Theobald Tiger in *Tempo* signifies his intention to practice indirect political criticism through cultural comparisons between national boundaries of France and Germany and of boundaries of gender. Issues like these were not class- or milieu specific, as they would not fit into the communicative profile of *Tempo*, which was a daily newspaper with popular appeal due to its high reliance on photographs (Koszyk 255). Tucholsky's articles in *Tempo* thus speak to the paper's audience of urban, lower- to middle-class, and a presumably younger readership, which was susceptible to a new, innovative style in the press. *Tempo*, as the name suggests, tried to come to terms with the accelerated lifestyle of the Weimar Republic and sought to meet a broader demand for news coverage and cultural information in a user-friendly form.<sup>90</sup> Tucholsky, as Peter Panter, published nineteen articles in *Tempo* in 1928, mostly on cultural issues such as the difference between French and German Theater-audiences, the difference between German and French film censorship, or the difference between German and French cultural propaganda. *Tempo's* proximity to another Ullstein paper, the prominent *Vossische Zeitung*, which was after the *Weltbühne* Tucholsky's most important publishing venue, is apparent through Tucholsky's use of the

---

<sup>89</sup> Ullstein's *Tempo* had a circulation of around 100,000 to 150,000 between 1928 and 1933 (Eksteins 314).

<sup>90</sup> *Tempo* belonged to the successful Ullstein publishing house, and its circulation numbers indicated the demand for such a paper: it rose from 100,940 in the first quarter of 1929 to 145,450 in the last quarter of 1930, and then declined rapidly in the context of rising Nazism until 104,060 in the first quarter of 1933 (<http://www.oew.ac.at/cgi-bin/pdok/bz/auf/1160>).



pseudonym Peter Panter in both papers, and this persona's concern with similar issues of mostly culturally critical nature. One article, for example, appeared on the same day in both papers, and was only slightly modified in content.<sup>91</sup> This slight modification, however, demonstrates Tucholsky's awareness of his diverse audience's political and ideological priorities: the educated, privileged reader of the *Vossische* cared more about abstract and intellectual questions such as those of a country's mentality or the film's pacifist symbolism (Tucholsky 10019).<sup>92</sup> For the *Tempo* readers, keeping the paper's populist profile and its more random readership in mind, Tucholsky discussed the issue of WWI from the perspective of the working- and lower middle class – and concluded with an emotional appeal to the pacifist cause (Tucholsky 6350).

During the same year, Tucholsky also made great efforts to become more popular among the working class. Reaching out to open up public communication with yet another target audience, the working class, Tucholsky's orientation towards the leftist publishing scene for a counter-public was continued in 1928 in the context of his activities for the *Rote Hilfe Deutschland*, when he published in the leftist *Der Rote Helfer* and Münzenberg's *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*.<sup>93</sup> Here, he wrote on issues of the

---

<sup>91</sup> The article at stake is “Deutsche Soldaten in der Pariser Oper,” published on November 9, 1928, in both *Vossische Zeitung* and *Tempo* under Peter Panter. While in the *Vossische* he emphasizes the implications of a French WWI-movie in terms of the difference between the German and the French mentality, the *Tempo*-article discusses the implications of the film in terms of how it depicted the suffering of the working and lower middle classes, and how the film should have the effect of supporting the cause of pacifism.

<sup>92</sup> Ullstein's *Vossische Zeitung* had a long tradition of representing the voice of the upper middle class. Since 1721, under the name *Berlinische privilegierte Zeitung*, the *Vossische* (only since 1911 named *Vossische*) had been an organ of the Enlightenment. Its political orientation was democratic, and it had a strong emphasis on issues of cultural politics (<http://www.oeaw.ac.at/cgi-bin/pdok/bz/tnd/1240>).

<sup>93</sup> Münzenberg's *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* reached a circulation of 400,000 during the Weimar Republic and represented with the *Rote Fahne* the largest communist venue (de Mendelssohn 328). Although in 1928 he wrote almost half as many articles for the *AIZ* as for *Tempo*, his *AIZ* publications caused intense public debates, particularly because of its blunt satire of the military and the church, resulting in legal action against Tucholsky and Münzenberg.

working class in the context of his pacifist agenda, such as on the negative experience of WWI as a consequence of militarism, on the still underprivileged position of the worker in the allegedly equal society of the Weimar Republic as a symptom of its capitalist stance, and on the positive possibility of Europeanism for a stronger international working class in a united Europe. He discussed his publishing strategy as a public intellectual who was sensitive to the decreasingly diverse public sphere of the Weimar Republic, and who tried to keep critical public communication open in his private letters, as the following section will highlight.

Tucholsky's private communication often illuminates alleged paradoxes and inconsistencies in his work. In his letters, Tucholsky expressed his objective of maintaining critical communication within a fragmented public sphere, which he regarded as symptomatic of a fragmented political culture. He wrote on April 14, 1926, to Maximilian Harden, publisher and republican activist, "Es klafft ein Riss zwischen meinem Kampf und meiner Beteiligung an milden Blättern – aber es ist gar kein Widerspruch zwischen meinem Kampf und dem, was ich da tue" (Tucholsky 11402). This comment shows Tucholsky's position as a public intellectual who tried to make use of all available public channels for the same cause: the expansion of a democratic culture. However, his practice was increasingly criticized for ideological inconsistency, but despite attacks from left and moderate papers, he kept writing for both (Hepp 262). Because of his awareness of this contradiction, it is hard to say whether he was simply out of touch with the political realities of this phase, or whether contradiction and ambivalence were necessary attributes for maintaining critical mass communication in a medialized public sphere.

Tucholsky's concept of public communication also had many paradoxical aspects. Tucholsky discusses his unconventional understanding of the function of the public intellectual, particularly in regards to party affiliation, in a letter to Bernhard Wiedehöft dated April 19, 1926. On the one hand, he sought employment at party affiliated, leftist organs, but on the other hand, he tried to avoid any party affiliation and he criticized dogmatic practices of the communist left in Germany. On the one hand, he suggested that intellectuals should cooperate but not influence the working class and its cause, but on the other hand, he criticized the press of the working class for its lack of aestheticism.<sup>94</sup> In the letter to Wiedehöft, he mentions that although he does not see the public intellectual as someone who should be the leader of the working class, the working class should use the public intellectual's potential for its cause instead of criticizing his or her bourgeois background (Tucholsky 11405). Later, however, he admitted to having cared less for the oppressed, but only to having hated the oppressors: "Meine Abneigung gegen die Schinder ist viel grösser als meine Liebe zu den Geschundenen – hier klafft eine Lücke" (Tucholsky 12165). It was this constant contradiction of seeking a broad readership but despising any affiliation to groups, organizations, or parties that made Tucholsky feel increasingly uneasy on the publicistic market of the Weimar Republic. This unease was heightened by the fact that the publicistic market, instead of cooperating as a counter-public against anti-republican dominance, consisted of an aggregate of separate interests that did not merge into a common ground of a republican public sphere.

---

<sup>94</sup> In a letter to the revolutionary *Piscator Bühne* he writes on March 14, 1928: "Kurz: es gibt bei jeder Kunst – auch bei der revolutionären, gerade bei der revolutionären – einen Streifen, den man dogmatisch nicht beackern kann." (Tucholsky 11449). This criticism of dogmatism in the revolutionary movement echoes an earlier criticism of the style of the revolutionary press, which he expressed in a letter to George Grosz of March 11, 1925: "es besteht kein Anlass, ein kommunistisches Organ aus lauter Verachtung für die Bürgerlichkeit zum Beispiel mit lauter Druckfehlern zu setzen" (Tucholsky 1357).

He expressed his frustration with the realities of the German publishing market in a letter to his wife Mary Gerold on September 18, 1928, particularly concerning the restrictions the publishers put on their employees in terms of their affiliation with other papers and their political tendencies: “Die ganze Unbarmherzigkeit dieser Institution ist mir zu[m] Bewusstsein gekommen – wenn was passiert, läge ich im Ernstfall glatt auf der Strasse ... was schlimmer ist: das auf der kommunistischer Seite ja nichts ist. Ich finde da weder grossen Dank noch Geld – ich bin ein geduldeter Intellektueller. Der Popo sitzt genau zwischen den Stühlen” (Tucholsky 11476).

It is this position between opposed fronts that best describes Tucholsky’s situation in an increasingly polarized public. It expresses his position as a bourgeois intellectual whose critical impetus was not valued because of short-sighted party interests. This was a tendency which increased dramatically during the last year of the republic and its narrowing public sphere. His position “between chairs” of political fronts also points to Tucholsky’s self-understanding as a public intellectual: he always operated between discursive boundaries of the Weimar Republic in order to unite disparate interests among the political left and middle for the cause of republicanism and pacifism.

However, the fact that Tucholsky, as indicated in the letter, regarded this role as highly dissatisfying shows his ambiguity towards his own position as a public intellectual in a medialized public sphere with its contradictions of public communication. These contradictions arose out of the situation of mass communication in a market-oriented, politicized public sphere. It involved the existence of multiple, diverse channels of communication and an equally diverse audience, but it also involved the necessity of increasingly simplified communicative structures that were necessary in order to reach a

progressively saturated audience. Furthermore, the economically dire situation of the publishing market in the Weimar Republic, particularly after the inflation of 1923, fostered a press market which was supplied by few news agencies and little standardized reporting, while the large number of different papers fostered the illusion of a highly diverse press market. In reality, however, the press became less and less independent, which applied to the provincial press in particular. Tucholsky's publishing strategies responded to this contradictory situation and thus became susceptible to criticisms that measured the value and effectiveness of a writer with standards of "loyalty" to one paper or publishing house that adhered to communicative contexts predating those of the Weimar Republic.

Tucholsky's publishing strategies for the "stable years" of the Weimar Republic suggest his intention at that time to reach a broad audience with his writings in times of anticipated political crisis: as the economy stabilized in 1924 and republicanism seemed to prosper, Tucholsky shifted his focus to one of intercultural understanding in essays for the *Weltbühne* and the *Vossische*, both moderate to leftist-liberal venues, and he expanded this international emphasis with articles for pacifist organs. After the press landscape began to slowly shift to the right, however, Tucholsky sought once more to reach a more diverse audience again, including leftist and moderate papers. In this wide spectrum of periodicals he used between 1924 and 1928, he focused primarily on the merits of republicanism and Europeanism as an alternative to nationalism and as a guarantee for an internationally oriented, pacifist future, as the following analysis of selected texts published during these years will suggest.

## **Contesting Nationalism: Pacifism and Europeanism in Tucholsky's Writings between 1924 and 1928**

Tucholsky's turn from short-term issues during the first phase of the Weimar Republic, such as right (and left) extremist violence and strong political resistance to the establishment of the republic, to long-term issues in the second phase, such as pacifism and Europeanism, indicates his concern for a well-founded democracy as the basis for lasting peace in Europe. During the first phase of the Weimar Republic Tucholsky focused on public communication and the need for language reform in a new democratic system. His texts of the Republic's middle years revolved around his critique of how political, cultural, and economic institutions practiced democracy during these seemingly "stable" times. Although the political landscape was considerably less polarized during these years, Tucholsky assessed the core of the political culture of the Republic as anti-republican in its use of the media and the anti-republican language in the media, and in the practice of bourgeois culture as a consequence of not immediately reforming such language after WWI. To counter this still prevailing anti-republicanism, Tucholsky regarded the prime function of the public intellectual to deconstruct and thus abolish the power of nationalist ideology in this language and culture. The purpose of such deconstruction was to point out the invented nature of nationalism and to "Europeanize" Germany. Tucholsky's pacifist goal in this period was to work towards the establishment of a supranational identity in Europe as an alternative to a general return to nationalism in the second half of the middle years. He tried to accomplish this by repeatedly reminding an increasingly diverse audience of the fabricated nature of nationalism which undoes the liberal political and social accomplishments of the new, republican Europe. The

following sections show how Tucholsky deployed satire in his writings between 1924 and 1928 to point out inherent nationalisms of the *Alltagskultur* of the German middle class.

### ***The Public Intellectual as Satirist and Propagandist***

During the middle years of the Weimar Republic, Tucholsky's concept of the intellectual as satirist showed his awareness of the necessity to dismantle public language and ideology through satire. As all of his programmatic articles, his writings on the function of the public intellectual always appeared in the *Weltbühne*, which marks the pivotal role he ascribed to the relatively small community of *Weltbühne* readers in the process of reforming public communication. It also indirectly points to a somewhat elitist aspect of Tucholsky's notions about the function of the intellectual in public discourse. As much as he sought to connect with the leftist spectrum of writers and activists in the Weimar Republic, he never entirely departed from his theoretical stance as a writer greatly concerned with the stylistic and aesthetic aspects of writing. It was the doctrinal nature of political writing in a politically polarized public sphere that on the one hand fascinated him and is incorporated in his satirical style particularly of the last year of this period. On the other hand that enterprise appalled his aesthetic sensibilities.

Reflecting on these issues in the *Weltbühne*, Tucholsky urged his audience of intellectuals to reassess the idealist position he had held himself immediately after WWI. As expressed in the *Weltbühne*, his concept of the public intellectual of the middle phase of the Weimar Republic embraced deconstructing authoritarianism through satire and an increased understanding and sensitivity for class difference, which is discussed in his article "Horizontaler und vertikaler Journalismus," writing as Ignaz Wrobel on January

13, 1925. Here, Tucholsky talks about the vital task of the public intellectual to provide information about the mentality and the material circumstances of people across social classes. In order to write effective satire, one that fulfills its function of deconstructing and destroying existing power structures, the writer must have a thorough understanding of the social fabric of both the subject and the target audience:

Der lesende Proletarier weiss über Innerafrika besser Bescheid als über das Leben in einem reichen Kaufmannshause, der gebildete Bürger mehr von Indochina als von Budget seiner Näherin. ... Daher geht ja auch fast alle Satire dieser Tage so daneben, weil der Angreifer seine Objekte nicht ordentlich kennt und in Himmelsrichtungen schießt, wo der andre gar nicht steht. (Tucholsky 3401)

This emphasis on the necessity of a “socially intelligent” satire for an effective counter-public precedes Tucholsky’s discussion of the task of the public intellectual to report “vertically” across social classes. He gives specific examples on how the public must be informed of the material circumstances, particularly those of the working class, in order to be mobilized for social and political change:

Da tut es immer gut, die blumigen Adjektiva abzukratzen und nüchtern zu konstatieren: Wochenlohn eines hiesigen Arbeiters soundsoviel Mark, Verbrauch soundsoviel, Tuberkulosesterblichkeit, Arbeitszeit, und so weiter, und so weiter. Das wiegt schwerer als dreissig Vesuvbesteigungen. Denn keine Reise schafft solche Veränderungen wie die Versetzung in eine andere Klasse. Verändere das Budget, und du veränderst das ganze Weltbild. (Tucholsky 3412)

As indicated here, Tucholsky’s concept of the public intellectual was increasingly geared towards political mobilization of the working class. At the same time, however, he ascribed an authority of the public voice to the (non-proletarian) intellectual, which suggested Tucholsky’s fundamentally non-egalitarian understanding of the political process. Tucholsky never entirely abandoned his elitist position of the Weimar Republic’s early years, although he modified it considerably and increasingly until the end of his writing career in 1932. The social and political cause of the working class was



never entirely Tucholsky's foremost concern, it was much more the political potential of the working class that attracted Tucholsky's attention. As a public intellectual with a high sensitivity for political and public profiling, he strategically sought out the working class and its political capacity for his public project. The working class and its tradition of international solidarity through the worker's movement of the nineteenth century seemed like the only social class in Germany that had the potential to form a counter-public to authoritarianism and nationalism, and to help secure the goal of a pacifist future in Europe.

Thus, Tucholsky beseeched his fellow intellectuals to reconceptualize public language for its appeal to the masses. He increasingly saw the public intellectual as a propagandist, one who not only understood the mentality and the material circumstance of the audience he wanted to contact, but who also adapted his language to the experience and socio-political concerns of this audience. In his *Weltbühne* article "Über wirkungsvollen Pazifismus" from October 11, 1927, Tucholsky as Ignaz Wrobel urges his intellectual readers to use graphic, aggressive public language in order to popularize pacifism:

Und wir sind nicht nur zu wenig Kämpfer des Friedens – wir sind es auch viel zu abstrakt, viel zu hoheitsvoll, viel zu theoretisch. ... Um propagandistisch verstanden zu werden, muss man vereinfachen und verdicken, untermalen und übertreiben – man muss klar und simpel sein und allen verständlich. Hier und nur hier steckt die Mobilisierung des Friedens. (Tucholsky 5466-67)

This text exemplifies Tucholsky's emphasis of pacifist public propaganda as supporting his model of a counter-public.<sup>95</sup> Its emphasis of the emotional aspect of mass

---

<sup>95</sup> The *Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* defines the term propaganda as: "information, rumors, etc., deliberately spread widely to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution, nation, etc." (Webster 1152). Political propaganda must be distinguished from the term political education in that

communication, particularly mass communication with the intent of political motivation, differs sharply from his earlier statement of “Horizontaler und vertikaler Journalismus” from 1925 where he underlined the necessity of unsentimental documentation of material circumstances with preferably little use of adjectives. His new concept of the intellectual as propagandist might have been a response to an infamous publication by Adolf Hitler, leader of the growing National Socialists. His book *Mein Kampf* was published in 1925 and delineated national socialist press politics and its understanding of political propaganda. Hitler contended that propaganda had to appeal to emotion when addressing the masses, and that public communication, geared to the masses, should adapt its stylistic and thematic level to the lowest common denominator, in order to appeal to the masses (qtd. in Koszyk 349).

Whether Tucholsky responded to Hitler’s writings, or whether Tucholsky contributed to a general discourse on public communication in an increasingly fragmented political landscape, the changed concept of the public intellectual as propagandist signified and indicated a different communicative context after 1925 – one that was required to appeal to an increasingly divergent audience, and one that would counter the growing appeal of nationalist propaganda, which had a concept of public mass communication that approximated Tucholsky’s concept on several crucial issues. It is interesting that Tucholsky, although he called for a “republican propaganda,” regarded the concept of propaganda as contrary to the republican principles of differentiation, analysis, critical assessment, and individualism. Tucholsky’s concept of propaganda was more of a method of political education in times of acute crisis. Contrary to the Nazis,

---

propaganda only shows one version of a doctrine or principle, whereas political education presents a multiplicity of views, with the goal of establishing political competence among people.

Tucholsky's propaganda was intended to dismantle authority and to empower the individual. This paradoxical concept of propaganda, which on the one hand was aimed at mobilizing the masses against growing nationalism and National Socialism, but which on the other hand dismissed authority, is characteristic of Tucholsky's work in general. It was marked by a constant contradiction between the longing for community and unity, but it still recognized the realities of discord, difference, and ambivalence in the context of modern life in a mass society. To Tucholsky, propaganda as an integral part of modern mass communication, particularly in a mass media context, was a crucial concept to which the public intellectual had to respond in the context of critical mass communication.

Geared towards inclusion of a mass audience, Tucholsky's concept of the public intellectual became less elitist during the middle years of the Weimar Republic. The public intellectual, according to Tucholsky, had the duty to mobilize his audience for the pacifist goal and thus to present alternatives to nationalist concepts of German-ness. This mobilization included an oppositional voice which propagandistically criticized tendencies in German politics that posed the biggest obstacle to the pacifist goal: the insufficiently democratic realization of the Weimar Republic's constitution, and at its intrinsic nationalisms of the mentality of the middle class.

The next section will discuss Tucholsky's observations of how underlying ideologies of authoritarianism played a role in the resistance of the German middle class to become democratic, particularly in its institutions of politics and culture.

### *Tucholsky's Critique of Republican Politics and Middle Class Culture*

As the economy stabilized and political extremism decreased, Tucholsky turned his attention from short-term to long-term problems of German politics, particularly to the need for a profound reform of practiced republicanism in the Weimar Republic. In 1924, his criticism of the indecisiveness of the republican politicians and their cooperation with anti-republican forces remained general, as in the *Weltbühne* poem “Der Geschlechtslose” of September 4, 1924, when Tucholsky as poet Theobald Tiger satirized the political weakness and the lack of direction of the German party republican:

An alle hab ich mich verloren  
Ich gab mich allen einmal hin  
Wie kommts, dass die zum Sieg erkoren,  
Und dass ich stets der Dumme bin?  
...  
Ich bin kein Männchen und kein Weibchen  
Ich bin ein deutscher Demokrat. (Tucholsky 3190-91)

This satirical depiction of a politically impotent, non-confrontational, weak republicanism becomes more subtle and differentiated as the Republic's middle years progressed. In his article “Die Inszenierung der Republik” from April 12, 1925, published under Peter Panter in the *Vossische Zeitung*, Tucholsky points out that at the root of republicanism's failure in the Weimar Republic was its lack of a republican public sphere with a new, republican language:

Was nützen alle schönen Reden der republikanischen Minister, die – wie die Weimarer Verfassung – dem Öl gleich schillernd auf dem Wasser schwimmen, wenn nicht im kleinen Kreise die Achtung und die Autorität vor der Republik stabilisiert sind? (Tucholsky 3510)

Not only the public sphere as an inherently republican institution, but also other pillars of republicanism such as education, administration, and jurisdiction are in need of republican reform in order to meet the constitutional norm of a republican system:

Wie begründe ich eine Republik? Indem ich in die Ämter Republikaner setze, indem ich die republikfeindlichen Richter und Lehrer und Universitätsprofessoren und Verwaltungsbeamte entferne, indem ich nicht den 'Fachmann' anbete, der sich farblos gibt und reaktionär arbeitet – indem ich Republikaner schaffe. (Tucholsky 3611-12)

According to his theory that the satirist must understand his audience, his article in the *Vossische*, which had a more diverse audience than the intellectual *Weltbühne*, does not analyze the process of republicanizing the German public. Instead, Tucholsky personalizes his criticism for easier comprehension of the larger issue at stake.<sup>96</sup>

Tucholsky also switches styles within texts, as the above article demonstrates. He satirically dismantles public speech with the metaphor of “oil on water,” which he ironically describes as “beautiful,” while his constructive suggestions for reform remain literal.

During the second half of the middle years of the Weimar Republic, however, Tucholsky's satirical style dominated his critique of diminishing republicanism. This predominance was synchronous with his shift towards embracing propaganda, which became particularly important during the last phase of the Weimar Republic (discussed in Chapter 4 and 5 of this study). In his satirical *Weltbühne* article “Der Sieg des republikanischen Gedankens” of September 14, 1926, Tucholsky as Ignaz Wrobel draws parallels between practiced republicanism and the political practice of the former *Kaiserreich*:

Sie geben Tag für Tag eine Position nach der andern auf. Sie rücken den alten, verfaulten, verbrecherischen Idealen immer näher, bekennen sich zur absoluten Souveränität des Staates, zum Recht, Kriege zu führen, zur wirtschaftlichen Autokratie, zum Grossdeutschtum, zum Autoritätsgedanken – nur sagen sie mit ein bisschen andern Worten. (Tucholsky 4540)

---

<sup>96</sup> Dieter Hess calls this method of Tucholsky's criticism a “Personalisierungsstrategie” (Hess 92).

The public use of political language is here again at the core of Tucholsky's satirical criticism of republican politics. Anti-republican concepts such as autocracy, imperialism, and authoritarianism are still much ingrained in the German language, which makes republican politics impossible, due largely to the result of an authoritarian use of public language. Although Tucholsky acknowledges that language has changed, he criticizes its anti-republican, propagandistic use in the public sphere because its authoritarian language fosters a fundamentally anti-republican national identity.

Thus, Tucholsky's satirical description of the Weimar Republic's constitution as a "paper hat," which was worn on "political beer fests," illustrates the charade-like character of a political system that has not reformed its ideological core, as he writes as Ignaz Wrobel in his *Weltbühne*-article "Verfassungsschwindel" on October 26, 1926:

Eine Verfassung ist, so sie diesen Namen überhaupt verdient, der Extrakt aller Grundgesetze, staatlicher Einrichtungen, wichtigster Praxis des Landes. Diese da ist ein Hütchen, das sich ein gänzlich umgewandelter Koloss spasseshalber aufs Ohr setzt – eine Papiertüte zum politischen Bockbierfest und für höhere Feiertage. Bei der Arbeit nimmt man sie ab. ... Tatsächlich ist die Autorität der sabotierenden, autokratischen, wilhelminischen, grössenwahnsinnigen Beamten und Vorgesetzten aller Art nicht gebrochen, sondern gestärkt. (Tucholsky 4612-13)

As Tucholsky's observation exemplifies, authoritarianism thrived under the pretense of a republican system that did not reform its core and its most crucial public institutions.

This authoritarianism was driven by nationalist ideology, which Tucholsky considered an inherent part of the bourgeois mentality. To Tucholsky, this direction towards a nationalist revival in the public sphere posed a threat to his goal of an international pacifism in the form of a united Europe – a threat that he found most visibly demonstrated in the nationalist press. As an integral part and simultaneously as an integral shaper of a nation's *Alltagskultur*, the press and the choice of its language (with

its political implications) played a pivotal role in creating and sustaining nationalisms. It also, however, bore the potential of a counter-voice to existing authorities, and was inherently egalitarian in its accessibility to the masses and its orientation towards mass interests. The next sections will highlight Tucholsky's discussion of this ambivalent role of the press as part of the German *Alltagskultur*, and it will follow Tucholsky's criticism of inherent nationalisms of German *Alltagskultur*-organizations such as fraternities and sports-organizations, which became more and more important as places for (nationalist) identity-formation as the Weimar Republic progressed.

### ***Critique of Nationalism in Public Language and German Alltagskultur***

Because Tucholsky found an increased public display of nationalism during the second phase of the Weimar Republic despite its foreign politics of concurrence, his texts on nationalism are distinctly more satirical than his texts on the other main issues of this period, namely the texts on the role of the intellectual, on the political and propagandistic inefficiency of party republicans, and on the establishment of pacifism and a united Europe. His satirical *Weltbühne*-article "Deutsch" from July 24, 1924, written under Ignaz Wrobel, deconstructs the popular adjective "German" as a hollow concept that was only intended to preserve a nationalist notion of an alleged German distinctiveness:

Die ganze Borniertheit des Nationalismus spricht aus diesem Adjektiv. Es genügt, irgendeinem Krümel das Epitheton 'deutsch' anzuhängen, und Kaffeemaschine, Universitätsprofessor und Abfuhrmittel haben ihr Lob weg. ... Man kann keine Zeitung mehr aufschlagen, ohne dass einem auf jeder Seite versichert wird, dieses sei deutsch, jener habe deutsch gehandelt, und der dritte habe nach deutscher Art Konkurs oder sonstwas gemacht. (Tucholsky 19723)

By placing the nationalist adjective into random, everyday contexts such as coffee-machines or laxatives, Tucholsky demystifies its nationalist notion and simultaneously demonstrates the ideological function of its repetitive use in the nationalist press.<sup>97</sup> After the NSDAP re-formed in 1925 under Hitler,<sup>98</sup> Tucholsky's satire of nationalism increasingly included satire of Nazi ideology and its obsession with the Germanic mythos, its fierce anti-Semitism, and its ritually practiced nationalism. The satirical poem "Olle Germanen," written under the pseudonym Theobald Tiger and published in the *Weltbühne* on March 3, 1925, anticipates Tucholsky's satirical criticism of National Socialism in the final phase of the Weimar Republic. Without directly referring to National Socialism, he here parodies nationalist poetry through an allusion to Germanic alliterative verses, paired with a parody of nationalist and *volkish* propaganda:

---

<sup>97</sup> Tucholsky's criticism of nationalist style and language particularly in the press, but also in literature repetitively drew a connection between the increasing popularity of this style and decreasing effectiveness of republicanism:

"Der neue Zeitungsstil" Ignaz Wrobel, *Weltbühne*, December 16, 1924:

Es hat sich nichts geändert – aber es wird jetzt viel feiner verpackt ... Diese aufgeregte Stagnation ist ein getreues Abbild der Gesellschaftsordnung, die sie hervorbringt. Eine lärmende Langeweile und ein tiefes Unrecht dazu: eine Verschleierung der Wahrheit und die Ablenkung vom Wesentlichen. (Tucholsky 3373).

"Der neudeutsche Stil" Peter Panter, *Weltbühne*, April 6, 1926:

Das Modedeutsch der wiener und berliner Schmalzküchen mit den frech hingenuschelten 'Nebenbeis' und der Bildungsmayonaise, diese künstlich hochgetriebene Hefebildung, dieser neudeutsche Stil hat wie eine Seuche um sich gegriffen ... Wer ist in Deutschland heute einfach? Die Schafsköpfe, Rudolf Herzog. Die treudeutschen Oberförster. Wenn sie nicht den schrecklichsten der Schrecken vollführen: die germanische Nachahmung romanischer Beweglichkeit. (Tucholsky 4314).

<sup>98</sup> After his short prison sentence after his putsch-attempt in 1923, Hitler reformed the party around a leader-centered structure and incorporated techniques of modern communications media into the popularization of the NSDAP. He emphasized mass gatherings with regimented rituals and parades, and he put effort into portraying the Nazi movement as a dynamic and determined one in order to recruit more and more members (Peukert 236).



Papa ist Oberförster,  
Mama ist pinselblond;  
Georg ist Klassen-Oerster,  
Johann steht an der Front  
Der Burschenschaft  
'Teutonenkraft.'  
Bezahlen tut der Olle.  
Was Wotan weihen wolle!

Verjudet sind die Wälder,  
Verjudet Jesus Christ.  
Wir singen über die Felder  
Wie das so üblich ist  
In Reih und Glied  
Das Deutschland-Lied.  
Nachts funkelt durch das Dunkel  
Frau Friggas Frost Furunkel.  
... (Tucholsky 3528)

This poem epitomizes Tucholsky's satire of nationalism. Playfully, he paints a caricature of a nationalist, presumably upper-middle-class family (indicated by the father's profession and the son's membership in a university fraternity), which has internalized the authoritarianism and anti-Semitism of nationalist propaganda. By repetitively using the first-person plural, the caricature of a nationalist family represents nationalist anti-Semitism and nationalist culture in general, as the allusion to the *Wandervogel*-movement (in the line "Wir singen über die Felder") and to the nationalist fraternity as exemplars of an inherently anti-republican *Alltagskultur* demonstrates.

The parody of nationalism in high culture in the allusion to Germanic mythology and in low culture as in the allusion to nationalist sports-organizations and fraternities is complemented with a satire of absurdities satirizing anti-Semitism, such as the combination of a Jewish forest and a Jewish Christ. Similar absurdities of a nationalist and anti-Semitic ideology are demonstrated in Tucholsky's *Weltbühne*-article "Die

Glaubenssätze der Bourgeoisie,” published on October 2, 1928, under the pseudonym Peter Panter. This sociological account of middle-class and lower-middle class nationalism demonstrates similarities and differences between its class-bound origins and represents Tucholsky’s class-conscious understanding of nationalism as he deconstructs it by means of “vertical” journalism. Thus, Tucholsky presents nationalist and anti-Semitic maxims of the lower middle class through the character of “Frau Pagel,” a book-keeper’s wife:

1) Unter dem Kaiser war alles besser. ... 4) Schuld an dem ganzen Elend sind die Juden. Die Juden sind schmutzig, geldgierig, materiell, geil und schwarz. Sie haben alle solche Nasen und wollen Minister werden, soweit sie es nicht schon sind. ... 7) Wenn man Rhabarber nachzuckert, wird er sauer (Dieser Satz ist völlig unsinnig; er ist durch ein Missverständnis entstanden, also unausrottbar.) 8) Kommunismus ist, wenn alles kurz und klein geschlagen wird. In Russland werden die Frauen vergewaltigt, sie haben eine Million Menschen ermordet. Die Kommunisten wollen uns alles wegnehmen. ... 10) Alle Welt ist gegen Deutschland – aus Neid. (Tucholsky 6243-44)

Tucholsky juxtaposes this lower middle-class ideology with that of Frau Rechtsanwält Margot Rosenthal, a Jewish representative of the upper-middle class:

... 4) Kommunismus ist, wenn alles kurz und klein geschlagen wird. Die Kommunisten wollen uns alles wegnehmen, wo man sich Stück für Stück so mühsam zusammengekauft hat. Arbeiter muss es natürlich geben, und man soll sie auch anständig behandeln. Am besten ist es, wenn man sie nicht sieht. 5) Alle Welt ist gegen die Juden – aus Neid. 6) Kunst darf nicht übertrieben sein. 7) Wenn man in einem eleganten Hotel sitzt, ist man selber elegant. 8) Bei Gewitter muss man den Gashahn zudrehn (Siehe Frau Pagel, Ziffer 7: Rhabarber.). ... (Tucholsky 6245-46)

This satirical juxtaposition of two versions of ignorance illuminates the consequent absurdity they share. Tucholsky’s satirical technique of juxtaposition points to the similarities of two seemingly different ideological camps: nationalist anti-Semitism and the apolitical, capitalist stance of the (Jewish) bourgeoisie. Both camps share an intense anxiety concerning communism, and both camps regard themselves as members of an

exclusive group. By inserting random postulates, for instance Frau Pagel's "Wenn man Rhabarber nachzuckert, wird er sauer," and Frau Rosenthal's "Bei Gewitter muss man den Gashahn zudrehn," Tucholsky satirically implies the random nature of both representatives' maxims and the absence of logic in such statements. Most importantly, however, this article exemplifies Tucholsky's concept of "vertical journalism," which intended to establish a counter-public to existing nationalism by means of satirical depictions of anti-republicanism in Germany's mentality, mainly in that of the middle class, and the implied mobilization of the working class to pursue political and social change.

The consequence of such political and social change initiated by Tucholsky's concept of "vertical journalism" would be the abolishment of nationalism. Without nationalism, inter-national systems of government would be possible, and peace would be secured. As the following section will show, Tucholsky envisioned a united, pacifist Europe – a model which he developed during the middle years of the Weimar Republic and to which he referred as an ideal form of government until he retired from his career as a writer in 1932.

### *Europeanism as the Ultimate Pacifist Goal*

During Tucholsky's years in Paris, he continued his activism in the pacifist movement and extended it to his public activities for a cross-cultural understanding between Germany and France.<sup>99</sup> This understanding was, according to Tucholsky, a

---

<sup>99</sup> Besides his activities in German-French pacifist organizations, youth organizations, and his involvement in German-French diplomacy, Tucholsky also reiterated the necessity of a French-German communication and cooperation among their working classes, as he writes as Ignaz Wrobel on April 2, 1924, in the social

crucial necessity in building a pacifist Europe.<sup>100</sup> As Germany pursued a rapprochement-policy under Foreign Minister Stresemann, Tucholsky insisted that only the establishment of an internationally oriented identity among Germans could stabilize international relations. Thus, he continued his publicistic work of popularizing alternatives to nationalism in an increasing variety of periodicals. During 1924 and 1928, as Stresemann's foreign policy steered away from Germany's former role as aggressor, Tucholsky wrote in several pacifist papers about the goal of the pacifist movement to help establish a union of European nations, in which nationalisms as the greatest threat to a peaceful future would be overcome. Furthermore, his publicist work as a foreign correspondent during these years was meant to counter existing prejudices against Germany's former rival France in the conservative, nationalist, and emerging National Socialist press. In his article "Wie sich der deutsche Stammtisch Paris vorstellt," published on February 6, 1926, in the largest of Germany's pacifist papers, *Das Andere Deutschland*, Tucholsky points out the discrepancy between the international orientation of Europe's policies and the prevalence of a nationalistic press:

Man hat dieser Tage in Paris ein grosses Institut für die geistige Zusammenarbeit der Völker Europas eingeweiht. Das ist für die Katze, so lange der Einfluss dieser käuflichen und gemeinen Presse weiter bestehen bleibt, so lange der deutsche Stammtisch seine politische Weisheit aus solchem Augenwischpapier bezieht. (Tucholsky 4175)

This text is yet another example of Tucholsky's concern with the political repercussions of an inherently nationalist culture in Germany as fostered by the right-wing press and as

---

democratic-pacifist paper *Die Menschheit*: "Es ist eine Tragik, dass Frankreich und Deutschland nebeneinander liegen. Sie könnten sich ergänzen, und sie kennen sich nicht. Ihre Arbeiterklassen haben nur einen Feind, den gleichen: sie kennen sich nicht" (Tucholsky 3593).

<sup>100</sup> Tucholsky saw the German-French cultural understanding as a vital precondition for political cooperation, and regarded such cooperation as a "Vorbedingung zur Genesung des kranken Europas" (qtd. from Hepp's introductory overview "Kurt Tucholsky. Leben und Werk" [Tucholsky 144]).

practiced by the *Alltagskultur* of the lower-middle and middle classes, such as at their “Stammtisch.” Furthermore, this article indirectly refers to the consequences of nationalist discourse in the public sphere through the press, which complements Tucholsky’s criticism of a still anti-republican and nationalist domestic policy in Germany as another phenomenon of a nationalist political culture in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic. He writes as Ignaz Wrobel in the article “Aussen- und Innenpolitik,” published in the pacifist paper *Die Friedenswarte* in July of 1926:

Wo ist die leiseste Rückwirkung einer internationalen Verständigung in unserer Innenpolitik? Die Rückwirkung der schweizer Besprechungen auf die Innenpolitik fehlt. Und sie wird von keinem der beteiligten Staaten reklamiert, erstens, weil es keiner besser macht, und zweitens aus heiliger Scheu vor der ‘Unabhängigkeit’ der andern. Nun ist diese Unabhängigkeit eine glatte Lüge ... Wir wohnen nicht mehr in einzelnen Festungen des Mittelalters, wir wohnen in einem Haus. Und dieses Haus heisst Europa. (Tucholsky 9860-63)

Again he points out nationalist rhetoric as obscuring the fact of a democratic twentieth-century Europe, which, due to globalization of trade, assimilation of cultures, and progression of information technology, has developed closer ties among its nations than its nationalist forces acknowledge. Moreover, as Tucholsky criticizes, the anti-republican and anti-European nationalism essentially represents militarist and capitalist interests, as he writes as Ignaz Wrobel in his article “Und wer spricht für euch?” published in *Das Andere Deutschland* on October 22, 1927:

Wir erkennen die ‘Ehre des Vaterlandes’ nicht an, wir erkennen die ‘Heiligkeit der Fahne’ nicht an; unser Vaterland ist ein *geeintes Europa*, aber nicht ein durch kaufmännische Interessen zerklüftetes Deutschland. Es gilt, der Internationale der Blut-Generale die wahre Internationale der Pazifisten gegenüberzusetzen. (Tucholsky 5495)

As he indicates in this article, Tucholsky tries to establish a counter-public of the pacifist movement to a returning nationalist force particularly in Germany after 1925. He

deconstructs the sacral character of nationalist symbols such as flags or militarist phrases such as the “honor of the fatherland” as in the service of ideologies of the military and capitalist interests, and he juxtaposes these interests with the goals of pacifism: a united Europe.

