

Preface [191]

The political ambiguity of Germany from 1918 through 1933 has left such a great cultural impact on the ideals of women. During Weimar Germany, political leaders utilized women more as a political strategy rather than illustrating them as strong and intellectual individuals. After the Weimar Republic had failed, other political parties attempted to depict women in a different manner: the Nazis described the ideal German woman as someone who was “healthy,” strong, and intellectual. These three images explore the differences as well as the transitions of the depictions of women during Germany’s economic and political struggle. It touches on how different political groups viewed and demonstrated women in paintings, sketches and posters. Both points in time use women as a political method. However, their utilization and intentions of the female gender differ in several ways. The degrading representation of women during Weimar Germany percolated political artists to utilize their artworks as a furtive response. It allowed for the uprising of Hannah Hoch, a female Dada artist as well as feminist. It influenced women to act a certain way and for others to assume the roles of German women during this time.

Image 1 [242]

In this propaganda poster, the Nazis are directly attacking the communist party. This is a different type of propaganda as the technique is used to promote the Nazi party by destroying the image of another party. This differs from earlier and later works as they tended to glorify the Nazi image. The poster still uses the traditional font of an older German time but it shows the advancement in Nazi propaganda from conventional ideas of promoting your own party to destroying the image of an opposing political enemy. The Nazis put a skeleton in communist attire to show that they feel the Communists will bring death to Germany, as skeletons are symbol of death. The use of red is also used to help convey the Nazi message. Red is often used as a color of warning. Here it is used to show that communism is a threat to German society as they are a foreign influence. Nazis viewed propaganda as a tool to spread their message so they can build a good foundation of ideals which people can live by. This is reflected in their propaganda as their messages are clear enough where common people can understand and accept Nazi standards. Using propaganda as a medium, the Nazis believed that they could effectively spread their political messages to the masses. One of these messages can be seen above; Communism will bring death to the state of German only Hitler can save us.

Felice Albrecht, Political Poster, 1932.



Image 2 [220]

This picture depicts an “older farmer-couple with a ghostly-like figure over farm houses.” (Artstor) The husband is holding a scythe and looking gravely at the creepy ghostly figure. The woman also has a similar sad expression and has her face resting on her hands. She appears to be helplessly sitting next to her husband. Her husband looks like he wants to do something but he cannot. Felice Albrecht made this poster in 1932 during Hitler's rise to power. The ghostly figure is a symbol of the Great Depression that was going on at the time. Jobs were so scarce that “unemployment [rose] to nearly 30 percent in 1932,” and the artist wanted to portray Hitler as a person who would help everyone, even the lowly country-folk. The artist dramatizes the poverty by drawing a farmer with a scythe looking over a barren land. Note the usage of the color red in both the font and the borders. This was the artist's way to promote socialism and at the same time appeal to traditionalists by using the old, complex font rather than the modern, easy-to-read font. This image was published as propaganda to gain support for the already popular Hitler. Germany was begging for a change, and Hitler was ready to alter the way of government dramatically enough to cause results.

Felice Albrecht, “Country Folk in Crisis”



Image 3 [121]

In this picture, Otto Dix portrays some of his well-known expressionist pieces of artwork. Dix was paired closely with George Grosz in the realistic depictions of the Weimar Republic, especially in the new democratic republic's rough and dark starting years. The painting above is expressive in Dix's view of Weimar Germany in its beginning steps. Dated back to 1918, the painting “Fallen II” was one of Dix's darker expressions of Germany, as the war in that time was just coming to a halt and Germany was struggling in its wake. Dix was good in portraying a dark and broken German society in this particular painting, and the cluster of images that don't fit together to form a discernible picture works to depict Germany as a country in need of a revolution.

Otto Dix, “The Fallen II”