Juxtaposition and deconstruction of ideology through satire were his most effective stylistic devices in promoting pacifism. In his articles on the goals of the pacifist movement, Tucholsky increasingly uses the first-person plural as a sign of unity in the pacifist movement, thus representing a strong counterforce to a growing and openly conducted nationalism. In his article “Die grossen Familien,” written as Ignaz Wrobel on March 27, 1928, in the *Weltbühne*, Tucholsky puts the goals of the pacifist movement in stark contrast to those of the fundamentally nationalist goals of Europe’s political leaders:

Der europäische Friede steht über den niedern Interessen der Vaterländer. ... Wir halten den Krieg der Nationalstaaten für ein Verbrechen, und wir bekämpfen ihn, wo wir können, wann wir können, mit welchen Mitteln wir können. Wir sind Landesverräter. Aber wir verraten einen Staat, den wir verneinen, zugunsten eines Landes, das wir lieben, für den Frieden und für unser wirkliches Vaterland: Europa. (Tucholsky 5857-59)

This text exhibits the tendency of Tucholsky’s writings at the end of the Weimar Republic’s middle years to reveal an increasingly dichotomous political course through the depiction of stark contrasts and juxtapositions in the political landscape of the Weimar Republic. He continued this tendency of polarization for pro-republican, pro-pacifist propagandistic purposes in his writings for *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (AIZ) of the communist publisher Münzenberg, as the Republic approached the end of its middle years in 1928.

### ***Expanding Critical Communication in 1928: Tempo and AIZ***

Tucholsky made considerable ideological and stylistic stretches in the year 1928. Tucholsky turned from primarily pacifist venues to a broad readership of the relatively moderate *Ullstein*-paper *Tempo*. He also began to publish in the communist venue *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* despite his growing reservations towards the socialist and communist movement. He saw his role as a public intellectual who is affiliated with the working class as one of a “helper,” who assists and mediates in the process of unifying the working class and organizing it for a powerful counter public to Germany’s growing nationalism and emerging National Socialism.<sup>101</sup>

Tucholsky’s inclusion of the communist press and of a moderate but popular daily demonstrates his strategic moves on the mass media market, where he tried to activate and unite the working class for political participation against nationalists, and where he tried to maintain critical communication among the educated middle class through subtle political criticism in the context of discussions around cultural issues. Interestingly, Tucholsky’s articles in *Tempo* and *AIZ* use one respective pseudonym exclusively. The cultural critic Peter Panter presents the *Tempo*-articles, which discuss issues of culture and national mentality from his position as a cultural correspondent in Paris. Although the *Tempo* articles are not decidedly political, his cultural criticism on issues like theater audiences or the Parisian cinema carries a politically critical undertone. Tucholsky

---

<sup>101</sup> In his *Weltbühne*-article “Gebrauchslyrik,” published on November 27, 1928, Tucholsky as Ignaz Wrobel mentions that the intellectual’s task in the proletarian movement is that of a “helper” (Tucholsky 6394). However, Tucholsky insists that the public intellectual must retain a freedom of choice of his public channels: “Ich kann dieses Spiel nicht mitspielen, das darin besteht, jemandem Vorwürfe zu machen: er schreibe Verse für Proletarier und verdiene sich sein Geld als Regisseur an schlechten bürgerlichen Theatern ... Besser ein Anzug nach Mass als eine Gesinnung von der Stange” (Tucholsky 6392-93).

repeatedly alludes to cross-cultural understanding in his discussions on the Parisian cultural scene, as in his article “Pariser Publikum,” published on October 8, 1928:

Es muss für deutsche Schauspieler, ganz abgesehen von der Sprache, nicht leicht sein, vor Pariser Publikum zu spielen. Es ist leichter und schwerer. Leichter: weil sie naturnäher und im ganzen nicht so blasiert sind, wie man das anderswo antrifft; schwerer: weil sie noch die feinste Nuance abschmecken. Publikum ferner Länder ist nicht besser und nicht schlechter als das deutsche. Es ist anders. (Tucholsky 10871)

While he raises the issue of nationalism in “high” culture such as theater in this article, another one addresses nationalism in “low” culture such as sports and film. The article “Film mit Scheibe” from October 26, 1928, emphasizes the international character of the arts and sports, and thus indirectly implies to the audience that its interests are of profoundly anti-nationalist, international nature: “In der Kunst und im Sport sollte es keinen Nationalismus geben” (Tucholsky 10873).

In contrast to the cautious and indirect criticism of nationalism in culture as practiced in *Tempo*, Tucholsky’s publications in the communist *AIZ* display earthy language and graphic satire in their criticism of growing authoritarianism in the Weimar Republic. In the *AIZ*, Tucholsky openly carries out the message of the necessity of political and social change. Tucholsky exclusively used his pseudonym Theobald Tiger, his public persona of political poetry, in his satirical depiction of the consequences of a nationalist system for the working class. His political poems published in 1928 in the *AIZ* focus on three issues in motivating the working class for participation in the establishment of a counter-public to the existing, nationalist-dominated political culture of the Weimar Republic. These three issues are institutional critiques for an awareness of the instrumentalization of the working class in an authoritarian system, the questioning of an improvement of the social and political status of the working class during the course



of the Weimar Republic and its purported revolution, and the reminder of the original goals of the nineteenth-century working-class movement as an incentive for a return to those goals.

The first of these three topics, the critique of state institutions that suppress the workers, is expressed in the poem “Gesang der englischen Chorknaben.” It alludes to the instrumentalization of the working class in an authoritarian system in its critique of the connection among the institutions church, military, and industrialism as one that exploits the working class and suppresses its basic human rights:

Macht eure Fabrik auch mal Plei-hei-te  
Die Kirche, die steht euch zur Sei-hei-te,  
Und gibt euch stets das Geleite:  
Sie beugt dem Proleten den Rücken krumm  
Und hält ihn sein ganzes Leben lang dumm  
Und segnet den Staat und seine Soldaten  
Die Unternehmer und Potentaten ... (Tucholsky 6156)

Tucholsky’s implied message, expressed through the satirical depiction of the church’s fake spiritualism intends to motivate the working-class audience to initiate change. The endings of the first two lines remind of those of a religious song, but one that is poorly sung, which points to the fact that the church was “out of tune” with the needs and interests of the working class, despite its creation of an artificial sense of spiritual and material security for common people.

This poem stirred considerable public controversy when it prompted legal action for alleged blasphemy. Although the trial ended in Tucholsky’s acquittal, it indicated the relevance of Tucholsky’s satire in the political discourse during this time, and particularly

in the context of the competition between the political right, the left, and the democrats for winning over the working class as a great voter potential.<sup>102</sup>

While this first poem criticizes reactionary tendencies in the institution church, another poem critically examines the socio-political realities of the Weimar Republic after its “revolution,” which was initiated largely by the working class. Through the technique of personal questioning in his poem “Zehn Jahre deutsche ‘Revolution,’” the text turns directly to the reader and emphasizes the failure of the Weimar Republic’s political parties to have represented the interests of the working class. Instead, as the poem satirically points out, the alleged republicanism is in fact governed by an authoritarian *Kaiserreich* ideology, symbolized by the colors black, white, and red:

...  
Bist du glücklicher? du Arbeiterfrau?  
Bist du glücklicher? Bergmann im Schacht?  
Ist dir wohler? Mann im Gefängnisbau?  
Hat euch allen die Republik was gebracht?  
Wir sind eine Republik.  
Mit schwarz-weiss-roten Schnüren...  
Wir bemühen uns, das Geschäft streng im Sinne  
Seines Begründers zu führen.  
... (Tucholsky 6356)

As implied in its rhetorical questions in this poem, the inherent authoritarianism of Weimar Republic politics is paired with capitalist interests (“das Geschäft”), implying the anti-proletarian stance of its representatives. Through this technique of personal questioning, and through the satirical depiction of authoritarianism and ruthless capitalism in an allegedly egalitarian system, Tucholsky critically discusses the

---

<sup>102</sup> This blasphemy trial against Tucholsky drew attention to him as a powerful advocate for the working class, as the surge in subsequent legal action against him indicates. In the aftermath of the blasphemy trial of September 1928, he was sued for his *Weltbühne* article “Verhetzte Kinder – ohnmächtige Republik” for libel (on November 17, 1928), which ended in a fine of 2000 Reichsmark (Hepp 558). Further legal action against Tucholsky followed in 1929 and thereafter, which will be discussed in Chapter 4 and 5 of this study.

shortcomings of republicanism as practiced in the Weimar Republic from the perspective of the working class, thereby giving the working class a public voice, as he had called for in his concept of “vertical journalism.”

Tucholsky not only pointed out the disadvantaged position of the working class in the Weimar Republic, but also reminded his proletarian readers of the original goals of the working-class movement of the nineteenth century. The satirical technique he used in his *AIZ* texts of 1928 entailed blunt juxtaposition of two extremes, which invite the reader to draw a synthesizing conclusion. In the poem “Das Sozialistengesetz 1878” he uses such a technique to illustrate how far the working-class movement has drifted from its original ideals:

Damals: Opfer. Heute: Verräter.  
Damals: Klassenkampf. Heute: Besetzt! Bitte später!  
Damals: Klarheit. Heute: Pst, nicht so laut!  
Und im Hintergrund wird ein Kreuzer gebaut.  
(Tucholsky 6340)

Implied in this text is the message that the working class must organize and unite again in order to achieve effective social and political change to its advantage. Throughout his *AIZ* texts Tucholsky alludes to militarism as the ultimate enemy of the working class. These allusions support the thesis that Tucholsky’s engagement in working-class venues was less motivated by a socialist goal but much more by his model of a pacifist, united Europe, and he regarded the working class as an audience most receptive to such a goal, given its tradition of international orientation and its tradition of relative immunity to nationalist propaganda of the bourgeois culture and press.

Therefore, Tucholsky intensified his work for Münzenberg in 1929, as the Republic entered a state of crisis, and developed a satirical style that tried to counter the

increasing constraint on the public sphere in the Republic's final years. It was precisely this countering of a progressively closed public sphere through satire and conscious moves within the publishing market that distinguished him as a writer from most of his contemporary intellectuals.

### **Tucholsky and Ossietzky on Republicanism**

A comparison of Tucholsky's model of a counterpublic of this phase with those of other prominent intellectuals such as Carl von Ossietzky, his colleague and fellow editor at the *Weltbühne*, demonstrates his model's emphasis on the public use and deconstruction of language conventions, particularly through satire, and his criticism of practiced republicanism which still uses authoritarian, militarist concepts.

Carl von Ossietzky (1889-1938), chief editor of the *Weltbühne* from 1926 to its ban by the Nazis in 1933, and publicist in numerous other leftist-intellectual magazines, comes close to Tucholsky's critique by arguing that democracy in the Weimar Republic was not yet part of the public's consciousness but merely a theoretical document. In his article "Schutz der Republik – die grosse Mode," published in 1924 in the leftist-intellectual, cultural magazine *Das Tage-Buch*,<sup>103</sup> he writes:

Unsere Republik ist noch kein Gegenstand des Massenbewusstseins, sondern eine Verfassungsurkunde und ein Amtsbetrieb. Wenn das Volk die Republik sehen will, führt man ihm die Wilhelmstrasse vor. Und wundert sich, wenn es ziemlich begossen nach Hause geht. Nichts ist da, was die Herzen schneller schlagen

---

<sup>103</sup> The magazine *DasTage-Buch*, edited by Leopold Schwarzschild and comparable in themes and style to the *Weltbühne*, had the same circulation number as the *Weltbühne* but is regarded as less influential on cultural and political discourses during the Weimar Republic than the *Weltbühne* (Koszyk 285).

liesse. Um diesen Staat ohne Idee und mit ewig schlechtem Gewissen gruppieren sich ein paar sogenannte Verfassungsparteien, gleichfalls ohne Idee und mit nicht besserem Gewissen, nicht geführt, sondern verwaltet (42).

Ossietzky alludes here to two phenomena in the Republic's history that point to the urgency of "defending" republicanism: the newly established *Republikenschutzgesetz* of 1923 and the founding of the pro-republican, non-governmental organization *Reichsbanner*, which sought to publicly demonstrate the strengths of republicanism (Ossietzky remarks sarcastically that since the corrupt government cannot effectively defend republicanism, organizations such as the *Reichsbanner* (affiliated with the socialdemocratic party SPD) have to do their job [42]). Like Tucholsky, he criticizes the Republic's failure to win widespread, emotional appeal. However, although Ossietzky also thematizes the need for a republican identity and the necessity of public representation of republicanism in the form of symbols and events, his style differs from Tucholsky's in the absence of language satire, which had become an integral part of Tucholsky's satirical repertoire, increasingly so during the second half of the Weimar Republic. Ossietzky's discussion of republican identity resembles Tucholsky's themes concerning the need of a republican counter-public sphere, but Tucholsky's texts synthesize these aspects by way of deconstructing ideologies. Ossietzky, unlike Tucholsky, remains descriptive in his criticism of how the government has failed in attracting mass support by means of "republican propaganda." Although it is a contradiction in terms, such "republican propaganda" that not only criticizes anti-republicanism but also presents republicanism in its essence that is in its diversity and inclusiveness and not by the way Weimar politics have worked, is practiced by Tucholsky, who is not only critical but also funny – a way of attracting readers.

Tucholsky's texts create a distance to language convention, and their appropriation to their diverse publicistic contexts in theme and style represent a model of a republican counter-public which in its innovativeness was unparalleled by his contemporaries. A comparison of Tucholsky to other contemporary intellectuals' writings, particularly to those that addressed the same issues in the same or similar organs, reveals Tucholsky's unique use of satire. Ossietzky's style is analytical; it lacks the emotional dimension of Tucholsky's writings. Tucholsky's style, particularly its humor, expresses ambivalence and contradiction.

### **Europeanized National Memories: the Basis for Pacifism**

At the same time that foreign politics of the first half of this middle period denoted a new direction of cooperation between Germany and other European nations, Tucholsky developed a model of supranational identity as an alternative to nationalist identity in pacifist and intellectual papers. He strove to "Europeanize" national memories as a basis for a European identity and as a foundation for a pacifist and republican future. He tried to achieve this Europeanization through a satirical dismantling of nationalist traits in Germany's (and other European countries') cultures, and through repeated appeal to the goal of a supranational community in Europe as an alternative to growing nationalism.

After 1925, Tucholsky developed different satirical techniques to broaden his counterpublic in order to re-conceptualize public communication. These techniques, as appropriate they were to their different communicative contexts, occasionally found themselves in proximity to national socialist rhetoric on propaganda. The discourse on

propaganda became dominant during the second phase of the Weimar Republic after Hitler published his notorious *Mein Kampf* in 1925, which delineated the Nazis' concept of public speaking, but which also did not become widely popular until the 1930s – a concept that echoed various key points of Tucholsky's model of mass propaganda: simplicity, repetitiveness, emotion, and “speaking” the socio-economical language of his audience, as he outlined in his writings on mass propaganda. The difference from Hitler's concept, however, was that Tucholsky sought to counter the Nazis' strategy with their very own weapons in order to dismantle the illusion of German supremacy they aimed to create.

Tucholsky's concept of public mass communication oscillated between the idea of emotionally capturing an audience during public mass events, and creating critical distance through the technique of “vertical journalism.” Thus, he expanded his public presence in the communist as well as the popular-moderate press, and he deconstructed familiar concepts through satire. As he observed the Weimar Republic from an outsider's perspective in Paris, he created distance through critique and satire in his writings. This distance was, according to Tucholsky, necessary to reconceptualize ingrained ideologies in public language and everyday culture. During the middle years of the Weimar Republic, Tucholsky resorted to an increasingly graphic satirical style, particularly when addressing the working class, in order to activate the masses for political and social change. Tucholsky's innovative role in the public discourse on republicanism becomes particularly evident when compared to other intellectuals' writings on the necessity of a broad implementation of a republican identity in the Weimar Republic: Tucholsky does not remain caught up in elitist-literary rhetoric but uses his concept of “vertical

journalism,” a sociological approach to public communication, to appeal to his diverse audience and to establish a republican public sphere in an increasingly anti-republican environment.

This concept set the stage for his writings of 1929, which produced the most sensational texts of his career. By publishing a controversial book on Germany, his conspicuous *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, Tucholsky heavily influenced the highly contested discourse on what it meant to be German during the last phase of the Weimar Republic. As the next chapter will demonstrate, Tucholsky incorporated new forms of mass communication and thus offered a new way of speaking about Germany.



## Chapter IV:

**“Der Staat schere sich fort, wenn wir unsere Heimat lieben:”**

### ***Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* and the Discourse on German-ness During the Final Phase of the Weimar Republic (1929-1933)**

In 1929, when public discourse on German-ness became increasingly nationalized, Tucholsky wrote in the *Weltbühne*:

Aber es ist ja nicht wahr, dass die sechzig Millionen immer ein einziges Ding sind; gespalten sind sie, durch den Klassenkampf zerrissen, in ihren Anschauungen, ihrem Herkommen, ihrer Abstammung so weit voneinander unterschieden, dass man schon auf das Heimatgefühl, das ganz und gar unpolitisch ist, zurückgreifen muss, um wirklich sagen zu dürfen: Deutschland. ... Aber hier ist klar und eindeutig gezeigt, wie an die Stelle des Religionsbegriffes, der angeblich den Menschen erst über das Tier hinaushebt, dieser Vaterlandsbegriff getreten ist, der mit seinem falschen Mystizismus auch bessere Gehirne vernebelt hat. (Tucholsky 6726)

This article (“Ein besserer Herr,” Peter Panter, *Weltbühne*, June 25, 1929) presents the theme of Tucholsky’s controversial project that was about to appear two months later in 1929. His book *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* was intended to deliver a “cross-section” through a highly politicized and ideologically contested country, in which concepts of German-ness competed in homogenizing divergent national identities.<sup>104</sup>

Tucholsky found himself caught up in yet another contradiction as he tried to move beyond political difference with an allegedly apolitical concept of “Heimat.”<sup>105</sup> By

---

<sup>104</sup> *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, 12. I will refer to this source in the following as “DD.”

<sup>105</sup> In his study on the concept of “Heimat” in German novels of the 1970s, Eckhart Prahl distinguishes between the concrete meaning of the word and its emotional meaning. Its concrete and original meaning

examining Germany's cultural, economic, and political situation in the Weimar Republic, Tucholsky discovered that the anti-republican lobby (especially the right-wing media and other spokespersons of militarist, industrialist, and reactionary interests) had used a false mysticism in creating concepts of national identity, which he called "Vaterlandsbegriff." On the other hand, however, he did acknowledge that a citizen needs and wants some kind of sense of belonging. This personal sense of belonging constituted Tucholsky's concept of national identity, which he called "Heimatgefühl." Tucholsky's concept of "Heimat" denoted an apolitical space, freed of any implication of superiority or exclusivity – it described a highly individual sense of belonging.

As ambivalent as his concept of "Heimat" was Tucholsky's understanding of the role of photography in mass communication in the context of national identity. On the one hand, he deemed photography a vital component of "vertical journalism" in form of "Tendenzphotographie," on other hand, however, he regarded photography as dangerous in that its supposed objectivity only obscured underlying ideological relations instead of revealing them.

This chapter will take a critical look at this book and its many contradictory, paradoxical discussions of issues concerning German-ness. As Tucholsky's most controversial text (Hepp 291), selling 50,000 issues in three editions within a year (Mayer 68), it responded to publicly propagated concepts of "German-ness" and sought to elucidate the reinforcement of ideologies within the public sphere. This did not mean, however, that Tucholsky's stance on the role of the mass media was entirely negative.

---

denotes a location, the location of the home (11). Prahl notes that the concept of "Heimat" has been subject to political manipulation, particularly in the context of Germany's search for national identity during the nineteenth- and twentieth centuries. National Socialists used the concept of "Heimat" by making it equal with the concepts of "Nation" and "Volk" (13).

As this chapter will highlight, *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* laid out the subversive as well as the totalitarian potential of *Alltagskultur*, in which the media were participated. By analyzing Tucholsky's satirical style, his language parody, and the literary as well as the photographic montage employed in his texts and John Heartfield's photomontages, this chapter traces Tucholsky's project as one that attempted to show how ideologically permeable and penetrable mass communication and mass culture is and what role it plays in shaping national identities. It specifically looks at how Tucholsky discusses nationalist traits in German cultural politics, particularly in its commercialized culture, as well as Germany's folk culture and that culture's subversive potential.

This chapter differs in length and structure from the other main chapters of this dissertation. The different genre at hand, a book, necessitates a critical look at the context of the book market at the time it was published, and it also calls for a critical look at the genre *Deutschland* book, generated by *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, in its role within the discourse of German-ness.

This critical look at Germany's culture in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, its politics, and its economic situation in a supposed democracy highlighted many sources of anti-republican sentiment in the Weimar Republic's public sphere. In his language parody and satire of Germany's cultural politics, Tucholsky demonstrates how language in the media, in high and low culture, and in other realms of public communication, namely in form of monuments glorifying militarism and monarchism, conditioned and reinforced anti-republicanism. As indicated by the intensity of responses to *Deutschland*

*Deutschland über alles*, this demonstration posed a considerable threat to right-wing propaganda.

This chapter takes into account thematic as well as formal aspects of the book. It looks at its dualist structure, its play with literary conventions such as Germany's tradition of *Heimatliteratur* as creating a forum for communicating about German-ness.

The introductory part of the chapter situates the publishing of *Deutschland über alles* within the historical and biographical context of 1929, when the final, crisis-ridden phase of the Weimar Republic began. It presents Tucholsky's life in Sweden and his publishing practices of the year 1929 as significant for his decision to work for the communist publishing house *Neuer Deutscher Verlag*. It assesses this year as the height of Tucholsky's polemical agitation, responding to the potential of the political situation in 1929 to consolidate republicanism, particularly with the help of the working-class voter. Popular as well as scholarly criticism reacted to its innovative style as a model for critically communicating about German-ness.

The text interpretation begins with situating *Deutschland über alles* within the legacy of Germany's liberal counter public. It advances an analysis of its style and form, its employment of montage, and the significance of the formal aspects to the book's political message. The second part of the textual analysis focuses on thematic aspects, particularly on Tucholsky's critical representation of the role of *Alltagskultur* and public language in forming, reinforcing, and reflecting ideological constructs of national identity. This thematic analysis is paired with an analysis of Tucholsky's satirical techniques in critically discussing these issues. In its conclusion, this chapter highlights *Deutschland* books published in direct anticipation of, or direct response to *Deutschland*

*Deutschland über alles*, and it ascribes Tucholsky's project as one of tremendous impact on the discourse on German-ness during the last phase of the Weimar Republic.

In order to demonstrate Tucholsky's awareness of the political crisis of the final phase of the Weimar Republic, to which his work responded, the next section lays out events in Tucholsky's biography and his publishing strategies of the year 1929.

### **Tucholsky moves to Sweden**

Tucholsky's public activism and his publishing strategies of the year 1929 pointed to the approaching crisis at the end of the year. He spent the first third of the year traveling on his reading tours, radio broadcasts, and public speeches. He continued his activism in pacifist organizations and spoke about the relationship between France and Germany at the convention of *Deutsche Liga für Menschenrechte* in Berlin in the spring of 1929 (Hess 559).

During the second half of 1929, his activism in the pacifist movement slowed down. Tucholsky focused on promoting his book and on trying to respond to the demands of the escalating political crisis during the last few months of 1929. He spent the summer of 1929 in Läggesta, Sweden, a small town near Castle Gripsholm, where he worked on *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*. This book was published on August 6 in Willi Münzenberg's communist *Neuer Deutscher Verlag* and prompted strong reactions from a broad spectrum of readers. The highly politicized context of the publication of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* was not only apparent in the critiques, imitations, and praise it received, but also in nonliterary form during Tucholsky's reading tour, which followed the publication of the book. In November and December of 1929,

Tucholsky toured through Cologne, Frankfurt, Mannheim, Darmstadt, Mainz, Dresden, Leipzig, Breslau, Hamburg, and Wiesbaden, where right extremists mistook someone else for Tucholsky and beat this person severely (Hepp 560). Because of right-radical violence it became almost too dangerous for Tucholsky to stay in Germany, and his book had caused such controversy even amongst his friends and employers, that Tucholsky made Sweden his permanent residence from 1930 on (Hepp 324). Despite his physical absence, however, he made himself heard. As the next section will show, his publications of 1929 were aggressively polemical and indicated the vital importance he ascribed to countering growing National Socialism, as the Weimar Republic lurched into its last crisis.

### **1929: Tucholsky's Year of Polemical Agitation**

Tucholsky responded to the onset of the final crisis of the Weimar Republic not only by intense presence in as many public channels as possible, but also by taking radical measures in his publishing strategy in order to reach a broad audience. Before the elections of September 1930 showed a dramatic political polarization, he focused on reaching the working class with his message promoting republicanism and a pacifist, international future. Although he had just published two collections of texts at the publishing house Rowohlt, *Mit 5 PS* and *Das Lächeln der Mona Lisa*, his sensational publication *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, published in Münzenberg's *Neuer Deutscher Verlag*, characterized Tucholsky's public presence during this year and radically changed his profile from a critical yet amusing feuilletonist of texts compiled in publications such as *Das Lächeln der Mona Lisa* to an activist-writer publishing in

socialist-communist papers, and who committed his work, within the confines of republicanism, to the cause of the working class. The fact that Tucholsky had already declined an earlier offer by the moderate publishing house Rowohlt to write a book about Germany, and his rather reluctant acceptance of Münzenberg's offer demonstrates the significance he saw in mobilizing the working class to establish alternatives to growing nationalism (Hepp 300).

The increase in nationalist discourse during the last phase of the Weimar Republic caused Tucholsky to intensify his agitating political polemics. The decreasingly diverse public sphere of this phase and the emergence of Nazi propaganda prompted Tucholsky to engage in graphic satire and blunt polemics in order to compete with nationalist propaganda. He cooperated with John Heartfield, an artist and graphic designer, who, together with George Grosz, had created designs for the famous stages of Erwin Piscator and Max Reinhardt and had thus profoundly shaped the visual appearance of the Weimar Republic's culture. Heartfield and Grosz were also editors of several progressive, avantgardist magazines of the leftist Malik Verlag, for which Tucholsky had written several articles, namely for the magazine *Der Knüppel*. The fact that Tucholsky continued cooperating with the radical left indicates the importance he ascribed to forming an alternative public. Tucholsky had already begun this trend in 1928, despite his repeatedly expressed reservations against party politics, particularly those of the communist party, in order to find a working-class audience. He saw the working class as the only social class that bore the potential to become a powerful, united front against growing nationalism and National Socialism.

Several articles published in 1929 attest to this awareness, which explains not only the mere fact that he became involved in radical leftist publishing, but also the style and tone of these publications, particularly that of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. In his few contributions to moderate papers, namely to Ullstein's *Tempo* and *Uhu*, Tucholsky remained moderate in style, tone, and themes. His articles for the *Vossische Zeitung* appealed only indirectly for political action in their criticism of nationalism in language ("Der Gruss" July 12, 1929 [Tucholsky 10910]), of nationalist prejudice ("Die 'dummen' Schweden" November 7, 1929 [Tucholsky 7031]), and of public pragmatism in a market-oriented world ("Mieter und Vermieter" November 16, 1929 [Tucholsky 7052]). At the same time, his contributions to leftist organs and even those to the *Weltbühne* had become increasingly polemical in order to agitate the broad audience of workers to form a counterforce to increasing nationalism.<sup>106</sup>

Despite his many contradictory career moves, Tucholsky always articulated his concept of the public intellectual and his/her tasks in the cultural and political process. In his last programmatic article on the role of the public intellectual in party politics, published in the socialist paper *Die Front* under the title "Die Rolle des Intellektuellen in der Partei," Tucholsky expressed his criticism of the dogmatic leftist party press ("Aber tatsächlich ist es heute so, daß die Freiheit, die der Intellektuelle genießt, bei den

---

<sup>106</sup> In 1929, Tucholsky contributed 114 articles to the *Weltbühne*, 25 to the *Vossische Zeitung*, 4 to *Tempo*, 2 to *Uhu*, 1 to *Die Dame*, 1 to *Die Literarische Welt*, 1 to *Das Andere Deutschland*, 2 to *Simplicissimus*, 1 to *Die Front*, 1 to the German Radio, and 8 articles to Münzenberg's *AIZ* besides his 42 articles in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. These numbers indicate Tucholsky's greater concentration on publications in the *Weltbühne* and Münzenberg's venues from the year before, when he contributed 103 articles to the *Weltbühne*, 33 to the *Vossische*, 17 to *Tempo*, 7 to *AIZ*, 4 to *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, 3 to *Uhu*, 2 to *Die Dame*, 1 to *Die Literarische Welt*, 1 to *Das Andere Deutschland*, 1 to *Der Rote Helfer*, and 1 to *Frankfurter Generalanzeiger*. In sum, Tucholsky shifted from publishing 61 articles in moderate papers and 8 in radical left papers in 1928 to 35 articles in moderate papers and 51 in radical left papers in 1929 (these numbers do not include the *Weltbühne*, since the *Weltbühne* had a relatively steady readership of 16,000 mostly writers and intellectuals).



bürgerlichen Blättern – innerhalb des Rahmens dieser Blätter – größer ist als in der Arbeiterpresse” [Tucholsky 6510]) and urged for a united leftist front against the political right: “Es kommt nur auf eins an: *zu arbeiten für die gemeinsame Sache*” (Tucholsky 6511). Tucholsky maintained that the role of the intellectual in this struggle for a “united goal,” the goal of establishing a counter public to increasingly dominating nationalisms, was to be a mediator, not a leader, and this mediating role did not necessitate a full identification with the lifestyle, the ideology, and the material circumstances of the working class. The intellectuals’ devotion to politicizing and empowering the working class was, for Tucholsky, not a matter of party politics but a matter of countering nationalist dominance in the public sphere through public communication: “Wir sitzen zwischen den Stühlen und haben erkannt: Der Kampf der Arbeiterklasse führt zum Siege; er ist gerecht” (Tucholsky 6507). Tucholsky’s *Weltbühne* article “Das Nachschlagewerk als politische Waffe,” published on August 20 under Ignatz Wrobel, concretizes his criticism of nationalism in public language, which misused distorted statistics and numbers disguised as objective information for the effect of political propaganda. He specifically mentions reference works such as the *Handbuch des öffentlichen Lebens* that use false statistics to justify its authors’ nationalist-chauvinist idea of a superior German-ness and its propaganda against the Versailles Treaty (Tucholsky 6863). Tucholsky criticizes the occupation of nationalist rhetoric in the public sphere:

Das ‘Handbuch des öffentlichen Lebens’ aber hat nicht die Berechtigung, für Deutschland zu sprechen, wenn es so spricht. Es spricht für einen Teil Deutschlands. Nicht für seinen besten. (Tucholsky 6869-70)

This criticism of a nationalist language in the German public sphere and the power of this language to shape political consciousness into an anti-republican national identity becomes the main focus of Tucholsky's most sensational attempt of establishing a counter public. *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* was a polemical response to a continued *Kaiserreich* mentality in the Weimar Republic, and it pointed out the degree to which this mentality supported the emergence of National Socialism. Reactions to the publications were intense and indicated the notoriety of the book in discourses on German-ness, not only in the Weimar Republic but also post WWII, as the next section will highlight.

### **Reception of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles***

Popular and scholarly reception of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* was polarized by its approval and rejection, which denoted the book's relevance in the discourse of national identity in the final phase of the Weimar Republic. The fact that it has been measured primarily in terms of why it had not "prevented" National Socialism indicates that the book had not been fully recognized in its role of creating a genre for discussing German-ness.

The following paragraphs delineate reactions to the book that began immediately after its publishing in 1929, and which indicated the book's central position in the discourse around national identity within the crisis of republicanism during the Weimar Republic's final years. It outlines post-WWII criticism of the book, ranging from polarized reception in East and West Germany to a general discussion around national identity in the context of newly reunified Germany. It concludes with an overview of

recent scholarship on *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* as a point of departure for this study's interpretation of the text.

### ***Contemporary Reactions to “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles”***

Contemporary reactions to *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* were mostly negative and reflected the politicized and polarized public sphere of the Weimar Republic's final years. Ambivalent comments about the book came even from Tucholsky himself – on the one hand, he criticized the increasingly dogmatic course of the leftist publishing world, on the other hand, he justified in the same letter to Mary Gerold dated August 30, 1929, his at times “blunt and cheap” (Tucholsky 11503) satirical means used in the book as necessary in this context. Four years later, on July 25, 1933, he wrote to Walter Hasenclever defensively about the book, acknowledging its aesthetic clumsiness and the lack of critical severity:

Daß die Seite *Tiere sehen Dich an* mit den Generalsköpfen gar nicht von mir ist, nebenbei – ich muß natürlich die Verantwortung tragen. Sie stammt von John Heartfield, und er hat sie knapp vor der Drucklegung eingefügt, er hatte Recht es zu tun. Und das Buch ist als künstlerische Leistung klobig. Und schwach. Und viel zu milde. (Tucholsky 11697)

Tucholsky's comment that in retrospect the book's criticism on nationalism was too mild can be understood in the context of established National Socialism in Germany after 1933. The fact that Tucholsky's opinion about the book ranged from defensiveness about the less subtle satire to disappointment about its alleged lack of effective impact on a mass audience also indicates the book's symptomatic role within Tucholsky's work in its last phase: it signified the height of Tucholsky's polemics, which represented his last

attempt at winning over the working class in order to counter rising nationalism and National Socialism.

The book's publishing context epitomized the politicized publishing market of the Weimar Republic's final years. The prestigious *Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel*, an official advertising organ for all German publishing houses, refused to advertise Tucholsky's *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. After Tucholsky repeatedly referred to the *Börsenblatt's* anti-republican political position in public, and after protests by his publishing house *Neuer Deutscher Verlag*, the *Börsenverein* replied with an explanation of its refusal to publish the advertisement.<sup>107</sup> Its stated reason was Tucholsky's alleged ridiculing of the national anthem. This criticism not only demonstrated the fundamentally anti-republican stance of the *Börsenblatt*, the most prestigious and sought-after organ of the German publishing world, but which also actually helped the book's publicity, through negative attention (Becker 81).

While the refusal of the *Börsenblatt* to advertise *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* demonstrated a passive resistance of conservative groups against liberal and leftist discourses on German-ness, reactions to this book from the extreme political right were severe. In his detailed study of the publishing context and content of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, Hans J. Becker lists a number of reactions by nationalists and National Socialists, which mostly see this book as helping their propaganda,<sup>108</sup> or, in their anti-Semitic and anti-republican fashion, as a product of a Jewish conspiracy and of so-

---

<sup>107</sup> Tucholsky wrote: "Im Anzeigenteil wimmelt es von Verlagsanzeigen solcher Bücher, die bis hart an das Strafrecht republikfeindlich sind-, und zwar von rechts her." (qtd. in Becker 80).

<sup>108</sup> Jäcklin Rohrback writes in *Nationalsozialistische Briefe* 7 (1929): "Sie haben für uns mit diesem Bilderbuch eine gute Propaganda-Vorarbeit geleistet" (qtd. in Becker 81). Another Nazi paper, the *National-Sozialist* from October 6, 1929, writes: "Tucholsky wird auf dieses Buch vor dem neuen Staatsgerichtshof mildernde Umstände kriegen. Sicher. 'Wegen Förderung der N.S.-Propaganda'" (qtd. in Becker 81).

called “anti-nationalists,”<sup>109</sup> as Nazi-publicist Helmut Schütting wrote on December 20, 1929 in the *Völkischer Beobachter* under the title “Drückeberger Tucholskys neueste Deutschenbeschimpfung”: “... Dieses Bilderbuch ist eine Tollheit. Eine Ausgeburt unserer Zeit. Unserer Zeit, die angefressen und krank literarisch dahinsiecht” (qtd. in Becker 82). Schütting’s Nazi rhetoric described democracy and intellectualism as an illness, as a symptom of Jewish domination, and as a direct opposite of “healthy” German-ness. This adds an anti-Semitic and racist component to the nationalist rhetoric of these years, which in its repetitiveness was used as anti-republican and simultaneously as anti-Jewish propaganda. This propaganda was not shy of aggressive, violent, and vulgar language, and it focused on demonizing the critics of the Nazis and of nationalists by constant referral to an alleged “foreign” and “dirty” Jewish-ness, alluding to republicanism and intellectualism as the enemies of the working class and the German people. An anonymous critic noted in the Nazi organ *Die Flamme* (December 9, 1929):

Das neueste seiner Exkremente, betitelt frech ‘Deutschland Deutschland über alles.’ Darin arbeitet er so verschwenderisch mit Schmutz und Unflat, wie es nur ein Schwein versteht, das im Dreck zu Hause ist ... Bitte, lieber Leser, betrachte dir das obenstehende Bild und wisse: Ein *Judenschwein* schaut dich an. (qtd. in Mayer 103)

The anti-Semitic, derogatory Nazi term “Judenschwein” refers to a caricature that accompanied this text, and this racist caricature depicted an angry looking Tucholsky with a prominent nose, implying his Jewish background, which in itself was supposed to suggest Tucholsky’s alleged anti-Germanism. The picture was a direct response to Heartfield’s montage “Tiere sehen Dich an” (DD 63), which depicted leaders of the military and right-wing nationalists, and which outraged the right-extremist community

---

<sup>109</sup> As mentioned in the *Nationalsozialistische Flamme* December 9, 1929 (qtd. in Becker 82).

because the picture suggested a bestiality of militarism. Tucholsky as a Jewish intellectual who wrote on issues of German-ness and national identity became for right-wing and Nazi propaganda the personification of a Jewish-republican conspiracy against their militarist and mythical concept of a purported German supremacy.

While racist and anti-Semitic National Socialist rhetoric focused on Tucholsky's alleged lack of German-ness, the political left, namely its organ *Die Aktion*, criticized Tucholsky for his lack of proletarian identity. It attacked Tucholsky and his publisher Willi Münzenberg for their alleged bourgeois hypocrisy:

Herr Tucholsky ist heute einer der geschicktesten bürgerlichen Journalisten Deutschlands. Er weiss in Vers und Prosa jeder 'linken' Gesinnung gerecht zu werden. In dem Buch 'Deutschland Deutschland über alles' ... legt Herr Tucholsky ... zum Schluss der 'deutschen Heimat' eine Liebeserklärung hin, die von ekelerregender Verlogenheit und zum Kotzen ist. Aber Willi Münzenberg ... vermag auch so etwas als 'kommunistisch' zu decken. (qtd. in Becker 84)

The left emphasized Tucholsky's bourgeois background, which disqualified his work as invalid for the proletarian cause. Compared to the rhetoric of the extreme right, the left also used vulgarisms, but only in regards to an alleged hypocrisy of Tucholsky's writing, not to racially degrade him. The vehement reactions to the publication of the book on either side of the political spectrum signify its importance in the Weimar Republic's discourse on national identity, particularly during its contested final years.

Arguments from the Republic's liberal intellectuals against *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* were much more differentiated and less politicized. Tucholsky had the reputation of always appropriately addressing pressing political and social issues, but this publication received mixed reviews even among this readership. In two different

articles,<sup>110</sup> Herbert Ihering accused Tucholsky of repetitiveness: “Nun schreibt er immer wieder dieselben Aufsätze gegen das Militär, gegen die Justiz, gegen den Spiesser. Keine neue Beobachtung. Kein neuer Ton” (qtd. in DD “Anhang”). Ihering criticizes the book as a representative of the fashionable *Neue Sachlichkeit* and its false pretense of remaining objective through photographic documentation. Ihering accused writers like Tucholsky of superficiality in their engagement for the working class, and for their capitalist orientation. Ihering’s criticism of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*’s methods of representation was shared by a number of writers and intellectuals during the final years of the Weimar Republic.<sup>111</sup> Tucholsky replied to Ihering’s criticism in a personal letter dated October 18, 1929. In this letter he acknowledges Ihering’s criticism of the book’s anachronism, but he explains and justifies the repetitive nature of his work by referring to his personal goal of fighting against the imminent “Wilhelminian spirit” of authoritarianism, which has shaped the culture and mentality of the Weimar Republic and prevented the development of egalitarian, democratic, liberal thinking in Germany:

Die Gefahr steckt vielmehr darin, dass in der allgemeinen Beruhigung ein ordentlicher, glatter Nationalismus, ein sauber rasierter Kapitalismus, eine fein gebügelte Unterdrückung der Arbeiter überall zu spüren ist – also auch in den Kreisen der bürgerlichen Intellektuellen. (qtd. in DD “Anhang”)

This “smooth nationalism,” “shaven capitalism,” and “meticulously ironed suppression of the workers” that Tucholsky attacked soon became aspects of the Nazi dictatorship.

---

<sup>110</sup> Herbert Ihering, “Polemik ohne Risiko,” *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, October 4, 1929. Also printed as “Polemik,” *Das Tage-Buch* 10 (1929).

<sup>111</sup> The most prominent critics were Bertolt Brecht in his essay “Neue Sachlichkeit” (1929), Joseph Roth in his essay “Schluss mit der Neuen Sachlichkeit” (1930), and Walter Benjamin in his essay “Linke Melancholie” (1931). Even the organ of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, *Der Scheinwerfer*, criticized Tucholsky of repetitiveness:

Kurt Tucholsky hat jahrelang in der ‘Weltbühne’ ... alles Morsche und Faule benannt, er war auf dem richtigen Weg. Aber jetzt, wo er eine gemeinsame Linie finden sollte, jetzt wirkt alles stumpf, abgenutzt” (Rolf Nürnberg, “Die Gartenlaube von links,” *Der Scheinwerfer* 3, 1929 [qtd. in Mayer 67]).

When the Nazis gained power in 1933, propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels incited a symbolic burning of books in which the works of most of significant authors of the Weimar Republic were destroyed. The effect was the end of critical voices in the arts and the end of freedom of speech. In later years in Nazi Germany, works by Tucholsky and other intellectuals of the Weimar Republic were only discussed under the premises of racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-humanist Nazi ideology. Nazi Germanist Josef Nadler declared Tucholsky the representative of a Jewish conspiracy that was about to “poison” German culture (qtd. in Hepp 276). After 1945, which marked the end of WWII and the end of the Nazi regime in Germany, discourses on literatures of the Weimar Republic were dominated by the question of how the catastrophe of National Socialism could have happened in a seemingly cultivated, free, and civilized society, as the next section will highlight.

### ***Post WWII Reception***

During the decades after the war, reception of *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* in West Germany was influenced by the verdict of historian Golo Mann, who had accused leftist intellectuals of their unwilling support of National Socialism.<sup>112</sup> It was not until 1964, when the first facsimile print of *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* came out at Rowohlt, and which sold 5060 copies in the same year (Becker 96), that a new discussion around the book began. The emphasis of this discussion shifted from Tucholsky’s role as a representative of the Weimar Republic’s intelligentsia failing to

---

<sup>112</sup> Paul Sethe accuses Tucholsky of writing the book out of bitterness, not out of the motivation for change: “... das ganze Elend der Weimarer Republik steht wieder vor uns. Wenn wir noch nicht wussten, warum sie zugrunde gegangen ist – jetzt wissen wir es” (7).



prevent National Socialism to a reading of the text in its socio-political context.

Nevertheless, even contextualized readings were dominated by the question to what degree Tucholsky indirectly supported the Nazis' cause by depicting such a "negative" image of the republic, except for Helmut Heissenbüttel's judgment of the book from a literary standpoint (Becker 97), when he characterized this book as "... eine Verbindung von politischem Pamphlet ... und offener literarischer Form" (Heissenbüttel 68).

Such literary readings of the book were absent in GDR-criticism. In 1967, the GDR published its facsimile print, which sold around 15,000 (Becker 98). Its reviews were dominated by an equation of "Weimar and Bonn:"

Denn die Verderber Deutschlands, die Tucholsky geisselte, sind im Bonner Staat, unter anderen Bedingungen, wieder gegenwärtig. Und zum anderen steht heute in der DDR jenes Deutschland fest gegründet, das Tucholsky als seine Heimat verteidigte. (qtd. in Becker 99)

It is almost needless to mention that Tucholsky's depiction of "Heimat" bore no resemblance to the political system of the GDR, and that the assertion that the "Bonner Staat" paralleled political conditions of the Weimar Republic was an overgeneralization typical for GDR literary criticism. Once again, since its controversial reception in the Weimar Republic's last years, Tucholsky and his work were instrumentalized for cultural politics, this time in the context of an ideologically and physically divided Germany.

In West Germany, the student movement now prompted interest in Tucholsky as a social reformer. The second facsimile print of the FRG was published by Rowohlt in 1973 and received overwhelmingly positive responses in the press; even the *Bild-Zeitung* mentions it (although erroneously as "*Deutschland Deutschland über alles – über die wilhelminische [sic] Zeit von Kurt Tucholsky*" [qtd. in Becker 103]), and the conservative *Welt am Sonntag* found that the book was relevant for understanding politics

in the 1970s: “Und so weiter, immer zynisch-fröhlich-klug weiter, bis auch der letzte Geschichtsmuffel auf die Idee kommt, dass Tucho eigentlich so tot noch gar nicht sein kann” (qtd. in Becker 103). *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* has enjoyed a recent rediscovery and such positive reception also lies in the fact that it destroys anachronistic national symbols. It also uses a combination of patriotism and cosmopolitanism as an alternative national identity, and it presents a political concept that is compatible with current concepts of internationalism as in the European Union. The relevance of the book in the discourse on national identity was not restricted to just Germany, as indicated by its translations into different languages.

### ***Translations of “Deutschland Deutschland über alles.”***

Several translations contributed to an international reception of the book. Its Russian translation, already published in 1931, had little in common with its original.<sup>113</sup> The correspondence between text and picture was rearranged (the title picture was exchanged for a picture of a communist march), and some text passages (such as the introductory quote of Hölderlin) were completely omitted. The foreword does not mention Heartfield, it characterizes Tucholsky as a companion of the proletariat, but it criticizes the book’s final discussion of “Heimat” as representing a “‘lyrische(r) Seelenschmerz’ eines desorientierten Kleinbürgers” (qtd. in Becker 95). The book’s American translation of 1972, however, tried to resemble its original (Becker 101). As H.J. Becker notes, it was the ideological kinship of Tucholsky with the New American Left of the late 1960s and early 1970s, particularly in the context of the Vietnam War,

---

<sup>113</sup> See H.J. Becker’s detailed discussion of the differences between original and translation (94-95).

which initiated a translation and an American edition of the book, and which contributed to the increased attention of American scholarship to the cultural and political world of the Weimar Republic (Becker 100). Compared to other bestsellers of the time, however, especially novels like Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which had readers all around the world in numerous languages, *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* did remain primarily a book for a German audience. It was, after all, concerned with the issue of nationalism in Germany and its ramifications in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic, but the overall discussion of national identity had indeed international relevance.

This relevance to the discourse of German-ness was noted by Tucholsky scholarship. As the next section shows, scholarly studies on *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* progressed from postwar discussions on the role of the book in strengthening anti-republican sentiment to differentiated analyses of Tucholsky's concept of "Heimat."

### **"Eine bösen-geniale literarische Eintagsfliege" – Recent Scholarship on *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles***

Recent scholarly reactions to the text are as diverse as its popular reception history in the press – while almost no scholars gave undivided approval,<sup>114</sup> almost all consider the book incredibly influential on the discourse of national identity.<sup>115</sup> Helga Bemann regards it as Tucholsky's most controversial work (417). While some critics

---

<sup>114</sup> An exception is Stefan Neuhaus' study.

<sup>115</sup> Bauer's statement is representative for the general assessment that because of its significance for the debate around the "German nation," *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* caused tremendous reaction, even a boycott by the German publishing society: "Tucholsky hatte mit *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* einen seiner grössten Bucherfolge, obwohl der Börsenverein mit allen Mitteln einen Boykott des Buches durchzusetzen versucht hatte." (Bauer 807).

see the text as having had no effects whatsoever on the cultural and political scene of its time,<sup>116</sup> others stress the particularly modern character of the book in its discussion of the issue of nationalism and national identity, particularly in its international orientation (Neuhaus 274). Some scholars diverge on the book's direction of influence (i.e. negatively whether it involuntarily facilitated the destruction of republicanism or positively whether it warned against national socialism as a consequence of nationalism and militarism), but they all agree on the fact that the book had a tremendous impact on the discourse on German identity during the last phase of the Weimar Republic. The following section will provide a synopsis of recent research on *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, which has been approached by socio-historical analysis exclusively. The majority of these studies regarded *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* as one of Tucholsky's less laudable products.

Earlier studies focused on the role of the book in facilitating the demise of republicanism or on not preventing National Socialism. Harold Poor (1968) criticized Tucholsky's attacks on republicans in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* for having only the effect "to aid the cause of his rightist enemies" (Poor 183). H.J. Becker, who in 1978 provided a first and still the most detailed socio-historical reading of the book to date, also concluded that although it was highly influential on other literature about German-ness of these years, it did not achieve its goal of agitating the working class for anti-nationalist and anti-National Socialist political action. Becker concluded: "So war das Buch letztlich nur eine bös-geniale literarische Eintagsfliege; eine bittere Abrechnung, die den Gegner zwar reizte, andererseits aber viele Sympathisanten peinlich

---

<sup>116</sup> The *Frankfurter Rundschau* from November 10, 1973 notes: "Dass diese geniale Agitation leider letzten Endes nichts bewirkte, ist indessen nicht zu übersehen" (qtd. in Neuhaus 263).

zu berühren schien” (Becker 104). Ian King (1983) saw *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* as one of the less significant works of Tucholsky, particularly because he thought it launched a disproportionate attack on republicanism and underestimated the national socialist threat to the Republic (King, *Politische Biographie* 84). Michael Hepp (1993) noted that when *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* was published, the leftist intellectuals were in the midst of a debate on their role in politics and their position toward communism – and he argues that the book fragmented the left more than it united it (Hepp 323).

The political significance of the text was undisputed. The question of the book’s role in preventing or facilitating National Socialism shifted to a focus in more recent studies on the text’s central role within discourses on national identity during the final years of the Weimar Republic, and how the text employs, reflects on, and deconstructs nationalist symbolisms. Erhard Schütz (1993) criticizes Tucholsky’s book for its “thematic fixation” on the past (374). He asserts that Tucholsky’s critique of Wilhelminian residue in the Republic was itself caught up in the “comfortable symbolism” of the Kaiserreich, as Tucholsky himself had put it:

Daher man es denn früher mit den Revolutionen einfacher hatte: die Symbole waren so schön bequem. Ein Kaiserschloss, die Bastille, goldene Kutschen – bitte nur zugreifen. Heute? (DD 90)

Although Schütz observes that Tucholsky’s use of Wilhelminian symbolism is accurate, he does not mention the fact that Tucholsky used these symbols to satirically dismantle their ideological messages. The positive merits of the book, in terms of the discursive practices it employed in order to create an awareness for nationalist discourses and thus

to deconstruct them within the politicized public sphere of the Weimar Republic's last phase, has been acknowledged only very recently.

These positive merits mentioned in scholarship involved the diversity of styles employed in the book. Dieter Mayer (2002), for example, suggests a heterogeneous reading of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* that finds a unifying intention of presenting a cross-section of Germany in the book's disparate style (Mayer 87). According to Mayer, this cross-section of Germany, consisting of multiple disparate parts, would then render a more adequate depiction of the political, cultural, social, economical, and ideological state of Germany than photographs alone, which, as Tucholsky noted, could be instrumentalized for propaganda as well. As mentioned in Chapter 3, although Tucholsky wrote about propaganda and wanted to "propagandize" republicanism to counter nationalism, his concept of propaganda rested on a differentiated view of the world, which distinguished his from Nazi concepts of propaganda. Although Tucholsky aimed to generalize and to emotionally involve his audience to achieve widespread support and to prompt political activism, his concept of propaganda provided for multiple perspectives on one key issue. Mayer argues rightly that the fundamental concept of theme and style in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* rests on Tucholsky's "vertical journalism" (Mayer 101) – his theoretical concept from 1925 that he employed primarily in his writings addressed to the working class written during the second half of the Weimar Republic.

Another positive account of the constructive role of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* in anti-nationalist discourse came from Stefan Neuhaus (2002) which

identified the book's political progressiveness as outlining a cosmopolitan, European, egalitarian dimension to German politics by means of negative satire (Neuhaus 274).

Recent scholarly criticism has also situated *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* within the surge of *Deutschland* books published in the last phase of the Weimar Republic, and by doing so it compared and contrasted Tucholsky's discursive practices of talking about German-ness with its forerunners and with those that were published as a response to *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. The following section outlines these comparisons and concludes with an assessment of this chapter's position within that scholarship.

### ***Scholarly Comparisons of other Deutschland books with "Deutschland Deutschland über alles"***

Recent scholarship has acknowledged the context of the politicized literary market of the Weimar Republic's final years. Dieter Mayer (2002) points out several *Deutschland* books that were published either in direct response to *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, or that took up similar techniques of representation. He also mentions those *Deutschland* books published earlier in the Weimar Republic. Mayer lists Tucholsky's positive book review of Oscar Blum's *Trümmerfeld Europa*, published in 1924, and his positive review of Alfons Goldschmidt's 1928 *Deutschland heute*, both of which used historical sources and photographs to intensify their socialist-pacifist message (Mayer 97). In his brief overview of a few left-extremist and right-extremist *Deutschland* books that were published in the aftermath of Tucholsky's book, Mayer emphasizes the stylistic difference, namely the absence of satire in these other works, which relegates

them to a merely affirmative, demagogical function (101). Mayer lists the *Volksbuch* (1930) of Münzenberg's leftist *Neuer Deutscher Verlag* as such a publication, and points to Tucholsky's negative review of this book that condemned its lack of critical emphasis (Mayer 99). Mayer mentions two publications by Edmund Schulz and Friedrich Georg Jünger, *Das Gesicht der Demokratie* (1931) and *Die veränderte Welt. Eine Bilderfibel unserer Zeit* (1933) as representatives of the right-wing, anti-republican responses to *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, and he rightly points out that the fundamental difference to Tucholsky's book is the lack of critical impetus, and the emphasis on mere propaganda against the Weimar Republic. Besides this relevant but very brief observation of these books' difference from *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* in their lack of satire and their intention of manipulating their audience instead of proposing critical thinking, Mayer does not compare and analyze any other stylistic or rhetorical similarities and differences between these books.

A more detailed and in-depth analysis of the discursive context on German nationalism of Tucholsky's *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* came from Erhard Schütz. Schütz draws a connection between the discourse on nationalism and Germany's transformed media market after WWI, and he notices a profound turn away from liberal concepts of Germany during the 1920s towards politically polarized and increasingly anti-republican ones in the 1930s (360). Schütz, like Mayer, detects a difference between right-wing *Deutschland* books and their emphasis on the future, on vision and mythical concepts of Germany, and left-wing *Deutschland* books and their emphasis of minute depiction and analysis of contemporary social and economical circumstances. Schütz also points out both camps' stylistic similarities in their rejection of republicanism and



individualism (360) – which were, in contrast, important aspects of Tucholsky’s work. Schütz provides brief analyses of three leftist *Deutschland* books,<sup>117</sup> which he regards as constituting the interpretive background for Tucholsky’s book because of their “Beschreibungsanspruch(s) und Wirklichkeitsgestus” (361). The commonality Schütz sees in Barthel’s visionary glorification of technology, in Goldschmidt’s pathos, and in Stenbock-Fermor’s communist idyll is their concepts of a proletarian Germany as a projection of the authors’ own phantasies of belonging, rather than a reasonable account of a future socialist state (363). The affinity of these books to Tucholsky’s is, according to Schütz, their depiction of a victorious proletariat. However, Schütz sees Tucholsky’s book as “fixated” (363) on the present consequences of the past. Thus, Schütz argues, unlike socialist-communist *Deutschland* books, Tucholsky’s provides a critical discussion of anti-republican and anti-proletarian symbolism in the Weimar Republic’s political culture (364). According to Schütz, the “reflective” (364) character of Tucholsky’s presentation of Germany distinguishes his work and defines his authorship in a medialized context. Schütz draws a connection between the surge of *Deutschland* books in the final phase of the Weimar Republic and an increase in competition on the literary market, which caused authors to redefine their own positions as authors in the context of a medialized Germany, whether they were aware of it or not (365). Schütz sees the weakness of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* in its contradictory mix of anachronistic didactics and a fixation on allegedly negative new developments in the Weimar Republic as the consequences of the past (368). He concludes that this

---

<sup>117</sup> Max Barthel’s *Deutschland. Lichtbilder und Schattenrisse einer Reise* (1926), Alfons Goldschmidt’s *Deutschland heute* (1928), and Graf Alexander Stenbock-Fermor’s *Deutschland von unten* (1931).

combination of “Sentimentalität und Kalkül,” prevented Tucholsky from addressing the pressing issue of National Socialism (368).

Schütz’s conclusion is countered by Stefan Neuhaus. Neuhaus observed that the book indeed warned against Nazis and against right-extremist, militarist organizations such as the “Stahlhelm” (264). Neuhaus also counters Schütz’s assertion that Tucholsky remained caught up in pre-Weimar Republic rhetoric and -symbolism by pointing out that the book accurately predicted the development of German politics toward totalitarianism and ultimately toward another world war (270). For Neuhaus it was, therefore, less important that Tucholsky did not provide any concrete alternatives to the social and political conditions he criticized, than that he was a writer who sought to create a critical awareness of political and social problems among the public (274).

Several key issues of recent scholarship on *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* serve as points of departure for this chapter’s assessment of the text within a contested discourse on Germany’s national identity. Firstly, Mayer’s observation that the fundamental stylistic concept of the book is his “vertical journalism” will be specified for its pivotal role in Tucholsky’s texts intended for a working class audience, which suggests that Tucholsky was concerned about differences between socio-economical classes rather than between nations. Secondly, Schütz’s thesis that Tucholsky’s self-understanding as an author was heavily determined by his medialized context will be reinterpreted positively. Thus, Tucholsky will be understood as an author who was aware of the transformed context of mass communication, and who responded to these new circumstances of publishing productively. And thirdly, this study agrees with Neuhaus’ observation that the character of the text is inherently anti nationalist, and that

it created a utopian image of an egalitarian, liberal, and socially responsible Germany through negative satire (Neuhaus 274).

An analysis of the text's stylistic devices, particularly its satire and its technique of juxtaposition, and a subsequent comparison of the text with several *Deutschland* books that were published prior to or in direct response to Tucholsky's, will establish Tucholsky's discursive practice in this book as highly relevant for the contested concept of German-ness during the last phase of the Weimar Republic. It will not only demonstrate Tucholsky's critique of National Socialism, particularly its propaganda in the media and its distortion of public language as an accurate political assessments in the context of public communication, but it will also highlight Tucholsky's contradictory stance on the concept of "Heimat." It interprets the ambivalence of the concept as a central characteristic of Tucholsky, the public intellectual who was always assessing and always countering existing domination without delivering definite alternatives (which in themselves would constitute a new dogma).

### **Contesting Notions of German-ness: *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* in the Weimar Republic's *Öffentlichkeit***

*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* epitomizes Tucholsky's satirical response to an increasingly fragmented public sphere and to an increasingly aggressive? nationalism by the National Socialists in the Weimar Republic. The book is a parody of the increasingly popular, nationalist *Heimatliteratur*, which was represented by ultra-conservative writers such as Rudolf Herzog, Adolf Bartels, and Arnolt Bronnen.

*Heimatliteratur* glorified the German nation, its landscape and its mentality as something

superior, and it set the tone for the *Blut-und-Boden* literature of the Nazis, which became more and more popular as the Weimar Republic approached its end (Ketelsen 76).

*Deutschland Deutschland über alles* is not only a parody of such literature, but also represents an alternative to it. The book thematizes the traditions of Germany's high and low cultures. It looks critically at their role in creating a counter public, but also at their role in the dysfunction of republicanism and rising National Socialism. Tucholsky's style reacts to the Weimar Republic's fragmented public sphere by incorporating a variety of forms and styles such as photomontage, pictures, statistics, commentary, analyses, poems, and language parody. The technique of contrasting visual and textual parts of the book supports its underlying criticism of existing dichotomies in the public representation of the "German nation." The next section demonstrates how the book places itself into a liberal tradition of politically critical literature in Germany's public sphere.

### ***"Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" in the Legacy of Germany's Liberal Literary Tradition***

Satirical literature has always been politically critical (Wilpert 809). *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* places itself into this tradition of politically critical satirical writing, and by doing so it points to another crucial aspect of the book: its criticism of alleged national traditions in Germany that are only propagated constructs of right-extremist interest groups. Tucholsky's *Deutschland* book dismantles nationalist notions of German-ness by presenting them as ideological constructs that exploit the working class, that reverse the progressive momentum of Enlightenment thought, and that would eventually drive Europe into another war for the material benefit of a few. Tucholsky's

dualist structure of this presentation divides progressive and regressive legacies and tendencies in German culture, and interprets these as symptoms of a general suppression of egalitarianism.

The tension between these tendencies in German culture lies at the core of the book. By introducing the theme of nationalist and National Socialist misrepresentations of German-ness through an opening quote of Hölderlin's critical assessment of the Germans' pragmatic and oppressed mentality, Tucholsky positions the book into a legacy of critical literature as a counter-force to existing hierarchies of power.<sup>118</sup> The introductory quote by Hölderlin also suggests the book's targeting of an intellectual audience as a complement to its desired broad audience among the working class. Its function is to realize Tucholsky's goal of the cooperation of intellectuals and the working class in countering nationalism in the Weimar Republic. Moreover, the introductory quote signifies Tucholsky's identification with Hölderlin as the misfit intellectual who provides an oppositional outsider perspective in order to defend critical public communication. Another critical literary legacy Tucholsky draws from in this book is that of nineteenth-century satirist Heinrich Heine. He reminds his readers that the critical impetus of Germany's liberal cultural tradition was, compared to Germany's military tradition, grossly underrepresented in the public sphere: "Die Zahl der Deutschen Kriegerdenkmäler zur Zahl der Deutschen Heine-Denkäler verhält sich hierzulande wie die Macht zum Geist" (DD 16). This caption under a picture of a Heine memorial

---

<sup>118</sup> Tucholsky's critical assessment of the suppressive force of militarism in the Weimar Republic continues Hölderlin's metaphor of Germany as a battlefield of ideologies: "Es ist ein hartes Wort, und dennoch sag ich's, weil es Wahrheit ist: ich kann kein Volk mir denken, das zerrissener wäre, wie die Deutschen. Handwerker siehst du, aber keine Menschen, Denker, aber keine Menschen, Priester, aber keine Menschen, Herren und Knechte, Jungen und gesetzte Leute, aber keine Menschen – ist das nicht wie ein Schlachtfeld, wo Hände und Arme und alle Glieder zerstückelt untereinander liegen, indessen das vergossens Lebensblut im Sande zerrinnt?" (DD "Vorrede").

implies both the core message of Tucholsky's *Deutschland* book, its critical reevaluation of German-ness, and Tucholsky's self-understanding of the public intellectual in the legacy of Heine as the politically critical, satirical patriot, who continuously sought to employ literary means for popularizing an egalitarian, anti-authoritarian political culture in Germany.

Hölderlin, Heine, and Tucholsky share a deep commitment to and great interest in the political, cultural, and social course of Germany. Similar to Heine's nineteenth-century criticism of Germany's ignorance towards the social and political advantages of the ideals of the French Revolution, Tucholsky's criticism was based on his rejection of outdated restoration of imperial ideology in the Weimar Republic by anti-republican interest groups. By demonstrating the disadvantaged position of the working class as a consequence and outcome of authoritarianism, and by indicating subversive trends within the working-class culture, Tucholsky appeals to his audience to counter nationalism in politics and culture with an alternative, republican and internationally oriented concept of German-ness.

Just as Tucholsky's nineteenth-century predecessor Heine used satire for political criticism, Tucholsky's prevalent stylistic device in deconstructing ideological concepts of German-ness is satire through language parody, juxtaposition, and montage, as the following section demonstrates.

### **Formal Aspects of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles***

A dual structure of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* represents formal as well as thematic aspects of the book. It confronts old and new, pre- and post-WWI contexts, authoritarian and republican ideology, high and low culture, and the fabricated and the

authentic concept of Germany. This binary structure underlines the text's intention of mobilizing the intellectual and working-class readership to form a counter public to the criticized political, social, and ideological circumstances of the Weimar Republic.<sup>119</sup>

The form of the book plays with literary convention and reflects its intention to deconstruct preconceived notions on what it means to be German. Its display of multiple perspectives on the topic of German-ness supports Tucholsky's concept of a public intellectual as providing alternative views on political issues and thereby maintaining critical public discourse. By including the working class in this discourse, Tucholsky fulfilled the concept of a "vertical journalism" that intended to erode class barriers established under nineteenth-century authoritarianism in Germany, which were still perpetuated in Weimar Germany's political culture as well as in its *Alltagskultur* as the main components in shaping and maintaining a national identity.

Several formal aspects of the text reflect Tucholsky's concept of "vertical journalism." The predominant stylistic device of deconstructing authoritarian public language as a precondition of establishing a counter public was Tucholsky's use of graphic satire in this book; its Nazi language parody inhabits the double function of deconstructing ideological occupation of language and to reveal public language as prime medium of propaganda. Tucholsky's graphic satire is visually enhanced through accompanying or juxtaposing photographic images, and the use of picture montages supports the goal of his concept of a critical counter public through defamiliarization of concepts in order to reveal their hidden ideologies.

---

<sup>119</sup> Erhard Schütz observes opposing images of the German nation in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic, particularly in the form of derogatory terms used in the nationalist press concerning republicanism: Reich vs. Republic, "Jewish republic" vs. *Deutschtum*, "asphalt metropolis" vs. "authentic country" (359).

The visual as a central element of mass communication enjoyed increasing attention during the last years of the Weimar Republic, particularly in the context of political propaganda. Tucholsky's interest in the visual media was twofold. It was motivated not only by his belief in this medium as the new appropriate means of expression in an increasingly visual, modern culture,<sup>120</sup> but he also welcomed the politically agitational power of photography as a tool for reaching a working-class audience.<sup>121</sup> Through the combination of photography with text for visually and politically powerful messages, *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* demonstrated the close relationship between medial development and nationalism (Schütz 358), since, according to sociologist Jürgen Habermas, national identity resulted from a process that was generated through institutionalized communication (Habermas 17).

The relationship between nationalism and mass communication constitutes the central theme of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. With this text as a "cross-section" of Germany, Tucholsky shows a system of references to the nation, to nationalism, and to national identity with at least two fundamentally different political backgrounds. These implied a binary construct of the German nation: on the one hand, references to the nation of Germany entailed nationalist axioms as invented traditions that would recreate a concept of Germany on a foundation of anti-republican, monarchist, militarist, and capitalist ideology, which Tucholsky vehemently criticized. On the other hand, Tucholsky presented the German working class that was exploited by this ideology.

---

<sup>120</sup> He wrote as Peter Panter in the *Weltbühne* of May 22, 1928: "Wir glossieren so viel: Artikel, Zeitungsfehler, Schwupper der Kritiker und Romane: - aber die grösste Wirkung geht kaum noch vom gedruckten Wort aus. Eher vom gesprochenen: dem Rundfunk, und vor allem: vom Bild." (Tucholsky 5966-67).

<sup>121</sup> Tucholsky wrote as Ignaz Wrobel in the *Weltbühne* of April 28, 1925: "Was uns fehlt, ist die tendenzfotografisch illustrierte Kampfzeitschrift" (Tucholsky 3640).



Tucholsky pointed out that although the working class had been exploited, it had developed its own counter culture of a Germany that had evolved out of the peasantry, as represented by artists such as Karl Valentin, and that carried the potential of countering and subverting the dominant system.

This revolutionary potential of working-class culture as an alternative to existing reactionary culture in Germany constitutes the background of Tucholsky's discussion of national identity. In Tucholsky's introduction to the book, which implied a deconstruction of nationalist symbols in order to open up the possibility for his reader to construct their individual national identity in a republican public sphere, he discusses self reflexively the paradoxical nature of the book: its depiction of a typical cross-section of Germany through the randomness of the photographic image (DD 11). His assertion that the book represents types and examples rather than individual fate, however, suggests the coherence and linearity of the book. The text thus plays with its readers' expectations, since this expectation of coherence and unity is deliberately destroyed by the presentation of incoherence, diversity, and conflict in Germany. Due to this fragmented presentation of Germany and its challenged national identity, the reader can draw the conclusion that it is a country of conflict and contrary identities, and that the state has failed to meet its liberal potential. Instead of finding one single image of German-ness, the reader is invited to judge the ones demonstrated in the book for eventual identification with an authentic Germany as presented in the last text entitled "Heimat" (DD 226-231). The play with the reader's horizon of expectation accentuates the function of the text to destroy familiar concepts and conventions, as suggested in Tucholsky's revolutionary concept of critical communication.

This destruction of familiarities, that have been ideologically used, constitutes the foundation of a politically and socially empowered working class. By revealing nationalism as an invented concept of right-wing media propaganda and by linking it to social and political disadvantages of the working class, Tucholsky seeks to motivate the working class to committing to republicanism as a political alternative. In order to discuss ideological relations in the discourse around German-ness without employing dogmatic frames of reference himself, Tucholsky used satire as a means not only to express the complexity of the concept of national identity, but also to suggest how an alleged dogma can be reinterpreted and thus be disempowered.

### ***Graphic Satire***

The use of satire in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* is the text's most prevalent stylistic device, mainly rendered from the contrastive arrangement of texts and pictures. The function of satire in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* was to dismantle dominant concepts of German-ness in the language of Germany's everyday culture, and to demonstrate how a seemingly objective picture, such as a photograph, can be used to deceive the readers' expectations of its content, and how it establishes a false sense of reality. Not only did Tucholsky intend to draw his reader's attention to the injustices inflicted on working class by the republic's functionaries, and which thematizes the anti-republican and inherently anti-proletarian sentiment of the Weimar Republic. The literary form of satire, combined with powerful images and the juxtaposition of images and commentary also intends to teach its readers to read between the lines and to question

the objectivity of official (photographic) documentation. Tucholsky's satire speaks of the mechanisms of public communication: through responding to the trend of a decreasingly diverse and less critical public sphere of the late 1920s, Tucholsky developed a satirical technique in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* that relied heavily on graphic satire, contrasting images, and a deconstruction of authoritarian language through parody. The most productive way of doing so, according to Tucholsky, was to rely heavily on visual effects:

Es kommt darauf an, die Fotografie – und nur diese – noch ganz anders zu verwenden: als Unterstreichung des Textes, als witzige Gegenüberstellung, als Ornament, als Bekräftigung – das Bild soll nicht mehr Selbstzweck sein. Man lehre den Leser, mit unsern Augen zu sehen, und das Foto wird nicht nur sprechen: es wird schreien. (Tucholsky 7503)

As Tucholsky mentions here in his article “Auf dem Nachttisch,” written as Peter Panter in the *Weltbühne* of May 20, 1930, accompanying the pictures with text commentary reveals the seemingly objective nature of the photographic image as politically motivated propaganda. It destroys the notion of objectivity of the press (and of any products of public communication) and thus counters authoritarianism. It instructs its audience to become critical recipients. The combination of picture and text, then, balances the potentially manipulative character of both forms of communication. An example of Tucholsky's satire of the propagandistic distortion of reality in the media for supporting nationalist and anti-egalitarian ideologies is the picture-text combination entitled “So schreckliche Szenen...” (DD 36-37). The photograph shows two men who are dressed like workers with a pistol in a civil combat scene. The accompanying text is a parody of the nationalist press, describing the rebelling workers as demonstrating “raw and unreasonable violence,” their “brutality and rawness” (DD 37), and that they had surely

robbed “the bourgeois of their jewels and gold” (DD 37). The satire of the text is evident through the fact that all allegations made in the text are not supported by the picture: the persons’ faces are not visible. The text, however, states: “Dem geübten Physiognomiker genügt ein Blick, dem Richter gar keiner, um festzustellen: die Revolution hat hier das Unterste zu oberst gekehrt.” (DD 37). Here the text satirically alludes to anti-Semitic and racist theories that physiognomy expresses a particular character, and it satirically comments on the right-wing bias of the German judiciary. The text concludes with a satirical punch line (“Übrigens sind die beiden Herren auf dem Bild verkleidete Kriminalbeamte” [DD 37]) which exhibits the whole text as an ideologically motivated fabrication with no relation to facts.

This combination of text and pictures, as many others in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* (for example: “Das möblierte Zimmer” [DD 122], “Das Schaufenster” [DD 123], “Das Fehlende” [DD 150-51], “Früh prügelt, was...” [212]) are examples of Tucholsky’s class conscious republicanism. His satire shows the working class as the victims of nationalist agitation in the media, and it indicates Tucholsky’s language critique as the prime medium of propaganda.<sup>122</sup>

### ***Parody of Nationalist Language***

Language parody is another form of satire in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. Parody imitates and exaggerates with the intent to demonstrate the nature of its object.

Tucholsky’s understanding of the function of public language in conceptualizing

---

<sup>122</sup> As Gerhard Kraiker mentions in his article “Tucholsky als politischer Publizist der *Weltbühne*”, Tucholsky regarded the working class, besides the small community of intellectuals, as the only potential for a powerful alternative to the dominating nationalism: “Die angestrebte alternative Geisteshaltung zur herrschenden sah er ausser in kleinen intellektuellen Zirkeln nur bei den politisch bewussten Arbeitern entwickelt.” (70-71).

nationalist constructs of German-ness is expressed in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* through his satirical use of dialect, sociolect, and jargon, which not only has the double function of reaching an audience (to speak to the reader in his/her socio-economically assigned language), but which is also intended to deconstruct the ideological occupation of public language.

Regional and socio-economic markers of speech are political statements in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. Tucholsky often writes in Berlin dialect to ridicule the petite bourgeoisie and their deception by capitalism (DD 64-66; 86-88; 122), with the exception of the poem “Mutterns Hände,” which pays tribute to the hard working women of the proletariat (DD 171). Simple and clear examples illustrate the unfortunate fate and the hard life of the working class (DD 18, 49, 124, 132, 171, 179, 213). Earthy jokes about the government (DD 33), the military (DD 176), the aristocracy (DD 45), and the clergy (DD 123) are meant to politically educate and empower the reader in his or her language. Some texts are also directed to an intellectual audience, such as “Die Zeit schreit nach Satire” which is filled with inside jokes about the publishing scene and its political opportunism (DD 99-107).

Language parody in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* is also politically critical. By alluding to the political and ideological dimension of public language, Tucholsky criticizes and ridicules different organizations that are of anti-democratic bent (such as military, aristocracy, Nazis, bureaucrats, etc.) using their language and terminology in a grotesque context. One example is the article “Endlich die Wahrheit über Remarque” (DD 216-221), which mocks racist and brutal Nazi press language:

Seit Monaten heult die Berliner Asphaltpresse Reklame für ein widerliches Machwerk von Erich Maria Remarque, dessen Titel “Im Westen nichts Neues”

übrigens der Obersten Heeresleitung entlehnt ist (Herr Staatsanwalt?) – und das den Krieg so schildert, wie er sich eben nur in den Köpfen typischer Drückeberger malt. (DD 216)

This text satirically alludes to the right extremists' derogatory description of the leftist-liberal press as "Berliner Asphaltpresse" and its pacifist stance on WWI as cowardice, as their propagandistic *stab in the back* legend suggested. It also alludes to the frequent legal actions initiated by the right against liberal and leftist writers, as Tucholsky experienced himself, and which had aimed at the reinstitutionalization of restricted public speech. The article satirizes Nazi propaganda and its anti-Semitic projection of vice onto the allegedly "non-German" Jew. Cowardice, laziness, lack of nationalist ethos, promiscuity, and lack of moral values are ascribed to the "Jew" Remarque, with the implicit message that these characteristics are not those of a German.<sup>123</sup> Tucholsky caricaturizes Nazi press style and its combination of militarism and anti-Semitism by fabricating a story about "Jewish" Erich Maria Remarque, author of the bestselling anti-war novel *Im Westen nichts Neues*, who in fact was not Jewish, in Nazi press style. By using Nazi terms such as "Judenknäblein," "Synagogendiener," or "Spross Judas" slightly more frequently than the Nazi press, the text represents a grotesque image of the Nazi press and thereby deconstructs its ideological motive (DD 216). The content becomes gradually more and more comical, too, as it plays with the Nazis' anti-Semitic rhetoric. Remarque's father is described as a Jewish butcher who is suspected to have killed "Christenkinder" in his butcher shop (DD 216). It continues by asserting that Remarque's original name was supposedly Erich Solomon Markus, and that his birth record shows, "wie das bei jüdischen Familien üblich ist" (DD 216), two mothers. This

---

<sup>123</sup> In National Socialist ideology, German-ness consisted of being a National Socialist only (Hermand 54).

mockery of Nazi propaganda and its assertion of the immorality of the Jewish culture receive its satirical character through Tucholsky's assumption of his readers' knowledge that Remarque's original name was Erich Paul Remark, and that he was catholic like most Westphalians. It also implies the illusionary but nevertheless destructive function of racist anti-Semitism. The parody continues with outlandish accusations against Remarque, for example of having never fought on the front: "während vorn seine Kameraden mit dem Gesang "Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles" gen Paris zogen ... hat der Jude Markus hinten geschlemmt und geprasst" (DD 218), and of fathering 84 children "out of wedlock" (DD 218).

Tucholsky satirizes anti-Semitism, sexism, and false heroism as central aspects of National Socialist ideology. He satirically alludes to the Nazis' regressive gender stereotypes, which depicted the woman as submissive and domesticized, with her only function to serve, support, and worship her husband, in particular if he displayed a military uniform: "Die deutsche Frau will ... zu einem Helden aufblicken" (DD 218), and that this "German woman" rejected Remarque's book because of its refusal to fabricate militarist heroism (DD 218). Tucholsky satirizes here the cliché of potency and manliness depicted in the right-wing and Nazi propaganda for militarism as the stark contrast to Remarque's book and its function of shattering myths of manhood and militarist glory. The right-wing cliché of manliness is ridiculed even more through the accompanied picture, which shows overweight, drunken soldiers in a stupor posing in front of the camera (DD 217). Thus, the juxtaposition of textual satire, mostly in form of exaggeration of clichés perpetuated by the press and by propaganda in the public sphere, with a photographic image, creates a mostly humorous, deconstructive effect.

However, juxtaposition as a satirical technique is not only used for humorous effect. Some pictures are juxtaposed to each other without any textual commentary. Following the last page of the text, the other two pictures that appear in the context of this article, are situated on one page. The upper picture shows schoolchildren running in a snowy schoolyard. Juxtaposed to this picture is the lower one, showing mutilated bodies of dead soldiers on a battlefield (DD 219). Together, the preceding text and pictures imply the message that Remarque's book rendered an accurate account of the destruction of many young lives during World War I. Implied in this satirical use of Nazi and military propaganda is that these groups are using young people as targets of their dangerous messages. The reader is urged to reason through logical deduction that following such propaganda, as already experienced in and before WWI, would eventually lead to death and destruction.

Juxtaposition and contrast as a means to expose hidden ideology, particularly nationalism, either in the language of the media or in its visual documentary material, is central stylistic device in this book. If language or a picture is taken out of its context and put into a different one, accompanied by either a textual or a visual comment, its ideological occupation surfaces. A similar effect of deconstruction of ideological concepts is achieved through photomontage.

### ***Montage***

The technique of montage is one of the more prominent stylistic feature of the Weimar Republic's culture. Relying heavily on the visual, the literature, architecture, and the arts of the Weimar Republic used montage as an appropriate technique to



deconstruct conventional representations through disassembling and reassembling of the world. The principle of disruption inherent in the montage characterizes it as a “paradigm” of the modern (Honnef 17). Montage does not seek mimetic imitation of reality, but it incorporates reality in its diversity (Bürger 78). Thus, it signifies a different, transformed way of conceptualization. Its multiperspectival construction points to a world consisting of construction, interpretation and signification. Montage has a politically critical component in that it defamiliarizes contexts and meanings by discontinuing traditions, by fragmenting wholeness, and invites the audience to look beyond surface appearances. The technique of montage reflects critically on all aspects of modern life in that it disrupts familiar concepts – it thus illustrates to mass audiences to become involved in deciphering and reassembling the different parts within a new context.

In the case of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, montage appears in the form of text montages, text-picture montages, and photomontages created by John Heartfield, avant-gardist and communist photomonteur.<sup>124</sup> These montages were understood by Tucholsky and Heartfield as assemblies of pieces of pictures and texts as representative fragments of their time, rendering their new meaning through the interrelationship of the disparate parts in their new contexts. These parts created a fragmented reality of generalities that was up to the reader to unify and to deduct from, in order to create

---

<sup>124</sup> John Heartfield, pseudonym of Helmut Herzfeld, was one of the most prominent avant-garde artists of the Weimar Republic. Coming from the innovative *Dada*-movement, Heartfield was a co-founder of the *Malik-Verlag*, which published politically critical art intended for a working class audience. Although many of Heartfield’s and the *Malik Verlag*’s products expressed similar goals to those of the communist party (in the most general terms, the empowerment of the working class), it was not associated with or financed by the communist party. For more on Heartfield’s and the *Malik*-circle’s aesthetics, see George Grosz, John Heartfield, Wieland Herzfelde, *Art is in Danger!* Paul Gorrell, trans. (New York: Curbstone Press, 1987).

meaning for their own individual reality. The reader becomes actively involved in the process of creating meaning; the use of satire, irony, the play with quotes and pseudo-quotes, the use of language and of ideologically loaded words and phrases all are supposed to be deciphered by the reader for his/her political empowerment. Familiar political truisms, socially accepted hierarchies, and habitual exploitations of the working class by those in power are criticized implicitly.

John Heartfield's photomontages in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* complement this criticism through the visual dissection of nationalist ideology. His eleven contributions echo the intention of the book in form and content: *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* is a book in which the montage of seemingly unrelated pieces create a whole picture, a "cross-section" of Germany, as Tucholsky called it.<sup>125</sup>

Disassembling the concept of the "German nation" and putting it back together shows a country whose identity is created and perpetuated by outdated symbols of authoritarianism to maintain the *Kaiserreich's* ideals of a hierarchical society and of a dominating military and aristocracy. Heartfield's photomontages depict the connection between authoritarian elements of German culture and the dysfunction of republicanism on the symbolic level: the title page, for example, is a montage of all the elements in German politics and society against which this book polemicizes - the alliance of the military, anti-democratic thinking, and the capitalists.

These elements, as discussed elsewhere in the book, are reinforced within German *Alltagskultur* as well. Other photomontages, visually complementing Tucholsky's texts, dissect an inherently capitalist and therefore artificial consumer culture ("the faceless

---

<sup>125</sup> Lothar Köhn calls the book a "Montage höherer Ordnung," referring to the structure of Tucholsky's portrayal of the Weimar Republic (585).

bourgeois” DD 173), point to authoritarian and disciplining elements within German recreational culture (“soccer head” DD 109), and function as blunt and shocking references to the need of political and social change (“rear with ears” DD 176). This last example highlights the trajectory of both text and picture to give a combined, overall message that a dominating anti-republicanism is in strong need of a powerful counter public. It is preceded by an equally graphic and earthy comment by Tucholsky on the German military, aristocracy, and judiciary: “Gesichter, die in die Hose gehören. Aber wir zeigen sie der Welt” (DD 176).

The image of the “face” of Germany, a façade that obstructs what is hidden behind, appears throughout the book. Complemented by photomontage, this image implies the agitatory intent of the book: the “face” of Germany, its national identity, must be made transparent in order to change existing structures and hierarchies of power that are perpetuated through multiple levels of culture. The book’s function is to “show to the world” these underlying forces of power, and by doing so, to destroy this power. As shown in the preceding paragraphs, graphic satire, language parody, and the montage of texts and pictures are the prevalent stylistic techniques of the book. The following section will exhibit the relations of formal aspects to the text’s intent of disempowering authoritarian culture in Germany.

### **Theme and Content of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*: Authoritarianism in the Weimar Republic and its Alternatives**

The themes in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* also follow a binary structure. On the one hand, they depict anti-republican nationalisms not only in obvious institutions

(such as the military and the monarchy), but also in Germany's high and low cultures and in the political and judicial personnel of the Republic. On the other hand, the book points to the subversive potential of low culture, particularly to that of the underprivileged, because of its lack of hegemonial occupation. Thus, it aims at preventing its audience from identifying with an inherently authoritarian, bourgeois culture, and at diminishing authoritarian discourse in the German public sphere, in order to establish a pacifist, egalitarian form of community, which Tucholsky depicts in his concluding text entitled "Heimat."

This section analyzes the theme and content of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* in terms of its function to exhibit ideological relations in the German public sphere, namely in its cultural politics, particularly in its dismantling of the authoritarianism that was permeating the high and low cultural spheres, its display of militarism and monarchism, and its openly anti-republican political and judicial personnel. It will conclude with an analysis of what Tucholsky regarded as elements of the German culture with subversive potential. Furthermore, the chapter will examine how Tucholsky attempted to mobilize this potential, and, on a more critical note, how he played a balancing act in trying to reconcile his fundamentally individualist and social-liberal political position with the fact that he was publishing in a communist venue. The first issue to be discussed, however, is Tucholsky's critical analysis of cultural politics in the Weimar Republic. Tucholsky's analysis of cultural politics constituted the background of his discussion of how authoritarian ideologies are conditioned and reproduced in the Weimar Republic's cultural spheres.

## **“Die gute alte Zeit hat’s nie gegeben. Die schlechte Neue? Allemal:” Cultural Politics in the Weimar Republic**

Tucholsky critically examined the cultural landscape of the Weimar Republic in terms of its role in perpetuating authoritarianism. He emphasized the importance of *Alltagskultur*, or low culture, in conditioning and reinforcing ideological relations:

Aber seit jeher war diese Gebrauchsliteratur für den Alltag ungemein bezeichnend, weil nämlich von ihnen aus zwar nicht auf den Verfasser, aber ganz genau auf das konsumierende Publikum geschlossen werden kann ... Wie sieht nun das Idealbild des gebildeten norddeutschen Mittelstandes aus? Wie ein Reserveoffizier. (DD 68)

As Tucholsky mentions here, *Alltagskultur* conditions and shapes identities, in this case militarist identities, and these identities can be dismantled through analyzing such cultural products. Therefore, he critically reviews nationalist author Rudolf Herzog in his article “Rudolf Herzog – ein deutscher Mann” (DD 67-76).<sup>126</sup> The title of this article already satirizes nationalist jargon as used in nationalist literature by writers like Herzog. The absurdity of this jargon is suggested by the title’s periphrasis – the fact that Herzog is a man and that he is German is given, however, the term “deutscher Mann” implies his authoritarian, nationalist, anti-Semitic, chauvinist political stance. Tucholsky reviews Herzog’s nationalist novel *Kameraden*, published in 1922, and gives a sociological analysis of why nationalist literature experienced such great popularity (Tucholsky estimated around 10 million readers of this book [DD 74]). His contention is that popular books like those written by Herzog reflect their readership’s ideological orientation. The German-ness promoted in nationalist *Heimatliteratur* consisted of feudal and militarist

---

<sup>126</sup> Rudolf Herzog was one of the more prominent *Blut und Boden*- writers with popular novels such as *Die Wiskottens* (Berlin: Cotta, 1914), *Kameraden* (Berlin: Vier Falken Verlag, 1922), *Nur eine Schauspielerin* (Berlin: Hinius Verlag, 1928).

values, and it created a false idyll of the past, which served as a negative blueprint for the present shortcomings of republicanism. Tucholsky stresses the imaginary character of these constructs of German-ness: “Dieses Deutschtum ist ein unerträgliches, und sein Wert besteht nur in der Einbildung” (DD 73). The glorification of pre-republican, feudal social structures in these *Heimat* books, their nationalist, anti-Semitic, and even sexist depiction of the world created a false sense of reality for the middle- and lower middle-class readership of such literatures, which influenced and reinforced its uncritical, apolitical lack of class consciousness and its lack of politically critical thinking:

Es ist der Gehaltsempfänger, der den Burggrafen spielt, der Bibliotheksrat aus der Gehaltsstufe IV mit herunterklappbarem Visier, der Vorsitzende eines Polizeihundzüchtervereins als August der Starke. Es liest sich so wohlig, so glatt, man fühlt sich, es ist der Märchenwald unserer Zeit. (DD 74)

These fairy tale-like conditions of the German *Heimatliteratur* as representing a significant part of German *Alltagskultur* are countered by Tucholsky’s own version of *Heimatliteratur* in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. Instead of creating an illusion of a glorious, feudal, and militarist German tradition, Tucholsky dismantles such constructs of German-ness by exhibiting material and sociological facts that create the need for such ideological compensations. This materialist understanding of the function of cultural production exhibited by Tucholsky in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* differs from communist and socialist concepts, however, in that it remains self-reflexive in its employment of satire, that it distances itself from any ideology by thematizing the ideology of public communication in its language parodies.

Not only overtly nationalist cultural products were target of Tucholsky’s criticism. He also satirized the use of satire in the Weimar Republic, namely to what extent it loses its critical impetus if it becomes commercialized. Tucholsky criticizes the

cultural politics of publishing houses and theaters in “Die Zeit schreit nach Satire” (DD 99-107). The text, written exclusively in direct speech in order to convey a sense of immediacy, traces in twelve consecutive scenes how the “Deutsche Literatur-Betrieb G.M.B.H.” (DD 99), despite being self-proclaimed “republican” (DD 105), does not promote free speech, but how it instead yields to its bourgeois and aristocratic audience and how it censors its productions accordingly. The superficiality and the lack of critical depth of this “Literatur-Betrieb” and mass entertainment in its economical dimension are depicted through Tucholsky’s use of language parody. It points to the inherent bureaucratic authoritarianism of the “Literatur-Betrieb” by satirizing its preoccupation with professional titles (DD 99), and it exposes the loss of satire’s critical impetus when it becomes instrumentalized for entertainment within profit-oriented cultural politics. Tucholsky, using his technique of personalization (Hess, *Aufklärungsstrategien* 92) and language parody, criticizes the practices of the purportedly republican (and hence critical) cultural institutions in the Weimar Republic, which focus on trends dictated by the market, rather than on authenticity and promotion of critical thought. He speaks through the voice of “Dr. Milbe,” an executive of the section theater of the “Literatur-Betrieb.” His concern with names, trends, and his indiscriminate use of critical terms such as “satire,” and also his indiscriminate use of artists with different political profiles, implies Tucholsky’s critique of the superficiality of the German cultural market and its fundamentally uncritical and apolitical stance, which makes it susceptible to ideological occupation and manipulation:

-“Also, sehn Se, ich hab mir das so gedacht -: wir machen eine Revue, verstehn Se, also eine Revue, so was hat Berlin überhaupt noch nicht gesehn! Scharf, verstehn Sie mich, witzig, spritzig – also es ist ja gar kein Zweifel: *diese Zeit schreit ja nach Satire!* –das wird eine ganz grosse Sache! Wir haben sofort an Sie

gedacht – nehm Sie ‘ne Zigarette? – kommt ja gar kein anderer in Frahere. Wir engagieren Pallenberg, die Valetti, Ilka Grüning, Otto Wallburg - - Hallo? – ‘tschudjen ‘n Momentchen...! (Viertelstündiges Telefongespräch) ... Regie? Piscator! Seffaständlich! Hat schon zugesagt; wenn er also nicht kann, dann Jessner. Oder Haller. Auf jeden Fall: 1a. Da können Sie sich auf uns verlassen. Und gehn Sie ran, besonders in den Couplets...nein, halt, machen Sie keine Couplets – machen Sie Sonx – jetzt macht man Sonx – natürlich nicht zu literarisch, nicha, wir wenden uns ja an ein grosses Publikum...also’n bisschen allgemein-verständlich...wir haben so etwa gedacht: Dreigroschenoper mitm Schuss Lehár. (DD 100)<sup>127</sup>

The satire of this text lies in its depiction of the “Literatur-Betrieb” and its attempt to market satire. It implies that cultural products lose their critical impetus precisely through their marketing. Tucholsky’s language parody ridicules trendy, marketed cultural novelties such as “songs,” and the comment that songs are the new trend instead of political couplets also implies their temporary and uncritical character. Dr. Milbe’s indiscriminate mentioning of artists and directors, no matter what political tendency in the politicized cultural landscape of the Weimar Republic they represent, attests to his ignorance of the politics of culture, and his generalizing comment “Auf alle Fälle: 1a” implies his only concern with sensationalism and profit. Tucholsky’s use of Dr. Milbe’s language, a parody of uncritical, profit-oriented, apolitical pretentiousness of the entertainment industry hints at its disguise under allegedly critical labels such as “satire” or famous names of the cultural scene. Dr. Milbe’s tendency of abbreviating his speech (“sehn Se,” “keine Frahere,” “seffaständlich”) points to the superficial, frantic, hectic preoccupation of the Weimar Republic’s profit oriented cultural market. It also critically

---

<sup>127</sup> The satirical effect of this text is received through Milbe’s ignorance of the fundamentally different political directions of the artists and directors he refers to indiscriminately. Composer of Franz Lehár, for instance, wrote entertaining *Operetten*-music (musicals), which had nothing in common with Brecht’s politically critical project *Dreigroschenoper*. Rosa Valetti often recited and sang for politically critical cabaret, while Otto Wallburg was a highly popular star of apolitical *Operette*. Hermann Haller and Leopold Jessner were directors of mainstream theater which did not share the politically critical role of Piscator’s theater.



comments on the contradiction that the cultural market of the Weimar Republic was shaped and dominated by ignorant and apolitical businesspeople.

Photomontages visually complement this critical message. Two of Heartfield's photomontages accompany this text: one (DD 101) shows a young female dancer being watched by a literally faceless bourgeois (indicated by his tuxedo and a blank face). This montage implies the uncritical and objectifying cultural entertainment of the middle class. The other montage (DD 107) shows an ink pot with an ink pen in the shape of a woman's leg sticking out, which satirically criticizes the widespread practice of writers on a competitive market to retreat to uncritical and objectifying entertainment for the bourgeois readership. Tucholsky and Heartfield allude to the necessity of public persons such as writers to express their politically critical positions, which ultimately means that Tucholsky considered the writer's role as one of a public educator. The tension in the relation between text and photomontages also bridges the gap between this article's target audiences of intellectuals and the working class. The text is a satirical dismantling of capitalist ideologies in the allegedly republican cultural scene of the Weimar Republic. Heartfield's accompanying photomontages capture the gist of the article, communicating with its non-intellectual audience and implicitly critiquing the absence of working-class interests in such a cultural market.

Not only the Weimar Republic's cultural market, but also its leisure culture of sports, conditions and reinforces authoritarianism, according to Tucholsky. The article "Deutscher Sport" (DD 108) satirizes the permeability of German *Alltagskultur*, namely sport organizations, with disciplining bureaucracy. The title "Deutscher Sport" invites an ambiguous reading of the article, either in terms of the German "sport" (meaning its

preoccupation) of disciplining, or in terms of the disciplining (meaning its bureaucratization) of German sports. Tucholsky again employs language parody to exhibit the German tendency to nationalize and ideologically permeate even its leisure culture through the impenetrable bureaucratic language of sports organizations, which reflects its emphasis on hierarchy, competition, and exclusivity as the micro dimension of an inherently nationalist culture.

The opaqueness of bureaucratic jargon suggests its streamlining of the spontaneous character of leisure culture and thereby depriving it of its subversive potential. Tucholsky also imitates the emphasis of hierarchy in German leisure sports, and in this imitation he ridicules its senseless recreation of authoritarian structures in the microdimension of sports organizations:

Den ausserordentlichen und Körperschafts-Mitgliedern ist nicht das Recht eingeräumt, das Klubabzeichen des A.v.D.an ihren Wagen zu führen – für die ordentlichen Mitglieder gräbt man das “Traditionsschild” (das Schild des Kaiserlichen Automobilklubs) aus, das neben dem A.v.D.-Klubabzeichen geführt werden darf -, ihnen stehen auch wohl nicht die Klubräume des A.v.D. offen, es wird ihnen aber dadurch Einfluss auf die Führung der Organisation eingeräumt, dass das vom Repräsentanten-Ausschuss der ordentlichen Mitglieder gewählte und aus einem Präsidenten und drei Vizepräsidenten bestehende Präsidium sich aus den Reihen der ausserordentlichen und Körperschafts-Mitglieder gemäss den mit diesen abgeschlossenen Verträgen um höchstens drei weitere Vizepräsidenten ergänzt. Diese müssen während der Dauer ihrer Amtszeit ordentliche Mitglieder des A.v.D. sein. (DD 108).

As this example shows, through language parody of bureaucratic jargon, which becomes satirical through slight exaggeration of its cumbersome and dry style, Tucholsky exhibits the inherent exclusivity and hierarchical structure of sports organizations. These are preoccupied with rules and regulations concerning its leadership and its representation, and which therefore reflect nationalist mechanisms on the micro level of *Alltagskultur*. This text receives its critical impetus by means of language parody, which not only illuminates the absurdity of such bureaucratic disciplining of German sports, but which also demonstrates structures of authoritarianism that the audience presumably experiences on a daily basis. This critical dissection of familiar ground aides in Tucholsky's aim to illuminate ideological relations and hegemonial structures in the political culture of the Weimar Republic, and in this case in its everyday culture, with the intention to agitate the working class for pro-republican political participation. This text is accompanied and complemented by a photomontage by Heartfield (DD 109), which depicts two soccer players wearing a soccer ball instead of a head, and which poses a warning of a bureaucratic mentality that even invades the private realm of leisure such as sports - and that becomes part of one's (disciplined) identity. Tucholsky's concern with *Alltagskultur* and the tendency in Germany to discipline it points to the fact that it eventually becomes susceptible to nationalist propaganda, directly by display of public monuments or public mass events, or indirectly through the media.

The next section discusses Tucholsky's positive account of *Alltagskultur*, which he saw as carrying revolutionary potential if uninvaded by hegemonial cultural tradition.

***“Die Komik der unrealen Potentialsätze, die monströse Zerlegung des Satzes:” German Folk Culture and its Subversive Potential***

The susceptibility to authoritarianism of such forms of low culture, whether bestselling *Heimatliteratur*, entertainment culture such as revues, or recreational culture such as sports, represents Tucholsky’s critical discussion of the role of low culture in reinforcing nationalism. He does, however, also see a fundamentally revolutionary political potential in low culture, namely in those forms that have traditionally been the voice of the underprivileged, the “peasants.” Such remnants of folk culture, to Tucholsky, have not been invaded by ideological (political, economic) interests, which he sees demonstrated in their use of language.

Again, language is the location of identity. Tucholsky tried to capture the identity-forming and empowering role of language in his poem “Mutterns Hände” (DD 171). Written in Berlin local dialect, the language of the urban worker, the poem depicts the mother as the heroine of the working class and thus establishes an emotionally capturing alternative to conventional military heroes:

Hast uns Stulln jeschnitten  
Un Kaffe jekocht  
Un de Töppe rübajeschohm –  
Hast jewischt und jenäht  
Und jemacht und jedreht...  
Alles mit deine Hände. ... (DD 171)

This poem attempts to imitate in content (the working-class mother and her ordinary heroism in her daily chores) and in form (dialect as a marker of class identity) the cultural products of cultural workers such as the Bavarian comedian Karl Valentin. Authenticity

is conveyed through language, in this case through Karl Valentin's Bavarian dialect, which has retained a "simple" (DD 137) form of humor:

Eine kleine Seele. Und ein grosser Künstler. Wenn ihn nur nicht einmal die Berliner Unternehmer einfangen! Das Geheimnis dieses primitiven Ensembles ist seine kräftige Naivität. (DD 137)

Tucholsky contended that the "primitivism" of artists like Valentin in contrast to Berlin's analytical culture created a space within the Weimar Republic's culture that remained unoccupied by fabrications of nationalism. Such art refused to become an instrument of hegemonial ideologies, and Tucholsky saw precisely this refusal of low art to subordinate as vivid proof for the possibility of change. Another space Tucholsky regarded as uninvaded by ideological hegemony was the feeling of belonging, of home, of "Heimat," that Tucholsky, contrary to his general belief of the omnipresence of politics even in the most private and familiar spheres of life, considered to be personal, individual, and not politically involved.

### **"- ausserdem hat jeder sein Privat-Deutschland:" Tucholsky's Concept of German-ness**

Tucholsky's "cross-section" of representations of German-ness ends with the representation of his own concept of German-ness. This last text of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, entitled "Heimat," lays out Tucholsky's concept of an alternative national identity, one that is individual and removed from associational life. He contrasts nationalist symbols and associations with a personal, independent notion of national identity. This concept of "Heimat" represents Tucholsky's synthesis of the preceding

dualist discussion of polarized constructs of German-ness in the cultural public sphere of the Weimar Republic.

It is misleading to read this text as a sentimental, uncritical account of Germany, because it attempts to illustrate a concept of German-ness unoccupied by ideology.<sup>128</sup> This occupation of German-ness as a highly contested concept in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic as the theme of Tucholsky's *Deutschland*-book was released of its tension between concepts of "Vaterländische" (DD 230) and "umgekehrte Nationalisten" (DD 230) who either glorified or denied their homeland for the sake of ideological instrumentalization. This tension, however, was continued through the pictures that accompany the text.

Pictures of conventional landscape photographs and pictures of nationalist symbols, such as the island of Helgoland, the Bavarian castle of Linderhof, and the anti-French Niederwald monument contrast nationalist associations with the text's emphasis on private, independent, individual national identities. Patriotism, to Tucholsky, was something personal and private: "Im Patriotismus lassen wir uns von jedem übertreffen – wir fühlen international. In der Heimatliebe von niemand" (231). National identity in the form of "Heimatliebe," contrary to the nationalist connotation of the term "Vaterländisch" (DD 231), was for Tucholsky a concept that did not exclude political internationalism and pacifism, because this sense of "Heimat" was for him something completely removed from the (politicized) public sphere: "Der Staat schere sich fort, wenn wir unsere *Heimat* lieben" (DD 226). Thus, this last text *Heimat*, as a positive conclusive alternative to false patriotism in the form of nationalism, can be understood as

---

<sup>128</sup> Burkhart Spinnen reads the text as a sentimental and uncritical affirmation of Germany (187).

an alternative to nationalist *Heimatliteratur*, which, as Tucholsky pointed out, was responsible for the lack of non-nationalist concepts of German-ness in its public sphere: “Das ist in schlechten Büchern, in noch dümmere[n] Versen und in Filmen schon so verfälscht, dass man sich beinahe schämt, zu sagen: man liebe seine Heimat” (227). The conditioning and reinforcement of nationalism through literature and the media thus “imagined” a national identity that was false, exclusive, anti-democratic, and inherently belligerent:

Es ist ja nicht wahr, dass jene, die sich ‘national’ nennen und nichts sind als bürgerlich-militaristisch, dieses Land und seine Sprache für sich gepachtet haben. Weder der Regierungsvertreter im Gehrock, noch der Oberstudienrat, noch die Herren und Damen des Stahlhelms allein sind Deutschland. Wir sind auch noch da. Sie reißen den Mund auf und rufen: ‘Im Namen Deutschlands...!’ Sie rufen: ‘Wir lieben dieses Land, nur wir lieben es.’ Es ist nicht wahr. (DD 231)

This text illustrates Tucholsky’s polemical countering of nationalisms in the Weimar Republic’s public sphere. His repetitive reminder of the lack of truth in nationalist propaganda (“es ist nicht wahr”), and his reference to privileged circles (bourgeois politicians, intellectuals, and militarists) as the prevalent producers and consumers of such ideologies, is countered by his use of the unifying first-person plural (“Wir sind auch noch da”) as a powerful and united alternative public.

Tucholsky had always pursued the idea of such a counter public. This alternative public, identified by Tucholsky as “Kommunisten, junge Sozialisten, Pazifisten, Freiheitsliebende aller Grade” (DD 231) is presented as a united leftist-liberal community that does not recognize nationalist symbols (“Wir pfeifen auf die Fahnen – aber wir lieben dieses Land” [DD 231]), and that instead aims to overcome Germany’s dichotomous political culture through an international political orientation without losing a private, individual sense of belonging:

Aus Scherz hat dieses Buch den Titel “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles” bekommen, jenen törichten Vers eines grossmäuligen Gedichts. Nein, Deutschland steht nicht über allem und ist nicht über allem – niemals. Aber *mit* allen soll es sein, unser Land. Und hier stehe das Bekenntnis, in das dieses Buch münden soll: Ja, wir lieben dieses Land. ... Und in allen Gegensätzen steht – unerschütterlich, ohne Fahne, ohne Leierkasten, ohne Sentimentalität und ohne gezücktes Schwert – die stille Liebe zu unserer Heimat. (DD 230-31)

This text indicates the culmination of Tucholsky’s internationalist concept of German-ness in the form of Europeanism, about which he had been writing since the Weimar Republic’s middle years. Tucholsky redefines Germany’s position as an equal member of a federation of nation-states, in which each individual keeps a personal national identity. Thus, Tucholsky suggests an alternative to the nationalism of the “new politics” analyzed by historian George L. Mosse, who defined it as an “aesthetic of politics” (Mosse 20) through the media in order to nationalize the masses.

The absence of a public voice for alternatives to nationalist concepts of German-ness is the prevalent criticism of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. Through satirical juxtaposition of these concepts with the reality they obscure, through language-parody and photomontage, Tucholsky and Heartfield intend to subjugate their ideological powers. Tucholsky replaces the false and exclusive sense of nationalist belonging with an individualist, private one, which was intended to be open for integration into a supranational political system.

This concept, however, did not find its public. What nevertheless did find a public and what indeed had a tremendous impact on the discourse around German-ness within the final phase of the Weimar Republic were the formal aspects of Tucholsky’s *Deutschland* book. The combination of photographic image with text constituted a new genre within the context of public communication on national identity.



## ***Deutschland Deutschland über alles* generated a New Form of Discourse around German-ness**

During the last years of the Weimar Republic, developments in the media landscape concentrated around discussions on the concept of the “German nation” in the daily press and in the cultural magazines of the Weimar Republic (Schütz 359). The same phenomenon occurred on the book sector, where, primarily in the form of travel literature, the discourse around what it means to be German and what ideological profile Germany should have as a nation dominated on both ends of the political spectrum, while moderate, liberal assessments were sparse.

In 1926, Max Barthel, shortly after turning to National Socialism, published a socialist *Deutschland* book *Deutschland. Lichtbilder und Schattenrisse einer Reise* (Berlin: Büchergilde Gutenberg 1926). Alfons Goldschmidt’s *Deutschland heute* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1928) discussed Germany from a socialist perspective, Graf Alexander Stenbock-Fermor’s *Deutschland von unten* (Stuttgart: Engelhorn, 1931) argued also from a socialist perspective, and Eugen Diesel’s liberal assessment *Die Deutsche Wandlung* (Berlin: Cotta, 1929) speculated on Germany’s position situated within the mass media and their altering of perception:

Das Bild des Vaterlandes wird ergänzt durch unzählige huschende Eindrücke von der flimmernden Leinwand, auf der wir Wasserflächen von oben und von der Seite blitzen oder die Giebel und Türme unserer alten Städte von der Zeppel Gondel aus sich abenteuerlich drehen sehen. (Diesel 295)

As Diesel mentions here, in the Weimar Republic, the public experienced a fundamental transformation of perception in the age of mass media. Tucholsky shared Diesel’s

observation, but while Diesel remained descriptive in assessing these altered conditions of public communication in his *Deutschland* book, Tucholsky actually incorporated this new sense of synchronicity and multiplicity of perception in his book through visual and textual montage, through juxtaposition and satire. As mentioned by Diesel, formerly absolute notions of a nation not only become relative, but they are also understood as constructed within a particular ideological framework. It is precisely this deconstruction of absolute terms and totalizing concepts as phenomena of a bygone era (or as phenomena of a present that, due to its ingrained authoritarianism, refuses or is unable to accept and use its liberties) that Tucholsky seeks to accomplish with his book.

The polarized discourse around German-ness was captured in yet another *Deutschland* book. Within the context of general political polarization and anti-republicanism of the early 1930s, however, as demonstrated in the devastating elections of September 1930 which represented a sudden rise in National Socialism, nationalism, and communism, concepts of Germany's national identity radicalized, as documented in *Deutschland so oder so?* by US-American journalist H.R. Knickerbocker.

Knickerbocker argued that Germany's polarized political landscape would eventually either swing towards National Socialism or towards communism, but democracy would not prevail in such an anti-republican environment.

Knickerbocker's prediction of a political swing to the right proved to be accurate, if judged by the surge of right-extremist *Deutschland* books at the turn of the decade. Edmund Schultz's *Das Gesicht der Demokratie* (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1931) and its nationalist, anti-republican discussion of Germany and shortcomings of the republican system marks the beginning of a sharp increase of a nationalist and national-socialist

public discourse around German-ness. While pro-republican *Deutschland* books remained absent on the publishing market of 1932 and later, National Socialist *Deutschland* books began to dominate, for example Gregor Strasser's *Kampf um Deutschland* (München: Eher, 1932), Joseph Goebbels's *Das erwachende Berlin* (München: Eher, 1934), and Dr. Johannes von Leers's *Juden sehen Dich an* (Berlin: Volkswacht, 1933). Interestingly, it was books of the extreme right which took up Tucholsky's form of combining pictures with text for the purpose of an intensified ideological impact among the mass public.

Three *Deutschland* books that explicitly relate to Tucholsky's original discussion of national identity will be analyzed in this section. Each comes from a different ideological camp: Goldschmidt's socialist book served as an incentive for Tucholsky's *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, Edmund Schultz's *Das Gesicht der Demokratie* presented those nationalist-chauvinist notions of fatherland and national identity that Tucholsky had sought to deconstruct in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. The last representative, National Socialist Dr. Johannes von Leers' *Juden sehen Dich an*, (the title is a direct response to Tucholsky's and Heartfield's controversial picture entitled "Tiere sehen Dich an," a satirical reference to the anti-republican and widespread militarism in the Weimar Republic) depicts what happens when concepts of the German nation become mystified and when national identity becomes de-individualized.

The books resemble *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* in form and content (textual commentary of pictures, political criticism, and ideological agenda). However, satire is lacking in all other books, which were not intended to deconstruct existing dichotomies but support them by discussing German-ness under the aspects of

physiognomy (Goldschmidt), gender (Schultz), and race (von Leers). The picture-text arrangements in all other books are literal, their choice of language is aimed to suggest unity and not fraction (as in Tucholsky's book), and their political stance is anti-republican. The next section will compare and contrast these Deutschland-books with Tucholsky's. The first book discussed is the socialist *Deutschland heute*, which was an incentive to the making of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*.

### **Alfons Goldschmidt: *Deutschland heute* (1928)**

Although Tucholsky acknowledged the influence of *Deutschland heute* on *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, the differences in language, presentation, and even in ideological trajectory are striking. Alfons Goldschmidt (1879-1940), leftist journalist and regular contributor to the *Weltbühne*, published *Deutschland heute* in 1929. In his *Weltbühne* article "Wahnsinn Europa," Tucholsky lauded the rare critical stance of the book within a generally uncritical public in the context of the Weimar Republic's increasing nationalist political climate:

In Deutschland hat sich seit dem wirtschaftlichen Scheinaufschwung ein Optimismus breitgemacht, der an die lärmendsten Ereignisse der Vorkriegszeit erinnert. Es ist schauerlich. Da kommt ein Buch über Deutschland heute von Alfons Goldschmidt gerade zur rechten Zeit (bei Ernst Rowohlt, Berlin). Es ist das Beste, was über Deutschland seit langen Jahren erschienen ist. Goldschmidt hasst aus Liebe – und das ist der furchtbarste Hass. ... Goldschmidts *Deutschland heute* sagt das zu Ende, was hier oft angedeutet worden ist – es ist in ganzen Kapiteln etwas durchaus Vollkommenes. (Tucholsky 6582)

As Tucholsky had mentioned in his articles on propaganda, he considered the emotional aspect of public communication about German-ness to be a crucial factor in pro-republican discourses, which had been absent there and which therefore had less emotional appeal for a mass audience for countering emotionally charged nationalism.

This emotional appeal is constituted largely through the choice of language when talking about Germany as a fundamental and important medium of publicly communicating German-ness, as Tucholsky mentions in his positive review of Goldschmidt's

*Deutschland heute* in his *Weltbühne* article "Mir fehlt ein Wort":

Sprache ist eine Waffe. Haltet sie scharf. Wer schludert, der sei verlacht, für und für. Wer aus Zeitungswörtern und Versammlungssätzen seines dahinlabert, der sei ausgewischt, immerdar. Lest dazu das Kapitel über die deutsche Sprache in Alfons Goldschmidts *Deutschland heute*. Wie so vieles, ist da auch dieses zu Ende gesagt. (Tucholsky 6918)

Tucholsky notes here that *Deutschland heute* was a strong motivation for Tucholsky to write his *Deutschland* book. Another rhetorical incentive from Goldschmidt's text was his metaphorical use of a "face" as an image of German-ness. Similar to the Dadaist artist and activist George Grosz, who in his drawings entitled "Das Gesicht der herrschenden Klasse" sought to capture the physiognomy of power, Goldschmidt and also Tucholsky drew connections between the physiological appearance of the Germans (their faces) and political and social dysfunctions in Germany. "Faces" were types, representatives of a nationalist-chauvinist identity that was undermining the republican system. It is interesting, however, that although Tucholsky had repeatedly called for the use of such rhetorical and stylistic devices of simplifying complex issues in mass discourse for constituting a counter public, not only his rhetorical style, but also his ideological trajectory in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* differed sharply from Goldschmidt's in that it did not follow communist party lines.

Goldschmidt, on the other hand, stayed close to communist doctrine. His book is less intellectual in content and form than *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, even though Tucholsky sought to address concerns of the working class. Unlike *Deutschland*

*Deutschland über alles*, the introductory text in Goldschmidt's book is not a literary quote. It describes the German landscape, its climate zones, its population density, and it describes Germany as a whole as "directed towards the east": ... - Deutschland ist die mechanisierteste europäische Maschinenvorhalle des Ostens" (Goldschmidt 8), and not as a potentially integral part of a united Europe, as Tucholsky did.

The fundamental difference between Tucholsky's book and Goldschmidt's book is the fact that *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* dismantles ideology in order to point to ideological relations, whereas Goldschmidt's text intends to constitute ideology. Thus, the trope of the face in *Deutschland heute* is not that of a deceptive surface that obstructs power relations, as in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, but that of natural German solidarity with the Soviet revolution. The assumption that there is a "real," "natural" identity of Germany that is obscured by republicanism makes the text part of the polarized, anti-republican discourse of national identity in the final phase of the Weimar Republic. Goldschmidt asserted that during the revolution of 1918, Germany displayed authentic political goals in its orientation towards Russia: "Einen Augenblick war das Gesicht Deutschlands lebendig, jung, mit blanken Augen ... Das Gesicht war in diesem Augenblick nach Osten gewendet, dem kühnen Brudergesicht zu" (Goldschmidt 13). However, the republic as the result of the revolution is described as a "übles Kompromissgesicht" (Goldschmidt 14). Goldschmidt discusses national identity from a communist viewpoint when he claims that Germany in form of the Weimar Republic is "faceless" (Goldschmidt 14) and "colorless" (Goldschmidt 15), whereas other countries have a national identity – Russia's identity is "calm and red" (Goldschmidt 14), in contrast to the "brutal" identity of the USA (Goldschmidt 14).

Unlike the satirical, mocking language parody in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, the language uses numerous adjectives such as “schwer,” “drückend,” “hart” (Goldschmidt 25), thus creating a sense of the worker’s suffering, but also referring to their strong sense of class identity, unity, and an alleged cultural authenticity of the working class:

Die Bahnhöfe atmen schwer in den Ruhrnächten. Ernst ist der Schrei des Rangierpersonals, die Betonmauern sind dumpfe Zyklopenwände, schwere Vulkanplatten, Riesenwucht und Riesenschutz. Nichts ist heiter hier, der Kumpel dröhnt hart auf den Platten, zwanzig, fünfzig Gleise weisen in Märkte, fern ist der Gewinn und nah ist die gefährliche Arbeit. Die Nacht drückt auf schwarze Erde. Herb sind die Menschen, eigen noch in Massen unterirdische Bauern, noch nicht abgerissen von der Scholle, denn auch der Bergmann ist Bauer. Widerwillig rollen die Kohlen- und Eisenzüge aus dem schwarzen Tor. Der Kumpel liebt Berlin nicht. (Goldschmidt 25)

As indicated in this text, Goldschmidt’s negative references to the city, in particular to the city of Berlin, are another difference to *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. While Tucholsky writes for the urban worker, Goldschmidt refers to the city as a destructive element in his metaphor of Germany as an organism (Goldschmidt 26), as an idle parasite that the rest of working Germany has to labor for. Goldschmidt’s organic, communist nationalism describes, very similar to the Nazi’s shunning of the city, urban areas as the main destructive force for his organic national identity:

Feinde der Urarbeit sind die grossen Städte, aufgeplustert und voll Zivilisation, unorganisch und anmassend, rechthaberisch und pflichtlos. Je grösser die Stadt, um so ärmer das Land, je gedrängter die Stadt, im so leerer die Fruchtbarkeit. Für Menschen gibt die Stadt Maschinen, für Herzinnigkeit Elektrizität. Die Stadt trennt, die grosse Stadt ist Volkszerreisserin. (Goldschmidt 27)

Goldschmidt’s contrasting of a “healthy” country to the “sick” city, the contrast between the culture of workers and farmers to the culture of civilization and technology constitutes the fundamental structure of the book’s anti-republican, anti-urban, anti-

civilizationalist stance. According to Goldschmidt, Berlin as a representative of a “faceless” Germany shows “Asphaltanmassung” instead of loyalty (Goldschmidt 31), “lähmender Automatismus” instead of social interaction (Goldschmidt 34), “Nivellierung” instead of individuality (Goldschmidt 35), and it is “pervers” instead of loving (Goldschmidt 39): “Berlin ist die grosse Gewalt, aus der Deutschlands Zukunft geboren wird” (Goldschmidt 48).

Goldschmidt promotes an anti-urban, anti-republican working class identity. The “faceless” republican system is, according to Goldschmidt, the cause of the development of a “cultureless” civilization (Goldschmidt 144), whose institutions such as the administration, the judicature, the legislative, and the universities, cause more physical and ethical suffering for the working class, and he also criticizes Germany’s cultural institutions as representing bourgeois culture, thereby excluding the working class (Goldschmidt 145-150). Goldschmidt’s *Deutschland heute* is an attempt, like Tucholsky’s book, to reach the working class and to form their national identity. The difference to *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* here is that Goldschmidt argues from a communist, anti-republican, and anti-civilizationalist perspective, drawing the connection between the worker’s oppression and the republican system as an outcome of the development of civilization. Drawing this connection brings Goldschmidt’s text in proximity to Nazi arguments against civilization. Tucholsky, on the other hand, draws a connection between the oppression of the working class and a lacking democratic identity in Germany, where an omnipresent system of references to militarism and chauvinist nationalism undermines the democratic ideal of equality.



As the next section demonstrates, this omnipresent system of nationalist references is displayed in a *Deutschland* book that was published in response to *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, Edmund Schultz's *Gesicht der Demokratie*.

**Reinforcing National Symbolic: Edmund Schultz's *Das Gesicht der Demokratie* (1930)**

Edmund Schultz's *Das Gesicht der Demokratie*, published in 1931, was a nationalist response to *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. Not only did it use the trope of the face as representing the ideological profile of Germany, it also combined photographic pictures with text, and it referred negatively to the *Weltbühne* intellectuals as representing Jewish and therefore "un-German" thought (Schultz 58). It responded directly to Tucholsky's book in that it took an identical picture of returning soldiers from the Westfront, crossing a bridge over the Rhine River, shown on page 13 of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* and displayed on page 31 of *Das Gesicht der Demokratie*. In Schultz's book, this picture with text implied that the Weimar Republic, led by republican politicians, was a disgrace for German national dignity because of their purported domination by the Allied forces (Schultz 47) and because of an alleged capitulation of German-ness in a democratic (hence "un-German") political system (Schultz 15). While Tucholsky's book aimed at dismantling national symbolism, Schultz, and his co-author Friedrich Georg Jünger (brother of Ernst Jünger), intend to reinforce it. They maintain that the *stab-in-the-back* legend, the myth of the superiority of the German nation, and the myth that this text, or any text, displays objective and eternal truths:

Die Verlagsleitung hat bisher ... das Gebiet der Politik ... niemals gepflegt. Wenn sie jetzt dem vorliegenden politischen Bilderwerk ... Raum gibt, so tut sie das in der festen Gewissheit, dass der Verfasser und Herausgeber – fern von parteipolitischen Motiven oder zersetzenden Absichten – von dem heissen Bestreben beseelt ist, dem Vaterland durch objektive Darstellung von Tatsachen und freimütige Kritik im besten Sinne zu dienen. (Schulz, “Vorrede”)

By asserting the book’s objectivity and its alleged distance to party politics, Schultz and Jünger obscure their intent of reinforcing a nationalist tradition, which, once popularized, would legitimize the reestablishment of reactionary politics. Such a restitution of authoritarianism in the form of a nationalist revolution was increasingly called for in right-wing literature during the last phase of the Weimar Republic. This revolution was supposed to revitalize Germany’s purported national might, which they claimed had been lost in an allegedly “weak” and “valueless” democratic system (Sontheimer 126).

The replacement of a patriarchal, authoritarian social structure in the Weimar Republic with equal rights for all, especially for women, posed an existential threat to right-wing ideology. The assertion of Germany’s loss of purported national unity in republicanism indicated an underlying fear of emasculation. For the first time in German history, the Weimar Republic granted women the right to vote, which caused the emergence of women in the public sphere.<sup>129</sup> The visibility of women in politics and culture of the Weimar Republic became a crucial theme in fascist and national politics, which manifested itself in an increased need, as indicated in nationalist writings, to restore a militarized male identity that was expressed through a hyperbolic language of heroism. This gendered language of national identity conveyed gendered practices of

---

<sup>129</sup> For more information on the role of women in the Weimar Republic’s culture and on the role of women in nationalist and fascist ideology, see Celia Applegate, 64-74; Elizabeth Harvey; Eugene Jones and James Retallack, 201-221.

identification. Thus, nationalist propaganda marked republicanism not only as something Jewish and “un-German,” but also as something “weak,” “female,” and “unhealthy,” as asserted by W. Kleinau in *Stahlhelm und Staat* (1929):

Die Revolution von 1918 was das Brodeln jenes Abschaums der Nation, der im Läuterungsbade des Weltkrieges durch seinen Mangel an männlicher und völkischer Substanz an die Oberfläche getrieben worden war. Dieser Abschaum liegt noch heute als zähe, erstickende Schicht über den gesunden Kräften unseres Volkes, die, durch das Fronterlebnis wachgerufen, infolge dieser lähmenden Überlagerung nicht zur Entfaltung kommen können. (qtd. in Sontheimer 127)

Schultz and Jünger’s nationalism indicates a similar, gendered understanding of politics, as they ascribe strength, discipline, and authority as characteristics of right-wing paramilitary organizations, which, according to Schultz and Jünger, displayed “true” German-ness (as opposed to weak, female, Jewish republicanism) in their form of “reine Männerbünde” with a “strengen Prinzip von Führung und Gefolgschaft” (Schultz 121). According to Schultz and Jünger, these organizations represent the core structure of a nation, which, as it is “male,” is involved in perpetual struggle, since struggle and war constitute its meaning: “Der Staat ist männlichen Geschlechts. Von der Idee dieser Kampfbünde zum autoritären Staate, der den Lebens- und Machtkampf der Nation organisiert, führt ein Weg, der wohl übersehbar ist” (Schultz 21).

In the context of this gendered, militarist concept of national identity, the book accuses the culture of the Weimar Republic of destroying nationalism. It echoes in a non-satirical form Tucholsky’s satire of national socialist polemics against Erich Maria Remarque’s bestselling antiwar novel *Im Westen nichts Neues*. Schultz and Jünger try to prove how republican literature such as *Im Westen nichts Neues* hosted a “spirit of defeat” (Schultz 152). By displaying pictures of Weimar Republic intellectuals such as Thomas Mann, Heinrich Mann, Gerhart Hauptmann, Alfred Döblin, Emil Ludwig Cohn,

Alfred Kerr, Alfred Flechtheim, Theodor Wolff, Georg Bernhard (chief editor of the *Vossische*), Erich Kästner, and Dr. Gumbel, combined with a selection of their pro-democratic and pacifist quotes, Schultz and Jünger try to demonstrate how this republican (and allegedly its implicit weakness, Jewishness, and femininity) had enfeebled Germany's "nationalpolitisches Denken" (Schultz 151).

In *Das Gesicht der Demokratie*, the text-picture combinations are always literal, unlike in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. The captions to the total of 241 pictures are always explanatory (mostly about who is who in the picture). The absence of satire and photomontage indicate the fundamental difference to Tucholsky's book: while *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* sought to dismember ideological myths about national identity through scrutinizing aesthetic techniques, *Das Gesicht der Demokratie* reinforced these myths through an over generalizing, gendered concept of national identity.

Although overgeneralization as a means to achieve mass appeal in public communication was a concept defended and even called for by Tucholsky, his concept of propaganda was intended to mobilize the masses for republicanism and to empower them by displaying mechanisms of authoritarian suppression with the aesthetic means of satire. While *Das Gesicht der Demokratie* represented a conglomerate of nationalist and right-extremist ideology that directly attacked republicanism as an allegedly "un-German" governmental form, another book published in direct response to Tucholsky's *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* attacked the republic's alleged Jewishness, and, in its anti-Semitism, epitomized the ideological base of National Socialism.

**National Socialist concepts of German-ness: J. von Leers' *Juden sehen Dich an* (1933)**

Johannes von Leers was a Nazi publicist and raging anti-Semite, who was involved in anti-Zionist movements in the Middle East and North Africa from the 1930s to the 1960s). In 1933 Leers published an anti-Semitic, National Socialist *Deutschland* book, which received positive reactions in the prominent *Börsenblatt für den Deutschen Buchhandel*. The fact that the *Börsenblatt* even mentioned this book, let alone granted its advertisement for its four editions while denying *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* any advertisement, was a significant indicator for the right-biased politics of public relations of the Weimar Republic's mainstream publishing media.

The book is an anti-Semitic response to *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. Tucholsky's picture-text combination "Tiere sehen Dich an," his criticism of militarism and authoritarianism, is now turned around by Leers as propaganda against Jewish Germans. In six chapters, a foreword and a conclusive after word, Leers lists prominent Jewish intellectuals, politicians, bankers, artists, and scientists as "enemies" (Leers, "Vorwort") of Germany.

Leers, like Tucholsky, uses a combination of text and pictures for his propaganda. In all chapters, a short introduction of anti-Semitic, pseudo-scientific, and paranoid explanations of why Germany is supposedly about to be destroyed by a Jewish conspiracy, is followed by pictures of Jewish prominent individuals' faces and their

names under the picture.<sup>130</sup> The concluding after word implies the Nazis' plan of genocide:

Es genügt nicht, sich die Juden anzusehen, die uns all die letzten Jahre politisch, geistig und wirtschaftlich beherrscht haben. Das deutsche Volk muss vor allem auf der Wacht stehen dass eine Judenherrschaft nicht wiederkommt. In strenger Disziplin und Gesetzlichkeit ist dafür zu sorgen, dass Deutschland nun auch den Deutschen gehört. (Leers 95)

Leers insists on discipline as a necessary characteristic in executing anti-Semitism. His writing is reminiscent of Tucholsky's repeated criticism of a disciplining culture in Germany. Tucholsky's mockery of Nazi jargon and its aggressive anti-Semitism became a sinister reality in Leers's book, as it lay out and tried to justify National Socialism's brutal actions against Jews.

Leers's book represents such Nazi propaganda. Its frantic rage against an imagined Jewish domination during the Weimar Republic reminds of Tucholsky's mockery of irrational Nazi propaganda four years earlier in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. The dual structure of Leers's book follows his repetitive argument that Germany has been dominated by a Jewish conspiracy, and that Germany after the

---

<sup>130</sup> Chapter I, entitled "Blutjuden," combines the fear of a Jewish conspiracy with that of a communist conspiracy. Representatives of Marxist thought (Marx, Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Münzenberg, Schlesinger, Gumbel, Trotzki, and also Erzberger and Adenauer) are accused of planning to destroy the German nation and people. As with all the other individuals used as representatives of an alleged Jewish conspiracy, the author fails to deliver any kind of proof of his allegations. Chapter 2, entitled "Lügenjuden," accuses intellectuals such as Einstein, Lion Feuchtwanger, Emil Ludwig, and Theodor Wolff as disseminating "destructive" ideas (Leers 28). Chapter III, "Betrugsjuden," describes random political representatives of the Weimar Republic (the Prussian SPD-"Fraktionsführer: Heilmann, Staatssekretär Weismann, Heinrich Sklarz) of financial fraud and corruption. Chapter IV, "Zersetzungsjuden," shows Prof. Magnus Hirschfeld, who had defended "Homosexualität in besonders schmutziger Weise" (Leers 55), thus allegedly demoralizing society. Schulrat Löwenstein, who in his communist school "richtete Berliner Arbeiterkinder zu Volksverrat und Judenknechtschaft ab" (Leers 55) is also accused of undermining German-ness. Chapter V entitled "Kunstjuden" shows prominent representatives of Germany's cultural scene as dedicated to the "innere(n) Aushöhlung des deutschen Volkes" (Leers 63), namely Erwin Piscator, Julius Bab, Max Reinhardt, Charlie Chaplin (sic), Ernst Toller, and Alfred Kerr. Chapter VI, "Geldjuden," accuses Germany's leading bankers and entrepreneurs of not representing Germany's economic interests because of their purported "jüdischen Materialismus," which allegedly manifests itself in "Korruption, Ehrlosigkeit, Schmiergelderwesen, Protzengehälter, Gewissenlosigkeit" (Leers 84).

“national revolution” (i.e. Hitler’s ascension to power in 1933) is about to remove any Jewish Germans from any public posts. By referring to the already popular *stab-in-the-back* legend which asserted that a Jewish conspiracy had weakened the German front in WWI, and employing a mixture of religious, colloquial, and brutal terms, Leers polemicized his paranoid fear against a purported enemy from within:

Auch der Beschränkteste wird zugeben müssen, dass es sich um eine regelrechte Beherrschung Deutschlands durch ein fremdes Volkstum gehandelt hat, das auf allen Gebieten des Lebens zur Niederhaltung und Unterdrückung des Deutschtums zusammenarbeitete, und das jeden Tag seine satanische Herrschaft wieder antreten würde, wenn das Deutschtum schwach wird. Zugleich zeigt diese Galerie von Volksverderbern durch die bloße Tatsache, dass kein einziger von ihnen durch die nationale Revolution von 1933 bisher hingerichtet worden ist, trotzdem ihre Verbrechen gen Himmel schreien, mit aller Deutlichkeit, wie ausserordentlich menschlich und gnädig das deutsche Volk selbst noch seinen schlimmsten Verderbern gegenüber verfahren ist. (Leers, “Vorwort”)

Leers’s repetitive use of “Deutschtum” (German-ness) contrasts with his terms of oppression (Beherrschung, Niederhaltung und Unterdrückung, satanische Herrschaft, Verbrechen, Verderber) and indicate a practice of repeating the same message over and over again for the purpose of popularizing anti-Semitism and to justify National Socialism. As Hitler had already laid out in *Mein Kampf*, public language “must not measure the speech of a statesman to his people by the impression that it leaves in a university professor, but by the effect it exerts on the people” (qtd. in Michael 17). From 1933 on, Nazi propaganda homogenized public communication into Nazi German, a language infused by its ideology, and it even reset the font of right-wing printed matter in

Germany's public sphere into gothic letters, which was considered to be a "German" type, whereas the roman type was considered "foreign" (Michael 28).<sup>131</sup>

Leers uses a rhetorical strategy which prevents open debate and exchange of opinions. Describing "foreign" (i.e. liberal-democratic) social or political phenomena as "satanic" feeds into familiar religious conceptual patterns which were intended to facilitate the audience's identification with National Socialist notions of "German-ness." Leers' language obscures historical and political facts for ideological purposes, and he uses the format of text-picture combination, as introduced by Tucholsky, to create the illusion of the book's factuality.

Tucholsky's book, on the other hand, uses satire, montage, and text-picture combinations not only to highlight the multidimensional aspect of reality but also to demonstrate the ideological infiltration of media language in the discourse on German-ness during the last years of the Weimar Republic. Leers, however, remains in the literal mode and reduces his message to the repetitive theme of the destruction of "German-ness" by Jews. This oversimplification of the world, as opposed to Tucholsky's demonstration of its complexity and diversity, proved to be an effective tool in mass communicating the illusion of stability, orientation, and a fake sense of unity through superiority – the kind of propaganda Tucholsky had already satirized (and thus tried to dismantle its effectiveness) in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*.

---

<sup>131</sup> Michael and Doerr note that Nazi language "suffused the Third Reich discourse with a glorified heroism (Heldentum) and a willingness for self-sacrifice (Opferwilligkeit) and sacrificial death (Opfertod) of the individual. The verbalization of such concepts was intended to evoke sentiments of mystical blood ties and emotions to make Germans believe in the transcendental German nation (Volk). The exclusion of others from this racially perceived community (Volksgemeinschaft) was underscored in a heightened sense of belonging, by way of birth, to this privileged group" (29).



## **Successful or effective? *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* as a Model of Critical Public Communication**

Tucholsky expressed the failure of his intention to unify a disparate and fragmented left and liberal audience against the threat of National Socialism as the epitome of aggressive nationalism in his much quoted statement “ich habe Erfolg aber keine Wirkung” (Tucholsky 11294).

This statement about his failure to promote republicanism at the end of the Weimar Republic must be modified, or even interpreted contrarily. While Tucholsky did not succeed in popularizing his political message, he was indeed effective in establishing a subgenre for the discourse on German-ness during the last phase of the Weimar Republic. The combination of photographic picture and text, the metaphor of the face for Germany’s character, the controversy around Remarque’s *Im Westen nichts Neues*, and anti-Semitism as a fundamental aspect of the new powerful National Socialist rhetoric where themes initiated by Tucholsky and responded to by subsequent *Deutschland* books. The explicit and intense response of these *Deutschland* books published in the aftermath of *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* to Tucholsky’s themes and form indicates the threat the book’s ideology-critique posed to right-radical concepts of German-ness. Schultz’s nationalist and von Leers’s National Socialist *Deutschland* books discuss German-ness under opposite premises than Tucholsky does. His book’s satire and montage, its fastidious language, and the effective juxtaposition of textual and visual messages were effective in causing such intense response. These nationalist and National Socialist *Deutschland*-books sought to restore ideological concepts of German-ness that Tucholsky’s book had deconstructed.

*Deutschland Deutschland über alles* initiated a discourse around German-ness in the particular form of the *Deutschland* book, which became a phenomenon of the last phase of the Weimar republic. It thematized the illusion of simplifications in an increasingly diverse reality, and it revealed allegations of objectivity as ideological constructs. It indicated the tension between complexity and simplification in the politicized public sphere of the Weimar Republic's last years. While the political right and left sought to simplify the world in their propaganda in order to attract an increasingly disoriented public (a strategy which, as we know today, worked), the political middle and the republicans did not find a publicly effective form of popularizing democracy. Tucholsky's book demonstrates an attempt to display complexity in a simple form without compromising this complexity.

With its critical view on how *Alltagskultur* is permeated by ideology and how it generates systems of ideas and values, Tucholsky's book anticipates a later theory by Marxist theorist Louis Althusser and his notion of "Ideological State Apparatuses." By examining how ideology creates a sense of self (i.e. how national identities are created), and how seemingly free subjects in capitalist societies never revolt against the system of which they are part, Althusser pointed to entities such as schools, religions, the family, mass communication, the arts, sports, leisure culture, etc. as institutions or "Ideological State Apparatuses" (ISAs) and these apparatuses' role in perpetuating and generating such identities. Tucholsky critically examined some of these apparatuses (ISAs), namely the arts, leisure culture, and mass communication in the Weimar Republic for their role in maintaining and creating anti-republican ideology, which often presented itself in familiar concepts.

This destruction of familiar concepts motivated Tucholsky's work and constituted its satirical style. Ambiguity and contradiction as phenomena of his playful satire constituted a central characteristic of Tucholsky's texts, which undermined the authority of the word and thus the authority of established power relations. Regardless of the political outcome, the mere fact that *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* received such intense response from the political right indicates its relevance in the discourse on German-ness during the Republic's last phase. Furthermore, it indicates the relevance of Tucholsky as a public communications strategist, whose critical impetus can be found, with the reverse effect as intended, among the political right, which, in order to attract the masses, presented a fluctuating political profile, while the left remained static.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> In his study on NS-Press during the Weimar Republic, Gerhard Paul notes: "Stärker als alle anderen Teilkulturen der Weimarer Republik war die nationalsozialistische kein statischer Block, sondern befand sich in ständiger Veränderung: Sie fluktuierte und erweiterte personell ihre Grenze, bildete organisatorische und symbolische Formen heraus, veränderte partiell ihre äussere Repräsentation und ihre propagandistischen Akzente, bis sie schliesslich weit über ihren ursprünglichen Bereich hinaus integrierend wirkte" (255).

## Chapter V:

### **“Ein Abfalleimer gebrauchter Ideen:”**

#### **Tucholsky’s Nazi Satire (1930-1932)**

Less than a month before he died, Tucholsky wrote in a last letter to his close friend Hedwig Müller in November of 1935: “Die Frage ‘Deutschland’ ist für mich gelöst – ich hasse es nicht, ich verachte es” (Tucholsky 12241). What Tucholsky alludes to here is the fact that political engagement and involvement through his writings always had an emotional and personal dimension for him. This engagement became impossible after the Nazis’ electoral successes, particularly after 1932, when he decided to retire from public writing altogether. In the last two years of his career as a public intellectual, Tucholsky underwent changes in attitude and practice. If prior to 1932 he had used satire in language as a “weapon” against nationalism and National Socialism, after that date he not only gradually silenced himself, but also why increasingly Nazi discourse during and after 1932 showed features similar to Tucholsky’s concept of propagandistic public communication, albeit under reverse ideological premises.

Tucholsky narrowed his public voice in response to Germany’s rapid move toward totalitarianism, until he ultimately and consciously chose silence as a form of critical public communication. The last two years of Tucholsky’s career as a public intellectual displayed the political importance he assigned to the constructs of German-ness in the public sphere. These constructs were more and more aggressively propagated

by the National Socialists. Tucholsky responded to this trend productively in that he used satire to subvert Nazi ideology and its extreme, anti-Semitic form of nationalism. This chapter raises the question of how this satire responded to changing historical circumstances. It traces how the degree of acerbity in Tucholsky's satire rose after the Nazis' electoral successes – which not only signified his strong emotional involvement, but which also made his retreat from critical public writing seem even more puzzling, particularly if one considers his great success as the writer of *Schloss Gripsholm*, and the great publicity his anti-militarist statement “Soldaten sind Mörder” received in the year 1931.

Tucholsky's role as a public intellectual in the Weimar Republic's press landscape was particularly telling of the socio-political situation of public communication during the Republic's very last years. An introductory part of this chapter will outline the press landscape of 1930 to 1933 in order to assess the situation of public mass communication during this time, since Tucholsky's writings acknowledged shifts, ruptures, and repercussions of critical mass communication. This overview is followed by an analysis of Tucholsky's publishing strategies between 1930 and 1932, when he retreated from the public arena.

A close look at his relationship to the political left during this time of political polarization in Germany highlights Tucholsky's difficult political position at this time. He increasingly distanced himself from any form of party-dependent discourse and instead used increasingly sharper satire to assess the situation of mass communication during the last years of the Republic as a “funeral” (Tucholsky 10180) of liberalism. Tucholsky's concept of history became increasingly pessimistic during these last years,

when he repeatedly referred to the illusion of progress and the ideologically motivated blindness toward objectivity in any form of conceptualization.

The text analysis in the middle of this chapter follows Tucholsky's path as a public intellectual from diverse activism against National Socialism before the elections of 1930 to intense satirical dismantling of ideological infiltration of the masses through the press in 1931, and to his most sarcastic phase in 1932 when he assessed the political and ideological situation of Europe on the eve of totalitarianism. After the rapid transformation of the Weimar Republic into Nazi dictatorship in 1933, Tucholsky lost his audience and stopped writing altogether, except for his private correspondence. The fact that he refused to join any press organs established by other intellectuals in exile, that he even ridiculed their attempts to maintain a critical voice, points to his alternative concept of critical mass communication, as will be discussed towards the end of the chapter. This part is followed by a brief comparison of Tucholsky's concept of critical communication and his criticism of how the media propagated nationalisms with a work by George Grosz, who was, like Tucholsky, one of the most notable satirists of the Weimar Republic. The conclusion of this chapter argues that Tucholsky's work during the last phase of the Weimar Republic anticipated later, post-WWII analyses of the mechanisms of constructing nationalism in the public sphere. It will thus reiterate how useful Tucholsky's writings are for the analysis of nationalist discourses in the Weimar Republic's media landscape, and that it can even serve as a model for looking at processes of public communication today.

Tucholsky's Jewishness became part of nationalist and National Socialist discourse around German-ness. The extreme right tried to dismantle his validity and credibility as a writer who was allegedly not German and not residing in Germany. These attempts to evict Tucholsky as a public intellectual of the Weimar Republic, particularly during its final phase, have not been taken under scholarly scrutiny. The intricacies of Tucholsky's role as a public intellectual and his strategic move from the public to the private realm of communication have been overlooked largely because of a too generalized and populist explanation of his public silence. These explanations tend to focus on his Jewishness to the exclusion of other factors, as does the latest film on Tucholsky by Xavier Koller (2001). In order to better assess the contribution of this chapter to studies of Tucholsky's work and his role as a public intellectual, the following section will give an overview of Tucholsky scholarship on the last years of his work.

### **Scholarship on Tucholsky's Final Years**

Studies on the last phase of Tucholsky's work are sparse. While older studies on Tucholsky explain his "retreat" to the *Weltbühne* and his successive retirement from public discourse as well as his suicide in 1935 as a dramatic reaction to the developments in Germany (Raddatz, *Bildbiographie* 139), or as a result of his depression (Poor 224), more recent studies try to argue that Tucholsky's loss of an audience for his political satire was the reason for Tucholsky's gradual public muting. Dieter Hess (1982) contends that Tucholsky created a substitute public sphere (*Ersatzöffentlichkeit*) in his private letters (228). Hess sees Tucholsky's retreat to the epistolary genre as constituting a new communicative quality (229), and he interprets Tucholsky's choice of private

forms of communication as significant for a typology of satirical failure in socio-critical communication (237). I contend that he did not create a substitute public sphere. His satire did not “fail,” as Hess argues, because there were too many external factors contributing to this alleged failure. Satire simply did not work in an ideologically streamlined public anymore. Anton Austermann (1985) made a similar observation by stating that in the 1930s, Tucholsky regarded democratic propaganda as pointless in the context of popular fascism (180). This crucial observation contradicts another statement by Austermann in which he argues that Tucholsky “almost indifferently” (176) watched the fascists use concepts of propaganda that he had wanted the republicans to use for their cause. I maintain that Tucholsky was not “indifferent,” but that he was rather disillusioned that after 1933 the cause of republicanism and a peaceful future in a united Europe was lost.

The most recent study on Tucholsky, Renke Siems’s *Die Autorschaft des Publizisten* (2004), stresses Tucholsky’s economical considerations as an author (336). Siems marks 1933 as Tucholsky’s discursive drop-out (359), because: “wenn kein Zugriff mehr auf eine massenwirksame Presse besteht, erübrigen sich damit auf den medialen Wahrnehmungsstil ausgerichtete Schreibformen” (359). Siems means that Tucholsky retreated from public writing because he had no access to it anymore.

It was not his consciously chosen silence, however, that Tucholsky’s last phase, including his publications from Sweden between 1929 and 1932, is famous for. Michael Hepp (1996) documented the debate around the sentence “Soldaten sind Mörder” of August 1931, printed in the *Weltbühne* under the title “Der bewachte Kriegsschauplatz.” This debate around the ethics of war culminated in a verdict of the German Supreme



Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*) in 1994 on the issue of free speech and the reputation of the German *Bundeswehr*, which had sued against the use of Tucholsky's sentence in the post-WWII context. Text analyses in this chapter address two crucial issues of Tucholsky's last years: 1) the question of why he retreated from public discourse, and 2) the degree and function of sensationalism in the form of satire in his late work. The connection between these two issues is indicative of Tucholsky's awareness of the end of critical public discourse.

### **The End of Free Speech: the Press in Germany between 1930 and 1932**

The press landscape of the Weimar Republic's last years pointed to the emerging anti-democratic discourse in Germany's public communication. Due to increased dependence on (mostly conservative and right-wing) industry and business, as well as rising costs of production, the press landscape of the Weimar Republic underwent a profound shift to the right of the political spectrum from its beginning to its end.

Tucholsky had always regarded it as important to establish a propaganda that countered right-wing rhetoric, to influence undecided voters for the republican cause. As we have seen, he recognized that a variety of media could have served as a mouthpiece for this propaganda. In 1931, Tucholsky recognized that the press landscape was polarized, and called for an outreach to a mass readership to counter this rapidly growing trend of mass nationalization through the media (Tucholsky "Rote Signale" 8706). In the context of a rapid deterioration of Germany's economic situation after 1929, the press of the Weimar Republic responded most intensely to the September elections of 1930, in which the Nazis achieved a national breakthrough, the subsequent parliamentary and economic crisis under Brüning's cabinet in 1931, the presidential elections and Reichstag

elections of 1932, and the cabinet of Papen in 1932. The tendency, circulation numbers, and publicistic profile of the independent press, which consisted of the large publishing houses Ullstein, Mosse, and Sonnemann, will precede an examination of the Hugenberg press empire as the most influential press magnate of the Weimar Republic's last years and it will highlight Hugenberg's involvement in the success of the Nazi party. Finally, this section will discuss the press of the political extremes, the NSDAP and the KPD, as a minority on the publishing market, yet as a powerful and dominating voice in political discourse.

### ***Ullstein, Mosse, and Sonnemann***

The papers of Ullstein, Mosse, and Sonnemann were the only large publishing houses in the Weimar Republic which were not directly affiliated with a political party. The independent press of the large publishing houses, whose political orientation was liberal-democratic and supported the Weimar Republic's democratic government, struggled not only for a readership but also for economic survival during the last years of the Weimar Republic, as it was threatened by a vast array of ever increasing right-radical press products, most of which were under Hugenberg's supervision. After the 1930 elections, the press of the democratic center and left recognized Brüning as the far lesser evil than a possible government of nationalist concentration, but the journals *Die Weltbühne* and *Das Tage-Buch* called repeatedly for the Brüning government's resignation (Eksteins 215). In 1931, when the depression deepened and unemployment rose to over six million, the papers with moderate, democratic political orientation oscillated between approval and rejection of Brüning's measures. The *Vossische Zeitung*,

the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and the *Berliner Tageblatt* generally approved of Brüning's use of emergency measures and even criticized the SPD for not cooperating (Eksteins 216). As Brüning repeatedly used the emergency decree and as the economy became even worse toward 1932, the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Tage-Buch* vehemently criticized chancellor Brüning's failure to resolve conflict within parliamentary boundaries, which they saw as partly responsible for the devastating election of Franz von Papen as chancellor in 1932 (Söseman 134). The *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Vossische Zeitung*, however, supported extra-parliamentary use of the emergency decree as a necessary tool in times of political turmoil, and gave president Hindenburg their unreserved trust for his defense of republicanism (Eksteins 221).

The democratically oriented, liberal papers of the large publishing houses had dramatically declining circulation numbers at the end of the Weimar Republic. During the last decisive phase, industrial interests dominated the provincial press due to their investments in the press (Koszyk 454). In 1917, only 16.8 % of the total number of newspapers was decidedly right wing (NSDAP, DNVP, DVP and Economic Party). By contrast, in 1932, these papers made up 26.7%. The left-liberal papers shrank from 16.9% in 1917 to 2.9% in 1932 (Eksteins 312).

After WWI, the press landscape of the Weimar Republic displayed the process of negotiation with and adaptation to the transformed situation of social, cultural, and political life. Around 50% of the German press during the Weimar Republic was overtly connected to a particular political party or ideological tendency (Eksteins 84), since particularly the provincial press and the smaller press was linked to political stances that ranged from conservative to right-extremist. The most prominent democratic publishing

houses, Mosse and Ullstein, were not plagued with economic considerations to the degree smaller newspaper enterprises were, however, there was a considerable “divergence of commercial interests and editorial inclinations” (Eksteins 309) which ultimately resulted in an institutional crisis of the democratic publishing houses after 1928. This crisis was “not brought on but only aggravated by the depression” (Eksteins 309).

As already mentioned in chapter 2, the liberal publishing houses Ullstein and Mosse printed the most popular urban mass papers with democratic tendency. Mosse published the popular *Berliner Tageblatt*, *Berliner Volkszeitung*, *8-Uhr-Abendblatt*, and *Berliner Morgen-Zeitung*, which were primarily distributed in Berlin. Ullstein housed the popular *Vossische Zeitung*, *Tempo*, *Berliner Morgenpost*, *B.Z.am Mittag*, *Berliner Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *Berliner Abendpost* – which were, except for the nationwide *Vossische*, also primarily papers distributed in the Berlin metropolitan area. The content of these mass papers was determined by its readership of mostly urban working-class readers or urban intellectuals – an audience that had a social-democratic and liberal political inclination.

While these papers were all located in Berlin, the publishing house Sonnemann held one of the Weimar Republic’s most distinguished papers, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which had developed out of investment- and trading news in the Frankfurt area (Eksteins 126). The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, with Mosse’s *Berliner Tageblatt* and Ullstein’s *Vossische Zeitung*, had a liberal middle-class and upper middle-class (and disproportionately Jewish) readership (Eksteins 129). As a result, in the second half of the Weimar Republic, these papers found it increasingly difficult to relate to the realities of the Republic. By the end of 1931, the democratic press had succumbed to the feeling of

impotence (Eksteins 248). When Franz von Papen was appointed chancellor in 1932, the three main democratic papers sensed the beginning of their end (Sösemann 154), which was approached rapidly as the right-wing press started a smear campaign against the democratic press, including rumors that the democratic press was on the brink of economic collapse – which in fact, despite serious financial struggles, did not happen until the end of the Weimar Republic under Hitler’s “synchronization” course after his appointment as chancellor in January of 1933 (Eksteins 264). The following section shows how the party press dominated the press landscape of the Weimar Republic’s last years, and how the right-extremist press succeeded in motivating voters even beyond its readership.

### ***SPD Press***

The press of the SPD constituted the largest direct party press in the Weimar Republic. However, this dominance was not to last, and this seemed directly linked to its political loyalties and positions. It had 209 party papers in 1929, which declined to 135 in 1932, due to rising printing- and distribution-costs (Koszyk, *Sozialdemokratische Presse* 188). The total circulation of these papers, including its most prominent daily paper *Vorwärts*, fell from 300,000 in 1923 to a circulation of 76,000 in 1932. In the context of the general deepening of the economic depression, the SPD-paper readership, mostly workers, became even less able to pay for newspaper consumption, which contributed to a decline in advertising in this press of over 20% in 1931 alone (Koszyk, *Sozialdemokratische Presse* 196). While the social-democratic press had been relatively supportive of the Brüning government, it received an enormous setback with

Hindenburg's appointment of Franz von Papen as chancellor in 1932 (Koszyk 202). After Hitler's appointment as chancellor in 1933 and his subsequent terror against the social-democratic press, which consisted of demolition of printing equipment and publishing houses, as well as violent attacks on journalists by National Socialists, the leftist press struggled to keep its place in the Weimar Republic's public. After the burning of the *Reichstag* on February 27, 1933, however, the social-democratic press was shut out of public discourse in a quick "press decree" of February 28, which illegalized any leftist and social-democratic press (Koszyk, *Sozialdemokratische Presse* 213). In contrast to the press of the SPD, the right-extremist Hugenberg press empire flourished during the last years of the Weimar Republic.

### ***Hugenberg Press***

The Hugenberg press was the most dominant and fastest growing press concern during the last phase of the Weimar Republic (Leopold 125). The ultra-conservative line of the Hugenberg publishing empire was affiliated with the DNVP and its chairman, Alfred Hugenberg was also the head of this party. It was the only press besides the Nazi press that did not suffer too much under the economic constraints of the depression. With considerable financial support from the heavy industry, Hugenberg had bought companies of the information sector since the early 1920s: the press agency Telegraphen Union, the movie production company UFA, the ALA (Allgemeine Anzeigen GmbH) which held a monopoly in the advertising business, the VERA Verlagsanstalt, a credit institute which managed loans and investments for newspapers and magazines with funds from large banks and big businesses, and the Scherl Verlag, which published dailies, weeklies,

magazines, books, and a large variety of special-interest magazines. The Scherl Verlag alone published fifteen papers, among which the *Berliner Lokalanzeiger*, *Der Tag*, *Die Woche*, and the *Berliner Illustrierte Nachtausgabe* were the most prominent. The Hugenberg house also published another 26 papers across the nation in form of local or regional papers, such as the popular *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, and the *Hannoverscher Kurier* (Koszyk 228). Contrary to the liberal publishing houses, Hugenberg realized that he could exert most influence in terms of political propaganda in the provincial press. As the liberal papers declined steadily through the Weimar Republic, the ultra-nationalist Hugenberg empire grew. Hugenberg also took the National Socialist press under his direction and thus was a central figure in the popularization of Nazism.<sup>133</sup> In 1929, he cooperated with Hitler against the Young Plan and subsequently opened his newspaper empire to National Socialist propaganda. Hugenberg's press, particularly his provincial newspaper, was one of the important obstacles to the implantation of democratic, republican ideas amongst the German public (Eksteins 81).

While the liberal press dominated urban areas, Hugenberg "owned" the provinces. Particularly in the context of a dire economy during these last years of the Weimar Republic, many small, provincial newspapers could not afford multiple or independent news services. Thus, Hugenberg's company "Wipro" (short for "Wirtschaftsstelle für die Provinzpresse"), a news service he had founded in 1922, which had been delivering news to over 300 newspapers, from nonpartisan to right wing, with highly selective, right-wing news, profited from the economic depression and began dominating the provincial press

---

<sup>133</sup> The daily circulation of the NS press grew from 10,700 in 1926 to 3,197 964 in 1933, and to 6,120 057 in 1939 (Koszyk 385).

market (Leopold 15). By the end of the Weimar Republic, Hugenberg's press agency *Telegraphen-Union* delivered news to two thirds of all German newspapers in the second half of the Weimar Republic (de Mendelssohn 340).

The fact that Hugenberg was also head of the ultra-nationalist DNVP made his dominance in the publicistic market of the Weimar Republic's last years practically a platform for right-radical politics. Hugenberg's immense press campaign against the Young Plan in 1929 led to his call for a plebiscite, which, however, was rejected by the *Reichstag*. Both the *Reichstag* vote and the defeat of Hugenberg's proposal suggests the (temporary) strength of republicanism in 1929, against which the Hugenberg press campaigned. The Hugenberg press empire continued aggressively to represent the political line of Hugenberg's DNVP and its ally NSDAP, particularly in the provincial press, and drew even more advertisers from the liberal press in the Weimar Republic's last years of economic depression. This was primarily due to his function as the head of the ultra-conservative DNVP and his connections to the heavy industry (Leopold 175), not to mention his ownership of the new and economically promising medium film in Germany (Guratzsch 242). Although Hugenberg had been a powerful proponent of the "nationalist front," and although he had supported the rise of Hitler for the sake of eliminating republicanism, he was removed from office, and he was forced to sell his publishing and film empire to the Nazis (Leopold 164).



### *The Nazi Press*

During these last years of the Weimar Republic, the Nazi press that was not affiliated with Hugenberg had the fastest growing periodicals in the nation. As a whole, the Nazi press grew from a total circulation of 253,925 in 1930 to 3,197,964 in 1933 (Hale 59). Franz Eher Verlag (*Völkischer Beobachter*, *Der Angriff*) and the Kampf Verlag (*Märkischer Beobachter*, *Der Nationale Sozialist*, *Sächsischer Beobachter*) were the biggest publishing houses of the NS press. In contrast to the KPD press, which originated in urban areas, the Nazi press was planted into rural areas. Most of these papers were founded during the depression, and their purpose was not to deliver information, but, in the words of Josef Goebbels, to “incite, to inflame, to urge on” (qtd. in Eksteins 85).

This kind of propaganda became highly effective. What is particularly interesting about the rise of Nazism in Weimar Germany is the fact that although Nazi papers had a sharp rise in percentage, the total number of papers circulating in Germany that were left-liberal was 3.6 million in 1930 and 3.2 million in 1932 (Eksteins 313). If one compares these numbers with voting figures of the corresponding parties, however, it seems startling that the NSDAP had such an enormous voter outcome (0.7 million papers and 13.8 million voters in 1932), while the left liberals or even the SPD did not show such corresponding numbers: left liberal papers were 3.2 million in 1932 with 0.4 million voters, SPD papers were 1.2 million in 1932 with 8.0 million voters (Eksteins 313). These numbers suggest that if there was a connection between the political messages in the press and a turnout of votes, the Nazi press was doing something effective the liberal papers did not do. Because of Hugenberg’s dominance, however, the Nazi press

complied with its right-wing facilitators until it had no more use for them. In the fall of 1932, Goebbels began a public campaign against Hugenberg, who he successfully belittled because he was not part of the Nazi movement, despite his massive support for the NSDAP:

Hier kann nur ein Vergleich sprechen: stellt euch bitte ein Dutzend kräftiger Riesen vor, die mit weit ausholenden Schritten in den Kampf stürmen, und stellt euch weiter einen kleinen lächerlichen Zwerg vor, einen Hugenzwerg, der den niederwalzenden Weg dieser Riesen nachzutrippeln versucht und dann erklärt, er begrüße es mit Genugtuung, dass die Riesen sich ihm angeschlossen hätten. Kann man diesem Kümmerling, der in der Scherl-Broschüre diese Sätze niederschreiben wagte, anders antworten als mit einem schallenden und befreiendem Gelächter? (qtd. in de Mendelssohn 322)

It was this defamatory language of the Nazi press that smeared even early supporters of the National Socialists such as Hugenberg. This kind of language was successful over rational debate and factual information – the tenets of a free press in a free society.

While the Nazi press and its anti-republican propaganda before this election had focused on the Young Plan and the revision of the Versailles Treaty, it aggressively tried to dominate the press landscape after 1930.

The basic concept of Nazi press politics was laid out in Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in 1925. Hitler regarded the press as the most important tool in exerting power, and its liberal tradition of rational-critical debate and the voicing of political criticism and opposition were to be eliminated:

Wenn also irgendwo, dann darf gerade hier der Staat nicht vergessen, dass alle Mittel einem Zweck zu dienen haben; er darf sich nicht durch das Geflunker einer sogenannten 'Pressefreiheit' beirren und beschwätzen lassen, seine Pflicht zu versäumen und der Nation die Kost vorzuenthalten, die sie braucht und die ihr guttut; er muss mit rücksichtsloser Entschlossenheit sich dieses Mittels der Volkserziehung versichern und es in den Dienst des Staates und der Nation stellen. (qtd. in Koszyk 349)

Hitler called this strategy the “education of the people” by means of media propaganda (Koszyk 349). Hitler’s concept of propaganda emphasized the importance of an oral style in newspaper writing. This style of “spoken writing” (Wilcox 25) of the Nazi press became increasingly popular: while the first Nazi paper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, was not published earlier than 1920, 150 party owned or affiliated newspapers developed within 13 years (Wilcox 17). The press was divested of its traditional function of critical reflection and analysis. Persuasion and manipulation in the form of political propaganda replaced analysis and rational-critical debate. In the opening address of the Nazi’s “Party Day of Victory” in 1934, documented by Leni Riefenstahl’s film *Triumph of the Will*, Hitler declared the success of his press concept:

Through legislation and measures of organization, the Press has entered into the service of this mighty idea and of our people’s task and now cooperates to produce in an ever higher degree the unity of opinion and of will. (qtd. in Wilcox 27)

By the time of this statement, a free press did not exist anymore. Indeed, the first real victim of the Nazi takeover was the communist press, which, although small in number compared to the right-extremist press, had been a threat to the political right due to its appeal to the vast masses of the working class.

### ***KPD Press***

The left-radical press was dominated by the KPD party press (in 1932, the *Rote Fahne* had a circulation of 130,000, *Ruhr-Echo* of 48,000, *Der Kämpfer* of 46,500, *Thüringer Volksblatt* of 43,000 [Hales 66]) and of Willi Münzenberg’s press empire. His *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* was the largest weekly paper of the extreme left, with a circulation in 1931-32 of nearly 500,000. Daily circulations of all communist papers

were estimated around 658,000 copies (Hales 66). The biggest problem the communist press faced, however, was to find advertisers. While a Hugenberg paper would fill 38 pages of advertisement on weekday alone (Leopold 96), Münzenberg's papers would not even fill one page on a Sunday edition (McMeekin 358). What the communist press shared with the press of the extreme political right, particularly the Nazi press, was the use of language and representation. Both the communist and the Nazi press employed a new concept of agitation in the press, which was predominantly evident in its oral style of language: "die Auflösung des Textes in eine Serie gestaffelter Überschriften, einen lauten, aggressiven Ton, Behauptungen statt Argumente, Schmähung statt Debatte, ein knatterndes Maschinengewehrfeuer von Schlagworten statt einer geordneten Auseinandersetzung." (de Mendelssohn 309).

Despite rhetorical similarities in the right- and left-extremist press, the press of the political right enjoyed more editorial freedom. The *Republikenschutzgesetz* was most rigidly invoked to suppress the left-extremist press: the *Rote Fahne*, the most important organ of the KPD, was not allowed to publish for 49 days in 1929, for 84 days in 1931, and for 63 days in 1932, before it was entirely illegalized early in 1933 (Koszyk 328).

### ***The Abolition of the Public Sphere***

In the last years of the Weimar Republic, propaganda had replaced critical public communication. This propagandistic language in the press was a new phenomenon of the Weimar Republic media landscape, and it pointed to the politicized and polarized public sphere of the time. Its use among the right-extremist press became the focus of post-WWII research on the origins and contributing factors in the Weimar Republic's social

life that enabled such widespread support of the National Socialists movement in the early 1930s.

In 1933, the rapid dismemberment of republicanism also took place on a much more literal level. The *Reichstag* was set on fire on February 27, 1933, and this incident was used as the pretext for an emergency decree (February 28), which suspended basic constitutional rights – most importantly, the right of free speech and the existence of a free press. The next elections on March 5, 1933, were held under intimidating conditions for Republicans, yet the Nazis still failed to achieve an absolute majority, and were far from gaining a 2/3 majority necessary to pass an Enabling Act (*Ermächtigungsgesetz*), which enabled altering the constitution. On March 23, 1933, Hitler gained enough votes (444 votes of NSDAP, DNVP, Center Party, DVP outvoted the 94 votes by SPD that were against the Enabling Act) to pass the law with the decision of the Center Party and the DVP to support the Enabling Act, after liberal parties were severely demoralized by the outcome of the 1933 Reichstag elections, when the SPD only held 18% of the votes, the DVP 2% of the votes, the Center Party 11, 20%, whereas the NSDAP held 43.9% and the DNVP 8% (Kolb 294). In the aftermath of the burning of the Reichstag, which the NSDAP propagated as an act of communist terrorism, the KPD and its 81 votes had been excluded from the parliamentary decision-making process. The SPD was heavily intimidated by right extremists, and it was the only party that provided 94 votes against the Act (Jones 472). The Enabling Act, however, “removed the last legal obstacle to the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship and set the scene for the final chapter in the destruction of the German liberal parties” (Jones 473). On May 10, 1933, the Nazis burned all books that even remotely did not adhere to Nazi ideology, and by July 14, all

opposition parties were banned from the Reichstag. By then, Germany was officially under the dictatorship of the Nazi party.

The press landscape thus reflected the demise of republicanism in the political realm of the Weimar Republic's last years: by the time Papen was chancellor, the Reichstag had only held thirteen sessions in 1932, a number that had declined proportionally to the rise of emergency decrees promulgated: five in 1930, forty-three in 1931, and nineteen by the end of May 1932 (Eksteins 213).

At this point, Tucholsky resided in Hindås, Sweden. He was active in the campaign for Ossietzky's amnesty and his nomination for the Nobel Prize, which Ossietzky was granted in 1935, before he died of tuberculosis as a consequence of his incarceration. Tucholsky's active correspondence during his Sweden years demonstrates his continued involvement with pressing political issues, and it indicates plans for political action, which makes his sudden suicide seem random and unexplainable rather than carefully planned.<sup>134</sup> To understand Tucholsky as highly cognizant of mechanisms of public debate, a consideration of his decisions concerning his publishing practices seems compelling.<sup>135</sup>

---

<sup>134</sup> In his comprehensive biography of Tucholsky, Michael Hepp raises the question whether the cause of Tucholsky's death was indeed suicide, or whether he was killed by German Nazis, who had a residence close to Tucholsky's (Hepp 372).

<sup>135</sup> One should note, however, that although it seems as though he decided in 1932 not to publish anymore, most of the papers he worked for had to terminate his employment due to the dire situation of the publishing market in the final years of the Weimar Republic.

## **Tucholsky's Gradual Silencing**

Tucholsky's gradual withdrawal from the public took two years. Tucholsky's work underwent a shift in these final years from displaying a diversity of public involvement up until the elections of 1930 and then a gradual narrowing of his public profile in the election's aftermath, until his complete withdrawal from the public sphere in 1932. This section traces this narrowing of Tucholsky's public voice through the years 1930 to 1932 and beyond. While in 1930 he began to limit his diverse public profile and retreated to publishing mainly in the *Weltbühne* and in the *Vossische Zeitung*, 1931 was a year in which he gained sensational publicity one last time: once for his novel *Schloss Gripsholm*, which was (after *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*) his highest-selling publication, and once for his notorious statement that soldiers are murderers. During his last year of publishing, in 1932, Tucholsky increasingly wrote on the role of journalism and public writing in political opinion formation and political decision making, and he finished his career as a writer with sarcastic remarks on the missed chance of lasting peace and progressiveness in a European league of nations, which could not be realized in the climate of nationalism, isolationism, anti-Semitism, anti-republicanism, and growing militarism in the final years of the Weimar Republic. Tucholsky spent the last years of his life, until he died in 1935, writing private letters – his correspondence intensified proportionally to his public silence.

In contrast to the retreat into silence of these last years of his life, Tucholsky had acquired a broad readership during the second half of the 1920s. He published in diverse venues such as the *Weltbühne*, the *Vossische Zeitung*, *Das Andere Deutschland*, and in

the leftist *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*. These papers had circulations of 16,000, 70,000, 42,000, and 300,000, respectively. He had also published in the *Prager Tageblatt*, *Uhu* (circulation around 100,000), *Tempo* (circulation in July 1930: 100,940) and *Simplicissimus* (circulation: 30,000 in the 1920s), although only on non-political issues in these papers (Eksteins 314). In 1930, however, Tucholsky abruptly narrowed this diverse public presence: his last contribution to *Simplicissimus* was on February 15, 1930, the last article for *Tempo* was on July 27, 1930, and the last article for *Das Andere Deutschland* appeared in the issue of March 8, 1930. Also in 1930 he published his last contribution for the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (Nr. 20) and consequently lost his largest, working-class audience. He continued publishing for Ullstein's *Uhu* until October 1, 1931. However, his contributions were of a strictly apolitical nature: amusing stories about gender differences such as in "Bitte – fädeln Sie mal ein" (Tucholsky 8846) with his less politically engaged pseudonyms Peter Panter or Theobald Tiger. His last article for the *Vossische Zeitung*, published on September 29, 1931, was also about banalities of everyday life ("Das Ehepaar erzählt einen Witz," Tucholsky 8645) – and although such contributions are less important for this particular study, they represent Tucholsky's other, entertaining and light-hearted, yet observant side. His observations of this kind are invaluable for social studies on the Weimar Republic.

As a result of his changes in publishing, Tucholsky's readership became less and less diverse. By 1931, his audience had narrowed to the readers of the *Weltbühne*, which were approximately 13,000 – 16,000 people, judging from the *Weltbühne*'s circulation. The only other paper in which he published was the *Prager Tageblatt*, and that was only one article. It seems as if this article was published by accident, since his previous



contribution to the *Prager Tageblatt* dated back to 1927.<sup>136</sup> What is remarkable in terms of audience contact for Tucholsky in this final phase of the Weimar Republic is that the year 1930 (and to some extent the year 1931) marks the end of Tucholsky's pursuit of a broad, diverse, and eminent readership.

However, the narrowing of his public presence did not diminish the acerbity of his satirical voice. Tucholsky reacted to the September 1930 elections, which gave 18% of the votes to the NSDAP, with a sensational article published in the *Weltbühne* in August 1931 entitled "Der bewachte Kriegsschauplatz." In this article, he draws a connection between WWI militarism, which was aggressively promoted by the Nazis, and professional murder with the much discussed phrase: "Da gab es vier Jahre lang ganze Quadratmeilen Landes, auf denen war der Mord obligatorisch, während er eine halbe Stunde davon entfernt ebenso streng verboten war. Sagte ich: Mord? Natürlich Mord. Soldaten sind Mörder" (Tucholsky 8532). Tucholsky's responsible publisher Carl von Ossietzky was sued for this article by defense minister Groener, who felt that it was deeply offensive to call soldiers murderers. Tucholsky was absent at this trial because of his residence in Sweden, and many of his friends advised him to stay away from Germany because of the high probability that he would be physically harmed or even killed by enraged Nazis (as documented in exchanges of letters with friends around this time).<sup>137</sup>

This trial was one in a series of lawsuits against the *Weltbühne*: Ossietzky had to serve an eighteen-month prison sentence for Walter Kreiser's article "Windiges aus der

---

<sup>136</sup>This article from 1931, written under Peter Panter, entitled "Die Aktenmappe," he tells an apolitical anecdote from a visit to the dentist (Tucholsky 10332).

<sup>137</sup> For an in-depth portrait of Tucholsky's dilemma of returning or staying away in light of the possibility of Ossietzky's incarceration, see Hepp 332.

deutschen Luftfahrt,” which uncovered a secret and illegal rearmament of the German air force (Hepp 328). This lawsuit was still making headlines when the *Reichswehr* sued again, this time because of Tucholsky’s alleged libel of the German army. The trial ended in Ossietzky’s and Tucholsky’s acquittal. However, since the publication of *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*, Tucholsky had once again outraged militarists, nationalists, and National Socialists, and again his article had launched a debate around outdated militarism and the path of German politics in the early 1930s. Tucholsky’s highly successful book *Schloss Gripsholm*<sup>138</sup> was published in the *Berliner Tageblatt* in the spring of 1930 before it was published as a book at Rowohlt in the summer of 1931,<sup>139</sup> when it sold 450,000 copies (Prescher 83).

Despite his success as a novelist and his notoriety as a public intellectual, the year 1932 marked the finale of Tucholsky’s career as a writer. He spent most of his time in Hindås, Sweden, with the exception of the summer months, when he was in Zürich, Switzerland (his partner Dr. Hedwig Müller lived there). His articles, published exclusively in the *Weltbühne*, were dominated by the themes of nationalism and National Socialism, militarism, legal actions against the *Weltbühne* and Carl von Ossietzky’s incarceration, and the missed chance of the establishment of a European Union, with

---

<sup>138</sup> *Gripsholm*’s success is another indicator for Tucholsky’s insight into the publishing market and his constant play with his audience’s expectation: the subtitle of the novel, “Sommergeschichte,” suggests an ‘easy read’ with apolitical content. The text, however, discusses crucial socio-political issues of the final years of the Weimar Republic. See Walter Delabar, “Eine kleine Liebesgeschichte. Kurt Tucholskys *Schloss Gripsholm Eine Sommergeschichte* (1931).”

<sup>139</sup> Circulation numbers of the *Berliner Tageblatt* were decreasing dramatically in the final years of the Weimar Republic: in 1932, it only had a circulation of 30 000. In the fall of 1932, Mosse had to file bankruptcy, the *BT*’s chief editor Kurt Wolff, and Rudolf Mosse’s son-in-law Lachmann-Mosse, who had taken over the business after Mosse’s death in 1920, had to immigrate to Switzerland. The fate of the *Berliner Tageblatt* is representative for the fate of the liberal press that was competing for advertisers at the end of the Weimar Republic, when ultra-conservative publishers such as Hugenberg began dominating the advertising market (Kosyk 250).

which, Tucholsky contended, such totalitarian developments in Germany could have been avoided.<sup>140</sup>

The consequences of Tucholsky's activities as a public intellectual, his sensational writing of 1931 and his publishing strategies of this phase indicate Tucholsky's contradictory and ambivalent position as a public intellectual in the context of a politically polarized public sphere during the Weimar Republic's last years. As the next section will discuss, Tucholsky, although he had affiliated himself with communist venues, had a difficult and controversial relationship with leftist politics – as he had with right-wing politics. Although he is often regarded as a left leaning writer, any dogmatism, whether in form of political doctrine or of aesthetic issues, was suspicious to him. A closer look at Tucholsky's relationship with socialism in his last years of life will contribute to a more differentiated assessment of his authorship and his function as a public intellectual in a decreasingly diverse and increasingly ideologically streamlined public sphere.

### ***Tucholsky and Socialism***

During the last phase of the Weimar Republic, Tucholsky had been attacked by the main organ of the German communist party, *Rote Fahne*, which denounced him as a bourgeois intellectual with no political line (Kraiker 298). Despite the fact that he described Marxist ideology as a “dogmatic religion” (Tucholsky 7752), he used its

---

<sup>140</sup> In November of 1932, he published his last article ever in the *Weltbühne* (a satirical collection of nationalist aphorisms entitled “Worauf man in Europa stolz ist” Kaspar Hauser, November 8, 1932). Army minister Groener, who had sued the *Weltbühne* for libel a year earlier because of Tucholsky's statement “soldiers are murderers,” and for the *Weltbühne*'s publishing of the Reichswehr's illegal covert rearmament, was forced to resign on May 12, 1932, because he had banned the SA and SS.

publications to write about the misrepresentation of democracy in the Weimar Republic, and about the lingering anti-proletarian, Wilhelminian, anti-democratic ideology that was so prominent in the late 1920s and early 1930s. His choice to work for Münzenberg and not for the KPD organs was partly because Münzenberg was much more tolerant toward bourgeois, leftist-liberal intellectuals such as Tucholsky, and guaranteed him freedom of expression. The KPD, however, had declined Tucholsky's earlier offer of giving the KPD publicistic support without committing to the bolshevist ideology.<sup>141</sup>

Tucholsky was not a socialist. Contrary to this ideology, Tucholsky's democratic understanding entailed the basic behavioral tenets of a civilized and democratic society: the awareness of one's freedom and equality, the ability to participate political discussion (*Diskussionskultur*), and the willingness to perform nonviolent conflict resolution; working for the *AIZ* became an ideological stretch for him. The *AIZ*, with its circulation of 300,000, was one of the largest papers representing KPD ideology, and it decidedly aimed at the destruction of Social Democratic publications (Hepp 297). Thus, Tucholsky's employment at the *AIZ* between 1928 and 1930 was heavily criticized by Tucholsky's main employer Ullstein, who accused Tucholsky of opportunism, while Tucholsky wrote to his wife that he felt he was caught "zwischen den Stühlen" (Tucholsky 11467). Tucholsky's contributions for the Ullstein papers *Vossische Zeitung*, *Tempo*, and the magazine *Uhu* were mostly about relationships, banalities of everyday life, family scenes, social encounters, and anecdotes from Tucholsky's travels. These articles reflected the populist yet liberal direction of the Ullstein publishing house, whose papers were bought on a weekday by approximately 1 million Germans in 1928 (Eksteins

---

<sup>141</sup> See this study's discussion of Tucholsky's "Gebrauchslyrik" in Chapter 3.

112). It certainly did not reflect the goals of the political left, which also criticized Tucholsky for his continued activity in the popular, liberal mass papers.

Tucholsky's elusive political position, particularly with respect to the working class, has been discussed by Tucholsky scholarship. With the exception of GDR scholars, however, his position has been defined as located somewhere between classical liberalism and socially conscious republicanism. In his comprehensive Tucholsky biography, Michael Hepp sees Tucholsky's motivation behind his political publications not as a contribution to party socialism but rather as an individualist fight for a humane society, whose goals at times were similar to those of the worker's movement (Hepp 310). Marcel Reich-Ranicki characterized Tucholsky as a "Volksschriftsteller, der sich das Volk vom Leibe hielt" (Strauss 269). Harry Pross also characterized Tucholsky as a writer whose aestheticism in his social criticism did not completely fit into the working-class culture and its literature (Pross 105).

The fact that Tucholsky did not agree with communist party politics, and his decision to publish in a left-radical publishing house regardless of his personal suspicion of KPD doctrines, cannot merely be explained by Tucholsky's alleged opportunism. A much more convincing explanation is to be found in Tucholsky's publishing strategy within the context of the Weimar Republic crisis.

### *Nationalism in the Weimar Republic's Last Years*

In the early 1930s, a profound public shift towards the political right was also reflected in the reader's choice of books: Germany's bestseller list in 1932 showed a dramatic increase in nationalist literature with its representatives Carossa, Beumelburg, Dwinger, Grimm, Steguweit and Hermann Stehr (Hepp 335). Nationalist novels published in 1932 displayed strong anti-Semitism and anti-republicanism, which blamed the "Jewish republic" (Dwinger) for undermining the German nation and culture (Achternkamp 12).

The nationalist press equated republicanism was equated with "foreign-ness" and "Jewish-ness." Through public domination of nationalist-chauvinist discourse, republicanism lost its appeal to many Germans, who regarded their "German-ness" as challenged by republicanism. During the final phase of the Weimar Republic, conservatives and nationalists had added racism to nationalist discourses of the republic. The issue of class, which had been frequently addressed by leftist intellectuals such as Tucholsky in regards to the debate on the "German nation" was entirely absent in nationalist texts. "German" entailed anything that was not Jewish (or republican, or intellectual), as Kurt Sontheimer has documented in his study on anti-republican thought during the Weimar Republic. Sontheimer notes that after 1930, even the leftist-liberal intellectuals, most of whom were Jewish, knew that the crisis of the Weimar Republic would not be solved by republican means anymore (388). The *Weltbühne's* publisher and chief editor, Carl von Ossietzky, echoes Tucholsky's concerns with republicanism, which had lost broad support after 1930:

Es hat keinen Zweck mehr, vor der drängenden Gewalt der Reaktion die Augen zu verschliessen. Es gibt keine Demokratie mehr zu retten, weil keine da ist, wohl

aber eine zu schaffen. Weil die Krise mit parlamentarischen Mitteln nicht mehr zu beheben ist, muss ihre Lösung ausserhalb des Parlaments gesucht werden, wo noch Kräfte vorhanden sind. (qtd. in Sontheimer 388)

Thus, writers like Tucholsky tried to counter this intense nationalist course of the Weimar Republic's last years. Along with a shift toward conservative-nationalist literature in the last years of the Weimar Republic went a fierce anti-Semitic propaganda conducted by right-wing extremists, which was directed primarily against the majority of leftist and liberal public intellectuals. Most of these intellectuals were primarily Jewish, although a majority of them were not practicing their Jewish religion and did not identify with their Jewish background (Deák 24). Interestingly, although Tucholsky belonged to this group of non-practicing Jewish intellectuals who were fiercely attacked by the Nazis, they seemed to be oddly fascinated by him. As already seen in Chapter IV, Tucholsky had developed a writing style to which Nazi writers responded. The following sections pick up on this topic of the degree to which his style and his writings were influential on National Socialist discourse of the 1930s, and vice versa.

### **Tucholsky Reacts Productively toward a Decreasingly Diverse Public Sphere**

Tucholsky's last two years of writing were marked by his awareness of a diminishing public sphere and the dominance of totalitarian discourse. As we have seen, after the elections of 1930, he retreated to the *Vossische* until the fall of 1931, and to the *Weltbühne* until the end of 1932. However, his satire became even more acerbic as he watched the public sphere in Germany being captured by the very nationalist rhetoric against which he had been propagating. His writings on public communication, particularly those on the issues of nationalism and the press (and those on how the press

invents and imagines particular concepts of German-ness) changed in responses to electoral victories of the Nazis, as the next section shows.

*Nazism demystified: Tucholsky's Writings of 1930 before the September 14 Elections*

In the context of a sharp rise in unemployment as a consequence of the economic depression that had started in the fall of 1929, political extremism, in particular the Nazi party, gained increasing popularity in the Weimar Republic.<sup>142</sup> Tucholsky tried to counter this trend by repeatedly reminding his readers of the shortsightedness of political radicalism in economically dire times. Instead of blaming the Republic for all that had been going wrong, he tried to convey a larger picture of how anti-republican forces had been sabotaging the establishment of a functioning democratic political culture in Germany, and the extent to which the press had been contributing to this failure of republicanism.

In order to debunk the self-proclaimed, mystical glory and promises of the Nazi party, Tucholsky used language parody and mockery of Nazi pathos in the press and in literature. He dismantled Nazi heroism by commenting on Nazi grandeur from the perspective of “below,” from the perspective of the working class. By deploying urban Berlin dialect, Tucholsky not only demonstrated a “simple” perspective of the worker, but he also deflated Nazi rhetoric through ridicule. By way of language parody, Tucholsky also satirized the practice of the right-wing press of perpetuating ideological constructs of a “German nation.” In his article “Der Reisebericht,” published in the

---

<sup>142</sup> The NSDAP had a sevenfold increase of vote percentage between 1928 and 1930 (Peukert 209).



*Vossische Zeitung* on January 1, 1930 under his pseudonym Peter Panter, Tucholsky illustrates the absence of objectivity and the political and ideological direction of the different media by humorously presenting three versions of the same journey through Italy – each resembling the political line of either the extreme right, the extreme left, and somewhere in between, which in its vagueness and apolitical stance delivers no information whatsoever. The first version ridicules nationalist and national-socialist rhetoric, which resembled those written for the “Hugenberg-Blätter,” which at this point dominated the provincial press in Germany and supported National Socialism:

Stolz die Bevölkerung und mannhaft, schlicht die Kleidung und fest das Auge, ernst die Bärte und wacker der Schritt. ... Stolz trägt der Soldat seine Waffen; die Waffe ist stolz auf den Soldaten, der Soldat ist stolz auf seine Waffe, und überhaupt sind alle – besonders vormittags – sehr stolz. (Tucholsky 7204)

By parodying National Socialist language in the press, Tucholsky hoped to deprive it of its ideological power over its readers. Repetitive reference to the pride of the Italian does not provide the reader with any useful information about Italy, according to Tucholsky. It only creates a fictitious trait about a national characteristic of an Italian that has no factual basis whatsoever. Tucholsky therefore not only informs his readers of the ideological infiltration of the press, but also points to the nonsense of nationalism, here with the example of the “proud Italian” portrayed in the right-extremist press.

A similar lack of factual information for the sake of ideological propaganda was to be seen in the left-extremist press. Tucholsky satirizes the left-extremist press in the second version which resembles that of “radikale Blätter” and mocks the rhetoric of communist publications:

Das erste, was der Reisende in Italien erblickt, ist das Symbol dieses Landes: die Kette. Ketten an den Grenzen und Ketten um die Gehirne, alle Taschenuhren liegen gleichfalls an der Kette ...Versklavt ist Italien und unfrei. (Tucholsky 7205)

The satirical message of this text suggests that the communist press, like the right-radical press, is not a source of information but an advertiser of ideological infiltration. The humorous part here is obviously Tucholsky's overzealous use of the chain metaphor. The metaphoric use of the chain reaches absurdity when Tucholsky consciously uses it on a literal level (the watch on a chain), which points to the exhaustive and indiscriminate use of this image and thus to its incorrect application in the communist press.

The third version satirizes all media products "in between" the extremist press. This version, resembling "alle Blätter," satirizes the apolitical, vague, impractical, and useless information provided by most publications, and thus also does not provide any useful or allegedly "objective" information about the country:

Die rein menschliche Einstellung der Italiener ist irgendwie sofort erkennbar. Rein kulturpolitisch-geographisch ist die italienische Mentalität typisch südlich: der Staat verhält sich zur Kirche wie die Einsteinsche Relativitätsphilosophie zur Kunstauffassung der zweiten chinesischen Kung-Periode und etwa noch wie die Gotik des frühen Mittelalters zu den Frattelinis. (Tucholsky 7606)

This satirical depiction of impractical, vague, and intellectualized press language of the apolitical, moderate press also indirectly indicates the lack of mass appeal of this kind of press, particularly when compared with the press products of the political extreme. This, as demonstrated, infiltrates its readers with ideological guidance – which may seem more substantial than the vague and impractical information delivered by the apolitical press. Therefore, to use Tucholsky's reasoning, an allegedly apolitical stance is indirectly also a

political one, in that it does not counter the polarized press landscape of the Weimar Republic's final years but rather quietly accepts it.

Tucholsky called for a conscious politicizing of the public. What was needed was, in Tucholsky's opinion, public awareness of the propagandistic use of alleged facts and statistics, which right wing lobbyists used to justify their systematic undermining of the Weimar Republic's democratic system and all its constitutionally guaranteed freedom of the individual. Tucholsky explained his personal goals and the goals of the *Weltbühne* in a programmatic article, written under Kurt Tucholsky and entitled "Fünfundzwanzig Jahre" published in the *Weltbühne* on September 9, 1930, only a few days before the September elections, in which he mentions his primary objective to serve as a counter voice to nationalist constructions of German-ness:

Solange die *Weltbühne* die *Weltbühne* bleibt, solange wird hier gegeben, was wir haben. Und was gegeben wird, soll der guten Sache dienen: dem von keiner Macht zu beeinflussenden Drang, aus Teutschland Deutschland zu machen und zu zeigen, dass es ausser Hitler, Hugenberg und dem fischkalten Universitätstypus des Jahres 1930 noch andere Deutsche gibt. Jeder Leser kann daran mitarbeiten. Tut er es in seinem Kreise durch die Tat: es ist unser schönster Lohn. (Tucholsky 7667)

Tucholsky emphasized the active involvement of his readers into the act of establishing republicanism and countering nationalism by an alternative national identity. He repeatedly mentioned the possibility of change if it is supported by a broad number of people: "Aber immerhin darf man nicht so tun, als sei die gerade bestehende Gesellschaftsordnung das A und O und die einzig mögliche" (Tucholsky 7704). Nationalist and National Socialist ideological infiltration of the German language is caricatured by Tucholsky in his May 6, 1930 *Weltbühne* article "Staatspathos"

(Tucholsky 7471). He pointed out the untimely continuation of anti-republican sentiment in the German language:

Der Staat ist längst nicht mehr der grosse Gott und der dicke Manitou. Der Staat hat nicht mehr die Allmacht in Händen – fragt nur bei den Banken, bei denen ihr euch das Geld borgt, damit ihr weiter machen könnt. Dieses Pathos glaubt euch kein vernünftiger Mensch. (Tucholsky 7471)

Tucholsky satirically drew a connection between the remnants of authoritarian thinking in the Weimar Republic, which facilitated the restitution of nationalism, and the use of nationalist pathos in public speech and public representation. Such public representation in the form of assemblies had been custom in the context of chauvinist, imperialist Wilhelminian Germany – only that the Weimar Republic was a republican system and that after Germany's defeat in WWI, and according to the Versailles Treaty, aggressive nationalist behavior in Germany was not only dangerously inappropriate, but according to Tucholsky it was also a symptom of oppression, ignorance, and instrumentalization of the masses. Tucholsky believed that this instrumentalization of the masses was executed in the interest of a powerful elite, which pursued the launching of another war.

Nationalism as a political phenomenon has become the subject of scholarly works across disciplines. According to the historian Eric Hobsbawm, nationalism, and in its extreme form, National Socialism, which after 1930 showed increased public dominance in the Weimar Republic, had a short history to draw from, since Germany as a nation had not existed before 1871: “Hence the multiplicity of reference, ranging from mythology and folklore (German oaks, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa,) through the shorthand cartoon stereotypes to definition of the nation in terms of its enemies” (Hobsbawm 278). Already in the 1930s, Tucholsky satirized this multiplicity of nationalist reference and reveals it as what Hobsbawm later called “invented traditions” for the sake of

nationalism, and as aggressively used by the National Socialists, in his Theobald Tiger poem “Das Dritte Reich,” published on May 6, 1930, in the *Weltbühne*, which drew a connection between the remnants of Wilhelminian ideology in the use of the German language, and the increased success of the National Socialists. He ridicules the Nazi’s random invention of a national identity based on the allegedly “great” German empires (as suggested in the “third” Reich):

Es braucht ein hohes Ideal  
Der nationale Mann  
Daran er morgens allemal  
Ein wenig turnen kann.  
    Da hat denn deutsche Manneskraft  
    In segensreichen Stunden  
    Als neueste Errungenschaft  
    Ein Ideal erfunden:  
Es soll nicht sein das erste Reich  
Es soll nicht sein das zweite Reich...  
Das dritte Reich?  
Bitte sehr! Bitte gleich!  
...  
Ein blick in die Statistik:  
Wir fabrizieren viel.  
Am meisten nationale Mistik. (Tucholsky 7475)

In its simplicity of alternating rhymes and alternating iambic tetrameter and trimeter this poem is reminiscent of folk poetry. Its simple structure counters the fake heroism and mysticism of National Socialist ideology. It reveals its alleged references to a national tradition as a fabrication with the only purpose of establishing and legitimizing its dominance.

After the Nazis gained 18.3% of the votes in the September 1930 elections, at the expense of the republican parties, Tucholsky increasingly analyzed the inventing and the imagining of German-ness in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic’s final years.

The next section illuminates these analyses in the context of Tucholsky’s retreat from the

public sphere, and it seeks to shed new light on Tucholsky as a public intellectual who reacted productively and not apathetically to the end of critical communication.

### ***Teutschland vs. Deutschland: Medial Constructs of German-ness after 1930***

After their electoral success in 1930, the Nazis became more and more powerful in the Weimar Republic's public sphere. Their heavily propagated image of an "Aryan," militarist, and anti-democratic German nation (mocked by Tucholsky as "Teutschland"), became an existential challenge to republican Germany. Disillusioned that republicanism, let alone Europeanism, would not dominate politics and would not shape national identity in the near future, Tucholsky increasingly used satire as a means of criticizing nationalism and National Socialism. He did so either through mockery of their language and ideology or through depictions of pompous, self-important National Socialism seen from the sober point of view of the "little man," mostly a worker from Berlin, as in the Theobald Tiger-poem "Joebbels" from March 24, 1931, which ridicules Joseph Goebbels' self-important propaganda:

...  
Mit dein Klumpfuss – seh mal, bein andern  
Da sacht ick nischt; det kann ja jeda ham.  
Du wisst als Recke durch de Jejend wandern  
Un passt in keen Schützenjrahm?  
In Sportpalast so wie in deine Presse  
Da haste eine mächtig jrosse Fresse.  
Riskierst du wat? – De Schnautze vornean.  
Josef, du bist'n kleener Mann.  
Du bist mit irgendwat zu kurz gekomm.  
Nu rächste dir, nu lechste los.  
Dir ham se woll zu früh aus Nest jenomm!  
Du bist keen Heros, det markierste bloss. ...  
(Tucholsky 8260)

The perspective from below, from the standpoint of the little man, is indicated by the use of Berlin dialect. This simple and unassuming perspective sees things as they are, without ideological infiltration or social pressure, and reveals nationalism and National Socialism as a pompous public staging which is motivated by repressed anger and by constructed greatness (“Du bist keen Heros, det markierste bloss”). It is this perspective expressed through the dialect of the urban worker, that Tucholsky uses for deconstructing ideological constructs of “Teutschland” and to dismantle the heroism and mysticism of National Socialist ideology.

Tucholsky’s use of dialect has been evaluated by scholarship in different ways. Joachim Radkau contends that the poem *Goebbels* was a “Meisterwerk satirischer Kleinkunst, aber an seiner politischen Wirkkraft muss man zweifeln” (64), and he explains that by the fact that Goebbels printed this poem in his paper *Angriff* – Radkau criticizes Tucholsky and the ‘liberale Presse’ as inadvertently supporting National Socialism: “Zu einer Zeit, als schon so viele satirische Pfeile verschossen worden waren, tötete Lächerlichkeit nicht mehr; eher schaffte sie Publicity” (Radkau 64). Helga Bemann wrote on Tucholsky’s language as significant in determining his innovativeness:

Es ist die Sprache, die Tucholsky vollends aus der zeitgenössischen Zunft der Durchschnitts-Dichter-Journalisten heraushebt. Deren Zeit geht in der zweiten Hälfte der zwanziger Jahre ohnehin zu Ende, als ein neues, modernes Nachrichtenpressewesen sie von ihrem Platz in der Zeitung verdrängt. (Bemann, *Dichter-Journalist* 164)

Although Bemann mentions here Tucholsky’s position as a public intellectual as situated on the intersection of a medialized society and a new way of public communication, she does not further elaborate on that observation. Other crucial

observations concerning Tucholsky's use of language and style that do not delve deeper into a useful and much needed analysis are Ludwig M. Eichinger's article "Kurt Tucholsky, die Stadt Berlin und die Dörfer. Regionale Sprachformen als Symptom," in which he states that Tucholsky's use of regional forms of language is a means of suggesting authenticity and feeling without becoming sentimental (238). Eichinger draws a connection between a more frequent use of dialect in Tucholsky's poetry and his final years of publishing, which Eichinger labels as a phase of resignation (213). The "Plattdeutsch" (northern Germany's lowland dialect) as the rural source of Berlin dialect, used in his popular novel *Schloss Gripsholm*, is interpreted by Eichinger as displaying anti-conformism and anti-authoritarianism (234). This view of authentic folk culture, expressed through regional dialect, suggesting revolutionary political potential is shared by Theodor Ickler in his article entitled "Die Überwindung des Pathos. Zu Sprache und Stil bei Tucholsky," in which he also states that Tucholsky's use of dialect suggests authenticity in a world increasingly fabricated and shaped by the media (171).

The fabrication of German-ness in the Weimar Republic's public sphere, particularly the increasingly powerful versions of the extreme right, became Tucholsky's focus after 1930. It was during a time when he narrowed his publicistic diversity because of the loss of a critical public in Germany. Instead of his appeals to a broad audience, mainly a working class audience to counter National Socialism, as he did before the September 1930 elections, he retreated to satirizing National Socialism and its fake heroism and to satirizing the Weimar Republic press landscape. According to Tucholsky, the press of the Weimar Republic had become a tool for right-wing propaganda, instead of making use of its role of keeping power in check through critical opposition. As



Tucholsky's estranged persona Kaspar Hauser he wrote on April 13, 1931 in the *Weltbühne* article entitled "Weltbild, nach intensiver Zeitungslektüre:"

Hitler stellt eine Garde rassegereinigter SA-Leute auf, Kortner spielt die Hauptrolle, abgebauter Kardinal sucht Kinderwagen zu verkaufen, Reichstag, werde hart, ach Gottchen, Unterhaltungsbeiblatt, wie ich zu meinen Kindern kam, technische Beilage, Dampfkesselwarmwasserrohrentzündung, die Herzogin von Woster in einem pikant rotbraunen, Familiennachrichten, das ist doch die, wo der Mann die geschiedene, Kurszettel und andere Konkurse, verantwortlich für den Gesamtinhalt: Wir leben in einer merkwürdigen Zeitung! (Tucholsky 8370)

Tucholsky's satirical presentation of random quotes of the press points to the random nature of establishing a "Weltbild," an ideological view of the world. His conclusive play on the saying "wir leben in einer merkwürdigen Zeit," designates Tucholsky's criticism of the ideological sell-out of the media, which, instead of deconstructing ideologies in order to establish and maintain critical public communication, have become a platform for nationalist and National Socialist propaganda.

As National Socialism became increasingly popular, Tucholsky repeatedly referred to its primitivism and its fictitious nature: "Fix und fertig liegen die Phrasen in den Gehirnfächern, ein kleiner Anlass, ein Kurzschluss der Gedanken, und heraus flitzt der Funke der Dummheit" (Tucholsky 8691). Particularly in light of the progressive circumstances of the republican system, and the Weimar Republic's progressive cultural landscape, Tucholsky became increasingly embittered about the public success of National Socialism and its fabricated cultural tradition, which he characterized as a lie and the form of its representation as stolen:

Dass Nazis keine Schriftsteller besitzen, die fähig sind, Deutsch zu schreiben, weiss man aus den Leistungen ihrer Führer. Dass dieses Gesocks aber systematisch klaut, um den Lesern ihrer Papiere vorzuführen, was herzustellen sie selber nicht fähig sind ... Stehlen – sich die deutsche Nationalität ermogeln – lügen – stehlen -: es sind arme Luder. (Tucholsky 8838)

As indicated here, this fictitious nature of the Nazi's construct of German-ness was the focus of Tucholsky's writings in 1932. He satirized not only the intellectual void of Nazi ideology, but also satirically criticized the facilitation of Nazi ideology in the Weimar Republic's public sphere, particularly in its media and in its schools. His article "Hitler und Goethe. Ein Schulafsatz" from May 17, 1932, mocks ideological infiltration in early writing of school essays:

Goethe war ein grosser Deutscher. Zeppelin war der grösste Deutsche. Hitler ist überhaupt der allergrösste Deutsche. (Tucholsky 8881)

This text renders its satire through the implicit parallels of the imitation of a poorly written school essay with nonsensical arguments as to why Hitler would be the "greatest German" to Nazi propaganda and its equally primitive argumentation. Another example of Tucholsky's Nazi satire after the devastating elections of 1930 is the article "Viermal Eichhörnchen" (Kaspar Hauser, *Weltbühne*, June 7, 1932) which, similar to his earlier article "Ein Reisebericht," demonstrates the ideologically distorted use of language in public communication. He begins with the "Tatbestand" (Tucholsky 8909) of a scene in which the narrator observes a squirrel in a park. This scene is reinterpreted four times, each time under different ideological premises. The "Eichhörnchen national" version parodies the absurdly frequent use of the word "deutsch" by the National Socialist press and it thus attempts to destroy its ideological power:

Ich mache einen deutschen Spaziergang durch unsern deutschen Wald. Meine deutschen Augen mustern die herrliche deutsche Landschaft und versinken in ihrem Zauber: von dieser Schneise her könnte man ganz gut einen Sturmangriff unternehmen, die Wiese gäbe ein famoses Schussfeld für ein gedecktes M.G. – und da! Was ist das? Der Feind. Unwillkürlich nehme ich Deckung. Es ist ein Eichhörnchen. Blond wie Goebbels, lässt es spielend seinen Schweif wedeln. Doch was ist dieses? Es läuft nicht davon! Ein Deutscher läuft nicht davon. (Tucholsky 8909)

In this text, language satire not only dismembers the ideological message of being “deutsch” through over repetition, it also satirizes the militant character of Nazi language. The idyll of the forest scene is suddenly interrupted through juxtaposition of an (imagined) combat scene. This juxtaposition implies the omnipresent belligerence of National Socialism, and it also dismantles its racism through the depiction of a squirrel that is blonde like Goebbels, implying his readers’ knowledge that Goebbels was not blonde, and thus pointing at the fundamentally fictitious and imagined character of Nazi ideology and its racist, anti-Semitic, and militaristic tendency. A squirrel becomes the representative of German might, and the absurdity of the situation urges the reader to see behind National Socialist exclusive, militant, and racist constructs of German-ness.

When speaking about German-ness in the context of rising National Socialism, Tucholsky also satirically reflected on the missed chance of Europeanism as the direct opposite development of the fascist trend in Europe, and the degree of satirical acerbity denotes how much Tucholsky cared about this issue, as highlighted in the following section.

***“Irrenhaus Europa”: Fascism and Europeanism in 1932***

In the context of increasing fascism in Europe, the idea of a peaceful, united Europe had turned into an illusion. Given that practically all of Tucholsky’s political activism since 1918 was motivated by the goal of a pacifist Europe, and given that this goal seemed to be distant but reachable during the Republic’s stable years, judging from Tucholsky’s focus on Europeanism and pacifism during these years, it is not surprising that there was a considerable amount of bitterness in his last writings on this missed

chance of Europeanism in 1932. Not only had Italy's fascism put an early halt to internationalist tendencies in Europe of the 1920s, but also Germany's domestic politics took on an increasingly isolationist tone in the context or as a result of intense right-wing propaganda against the Young Plan after 1929. In addition to this propaganda, the depression following the Wall Street Crash of 1929 discredited the capitalist economic order, and the NSDAP used this anti-capitalist propaganda for anti-Semitism and anti-bolshevism (Hermand 144). Based on economic instability and its effect of creating a considerable sense of insecurity among the German people, Nazi propaganda sought to respond to this insecurity by providing a false sense of continuity and pseudo religious stability for the public: "Nazi ideology between 1929 and 1933 was dominated by a bewildering mixture of accommodationist-opportunist and radical-utopian elements whose inner contradictions could only be kept hidden with the help of skillfully deployed propaganda tricks" (Hermand 151). Tucholsky criticized this nationalist exclusivity and the invented mysticism of nationalism that was haunting Europe:

Ein Haufe von Narren, denen das eigene Land zum religiösen Begriff geworden ist. Und da jede Religion ihren Teufel nötig hat: der Teufel das ist allemal der Ausländer. (Tucholsky 8562)

As he mentions here, it was the secularized "religion" of nationalism that seemed so appealing to the masses in unstable times that was the Nazi's formula of success.

While he was observing developments in Europe at the dawn of fascism from his exile in Sweden, Tucholsky satirically attacked nationalist frenzy that had taken over the progressive liberalism of the Weimar constitution:

Wir haben ein Ideal:  
Wir hungern. Aber streng national.  
Fahnen und Hymnen an allen Ecken.  
Europa? Europa soll doch verrecken!

Und wenn alles der Pleite entgegentreibt:  
Dass nur die Nation erhalten bleibt!  
(Tucholsky 8737)

With this satirical depiction of nationalist obsession in Europe, Tucholsky responded to a significant shift to the right that took place in Germany's cultural landscape of the year 1932.<sup>143</sup> Many novels published in this year thematized not only the deep sense of crisis in light of emerging National Socialism - for example: Hans Fallada's *Kleiner Mann, was nun?*, Irmgard Keun's *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen*; but many novels depicted a loss in support of Europeanism, such as Hermann Kesten's *Der Scharlatan*, Ernst Glaeser's *Das Gut im Elsass*, Kasimir Edschmidt's *Der Auslandsdeutsche* (Achternkamp 316).

The significance of the idea of Europeanism as a sub-theme of national identity to Tucholsky's work seems compelling in light of the fact that his last contribution to the *Weltbühne*, and his last published piece in his lifetime (on November 8, 1932), was a sarcastic collection of nationalist aphorisms entitled "Worauf man in Europa stolz ist":

Man ist stolz in Europa: Deutscher zu sein. Franzose zu sein. Engländer zu sein. Kein Deutscher zu sein. Kein Franzose zu sein. Kein Engländer zu sein. ... Als deutscher Sozialdemokrat schlimmeres verhütet zu haben. (Tucholsky 8964)

These final satirical remarks by Tucholsky on the devastating developments of nationalism in Germany and in Europe in the 1930s are a play on the nationalist concept of "pride" of belonging to a particular nation. Tucholsky's satire, however, destroys the notion of pride by pointing to the random nature of nationalism (i.e. an Englishman is just as proud to be an Englishman as a German is proud to be a German. Thus, pride becomes relative and constructs of national might are revealed as mere propaganda). The sarcastic

---

<sup>143</sup> Thomas Achternkamp discusses several novels, amongst others Heinz Steguweit's *Der Jüngling im Feuerofen*, Ernst Guido Kolbenheyer's *Reps, die Persönlichkeit*, Edwin Erich Dwinger's *Wir rufen Deutschland* in his dissertation.

remark that the social democrat is proud to have prevented the worst implies the opposite, since it was the political center and even the SPD who could not (nor wanted to) find an alternative to Hindenburg, who appointed Hitler two months later.

### ***The End of a Critical Public Sphere 1933-1935***

For Tucholsky, the question of socio-economic class was inextricably linked to identity, particularly to national identity. As documented in his private letters, Tucholsky's hope for a strong Weimar democracy crumbled more and more in its later years. In 1929 he still believed in the revolutionizing effects of his writings among the working class, which seemed the least corrupted social group and one which would be most interested in maintaining a democratic system, as he told his wife Mary Gerold in a letter from August 30, 1929 (Tucholsky 11503). After the elections of September 1930, when the NSDAP gained 107 seats in the Reichstag from 12 in 1928, other right-wing party seats totaled 98, and the KPD gained 77 seats (Kolb 195). It was after the election that Tucholsky realized that a unified democratic front against the fascist would be impossible, as he wrote to his brother Fritz on January 18, 1931, and added that his career as a politically critical publicist was approaching its end: "Ich bin Schriftsteller – kein Parteiführer. Und mich interessiert weder das Land genügend noch seine Nöte" (Tucholsky 11566). Despite his private disillusion about Germany's situation, however, he continued publishing until 1932, and some of his most controversial articles such as "Der bewachte Kriegsschauplatz" were written during these last years, which exemplifies Tucholsky's strategy of sensationalism during the final phase of the Weimar Republic. He had also

gained great popularity through his novel *Schloss Gripsholm*, which was published with Rowohlt in 1931 and sold 50,000 copies immediately.<sup>144</sup>

But even his last desperate attempts to reach a readership through publicity for his sensational publications such as *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* or the involvement of the *Weltbühne* in numerous legal battles with the Reichswehr seemed pointless to him. After the elections of July 31, 1931 resulted in the NSDAP as the biggest party in the Reichstag with 230 seats (Kolb 195), Tucholsky realized that there was no more hope for a democratic “Deutschland” as an alternative to a nationalist or even a National Socialist “Teutschland.”

Potential alternatives to this nationalist and National Socialist occupation of the public sphere were, according to Tucholsky, not in sight. Its dogmatism and inflexibility had even put the German political left in ideological proximity to the National Socialists, as he wrote on April 20, 1933 to his friend Heinz Pol (Heinz Pollack, journalist for the *Vossische Zeitung*, *Welt am Montag*, *Weltbühne*, and *Literarische Welt*), a fellow journalist and writer for the *Weltbühne* and the *Vossische Zeitung*.<sup>145</sup> After March 1933, when, with Hitler as chancellor, the NSDAP had 288 seats in the Reichstag (Kolb 195), the ground was already prepared for rapid dismantling of the last republican institutions and the establishment of a fascist dictatorship. Tucholsky observed this development with bitterness and disappointment from his exile in Sweden, since National Socialism

---

<sup>144</sup> Bemmann notes that *Schloss Gripsholm* with 50,000 sold copies in 1931 was Tucholsky’s most successful publication in book-form, followed by *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* with 40,000, his anthology *Das Lächeln der Mona Lisa* sold 26,000, *Mit 5 PS* sold 25,000, and *Lerne Lachen ohne zu weinen* sold 10,000 (486).

<sup>145</sup> He wrote “... das jetzige Regime sieht stabil aus, es hat viele Voraussetzungen für sich – ob es hält...Und wenn es nicht hält: wer soll das ablösen? Diese Linke da: kann einpacken und müsste renoviert werden. Ich bin kein politischer Führer, aber mit denen da – das ist wohl nichts” (Tucholsky 11681).

represented in extreme form all the factors subsumed under nationalism, against which he had warned during his publicistic career and to which he had sought to establish an alternative national identity. As he noted in a letter to Walter Hasenclever from April 20, 1933, public debate around German-ness and national identity was entirely occupied by Nazi rhetoric and ideology, which made it impossible to popularize a progressive alternative:

Eine publizistische Wirkung auf einen ganzen Volkskörper in Deutschland haben wir nicht mehr. ... Man kann nicht schreiben, wo man nur noch verachtet. (Tucholsky 11677)

A year later, in 1934, his frustration about the end of critical public communication becomes less personal. In a letter to Walter Hasenclever from October 7, 1934, he mentions that “Die Welt, der wir angehört haben, ist tot. Man muss das mit Anstand zu tragen wissen” (Tucholsky 11846). Two months later, again in a letter to Hasenclever, he summarizes the objective of his work, the establishment of a public understanding of the mechanism of invented traditions.

Here he presents in a nutshell what he has been trying to do publicly throughout the years of the Weimar Republic: to create a public awareness of constructs of linearity and of absolute terms and their hidden ideologies. According to Tucholsky, who often positively referred to Schopenhauer’s anti-idealist philosophy, nationalism (and in its extreme form National Socialism) creates the illusion of a long tradition in order to gain legitimacy and public support.

Aber die Menschen lernen nichts, und nichts ist dümmer als die dümmliche Idee von “Fortschritt,” der allgemein mit dem Wasserklosett verwechselt wird. In Schopenhauers Eristischer Dialektik findet sich schon alles, was jetzt in Deutschland getrieben wird – und diese kleine Abhandlung ist nur eine Wiederholung ganz alter Prinzipien. Ich für meinen Teil kann dem nur noch zusehen. (Tucholsky 11913)



This comment exemplifies Tucholsky's understanding of ideologically distorted concepts such as "progress," and it again assumes his anticipation of the ideologically and politically motivated invention of tradition. Another article demonstrates Tucholsky's concept of history, which does not believe in linear progression but rather understands history as representing random fabrications of realities:

Und wenn alles vorüber ist –; wenn sich das alles totgelaufen hat: der Hordenwahnsinn, die Wonne, in Massen aufzutreten, in Massen zu brüllen und in Gruppen Fahnen zu schwenken, wenn diese Zeitkrankheit vergangen ist, die niedrigen Eigenschaften des Menschen zu guten umlügt, ... dann wird es eines Tages wieder modern sehr modern werden, liberal zu sein ... und dann wird das so gehen, bis eines Tages ... (Tucholsky 7804)

Through his disbelief in a linear progression of history, and by mentioning Schopenhauer as a prophet for Germany's historical course, Tucholsky positions himself into an anti-idealist legacy, which, with its critical attitude, questioned alleged traditions and strongly advocated individualism and individual instead of collective responsibility for the political process. It is also this strong belief in individualism that contributed to Tucholsky's concept of a personal sense of "Heimat" that he had called for in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, which he saw as a necessary precursor to an eventual peaceful community of nations in Europe where the individual, with his/her own private, denationalized sense of belonging, would live in an inclusive, free, supranational political system.

It is precisely this reference to a German anti-idealist tradition that Tucholsky shared with another prominent satirist of the time: George Grosz. A comparison with Grosz's concept of a German cultural tradition and the way a reorientation in its terms would counter dominating concepts of what a German tradition is will highlight not only the specificity of Tucholsky's concept but will also suggest that the similarity of

Tucholsky's and Grosz' satirical style (yet in different disciplines) had its roots in a comparably understood cultural tradition.

### **A Satirical Counter Tradition**

A comparison of George Grosz's and Tucholsky's writings on cultural and national traditions contributes not only to an understanding of Tucholsky's unique position within the discourse on nationalism in the final years of the Weimar Republic, but it also sheds light on the function of a satirist in a society of increasingly inflexible public communication. In his article of 1931, "Unter anderem ein Wort für die deutsche Tradition," George Grosz expresses the Weimar Republic's general sense of disorientation as a sign of a cultural crisis. Published in the moderate art magazine *Das Kunstblatt* (15/3), Grosz notes fluctuating ideologies in a transitional period, which is prone to random fabrications of national identity: "Überall Umorientierung und entschiedene Reaktion auf das, was vorgestern noch allgemein gültig. Rechts und links scheiden sich immer klarer zum Endkampf um die Macht" (79).

Similar to Tucholsky, Grosz recognizes the fluctuation of concepts, and he also notes the polarization of Germany's political culture, but he does not, as Tucholsky does, interpret these developments in the context of nationalism's invented traditions. Grosz is less analytical than Tucholsky, which is also reflected in his language. While Tucholsky plays with fine nuances in jargon, dialect, and press style to demonstrate the occupation of ideologies in public communication, Grosz remains in a style of short, incomplete sentences, which also corresponds with his general anti-technological and anti-metropolitan stance ("Die Grossstadt, ein wahrer Wasserkopf, Kontorstadt, Umsatz- und Messeplatz. Nach Feierabend zweifelhafte Vergnügungen...hastig, geräuschvoll...falsch

beglitzert, den tired businessman aufzupulvern für ein paar Stunden” [80]). Instead of calling for a reinterpretation of a German tradition through disassembling the ideological constructs it hosts, Grosz urges for a return to the medieval masters of art such as “Mulscher, Bosch, Breughel und Mälesskircher, und den Huber und Altdorfer” (84). Grosz juxtaposes these masters’ “Einfachheit, Gemüt, und Gefühl” (83) to the negative image of a pale, urban, over-intellectualized child representing contemporary avantgardist art, which in its intellectualism creates an art that lacks authenticity in that it has no ground in tradition and thus becomes a random product: “Man wird wahrhaftig staunen, was heute den Leuten durch geschickte Propaganda und Turmgläubige als ‘letzte’ Kunst aufgeredet worden ist” (Grosz 83).

Although Grosz, like Tucholsky, sees a vital importance in a reorientation of the public concerning cultural traditions, and although he also, like Tucholsky, seeks to popularize an aspect of the German cultural tradition that had not yet been recognized in its meaning for a broad public, his observations lack Tucholsky’s depth in that they do not thematize the underlying issue of nationalism’s invented traditions propagated through all cultural, social, economical, and political institutions of the Weimar Republic. He does, however, recognize the inclusive character of a cultural tradition that emerged from medieval German peasantry, as Tucholsky had alluded to in *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. Grosz also mentions the occupation of “German-ness” in the visual arts through nationalist artists:

Wenn ich “deutsch” sage, so meine ich nicht jene niedlichen, mehr oder weniger kitsch- und gefallstüchtigen Maler, die stets ihre weiche gemütvolle oder pathetisch-dehnbare Art, die Dinge zu frisieren, als “deutsch” auszugeben. Nebenbei gibt es ja diesen Salonmalertyp überall, wo gemalt wird. Ich sage nur ganz bescheiden: wir sollten uns mehr auf unsere gute und nicht geringe malerische und zeichnerische Tradition besinnen.

Anzuknüpfen an die Gestaltungskraft der grossen mittelalterlichen Meister halte ich für genauso richtig...wie es die Franzosen tun und sich ihre Leute und Tradition heranbilden, indem sie sich von alten Neapeler Wandfresken, von Orientteppichen, von Ingress oder Negerplastik oder Bushmen-paintings ihre Anregungen holen. Hugh, ich habe gesprochen. (Grosz 84)

While Grosz mentions the invention of “German-ness” in the visual arts, he dismisses it as “Salonmalertyp” and does not recognize the nationalist potential of such art products in that it creates a false sense of a nationalist tradition that does not exist. He does, however, point to different traditions in the arts that could constitute an inclusive national tradition, as he sees in the French art scene.

Thus, George Grosz also pleads for a public reorientation concerning the concept of a “cultural tradition,” although he does not analyze it as poignantly as Tucholsky does in the context of nationalism. However, Grosz does portray nationalism critically in his drawings by depicting the ugliness of nationalist physiognomy in a blunt and ruthless way, just as his medieval masters did not shy away from portraying moral evil. Perhaps the fact that Grosz meticulously portrays the “face” of nationalism in his drawings, and the fact that Tucholsky is so meticulous in his presentation of nationalisms in language and public communication contributes to both artists’ great popularity as the most influential satirists of the Weimar Republic.

### **The Failure of Satirical Mass Communication at the End of the Weimar Republic**

Although both Grosz and Tucholsky are still popular and regarded as perhaps the most famous satirists of the Weimar Republic, one as a painter and one as a writer, and although both stood for a critical sensationalism due to the numerous legal action their cultural products provoked, their public activism still did not prevent the rise of National

Socialism in Germany – a reproach that is representative of the most common charge leveled against the Weimar Republic’s intellectuals after WWII.

This analysis of Tucholsky’s writings of the last years of the Weimar Republic suggests that such criticisms do not contribute to a better understanding of the function of these public intellectuals during this time. It also suggests that such assertions only divert from the real question of what the mechanisms were in the public sphere that facilitated National Socialism and that failed the thorough establishment of a democratic culture in Germany. Instead, by following Tucholsky’s path from seeking a broad audience for popularizing republicanism to his retreat to a small readership among which he knew his satire “worked,” sheds light on Tucholsky’s insights into the intricate mechanisms of propaganda that seeks to reinforce and intensify mass-effective concepts of German-ness in times of economical and political instability. Tucholsky’s critical and at times bitingly satirical depictions of invented traditions in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic anticipated later, systematic studies on the mechanisms of nationalism in modern mass societies, namely by historian Eric Hobsbawm, who stated that the continuity of invented traditions is largely factitious; they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations. Invented traditions show the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant. Hobsbawm describes the process of inventing tradition as one of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past and/or by imposing repetition (Hobsbawm 4).

In this final phase of the Weimar Republic, Tucholsky analyzed the mechanisms of inventions of nationalist traditions, and his assessment of mass manipulation through

public symbolic reference to nationalism anticipate later discussions on the “Nationalization of the Masses” by historian George L. Mosse. Tucholsky’s articles about the existence of multiple concepts of “Germany” and “German-ness,” the role of language and its ideological occupation in this inventive process, as well as his awareness of the propagandistic potential of the mass media during this final phase of the Weimar Republic demonstrate Tucholsky’s perceptiveness of ideology as an underlying but motivating factor of history.

Between 1930 and 1932, Tucholsky developed an even more aggressive satirical tone in his articles concerning nationalism. Continuing a trend he began with his polemical picture book *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* from 1929, he sought a sensational publishing strategy to counter powerful nationalist media occupation. However, when Reichstag elections in 1932 showed an even stronger NSDAP, Tucholsky discontinued publishing altogether. His refusal to engage in any kind of public communication after 1932 not only points to his concept of the self-proclaimed succession of “Sprechen-Schreiben-Schweigen” in his career, but it should also be understood as a consequent removal from a public sphere in Germany that had been captured by nationalist infiltration, and that refused to develop its powerful potential of subversion to a general totalitarian tendency, particularly in the context of a mass market.

Perhaps Tucholsky’s role as a public intellectual and his nuanced responses to an *Öffentlichkeit* on the brink of a historical catastrophe could provide more subtle insights into the contributing factors of the end of the Weimar Republic in Germany. Moreover, they could even provide useful recognition of the mechanisms of imagining a nation and perpetuating invented national traditions within a mass media market in general.

## **Conclusion:**

*“Wir können nicht zu einem Land Ja sagen, das von Kollektivitäten besessen ist”*

The inherent paradoxes of nationalism and the mass press, particularly the mechanisms of how national identities are mass communicated, how unifying ideologies exist in diverse public spheres, are at the core of this dissertation’s investigation of Tucholsky’s work. By thematizing these paradoxes, Tucholsky’s work reflected not only the ambiguities of medialized, politicized communication, but it also shed light on the practices of the public intellectual, whose critical voice perpetually assessed, countered, and (re)interpreted mass communicative mechanisms, and which thus often found itself caught up in contradictions that undermined the authority of cohesiveness. But it was precisely this notion of fluctuation, change, and adaptation to different communicative contexts that represented the strength of Tucholsky’s work in its particular communicative and political context in the Weimar Republic. By doing so, it posed an alternative to the static political rhetoric of the political left, and it also countered authoritarian discourses of the political right.

These alternatives often demonstrated Tucholsky’s paradoxical publishing and political practices. This dissertation assessed how Tucholsky’s work, by including diverse aspects of mass communication, thematized authoritarian structures that operated beneath the mantle of democracy in the Weimar Republic. It acknowledged Tucholsky’s critical

voice as a public intellectual who had committed his work to pointing to such dysfunctions in an allegedly democratic system, and to correcting these dysfunctions. As we have seen in the previous chapters, Tucholsky's attempts to deal with the ambiguities of mass medialized communication led to apparent contradictions/paradoxes. Although Tucholsky had made concerns of the working class a central part of his work and his agency, his individualist concept of national identity as a meta-political space suggested his difference to contemporary socialist discourse. He never identified with party socialism, even though many issues he addressed in his work, or even though many theories his work anticipated, dealt with social and political change, as well as with politicization of the working class. Nevertheless, his work lacked the rigidity and the dogma of socialist discourse in that it incorporated the democratic idea of change, fluidity, and flexibility into its work and into its style. Despite the fact that Tucholsky published in socialist-communist venues, and despite the fact that his work addressed goals of the working class movement, he was not a socialist activist or a communist writer. Tucholsky was a public intellectual operating in a medialized public, and he chose such venues for the sake of reaching a broad audience for his politically critical, at times socialist, but also at times liberal, always democratic, but also sometimes propagandistic messages.

The paradox of Tucholsky's attempt to write politically critical texts for a mass audience, or in other words, to develop a politically critical propaganda, is another noteworthy characteristic of his work, which became important during the middle phase of Tucholsky's career. While particularly after Hitler's publishing of *Mein Kampf* in 1925 the Nazi concept of propaganda became increasingly popular and influential,



Tucholsky's concept of "vertical journalism" sought to counter such developments in its attempt to appeal to a mass audience without exerting ideological manipulation. On the contrary, it made the ambitious yet paradoxical attempt to propagate the workings of propaganda, particularly how ideologies are communicated in the media, and what role language plays in this process. Tucholsky's satire and language parody sought to dismantle this ideological manipulation, but at the same time, Tucholsky aimed to reach the masses with these critical messages. Stylistically, his work condemned functionalist art and called for high aesthetic standards, yet it was politically engaged. Tucholsky sought to overcome this paradox by using satire and language parody, and he refined this style in nuanced accounts of ideological manipulation not only in the Weimar Republic's press language, but also in authoritarianisms in its everyday life. These satirical depictions of anti-democratic uses of language in public life underscored Tucholsky's fundamental belief in not only the hegemonic, but also the subversive potential of language in mass culture. By recognizing these two aspects, Tucholsky also demonstrated that his political orientation oscillated between socialism and liberalism, particularly in regards to the role of the arts in politics. On the one hand, he acknowledged mass culture and its potentially significant role in social change, but on the other hand, he believed in the aesthetic role of language in the arts, and he refused to dedicate language solely for a political functionalism. Correspondingly, Tucholsky believed in the Enlightenment ideal of the sovereignty of the individual, and in the educational role of the public intellectual. At the same time, however, he was dedicated to the democratic reality (and its shortcomings) of the Weimar Republic. Thus, his work tried to bridge the gap between high and low culture. As most prominently apparent in

*Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, Tucholsky placed his politically critical art into a tradition of high art, but it addressed issues of low culture and politics, particularly its politically and socially emancipatory potential. But even though he sought political effect on the masses, Tucholsky decided to retreat from the public sphere after 1932. This contradictory move illustrates yet again that Tucholsky's work was, ideologically, aesthetically, and culturally, always, as he often mentioned, "zwischen den Stühlen."

But it was precisely the contradictory nature of his work that illustrated the general paradoxes of culture and mass communication in a medialized public sphere. A perfect example of this paradoxical situation not only politically, but also publicistically and culturally, is particularly visible in one lead article of the *Weltbühne* written by Tucholsky in 1919, entitled "Wir Negativen." As we have seen in Chapter 2, this article was one of his programmatic ones published under his fifth pseudonym Kurt Tucholsky. This article illustrates several of the paradoxes inherent in his work, as we have seen in this dissertation. As alluded to in the article's title, on the one hand, he addresses the educational function of the public intellectual, who is politically engaged, and who speaks from the position of a collective, as indicated in his repetitive use of the first person plural ("Wir Negativen"). On the other hand, however, he underscores the function of the public intellectual as one who is always critical, always assessing, and always reevaluating ("Wir *Negativen*"). These were the fundamentally democratic tasks of a public intellectual in an inherently republican system. Despite the greater susceptibility of the masses to right-radical rhetoric, Tucholsky's concept of the public intellectual and of critical mass communication remains innovative and productive as it was highly responsive to the medialized conditions of the Weimar Republic's public

sphere. Tucholsky was a writer who adapted his work to the tensions of a highly politicized, polarized press landscape. Although he published in leftist papers, his writing resists the adhesion and identification of writings of socialist and communist intellectuals. He was a “free-floating” intellectual whose social-liberalism could not find a public, because this public needed to “learn” democratic discourse.

Furthermore, on the one hand, he speaks of the humanitarian, idealist aspect of his goal, “Wir können noch nicht Ja sagen. Wir können noch nicht einen Sinn stärken, der über den Menschen die Menschlichkeit vergisst” (Tucholsky 1222), but on the other hand he emphasizes the need for a powerful, mass-oriented, propagandistic force of republicanism:

Wir können noch nicht Ja sagen. Wir wissen nur das eine: es soll mit eisernem Besen jetzt, gerade jetzt und heute ausgekehrt werden, was in Deutschland faul und vom Übel war und ist. Wir kommen nicht damit weiter wenn wir den Kopf in ein schwarz-weiss-rotes Tuch stecken und ängstlich flüstern: später, mein Bester, später! Nur jetzt kein Aufsehen! (Tucholsky 1223)

As Tucholsky reiterates the necessity of a critical public in order to establish awareness and eventually the practice of a democratic culture, this article finally best demonstrates how the ambivalence of his work resulted from his ultimate attempts of allying with the masses but also of recognizing the individual: “Wir können nicht zu einem Land Ja sagen, dass von Kollektivitäten besessen ist, und dem die Korporation weit über dem Individuum steht” (Tucholsky 1222). By referring to individualism as a preferable alternative to a “Kollektivität,” Tucholsky displays his liberal, non-socialist ideological stance. His individualist notion of “Heimatliebe,” for instance, as discussed in Chapter 4, emphasizes the personal, subjective aspect of national identity. It is also this aspect of Tucholsky’s work as representing a “third way” between polarized discourses and

positions, that indicates that Tucholsky was a public intellectual, who, although or maybe because he silenced when the Weimar Republic was about to turn into a Nazi dictatorship, embraced the diverse and multifaceted realities of modern mass communication in its medialized and commercialized form. Tucholsky's writings urge the reader to disassociate his or her own view from the represented world, thus creating critical distance necessary for becoming a political subject instead of an object of power structures.

In order to provide a conclusive overview of how profound Tucholsky's role as a public intellectual in the discourse on German-ness was, and, furthermore, how the paradox of his work continued after 1933, a short comparison of this article with one of the extreme political right at the end of the Weimar Republic will provide a concise summary of Tucholsky's ambiguity, controversy, but also his centrality in the Weimar Republic's public sphere.

As already discussed in Chapter 4 in regards to Tucholsky's paradoxical position in providing a new "genre" of *Deutschland* books at the end of the Weimar Republic, an article published in 1933 in the former party organ of the catholic Center Party, but after the *Gleichschaltung* the right-extremist paper *Germania* is reminiscent of Tucholsky's article "Wir Negativen" of 1919 in theme and style. It illustrates how Tucholsky's themes and his rhetoric was paradoxically taken up by his political opponents, and how his style of 1919, at the beginning of a new political era of democracy, was recycled under opposite ideological premises during the Nazi era. Without suggesting that Tucholsky inadvertently supported the Nazi cause, it is striking how close Tucholsky's and Nazi rhetoric were, albeit on completely opposite ideological grounds. The

*Germania* article of 1933 was entitled “Unser Ja zum neuen Deutschland” and repeatedly confirmed the new system of National Socialism and the “ultra-conservative revolution:”

Wir sagen Ja zum neuen Deutschland, weil sich sein Aufbau in der Abkehr vom Liberalismus vollzieht. Wir sagen Ja zur nationalsozialistischen Revolution, weil sie ein Gericht über das Zeitalter der individualistischen Absonderung und Auflösung ist. Wir sagen ja zu ihr, weil sie eine “konservative” Revolution ist, die nicht Ausbruch des vermeintlich “autonomen” Menschen aus der gottgewollten Gebundenheit bedeutet, sondern Rückbesinnung auf die ewige Schöpfungsordnung, auf die Bluts- und Schicksalsgemeinschaft der Deutschen, auf unsere völkische Wesensart.” (qtd. in Minnerup 215)

While this *Germania* article creates a sense of unity among its readers by repeatedly using the first person plural, and while it reiterates its affirmative stance toward the National Socialist movement, it excludes anyone who is not in this community of “blood and fate,” and thereby it indicates its racist, supremacist, and anti-Semitic position. A comparison of these articles shows how Tucholsky’s writings, despite his self-proclaimed “failure” of his work in effectively democratizing Germans, was profoundly influential in discourses around German-ness throughout the Weimar Republic, and even during its demise.

As we have seen also in the context of right-extremist *Deutschland* books that were published in the aftermath of Tucholsky’s critical *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*, it almost seems as if the Nazis used Tucholsky’s concept of propaganda and thus beat him and republicanism with its own weapons. That Tucholsky was in touch with trends and tendencies of the Weimar Republic’s medialized public sphere was recognized by no other forces than those he had sought to destroy.<sup>146</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> An analysis of press language of the year 1933 in a paper indirectly affiliated with the NSDAP, the *Germania*, attests the sharp increase in ideologically “loaded” words such as “deutsch” or “Volk,” as Tucholsky had satirized in his writings. Key words used by Nazis in public sphere before 1933 were the words “deutsch” and “national,” which were used most frequently (Minnerup 211), and the following stylistic characteristics were dramatically intensified within one year: pathos, pseudo-religious words,

It was the presence of nationalist and National Socialist ideology in public discourses of the Weimar Republic that Tucholsky sought to demolish, and it was such discourses he saw operating within the premises of the Republic's democratic system. His satire attacked constructs of the right-radical press that fabricated an illusion of German superiority. These constructs obstructed the consolidation of republicanism and inhibited a peaceful and democratic future in a potentially united Europe. It is ironic, but typical for Tucholsky, that his style and his themes were taken up under reverse ideological contexts, addressed to an anti-republican audience, and that it served an opposite political agenda.

In distinguishing between a macro- and a micro dimension of ideological power structures in society, Tucholsky understood language as reflecting hierarchies of power. Through his innovative use of language satire, Tucholsky was able to subvert existing hierarchies of power in public communication and to create alternatives. This dissertation maintains that Tucholsky saw a close connection between the (mass) public use of language and a prevalence of nationalist ideology in the realm of public communication. Tucholsky used satire to reopen critical communication where these avenues had failed in the Weimar Republic, and thus sought a form of ideological cleansing of the German language, especially after WWI – his language analysis and his

---

repetition, superlatives, dualist structures of the text (“good” vs. “evil”), and emotionality of the text (Minnerup 232). The findings of Minnerup's analysis demonstrate that Tucholsky's satire of the repetitive use of the word “deutsch” in the nationalist and National Socialist press actually pointed to a trend in the press landscape of the Weimar Republic (and beyond) that even intensified after Tucholsky's decision to silence in 1932. The publishing house Germania AG also held the *Märkische Volkszeitung*, *Deutscher Volksfreund*, *Nordische Volkszeitung*, and the *Sächsisches Tageblatt*, which all had a catholic middle-class readership (<http://www.oeaw.ac.at/cgi-bin/pdok/bz/tnd/0610>). The readership of these papers were most likely not aware of the fact that the Germania AG was indirectly supporting the Nazi party, because only papers directly affiliated with and paid by the NSDAP had to display the swastika as a sign of Nazi press on their front page. Nevertheless, the *Germania* as a representative of such indirect Nazi press changed its linguistic style dramatically during the year 1933, as a content analysis by Minnerup (1989) showed.

reflection on the ideological dimension of public language is not given the status it deserves, particularly if one takes into account the fact that several post-WWII texts have taken Tucholsky's satire as a model for their confrontation and negotiation with Germany's ideological past and present.<sup>147</sup>

He exposed continuities of authoritarian mentality from Wilhelminian Germany not only in everyday practices but also in the German language and conceptualization by his unique satiric use of jargon, dialect, sociolect, puns, and other forms of language parody. Furthermore, his discussions related to language on the role of high and low culture in public identity formation illuminate his attempts of establishing a counter public for a new language that is appropriate for a new, twentieth-century Germany. Tucholsky advocated the critical potential of public communication by incorporating not only traditionally literary forms in his work, but also new forms of mass communication of the Weimar Republic's publishing landscape. Such new forms consisted of photo-text montages (as in his sensational book *Deutschland Deutschland über alles* of 1929), cultural and political commentary, analyses of mass-cultural trends such as fashion, sports, radio, and cinema, and parodist accounts of nationalist propaganda in the mass media.

Despite Tucholsky's diverse public voice and his multifaceted political activism in the public sphere of the Weimar Republic, he always came back to his basic, continuous concern in his work of the public function of language, propaganda, and ideology. During a time that was heavily polarized in terms of politics, ideology, and

---

<sup>147</sup> Tucholsky's concern with ideological occupation of language was realized immediately after WWII, when, in the context of "Stunde Null," Dolf Sternberger, Gerhard Storz, and W.E.Süskind published a dictionary of Nazi-terms in order to eliminate Nazi ideology in German language practice.

even in terms of the function of art in a mass society, Tucholsky found a way to communicate with his different audiences on different levels of public presence. This multifacetedness of his public voice was a model of cultural, public communication that reacted productively to a fragmented public sphere and that found forms and concepts that negotiated between the duality of art and politics. Tucholsky's work responded to political and ideological tendencies in the Weimar Republic's cultural, medial, political, and economic life, and it understood itself explicitly as a product of its time. Because it did so, Tucholsky's work was excluded from literary canon, since traditional canonical works only addressed eternal, timeless issues. This "timelessness" was often equated with high aesthetic norms of these works, and simultaneously works that explicitly understood themselves as products of their times were regarded as lacking aesthetic quality. Tucholsky's perceptiveness of the ideological role of language in public discourse has been overlooked and has led to indiscriminate evaluations particularly of the final years of Tucholsky's activity as a writer.

Tucholsky's discernment with ideological mechanisms in a medialized public sphere brings us to the next key conclusion of this dissertation. As we have seen, a central focus of Tucholsky's work was the role of mass communication in the process of national identity formation. Long before this topic was approached in a scholarly and systematic way, Tucholsky had written about the function of the media, particularly the press, in communicating and imagining the nation. He had pointed to the fabrication of national identities through public symbolic frames of reference to nationalist ideologies, as well as the choice of language in public discourse, which implied authority because of an invented nationalist tradition. Tucholsky maintained that only though widespread



realization that there is no “objective” reality presented in the mass media, and if so, that it is motivated by ideological interests, Germany could become a functioning democracy. Tucholsky tried to demonstrate that, within a medialized public sphere, the way the public understands the world is contingent on the way it is represented and constructed through the media. His work signals the crisis of meaning and representation in interwar Germany, when a fundamental transformation of the way the world was perceived took place. Tucholsky’s work responded to this shift in that it demanded that its audience unveils the workings of a discourse of ambiguity and deception. By means of humor, satire, word play, and language parody, his work undermines the authority of the word, the authority of the press, and it thus promotes public mass communication as a subversive power.

By approaching Tucholsky’s work in drawing from different methodological paradigms of literary, cultural, and communications studies, this dissertation not only acknowledges the aesthetic dimension of Tucholsky’s work, but contextualizes it into the discourse on German-ness during the Weimar Republic. The benefit of interpreting Tucholsky’s texts as pointing to mechanisms that construct knowledge not only sheds light on such mechanisms themselves (mechanisms that also create and reinforce power structures), but it also underscores that looking at texts that thematized everyday concerns in their particular historical-social contexts illuminate processes that are played out repeatedly and that are relevant at any time.

This dissertation’s ultimate contribution not only to Tucholsky scholarship but also to studies on the culture of the Weimar Republic is its recognition of Tucholsky’s textual production at the intersection with the Weimar Republic’s discourse on German-

ness. It acknowledges that Tucholsky's work both confirms and questions existing concepts of communication in a medialized public sphere, and it takes into account that he promotes critical thinking because his work destroys "trained" expectations of the reader. His critical voice permeated everyday microspheres of society, and his use of language and his publishing strategies indicated Tucholsky's pursuit in popularizing a public alternative to right-wing concepts of the German nation. It is this recognition that Tucholsky's search for an adequate public platform, his exploration of the public sphere, was driven by his fundamental interest in the function of language in political identity formation, that this dissertation achieved by approaching Tucholsky's work in drawing from multiple interpretive paradigms. That way, the multiplicity and diversity of his public presence becomes less random or opportunistic, as it was often criticized. It then becomes apparent that Tucholsky's work is highly observant of socio-political processes in modern societies, and that by approaching the diversity of his work from multiple angles these insights are presaging later, influential theories about identity formation, domination, and mechanisms of power reinforcement in modern, mass medial societies.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, Tucholsky's negotiation between high and low cultural traditions, his discussion of pre- and post-WWI language in the public sphere, his realization of the contradictory existence of a unifying ideology in an allegedly diverse public sphere (the ambiguities of a medialized mass communication) addressed the issue of the suppressive or the subversive role of mass communication (and mass culture in general) of the Frankfurt School and its critics Negt and Kluge, and he raised the question of the exertion of ideologies and hegemony in public life, as his contemporary and much more prominent intellectual Antonio Gramsci did. Tucholsky revealed the concealed,

fictional relation between audience and public sphere, between reader and press as such and thereby destroys the ideological notion of an objective press and of objectivity in the concept of national identity. The way he engaged in politically and culturally critical discourse in a mass public sphere demonstrated his understanding of the ambivalent character of mass communication: it could, in the Negt-Klugian and Gramscian sense, be a site of political agency and subversion of hegemonial structures, but it could also, in terms of the Frankfurt School and Habermas, be an instrument for hegemonial oppression of the masses.

Antonio Gramsci's concept of ideology, or better of ideologies, and how ideologies become hegemonies that ideologically indoctrinate without using coercion or force as a form of social control, is apprehended in Tucholsky's work. Like Gramsci, Tucholsky recognized the variable character of hegemonic processes that arise out of the activities of institutions or groups. Thus, he maintained that everyday culture and the mass media have to be interpreted and explained in terms of the concept of hegemony. Gramsci maintained that common-sense ideas and values as part of everyday life form the basis of our understanding of the world. It is these values or ideologies that can become part of a coherent set of ideas, which could eventually, through the organization of consent become part of a dominant or hegemonic ideology, one that is part of the leading role in society. Gramsci contended that this consent, hegemony, was class biased, and that it was constantly constructed and (re-) produced. This implies that any situation of hegemony can be altered, because there are competing hegemonies and counter hegemonies. To Gramsci, hegemony was a process of active organization, a continuous process of ideological battles between ideas, values, and meanings that

competed for power. It expresses subordinate consent to the authority of a dominant group's discourses in a society. To Tucholsky, the mass media, the medialized public sphere represented a major ground for such struggle for hegemony, and he emphasized the importance of recognizing both the authoritarian and revolutionary aspects of the mass media. He also pointed to the process of how common-sense ideologies of everyday life can become part of hegemonic ideologies, and how one must pay critical attention to such ideologies at work in everyday life, particularly if they are represented as objective truths in the press.

Negt and Kluge address the issue of domination in their critique of Habermas's concept of the public sphere. Like Tucholsky, Negt and Kluge criticize that in the bourgeois public sphere, the bourgeois is privileged, and the public sphere is not a fundamentally democratic institution, because the bourgeois has privileged access to the means of production. Because of Habermas's emphasis on the strict distinction between the public and the private in the bourgeois public sphere, Negt and Kluge criticize Habermas's ignorance of the fact that private interests are indeed played out in the public sphere, and that patterns of dominance do exist because of difference based on socio-economic class difference. Negt and Kluge maintain that although the public sphere presents itself as interest free, it is not, and that the public sphere presented by Habermas as a coherent entity is rather a set of different public spheres which host zones of ambiguity (2-3). In these zones, patterns of dominance are played out under the pretense of a purported collective will (4). Like Negt and Kluge, Tucholsky was interested in how the public sphere is made, how it changes, and what (or who) the dominant voices are in this sphere (and why). While Habermas was also interested in how the public sphere was

made and how it mutated, he did not address the issue of hegemony in the public sphere, since he only looked at the bourgeois public sphere, which indeed “declined” in the context of medialization. By including the working class into the discourse of national identity, and by addressing patterns and mechanisms of ideological infiltration within the public spheres and within the spheres of everyday cultures, Tucholsky not only aimed to reveal the workings of such mechanisms, but also pointed to the possibilities and capabilities of change inherent in these spheres. He contended that some unofficial cultures, mostly those of the working class, bore subversive potential in their role as counter publics, since in their unofficial existence these cultures have not been penetrated by hegemonic discourses.

During the Weimar Republic’s so-called stable years, Tucholsky turned to long-term political issues to secure the function of democracy in Germany. He committed his work to pacifism and Europeanism and thus intensified his engagement with the issue of how political and national identities are communicated in a mass medial public. It was during this time that in the context of a contested concept of national identity within the Weimar Republic’s politically polarized public sphere, Tucholsky interpreted these political and social processes mainly from the perspective of how German-ness was being communicated. His basic concern was to counter anti-republican concepts from becoming even more popular, as republicanism had failed to establish broad mass appeal in the mass public sphere, and totalitarian rhetoric prevailed. The theory of Ernest Gellner, who contended that nations are contingencies and not a given normative, and the theory of Benedict Anderson, who maintained that the notion of nations are “imagined communities” and communicated by the media, are foreshadowed in Tucholsky’s work,

since it accentuates the imaginary, fabricated character of national identities. Like Anderson, Tucholsky saw national cultures as a replacement of religious culture. Also like Anderson, Tucholsky recognized that a community's coherence, its self-image as a nation, is expressed through print and print languages that have been standardized (Anderson 46). The press as an expression of such print capitalism is central in the development of these new nationalist cultures.

However, Tucholsky also pointed to the permeability of everyday cultures by hegemonic discourse. As demonstrated in his critique of authoritarianism and discipline in everyday life, discussed in Chapter 4 namely in the use of language mostly in the press, but also in other spheres of public discourse such as in education, in entertainment such as theater, musical, and film, and in leisure activities such as sports, Tucholsky discusses the mechanisms of how ideologies are constructed and reinforced in such institutions. Tucholsky takes into account the emergence of ideologies such as nationalism in the public sphere, particularly how they are represented in language, but he also suggests that there are ways of dismantling these ideologies, such as by means of satire and by means of recognizing unofficial cultures that provide alternative perspectives on political and social processes.

Primarily during the last phase of the Weimar Republic, when it became increasingly obvious that democracy would not prevail, Tucholsky investigated the mechanisms of why nationalist discourse was so resilient even in the alleged democratic context of the Weimar Republic. By doing so he presaged Eric Hobsbawm's influential theory of "invented traditions." Hobsbawm contended that in times of social and historical transformations societies respond to novel situations by referring to continuities

with a largely fictitious past (1). Hobsbawm, like Anderson and Gellner, states that national identity is a modern construct because it gives modern societies a sense of belonging (which was formerly given in a religious context), and it reconstructs the past in order to convey a sense of belonging and legitimacy of the current system. Hobsbawm interpreted nationalism as an invention of an ideology that legitimizes states within capitalist economic relations. He (and his co-author Terence Ranger) suggests that much of a national tradition is invented, that the arbitrariness of a state's borders, for instance, is in nationalist discourse interpreted as dating back to a long-standing national tradition, which would legitimize the nation as an authority. Tucholsky alludes to this concept of invented traditions in his work. He points to the arbitrariness of nations, of cultures, and emphasizes the fictitious character of nationalism as it is promoted in the right-wing media of the Weimar Republic's public sphere. However, although Tucholsky anticipates Hobsbawm's notion of invented traditions in his critiques of nationalist discourse in the public sphere, he also deviates from Hobsbawm in that he acknowledges that it is not necessarily the illusion of a tradition that gives nationalism its force, but rather its immediacy. He regarded tradition as "created," and as a creation it is subject to continual reshaping. Thus, Tucholsky contended that nations are fluid and manipulable.

The notion of fluidity and manipulation, paired with the notion of nationalism as a secularized religion brings us to the last concept of recent historical-sociological scholarship that Tucholsky's work on nationalism anticipated. George L. Mosse's concept of the "nationalization of the masses" in the context of a "new politics" in the age of mass culture and mass politics stated that these "new politics" provided an objectification of a general will. As an "escape from the consequences of

industrialization” (6), rural, timeless myths were created and popularized that stood outside of its context of the new realities of a (mass) industrial information society. These myths, expressed in monuments, rituals, parades, or even in repetitive phrases in the right-extremist press, were aimed at artificially uniting a fragmented nation. Tucholsky critically examined the artificiality of these “new politics,” which, in its mythical interpretation of nationhood, would soon become standard practice in Nazi Germany. Mosse focused on the workings of this “new politics” in the public sphere in terms of how nationalist (or National Socialist) symbolic practices were executed in the public sphere, and how the public sphere hosted frames of reference to nationalism in form of monuments, buildings, etc. While Tucholsky also critically examined similar issues, his focus was rather on how such “new politics” are executed in the press and in press language, particularly in the context of a purportedly “democratic” public sphere of the Weimar Republic.

The case of Tucholsky demonstrates that there were public intellectuals that responded to the conditions of a medialized public sphere productively for the maintenance of critical public communication. Tucholsky’s work was dedicated to the reinforcement of a democratic system in Germany, not only on a political level, but also on a cultural and ideological level. Tucholsky sought to reveal hidden anti-republican ideologies at work in a variety of public spheres, whether in different forms of everyday culture or in different mass communicative contexts. He was aware of how in a newly medialized mass public sphere language could be an instrument for ideological purposes. He repeatedly called attention to this danger, and he did so not in a prescriptive-dogmatic way, but in a playful, humorous, satirical way, by means of language parody. This



“Tucholskian” style, its perpetual questioning and criticizing of anything given, not to mention its inherent paradoxes as consequences of his continuous assessing, evaluating, and critical reflecting, exhibits Tucholsky’s central position as a critical voice in the Weimar Republic’s versatile public sphere.

This dissertation’s final contribution is the notion that Tucholsky’s work demonstrates that art is part of political and social processes, and that it cannot be isolated from these processes. It shows that socially critical art has continued viability, even under shifting conditions of a medialized mass society. It also reminds us that particularly now, in recent times of political polarization, mechanisms of ideological infiltration on the levels of everyday life as well as in mass communicative processes still warrant critical attention.

## WORKS CITED

### Primary Literature

- Diesel, Eugen. *Die Deutsche Wandlung: Das Bild eines Volks*. Stuttgart, Berlin: Cotta, 1929.
- Diesel, Eugen, and William Douglas Robson-Scott. *Germany and the Germans*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1931.
- Goldschmidt, Alfons. *Deutschland Heute*. Berlin: Rowohlt, 1928.
- Grosz, George. "Unter anderem ein Wort für die deutsche Tradition." *Das Kunstblatt* 15 (3), 1931.
- Knickerbocker, H.J. *The German Crisis*. Berlin: Farrar & Rhinehart, 1932.
- Leers, Johannes von. *Juden sehen Dich an*. Berlin: Deutsche Volkswacht, 1933.
- Mann, Heinrich. *Essays*. Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1960.
- Mann, Thomas. *Schriften zur Politik*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1970.
- Ossietzky, Carl von. *Rechenschaft. Publizistik aus den Jahren 1913-1933*. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1982.
- Schulz, Edmund, and Friedrich Georg Jünger. *Deutschland Heute. Ein Bilderwerk zur Geschichte der Deutschen Nachkriegszeit*. Leipzig: Breitkopf&Härtel, 1931.
- Stenbock-Fermor, Alexander. *Deutschland von Unten. Reise Durch die Proletarische Provinz*. Stuttgart: Engelhorn, 1931.
- Strasser, Gregor. *Kampf um Deutschland: Reden und Aufsätze eines Nationalsozialisten*. München: F. Eher, 1932.
- Tucholsky, Kurt. *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980.
- . "Werke, Briefe, Materialien." Berlin, 1999. CD ROM. *Digitale Bibliothek*. Ed. Mathias Bertram, Michael Hepp. Directmedia.

### Secondary Literature

- Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1989.

- Achternkamp, Thomas. "Das Schattenjahr 1932: Subjekt zwischen Krise und Katastrophe im Roman der späten Weimarer Republik." Dissertation. University of Illinois, 2002.
- Ackermann, Irmgard, ed. *Kurt Tucholsky: Sieben Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung*. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 1981.
- Ackermann, Irmgard, and Klaus Hübner. *Tucholsky Heute: Rückblick und Ausblick*. München: Iudicum, 1991.
- Adorno, Theodor W., Max Horkheimer. *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente*. Frankfurt: Fischer, 1997.
- Albrecht, Niels. "Die Macht einer Verleumdungskampagne: Antidemokratische Agitationen der Presse und Justiz gegen die Weimarer Republik und ihren ersten Reichspräsidenten Friedrich Ebert. Vom 'Badebild' bis zum 'Mageburger Prozess'." Dissertation. Universität Bremen, 2002.
- Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy, and other Essays*. London: New Left Books, 1971.
- Anderson, Benedict R. *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London; New York: Verso, 1991.
- Anheier, Helmut K., Friedhelm Neidhart, Wolfgang Vorkamp. "Konjunkturen der NS-Bewegung: Eine Untersuchung der Veranstaltungsaktivitäten der Münchner NSDAP, 1925-1930." 1998. Veröffentlichungsreihe der Abteilung Öffentlichkeit und soziale Bewegungen des Forschungsschwerpunktes sozialer Wandel. Ed. Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung. <[www.wz-berlin.de](http://www.wz-berlin.de)>.
- Applegate, Celia. *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- . "The Question of Heimat in the Weimar Republic." *New Formations* 17. Summer (1992).
- Arnold, Heinz Ludwig, Heinrich Detering, ed. *Grundzüge der Literaturwissenschaft*. München, DTV, 2001.
- Assmann, Aleida. *Politische Identität und Nationale Gedenktage: Zur politischen Kultur in der Weimarer Republik*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989.
- Austermann, Anton. *Kurt Tucholsky: Der Journalist und sein Publikum*. München: Piper, 1985.
- Bauer, Michael. "Kurt Tucholsky: *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*." Kindlers Neues

- Literatur-Lexikon. Vol. 16. Studienausgabe. München: Kindler, 1988.
- Becker, Sabina, and Ute Maack, eds. *Kurt Tucholsky: Das Literarische und Publizistische Werk*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002.
- Becker, Hans J. *Mit Geballter Faust: Kurt Tucholskys "Deutschland Deutschland über alles."* Abhandlungen zur Kunst-, Musik- und Literaturwissenschaft; Bd. 240. Bonn: Bouvier, 1978.
- Bellier, Irene, Thomas Wilson, eds. *An Anthropology of the European Union*. Oxford: Berg, 2000.
- Bemmann, Helga. "Kurt Tucholsky – Der Dichter-Journalist. Anmerkungen zur Entstehung und Interpretation seines Werkes." *Tucholsky Heute: Rückblick und Ausblick*. Ed. Irmgard Ackermann. München: Iudicum Verlag, 1991. 151-64.
- . *Kurt Tucholsky. Ein Lebensbild*. 1. Ed. Berlin: Verlag der Nation, 1990.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Angelus Novus. Ausgewählte Schriften*. 2. ed. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1966.
- . *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1997.
- Berg-Schlosser, Dirk, and Ralf Rytlewski. *Political Culture in Germany*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.
- Blackbourn, David. "The Mittelstand in German Society and Politics 1871-1914." *Social History*. 2 (1977): 409-33.
- Brecht, Bertolt. "Neue Sachlichkeit." *Schriften I*. Ed. Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, Werner Mittenzwei, Klaus-Detlev Müller. Vol. 21. Werke: Grosse Kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1992. 352-56.
- Brinkmann, Richard, and Jürgen Brummack. *Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte: Festschrift für Richard Brinkmann*. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1981.
- Bullivant, Keith. *Das Literarische Leben in der Weimarer Republik*. Königstein/Ts.: Scriptor-Verlag, 1978.
- Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde. Theory and History of Literature*; V. 4. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Childers, Thomas. "The Social Language of the Politics in Germany: The Sociology of

- Political Discourse in the Weimar Republic.” *The American Historical Review* 95.2 (1990).
- Craig, Gordon. “Engagement and Neutrality in Weimar Germany.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 2.2 (1967): 49-64.
- De Mendelssohn, Peter. *Zeitungsstadt Berlin: Menschen und Mächte in der Geschichte der Deutschen Presse*. Frankfurt a.M.: Ullstein, 1982.
- Deák, István. *Weimar Germany’s Left-Wing Intellectuals; a Political History of the Weltbühne and its Circle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.
- Doerfel, Marianne. “Tucholsky als Politiker.” Dissertation. FU Berlin, 1966.
- Dovifat, Emil. *Handbuch der Publizistik*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968.
- Dovifat, Emil, and Dorothee von Dadelsen. *Die Publizistische Persönlichkeit*. Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1990.
- Ehlich, Konrad. *Sprache im Faschismus*. 1. ed. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1989.
- Eichinger, Ludwig M. “Kurt Tucholsky, die Stadt Berlin und die Dörfer. Regionale Sprachformen als Symptom.” *Tucholsky Heute: Rückblick und Ausblick*. Ed. Irmgard Ackermann, Klaus Hübner. München: Iudicum Verlag, 1991.
- Eksteins, Modris. *The Limits of Reason: The German Democratic Press and the Collapse of Weimar Democracy*. London: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Eley, Geoff. *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.
- Erwentraut, Kirsten. “Auch Hier: Es geht nicht ohne Freud. Tucholskys Schloss Gripsholm.” *Schweden: Das ist Ja ein langes Land. Tucholsky und Schweden*. Ed. Michael Hepp, Roland Links. Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg, 1994. 149-180.
- Fulbrook, Mary. *The Divided Nation: A History of Germany, 1918-1990*. London: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Gay, Peter. *Weimar Culture. The Outsider as Insider*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
- Geissler, Christoph J. “Die Tucholsky-Rezeption in der DDR.” Dissertation. University of Florida, 1998.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism. New Perspectives on the Past*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.

- Goldhagen, Daniel Jonah. *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1996.
- Görzel, Klaus. "Heinrich Mann: Der Dichter und seine Nationen." *Dichter und ihre Nation*. Ed. Helmut Scheuer. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993. 276-90.
- Gramsci, Antonio, and David Forgacs. *An Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*. New York: Schocken Books, 1988.
- Grenville, Bryan P. *Kurt Tucholsky: The Ironic Sentimentalist*. German Literature and Society; V. 1. London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Oswald Wolff, Humanities Press, 1981.
- Grosz, George. *Ein Kleines Ja und ein Grosses Nein*. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1955.
- Grosz, George, Wieland Herzfelde, John Heartfield. *Art is in Danger!* Trans. Paul Gorrell. New York: Curbstone Press, 1987.
- Guratzsch, Dankwart. *Macht durch Organisation; Die Grundlegung des Hugenbergschen Presseimperiums*. Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1974.
- Haarmann, Hermann, and Andrea Klein. *Pleite glotzt Euch an – Restlos: Satire in der Publizistik der Weimarer Republik. Ein Handbuch*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Trans. Thomas Burger, Fredrick Lawrence. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991.
- Hale Oron J. *The Captive Press in the Third Reich*. Princeton: N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Harvey, Elizabeth. "Serving the Volk, Serving the Nation: Women in the Youth Movement and the Public Sphere in Weimar Germany." *Elections, Mass Politics, and Social Change in Modern Germany*. Ed. Larry Eugene Jones, James Retallack. Washington: German Historical Institute, 1992. 201-21.
- Haupt, Jürgen. *Heinrich Mann*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980.
- Heissenbüttel, Helmut. "Deutschland geht nicht über alles. Tucholskys und John Heartfields Pamphlet nach 35 Jahren." *Die Welt* 1964: 68.
- Hepp, Michael. *Kurt Tucholsky. Biographische Annäherungen*. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1993.

- Hepp, Michael, and Viktor Otto. *Soldaten sind Mörder: Dokumentation Einer Debatte 1931-1996*. Berlin: Ch. Links, 1996.
- Herman, Jost. *Old Dreams of a New Reich: Volkish Utopias and National Socialism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Hess, Dieter. *Aufklärungsstrategien Kurt Tucholskys: Literarisch-Publizistische Aspekte der Weltbühne Texte*. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1982.
- . "Personalisierung als Strategie. Kurt Tucholskys Publizistische Auseinandersetzung mit den Sozialdemokratischen Parteien der Weimarer Republik." *Kurt Tucholsky. Sieben Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung*. Ed. Irmgard Ackermann. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 1981. 89-109.
- Hinderer, Walter. *Literarische Profile: Deutsche Dichter von Grimmelshausen bis Brecht*. Königstein/Ts.: Athenäum, 1982.
- Hinze, Klaus-Peter. "Gruppe 1925. Notizen und Dokumente." *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaften und Geistesgeschichte* 54 (1980): 334-46.
- Hobsbawm, Eric, Terence Ranger, ed. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Hohendahl, Peter Uwe. *Literaturkritik und Öffentlichkeit*. München: Piper, 1974.
- Holl, Karl, and Wolfram Wette. *Pazifismus in der Weimarer Republik: Beiträge zur Historischen Friedensforschung*. Sammlung Schöningh Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1981.
- Honnef, Klaus, et al. *German Photography 1870-1970: Power of a Medium*. Köln: Du Mont, 1997.
- Horgan, Andrew Joseph. "The Dilemmas of a Republican Identity: Socialists and Catholics in Weimar Germany." Dissertation. Columbia University, 2001.
- Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*. Frankfurt a.M.: S.Fischer, 1986.
- Ickler, Theodor. "Die Überwindung des Pathos. Zu Sprache und Stil bei Tucholsky." *Kurt Tucholsky. Sieben Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung*. Ed. Irmgard Ackermann. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 1981. 162-79.
- Ihering, Herbert. "Polemik." Nachwort. Kurt Tucholsky. *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980.

- Jones, Larry Eugene. *German Liberalism and the Dissolution of the Weimar Party System, 1918-1933*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.
- . *German Liberalism and the Dissolution of the Weimar Party System, 1918-1933*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.
- Kaes, Anton. "Schreiben und Lesen in der Weimarer Republik." *Literatur der Weimarer Republik 1918-1933*. Ed. Bernhard Weyergraf. Vol. 8. Hansers Sozialgeschichte der Literatur. München: DTV, 1995. 38-46.
- Kafka, Franz, et al. *Tagebücher*. 3 Vols. Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1990.
- Ketelsen, Uwe-Karsten. *Völkisch-Nationale und Nationalsozialistische Literatur in Deutschland, 1890-1945*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976.
- Ketelsen, Uwe-Karsten. *Völkisch-Nationale und Nationalsozialistische Literatur in Deutschland, 1890-1945*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976.
- Kiefer, Sascha. "'Meine ganze Jugend.' Tucholsky und Rheinsberg (1912)." *Kurt Tucholsky. Das Literarische und Publizistische Werk*. Ed. Sabina Becker, Ute Maack. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002. 17-46.
- King, Ian. "Ein Suchender, Kein Denkmal: An Analysis of Research on Kurt Tucholsky." *German Life and Letters* 50.1 (1997): 35-52.
- . "Kurt Tucholsky as Prophet of European Unity." *German Life and Letters* 54.2 (2001): 164-72.
- . *Kurt Tucholsky als Politischer Publizist*. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1982.
- Kleinschmidt, Karl. *Kurt Tucholsky. Sein Leben in Bildern*. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1964.
- Koebner, Thomas. *Weimars Ende: Prognosen und Diagnosen in der Deutschen Literatur und Politischen Publizistik 1930-1933*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1982.
- Köhn, Lothar. "Montage höherer Ordnung. Zur Struktur des Epochenbildes bei Bloch, Tucholsky, und Broch." *Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte. Festschrift für Richard Brinkmann*. Ed. Jürgen Brummack. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1981. 585-615.
- Kolb, Eberhard. *The Weimar Republic*. London; Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988.
- Koszyk, Kurt. *Deutsche Presse 1914-1945. Geschichte der Deutschen Presse*. Teil III.



- Abhandlungen und Materialien zur Publizistik. Vol. 7. Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1972.
- . *Zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur; Die Sozialdemokratische Presse von 1914 bis 1933*. Deutsche Presseforschung, Vol.1. Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1958.
- Kraiker, Gerhard. "Tucholsky als Politischer Publizist der Weltbühne." *Die Weltbühne. Zur Tradition und Kontinuität demokratischer Publizistik. Dokumentation der Tagung "Wieder gilt: der Feind steht Rechts!"* Ed. Stefanie Oswald. Vol. 1. Schriftenreihe Der Tucholsky-Gesellschaft e.V. St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2003. 65-75.
- . "'Vertikaler Journalismus.' Kurt Tucholskys Politische Publizistik der Jahre 1911-1933." *Kurt Tucholsky. Das Literarische und Publizistische Werk*. Ed. Sabina Becker, Ute Maack. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002. 277-310.
- Kurt Tucholsky Gesellschaft. Tagung. (1999: Berlin, Germany), et al. Halb Erotisch, Halb Politisch: *Kabarett und Freundschaft bei Kurt Tucholsky: Dokumentation der Tagungen der Kurt Tucholsky Gesellschaft, Berlin 30.9.-3.10. 1999, Triberg 9.6.-11.6.2000*. Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg, 2000.
- Kurt Tucholsky Gesellschaft. Tagung (1994: Mariefred, Sweden), Michael Hepp, and Roland Links. "Schweden – Das ist Ja ein langues Land" *Kurt Tucholsky und Schweden: Dokumentation der Tagung der Kurt Tucholsky Gesellschaft, Pfingsten 1994 in Mariefre/Schloss Gripsholm*. Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg, 1994.
- Langguth, Gerd. *Die Intellektuellen und die Nationale Frage*. Ed. Gerd Langguth. Frankfurt; New York: Campus, 1997.
- Laqueur, Walter. *Weimar, a Cultural History, 1918-1933*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974.
- Laqueur, Walter, and George L. Mosse. *Linksintellektuelle zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen*. München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1969.
- Lehnert, Detlev, Klaus Mergele. "Problems of Identity and Consensus in a Fragmented Society: The Weimar Republic." *Political Culture in Germany*. Ed. Dirk Berg-Schlosser, Ralf Rytlewski. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. 43-60.
- Leopold, John A. Alfred Hugenberg. *The Radical Nationalist Campaign against the Weimar Republic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Leschnitzer, Rudolf. *Von Börne bis Leonhard, oder Erbübel – Erbgut?* Rudolstadt:

- Greivenverlag, 1975.
- Lipp, Thomas J. "Kurt Tucholsky in Publicistic Context during the First Phase of the Weimar Republic 1918-1923." Dissertation. University of Kansas, 1997.
- Lukacs, Georg. *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1954.
- Lütgemeier-Davin, Reinhold. *Pazifismus zwischen Kooperation und Konfrontation: Das Deutsche Friedenskartell in der Weimarer Republik*. Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag, 1982.
- Mann, Golo. *Deutsche Geschichte, 1919-1945*. Bücher des Wissens. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1958.
- Mann, Golo, Hans-Martin Gauger, and Wolfgang Mertz. *Erinnerungen und Gedanken; Lehrjahre in Frankreich*. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1999.
- Maurer, Marcus. "Das Paradox der Medienwirkungsforschung." *Publizistik* 49.4 (2004): 405-22.
- Mayer, Dieter. "Aktiver Pessimismus. Kurt Tucholskys Deutschland Deutschland über alles (1929)." *Kurt Tucholsky: Das Literarische und Publizistische Werk*. Ed. Sabine Becker, Ute Maack. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002.
- Mc Meeking, Sean Alexander. "Münzenberg. Rise and Fall of a Communist Tycoon 1917-1940." Dissertation. University of California, Berkeley, 2001.
- Merten, Klaus. "Wirkungen von Kommunikation." *Die Wirklichkeit der Medien*. Ed. Klaus Merten, Siegfried S. Schmidt, Siegfried Weischenberg. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994.
- Merten, Klaus, Siegfried S. Schmidt, Siegfried Weischenberg, eds. *Die Wirklichkeit der Medien*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994.
- Michael, Robert, and Karin Doerr. *Nazi-Deutsch / Nazi-German: An English Lexicon of the Language of the Third Reich*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002.
- Minnerup, Willi. "Pressesprache und Machtergreifung am Beispiel der Berliner Germania." *Sprache im Faschismus*. Ed. Konrad Ehrlich. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1989. 198-236.
- Mommsen, Hans. *The Rise and Fall of Weimar Democracy*. Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1996.
- Mommsen, Hans, Elborg Forster, and Larry Eugene Jones. *The Rise and Fall of Weimar*

- Democracy*. Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1996.
- Mörchen, Helmut. "Anmerkungen zur Tucholsky-Forschung." *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 99 (1980): 298-305.
- . "Neujahrsgedichte Kurt Tucholskys als Beispiel deutscher Gelegenheitsdichtung." *Tucholsky Heute. Rückblick und Ausblick*. Ed. Irmgard Ackermann. München: Iudicum, 1991.
- . *Schriftsteller in der Massengesellschaft. Zur Politischen Essayistik und Publizistik Heinrich und Thomas Manns, Kurt Tucholskys und Ernst Jüngers während der zwanziger Jahre*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1973.
- Mosse, George L. *The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*. New York: The Universal Library, 1964.
- . *Germans and Jews: the Right, the Left, and the Search for a "Third Force" in Pre-Nazi Germany*. New York: H. Fertig, 1970.
- . *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Müller, Hans-Harald. "Im Grünen fing es an und endete blutigrot. Kurt Tucholsky, Porträt eines vielseitigen Schriftstellers." *Literarische Profile Deutscher Dichter von Grimmelshausen bis Brecht*. Ed. Walter Hinderer. Königstein/Ts.: Athenäum, 1983. 338-351.
- Negt, Oskar, and Alexander Kluge. *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*. Theory and History of Literature; V. 85. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Neuhaus, Stefan. *Literatur und Nationale Einheit in Deutschland*. Tübingen: A. Francke, 2002.
- Neuhaus, Stefan, Rolf Selbmann, and Thorsten Unger. *Engagierte Liteatur zwischen den Weltkriegen*. Schriften der Ernst Toller-Gesellschaft; Vol.4. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002.
- Nickel, Gunther. *Die Schaubühne – Die Weltbühne: Siegfried Jacobsohns Wochenschrift und ihr Ästhetisches Programm. Kulturwissenschaftliche Studien zur Deutschen Literatur*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996.
- Oswalt, Stefanie. *Die Weltbühne: Zur Tradition und Kontinuität Demokratischer*

- Publizistik: Dokumentation der Tagung: "Wieder gilt: Der Feind Steht Rechts!"* Schriftenreihe der Kurt Tucholsky Gesellschaft e.V.; Vol. 1. St. Ingberg: Röhrig, 2003.
- Paul, Gerhard. *Aufstand der Bilder: Die NS-Propaganda vor 1933*. Bonn: Dietz, 1990.
- Petersen, Klaus. *Die "Gruppe 1925." Geschichte und Soziologie einer Schriftstellervereinigung*. Heidelberg: Winter, 1981.
- . *Literatur und Justiz in der Weimarer Republik*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1988.
- . *Zensur in der Weimarer Republik*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995.
- Peukert, Detlev. *The Weimar Republic. The Crisis of Classical Modernity*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992.
- Phelan, Anthony. "Mythologie und Allegorie: Selbstverständnis und Satirische Strategie bei Kurt Tucholsky." *Das Literarische Leben in der Weimarer Republik*. Ed. Keith Bullivant. Königstein: Scriptor, 1978. 114-45.
- , ed. *The Weimar Dilemma. Intellectuals in the Weimar Republic*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985.
- Ploetz, Carl Dr. *Der Grosse Ploetz: Die Daten-Enzyklopädie der Weltgeschichte. Daten, Fakten, Zusammenhänge*. 32 ed. Frechen: Komet, 1998.
- Poor, Harold L. *Kurt Tucholsky and the Ordeal of Germany, 1914-1935*. New York: Scribner, 1968.
- Porombka, Beate. *Verspäteter Aufklärer oder Pionier einer neuen Aufklärung? Kurt Tucholsky (1918-1935)*. Beiträge zur Literatur und Literaturwissenschaft des 20. Jahrhunderts, Bd. 9. Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 1990.
- Prahl, Ekhart. *Das Konzept "Heimat." Eine Studie zur Deutschsprachigen Romanen der 70er Jahre unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Werke Martin Walsers*. Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Prescher, Hans. *Kurt Tucholsky*. Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1959.
- Pross, Harry. *Literatur und Politik: Geschichte und Programme der Politisch-Literarischen Zeitschriften im Deutschen Sprachgebiet seit 1870*. Olten: Walter-Verlag, 1963.
- Raddatz, Fritz Joachim. *Erfolg oder Wirkung: Schicksale Politischer Publizisten in Deutschland*. München: C. Hanser, 1972.

- . *Tucholsky. Ein Pseudonym. Essay.* 1.ed. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989.
- Radkau, Joachim. "Die Weltbühne als Falscher Prophet? Prognostische Versuche gegenüber dem Nationalsozialismus." *Weimars Ende: Prognosen und Diagnosen in der Deutschen Literatur und Politischen Publizistik 1930-1933.* Ed. Thomas Koebner. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1982. 57-79.
- Reed, T.J. "Mann and History." *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann.* Ed. Ritchie Robertson. Boston: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 1-21.
- . *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition.* 2.ed. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Reich Ranicki, Marcel. *Über Ruhestörer: Juden in der deutschen Literatur.* München: Piper, 1973.
- . *Sieben Wegbereiter. Schriftsteller des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts: Arthur Schnitzler, Thomas Mann, Alfred Döblin, Robert Musil, Franz Kafka, Kurt Tucholsky, Bertolt Brecht.* Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2002.
- Riha, Karl. *Kritik, Satire, Parodie.* Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992.
- Ringer, Fritz K. *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933.* Hanover: University Press of New England, 1990.
- Robertson, Ritchie. *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann.* Cambridge Companions to Literature. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Roth, Joseph, and Herrmann Kesten. *Werke.* Ed. 4 Vols. Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1975.
- Scheuer, Helmut. "'Bekenntnis zu Deutschland'? – Die Schriftsteller und die Deutsche Nation in der Weimarer Republik." *Die Intellektuellen und die Nationale Frage.* Ed. Gerd Langguth. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1997. 125-46.
- . *Dichter und ihre Nation.* 1.ed. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1993.
- Schönert, Jörg. "'Wir Negativen' – Das Rollenbewusstsein des Satirikers Kurt Tucholsky in der Ersten Phase der Weimarer Republik (1918-1924)." *Kurt Tucholsky: Sieben Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung.* Ed. Irmgard Ackermann. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 1981. 46-88.
- Schulz, Klaus-Peter. *Kurt Tucholsky in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten.* 8. ed. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1970.

- Schütz, Erhard. “‘Die Symbole waren so schön bequem.’ Medialität in den Literarischen Deutschlandbildern der Weimarer Republik: Kurt Tucholsky im Kontext.” *Dichter und Ihre Nation*. Ed. Helmut Scheuer. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1993. 256-375.
- . *Romane der Weimarer Republik*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1986.
- Siems, Renke. *Die Autorschaft des Publizisten: Schreib- und Schweigeprozesse in den Texten Kurt Tucholskys*. Diskursivitäten; Vol. 7. Heidelberg: Synchron, 2004.
- . “Gesprochene Schrift. Zu Kurt Tucholskys Erzählprosa.” *Kurt Tucholsky. Das Literarische und Publizistische Werk*. Ed. Sabina Becker, Ute Maack. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995. 213-44.
- Sontheimer, Kurt. *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*. München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1962.
- Sösemann, Bernd. *Das Ende der Weimarer Republik in der Kritik Demokratischer Publizisten: Theodor Wolff, Ernst Feder, Julius Elbau, Leopold Schwarzschild*. Abhandlungen und Materialien zur Publizistik; Bd. 9. Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1976.
- Spinnen, Burkhard. *Schriftbilder: Studien zu einer Geschichte Emblematischer Kurzprosa*. Literatur als Sprache; Vol. 9. Münster: Aschendorff, 1991.
- Sternberger, Dolf. *Aus dem Wörterbuch des Unmenschen*. München: DTV, 1970.
- Tucholsky, Kurt, and Erich Kästner. *Gruss nach Vorn*. Stuttgart: Rowohlt, 1946.
- Weidemann, Volker. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* March 24 2004: F 4.
- Wessels, Wolfram. “Die Neuen Medien und die Literatur.” *Literatur der Weimarer Republik 1918-1933*. Ed. Bernhard Weyergraf. Vol. 8. Hansers Sozialgeschichte der Literatur vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart. München: C. Hanser, 1995. 135-59.
- Weyergraf, Bernhard. “Erneuerungshoffnung und Republikanischer Alltag.” *Literatur der Weimarer Republik 1918-1933*. Vol. 8. Hansers Sozialgeschichte der Literatur vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart. München: C. Hanser, 1995.
- . Ed. *Literatur der Weimarer Republik 1918-1933*. Vol. 8. Hansers Sozialgeschichte der Literatur vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart. München: C. Hanser, 1995.
- Wilcox, Larry D. “Hitler and the Nazi Concept of the Press in the Weimar Republic.” *Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History* 2.1 (1985): 17-29.

- Willet, John. *Explosion der Mitte: Kunst und Politik 1917-1933*. München: Rogner & Bernhard, 1981.
- . *The Weimar Years: A Culture cut short*. New York; London: Abbeville Press; Thames and Hudson, 1984.
- Wilpert, Gero von. *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*. Stuttgart: A. Kröner, 1989.
- Winko, Simone. "Diskursanalyse, Diskursgeschichte." *Grundzüge der Literaturwissenschaft*. Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold, Heinrich Detering. München, DTV, 2001. 463-78.
- Zimmermann, Willi. "Kurt Tucholsky als Politischer Aufklärer. Versuch Einer Systematisierung seiner Aussagen zu Staat und Gesellschaft." *Kurt Tucholsky. Sieben Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung*. Ed. Irmgard Ackermann. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 1981. 109-30.
- Zwerenz, Gerhard. *Kurt Tucholsky: Biographie Eines Guten Deutschen*. München: Bertelsmann, 1979.

## VITA

Vera Middelkamp was born in Haltern (Westf.), Germany on March 27, 1972, the daughter of Ursula Middelkamp and Josef Middelkamp. After completing her *Abitur* (High-School diploma) at *Hiberniaschule* (Steiner-School) in Herne, Germany in 1992, she entered *Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität* in Münster, Germany. She received the equivalent of a Bachelor of Arts in *Publizistik* (journalism-communications), English Literature, and Political Science from *Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität* in 1995. In 1997 she received a Master's Degree in Germanic Studies from The University of Arizona, where she also was appointed as a Teaching Assistant since 1995. She entered the Graduate School of The University of Texas in 1997 where she was also an Assistant Instructor from 1997 to 1999. From 2002 to date, she has been a Visiting Lecturer for Germanic Literature at The University of Utah.

Permanent Address: 824 Bryan Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah 84105

This dissertation was typed by the author.